Francesca Decimo
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Boundaries within: Nation, Kinship and Identity among Migrants and Minorities

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Introduction

Nation, Migration and Kinship through Identity Categorization

Francesca Decimo and Alessandra Gribaldo

Introduction

In academic analysis and ever more frequently in media discourse as well, it is common to frame migrants and minorities through classifications. Ethno-national and juridical criteria are among the most widely used, promoting the circulation and diffusion of a specific system of identification. These ultimately represent national categories, originating from a naturalized representation of the world as a bounded set of nations (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). And yet this process of codifying and bundling continues to take place even while the transnational circulation of bodies, objects and images transforms our concepts and experiences of home and belonging (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Kearney 1995; Levitt 2001; Rouse 1991; Vertovec 2009), granting ever more relevance to the insight that 'being grounded is not necessarily about being fixed; being mobile is not necessarily about being detached' (Ahmed et al. 2003: 1). In view of this, which represents one of the most intense contradictions of the contemporary moment, it is even more imperative that social sciences confirm and reaffirm their focus on the dynamic character of all categories of identity and belonging (Brubaker 2004; Wimmer 2013).

Populations are made geographically identifiable through politics that have historically constructed them as the target of increasing political attention, a resource to monitor, valorize, manage and, ultimately, an object of governmentality (Foucault 2004; Hacking 1982; Kertzer and Arel 2002b; Scott 1998; Urla 1993). For their

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part, studies of migration have contributed significantly to understanding a central element of governmentality, namely the deployment of state technologies in the production, subjection and subjectivation of individuals through the policing of borders and the production of boundaries (Fassin 2011). Indeed, migrant and minority populations are particularly affected by regulatory practices revolving around the biopolitics of bodies and species in the form of norms and disciplinary mechanisms that attribute identity and generate subjectivity.

Specifically, populations are made identifiable through processes of boundary-making and categorization that are located within a regime of truth (Foucault 1975) in which knowledge is conceptualized in terms of evidence and measurement. Nonetheless, every move to produce and control identity from above is matched by ethics, strategies, and forms of resistance that social actors mobilize within and through borders and boundaries. The production of identity – in its various national, regional, ethnic, cultural and intimate manifestations (such as marriage strategies, acknowledgment of relatedness and kinship obligations) – lies at the intersection of agency, classificatory power and governmentality. In this view, we argue that the politics of kinship offer a crucial analytical perspective in that they constitute both a primary reference point and terrain of individual mobility as well as a fundamental construct of affiliation and national recognition.

With the aim of opening reflection on these topics, we issued a call for papers for a conference held in Trento in June of 2014,[1] inviting participants to consider how contemporary processes of social and cultural interconnection fueled by intense spatial mobility are challenging, bridging and overturning institutional boundaries of identity and belonging. This volume thus emerges from the discussion launched in Trento and sets out to offer an analysis of the identity construction processes that are generated when population policies intersect with global migration, through a socio-anthropological reading of identity and migration trajectories. Examining both governmental spheres and forms of agency, this collected volume aims to

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[1] The conference, titled 'Changing Population: Migration, Reproduction and Identity,' was held at the University of Trento, Department of Sociology and social Research, on June 3–4 2014 (http://web.unitn.it/en/sociologia/evento/34709/changing-population-migration-reproduction-and-identity). As the call for papers indicated, we invited participants to consider the 'politics of reproduction put in motion by both national governments, as they distinguish between citizens and non-citizens, and migrants and their descendants, as they affirm, negotiate or refrain from constructing their own definitions of family, kinship, genealogy and belonging.'

Several sessions addressed the themes raised by the call for papers from different perspectives. After having analyzed the over 70 abstracts we received and the 36 papers selected, it became obvious that the interrelated issues of national boundaries and politics of kinship represented thick, innovative and fruitful research strands deserving of exploration. The essays contained here emerged as the most coherent and significant examples of such explorations.

This book is thus the fruit of a collective effort involving multiple scholars in various ways. We would especially like to thank Paolo Boccagni, Nicholas Harney, David Kertzer, Bruno Riccio, Giuseppe Sciortino and Pnina Werbner, whose precious scientific contribution paved the way for the conference and the development of this volume. We would also like to thank Serena Piovesan for the organizational support she provided during the conference and Angelina Zontine and Chiara Masini for proofreading the text. Thanks also go to the three anonymous reviewers for their invaluable suggestions.

uncover how these spheres intertwine when migrants, minorities, boundaries and categorization are at stake. The contributing authors employ diverse disciplinary perspectives and reference a variety of contexts, geographical sites and units of analysis to make visible through social research the production and practices of institutional classification and their intersection with lived experiences of subjects; in so doing, they reconstruct how difference is claimed, negotiated and produced in the contested terrains of mobility and citizenship.

The Strain of Categorization and the Proliferation of Boundaries

A great deal of literature has reconstructed the way that modern nation-states act through the production of categories with the power to order, overwrite and distinguish between classes of individuals. In some respects, this power is inherent in every act of naming, an act which becomes more incontrovertible and absolute the more legitimate and authoritative the naming entity is considered to be (Bourdieu 1982). The modern state has adopted a complex apparatus, together with systematic methods for geographic mapping and archeological cataloging, in order to define and penetrate specific areas, populations and histories in the process of constructing the nation. As several scholars have admirably reconstructed, this long-term process mainly took shape through the construction of colonial empires. Indeed, the ongoing consolidation of European nation-states has been fed by paradigms for conveying knowledge about the Other, methods for incorporating remote territories and populations, and established systems of domination with their consequent legitimization (Anderson 1991). This process can be explored through emblematic analyses of the construction and governance of colonial India (Cohn 1996; Inden 1990) as well as the French (Gervais 1996) and Belgian (Chrétien 1985; Uvin 2002) empires in central-western Africa. Above all, the investigation of these systems of domination has revealed the numerical logics (Appadurai 1996a, b) and topologic and classificatory procedures (Amselle and M'Bokolo 1985) underlying these colonial empires' administrative and governmental regimes, logics and procedures that have succeeded in outliving the empires themselves.

Today, census surveys, vital records, passports, identification documents, church records and medical research data establish and grant materiality to the categorizations that inform our identities: beyond sex and age, they designate citizenship, nationality, lineage, religion, ancestry, health, language, ethnicity and race (Inda 2014; Torpey 2000; Torpey and Caplan 2001). Over time, this production of identity has served to form and consolidate institutional definitions of difference, and the ethno-racial sphere, with its proliferation of diversity, plays a crucial role in this process. As the wealth of significant research conducted over the last few decades has so eloquently demonstrated, the relationship between politics and categories of identification such as official classifications and statistics is far from neutral

(Morning 2008; Nobles 2000). Statistics, and specifically the most powerful tool of their deployment, the census, do not simply reflect the social and demographic profile of the nation, they profoundly contribute to its definition. The census specifically contributes directly to strengthening the nation in its role as the most relevant political instrument states employ to smooth and corral the messy complexity of individuals, cultures, languages, somatic traits, kinship bonds and religions that populate a given territory. Indeed, as Kertzer and Arel (2002a) have argued, the political significance of the census lies in the way it defines the ordered set of bounded identities necessary for a coherent narration of the nation as well as efficient control of the national population. In this way the census, along with other forms of institutional enumeration, has shaped the political arena in which multiple social forces struggle to determine who legitimately represents the nation and its population.

Thus, the institutional production of difference may be mitigated or exacerbated depending on which narration of the nation prevails. Ethno-racial categories have been used differently by different political regimes, as Rallu et al. (2006) find in their study highlighting how the choice of whether or not to use these categories to count national inhabitants may reflect divergent political aims. No ethno-racial statistical data exists for France, for instance, in that such data are overwritten by an overarching French identity that is ex ante defined as shared by all residents (Simon 2008). In Brazil, critics contest color-based classifications on the grounds that they extoll the value of mixed-race status and diminish the weight of racial issues by representing the black population as numerically limited, thus giving rise to a broad debate on census, race and inequality (Loveman et al. 2012; Nobles 2000, 2002; Petruccelli 2015). In contrast, lines of racial differentiation in the United States are highlighted to the point of becoming a constitutive element in and of themselves, inextricable from the national body, even when they are contradicted by the recognition that race has no biological foundation (Morning 2011; Nobles 2002). Similarly, states may continue to use noticeably fictional categories such as the census supercategory 'Hispanic' that lumps the vast variety of Latin-American peoples into one group (Kertzer, in this volume).

The academic debate is not immune from the controversial lure of categorizing and counting either, from the trap of treating the nation as a taken-for-granted analytical frame, that is, the *methodological nationalism* depicted by Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002), to contemporary dilemmas of how best to monitor social inequalities. Although scholars agree that it is high time to transcend population categories which have functioned as key tools of nation-state building and scientific racism, many have called for the use of criteria and categories that might account for differences in the composition of populations in order to document existing lines of inequality and social segmentation (Simon 2012; Simon and Piché 2012). And yet this analytical request does not resolve or elude the ambivalence originating from the fact that ethno-racial categories are located somewhere between the representation of social realities and their construction, an ambivalence which remains implicit in classificatory instruments themselves.

On the other hand, these systems for distinguishing and categorizing populations are not stable or durable in the least (Simon et al. 2015), as the history of the racial categorizing in the US (Morning 2008; Nobles 2000) or the continued updating of the Great Britain census (Thompson 2015) remind us. This is a contradiction intrinsic in any institutional system of identification and classification that reflects something deeper than simply a state's attempts to keep abreast of the times and its evolving society. Rather, the shifting and controversial nature of categorizing, especially when embedded in an institutional definition of difference, reveals the structural ambivalence between the will to draw lines categorizing identities and the impossibility of doing so. It is precisely this ambivalence that makes it possible for us to glimpse the area of resistance, the space of tension, that is in some respects a constitutive element of national formations.

As Wimmer (2002) argues, the principle of nationality is based on an assumed isomorphism between the borders of a given country and a society, itself delimited by the boundaries between *us* and *them.* In his analysis, the welfare pact underlying national integration takes the form of a process of social closure implemented through the definition and exclusion of non-nationals. And yet these boundaries are not drawn once and for all; rather, over time they are subject to a continuous push and pull among multiple forces that ends up configuring a stratified system of inclusion, or, in other words, different degrees of exclusion (Morris 2002). Thus, any national framework of differences between nationals and non-nationals reveals the strain underling the definition of citizen status just like that of the relative *other.* In keeping with this perspective, it is particularly the lack of alignment between territory, nation and identity, a disjuncture that is exacerbated by migratory flows, serves to problematize the issue of belonging in modern nation-states (Brubaker 2010).

At the same time, various scholars have unpacked the processes of category construction the nation state uses to maintain its space of influence over global migration, focusing in particular on moves to draw lines designed to distinguish between regular and irregular, legitimated and illegitimated subjects. Some emblematic studies are De Genova's (2005) exploration of the political construction of the category of undocumented migrants and Nyers' work (2006) on the state-centric logic and language underlying the category of *refugee*. These studies do an exemplary job of employing a meticulous empirical process to historicize classifications of identity, denaturalize legal systems and reveal the endless work of defending frontiers and defining categories of inclusion through which states seek to gain sovereignty over global mobility. However, these analyses focus mainly on nation states' historical efforts to produce, maintain and fortify *external* borders and the political significance of these borders in reifying identity-based distinctions between different classes of individuals and their associated rights.

We believe a productive terrain of inquiry, different from yet complementary to these investigations, might be established by shifting the focus towards the processes of redefinition and differentiation that take place within the nation and among its subjects. We therefore seek to offer a perspective that grants equal attention to both the logics of national governmentality in the sphere of global migration and the multiple ways that individuals and collectivities circumvent, adopt, experience and

produce categories of identity. In so doing, we propose to engage first of all with the research perspective investigating the nation-state's role as an inescapable, binding institutional dimension in the construction of migratory space. Multiples scholars have thoroughly argued that the contemporary intensification and differentiation of global mobility, rather than weakening sites of state power and institutional criteria for defining nationality, have actually contributed to their fortification (Bouböck 1998, 2003; Joppke 1998; Zolberg 1999). Above all, we recognize that the circuits of agency migrants weave by mobilizing translational fields of belonging are likewise constructed through engagement with (and not independent of) national borders and categories. This is not only true when claims of transnational belonging achieve institutional legitimacy, as in the case of dual citizenship; it is also true when the elements at play are 'merely' social and cultural and their deployment takes place transnationally in relation to multiple national attachments rather than an ethereal and spread-out deterritorialisation (Faist 2000; Kivisto 2001; Waldinger 2015; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). And yet, research in this area has somewhat neglected to problematize the specific ways national border and category construction actually takes place and therefore missed the chance to investigate the tensions, actors and dynamics through which these borders and categories are reconstructed, imposed or impinged among migrants and minorities. To this end, we focus our investigation on the *boundary within*, understood less as an established line of demarcation or given classification and more as an ongoing process of identity construction and social exclusion. This process takes place among the various actors, levels and spaces that make up the national fabric, itself shown to be intrinsically ambivalent, contradictory and subject to constant redefinition. In this perspective, census classifications, statistics categories, as well as the politics of nationality and the politics of kinship and intimacy comprise a field of investigation with the potential to capture the range of institutional actors, debates, regulations and documents through which the us/them distinction comes to be constructed and reconstructed inside the national body. Applying this approach, over the following pages we investigate how the intertwining of nationality and kinship in a mobile world contributes to the differentiation and reproduction of identities.

Embodied Nationality: Kinship and Identity among Migrants and Minorities

The act of defining collective identities implies analyzing the interplay of institutional and normative fields together with intimate, kinship-related and subjective dimensions. This volume attempts to consider how classifications and boundaries are experienced, embodied and reproduced by the subjects who are the target of the governmental actions, conceiving of these subjects not as disconnected individuals but as social actors embedded in relational contexts. Specifically, we suggest that the politics of kinship represents a crucial dimension in shaping identities and a

powerful cultural repertoire that intersects with national borders and citizenship requirements. We wish to underline the political nature of kinship as a space constantly molded by structures and subjects. Indeed, kinship and relatedness constitute an essential field through which individuals gain spaces of social and spatial mobility and variously reinterpret the boundaries of identity, at times even overturning the categories used to demarcate and define them. Using this lens, we seek to bring together these different strands of investigation, focusing on the strain of national efforts to classify and govern internal differences on the one hand, and the dimensions of belonging through kinship, intimacy and ancestry on the other. At the convergence of these perspectives, we consider the processes of redefinition and articulation that take place within the nation, through its own classifications, and within the boundaries of kinship when it crosses and is crossed by national categories. In so doing, we seek to highlight the governmental practices of the nation state and explore how these practices have repercussions beyond simple classification; rather, they are closely interwoven with people's daily lives and behavior.

Gender, family and reproduction are increasingly identified as a privileged locus for state efforts to foster migrants' social integration and govern migrant populations. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the intersection of kinship and state boundaries plays a pivotal role in migration policies, engaging questions such as, where are children born and to what parents? Who marries who? Who is allowed to reunite with which family members? What relationships enjoy recognition? In this context, the terrain of classification comes together with the terrain in which individuals think of themselves, constitute themselves, relate and act as subjects. The dimensions of kinship and relatedness come to constitute an interface between individual subjectivity and collective identity, a space that is particularly dense in terms of its implications for identity and continuity over time.

Kinship is not the only element that plays a key role in defining and reproducing identity-based lines of demarcation, be they ethnic, racial, national or class-based, however. Identity for its part is produced and made to persist over time through norms and practices (gender roles, marriage norms, kinship relationships, the rules governing descent and belonging) in which the construction of family and affinity bonds represent a decisive arena in the constant interplay between continuity and change. Various studies have shed light on the everyday dimension of kinship practices, transcending the concept of kinship as a bounded set of normative categories (Carsten 2000; Strathern 1992) to address the negotiated nature of kin relations and using the concept of relatedness to provide a more complex and nuanced picture. At the same time, however, this picture is never completely disentangled from normative kinship rules and expectations (Miller 2007). Here we use both relatedness and kinship as terms, the first to underline the processual face of kinship in local contexts and the kind of connections that may be described genealogically or in other ways. In this sense, relatedness goes beyond a set of assumptions related to the social and biological dimensions that have historically constituted the bedrock of kinship studies. Nonetheless, it would be hasty to dismiss the notion of kinship, as it identifies a dense experience captured through ethnography and the core of a lively debate (Herzfeld 2007; Sahlins 2013).

In view of these arguments, our approach is intended to bring analyses of identity-based national classificatory policies together with the fields more closely associated with kinship practices (Bear 2001; Borneman 1992; Das 2006). In so doing, the spatial images of the state characterized by verticality and encompassment that pervade popular and academic discourse (Gupta and Ferguson 2002) can be brought into tension with the construction of community and family within the nation-state. In keeping with this perspective, it is particularly crucial to note that nation and kinship are deeply interrelated and, in some ways, also act to reinforce one another (Das 1995; Delaney 1995; Rytter 2010; Schneider 1977; Shryock 1997). There is a deep interconnection between ideas about blood and relatedness, on the one hand, and historical and demographic features on the other (Carsten 2004: 137). Prevailing metaphors associated with the deployment of a naturalized kinship imaginary – fatherland, motherland, brotherhood – are widespread and commonplace in ideologies of nationalism (Delaney 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997). Intimacy and genealogy are themselves generated by ideas of the gendered conjugal couple and bloodline as the basis for group identity, and these are in turn the basis for the liberal nation-state (Erdreich 2006; Povinelli 2002). These kinship metaphors are constructed, but they also have the power to generate: in other words, they are 'metaphors we live by' (Carsten 2004: 160) that possess a potential political power of their own. Indeed, the connection between family and nation goes beyond the symbolic level and constitutes a potent criterion of recognition and inclusion: the way descent functions to discriminate in citizenship systems based on the *jus sanguinis* principle (Decimo 2015), or the legal meaning and identity-generating power contained in the term 'naturalization' are examples of this powerful connection.

Moreover, these multiple lines of research converge with the points scholars have made about family as a crucial site in global mobility, both as an object for governing migratory paths and minority groups and as a device for reasserting roles, relationships and identities, making claims and enacting forms of resistance. As recent studies have shown, reunification and family formation are less and less frequently perceived as indicators of migrants' stabilization, integration and well-being; instead, they are more and more frequently viewed with suspicion as grounds for social recognition and, as such, subject to specific policies of control and selection (Bonjour and Kraler 2015). In this context, today's familial migration policies are not only more restrictive than in the past, they are also increasingly aimed at discriminating between different categories of migrants (Kraler 2010). These policies are often based on a conceptualization of family that is naturalized and regulated according to Euro-American standards (Kofman 2004), with the result that heterogeneous households, understood exclusively as family units, are regulated and rendered uniform. In this way family is increasingly seen as a space of governmentality in the production of migrant citizenship in Europe (Bonjour and de Hart 2013). However, this process of attempted normalization goes beyond simply setting up a specific model of family that migrants and minorities must abide by. As Grillo highlights, this model also carries with it 'a certain conception of culture as a way of life attached to an identifiable collectivity, static, finite and bounded' (Grillo 2008: 3). Indeed, there is a sort of pedagogy of integration implicit in these policies targeting

migrants and their descendants as representatives of archaic kinship roles, set against liberal conceptualizations of autonomy, control and individual action that are taken for granted as representative of Western values (Sterckx 2015). Marriage norms, family making and gender roles become particularly relevant in this process of othering, and indeed these areas are more and more widely recognized as a dimension to be governed, a privileged locus for the reproduction of identities. And so migrant and minority families end up constituting a specific, problematic issue that lies more or less explicitly at the core of public discourse, serving through a circular logic to reinforce the same policies and norms established to discipline who is allowed to constitute a family and under what conditions. Ever more systematic and inflexible, policies of family reunification target economic characteristics (Staver 2015) and ethno-cultural affiliations (Pellander 2015) to exclude any subjects who might be considered a threat to or burden on society or the bearers of values not in keeping with those of the 'national culture.' Ultimately, this restrictive turn in family migration policy reveals that the hearths of *other* families are taken as an emblem of difference to symbolize and construct the hearth of the nation, once again establishing multiple degrees of belonging and membership (Block 2015; Olwig 2011; Schmidt 2011).

On the other hand, by taking on the point of view of migrants, many studies have demonstrated that migrants' relational spaces often contain stockpiles of the practices, forms of knowledge and skills mobile individuals need to deal with these highly complex and restrictive national systems and migratory regimes. As scholars have shown, migrants respond to the conditioning and constraints shaping their choices of mobility and family lives by re-fashioning meanings and practices of relatedness and inventing new ones along transnational lines (Gardner and Grillo 2002; Salih 2003), from engaging in caretaking at a distance (Baldassar and Merla 2013; Boccagni 2012; Hodagneu and Avila 1997) to establishing couple relationships (Beck-Gernsheim 2007; Lievens 1999) and kinship relations (Gallo 2013; Mason 2004; Olwig 2002; Werbner 1999). Nevertheless, multiple studies (particularly in northern European contexts) have documented the impact migration policies have on the individuals they target, highlighting how the intimacy, personal choices and private lives of migrants and their descendants are conditioned by the most intrusive elements of contemporary migratory regimes. In particular, these scholars have shown that migrants are increasingly obliged to interface with institutions, administrators, public discourse and categorized identities, that systematically force them to demonstrate the validity and value of their family arrangements, condition their narratives and consume an excessive share of their time in administrative and bureaucratic settings (Kraler 2010; Strasser et al. 2009).

Dialoging with these many rich fields of investigation, this book aims not only to contribute to weaving together different research areas; in addition, the studies we present shed light on dynamics that the existing literature on migration, minorities and the politicization of family life addresses only partially, if at all. Indeed, the analyses collected here adopt a perspective that transcends the Western context of minorities and immigration; what is more, these studies encompass a field that extends beyond the nuclear family unit to focus on kinship and relatedness more

broadly. This collection takes into account the continuum linking the logics of kinship and identity on the one hand and national boundaries on the other, with a view to exploring their intersection. By adopting this analytical perspective, we seek to understand not only how metaphors of kinship animate and give shape to the construction of the nation, but also the reverse. In relation to our field of inquiry, this involves exploring how contemporary migratory regimes, and the categorizations they give rise to, affect family life in ways that refashion the meaning of kinship and the very identity of migrants as of minorities.

Book Overview

The research perspectives traced here constitute the foundational themes of the book, the topics which the contributing authors substantiate through reference to different fields, geographical contexts and units of analysis. This chapter, together with the one **by David Kertzer**, aims to offer a theoretical and conceptual introduction to the cases presented in the two following sections of the book. We have organized the volume to begin with empirical analyses of the systems of classification and boundary-making underlying the construction of nationality as well as the impact, processes and paradoxes resulting from efforts to differentiate the national population. The focus then shifts to more explicitly take on the perspective of the kinship subjects and politics that act to impose nationality and its borders while also reshaping, redefining and overturning these lines of demarcation.

The analytical framework informing the **second section** of the volume, entitled **'Building the Nation through Frontiers and Classifications'**, approaches nation and citizenship as historical constructs characterized by ever-changing boundaries, constructs that are defined through an incessant production of identity-based, political, bureaucratic and statistical categories. More specifically, the studies we present here draw on various methodologies and sources to uncover the persistent presence of an internal principle of distinction which, like a set of Russian dolls, progresses infinitesimally from the institutional level to the discursive and social levels, carving out successive degrees of belonging and citizenship. The chapters by Jeroen Doomernik, Viola Castellano, Vanessa Grotti and Dorothy Zinn go straight to the heart of these issues, setting out from different contexts to converge in deconstructing the categories and distinctions through which national identities, together with recognition and belonging, are granted substance and weight. Most importantly, the chapters in this section shed light on the unexpected identity effects and short circuits produced by the crystallization of these categories when they operate regardless of ongoing evolutions in the population.

The **Doomernik's chapter** opens this section by presenting the figure of the *allochtoon:* an individual who, having been born to foreign parents, remains perpetually statistically recognizable and subject to monitoring regardless of the fact that most *allochtoon* are actually naturalized Dutch citizens. Doomernik retraces the historical construction of this category, identifying whom it refers to and which

generalizing ethno-national labels are used to classify it. Through an analysis of parliamentary minutes and political debates, the author identifies a move to politicize assumed differences in which the category of *allochtoon* serves to label individuals who exist at the margins of citizenship and nationality. He clearly shows how institutional arrangements give rise to a drawing of 'borders *within* the nation's population' (Doomernik in this volume). Specifically, policies for distinguishing while at the same time integrating non-western migrants (as generic as this distinction may be) end up overlapping, paradoxically producing a further category in which integration is constantly deferred and instead functions to fuel the definition of alterity. This process of domestic othering mirrors the new process of constructing Europeans in which Dutch migration policies play an integral part; the result is a kind of closed circle in which 'European' and 'non-European' mutually define each other through exclusion without the need for any further explanation.

Doomernik's contribution highlights how an imprecise, unintentional classification imposed from the top down for purely governmental aims can end up distorted to the point of actually working against its originally intended aims. On the other side, the **chapter by Castellano** reveals how similar ambivalences and contradictions may exist even when the classificatory logics in question have been intentionally adopted from the bottom up as a tool of political empowerment. Her ethnography of the child welfare system in New York City focuses on the construction of a social policy target group made up of abused children, the majority of whom come from black families. Not only does her analysis identify the ways that race-making is implicitly reproduced through administrative technologies, it also shows how difficult it can be to tackle the problem of the statistical over- or under-representation of racialized groups. Statistics on ethnicity and race, together with the audit systems and evidence-based technologies of knowledge (Strathern 2000) abundantly used to diagnose social problems and elaborate efficient responses, have the unintended effect of reinforcing racialized perceptions of social deviance. Indeed, discussions of nation and welfare in the US revolve around the construction of the African American woman in particular. Efforts to police the boundaries of family and women's reproductive activities intertwine with a moral economy (Fassin 2005) that exerts increasing influence over social policies under neoliberalism, constructing and assigning pathologized subjectivities that assert assumed characterizations and behaviors as constitutive elements of given racialized groups. Castellano's analysis of the position community organizations promote in the face of racial disproportionality reveals the challenges inherent in naming race, a historically stratified concept that is extremely slippery and difficult to manage. This insight once again illustrates the previously mentioned ambivalence intrinsic in classificatory logics aimed at constructing and crystallizing the realities they seek to represent.

Such tensions and contradictions intensify when integrated into the welfare systems that allocate benefits and protections, the true wealth of nations (Wimmer 2002), and more specifically in relation to the distinction between outsider and insider. In the parliamentary debates Doomernick describes, it is the presumed social costs of *allochtoon* individuals that make manifest the insider/outsider distinction and legitimize the continuing use of this category. Analogously,

Castellano describes the circular logics through which public discourse is able to deploy racial disproportionality in order to blame disempowered subjects for their own marginality and, once again, make them responsible for their social costs. Indeed, these analyses highlight how, while external borders are progressively fortified, national governments move to enact internal closures and distinctions that undermine the very foundations of citizenship and universal rights.

Such dynamics become even more evident if we move from the center of national systems to their peripheries. The **Grotti's chapter** offers an ethnography of a branch department of the French state in Latin America, revealing all the aporias surrounding the production of national identity, especially when access to the national health system is not guaranteed. French Guiana represents an emblematic field of tension between the nominal universalism underlying access to the health services theoretically guaranteed by the central state in Paris and the actual process of differentiation that is applied to local subjects. In this context, the health being contested is that of indigenous women preparing to give birth. It thus involves the medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth for the women who contribute to making this maternity ward's fertility rate the highest in all of the French territory, including the Parisian area. This massive reproductive potential is located at an exceptional intersection of social, natural and political borders in which subjects possessed of an identity that is neither certified nor claimed often find their citizenship rights overlooked. The complexity of the bureaucracy and the way healthcare delivery is organized facilitates the establishment of social barriers, thereby calling into question both discursively and practically the right to healthcare that these subjects in principle enjoy.

Like litmus papers, border areas, marginal subjects and liminal identities serve to reveal the logics of governmentality that underlie the construction and selective composition of national populations. These logics sometimes configure the fabric of identity in such a way as to blur and deny it, carrying it back into a generic stateless zone, as with the expectant Guianan women described in Vanessa Grotti's analysis. At other times, logics of governmentality are based on claims of assumed native identity, crystallized and preserved over time regardless of who experiences and embodies them. The **chapter by Zinn** analyzes another border zone, the Alto Adige/Süd Tirol, bringing us back to the heart of the old country in which all the weight of the last century of European history encounters – and clashes with – the complexities of globalization. The remnants of this history derive from a border that was drawn at the end of WWII by cutting across the local area heedless of the identities claimed by its residents. Once established, the border has become embedded in a political arrangement involving a rigid bilingualism embodied in the local government and administrations and used for classifying residents. This classificatory system is preserved and reaffirmed despite rapid changes in the population: a drastic drop in fertility rates among both Italian and German-speaking residents accompanied by a significant increase in immigration. In this case the prevailing logic of governmentality insists on taking the myriad of differences introduced by immigration and subordinating them under the categories of 'Italian' and 'German' in order to maintain the quota system used to organize the distribution of resources and positions. Zinn's analysis focuses in particular on the educational sphere, an exem-

plary site for guaranteeing the reproduction of the system. She observes schools that essentially survive thanks to the presence of students from immigrant families whose mother tongue is neither Italian nor German but who are obliged to choose one language or the other at the moment of registering, a choice that will also bind them to one or the other political community. Furthermore, there is an array of 'other' cultural, ethnicity and affinity characteristics associated with this linguistic affiliation. Just as with the category *allochtoon,* these characteristics serve as criteria, unplanned but still effective, for identifying what choices of language and belonging would grant the most advantages in terms of mimicking an essentialized identity.

The **third section**, titled **'Weaving Kinship and Shaping Identities in Global Mobility'**, investigates how social and spatial mobility is conditioned by national categories of recognition and inclusion, exploring from the inside out the real-life trajectories and paradoxical dynamics generated by normative definitions of identity and belonging. As the title of the section suggests, the chapters by Aurora Massa, Alice Rossi, Barbara Bertolani and Zithian Guo shift the focus, considering the nexus between kinship and identity in contemporary efforts to govern global migration, an analysis aimed at tracing how family and relatedness may represent both arenas in which borders and boundaries shape subjectivity and belonging and, at the same time, spaces of agency and mobility.

What all these chapters highlight is that, in a context in which borders are increasingly powerful, classification-based identity is ever more rigid and social divides are ever deeper. Kinship politics intertwine with the policies governing national belonging to give rise to a complex terrain in which kinship and governmental logics both overlap and diverge. Indeed, the ways migrants make methodical and systematic use of kinship as a key (if not exclusive) channel of mobility grants it such renewed social significance that it ends up calling into question nationality. Moreover, these ethnographies reveal how individuals interpret, personify and experience borders and classifications on both symbolic and emotional levels, thereby generating conflict and ruptures in terms of subjectivity and kinship relations.

The **chapter by Massa** opens this section by providing a view of familial experiences and the construction of belonging when these elements intersect with national history. In particular, she explores how the production of national borders between Eritrea and Ethiopia sometimes literally cuts across kinship ties and the paradoxical effects this can give rise to. Logics of national membership end up severing intimate and conjugal relationships as well as so-called blood ties, to such an extent that they disrupt the taken-for-granted naturalness of genealogical continuity. This process is overdetermined by political contingencies and immersed in complex forms of stratification originating from colonial history, the war between the two Horn of Africa countries, and divergent statuses and opportunities for mobility. State boundaries thus permeate kinship, reconstructing and reinforcing ethno-national distinctions and granting them relevance; these distinctions go on to produce breakages when they end up interwoven with and mixed up within the core of a single family.

It becomes crystal clear just how significant kinship politics have become in this historical moment characterized by the consolidation of nationality and fortification

of geopolitical borders when we begin to explore how these politics generate familial bonds and relatedness in migratory space and enact newly binding restrictions while at the same time setting up new margins for agency. The **chapter by Rossi**, based on a multi-sited ethnography of the mobility strategies of young Moroccan men in Italy, opens a productive reflection on the pervasive effects of restrictive migration policies in constructing documented and undocumented status and the significance that access to citizenship assumes in a context characterized by intense legal restrictions. Her analysis focuses one young man's passage from the status of unaccompanied minor to that of documented adult male migrant which is made possible by a deliberate – and subtly violent – fiction involving two marriages, a fertile one in Morocco and a sterile one in Italy. In this case, different marriage practices and reproductive behaviors are deeply interrelated with the regulation of migrant flows in which kinship, descent and the state determine what constitutes a legal or illegal family.

Rossi's contribution insightfully reveals that it is precisely the vague and unfixed character of kinship – whether fictional, biological, emotional or created for specific ends – that makes it a key field of dispute in contemporary migratory paths. Furthermore, the research we present emphasizes the organizational capabilities that migrants mobilize in the name of kinship in the sphere of migration, capabilities that go beyond individual actions to involve multiple actors and networks. For instance, **Bertolani's chapter** offers an ethnography of combined marriages linking Italy and Punjab that highlights how valuable the status of 'documented migrant' becomes in this transnational wedding market. Her analysis outlines the process of social reproduction enacted by these Punjabi families, showing how it develops through various legal statuses and strategies of family reunification that involve rethinking and reformulating the meaning of kinship and alliance. Documents attesting to a migrant's legal status become a crucial element of the dowry. Above all, however, documented migrants who might potentially be listed as 'relatives' become members of a political economy of kinship that organizes and distributes its reproductive logics across borders and classifications, weighing the legal value of individuals and the costs and opportunities associated with various marriage options.

These kinship politics appear to function similarly when they are incorporated into national borders and subordinated to their logics. With the **chapter by Guo**, the analysis turns to migrated Yi political cadres in south-east China, revealing how even the most emblematically cultural and traditional classifications caught up with kinship belonging (clan, lineage) and ethnic definitions are complexly and strategically linked to definitions of class and social standing within the bureaucracy that provides the political structure for the multifaceted Chinese nation. Change occurs by deconstructing and renegotiating forms of identity-based belonging through strategies that legitimize while at the same time continuously re-signifying forms of affiliation and identification, like a chess match in which the rules are constantly changing. In a certain sense Guo's study thus offers a mirror view of the picture that emerges from Massa's analysis, illustrating the fluidity of the intersection between kinship and state politics and observing how the power of ethnic affiliations might

diminish when trajectories of geographical and social mobility are granted legitimacy.

Through the chapters in the second section, the volume offers an opportunity to explore the meanings attributed to the notion of kinship and the elements of social belonging and reproduction embedded within it, an exploration which reconnects the idea of kinship with the national discourses and classificatory practices outlined above and addressed in the volume's first section. All these studies clearly show that the process of producing national identity is deployed not only when categories are imposed from above, but also when individuals themselves embody identities. Historical, political, and bureaucratic categories become the repertoire people draw on in enacting their own strategies to manage the discrepancies between places and belonging, affiliation and nationality.

With the **last chapter** we offer a conclusive analysis that weaves together the multiple perspectives provided by the different studies presented in order to retrace the main strands of research developed in the volume while offering some key remarks and research notes.

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The Perils of Reification: Identity Categories and Identity Construction in Migration Research

David I. Kertzer

Introduction

The issue I address here is as controversial as it is important: How are identity categories being used in demographic research and especially in research that focuses on population movements? These questions not only concern demographers and other social scientists, for they also bear on matters that affect the general population. Indeed, in considering how people are placed into larger identity groupings, we are dealing with matters that concern people's own identities. Few things could be more important.

A series of related issues has drawn attention in recent years, made more pressing by the massive scale of recent international mobility. Among these is the question of the extent to which modern states themselves have the power to create people's ethnic and racial identities through the bureaucratic machinery of government. Some years ago, the political scientist Dominique Arel and I brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to tackle this question, resulting in the 2002 book, *Census and Identity*. We focused on one aspect of this use of state power: the use of identity categories in national censuses. In our introduction, we tried to demonstrate how the use of such categories creates a particular vision of social reality. The census normally assigns people to a single category and conceives of them as sharing a common collective identity with all others who fall in that category. This process encourages people to view the world as composed of distinct groups of people. 'Rather than view social links as complex and social groupings situational, the view promoted by the census', we wrote, 'is one in which populations are divided into neat categories.' Here we cited the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's

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observation: 'statistics are to bodies and social types what maps are to territories: they flatten and enclose.' (Kertzer and Arel 2002: 5–6).[1]

But the problem of inventing identity categories and then acting as if they captured some kind of external reality is far from confined to the architects of national censuses. Nor is this error simply found among an unsophisticated population when confronted with the official use of such categories. The fact is that social scientists—and even some of the most sophisticated among them—constantly makes use of reified identity categories in their analyses. Alfred North Whitehead famously warned of just this 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness.'[2]

The call for the conference on which this book is based noted that 'Anthropology and Sociology have both contributed to uncovering the implicit essentialism underlying the racial and cultural definitions of difference conventionally used to identify, subdivide and classify human populations.' This statement is certainly accurate in that anthropologists and sociologists have regularly pointed out the tendency to invent identity categories and then treat them as if they reflected an external reality. Yet it is perhaps also a bit misleading, as I will try to demonstrate in this chapter, for much work on migration suffers from confusion about the nature of these categories and remains largely ignorant of the ways in which they produce misleading results. Skerry (2000) has argued that censuses should not be seen as 'scientific' undertakings, but rather as political in nature. It is worth asking whether the same might be said about other demographic research that relies on the use of identity categories.

Ethnicity

Much ink has been spilled trying to provide a satisfactory definition of ethnicity, perhaps the most general and frequently used term in trying to capture identity categories, especially in dealing with migration. In a recent attempt to specify what should be meant by 'ethnicity', Brown and Langer (2010: 2) define it as 'a sense of group belonging, based on ideas of common origins, history, culture, language, experience and values.' Recent instructions for the New Zealand national census similarly emphasize a sense of belonging. 'Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to.' Ethnicity, in this view, is a 'cultural' trait and not to be confused with race, ancestry, or nationality, even though, the census manual laments, when asked for their ethnic identification people often provide exactly such responses.[3]

It is important to pause here to consider more carefully the widespread notion that people 'belong' to ethnic 'groups'. New Zealand's census is far from unusual.

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[1] We further develop some of our perspectives on the politics of identity categorization in censuses in Kertzer and Arel (2006).

[2] Duster (2005: 1050) reminds us of Whitehead's warning.

[3] Statistics New Zealand, n.d.

The 2001 Northern Ireland census asks: 'To which of these ethnic groups do you belong?' There follows this list: White; Irish Traveler; Mixed; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Other Asian; Black Caribbean; Black African; Other Black; Chinese; Other ethnic group. Similarly, the British Labour Force Survey asks: 'To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong? White; Mixed; Asian or Asian British; Black or Black British; Chinese; Other ethnic group' (MacInnes 2011: 281–4; King-O'Riain 2007).

Can we forgive the poor confused respondent who cannot tell the difference between 'race' and 'ethnic group' when she is offered such choices for her ethnic group as 'White', 'Asian', and 'Black'? Note, just as importantly, the implication that every individual 'belongs' to an ethnic group, a lesson that the state and those social scientists involved in such survey work keep trying to teach people. What, in this context, one might ask, does 'belonging' to a 'mixed' ethnic group consist of?

That there is a clear distinction between racial categorizing and ethnic categorizing is a common refrain in the social scientific, and even biomedical, literature. Ford and Harawa (2010: 251–2), in recently proposing 'A new conceptualization of ethnicity for social epidemiologic and health equity research', try to establish a clear distinction between the two. Race, they write, is 'a designation imposed on people', linked to centuries-old attempts to divide humans into major geographical categories. 'Ethnicity, on the other hand', they write, 'encompasses the aspects of social life (e.g., culture) and personal identity that people within some collective (choose to) share'. There is considerable irony in these remarks for, far from choosing to share an ethnic identity, people are forced by survey researchers and census workers to identify themselves with one.

Rogers Brubaker (2009) has taken up this issue in a recent review of the literature on ethnicity, race, and nationalism. He reminds us that, a century ago, Max Weber warned that these are vague vernacular terms and should not be regarded as signaling fundamentally different concepts (ibid: 26–28).

That ethnicity cannot be profitably differentiated from race or ancestry should be clear from my Northern Irish and British examples. But let me give an example from my own work of many years ago (Hicks and Kertzer 1972). A group of people in Rhode Island (USA) in the 1930s took advantage of the newly enacted U.S. Indian Reorganization Act to establish their claim as members of the tribe of Narragansett Indians.[4] This surprised many people in Rhode Island who thought the last Narragansett Indian had died decades earlier. The members of this group wanted to be seen as Narragansett Indians, to be distinguished from their neighbors who were viewed, on the one hand, as African American, and on the other as a variety of 'white' ethnic groups: Italian-American, Irish-American, and Portuguese-American. Yet no one could claim that the Indian 'racial' identity was 'imposed' on them. Their problem was just the opposite: how to convince a skeptical public to accept their claim to Indian identity.

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[4] In the original article Hicks and I used the pseudonym of 'Monhegan Indians' for the Narragansetts.

On Groupism

The notion that people 'belong' to an ethnic group raises another important question. What is meant by 'group'? Cadogan (2008: 53), in a statement reflecting a common view, asserts that 'Sociologically, ethnicity may be understood as subjective belonging to a group'. It may be that sociologists would like to define ethnicity this way, but I would argue that such modes of sociological analysis are misguided. The perils of reification are evident here. In what sense is 'White' a group? Or even 'Hispanic' or 'Russian'?

Again, censuses and many national surveys use exactly this language of belonging. The Hungarian census provides a list and asks: 'Which of these nationalities do you think you belong to?' The UK census simply asks 'What is your ethnic group?' Here identity is cast as a simple self-evident trait such as age or sex. This idea of people 'belonging' to an ethnic group is promulgated by international conventions as well. Article 3 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities stipulates that 'every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such' (Simon 2012: 1381). The implication, clearly, is that whether or not people belong to a national minority is not a matter of individual choice but is rather a given. It would be hard to find a clearer example of essentialism.

Brubaker (2009: 26–28) has referred to the error commonly committed by social scientists in deploying these labels as 'groupism'. He defines this as 'the tendency to treat various categories of people as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups'. This tendency leads social scientists (but also the general public who adopt these perspectives) 'to take ethnic and racial groups and nations as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis'. Brubaker notes that such groupist thinking has somehow survived decades of academic critiques denouncing essentialism and reification.

Looking at studies of migrant adaptation, Andreas Wimmer (2007) has offered his own critique of such groupist thinking (although not using this term). He finds it to be prevalent both in the classic assimilation paradigm in migration studies—which he believes has recently seen a revival in both the U.S. and Europe—and among 'multiculturalists'. Those promoting a multicultural migration model 'assume[s] that the boundaries of culture, category/identity, and community coincide in an unproblematic way. The units of analysis are communities of immigrants from a particular country of origin'. In the assimilationist paradigm, individuals gradually weaken their ties to this ethnic identity, joining the mainstream. In the multicultural version, by contrast, ethnic persistence is seen as a good thing, to be nourished. "If they are *not* maintained and therefore 'lost' to assimilation, it is because these cultures/communities/identities have been suppressed and not given public recognition by the dominant community, otherwise they *would* have been maintained" (2007: 4–6). Wimmer does not exempt the more recent transnationalist perspective from this critique. Although transnationalist studies deterritorialize

ethnic group membership, and so view the group as stretching across national boundaries, they still picture the world, in Wimmer's (2007: 7) words, as 'made up by clearly demarcated communities of identity and shared culture'.

Wimmer draws both on the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth and on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to articulate a different approach to the study of such identities. Both men have figured in my own thinking. Over four decades ago Barth (1969) challenged what I here—borrowing from Brubaker—am labeling the groupist view of ethnicity. He called on scholars to focus not on groups as such—for they are highly problematic—but on boundaries, on the continuous process by which people distinguish among people's identities. This is a process that is situational and subject to a myriad of influences at a wide variety of social levels. It is also a process that is continuously evolving. While Barth focused primarily on the ways individuals deploy these identities from below, Bourdieu (1999) has emphasized the role that elites play in the creation and manipulation of these identities.

The generic identity of 'immigrant' can itself be profitably examined from this perspective.[5] How is 'immigrant' to be defined? A strict definition would limit the immigrant identity to those who have themselves migrated (although this too, it turns out, is not as straightforward as it might seem. I could live in Italy for many years and intend to remain there yet not be considered an immigrant by Italians. By contrast an African living in Italy for a few months and with a clear intention of returning home might well be called an immigrant). We commonly speak of second and third generation immigrants, and even fourth and fifth generation. But why should this identity be transmitted from parent to child while other kinds of identities are not?

Pitfalls of Focusing Migrant Studies on Ethnic Groups

Among the pitfalls of the central position given to ethnicity in migration studies is the tendency to see the migrant and the migrant's family as first and foremost a member of an ethnic group (or group of national origin). Rather than problematizing the importance of that identity, it tends to be taken as the person's basic point of reference. Given Wimmer's critique of transnationalism—noting how it has shared in the groupist fallacy—it is revealing that one of the best known figures in developing transnationalist approaches in anthropological studies of migration—Nina Glick Schiller—has recently tried to free migration studies from these blinders. Her 2006 *American Ethnologist* article (with colleagues Caglar and Guldbrandsen), is significantly titled 'Beyond the ethnic lens: Locality, globality, and born-again incorporation'. 'The central concern' of their article, they state, 'is to develop a conceptual framework for the study of migration, settlement, and transborder connection that is not dependent on the ethnic group as either the unit of analysis or sole object of study'. In an unusual comparative ethnographic study of a small city in each of two

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[5] Wimmer (2007: 15) also makes this point.

countries—Germany and the United States—they show how a focus on migrant participation in born-again Christian communities helps us understand migrant adjustment.

The possibility that in some social settings religion may provide a more significant identity than ethnicity in understanding the nature of migrant adaptation has, parenthetically, been raised in various European contexts by the large number of Muslim immigrants. Britain, which had previously resisted pressures to ask a religion question on its national census, came to seriously consider adding a question due in part to this concern. The new question for the 2001 census asked 'What is your religion?' followed by eight boxes, of which respondents were to tick only one.[6] Aspinall's (2000: 590) discussion of the decision to use the religion question on the 2001 British census is worth pondering:

> In Britain Muslims make up about half of all persons who are not 'white' and their numbers are growing in both absolute and relative terms (Anwar 1993). Modood has argued that this group 'must be reflected in any attempt to take some measure of ethnic minority identities and culture' (Modood et al. 1994).

Aspinall, one of the more sophisticated analysts of migration, revealingly refers here to British Muslims as a 'group', something I do not think can be justified. But the underlying point may simply be that there is as much justification in treating Muslims as a group as treating 'Arabs' or 'Whites' or 'Hispanics' as a group.

Let us return from this detour into religion to Glick Schiller et al. and their critique of transnationalism. They excoriate their fellow transnationalist scholars of migration for their *prima facie* treatment of ethnic identity as central to migrants. As they put it (2006: 613):

> scholars of migration continue to use "ethnic community" as both the object of study and the unit of analysis in migration research. The new diaspora studies perpetuate the problem by defining the unit of study as people who share an ancestry and a history of dispersal. The ethnic lens used by these scholars shapes-and, in our opinion, obscures-the diversity of migrants' relationships to their place of settlement and to other localities around the world.

Their study takes aim in particular at the tendency in migration studies to privilege large 'gateway' cities where the existence of large concentrations of migrants from the same places of origin leads to misleading characterizations of the centrality of ethnic identity in migrant adjustment. They conclude that 'nonethnic pathways [of migrant incorporation] will play a greater role in overall migrant incorporation in smaller-scale cities' (2006: 626).

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[6] This formulation of the religion question brings up many of the same issues of reification of social identities that apply to the use of ethnic categorization.

Ancestry and the Problem of Multiple Origins

As scholars have struggled with the complexities of assigning people to ethnic categories, some have argued that it is preferable to use the concept of 'ancestry' rather than that of ethnic group. In a recent examination of the impact of migration on the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population, Perez and Hirschman (2009: 12) assert that 'Ancestry'—which they define as 'the countries or regions of birth of a respondent's parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and so on'—'is a potentially objective characteristic'. They contrast this with ethnic and racial identities, which they assert are, by contrast… 'subjective claims of affiliation'.

On first sight, this claim has some appeal. After all, one might say that the fact that both of one's parents were born in Mexico is an objective 'fact', while stating that such a person is 'Hispanic' is not. Yet, if my grandparents migrated from a Jewish shtetl in lands then part of the Russian empire but now part of Poland, in what sense is labeling my ancestry as 'Russian' or 'Polish' an 'objective fact'? One might say the same for the 'Iraqi' or 'Syrian' ancestry of someone whose grandparents came from a Kurdish community before the postcolonial creation of either Iraq or Syria.

Moreover, the distinction between ancestry and ethnicity is often, in practice, elided. Consider that in the American Community Survey, which is administered each year to three million households by the U.S. Census Bureau, there is an 'ancestry' question. It reads: 'What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?' There follows a list of examples that range from 'Italian and African-American to Lebanese, Polish, and Ukrainian'. Lest there be confusion, instructions specify that "The intent of the ancestry question is not to measure the degree of attachment the respondent had to a particular ethnicity. For example, a response of 'Irish' might reflect total involvement in an 'Irish' community or only a memory of ancestors several generations removed.'" Revealingly, this question made its way to Census Bureau national surveys as a result of political lobbying. In this case, ethnic entrepreneurs representing themselves as spokesmen for various 'white ethnics'—Italian-American, Polish-American, etc.—were upset in the 1970s about the government's obsession with race and Hispanic ethnicity. They wanted government surveys to show how many Americans should be counted as part of their number (Prewitt 2013: 173–78).

Of course the other problem with trying to link ancestry to a particular ethnic identity is the fact that people's ancestry is so commonly complex. The Canadian census, which asks an ancestry question, deals with this by allowing four boxes in reply to its question: To which ethnic or cultural group (s) did this person's ancestors belong? Interestingly, the list of examples given includes such ancestral ethnic groups as 'Canadian, Italian, Chilean, and Jewish' (Bourhis 2003).

This brings us back to the question of ethnicity and religion and the futility of treating these as if they referred to different kinds of social phenomena. Here the Yugoslavian case is especially interesting. In much of the Balkans in the past insofar as people had meaningful identities that went beyond the purely local—people

frequently gave 'I'm from here' in response to questions of their identities—they identified with a religion. If we take the case of what is now Bosnia, people long identified themselves—and were identified by political officials—in just this way: Muslims, Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, or Jewish. It was only beginning in the mid-nineteenth century that the spread of nationalist ideologies led Bosnia's Christian population to begin to redefine themselves as Croats, if Catholic, or Serbs, if Orthodox (Markowitz 2007: 54). Hence religious identities were transformed into ethnic identities.

The Invention of the Hispanics

The invention of an ethnic group labeled 'Hispanic' in the United States offers a particularly telling instance of both the power of the state in creating identity for immigrants and the ways in which ethnic entrepreneurs are deeply implicated in these identity creations.

Back in the early 1970s, the size of the migrant population in the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean islands was growing. Among the largest such flows were those from Mexico and from Puerto Rico. A smaller but highly visible number of recent Cuban immigrants, post-revolution, were also settling in. At the time these immigrants had no notion that they were all part of the same cultural or ethnic group. On the contrary, early attempts at bringing together different populations of Spanish-speaking migrants failed miserably.

Linked to the question of the ethnic identity of these immigrants was the thorny question—from the U.S. Census Bureau perspective—of their racial identity, for the U.S. had categorized everyone by race since the first national census in 1790. Mexicans, the largest immigrant population, had traditionally been categorized as 'white'. In fact, an attempt by the Census Bureau in 1930 to create a separate Mexican 'race' was denounced by representatives of the Mexican-origin population in the U.S. and so Mexicans reverted to 'whites' in the following census (Schor 2005: 92). But by the 1970s some Mexican-American ethnic organizations were calling on the Census Bureau to recognize Latin American immigrants and their descendants as a separate, Brown race. The Bureau called on three expert anthropologists to study the proposal, yet they failed to reach agreement. One of the three anthropologists, as later described by a census official, 'deemed [the Spanish Origin] a separate race, especially if you considered the Mexican Americans ... but two others found them to be white, especially if you considered Cubans in Florida'.[7] The proposal to introduce a new, Spanish-origin 'race' also met resistance from political representatives of other 'racial' groups—African-American, native American, and Asians—who feared that adding the choice of 'Spanish-origin' as a race would diminish their numbers and hence their political clout.

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[7] Quoted by Mora (2014: 9). This account is based on Mora's article.

Given this situation, the Census officials decided that it would be safer to treat Latin American origin as an ethnic question rather than a racial question. The final decisions were made only after a new advisory body was created composed in part of ethnic activists who were considered to represent these Latin American origin populations. A new ethnic identity was invented, Hispanic, to incorporate (in an only very imprecisely defined way) all those of Latin American and Caribbean origin from Spanish-origin countries.

Although earlier Mexican immigrants and their descendants had opposed being identified together with others with whom they saw little in common—Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Argentinians, etc.—ethnic entrepreneurs now came to realize the major political and economic benefits to be derived from creating this omnibus Hispanic identity. For example, the Mexican-American political lobbying group, La Raza, transformed itself into a Hispanic identity group. Overnight, it went from representing only immigrants of Mexican descent to claiming it spoke for a population that, they argued, exceeded in size America's preeminent minority population, African-Americans (Mora 2014: 17). The claim that this newly fabricated 'group' is huge and growing is now a common one. In a typical recent report, we are told that 'Hispanics are the nation's largest minority group'. The same report—by a major U.S. survey organization—goes on to say that 'At more than 50 million strong, they make up 16% of the U.S. population now, and by some projections, that share will rise to nearly 30% by mid-century' (Pew Hispanic Center 2012: 11). Curiously, the same survey report (ibid.: 6) revealed that less than a quarter of all those identified in the survey as 'Hispanics' actually said they typically identified themselves that way (or as 'Latinos', the other common pan-ethnic label, although one more closely linked to Mexican-Americans).

One might think that social scientists, able to dispassionately deconstruct this political process, would retain a critical perspective on these artificial identities. Yet in practice the overwhelming proportion not only of social scientific work but even work done in public health—and, indeed, in epidemiology—acts as if such a 'group' existed and that, in the biomedical case, it had some kind of genetic—or at least environmental—unity.

Even those who are conscious of the problem seem to be unable to help themselves in slipping into fuzzy thinking. A 2014 study published in the *American Review of Public Administration* (Visser 2014: 237), for example, notes that 'a preference for ethnic group identification has persisted among Hispanics, despite increasing rates of interethnic and interracial marriages as well as increasing levels of assimilation in the United States'. Yet such a formulation assumes exactly that which cannot be assumed, that there is an *a priori* population 'Hispanic'. The article's topic, the 'Hispanic undercount in United States census surveys', itself illustrates the problem: how can one measure an 'undercount' without a notion that there is some objectively existing set of individuals out there in the population to be counted?

The problem only becomes more severe when the inevitable slippage occurs and the migration analyst moves from the use of Hispanic as an identity to the notion that people having such an identity are part of a Hispanic 'community'.

One commonly finds such statements in survey reports as the following: 'Survey responses are further complicated by the fact that the Latino population is a very heterogeneous one, and groups within the Latino community might have widely varying interpretations of racial and ethnic categories and their meaning' (Campbell and Rogalin 2006: 1033). Having invented the ethnic identity of Hispanic, social scientists are now writing as if there were such a thing as a Hispanic 'community'.

This kind of hazy thinking about migrant identities has many significant political consequences. There are few more charged issues in Europe today than the size of different immigrant flows into one's country. The threat posed by an influx of 'hordes' of foreigners who do not share the country's values is a common refrain in nativist movements and among right-wing politicians. This makes fuzzy thinking about migrant identity all the more dangerous.

In this context, what are we to make of such common claims as the following, here offered by perhaps the most prestigious source of scientific analysis in the U.S.?

> According to National Research Council projections [made in the late 1990s], by the year 2050, America's Latino and Asian populations are expected to triple, constituting about 25% and 8% of the U.S. population, respectively (Lee and Bean 2004: 221–22).

Consider that the same demographic study that cited this projection noted that by the third generation, over half of all 'Latinos' married 'whites'. Here there are multiple potential sources of confusion, for according to the census the former is an ethnicity and the latter is a race. Indeed, most Hispanics in the U.S. answer the race question by saying that they are 'white'. However, from the context it seems clear that what is meant is that most third-generation Hispanics marry non-Hispanics. And given intermarriage rates (similar for Asian immigrants to the U.S.), one might as well state that in the year 2100 the great majority of Americans will be either 'Hispanic' or 'Asian'. This is exactly the place where, following a logic best described as *reductio ad absurdum*, much of the migration literature seems to be taking us.

Conclusion

The study of migration is intimately tied to the use of identity categories. In the simplest and most direct use of such categorization, demographers calculate the number of migrants in a particular geopolitical destination by their country of origin. Yet from this relatively straightforward –though far from unproblematic– means of identifying people, it proves a short step to something very different as new identity categories are invented (e.g., Hispanic) and old identity categories are used to refer to individuals who themselves are not migrants at all (e.g., third-generation Italian-American). People's identities are multiple, complex, situational, and not stable over time. They are influenced both by state practices and ethnic and racial

entrepreneurs. While many scholars recognize this at a theoretical level, in their empirical migration research they continue to embrace a much less nuanced understanding of migrant identity.

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Part II
Building the Nation through Frontiers and Classifications

The Uninvited Migrant, the 'Autochtoon' and the 'Allochtoon' in the Netherlands

Jeroen Doomernik

Introduction

This chapter discusses the process by which the Dutch statistical terms 'autochtoon' and 'allochtoon' turned from neutral tools with which to monitor the effects of integration policies into tools for populist rhetoric. This is done by an analysis of parliamentary minutes and political debates from the past decade and a half. After introducing the Netherlands as a country of immigration, and discussing the country's tradition of dealing with denominational diversity, the genesis of the terms 'autochtoon' and 'allochtoon' is presented. From this it becomes clear why and how especially the second one of this dichotomous couple, denoting foreign origins, is very attractive for populist political use. Following that section, it is tentatively proposed that the internal 'bordering' that is being performed in this manner is related to uncertainties resulting from European integration, for instance in the field of joint asylum and refugee policies, which so far is not matched by a nation-building component.

Going around Europe looking at what is reported in the national media, the likelihood is considerable to hear reference being made to people who are unlike 'us'. This then either pertains to those who take advantage (e.g. political elites in the national capital or in Brussels) of our naivety or to those who should not be here in the first place (Doomernik 2014). Looking a little closer it becomes clear that the precise identity of this second category is puzzling. Generally speaking the subjects are immigrants and their descendants yet the words employed to identify them can be very different. This, moreover, is not merely (if at all) a matter of semantics but one of substance: not just the terms used differ, but actual definitions differ too. Consider the common use of the words foreigner, immigrant, *allochtoon*, or guest

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worker for residents with roots elsewhere or refugee, illegal migrant, or asylum seeker for those who currently arrive uninvited and hoping to resettle. Leaving aside the second set of terms for the moment, the main aim of this chapter is to explore the first set and to investigate how 'objective' terms can be turned into powerful political tools by certain – usually populist – political actors. The exploration starts in the Dutch context.

The 'Others' in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has not always been home to a homogenous Dutch people. After the country's independence from Spain in 1648, the Dutch nation could only exist and survive by considerable tolerance towards religious pluralism. This culminated during the twentieth century in what Lijphart (1968) identified as a consociational democracy. The term refers to a nation that contains parallel societies, geographically segregated to varying extents, and in any case with little social interaction. All denominations (religious and political) thus were self-contained. Popularly the image of pillars was often used (each a denomination) that only touch each other (in the national state institutions such a parliament) in an overarching structure (like a roof). Each 'pillar' had its own political party and social infrastructure like schools, universities, labour unions, medical facilities, media and such. Access on an equal footing to the state's scarce resources guaranteed peaceful co-existence and continuity. This era came to its end with the assent of previously unknown levels of wealth and education and a resultant distance to religion and ideology in the 1970s. With few exceptions, the Dutch no longer consider it relevant whether their neighbours or colleagues subscribe to Communist, Social Democrat, Roman Catholic or Protestant convictions, whereas earlier the social distances between these denominations had been virtually insurmountable. In other words, 'the others' that most Dutch people were most keenly aware of in those days of limited international travel were actually part of 'us' as a nation at the same time.

Since this onset of secularization, the protagonists in the division between 'us' and 'them' have dramatically changed. Of course, the country had seen the arrival and settlement of large numbers of international migrants arriving more or less continuously since the end of the Second World War (not suggesting there had not been significant international migration during earlier periods). Early on in most cases this did not yet mean that 'others' had arrived, especially not if these migrants had been part of Dutch colonial elites. However, other immigrants did bring new cultures and denominations into the country. Their social belonging was less self-evident but since they arrived in response to labour market needs, at the time this did not give rise to political concerns. This not immediately changed once these workers started to bring over their family members. The government's policy focus was inclusive. The past decade and a half this has changed. Considerable electoral support has become available for politicians who point out imported deviation from the Dutch main stream. Among those Islam is the most frequently invoked. This goes

hand in hand with exclusionary rhetoric and policies; in Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002) terms (b)ordering and 'othering' and a reshaping of what Geddes (2005) calls conceptual borders. This happens wilfully by political entrepreneurs. And it also is a paradoxical outcome of government's categorization for the benefit of inclusionary migrant policies.

More or less concurrently to secularization Dutch territorial borders lost most of their meaning as a consequence of European integration. Only the seaports and Schiphol airport (Amsterdam) are still actively guarded borders because they are gates of entry for arrivals from outside the Schengen area (the European Union's member states minus the United Kingdom and Ireland, but plus Switzerland, Iceland and Norway). The gradual expansion of this area of free internal mobility has meant that presently many migrants are EU-nationals and, as a consequence, fewer are third-country nationals for whom a restrictive regime applies. Yet more and more efforts are put into keeping out unwanted third country nationals. The borders surrounding the Schengen area obviously have gained relevance as a result. However, though in a certain way these borders are also Dutch, they have little political connection to Dutch sovereignty. This presently is primarily exercised at virtual administrative borders through admission, residence and naturalization policies. In other words: governing admission to the system has replaced admission to the territory as such (cf. Geddes 2005).

As we shall see, prospective immigrants who are to be excluded from admission, at least as much as international legal obligations allow, are those who are not EU-nationals, and whose arrival does not clearly serve an economic purpose. Among those a considerable proportion are ethnically the same as those long-term residents and Dutch citizens of immigrant background who are the subjects of 'othering' by 'conceptual borders'.

Next we describe and analyse the processes by which this reordering, 'reothering' and re-shifting of membership in the Dutch nation takes place; who might be eligible to belong; and who *dejure* belongs but socially speaking is on the outside regardless? In addition, we aim to investigate the role of intensifying bordering practices at Europe's outer perimeter might be playing in this. The reasoning will be much in line with that of Geddes (2005) who identifies close connections between European economic and political integration whilst access to welfare systems and labour markets to an important degree remain national, and the salience of external borders. Geddes furthermore argues that this in a sense means that borders within the nation – those of an organizational and conceptual nature – stay important or even gain in significance. Central in his argument stands the distinction between those who are excluded and included by admission policies. After showing how this works out in the Dutch case, we take Geddes reasoning a few steps further by discussing the effects of specific institutional arrangements that allow for the defining of borders *within* the nation's population; i.e. *not* those between nationals and aliens. The Dutch case may have its specific characteristics but simultaneously, so it is suggested here, is illustrative for virtually universal mechanisms. Indeed, it is postulated that processes of integration of diverse populations (like the European area of Freedom, Security and Justice) almost by definition demand an increased 'othering'

of those who are not partners in such a project. As Karyotis (2007) argues this takes concrete shape in a performative manner at the European borders. Following Elias' (2008) theoretical perspective or Anderson's (2006) reasoning one might also see this as a first step in a process of European nation building induced by instrumental collaboration for defensive, economic and political reasons. On an empirical level counter evidence most certainly is not difficult to find. In any event: as long as Europeans cannot be sure about who they are as 'a nation' at least it is helpful for them to know whom they are not. Here too the scope and implications of the article aim beyond the Dutch case.

As a backdrop against which these developments can be described in detail first of all a brief overview of immigration to the Netherlands of the past half century is given.

The Netherlands as a Country of Immigration

World War II left Europe's colonial powers weakened and in hindsight it was clear that their empires were drawing to a close. The Dutch empire was no exception. In 1943 the Japanese invaded the Dutch East Indies. The occupation that followed laid bare the inability of the Dutch to exercise their colonial rule and after the War cries for independence became loud. Initial attempts to counter such development led to an uprising, which the deployment of Dutch troops could not crush. By 1949 Indonesian independence had become inevitable. Not all of this new nation's inhabitants were equally happy with this outcome and those people preferred to move to the former motherland. They had been members of the Indonesian middle classes, belonging to or being associated with the Dutch ruling elite. From the Dutch perspective, their arrival was seen as unexpected, an inflow of people with a tropical background, but also as a logical consequence of the end of an era. In official discourse these immigrants were referred to as 'repatriates' suggesting they all had been born in the Netherlands, which many were not (Lucassen and Penninx 1997).

After Indonesia became independent, only Suriname and some Caribbean Islands were left as territorial remnants of the colonial past. From 1954 these had been full parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and until today this holds true for the islands Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saint Maarten, Saba, and Saint Eustacius. Suriname gained its independence in 1975, in the process of which a large section of the Surinamese population moved to the Netherlands. Their numbers rose further during the 5 years following independence. During that interim period Surinamese citizens could still opt for Dutch citizenship provided they moved to the 'motherland' before late 1980. By that a third or more of all Surinamese people had resettled in the Netherlands, predominantly in the larger cities (van Amersfoort and van Niekerk 2006; Van Amersfoort 2011; Vezzoli 2015).

Once the Netherlands had economically recovered from the devastations of the Second World War, demands on the labour market were such that employers began looking for temporary workers abroad. Between 1960 and 1970 their recruitment

became the subject of the bilateral agreements with a number of Mediterranean countries. Although recruitment first focussed on countries on the European shores the largest numbers of foreign workers ultimately arrived from Turkey and Morocco. The migration of these workers, also referred to as 'guest workers' came to its end as a result the oil crisis of 1973 (Penninx et al. 1994: 10). Implicitly it was taken for granted that these 'guests' would return home once they were no longer needed. However, this did not happen to any major extent. Instead immigration continued, this time of the family members of these labour migrants. Compared to the governments of other states, notably Germany, who had similarly imported 'guest workers' the Dutch relatively early, i.e. by the end of the 1970s, realized that many migrants had settled and therefore their integration should be facilitated. In concrete terms this meant they should have easy access to Dutch citizenship so they could exercise all necessary rights. Naturalization was offered after 5 years of legal residence and few other conditions had to be fulfilled. It also meant that, following the Dutch 'pillarization' tradition they should be encouraged to retain their own culture and religion. On an equal footing with other denominations this allowed for the creation of publically funded schools and also, albeit it small, broadcasting corporations for Muslims and other new religions. Religious organizations were furthermore encouraged to join consultative bodies appointed by national and local governments.

Until the mid 1980s Dutch immigration first and foremost had its origin in these (post) colonial and 'guest worker' experiences. Including its offspring this immigration resulted in sizeable ethnic communities. However, from the second half of the 1980s continuing immigration from these sources became superseded, at least in the public's perception, by a rapidly diversifying immigration of refugees and asylum seekers. Those migrants arrived from many parts of the less developed world and also from the disintegrating and civil war-torn Yugoslav Republic. This immigration stayed dominant during the whole of the 1990s, only to lose its significance after the introduction of a strict new alien's law in 2001 (Vreemdelingenwet 2000).

On January 1, 2015 4372 thousand residents have their roots in Indonesia; 348 thousand in Suriname; 396 thousand in Turkey and 375 thousand in Morocco. The immigration of people seeking refuge in the 1990s added numerous smaller communities. Overall, in 2016, 1.9 million people who live in the Netherlands are immigrants (foreign born) (constituting 11% of an overall population of 17 million). Adding their offspring 22% of the Dutch population has foreign roots, or in the terms normally used in Dutch public discourse, this is the size of the *allochtonous* population (something we return to later on) (figures from CBS Statline 2015 and 2016).

Categories of Native and Foreign

It seems safe to postulate that one of the widest windows through which to see into the heart of a nation is framed by its population statistics because these signify who is considered to be of political concern and for which particular reason. Countries in

which membership traditionally has been characterized by *ius sanguinis* (the law of the blood) assume ethnic homogeneity as the norm. Citizens are all those who are children of citizens and those who are not tend to be discouraged from naturalization. Statistics reflect this by a primary distinction between nationals and foreigners or aliens (Fassmann 2009). Citizenship based on ethnic criteria almost by definition makes it difficult to incorporate newcomers with clearly different ethnic features. Under those circumstances immigrants for prolonged periods of time and to a large degree, indeed are the equivalent to 'foreigners' and thus enumerated in the population statistics. In fact, it is not unusual for the children of immigrants to also (still) be among the foreign part of the population because they too inherit the nationality of their parents. Paradoxically, by the same principle it is quite possible for immigrants to escape enumeration if they are and always have been co-ethnics (and de facto nationals), perhaps even regardless of cultural or linguistic proximity to the 'fatherland'. The millions of *Aussiedler* (ethnic Germans who are descendants of migrants who left Germany for Eastern European destinations two centuries ago) freely resettling in Germany or Jews 'returning' to Israel are well-known cases in point (Doomernik 1997). Another example is found in Japan, a nation virtually closed to foreign settlers but comparatively open towards Peruvian and Brazilian immigrants who are descendants of emigrants who left for Latin America several generations ago (Tsuda 2003).

Nations whose nationality law is based on the notion of *ius soli* (or law of the land) define membership according to place of birth. This usually has a more inclusive effect than *ius sanguinis*. Indeed, countries that are typical representatives of this principle do collect statistics based on immigration (foreign born persons) and on nationality but descendants of migrants as a rule are not traceable in the population statistics (Fassmann 2009). They thus are an unknown quantity.

When the Dutch government developed its migrant integration policies in the early 1980s, as mentioned, these included easy naturalization. At the same time the government expressed an interest in the ability to monitor the long-term effects – i.e. into the second generation – of its integration efforts. This necessitated the introduction of descend as a statistical marker. To this end the concept of *allochtoon* was developed. The term gained currency once the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) embraced it in a milestone report of 1989 titled *Allochtonenbeleid* (Allochtoon Policy) (Jacobs and Rea 2012). The *allochtonous* are currently defined as those residents who are foreign born and has at least one parent who likewise is born elsewhere or, if born in the Netherlands, have at least one parent to whom this applies (Ibid.). To be sure: nationality is of no relevance. Indeed, the large majority of the allochtonous population are Dutch nationals (and often also of the country they or their parents came from). By default, those who are not *allochtoon* are the *autochtonous*. Commonly this applies to all who are Dutch nationals of Dutch native extraction but could and undoubtedly will include persons who are legally speaking aliens.

Not all immigrant groups were deemed to be in need of government support so a further distinction was made between people of western and non-western origin. Westerners are Europeans and others from industrialized countries (for historical

reasons including Indonesia). Non-western *allochtonen* are those who originate from the less developed parts of the world.

This conception of *allochtony* introduces ethnicity in population statistics but at the same time does so in an imprecise way. For instance, migrants and their children who arrived from Kurdistan or who fled Turkey because they belonged to the Armenian or Assyrian minorities are all labelled as 'Turkish'. 'Moroccan' likewise includes people with roots in the Rif Mountains as well as those stemming from the Arab speaking part of the nation. 'Surinamese' is a label under which a heterogeneous people with African, native Indian, Dutch and Asian roots can be found. Needless to say ethnic groups as identified for Dutch policy purposes are also in other ways highly diverse in character and hence also have members with widely differing needs for government attention and support.

Furthermore, compared to population counts that are only based on place of birth of the enumerated individual, the notion of *allochtoon* unavoidably inflates the category of persons in (potential) need of government concern. As mentioned, 1.8 million people or eleven per cent of the Dutch population are immigrants. Of those 723 thousand are of western origin. The remaining 1.1 million migrants were born in a non-western country. Crucial to note is that when we speak about these migrants plus their children in terms of *allochtoon* the category all of a sudden doubles in size. Given the fact that having a single foreign-born parent already meets the criteria of the definition it automatically includes the offspring of exogamous marriages, relationships which paradoxically suggest substantial social integration.

In current Dutch political discourse, the distinctions between western and non-western; migrants and Dutch-born; nationals and foreigners; settlers and temporary migrants; EU nationals and third country nationals; and other possible significant distinctions are more often than not surrendered to the catch-all term *allochtoon*. Obviously, it is not at all easy to then clearly know which speaker is referring to what precisely when (s)he invokes that term. Yet, to this author and others (e.g. Geschiere 2009) it is abundantly clear that the term has gradually moved from being a neutral instrument of benign inclusion to one denoting lacking integration and even to one suitable for pejorative usage. Or as Jacobs and Rea (2012: 46) note "It was gradually bestowed with a connotation of the 'non-white non-European Other'". In effect, while they constitute the majority within this category, it also gradually has become a label for the Turkish and Moroccan immigrants and their children who, by and large, constitute the Dutch Muslim community (see also Geschiere 2009: 151). This imprecise use is especially noticeable in the popular media but is also found in political discussions (Jacobs and Rea 2012: 45). For these reasons, and fearful of possible (further) stigmatizing effects, the Council for Societal Development (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, RMO) proposed to the Dutch government (in 2012) to limit the use of ethnic categorization to an absolute minimum. Meanwhile, on their own initiative several municipal governments have in recent years decided to ban the word *allochtoon* from their political deliberations, official documents and other communications. Some other actors, in contrast, are very adamant in their claim that it is of great societal importance to keep using this term. To this we turn next.

Populist Discourse and the *Allochtoon*

Added to the above observations on the diffuse, inflationary and possibly stigmatizing nature of the concept *allochtoon* should be some on the ascent of populist political parties in the Netherlands. In the run-up to the general elections of May 2002 a charismatic Jack of many trades founded a new political party. This was Pim Fortuyn who, named the party after himself (Lijst Pim Fortuyn or LPF). One of the issues he was particularly vocal about and which resonated strongly with a considerable part of the electorate was Islam, immigration and integration. Islam he called a backward culture. Furthermore, he advocated a total ban on further immigration (surprisingly he proposed to combine firmly closed borders with a general amnesty for irregular residents, especially failed asylum seekers). Nine days before the general elections, Fortuyn was assassinated by an animal rights' activist (who took offence against Fortuyn's proclaimed love for fur). Nevertheless, or perhaps also as a consequence of this murder, for the public shock by it had been large, the LPF landed a landslide electoral victory (resulting in 26 out of 150 available parliamentary seats). The coalition government that was subsequently formed included a number of LPF ministers. It was not long-lived: after ninety days the government resigned. In the elections that followed, the party itself dwindled but its short-lived success had made clear to many mainstream politicians that it might be wise to echo Fortuyn's sentiments. Notably Geert Wilders, a member of parliament since 1997 for the Liberal Party (VVD, Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie), adopted a number of Fortuyn's opinions. Together with his own explicit refusal to consider Turkish membership in the European Union these put him at odds with the VVD's line and subsequently, in 2004, he left the party while retaining his seat in parliament. He entered the 2006 general elections with his own party, de Partij voor de Vrijheid PVV (Freedom Party). It gained nine parliamentary seats. Since then Wilders can be quoted making statements like: 'Islam is not a religion but an evil ideology'; 'Mein Kampf is outlawed – if that's justified so should be the Quran which likewise is a fascist book'; 'because they amount to pollution there should be a tax on headscarves'; 'all criminal Muslims should be expelled'. Wilders and his party, furthermore, call vandalism and crime by young Moroccans 'street terrorism', mosques are 'hate palaces', and Islam is a 'desert ideology'. During a March 2010 press conference in which he once more underscored his refusal to accept Turkish membership in the EU 'because it would mean more immigration from the Islamic culture' he referred to the Turkish prime minister as a 'total freak'.[1] On the same occasion he informed the audience that he prefers to have no further mosques and would applaud the abolition of Islamic schools.

On the night of the 2014 municipal elections Wilders addressed a crowd of supporters in The Hague and posed three questions, each to be answered with 'more' or

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[1] As recalled on the party's website on 13 September 2016: https://www.pvv.nl/index.php/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/9247-video-inbreng-geert-wilders-debat-over-de-nasleep-van-de-legercoup-in-turkije.html

'less'. It was obvious the crowd was set up to cry 'less' on the first two questions. The third question was 'do you want in this city and in this country more or less [i.e. fewer] Moroccans?' The crowd yelled: 'less, less'.[2] In response to these yells Wilders promised that he 'would fix this'. To be sure: to any Dutch observer it was clear the PVV leader was not referring to Moroccan nationals, i.e. non-nationals, but to all residents who are Moroccan in the allochtonous sense.

It should be added that among the allochtonous groups 'the Moroccans' are most frequently subjected to negative stereotyping: by the PVV, in the popular media and by segments of the population at large (Van Heelsum 2014). The relatively high educational drop-out rates for young men, their overrepresentation in certain types of crime (Van der Laan et al. 2014), relatively highest unemployment rate (Huijnk 2014: 45) and concentrated presence in certain parts of the main cities make them the easiest targets for scapegoating.

The PVV as a party stands not alone in its scepticism towards immigration and its disdain for Islam but tends to phrase its views less veiled and more bluntly than most others, including the more or less prominent public intellectuals who participate in debates on the place of Islam in society. Frequently voiced in public debate, for instance, is an assumed intolerance among Muslims towards homosexuals and disregard of gender equality and it is then proposed their religion is in need of a reformation (like Christianity is said to have needed to become modern) (Mepschen et al. 2010). Dutch morality is more and more conceived in secular terms (Kennedy and Zwemer 2010: 266) adding to the moral high ground claimed by those who see adhering to a religion in general and to Islam in particular as backward or ignorant.

The rhetoric of the PVV intimately links Islam as an assumed threat to modern society with the *allochtoon* in general as a person who is much more prone to crime and a subscriber to different – i.e. non-Dutch – norms and values. For this the connection with young Moroccans is convenient to make.

Whenever doubt arises about the present value of the duo *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* as voiced for instance by the RMO (2012) the PVV is among the first to campaign for its continued use. To quote a PVV parliamentarian on the need for such a widened definition into the third generation: 'Non-western *allochtones* are still overrepresented in the crime figures. Next we won't see that anymore because they'll be registered as autochtoon. (…) Measuring is knowing.' (Volkskrant 29 June 2011).

On 3 July 2014 PVV parliamentarian De Graaf entered a motion in which he requested the government to see to it that the definition of *allochtoon* will not only include the third but also the fourth generation because 'specific third and fourth generation migrant groups are disproportionally represented in [sic] high school drop-out, crime and welfare dependency'.[3]

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaB75uznT8o, last accessed 7 July 2015.

[3] Tweede Kamer, Vergaderjaar 2013–2014, 32824, Nr.69. Motion rejected by a wide majority.

Earlier, in February 2008 its parliamentarians Fritsma and Wilders asked the following questions to the Minister of Justice (who already then had proposed to abandon the term 'allochtoon'):

1. Is it correct you want to ban the words 'allochtoon' and 'autochtoon' from our language? If so:
2. Do you expect the misery caused by many 'allochtonen' for Dutch society to go away if we simply stop using these words?
3. Why do you not want to make the distinction between 'autochtoon – allochtoon' even though the distinction clearly is highly relevant when it comes to crime, street terror, welfare dependency and such?
4. Could the Cabinet stop its politically correct drivelling and move to deal with the many problems that, whatever way looked at are largely connected to immigration/integration? If not, why not?[4]

In June 2010 general elections took place. By then support for the PVV had become considerable and its results had come close to those attained by the LPF in 2002: with 23 seats the PVV had become the third largest party in parliament. Wilders' party remained outside the new coalition government, which was built upon a parliamentarian minority. Following the strategy successfully tested by the Danish People's Party in the decade before, the PVV offered to tolerate and support the new government in return for a substantial say in the coalition agreement. This deal was struck and explains, at least to a large extent, why the government pursued such goals as:

– renegotiating EU law pertaining to family migration (in order to raise the legal age for bringing in a spouse and to introduce integration requirements as a condition for a residence permit);
– a ban on burka wearing;
– discouragement of multiple nationalities;
– naturalization becomes the crown upon successful integration;
– revoking nationality acquired through naturalization in case of serious criminal conduct;
– naturalization conditional on integration (e.g. professional experience, income level or educational attainments);
– turning illegal residence into a crime or offence;
– barring anyone who at any point irregularly resided in the country from ever receiving a residence permit;
– reduce by half immigration from non-western countries.

The latter point is particularly interesting because the PVV motivated this ambition by the need to curtail 'mass immigration' in general and that of Muslims in particular. At the same time, as mentioned, immigration that might be subjected to restriction stood (and still stands today) at a low level because most migrants are EU-nationals (and approximately only a fifth of all immigrants has a non-western

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[4] Published on the PVV's website. http://pvv.nl/index.php/home-mainmenu-1/11-kamervragen/889-voorstel-om-term-qallochtoonq-te-schrappen-kamervragen.html, posted 25 February 2008, accessed 20 October 2011. Author's translation.

nationality) (see Jennissen 2014: 25). Whether this can appropriately be called 'mass immigration' stands open to interpretation. It also is a matter of appreciation whether it is justified to define uninvited migrants who end up in an irregular situation as people who are criminals, and as people who by definition can never be deserving of a residence permit. Yet, the conclusion seems justified that the construction of an 'enemy' or problematic others needs little relationship to reality. It seems, moreover, typical for the discourse employed by the PVV to use language the recipient will have his/her own associations with instead of trying to be as precise as possible in defining political issues. This, obviously, makes it hard to criticize Wilders and his fellow party representatives who might easily evade fact-based discussions by disclaiming the assumed meaning of such statements. More commonly, however, the PVV simply refuses to react to any criticism and Wilders routinely ignores calls for public debate.

As mentioned earlier, the term *allochtoon* tends to be used in an inaccurate and generalizing manner both inside and outside the political sphere, usually by invoking the overall term when actually meaning to remark upon non-western allochtonous people. To be sure, Wilders himself not usually makes this mistake. However, even though he normally speaks about non-western *allochtonen* he then implicitly conflates them with the Muslims among them. The fine differentiation between western and non-western is lost on other PVV parliamentarians. Two of those formulated the following question to the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sports (following up on media reports about nurses failing to report violent abuse they are subjected to):

> Is it correct that cultural differences often are the cause of violent incidents? What will you do to protect nurses against allochtonen who could not care less about our norms and values?[5]

It is clear the term serves the PVVs purpose. As we saw, not only does it argue against its ban from public discussions, the PVV proposes to expand the definition of the *allochtoon* by adding additional generations.

Already on the basis of the present definition Statistics Netherlands predicts that by 2050 the Netherlands is going to be home to five million *allochtonen* (30% of the total population) (Garssen and Van Duin 2009). By adding the third generation this percentage is set to grow significantly. If at the same time the *allochtoon* remains associated with maladjustment, crime and 'street terror' this would seem a path towards social disintegration and conflict on an unprecedented scale – at least for the Netherlands.

In the spring of 2012, the Freedom Party withdrew its support of the coalition government. The argument was that it would not be made responsible for sizeable cuts in the national budget. New elections followed and in November 2012 a new government was installed, this time consisting of Liberals and Social Democrats. Their stated ambition was to run a pragmatic course. Sense then discussions on Islam and allochtonous people has made way for economic concerns resulting from the Euro crisis and the high price the Dutch nation is likely to pay for the survival of

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[5] Kamervraag 2011Z18965 (vergaderjaar 2011–2012)

the Eurozone. This challenge overshadows others although it did not keep Wilders from holding his 'fewer Moroccans' speech.

Effects of European Integration

Up until 1973 migration regulation in the Netherlands was relatively easy going and legal regularization of migrants without residence or work permits was common practice. With time the government pursued a more restrictive immigration policy but there remained due consideration for humanitarian principles and a generous interpretation of international legal obligations. In effect few obstacles where put in the way of family migration and the arrival of refugees. This relatively welcoming position gradually shifted. Europe became an area of justice, freedom and security (to recall a mantra coined by the European Commission) with no internal limits to mobility of all kinds. While this process developed, it necessitated a joint European position towards the rest of the world: a position that had to be based upon shared interests. The result was, among other things, a common immigration and asylum policies (an ambition laid down in the 1998 Amsterdam Treaty). Looking at what was achieved in terms of those common policies by May 2004 and what is in existence at present, the conclusion is that harmonization has focused on joint restrictions, border enforcement, and off-shoring of refugee protection (Tsolakis and Van Selm 2004). Joint positions on how to be attractive to immigrants (even the Blue Card never really got off the ground) (Doomernik et al. 2009) or to offer optimal protection to refugees on EU territory are meanwhile rare. Discussions on 'burden sharing' between member states lead nowhere. The only truly progressive policies are those towards third country long-term residents who have been granted uniform rights throughout the Union, and uniformed rights to family migration. Emphasis, in other words, is on cordoning-off the joint EU territory and defining those who are outside it as suspects of possible border transgression. For those who uninvited attempt to get in across the highly visible fences around Ceuta and Melilla such terms as bogus asylum seekers, economic refugees, and illegal migrants are invoked. Legally inaccurate as these terms may be their meaning is powerful and thus legitimizes extraordinary control measures. Almost any intervention seems permissible in order to keep out uninvited migrants even when it is obvious that these are people who perfectly fit the definition of the Refugee Convention. There is a wealth of literature on the securitization of migration in political, rhetorical and instrumental terms demonstrating this (e.g. Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2006; Van Houtum 2010). Borders are no longer pragmatically managed but 'performed' (Green 2010). Those who manage to get in in spite of these measures and do not successfully claim for asylum (or never apply in the first place) find themselves not only excluded in legal terms but often, and definitely in the Dutch case, also to such a practical extent that their lives become precarious (Doomernik 2008).

   These observations are generally true for all EU member states although with the caveat that some are (or were until recently) much more open towards uninvited

newcomers than others. Yet the salience of internal 'bordering' practices generally seems to be growing (Doomernik and Jandl 2008a, b). Some of those are a direct reflection of the hurdles imposed on prospective migrants from third countries and function as internal migration controls at the gates of the welfare state. This aim is much in line with Geddes' (2005) observation that drawing of borders in this respect serves to differentiate between 'useful migrants' and those who are unlikely to be so. Specific for the Dutch case, is that this 'bordering' is not limited to territorial and organizational boundaries but has also found a translation in the folds of society's fabric and this is done by institutionalized means: *de allochtoon.* The term seems to have become the tool for comprehensive 'othering' while its future is unclear. The concept has found little resonance elsewhere in Europe – with the exception of Flanders (Jacobs and Rea 2012) – albeit the 'race' concept used in the British census comes close. Other nations have their own terms by which to signify the 'others'. Even though these too may be derived from official categorization (e.g. by calling a person a foreigner with a German passport) this is not based on institutionalized practice.

Conclusion

Allochtoon was originally devised to target policy efforts and the scientific evaluation of policy outcomes. Over the years, as integration progresses the relevance of being born abroad, and especially of having foreign born parents, normally loses salience. By furthermore including children born out of exogenous relationships (e.g. a Dutch mother and a father of non-western origin) it is assumed that the 'foreign' parent's ethnic or other traits are of greater consequence for the child's identity and societal position than those of the other parent. Obviously this is a problematic assumption. Furthermore, this practice leads to an inflation of the perceived number of people in a disadvantaged position. In other words, where in policy terms and for scientific evaluation the relevance of the distinction between *autochtoon* and *allochtoon* decreases, the category keeps growing in size.

The fact that the size of the *allochtonous* part of the Dutch population increases is convenient for populist political rhetoric for it offers the possibility to identify 'a growing problem'. It is not without reason that the Freedom Party proposes to include the third generation of immigrants. Again: the objective justification for identifying societal problems and attaching those to persons of distant foreign origin becomes smaller while the 'objective' figures proof differently. Populist framing has furthermore associated these growing numbers with a very specific threat: that of an Islamic fifth column already present within Dutch society and to which many more Muslims are added who arrive uninvited in waves of 'mass immigration'.

Geddes (2005) points at the connections between several types of borders; among those that define the nation state and its institutions and those that encircle the joint European Union's territory. On the basis of the Dutch experience we might ask whether there is yet another connection. Might not the loss of visible territorial

borders, the loss of visible sovereignty, and hence the connection between the political and the practical be fertile soil for those populists who stress the need to defend the nation to threats from elsewhere and – having failed to do so earlier – now from within as well?

Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002) show by what means 'othering', ordering and bordering are shaped and they convincingly argue that these are dynamic processes. As far as bordering serves administrative and fiscal purposes their presence and function do not pose great riddles. This is not a given when we ask why the 'othering' within societies gains in relevance and follows very particular lines. Nor is it self-evident that the outside borders of Europe should be maintained in such a visible and militant manner as currently is the case, unless the aim is to signify a safe inside versus an unsafe outside. In effect they underscore who are the insiders and who are the outsiders and thus who 'we' are as a European 'nation'. Nation building is not achieved overnight but as Anderson (2006) and Elias (2008) demonstrate nevertheless is a social process that can be made to happen, on purpose by political elites, or as an outcome of joint practices. From that perspective, it does not seem far-fetched to understand the external and internal 'othering' that currently is taking place both as a symptom and perhaps in a perverted way as a contributor to European nation building. For as long as the Europeans have not found a proper common identity it may help them to have a least some idea of whom they are not.

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The Politics of Racial Disproportionality of the Child Welfare System in New York

Viola Castellano

Introduction

This chapter aims at examining the analytical category of racial disproportionality in the New York City child welfare system. Racial disproportionality is the statistical category which identify an unbalanced ratio between racial groups in a certain area of social life and in this case defines the over-representation of people of color in the institutional arena developed to protect the well-being of children subjected to abuse or neglect in their household. This theme has emerged from a wider research topic, which wanted to analyze how social inequalities are represented in the area produced by an intense (and forced) interaction between institutions and citizens, with a particular focus on processes of marginalization and racialization typical of North-American cities.[1] In order to investigate this vast and complex phenomenon, I chose to take as field of analysis the institutional structure of the child welfare system, so to say its juridical organization and its array of services.

In the United States the complex of institutions charged with child protection has been generally denominated the child welfare system. It consists of services developed to protect the well being of children subjected to abuse or neglect and the rehabilitation of family members accused of their endangerment. Within its framework are included: preventive services for families going through a troubled period; child protection services which conduct the investigation in a suspected case of a child's abuse or neglect; the foster care system; the family court and the relative legal representatives of parents, children and social services; the rehabilitative

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[1] This chapter is a further elaboration of my dissertation, titled "What can I do when the system is wrong? Rappresentazioni delle disuglianze nel child welfare system a New York City" (Castellano 2014).

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complex for parents (therapy, treatment for substance abuse, mandatory courses of parenting skills, anger management or to prevent domestic violence). The over-representation of people of color in the child welfare system is a national trend but reaches one of its highest peaks in NYC. The rate of 'racial disproportionality', so to say the proportion of families and children involved in its institutional complex, is indeed particularly stunning: the white population makes up only the 4% of the entire child welfare pool of recipients, despite it represent the 40% of the general population (NYS Office of Children and Family 2011, 21).

Statistics show how the majority of the cases of children's removal come from 15 community districts, whereas in others the foster care population is almost absent. These community districts have been targeted by the Administration of Children Service (ACS), the main governmental agency to administer child protection, in order to implement services as well as community empowerment programs, with the aim of reducing the numbers of removals and develop a knowhow about the causes which lead to this disproportionate outcome.

Thus the statistics about demographics features of the population in foster care have been published on the Administration of Children Services website, making the disproportionality phenomenon, and its urban, racial and socio-economical characteristics, visible and comparable for the public and policy-makers.[2]

Anti-racism activists and policy-makers started to problematize and discuss racial disproportionality in the first years of 2000. Institutional actors and research agencies developed tools to monitor and balance the racial gap, and internal committees and ad-hoc programs about it were created not only in New York State but also nation-wide (Hill 2006; Bartholet 2009). Revolving around the struggle for racial and social justice, this movement can be considered a product of the kind of institutionalized antiracism which marks the current social work practice and pedagogy. Differently from other struggles to achieve racial equity its existence and action is somehow limited to the internal debate about child welfare services and struggle to cut across professional realms becoming a wider and participated terrain of contestation. The data were initially made available and analyzed by private agencies and foundations, like the Annie E. Casey Foundation[3] and Chapin Hall.[4] The issue of racial disproportionality therefore started as a policy-related topic more than a community claim, and only later it became part of community-based discourse and response.

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[2]You used to find such data at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/statistics/statistics_cd_snapshot. shtml at the time I conducted my research, between 2011 and 2013. It is interesting to notice, though, that in the latest version of the Administration of Children Services website, created in the first half of 2015, community snapshots with data about the racial component of child welfare recipients disappeared. As it is possible to verify in the section "Data and Analysis" of the new ACS website (http://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/data-analysis.page#Agency-Wide%20Reports) statistical data about NYC child welfare population are now based only on community districts. It would be important to investigate how and why this new policy was adopted by the main govern-mental agency, which changed is Commissioner in 2014.

[3]The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) is a child welfare foundation, born as a philantropic organization, focused on improving the well-being of American children and is one of the domi-nant organizations in child welfare issues in the U.S

[4]Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is a research and policy center, focused on a mission of improving the well-being of children and youth, families, and their communities.

Despite the complexity of the process of race-making in the welfare system, and more widely in US society, has been debated for years by scholars in the anthropological and sociological field (Gregory and Sanjek 1994; Back and Solomos 2000; Neubeck and Cazenave 2001), I will extend this field of investigation to child welfare policies in this essay.[5] In section "How and why the significance of race emerged in the history of child welfare" I will describe the genealogy of racial disproportionality, how it was historically produced and how it was conceptualized.

In section "Technologies of truth and the re-appropriation of statistics" I will discuss the double function of statistical data: as a mean to categorize, governing and stigmatizing some population's groups; as a tool for social analysis and political mobilization. In order to do so I will use literature about nationhood and governamentality as key theoretical frameworks to interpret population's categorization. Finally, in sections "Difficult conversations" and "Problems of representation: poverty and race" I will describe some of the attempts made at the institutional, as well as grass-root, level to intervene in this phenomenon. There are indeed different modalities in which such data is thought and "put into work" to shape collective responses, more or less explicitly politicized as well as different way in which several groups of activists, professionals and researchers identify the causes of the asymmetry and try to reduce the racial disparity reforming the system's policies. These sections aim at highlighting the short circuits of racialized representations of social disadvantage and illustrate, through ethnographic cases, the inexpressibility of the racial issue, even in political circles constituted to discuss it.

My analysis doesn't argue about the ultimate legitimacy of statistics based on ethnicity and race but limit itself in showing how they can be conceived as important tools to achieve social justice as well as a way to reinforce a racialized perception of social deviance and disadvantage.

Therefore, in my conclusions I argue that a focus on racial disproportionality is a too ambiguous argument, easy to overturn, if it is not taken into account along with the other structural features which co-produce it, like class, gender and urban segregation.

Methodology

In order to gather data and a deep ethnographic insight on the topic of my research, I attended weekly support groups for parents in a grass-root association and monthly meetings of antiracist workgroups and racial disproportionality committees

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[5] I would like to acknowledge and thank some of the professors at the Department of Anthropology of the City University of New York Graduate Center, where I was a visiting scholar between March and June 2013, who gave me precious suggestions and directions of research. In particular I would like to thank Jeff Maskovsky, Dana Ain-Davis, Michael Blim and Leith Mullings, without whom precious reflections I would't have been able to develop the main arguments of this chapter. Anyway I take full responsibility for all the statements express here and I, by no means, intend to attribute any of them to their suggestions, which I elaborated personally.

throughout 14 months, conducting participant observation. I shadowed parents attorneys in the Brooklyn Family Court and the Bronx Family Court, following the cases of 20 families. I participated in policy and community forums, initiatives and workgroups created to reform the child welfare system and took part at workshops and classes of parenting skills planned by two organizations, switching from a more active and engaged participation to a more discreet observation, depending on the context I was researching.

I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with 47 people, which I encountered moving in and out of the intricate child welfare institutional apparatus. They are: parents, parent advocates, social workers, policy-makers, psychotherapists, family court attorneys, racial and social justice activists. I conducted reiterated interviews with four privileged informants, selected for their key-role in the system (a parent, a no profit director, a psychotherapist and a parent advocate) and the close relationship I developed with them.

How and Why the Significance of Race Emerged in the History of Child Welfare

My questions develop starting from the appearance of race as an analytical category to construct objective data in the child welfare arena.

It is correct to say that the racist structure of the system pre-existed any race-based analysis made by statistics and social scientists, but with the end of the civil right movement, the data begun to be discussed in the wider political debate and public opinion. In 1971 Billingsley and Giovannoni published "Children of the storm", one of the first books within the social work field in the US to focus on disproportionality and disparity in service quality between African American families and white families. At first, African American families were completely excluded from the benefits of child welfare institutions. Their initial role, operated mostly by philanthropic and religious organizations in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, was to save children from poor and dysfunctional families of Irish, Italian and German immigrants. They would have been future citizens of the US and this is why elites were interested in stopping the dangerous classes from reproducing constantly and without control, increasing issues of degrade and criminality and threatening the well being of the society as a whole (Billingsley and Giovannoni 1971; Reich 2005). Charles Loring Brace, founder of the Children's Aid Society, one of the first foster care agency in the US, which is now a major contractor of the NYC child welfare system, stated in its essay 'The life of street rats' that the 'dangerous classes' of New York were mainly constituted by children 'of Irish and German immigrants' who 'like rats, they are too quick and cunning to be (…) caught, so they gnaw(...) away at the foundations of society undisturbed' (Brace 1872).

We can see clearly as child welfare institutions were created not from the desire to protect human and children rights but as a device of social control and discipline

towards the 'undeserving poor' (Katz 1990). If the humanity and social behaviour of the undeserving poor needed to be shaped and addressed through such devices, African American children were not even considered part the 'dangerous classes'. They were simply excluded from the first forms of foster care, as their humanity and social presence was denied, and their existence objectified and commodified. The history of the child welfare system indeed developed throughout the history of slavery first and segregation later, that is why the conceptual framework of a rigid hierarchy based on race was deeply embedded in its first formations, according to nationhood's projects and conceptualizations (Ross 2005).

The following developments reflect somehow this initial unbalance and consequentially show its intrinsically unequal nature. Even when African American children became part of the pool of recipients of the child welfare system, which meanwhile was more and more administered through public and state institutions, significant difference in treatment didn't disappear. For example, many of the foster care agencies were Catholic, as the majority of recipients at first were Irish and Italian children, both Catholic groups: they were not accepting children from Protestant families, like almost all the African-American families were, while the few Protestant agencies were privileging white children anyway (Billingsley and Giovannoni 1971). In this way African American were still excluded, although not anymore through a legal status, as in segregation before. In particular, the book showed the difficulties related to black children's placement in foster care and adoptive families compared to white children. Race was meaningful as well as it is now, but instead of the current high number of children of color in foster care, the problem in the aftermath of the civil right movement was constituted by the numerous black children and families left unserved or underserved by the child welfare system (ibid.).

If this was the situation until the 1970s, the landscape and attitude of services began to change in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century, as a consequence of several factors. The civil right movement had the merit to increase preventive services instead of foster care services, implementing radically community-based programs and making an issue of the disadvantaged position of minorities in the system. Despite such a change, in the first part of the 1980s started a long-term process in the political economy of the city as well as in the whole country which heavily affected child welfare policies and outcomes (Roberts 2002, 2008; Tobis 2013).

An inversion of the tendency to underserved African American children in the system begun to show from the late 1970s and increased massively during the 1980s and the 1990s. There were structural reasons as the fiscal crisis and recession which marked the 1970s and the process of de-industrialization which caused unemployment and urban blight in neighbourhoods of color, traditionally working-class (Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993). The segregational dynamics were, as many sociologists discussed, emphasized by a raising real estate market, which started processes of gentrification, increasing rents, racializing the mortgage market, and confining poor people of color in areas where the scarce quality of services coincided with a pervading form of surveillance. The historical structure of the ghetto, segregated but more socially and economically heterogenous, with family

from the middle and working class, switched to the paradigm of Wacquant's hyper-ghetto, where the penal state is merged with a socially de-structured and culturally impoverished environment of the economically isolated inner city (Wacquant 1997, 1999; Bourgois 1998; Gregory 2005).

Crack and AIDS 'epidemics', as they were defined by media at the time, were other important factors in determining the skyrocket of children in foster care and the widening of the racial gap, as poor community of color were both the most affected and the ones in which institutional surveillance had the harshest impact (Tobis 2013). The case of crack-babies irrupted in the public debate and brought to immediate removals of the newborns of crack-addicted mothers. The medical science of the time was convinced that these babies would have had life-long consequences in terms of health because of the exposure to crack-cocaine but that wasn't the case, as recent surveys and research have shown (Winerip 2013). Lastly, welfare restructuring and the neoliberal turn of the economy, contributed to the peaks reached in the mid 1990s, generating a surveilled and selective access to welfare for families and in particular African American and Latino families and shaping the widespread despise towards single mothers, redefined as "welfare queens" (Kingfisher 1996; Morgen and Maskovsky 2003; Davis 2006).

These phenomenons and the consequential juridical modification adopted to ease children's removals, are the main causes which produced in NYC the rate of 50,000 children in foster care in 1994. Nowadays, the rate of children in foster care dramatically dropped from the 1990s, and is attested around 14,000 children, but the system is still widely perceived as unfair and biased towards minorities.

Technologies of Truth and the Re-appropriation of Statistics

In my research I wanted to explore which role technologies of citizenship[6] (Ong 2003), as production and dissemination of data about the population, had in reproducing social stratification. In particular, I wanted to investigate which was their contribution in structuring a political debate about moral requirements to access to resources within a national context where being a black single mother on welfare (three features revealed and builded through statistical knowledge) implies social exclusion and is strictly connected to a representation of social failure. There is a lively debate in social sciences and in particular in anthropology of government and institutions about how subject-making is managed and realized in contemporary societies. Part of it takes also in consideration how knowledge on population is constructed and used to regulate the 'conduct of the conduct' (Foucault 1994: 237),

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[6] Aiwa Ong inaugurates this concept drawing from Michel Foucault's work on governmentality and technologies of the self (Foucault 1988). With technologies of citizenship she identifies the practice through which individuals produce and shape their life, as particular categories of citizens. In Ong's sense, we can also see the dynamic of producing and interpreting data about the population as a technology of citizenship.

meanwhile many scholars have pointed out how ideas of race, ethnicity and nationalism are intertwined in shaping nationhood and citizenship (Ross 2005; Brubaker 2009). The child welfare system has a governing dimension central to what is conceptualized as normative and pathological, a construction particularly powerful when is about practices of parenting and child rearing. On one hand, as Leifsen noticed, the child welfare system turns to be a crucial institutional arena in converting an ideology of citizenship in a practice of civilization (Leifsen 2009). On the other hand any ideology of citizenship excludes other forms of existence, labelling them as inappropriate. The ideology of the child welfare system was represented in the first two century by its segregated nature and the deny for certain racial group to benefit from it. Despite its changes in time, it continued to reproduce exclusionary practice through the notion of inappropriate motherhood, in turn racialized also when race is silenced (Davis 2007).

If being part of a state implies being counted and categorized in population's groups that are created in order to administer and govern (Hacking 1991; Engle Merry and Coutin 2014; Urla 1993), in the US this specific governmental practice has been a key-factor in the reproduction of racial categories and the shifting social meaningfulness attached to them depending on the historical moment. The peculiar history of race-based statistics and census in the US, and its consequences in terms of their interpretation, never stop to create controversies and heated debates (Baker 2001), useful to highlight the complexity of the social fabric and the difficulties and challenges people have to face living within imposed and re-claimed subjectivities. Many scholars agree on the fact that 'the production of official ethnic and racial statistics is never unilateral, nor straightforward' but that 'there are often competing paradigms, and policy outcomes are the result of contestations, negotiations and compromises' (Simon et al. 2015: 8). As Ann Morning has highlighted, the production of such data are always a result of top-down and bottom-up pressures (Morning 2015).

Any counting and categorizing practice is rooted in a specific cultural and historical context (Omi and Winant 1994). In the United States this context reflects the history of racial formation and the attempts to overcome divisions and achieve equality (Nobles 2002). In so doing, the cultural politics of race, as Baker defined them, are permanent features of american society (Baker 2001, 2010).

Once a device of social oppression, the practice of dividing population in ethnic and racial groups has been re-appropriated by the same groups becoming a way to monitor social mobility and achievements of minorities and the base to articulate political demands, denounce inequalities and practice affirmative action (Baker 2001; Kukutai and Thompson 2015). As Jaqueline Urla, talking about the basque minority, highlighted: 'In the hands of the socially or politically disenfranchised, numbers may be also a language of social contestation' (Urla 1993: 818), describing as a characteristic of modernity the notion that we can know ourselves through numbers. At the same time the neoliberal framework and what Polsky (1991) has defined as the therapeutic state rely heavily on statistics in order to diagnose social problems and elaborate responses based on the concept of efficiency. Overall, statistics tell a lot about how the State defines legitimate identities for the purpose of policy making and redistribution (Morning 2015; Kertzer and Arel 2002), demon-

strating how in the US ethno-racial classification are fundamental to the project of nation-building and its multicultural self-representation.

In child welfare's practice and debate, statistics regarding the racial makeup of its pool of recipients are the most important factor in deciding which priorities the system should endorse. They represent an evidence of a racially unequal society, where African Americans are still affected by a number of social problems which compromise their ability to care for their children and comply with what parenting should look like for the State. Of course there is not only this in what the statistical 'truth' or reality reveals.

Once a researcher enters in the labyrinthine complex of services for children and families what emerges almost immediately is the experience of injustice that families have within the system. What they go through is perceived as an unfair and biased treatment, which marginalizes the role of parents and express a punitive attitude towards them, making them feel less than actual citizens (Williams 1992). Throughout my ethnography this feeling of unfairness was a leitmotiv and a basic assumption of almost all my interlocutors. From the parents attorney I shadowed in family court who used to start her first colloquium with her clients saying 'This system is totally unfair' to the judge who, before a hearing in family court, told me that I was in the right place if I wanted to look at institutional racism in the US, it didn't matter which part of the power spectrum social actors were occupying as its asymmetry was blatant.

Here I report a piece of my fieldwork notes during a support group for parents who lost custody of their children organized by a community-based organization I worked with during the research.

> I enter the room, the meeting starts at 11 am, but, as usual, it starts to fill up after 11:15. The majority of people are women between 20 and 50 years old, they are all Latina or African American, simply dressed and with a concerned look in their eyes. After the serenity prayer, the typical prayer used in support groups, first of all Alcoholics Anonymous, during which we stand in circle and hold hands, J., a mother I saw other two times there, starts updating the group about the recent developments of her case. She is visibly upset while she explains that the judge postponed once again the date of the reunification while ACS asked for the termination of parental rights, alleging her fragile psychic condition as cause.
>
> 'I don't want to be just the next African American woman with an addiction and mental health issues who is incapable of taking care of her children!' she said vehemently. T., the parent advocate and facilitators of the group looks at her with empathy and she quietly foster her rage, encouraging her in turning into determination in demonstrating the opposite to the judge and the case-worker and trying to transmit her trust and reliance. She calms down and the conversation steers on finding a strategy to use the services available to better her condition and, most importantly, her image in front of the institutions. (East Harlem, 7/03/2012)

J. is a poor single mother on welfare, she has issues of drug abuse, she was diagnosed with bipolar syndrome and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) years ago and she is a former foster kid. J., despite the fact and precisely because of the fact that she is marked by multiple stigmas and that she represents the statistical image of the parent who lost custody of her children, rebels against this same image. Doing so she rejects the way in which technologies of truth and subjectification

have constructed her social identity, acknowledging their weight, recognizing and resisting her same subjectification. As Urla (1993) said, the subject in participating and envisioning statistics is encouraged in a sociological monitoring. Such tactics don't challenge the power of statistical discourse to define social reality also if they strategically appropriate it but in this way they also participate in the construction of subjectivity in the present. Such forms of awareness and monitoring cannot be considered completely act of resistance but they can give us clues 'about forms of power and how people are caught up in them' (Abu-Lughod 1990: 42) counting as a potential engine of contestation in highly stratified and conflictual social and cultural contexts.

What Ian Hacking has called the nominalism implicit in technologies of administering of the population is always dynamic as he points out: it is important both to reveal it as a social construct and to show how names interact with the named, generating what he calls a looping effect (Hacking 1991, 2006). The named tries to take back imposed classifications and overturn the authority of experts, creating new experts and new classifications. In the case of child welfare practice this is testified by the range of institutional and community initiative to fight racial disproportionality, through different channels.

As showed by Engle Marry and Bibler Coutin, systems of audit, designed to manage and supervise, can be appropriated as modes of self-definition that create, rather than merely document, facts about selves (Engle Merry and Coutin 2014). This operation moves towards a shift from a command-and-control strategy of governance to collaborative, consensus-building discussions focused on problem solving and improvement.

The two anthropologists recognize how data gathering contributes to transparency and supplies to advocates data which are crucial to advance the struggle for social justice, but they also warn that these are practices always connected to the aim of controlling and surveilling, pointing out how this could potentially exacerbate structural violence, reinforcing a certain perception of determinate categories of people, which will be regarded and treated with even more suspect. Clarke and Newman as well pointed out how there could be a side effect in the monitoring of different population's groups. They noticed that with the "death of keynesianism" and the emphasis on public spending as unproductive costs (Clarke and Newman 1997; Rose 2006) particular lines of social differentiation became a focus for collective action and political conflict, questioning the problematic universalism of welfare. But as they highlighted, the emphasis on cultural diversity exposed minority ethnic groups to the repressive dimension of state welfare, diagnosing various 'maladjustment' in respect of education, social work and health 'which necessitated greater intervention and surveillance' (Clarke and Newman 1997: 10).

If even writing about subalterns and the disadvantaged is ethically and politically dangerous when it comes to ethnography (Susser 1996), with its opportunity to describe a complex and nuanced social reality, is easily imaginable what are the consequences of statistics and demographics, constructed as neutral datas and presented as the ultimate truth about population. In statistics there is not complexity and the categories are approximated for the sake of measurement as well as con-

structed on previous material. The interpretative elaboration and the historical and contingent nature of these artefacts are elided and the generic language and definitions of what is conceived as child abuse or neglect, what constitutes poverty and what defines a female-headed family become a 'metacode' (Engle Merry and Coutin 2014: 18) which transcends phenomenological particularity and traces boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate parenting. It is interesting to notice how variables which heavily affects the probability that a family encounters child protective services are not particularly examined in statistics, which conflate differences mainly in racial categories. On the community snapshot section on the Administration of Children Services website the samples are divided into the following categories: Black, Hispanic, White and Other.

These variables could be attributed to belonging to a cultural community with different standard of parenting, to the fact that parents are not anglophone, to the lack of a network of relatives, or to the lack of a valid legal status to be in the United States, for examples. Many times I met during my fieldwork families which cases were enormously complicated by the lack of adequate transmission of informations, like in the case of M. a Spanish speaking and illiterate migrant from Ecuador who was asked to sign documents concerning her kids without a proper translation, allowing case-workers to take decisions which extended the period of foster care.

Evidence-based projects and analysis answer to these complicated political aspects with the strength of data and evidences like rate of reunification, length of time spent in the foster care system and incidence of re-abuse. This kind of shift towards a more technical knowledge is evident also in the new methodological tool, used by case worker, of risk assessment analysis but doesn't solve the intricacy and complexity of each situation, as also Scherz (2011) highlighted. As she noticed, the intensity of the moral conflict and political ambiguity that any child welfare case entails, generated by the double aim of protecting the child and preserving the family, poses a political question. This mechanism was described to me by M.A., director of a community-based organization and former social worker, as the 'pendulum' that always characterized the child welfare system and is addressed through very highly standardized techniques to calculate risk.

Case-workers have to fill up documents assessing the level of risk (low, medium, high) for many categories, like housing, education, health etc. The option of choosing between only three level of judgment and equalizing procedures for everyone is aimed at reducing the political weight of the single decision and neutralize controversies regarding citizens' rights and state responsibility. One of the many problematic aspects that risk assessment should erase is racial disproportionality, but this technique is not capable to really lower the level of contestation and the arbitrariness of decisions, which always rely on the personal judgement of the case worker.

Most importantly, neutralizing the moral and political weight of child welfare practice through technical knowledge doesn't correct the structural and deep causes of abuse and neglect, but succeed in presenting a more rationalized and efficient way to treat with state's subjects.

Difficult Conversations

Once I got closer to the public sphere where issues related to inequalities and social policies were discussed, what I discovered is the degree of uncertainty and circumspection in acknowledging the multiple factors contributing to them. Such difficulty can lead to a unidimensional interpretative framework, as in the case of some antiracism organization I came across with. In their case, race is seen as the dominant factor in determining inequalities in the child welfare system and this could lead to a controversial process of reification of racial features, risking to underestimate the role of other components and the way they reinforce each other, as intersectionality theories have demonstrated several decades ago (Davis 1983; hooks 1984; Crenshaw 1989).

If in informal and politically involved anti-racism associations the issue was conceptualized as an expression of structural racism, in the more formal environment as the Court or policy forums, it was faced in a very prudential way, using a coded language in order to speak about racial aspects and racial bias in the system. The difficulties such social actors face to organize within the same institutional framework around issues of social and racial justice reveal how deeply they are embedded in social, economic and cultural dynamics. Initiatives to eliminate these inequalities struggle in order not just to intervene but also to identify them and propose possible solutions. Family courts, so to say the courts convened to decide matters and make orders in relation to family law, have decided to implement initiatives such us Court Catalyzing Change, a state wide program to prevent biased treatment of child welfare cases. Another organization was instead pushing for a state-level commission within the system charged with racial equity supervision in child welfare practice. Nonetheless, these proposals often clash with both discursive and practical difficulties to address the question of race bias in the system, which appears as an unmanageable object.

Here I report the words of C.J. a social worker and racial justice activist I interviewed, who was part of a Disproportionality Committee in New Jersey Family Courts and part of Court Catalyzing Change. He explained to me how it was hard to address the issue of disproportionality through a policy-driven lens. He was a law-guardian, the person who is charged with protecting the rights of children involved in a case, a position which is often read as an anti-parents and anti-reunification role. Nevertheless it is considered a crucial role to switch to a more family-oriented approach, and as a consequence, to reduce the number of removals, especially in African American families. I met him on an anti-racism meeting about the child welfare in Manhattan and he accepted to be interviewed about its activism, a life-long commitment to social justice he had made and was exercising through the institutional system he was working for, combining his job with his political struggle. Sitting on a diner's table in Newark during our long interview he admitted the conceptual and pragmatic obstacles him and the committee he was part of in Newark faced when they start meeting and discussing the topic of racial disproportionality:

> When I was a lawguardian I became member of the disproportionality committee and at that time we really don't know what to do. There was the Court Catalyzing Change initiative but we were still looking at how to define disproportionality accurately and once we defined that accurately we focused on how figure out solutions and for years nothing really came of that (...) (C.J., 02/02/2012).[7]

It took a while for his group to reach an agreement on how to define racial disproportionality, and move to a more action-oriented approach.[8]

Another ethnographic account at this regard could be offered by my field-notes during the Disproportionate Committee in the Bronx Family Court, where the same organizer, an African American judge, at some point during the meeting acknowledged the resistances in addressing explicitly issues of race in the meeting, as probably they were too uncomfortable to be faced by the audience in a direct way. All the participants of the different kind of initiatives already participated or wanted to participate in the Undoing Racism Workshop, promoted by the People Institute for Survival and Beyond. They wanted to participate in order to get a 'common language' to be able to define and speak about racial issues and create a 'safe space' to look at the weight of their own racial belonging in their daily practice. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB), is a national and international collective of anti-racism, multicultural community organizers and educators, which originated in New Orleans and then spread out nationally with different branches, one of whom is in New York. Undoing Racism Training is a 3 days workshop thought to inform and educate people about structural racism and give them organizing tools through dialogue, reflection, role-playing, strategic planning and presentations. The multiracial team of organizers/trainers are mostly people working in social services as the public the workshop is mainly addressed to.

The two antiracist organizations I worked with and to whom the trainers belong, the 'People Institute for Survival' and 'Beyond and Anti Racist Alliance', are multiracial organization, divided into different work groups and race caucus that meet singularly and transracially once at month. They are part of the inclusionist politics which aim to an 'equal opportunity through struggles within the confines of the social and legal system' (Mullings 1997: 133). Racial inequalities come to be understood and acknowledge also as an individual feature, seeking to 'deactivate' what is called Internalized Racial Oppression through a collective healing process.

The caution in which racial data are talked and discussed has multiple causes: one of the main reason is the ease in turning that discussion into a personal argument, risking of being offensive (white activists stereotyping or silencing activists of color, activists of color accusing white activists of racist attitudes) and compro-

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[7] In order to protect the privacy of my informants, I will put just their initial in the entire chapter.

[8] The Court Catalyzing Change Initiative describe racial disproportionality as the way in which, according to researchers, 'children and families of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system and frequently experience disparate outcomes. While children of all races are equally as likely to suffer from child abuse and neglect, the percentage of African-American children who enter and remain in out-of-home care is greater than their proportion in the population' (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The NCJFC register. http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/courts-catalyzing-change. Accessed 25 June 2016).

mise relationships which account also for the social weight of racial and ethnic belonging, struggling on the ground of identity politics.

Here the need of agreeing on the same language and definitions, to escape from this personal and highly discretionary way of make sense of racial data, constructing a conceptual base which is shared among participants, and allow them to exit from their positioned racial self and construct a dialogue.

At the same time the different political and cultural belongings of the people involved in the racial disproportionality groups and their diverse productive and economic sites, put in question this rigid vision of the same anti-racism practices, fostering a spectrum of different proposals and actions. They could range from a strong and radical protest against institutional practices and attitudes towards inner-city residents to the partnership with the Administration of Children Services in various forms of discussion and education.

Anyway, activists and policy-makers in general prefer to look at community and parents involvement as the only effective way to correct racial disproportionality, but also this solution contains multiple ambiguities. The claim to involving community organizations was a way to de-center the tension created by an explicit discourse on race and re-conduct the issue of institutional racism in self and community empowerment discourse, which appealed also to the memories and political meanings of civil rights struggles.

The difficulties I witnessed in naming and defining the racial disproportionality within the child welfare system refers to what Didier Fassin called the embarrassment in designing racial issues, embarrassment that for him has as an ethic as well as a practical motivation, but it is precisely this characteristic which reveals itself as the condition allowing the same possibility to acknowledge it: 'our inability in naming the racial issue imply an obligation to think about it' (Fassin and Fassin 2006: 20, my translation). In the French context this claim can be even more meaningful, due to the assimilationist republican model that, until few years ago, didn't acknowledge or report ethnic or racial characteristics in the population management (Simon 2015). But I think that also in the US, even with the trivialization and bureaucratization of racial categories, this inability still marks the discourses and perceptions about race. The insistence I noticed on finding a common language, a univocal definition of what is racism and the kind of analytical work that is tirelessly made in the US about what is race is emblematic at this regard. 'If you are not fluid in the language you become a skilled disorganizer' (M.C. Anti Racist Alliance Meeting, 22/03/2012) said once during a child welfare anti-racist meeting. M.C, a PuertoRican advocate working in a grass-root organization for family preservation, highlighting the risk of talking about race without a previous pact on how to talk about it. The people and activists I met during the fieldwork feel and live these ambiguities in their everyday experience, carrying on a struggle for the re-appropriation of their rights to define what they lack and what they need.

Statistics are just part of the equation but they have a key role both for what they reveal and how they are handled and manipulated. For example, almost all researches try to identify where racial bias 'materialize' in the process of child welfare decision-making (Derozetes et al. 2005). According to these research is extremely difficult to

trace where race starts to be a meaningful variable in the unfolding of a case with the child protective services. When the different chronological and institutional moments are broke down and investigated separately, it remains unclear how and when the disproportionate outcome starts to show up, leaving scholars without a clear explanation on where to locate the action of a discriminating mechanism. My point is that, when race is isolated as a data and somehow reified through statistics, despite its striking presence highlighted by the different rates and huge gaps in the racial makeup of a certain population, it is handled with caution, becoming unspeakable and impossible to be faced in a direct way. As M.A. told me, talking openly about racial disproportionality is 'political dynamite' (East Harlem, 05/06/2012, interview to M.A.). Although it would be impossible not to use racial categorization in order to pursue a fight for social justice in a still not color-blind society (Baker 2001) what I would like to point out is the way in which 'race is, at turns, made transparent, invisible, monumentally significant, and immaterial' (Davis and Cox 2012: 5).

The following extract from my fieldwork journal describes a specific event, the encounter between the Administration of Children Services and several anti-racism and social justice groups active in the human services arena, held during the Black History Month. This short paragraph describe at the same time how 'thick' is the conceptual and social existence of race as a political category and exemplifies its unspoken, painful ambiguities in a society which continues to be extremely divided through the color line, a color line which shapes the everyday life of its citizens.

> The meeting is held in a professional conference room at the ACS headquarter. There are around 50 places in three tables, every station is provided with a microphone and there are three big screens in front of them, connected to other three ACS offices in New York. The panelists sit in front of the public, on a desk slightly raised from the others. The room is initially full of people, that during the two hours diminish until it becomes half empty. The majority of ACS employees present are black women, as I also always see in family courts. There are few whites professionals and just a couple of men. During the meeting the tones of the conversation are kept moderate and friendly, and the main topics revolve around community partnership, the shift from a client-perspective to a more independent and self-managed developing model and the incorporation of a white privilege analysis in ACS work. After a panelist, the president of a community empowerment initiative, finishes to talk, the public sit still, until one woman of color, a case worker for ACS as she further explains, breaks the silence with an irritated and emotional remark. Those are some of her words I was able to capture: «We can talk about empowerment and everything else but I have to pause and ask me who I am and how screwed up I am, and we need to move, because there can't be no change if I think there's no reason to change (...) when the people find out, you know, that we're try to include a white privileged model, they shut down! 'Oh, I'm not going to talk about that problem!'. Every time we have these events, as you call it, you look around the room and there is 900 of us and two of the dominant culture in here! So you know, I get really frustrated. (…) We have to look at ourselves and find out why as an agency we investigate white families differently than we do with black families, why when we try to have a dialogue, most black people won't come, thinking 'I want nobody hear me saying that'» (ACS Meeting on racial disproportionality, 13/02/2012).

I wanted to insert this piece from my fieldwork notes as it illustrates how antiracism is part of the agenda of social work practice. Partnering with community-based

organization, promoting cultural competences training and Undoing Racism Workshop among professional working in the field, monitoring the rate of disproportionality and creating programs to reduce it, are initiatives and directions public and private child welfare agencies are taking since years.

On the other hand, the intervention of the case-worker exposes the depth and intricacy of the racial issue in the child welfare. As the case-worker explicits, the problem doesn't concern just a disinterested white majority of workers who mildly acknowledge the issue of racial disproportionality. Instead, also black social workers, who represent the majority of child welfare social workers, are elusive towards the 'political dynamite' of race.

Problems of Representation: Poverty and Race

> V: Why do you think there is just 3% of white kids in the NY system?
> T: Cause the system was made just for poor people, and this is how they get money. Rich get rich from the poor, you know? (interview to T.B, 20/10/2012, East Harlem)

This is a short exchange from an interview to T.B., a Puerto Rican mother and grandmother who had more than one case with the child welfare system, and who is now a parent advocate. T.B was born in Puerto Rico but came with her family in New York when she was little. She grew up in Harlem during the 1970s, living in projects and experiencing juvenile justice, poverty and violence, including the killing of her son during a shooting. I reported this short extract as an introduction to the topic of this section as it illustrates well the conflation between poverty and race which is so common in the United States, a self-evidence in the experience of many but a highly controversial aspect of the academic and political debate.

Although anthropologists and sociologists efforts showed in their work that this conflation is often incorrect, ideology of US welfare reform quickly devolves into a racialized argument of black versus white (Schneider 1999) where 'racial meanings are attached to particular issues-often treated as social problems-and with the manner in which race appears to be a, or often the, key factor in the ways they are defined and understood' (Murji and Solomos 2005: 3). This could be attributed also to the effect of what Brubaker called 'groupism' in conceptualizing ethnicity, which is instead socially constructed in a much more complex way, through the use of 'practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, common-sense knowledge, organizational routines and resources, discursive frames, institutionalized forms, political projects, contingent events and variable groupness' (Brubaker 2002, 186). Furthermore it reflects the national tendency of reading social behaviours according to the black-white dichotomy (Ong 2003). Scholars insist on how people practice racial belongings in different ways depending of the context and how a further racialization is operated within conventional racial categories, once it intersects with social-economic status, professionalization, geographical positionality, etc. The dichotomies and rigid containers in which population is broke up by statistical technologies don't reflect an equally dichotomous social reality. At the same

time statistics about the over-representation of people of color in the child welfare system speak about a structural condition of disadvantage. Coherently with the therapeutic state, this condition can become a device of victimization or pathologization, depending on the political spectrum where is discussed.

The difficulty to exit from the circularity of this argument explains the hardship for US society to become a post-racial society. Welfare and the same child welfare system were implicitly racialized throughout their history, even when efforts were made to establish an equal treatment of families in a previously racially segregated institutional system. This is why racial disproportionality in child welfare remains a highly controversial social policy issue and struggle to be defined, recognized and address through institutional devices. As Sally Engle Merry and Susan Bibler Coutin highlighted, it is important to remind how much ideologies and cultural politics enter this interpretational game and affect the way in which the discourse is structured. During an interview with a policy-maker of the Administration of Children Services, the principal public agency of the child welfare system in NY, she told me that although everybody in the office was aware that race was a fundamental factor in determining the chance to have a case with Administration of Children Services or not, for her was extremely difficult to raise the question as she would have been exposed as 'this crazy person who talks about racism' (interview to C.R, Manhattan, 9/06/2012). C.R has a long career in the Administration of Children Services and she is also a member of an anti racism organization I worked with. She is African American and she holds an advanced position in the hierarchical structure of Administration of Children Services. Often at the meetings she functioned as an insider to highlight and anticipate decision-making processes of the city child welfare system, keeping a position that obviously was never too radical and antagonistic towards the system. In that occasion, sitting with just me in a cafe close by the central office of Administration of Children Services in the Financial District, she was very critic about the role of the system, putting as a central argument the highly political ground in which decisions and reforms of the child welfare system takes place.

In a similar way attorneys who offers free legal representation for parents in Family Court told me that, although really aware of the incredible disproportionality rate in the child welfare system (a lawyer told me that in 5 years of practice, with an average of 100 cases at year, she could count cases with white families on one hand) it was not useful at all to raise issues of bias in court since they were impossible to prove and would have been detrimental to their clients. In the child welfare system, a series of social taboos, of tensions and decisive topics for governance and citizenship, conflate. Imploding in a myriad of contradictions, they unveil their contingent, historical and cultural construction and the power dynamics which pervade them. Just to name some of them we have: politics of reproduction, ideologies of family, human and children rights, moral economies of community participation, ideas and expectation about maternity and gender, hierarchy of resource access, need of social control and conflict resolution by the state.

This intricate bundle in which social actors have to disentangle themselves, especially the ones who work within the same system, put them in the difficult position

of handling in their everyday practice these contradiction, trying to find a way to escape, elide or manipulate these 'impossible objects'. Over-representation of people of color is refracted in any of the punitive section of governance, making the child welfare system just another piece of the puzzle. As statistics showed 'African American children and adolescents are overrepresented in child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and public school services for children with serious emotional disturbances, even when the researchers controlled for socioeconomic status, compared with the youths proportion in the population and compared with white children' (Derozetes et al. 2005: 36).

It is, however, a very delicate piece of the puzzle, as racialized groups represent both the perpetrators and the victims: if pointing the finger at bias within the decision process can lead to accuse of underestimation of the dangers children face in inner city communities, on the other hand insisting on these last topics can lead to a racialization of the child welfare system and a pathologization of families living in poor communities of color.

Elizabeth Bartholet (2009), a famous child welfare jurist, for example is a strenuous advocate against the racial disproportionality movement, as she interprets the different rate of white and black kids in the system as an outcome of the underclass effect and the condition of precariousness and social frailty in which kids are raised in inner city communities. In her opinion a movement to fight institutional racism in the child welfare system is pointless and even dangerous as it refuses to acknowledge the risks embedded in dysfunctional family models and in degraded urban areas. Focusing on bias and processes of discrimination in the institutional system, that are not present in her opinion, just risks to divert attention to the needs of family and children to be took in charge by social services. On the other hand, scholars like Dorothy Roberts (2002) or Joyce James (James et al. 2008) highlight how structural and institutional racism, extreme surveillance and social stigmas about black single mothers are the main reason for the disproportionate number of black kids in foster care. The first study about incidence of child maltreatment among different strata of the population goes back to 1980, (National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect 1980) but the one from 1996 (Third National Incidence Study on Child Abuse and Neglect 1996) didn't find any difference in the maltreatment rate among black and white families, and was taken as the most important evidence of a biased system from the racial disproportionality movement. Recently, however, the fourth National Incidence Study came out and found significant difference in the rate of abuse and neglect among black families compared to white families (black kids have a 1.7 more of chance compare to white kids of suffering of abuse and neglect) (Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect NIS–4 2015). These results echoes with the widening of the income gap between black and white families and with a general worsening of the living situation of African Americans in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis of 2008.

Conclusion

The racial disproportionality phenomenon echoes a specific cultural way in which poverty is produced and represented in the American society. As statistics regarding child welfare recipients show, the majority of the households which are recipients of child welfare services are the ones represented through the prism of the underclass in the political and cultural debate. The demography of child welfare counted and produced as a truth in statistics about population is the one made up of female-headed, impoverished African American and Latino families which rely on welfare to survive.

What in my opinion this feature brings to light is the history of the child welfare itself, which makes it an interesting example of 'welfare racism', so to say the racialized way to perceive and politicized welfare in public opinion. This widespread and consolidated perception is based on the disproportionate representation of people of color who are in the US poverty population and the view of welfare as a black problem (Neubeck and Cazenave 2001). In the colorblind rhetoric, furthermore, these outcomes are represented as the consequences of the dysfunctional and morally deviant underclass environment, reinforcing ideas about the pathological nature of family relationship and models of the urban poor, a powerful trope always quiescent in the US and cyclically brought up by different political contingencies. Indeed, in the 1980s the kind of attention towards technologies of truth and knowledge on population changed together with a new economical and political ethos, neoliberal choices and new ways to acknowledge, rationalize and intervene on social problems were elaborated (O'Connor 2001). Statistics were more and more focused on family's composition, switching the focus from structural disadvantage to a "flawed citizenship" caused by moral inadequacy of inner city families. The very same female-headed, impoverished African Americans and Latino families on welfare were therefore labelled as the main source of disparate social issues, ranging from racial riots to drug violence, and of course the most fertile environment for children's abuse and neglect.

Instead, as many scholars highlighted in the case of public assistance's recipients. (Gordon 1990; Mullings and Wali 2000; Goode and Maskovsky 2001), I believe that the two main causes of a certain specific demography in the child welfare mechanisms have to be attributed to the kind of institutional surveillance to which impoverished and racialized communities are subjected and the dysfunctional relations of households and means of production in them. As D.S., advocate in a no profit organization working in the Bronx said, 'It is the desire to punish which renders the neighbourhood unsafe', a statement which can be referred to police brutality as well as an invading child welfare practice. Most of the time families avoid to voluntarily contact preventive services, the ones which should prevent for a family in trouble to degenerate at the level of involving child protective services. This fear is motivated by the funded perception that services are more prone to punishment than to assistance, a perception which shapes the general attitude

towards the child welfare system, whose professionals in certain urban areas are known as 'baby-snatchers'.

In conclusion, what is then the role of statistical population's knowledge in such a complex political economical panorama? On one hand, we have seen how statistics could resonate with a common sense regarding irresponsible and lazy single mothers, who don't comply with mainstream images and model of maternity and who are incapable of taking care of their children (Kingfisher 1996; Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Davis 2006). The intimate connection between motherhood and nationhood has been documented by several scholars, who highlighted how reproductive work and its normative ideals are a strong component in nation-building (Skocpol 1992; Gordon 1990; Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000), a feature particularly visible in the despised imaginary of 'welfare mothers', who don't really hold the right to be mother, according to national ideals of motherhood.

On the other hand race-based statistics are an important tool in the pursuing of social justice. The first studies on how race was a significant variation in the child welfare population were carried on by African American and civil right activist and scholars, as an evidence of inherited and structural inequalities in public policy and as a device to correct them in years where black empowerment was also operated through institutional channels.

The paradox of racial statistics relies in their same malleability, in their potential to be read in multiple ways. The multiple ways in which they can be analysed and deployed is inherently linked to the 'polyvalent mobility' of race (Stoler 1995). What such statistical profile shows, in my opinion, is the ambivalent population's knowledge produced by technologies of citizenship and the struggle for appropriation of their social and political meanings.

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Childbirth on Europe's Ultra-Periphery: Maternity Care, French Universalism and Equivocal Identities on the Maroni River, French Guiana

Vanessa Grotti

Introduction

This chapter uses the prism of institutional healthcare delivery to analyze individual and collective notions of citizenship, reproduction and belonging on one of Europe's most remote external borders. It is based on the analysis of ethnographic data which I collected during several periods of field research in north-eastern Amazonia (Brazil, French Guiana and Suriname) from 2003 onwards, and in particular in 2011 to 2014, when I conducted a study of antenatal care in Suriname and French Guiana. Field sites included villages, health centers, hospitals and governmental and non-governmental headquarters. Research participants include Amerindian and Maroon people, governmental and non-governmental officials, secular and missionary health practitioners and policy-makers. As a social anthropologist with a decade-long involvement with transnational Carib-speaking populations living in remote village and urban settings in north-eastern Amazonia, my introduction to the intricate tensions pertaining to reproduction, migration and national identity grew out of accidental encounters with medical bureaucracy on the Maroni river. The Maroni is a large Amazon river which constitutes the international border between Suriname and French Guiana, in the north-eastern corner of the Guiana shield, in South America. I was first led to this European ultra-peripheral border as a graduate student trailing behind my semi-nomadic Trio and Wayana host family. I had met my host family in the Trio village of Tëpu, in southern Suriname and decided to follow some of its members as they migrated back to Antecume Pata, on the upper reaches of the Maroni river in French Guiana. Despite concerted national sedentarization campaigns which started in the late 1950s on all sides of the triple border area across which the Trio and Wayana live, these Amerindian populations maintain a high degree of mobility along extensive transnational kinship networks. One of the

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reasons for migrating back to this small Wayana community built on an island in the middle of the treacherous rapids of the Maroni headwaters, was to enable my adoptive mother to give birth to her fifth child in French Guiana. But Antecume Pata had changed considerably since the family's last residency several years before, because of the encroachment of illegal prospecting for gold in the vicinity of the village, and the increasing pressure of state interventions through targeted security and health campaigns. In the months to follow, I was to travel to Cayenne, French Guiana's capital city, to accompany my adoptive mother who had been convinced to fly by herself to the coast to give birth in the maternity ward of the Andrée Rosemon state hospital. As a Surinamese national without entitlements to French social security, my adoptive mother occupied a peculiar position on the ward, where she languished for weeks before finally giving birth to her baby boy. While spending time on the ward with her, I met other indigenous and tribal women in a similar situation, and talked with medical staff attending to them. Out of these initial encounters in 2005 grew the idea for an ethnographic project which examined local maternity care delivery as a whole, primarily as experienced from the point of view of the patients and their relatives, but also from the perspective of the clinical and non-clinical staff delivering care. As an anthropologist, I work with qualitative data collected through first hand extensive fieldwork. Methods used include participant and non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews and archival research. Rather than focusing on French Guiana as a whole, I decided to focus on the Maroni river for several reasons. Besides being a river basin with which I was familiar through personal contacts and fieldwork experience, I was interested in the powerful images of wilderness and lawlessness the Maroni conveys locally. Indeed, my local informants often referred to it as 'the Wild West'. I was also attracted by the idea of working on questions of transnational mobility, sovereignty and cross-cultural healthcare in a densely crossed borderland very distant from conventional representations in media and European political discourse on international migration and national sovereignty.

In this chapter I will argue that focusing on reproductive encounters set in medical institutions located in peripheral border areas reveal unique insights into migration dynamics that are concurrently internal and international. Indeed, the institutional delivery of maternity care in this distant, peripheral European borderland presents us with formidable contradictions which perfectly illustrate the deep intertwining of individual and collective reproductive tropes in biomedical encounters. As Decimo and Gribaldo have rightly argued in the introduction to this volume, '[p]opulations are made geographically identifiable through politics that have historically constructed them as an object of increasing political attention, a resource to monitor, valorize, manage and, ultimately, an object of governmentality'. As an illustration to this observation, in this chapter I argue that maternity care appropriately embodies the tension between stately duties of care and control that governmentality encapsulates. Because of the special protected status occupied by maternal health in European political history since the post World War II era, childbirth represents a unique example of humanitarian governance (Feldman and Ticktin 2010), a site of intervention in which the protection of those who are most vulnerable

becomes entangled in processes of national accountability, deservingness and legitimacy (Bacas and Kavanagh 2013). The peripheral nature of French Guiana within France and the EU as a whole, and the particular place which the Maroni River, a wild frontier *par excellence*, occupies in the local regional imagination, exacerbate these entanglements in the minds of the local maternity healthcare and support staff. As an example of the institutional and cultural contradictions I wish to highlight, I focus on indigenous and tribal women's experience of antenatal and perinatal care on the Maroni river, and the contrasting perspectives of patients and healthcare providers as they come to share the intimate moments preparing for the birth of a newborn baby. Whilst maternity checks require close contact and physical manipulations, interactions between clinical staff and local patients are plagued by misunderstandings and social distance, as the actors involved belong to quite different worlds and often only come to interact with one another at the end of the pregnancy and during childbirth. Because indigenous and tribal women represent a native and yet mobile population of the Maroni river basin, whose rich history has only partially and recently become acknowledged by national states in the form of official documentation and territorial recognition, their encounter with local medical bureaucracy highlights particularly well the contradictions and equivocations I wish to analyze here. As I hope to demonstrate here, on the Maroni river, daily interactions between medical staff and women patients are based on different sets of misunderstandings, practical misunderstandings (such as poor communication, language barriers or bureaucracy), but also ontological misunderstandings (for instance differing ways for patients and staff to deal with unfamiliar people and situations). Rather than being an inevitable consequence of the statelessness which rules this frontier zone, perceived to be a hotspot of informal economy and illegal migration, or solely because of the remoteness of its villages, it is because of mutual misunderstandings, and in particular, wrong assumptions on the part of those who design healthcare policies and those who deliver it, that maternal and neonatal health indicators are rather poor on either bank of the Maroni river (ARS 2011). These inadequacies between health policies and healthcare delivery on the one hand, and local patient's lived worlds on the other, demonstrate the intimate interplay between universalism, hierarchy and subjectivity in relations of care on Europe's periphery.

Contextualizing Healthcare on the Maroni River

The Maroni river is a broad, clear-water river originating in the Tumucumaque mountain range which stretches across the states of Pará and Amapá in northern Brazil, and it flows into the Atlantic Ocean. It marks the boundary between Suriname, to the west, and French Guiana, to the east. French Guiana has the full status of a French overseas *département*, and Suriname, formally known as Dutch Guiana, obtained independence from the Netherlands in 1975. The Maroni therefore constitutes a border between an emerging, postcolonial nation, and one of the European Union's nine Ultra-peripheral Regions. However the Maroni basin is first

and foremost a cultural and social space with a rich history and a strong identity, which is very specific and different from urban centers such as Paramaribo, Suriname's capital city, and Cayenne, French Guiana's departmental capital. This is something which is very present in the minds of the Surinamese and French Guianese, who for the most part are urban Creoles who live on the coast and who have little knowledge or first hand experience of the 'interior' or the 'bush', where mostly indigenous and tribal people live.

Because of its peculiar history and demographics, the entire Maroni basin is perceived as being a place of wilderness typical of the Guianan interior; indeed the Hospital of St. Laurent du Maroni, one of the two hospitals of French Guiana, is permanently understaffed, partly because nurses trained in the Cayenne Institute for Nursing Studies (IFSI[1]) prefer to stay in Cayenne, move to the French Antilles (Guadeloupe and Martinique), or to mainland France, than to be posted on the Maroni River (Lama 2013). In an ironic migratory twist, on the French bank of the river, most civil servants working in the local administration or in the various state healthcare agencies such as the Hospital of St. Laurent are French coming from mainland France. In French Guiana, the mainland French are known as '*métro'*, an abbreviation from Metropolitan French. When it is used by Creoles, the term *métro* is a slightly pejorative term. It encapsulates the idiosyncrasies of France's relation-ship with its overseas territories: the *métro* usually stand out due to their physical appearance, their dress code, their communication, their wealth and their peculiar enclosed sociability. The *métro* who come to work in the local administration, receive as compensation for their relocation, material incentives and advantages, for instance a salary premium of 40% which the Creoles who work alongside them, in the healthcare sector for example, are not entitled to. These disparities tend to foster a feeling of resentment among the least affluent Creoles, who have to get by in an overseas department which has a high cost of living and malfunctioning public ser-vices. But rather than encourage medical staff to settle in French Guiana, these financial perks often have the opposite effect: they allow recently qualified medical students to base themselves in exotic, tropical yet 'safe' placements for the time it takes them to save enough money to travel across South America. In this context, the encounter with patients on the Maroni becomes part of a personal journey into exotic worlds in which there is little time or place for the nurture of long-term bonds, or for developing an insider practical knowledge of how healthcare delivery works on the Maroni (Carde 2010, 2012).

There are of course a few notable exceptions of Metropolitan French who stay and devote their lives to French Guiana; however, a significant part of the Metropolitan French form a highly mobile and perpetually fluctuating collectivity with little long-term engagement with French Guiana. This is particularly true of the healthcare sector where few medical staff remain for more than a year. To give an idea of high staff turnover in the medical sector, I turn to the figures given by Charlotte Weisberg in her ethnography of maternity care in St. Laurent du Maroni: '[t]he medical and midwifery interns practice at the hospital for less than a month; the family medicine

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[1] Institut de Formation en Soins Infirmiers.

residents practice obstetrics at the hospital for a six-month rotation; and the hospital midwives usually practice for six months or one year' (2013: 85).

In French Guiana, besides the hospital, there are four health centers located further upriver in three Maroon villages and in the town of Maripasoula; and there is only one doctor I have met who has stayed in Maripasoula for over a decade. The smaller health posts are located in Amerindian villages and those on the headwaters are attached to the hospital in Cayenne, which means that Amerindian mothers are invited to travel to the maternity ward of the Cayenne hospital to give birth roughly 2 months before their due date.

On the other side of the border, the coastal-interior divide can be felt just as strongly. While the French hospital in St. Laurent is the only one on the river, the health posts of the Surinamese Medical Mission, the primary healthcare network funded by the Surinamese Ministry of Health and dedicated to the populations of the interior, face the same understaffing problems. I have only come across one Creole senior nurse who enjoyed living in the interior and spent 10 years of his life in the Amerindian village of Kwamalasamutu in southwestern Suriname. Since 2007, the Cuban Medical Brigade has been operating in Suriname and a doctor has been posted in the mining settlement of Stoelmanseiland on the Maroni headwaters. The rota of Cuban doctors is slightly longer, 3 years on average; but as these doctors leave their family behind in Cuba when they are posted in Suriname, they rarely stay for longer than what their compulsory service requires. All in all, on either side of the border, these non-native medical collectivities share a detachment from the region and a temporality based on the short-term and the projection of a personal and social future away from the Maroni (Brightman and Grotti 2014).

The Maroni river has a rich colonial and postcolonial history marked by resistance, inter-ethnic conflict and local resilience which can still be strongly felt today. More than a state boundary, the Maroni river is perceived in French Guiana and Suriname as a specific liminal zone inhabited by independent tribal and indigenous collectivities which challenged colonial authorities and were bitterly torn apart by the Civil War of the 1980s.

The Surinamese Civil War (1986–1992) brought lasting disruption and displacement in the Maroni region, where some of the most vicious fighting took place towards the end of the conflict. Local tribal and indigenous populations living on the Surinamese bank of the Maroni fled persecution into French Guiana, concentrating in particular in St. Laurent du Maroni. In the late 1980s, St. Laurent du Maroni, was little more than a sleepy back water, renowned only for its penal colony which had gradually dwindled to full closure at the end of the Second World War. Thirty years ago, St. Laurent's hospital was only a small structure based in the old infirmary of the penal colony, and residents say that until the war, they would commonly cross the river to be treated by the Dutch doctors working in the hospital in Albina, the town opposite St. Laurent on the Surinamese bank.

When Maroon refugees arrived in the St. Laurent area, they were allowed to stay in makeshift camps managed by the armed forces. The French authorities registered them in 1991, giving them temporary identity cards to allow them to circulate freely within a restricted part of the *département* (Kruijt and Hoogbergen 2005: 203), but

without granting them the status of refugees on French soil (French 1991). At the end of the war, these 'non-refugees' were invited to return to Suriname, which many Ndjuka and Saramaka refused to do, as they still feared persecution and had for most of them lost everything in the conflict: their villages had been destroyed, they had no home to return to. Today, eastern Suriname is relatively peaceful, but a large number of Surinamese Maroons have remained in French Guiana, only some of whom have been granted French citizenship, indeed a significant number of Maroon mothers who come to seek antenatal care in St. Laurent today were born in French Guiana, but often do not possess French identity papers or social security, nor do they speak French, which plays a significant role in the way in which they receive care. The Surinamese state never resumed the initiatives for integration and development that were emerging in the early 1980s. The Paramaribo authorities turned their backs on the Maroni and left it devastated: the schools and hospitals were not rebuilt. The principal motor of development and change has instead been the informal economy, most notably that surrounding the gold rush that took root even as the Civil War was drawing to a close at the beginning of the 1990s, further transforming local demographics and integrating the Maroni river to larger regional and international migration networks which spread across the entire sub-continent (Piantoni 2012).

In the past 25 years, thousands of Brazilian migrants, have entered Suriname and French Guiana to work alongside smaller numbers of Maroons and Amerindians, cutting forest and scouring creeks and river beds for gold (Theije 2006; Theije and Bal 2010; Simonian and Da Silva Ferreira 2006). This wide-scale movement of population concentrated on illegal resource extraction has exacerbated social and environmental tensions on the Maroni River. With visible consequences for the environment and the health of local indigenous and tribal populations, gold mining has led to an increase of river pollution, and to the presence of high levels of mercury in river fish, which is part of the daily diet of the populations living on the headwaters. Mercury intoxication can have detrimental effects on the development of children and, above all, fetuses. Pregnancy among indigenous women is now followed with greater anxiety by relatives, and is monitored more nervously during medical visits.

The expansion of the mining frontier on the Maroni is having direct consequences on processes of state interventions and securitization (Brightman and Grotti 2014). While social scientists studying the Suriname-based gold mining and drug trafficking industry have described the area as stateless and relatively peaceful in comparison to other South American mining frontiers, there has been a clear increase in operations aiming at securing the area, or reasserting the state's presence, most notably through the deployment of French military operations and patrols. As the military become a more visible presence, especially upriver from Maripasoula and Stoelmanseiland, interventions in the healthcare sector seem to follow a similar course, especially on the French bank. Healthcare, from policy making to delivery, has become a privileged place for the performance of processes of securitization and state control at the individual and collective level. In this context, in the minds of those who deliver healthcare, childbirth represents a particularly contentious issue. Enmeshed in a discourse of personal and collective security and responsibility,

antenatal care becomes entangled with questions of national identity, bureaucratic regulations, and universal rights to state welfare. But whose personal security is at stake here? And how effective are these securitization discourses in the context of maternal health? This is what I will turn to now by looking at native Amerindian experiences of childbirth policy on the Upper Maroni.

Caring and Civilizing: Maternity Care on the Upper Maroni

The Wayana are a Central Carib population numbering about 2500 people who live across the triple border area separating Suriname, French Guiana and Brazil. They are swidden horticulturalists who live on the banks of rivers or creeks in cognatic settlements traditionally numbering 30–40 people but which now can be five times as big. The villages in which the Wayana live in today on the headwaters of the Maroni river are thus bigger, and tend to last longer than in the past; they also some-times refer to their villages as 'white people's villages' as their foundation resulted from a process of contact and sedentarization which began in the late 1950s. The Wayana villages in Suriname were founded as mission posts by North-American Protestant missionaries in the early 1960s. The remaining Wayana villages which are located on the French Guiana shore of the Maroni River, were founded around the same time, when the French administration started to encourage the 'sedenta-rization' of the population, through the creation of schools and health posts. Although national discourses still tend to represent the Wayana as 'traditional', 'pristine' and thus fragile in the face of contact with the outside world, this contact has arguably been ongoing for a long time, and in its most decisive expression since the arrival of the foreign missionaries three generations ago.

As we have seen, the healthcare system on the Maroni is divided by national traditions: the Surinamese shore is dotted by health posts staffed mainly by local nurses. On the French Guiana side, the health centers and health posts are staffed by Metropolitan French personnel. Whereas health posts in Suriname provide free basic healthcare for all with a centralized system managed from Paramaribo the capital, the delivery of healthcare in French Guiana is divided geographically: the Maroon population on the Maroni river's lower reaches is under the responsibility of the hospital of St. Laurent, located by the mouth of the river, while the Wayana population living on the river's upper reaches is under the responsibility of the hos-pital in Cayenne. The differences in quality of care under both systems derive from strategic policy choices that were made at the foundation of the respective systems. Primary healthcare among the populations of the interior in Suriname was initially gradually designed and managed by a consortium of Protestant missionary organizations. While the Medical Mission has since the 1980s been integrated into the Surinamese Ministry of Health, it retains its original autonomy with its own board of directors, who are often connected to the Protestant mission's church. The basic principles emphasize the training and use of local staff (supervized by a senior nurse from the city), a general involvement in public health and sanitation measures

(such as water purification, etc) and the reliance on radio communication and day-time airlifting to deal with emergencies. Under this regime, antenatal and postnatal checks as well as childbirths are conducted in the health post or at home, with the visit of a gynecologist who having been assigned a specific portion of the interior, flies into each successive village over two consecutive days every month or so. The Medical Mission has in the past 5 years registered a sharp decline in births in Wayana villages on the Surinamese side. Women do not seem to give birth in the health posts anymore, and some suggest they may prefer to cross the border instead.

In French Guiana, healthcare to the interior originally grew out of the emergency department of the Hospital of Cayenne. The health posts in the Wayana villages on the French Guiana side are usually better equipped, but the centralized bureaucratic nature of the French healthcare system, prevents these health posts and their medical personnel to do what Suriname, in line with other emerging tropical nations, is better at doing: hands-on community-based healthcare and sanitation. This results in few Wayana people working in the health posts, and those who do, do so on precarious short-term contracts, since in order to be employed as health worker or nurse they would require a bachelor's qualification in nursing in line with Metropolitan France, something difficult to achieve in these villages where on-site school education ends with primary schools, and where promising Wayana students are faced with the prospect of leaving their village to become a boarder in the regional frontier town of Maripasoula, where the nearest secondary school is located. The doctors travel by canoe at regular intervals to visit the villages and perform routine checks and antenatal screenings with a portable scan machine.

Unlike infectious diseases which require targeted interventions, pregnancy and childbirth represent a process whose outcomes rest on the measurement of risk at social and bodily levels, and both the Wayana and the foreign doctors involved evaluate risk differently. Considered as a particular time in the life of a woman, both shamans and plant healers usually follow the woman and the unborn child with plant preparations and chants. Medical practitioners have for their part considered it either as a hyper-extended social phenomenon or as a self-contained biological procedure. Thus missionary medical personnel focused on the powerful connection between pregnancy and 'satanic' shamanic practice and introduced 'rationalizing' healthcare measures which focused on breaking the connection with the spirit world. On the other hand, secular governmental and non-governmental health initiatives tend to view it in physiological terms centered on the individual female body. There is little to no communication between doctors and women during antenatal visits; and as one French doctor commented to me: 'antenatal checks are for two things: to tell women they cannot take any traditional remedies as these could kill their baby, and to convince them childbirth is a dangerous matter and they have to come to give birth at the hospital in Cayenne if they want to give birth to a live and healthy baby'.

In French Guiana, the relative poor records on women's health have led to a tightening of the policy on hospital births, especially since 2006. Until then a good proportion of Wayana women informally chose to give birth in the local health centre at Maripasoula. This practice is now officially strictly forbidden, and women are

to be flown to the maternity ward in Cayenne, approximately 2 months before they are due, to give birth in a hospital environment. This is to my knowledge the only time Wayana women travel on their own to such a distant sphere of alterity (the city, the coast) for extensive periods of time. During these extended stays, they share hospital rooms with distant affines from other villages, but also strangers such as Creole or Metropolitan French women. Through daily commensality they come to develop intimate social relations with these distant people, including medical staff. Their bodies transform: they eat and sleep like urban people, they have few if no opportunities to talk to their kin. Most crucially, they give birth like urban people: on their own, surrounded by strangers in white gowns whose language they often do not understand, and lying in the 'physiological' position, that is on their back, with their feet stuck in stirrups.

The terms under which childbirth is being uprooted from the village and the familiar context of close kin, and this with increasing regularity, bear profound changes on the ways in which Wayana babies are moulded in-utero and brought into the world, especially when the mothers are young, still children themselves. Concerns on both sides highlight problems with communication and misunderstandings. Midwives point to the difficulty of young mothers leaving their families for the first time for their first birth, being very distressed during labour and experiencing physical and mental complications as a result. Women in the maternity ward in Cayenne worried about the medicines they were told to take, about the difficulty in observing the *couvade* (ritual food prohibitions) away from their relatives, and their lack of trust of the effects of 'machines' and their invisible waves, seen as white people's spirits, on their unborn children. Fetuses are said to be very sensitive to invisible beings with whom they can develop kinship ties even before birth, and these can determine their future lives. In this context a common strategy is not to show up on the day of the scheduled flight from Maripasoula to the Cayenne hospital and to wait until the expecting woman is in labour to set out to give birth in the health centre in Maripasoula. This explains the increase in babies being born in canoes. When willing to talk, young fathers express frustration at not being ascribed any nurturing role during childbirth: they either stay behind in the village or are too busy to navigate their canoe while their partner is in labour to have any physical contact with either mother or child; they claim they do not really follow the postnatal dietary rituals with their wife as she is not there, although I know that some do restrict their eating and hunting in the weeks following the news of the birth, even if mother and baby have not yet returned from the hospital. With the development of distant hospital births, the Wayana see the process of giving birth as closely tied to white people and the city. Life now starts in a distant sphere of alterity which can only be imagined by kin and residential affines, women and their babies develop in this context new forms of processual ties which are not dissimilar to traditional trading partnerships nurtured by their male counterparts in distant Maroon villages or in the city. It appears that with sedentarization and national healthcare policy plans, new ways of moving through space and social environments are being devised by the Wayana. While the possibility of benefiting from the recently introduced family benefits in French Guiana does influence the choice of pregnant indigenous women

as to where to give birth, the prospect of having to be uprooted from relatives for several months to be taken to a large hospital ward in the city leads women to make a choice in their own terms, which explains the increase in 'canoe births'. Faced with little state recognition and scant economic prospects, the Wayana respond to antenatal care in their own terms, insofar as this strategy is one of the last survival strategies that the state is offering them on this frontier zone.

Caring and Controlling: Childbirth and National Identity on the Lower Maroni

During my interviews with medical doctors, when I asked them to reflect on what the future held for Amerindian populations, they often returned to the problem of social welfare and the ravages their introduction into Wayana communities some 20 years ago had provoked. Rather than pinpointing the absence of recognition of land rights, the inadequacy of educational and healthcare policies whose universalism precisely left the Wayana at greater disadvantage, or the obvious lack of economic prospect or the gold mining, it was the money distributed through family benefits which was portrayed as the main problem, the poisoned gift to their fragile collective and personal way of life. With surprising consistency, my French doctor informants returned to how the introduction of benefits had plunged the river populations into a dependency leading to moral and social corruption: alcoholism, prostitution, violence were on the rise. Their attempts at discussing the issue of welfare money at communal gathering with the Maroni populations were met with anger. 'You are a doctor, so you do your job and treat our illness, but don't meddle with the way in which we live our lives, that's none of your business', that is what a doctor was reportedly told during a recent medical visit among the Wayana. The doctor's intention, I was told, was to try and help, but there was a feeling that the Wayana did not want to be helped, they barely came to seek treatment or advice from doctors stopping over in the Maroni villages on their fortnightly trips. 'Trust and common sense; sensible and pro-active'; these words often return in the mouths of doctors and midwifes when they tried to express what they were seeking to instill in the Maroni patients, and for them Maroon and Amerindians alike seemed to consistently lack such qualities.

From the natives' perspective, they were actually being consistent in their treatment of medical staff, whose faces kept changing, and who appeared to stay too little to know much about life on the river. We are faced here with what could be described as an ontological misunderstanding, an equivocation: to the French medical staff, healthcare was a familiar entity which had set guidelines and rules, and it did not matter that the persons running it in the frontline kept changing, the overall structure remained consistent. Yet, for the Wayana or the Maroon populations who privilege personal long-term relations with non-related Others (Grotti 2007, 2012,

2013),[2] this entity appeared amorphous, and deprived of sociability, and furthermore, made of distant Others who were young, inexperienced medical staff at the end of their training, and who seemed to be coming to French Guiana to have an exotic experience, take pictures, and leave again. With representatives of such distant alterity, the Wayana in particular behave in the way in which they treat non-related Others: with cunning distrust, and controlled verbal and physical communication. In practice, as observed by Charlotte Weisberg in her ethnography of maternity care on the Maroni River, French medical hospital staff and local patients rarely meet more than once during medical check-ups preceding birth, and seldom manage to exchange information as they struggle through some French and Sranan phrases (Sranan Tongo, Surinamese creole, is the main *lingua franca* used on the Maroni, alongside the Maroon languages). This lack of direct communication is further hampered by the contradictory directions and requirements given by medical staff who have little knowledge of where to send women for scans or tests when these women have no official entitlement to social security, that is when they have no state medical insurance which would enable them to have their medical treatments reimbursed, or who have pending applications for universal healthcare coverage. Studies on the experience of childbirth in a context of migration regularly mention the problem of communication as detrimental to the quality of care received, leading to medical complications (Bulman and McCourt 2010: 366; Niner et al. 2013: 539; Sauvegrain 2012: 100; Weisberg 2013: 7). Weisberg recounts the comments among hospital staff that women patients are not compliant or reliable; they cannot get them to do what they want. They seem to appear out of nowhere at the end of the pregnancy as if only interested in obtaining free healthcare and so-called 'papers': French identity papers, or entitlements to family benefits or state medical care. The women who come to give birth in St. Laurent du Maroni become then the new face of this history of migration which has marked the region. Pregnant migrants originating from Suriname, and supposedly the entire Guiana region, are understood to cross the Maroni River with a calculating mentality to plan to enjoy free childbirth and to earn benefits from the state, in a move which was contentiously described as 'obstetric migration' 5 years ago by the local politician and ex-maire of St. Laurent du Maroni, Léon Bertrand. But is this perception accurate?

France's laws and healthcare provisions are exceptionally protective of maternity and early childhood, regardless of nationality and status. As a direct consequence of the post-second world war consensus to protect working families, pregnant women and small children are entitled to walk-in free basic health check-ups across the territory through a network of health centers entirely dedicated to them: the PMI, the *Protection Maternelle et Infantile* (Maternal and Child Protection). PMI posts are mostly based in parts of the country which are disadvantaged economically and socially, and are particularly well developed in the overseas territories. Besides these health posts, pregnant women are entitled to seven antenatal visits which comprise regular tests which are performed at the hospital or in a private practice, and

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[2] Non-related Others are distant affines with whom traditionally social relations would have been avoided.

for which they will have to pay in advance if they do not have social security or have not been approved for universal health coverage. Unlike many 'less developed' countries such as Suriname, in French Guiana there are no longer traditional birth attendants, no non-governmental clinics or dispensaries, no locally trained midwives or physicians. There are only private practice and state-employed midwives and physicians, all trained in Metropolitan France (Weisberg 2013: 26).

Since 2000, when a Universal Health Insurance (*Couverture Médicale Universelle*) was introduced in France, non-EU nationals, whether legally present on the territory or not, can claim access to medical care and have their medical expenses reimbursed (Carde 2012: 3). French Guiana, as a French Department, introduced universal healthcare coverage on its territory in the same year, thus paving the way for a legal framework to medical assistance to migrants in a situation of irregularity.[3] The procedure to obtain universal health insurance however is usually fraught with bureaucratic obstacles which can delay the process indefinitely. Nevertheless, France has a special legal provision for the urgent treatment of foreign non-EU citizens on its territory, which means that a person who is illegally present on the territory and does not have any papers or insurance will still receive immediate and free treatment if her life is in danger: for example following an accident. Childbirth is classified as 'urgent care', meaning that any woman is entitled to give birth in France without having to produce any identity papers or social security. As all births are hospital-based, this means that their stay and treatment in hospital will be free. In this context, it is striking to note that France has a budget of 20 million euros for the 'urgent care' of its foreign citizens, and that according to recent estimates from its Regional Agency of Hospitalization, French Guiana uses up to 14 million euros of the total budget (Léveille 2008). Official figures of the birth rates in French Guiana in general and St. Laurent du Maroni in particular make the maternity ward the largest per inhabitant in the whole of the country (Gragnic 2013a, b; Jolivet et al. 2009).[4] It is hard to deny that we are faced with a population boom, astonishing in scale even when compared to the comparatively high birth rate in the rest of France. Whether French Guiana is a veritable 'baby-making factory' or not, the scale of the baby boom contributes to the specific nature of birth on the Maroni river; medical staff come to encounter there a situation which is very different from what their training in Metropolitan France had accustomed them to, and this has consequences for the way in which they perceive and treat patients.

France has recently been reprimanded by a UN human rights body about a 'discriminatory political discourse' associated with 'the increasing difficulties faced by certain inhabitants of [French] overseas territories in accessing health care with-

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[3] It is worth noting that French and EU nationals resident or visiting French Guiana are entitled to exactly the same healthcare coverage as in the rest of France; nevertheless French Guiana, as an Overseas Department, presents some peculiarities typical of remote European peripheries and borderlands such as worse health and economic indicators (ARS-Guyane 2011; Grenier 2011; Jolivet et al. 2009; PAHO/WHO 2012).

[4] Official figures demonstrate high natality rates in St. Laurent du Maroni: in 2009, with 2300 births for a population of 20,000, it placed the birth rates of this small Guyanese town at over 100 births/1000 inhabitants (Jolivet et al. 2009: 80).

out discrimination' (UNHCHR 2010, in Jolivet et al. 2010: 1827). Relations between medical staff and patients are also caught up in anxieties and perceptions of questions of citizenship, as the former tend to assume that expectant mothers who wish to give birth on French soil do so in a bid to obtain French citizenship for their children, and thus to obtain for them the privileges of social security and better opportunities for employment. Medical staff express fears of losing control over patients unaccustomed to the rigors of medical bureaucracy, and fears that patients seek to exploit the system (*see also* Weisberg 2013). This leads staff to produce a discourse of securitization: their claims that the patient's health and the integrity of the state are felt to be at risk lead them to treat patients in a way which alienates the latter, making them less willing to place themselves in the hands of medical staff. Ironically, rather than facilitate access to healthcare for the most disadvantaged patients, recent research suggests that the introduction of the Universal Healthcare Plan has made healthcare providers living in French Guiana feel responsible for controlling what they perceive to be an increasing influx of economic migrants, especially from neighboring countries and the Caribbean. As Estelle Carde suggests, healthcare professionals start to become discretionary regulators of immigration in their daily encounters with migrant claimants (2012: 5). Although existing studies have demonstrated that migration in the region is not driven by health-related motivations but rather by economic ones (Jolivet et al. 2009), the overall perception, regularly used by local authorities and politicians is that migration to French Guiana is driven by healthcare objectives, especially in the case of pregnant women. The Maroni basin, with its history of conflict and migrations, has become a place where medical encounters are marked by the tension between caring and controlling. It is a good example of the contradictions present at the very heart of French republican ideal of universalism, which in this case produce a system in which, as Miriam Ticktin has written: 'apparent regimes of care and compassion, enshrined in principles of universalism, are actually forms of anti-politics insofar as they systematically maintain inequalities and hierarchies' (Ticktin 2011: 19). Yet, as we have seen, recent historical events which have triggered mass migration, and the disparities in health provision and delivery, mean that the existing system is inefficient, overburdening hospitals which have to treat patients who do not benefit from regular consistent check-ups, either because they struggle to travel to them, to understand their purpose, or to be able to pay for them. As a prominent member of staff of the maternity ward of the hospital of St. Laurent once said to me in his office in November 2011: 'We try to give first world solutions to third world problems, and this makes us inefficient, inefficient with our patients and with our means'. Some of the long-term staff on the Maroni are aware of the misunderstandings which cause the system's shortcomings, but as long as border controls, migration and welfare entitlements remain emotionally-charged topics in wider national and international discourses, maternity care for minority populations is bound to remain a contentious issue.

Conclusion

> [A]lthough the language of universal humanity provided a way for colonial subjects to
> make claims for a different political reality, it was also part of colonial logics of governance.
> The idea of a 'civilizing mission' ...relied on a hierarchical understanding of [a] human
> community which suggested that European powers and populations had an obligation to
> assist the colonized in developing their human capacity (Feldman and Ticktin 2010: 8).

'But of course!' retorted the senior midwife I was interviewing when I asked her
whether she thought indigenous and tribal women living on the remote upper Maroni
ought to face the long and tiring journey by canoe and plane to travel to Cayenne to
give birth. 'Giving birth in a level-2 maternity ward[5] is the human right of every
woman living in France!' she added with warm enthusiasm. The universalism of her
comment was a spontaneous manifestation of the sincere commitment of my inter-
locutor; a French citizen from metropolitan France, she had settled in French Guiana
as a young trainee, fallen in love with the country and decided to stay. She took a
great interest in the unique diversity of this French Overseas Department and had a
personal fondness for traditional beliefs surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. But
never did she doubt that the clearest manifestation of France's universal commit-
ment to equality was in its delivery of the best quality of care to all expecting moth-
ers. And the measure for what good quality of care meant could only be found in
fixed universal guidelines. Yet it was precisely this universalism which caused
inequality (a blatant 'hierarchy' as eloquently referred to in the quotation above) in
a country in which a significant proportion of its inhabitants live in remote tropical
hinterlands, and who found hospitals daunting and alienating sites of alterity and
danger, and the cause of disruptions and misunderstandings of the kind I have
described. My contribution to this volume is thus not only intended to be about
indigenous and tribal women's experiences of maternity care in a border region, but
also a study of their relationship with urban, Creole society, and, beyond that, a
reflection on their relationship as socially and geographically distant minorities
within nation-states, one of these being a European nation. While from the
Amerindian and Maroon patients' perspective there is no problem as such with bio-
medical procedures and interventions – quite the contrary, they hold these in high
regard – it is rather with the sociality of medical encounters that difficulties arise. It
would seem that, as we have seen, the governance of maternity care cannot take
place without hierarchy and power. Control and care may represent the two ambiva-
lent sides of the same reality, even more so in a remote periphery where perceptions
of lawlessness and wilderness by internal elite migrants may unconsciously lead

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[5] Maternity wards in France are classified according to the level of care they can offer. Level 1
maternity wards (*maternité de niveau 1*) offer standard obstetric care for pregnancies which are
deemed 'low risk'. They are staffed by midwifes, obstetricians and pediatricians. Level 2 maternity
wards offer standard obstetric care, as well as a neonatal services. Level 3 maternity wards offer
standard obstetric and neonatal care, but also have a neonatal intensive care unit. The maternity
ward of the Andrée Rosemon Hospital in Cayenne is level 3, whereas the maternity ward of the
Centre Hospitalier de l'Ouest Guyanais in St. Laurent is level 2.

them to seek security in displays of power. In the contrasting way in which two healthcare systems expanded into the interior it is clear that the integration process was conducted with a different objective. Suriname is not only unlike France, but also differs from larger Latin American nation states such as Venezuela and Brazil, which have aimed at a systematic operational presence to control borders. Suriname demonstrates a historical readiness to delegate the fate of its minority population to third parties, in this case the Church, and its operational arm, the Medical Mission, with a clearly marked preference for primary community healthcare, traditional midwifery and village home-births. The fascinating encounter of these two radically different healthcare plans along an Amazonian river becomes particularly evident in the study of antenatal and perinatal care towards their most distant and hard-to-reach minorities.

Childbirth is one of the fundamental places where the nature of care is deeply entangled with the ambiguity of minority and migrant populations' involvement with the state (Lentin and Luibhéid 2004; Luibhéid 2002, 2013). As tangible embodiment of the future direction of a nation's identity, babies born in a context of migration or incomplete documentation are often wrongly perceived by those delivering and designing care as the entry into citizenship and welfare for entire families. And whilst many of those delivering care 'on the front-lines', as a nurse once ironically called them, strive in their daily practice to inventively circumvent bureaucracy in order to assist patients and nurture relations of trust, individual subversive attempts take place against the backdrop of political discourses built on powerful images such as 'obstetric migration' or 'birth tourism'. Despite their historical claim to political neutrality, generous national healthcare policies become singled out as threats to national integrity and prosperity which carry in them the seed for future dangers. Because of their potential for multiplication, pregnant bodies, despite but also because of their sanctuary status, become the focus of intense personal and collective control, in medical encounters and national discourses.

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Migrant Incorporation in South Tyrol and Essentialized Local Identities

Dorothy L. Zinn

Introduction

Within the overall focus of this volume on the intersections of migration and national boundaries in the production of identities, the present chapter examines the case of the Italian autonomous province of South Tyrol.[1] In this setting, the historically consolidated social division between Italian and German-speaking populations has had to come to terms in recent years with the increasing presence of migrants from around the world: these migrants are settling in the province and are further raising the population through family reunifications and childbirth in loco. I suggest that it is impossible to reflect on the social incorporation of recent migrant populations to South Tyrol without attending to some of the historical dimensions of conflict and contestation that have resulted in what I refer to as essentialized local identities and their material and social effects. In this situation, categories of internal diversity that are strongly recognized and highly institutionalized are now reckoning with newer phenomena of diversity provoked by the settlement of migrants of 137 different nationalities. Consequently, an analysis of South Tyrol's institutional definition of differences (Decimo and Gribaldo, introduction to this volume) cannot merely refer to an 'us/them' distinction of autochthonous citizens/foreign migrants, but rather, it must take into account underlying 'us/them' categories based on ethnolinguistic divisions that existed prior to the mass arrival of migrants. Based on an anthropological approach that aims to 'study through' policies (Wright and Reinhold 2011) targeting the migrant population, this chapter explores how the complex configuration of governmentality in South Tyrol produces migrant categorization. In this sense, I make reference to a Foucauldian analytic framework, in which the term

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'biopolitics' describes 'a new technology of power […that] deals with the population as a political problem' (Foucault 2003: 242, 245). Foucault developed this notion to capture changes emerging in the eighteenth century, whereby governments sought to calibrate their actions on the basis of a population's characteristics (Foucault 2008: 317). With regard to South Tyrol, I seek to demonstrate that we cannot separate the institutional biopolitics that the provincial government places in motion with regard to contemporary immigrants and their children from other biopolitical aspects that regard the relations among the protected linguistic minorities (German and Ladin-speaking) and the Italian language group present in the territory. Within this examination, I consider schooling to be a strategic site for processes of social reproduction, and therefore of particular interest for thinking about processes of migrant incorporation.[2]

Looking at the rapidly growing presence of immigrants to South Tyrol and their children over the last two decades, I ask how these new populations are fitting in: are they forcing a rethinking of established categories, or are they subsumed by them? In what ways is the handling of immigrants and foreign pupils related to provincial governmentality? What I hope to achieve is not, perhaps, a definitive reply to these questions, but at least a partial realization of what Feldman (2012) has termed an 'ethnographic displacement':

> …[Ethnography] 'displaces by insisting on the ethnographer's adoption of counterintuitive standpoints, so that new possibilities for interpretation and action can emerge. Second, it foregrounds historical contingency so that what is recognized as hegemonic, dominant, and seemingly omnipotent can also be recognized as socially constructed, and thus socially contestable, processes' (Feldman 2012: 19).

Following a brief description of the historical backdrop to the current ethnolinguistic groupings in South Tyrol, I will discuss the reception of contemporary migration in local political discourses and the need for migrants to choose sides, thereby affiliating themselves with the Italian or German-speaking groups. I then illustrate how technologies of governmentality in South Tyrol reproduce essentialized identities as a form of defense. Shifting the focus to the educational system, I point to the work of the special statistics office ASTAT as another site of biopolitical technology. The latter part of the chapter treats political discourses that relate specifically to the presence of foreign pupils in the educational system and the wider implications of such discourses for migrant incorporation. The discussion is punctuated with descriptive excerpts from the ethnographic research carried out in South Tyrolean schools.

The work presented here is based on data collected as part of a project regarding the category of foreign pupils in the South Tyrolean school system. Along with a discourse analysis of material from Provincial Council session minutes, media representations and the special provincial statistics office, I conducted ethnographic research during the entire 2013/2014 school year. This fieldwork took place in an Italian-language elementary and a German-language elementary, volunteering as a

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[2] Of course, the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) was important in laying the foundations for this attention to schooling.

mother-tongue assistant to the English teachers in both schools for four months in each; I also visited a few other schools elsewhere in the province. The school research included participant observation in-class and throughout the schools, informal and semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators, and analysis of policy documents; additionally, I have followed up the original period of participant observation with subsequent visits to the schools and unstructured interviews with the administrators and teachers. I have also conducted ethnographic research in the broader (Bourdieuian) field of migration in South Tyrol, through participation in a number of meetings, seminars and working groups related to the implementation of the 2011 Provincial Law on Integration. In addition to innumerable events and exchanges making up the ethnographic fieldwork, interviews were conducted with 38 people from the educational sector and the migration field, while seven key informants were consulted on multiple occasions above and beyond a more formal interview.[3]

Essentialized Identities in the Local Context

The province of Südtirol/Alto Adige was for several centuries a territory of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, but after Austria's defeat in World War I, it was ceded to Italy. Shortly thereafter, the rise of the Fascist regime led to an aggressive policy of Italianization of this border region, including a harsh repression of the German language and Germanic cultural forms, forced Italianization of German surnames and the administrative apparatus, suppression of German-language schooling, and the promotion of internal migration to the province of numerous Italians from other regions (Steineger 2009). In the wake of Fascism's fall, political representatives of the German-speaking minority, numerically a majority within South Tyrol, sought an arrangement for a significant degree of political and cultural autonomy, with some arguing for secession from the Italian state and/or re-joining Austria (Bergonzi and Heiss 2004). Some of the more extremist separatists carried out acts of violence in the 1960s and 1970s, thereby worsening a long-standing atmosphere of tension between the German-speaking population and the Italian state, as well as the resident Italian language group. However, the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972, which was implemented over the course of the subsequent years, gave extensive guarantees of protection to the German and Ladin-speaking minorities[4] (Baur 2000). This new regime of protection established not only a series of provisions to

[4] The Ladins in South Tyrol are estimated to be a population of about 20,000, circa 4.5% of the total population of 505,000 inhabitants, whereas the German and the Italian speakers represent, respectively, approximately 69% and 26.5% (ASTAT 2012). For the purposes of the discussion here, I will deal with primarily with the German and Italian language groups.

guarantee the right to public and official use of the minority languages, but also a quota system (the *Proporz*) that regulates access to public jobs, public resources and certain political positions. Moreover, and of particular importance to this discussion, the entire provincial administration was reconstructed along a tripartite division according to language groups; this division entailed the creation of three separate school systems based on the language of instruction (Baur 2008: 38).

The social division according to language-group membership is thus mirrored in and effectively reinforced by institutional mechanisms that recognize only the German, Italian and Ladin language groups on an official level. The weighty legacy of the past, contemporary institutional arrangements, and finally, a widespread social division throughout the society between German and Italian speakers (Baur 2000; Medda-Windischer et al. 2011; Chisholm and Peterlini 2011; Riccioni 2009) have all helped to form a local tendency to essentialize identity on the basis of language. I use the expression 'essentialized identity' to describe how members of the population are placed into only one of the three categories, reducing the complexity of their identity to one purportedly fixed essence of their being: language, especially through the notion of 'mother tongue' (cf. Schweigkofler 2000). Scholars from a host of disciplines and perspectives have critiqued such essentialized conceptions of identity,[5] and many have countered them with a position of constructivism, which can arguably take better into account identity's mutability, situatedness and fuzziness, as well as possible forms of hybridization. In the discussion throughout the rest of this chapter, I will clarify how an understanding of these essentialized local identities in South Tyrol is crucial to comprehending how local governmentality is acting to incorporate migrants and their children.

The Dejo Elementary School

Here I would like to insert a brief ethnographic detour[6]:

'I've calculated that there are only a few weeks in the year that they get sun here,' commented Fabio as we got out of his car on a chilly, overcast winter morning in the South Tyrolean village that hosts the Italian-language elementary school where he commutes to work. This is a school that, to the best of my knowledge, is unique in Italy: the first school to have a student population of 100% non-Italian citizens, or as locals working in schooling put it in both German and Italian, 'pupils with migratory background.' Eleven students of various nationalities (though mostly born in

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[5] Lack of space here prevents a thorough discussion of this point and the scholarly debates around it, but we find strong critiques of essentialized conceptions of identity within feminist/gender theory, cultural studies, post-structuralism and postmodernism. Even so, Gayatri Spivak (1988), for example, has argued that forms of 'strategic essentialism' may be acceptably deployed by some marginalized/subaltern groups to forward their revendications.

[6] Here and elsewhere, in order to respect the anonymity of the schools studied and the various people involved with them, I have used pseudonyms and have changed a few biographical details.

Italy) are in a single class that spans from first to fourth grades: Macedonians, Pakistanis, Albanians, a Pole, Moroccans. The enrolment of four brothers among these students keeps the school from closing; 'You could name the school after the Dejo family,' quipped the acting director, himself a rather rare bird in Italian school administration as a 'second generation', the child of an Arab immigrant and a Sardinian who arrived here from another Italian region. Given such premises, one might almost be tempted to imagine the school as a promising set for a reality show. The school is located on the first floor of a building that also houses its German-language counterpart on the ground floor; the children of the two schools rarely mix. Based on this spring's pre-enrolments, it appears that next year the students in the German-language elementary will also be 100% non-Italian citizens.

If I am dwelling at some length on this special case of the village's school, it is not simply to muse about it as a curious mutation of the South Tyrol school system. Rather, I am interested in considering this school as a result of the intersection of a number of different biopolitical lines, as a point of condensation of various South Tyrolean biopolitical forces taken to their logical conclusion. Indeed, I suggest that by tracing this example, we can to some extent illustrate a few of the relevant processes I wish to treat in this chapter. With reference to the thought of Foucault (2009), I understand the types of biopolitics deployed here to embrace what Foucault has called 'security apparatuses' and 'technologies'; as Foucault notes, however, such security apparatuses do not simply substitute legalistic and disciplinary technologies and apparatuses, but instead weave themselves together with them (ibid.: 107, ff.).

The very fact that such a microscopic school can even exist at all is due to an important choice of the Autonomous Province to favour rural areas and its ability to implement policies in this direction. Elsewhere in Italy a school this small would long have been forced to close or consolidate with another one. The policy of keeping tiny schools and other services viable in remote parts of the Province has helped to prevent flight from rural areas; it is a policy based in part on a strong ideologization of the relationship of the people (*das Volk*) to the land as an element of identity for the German-speaking minority. But even within an Alpine terrain that historically has presented a number of challenges to population survival and reproduction (cf. Cole and Wolf 1974), the village's unsavoury location begs the question of why someone would want to settle there in the first place: as Fabio noted, the village has a dismal climate due to its position nestled in a narrow crevice bend in the valley. Historically, in fact, prior to Fascism it was a choice location for strategic, not residential, purposes; under Fascism, however, it became an outpost for the Italian state because of its location along the train lines running through the province. Italian colonial policies in South Tyrol under Fascism, including internal migration from other areas of Italy, produced several analogous situations throughout the territory: small communities, predominantly of Italian speakers from other regions, that grew around the presence of various representatives of the State—train workers, but also Customs officers and Carabinieri military personnel. The school system, which under Fascism had helped to implement policies of forced Italianization of the German-speaking population, also had to accommodate the families of these workers. Since the advent of the Second Autonomy Statute in 1972, families have had the

right to school their children in their mother tongue, by virtue of Article 19, which reads as follows:

> In the province of Bolzano, instruction in elementary and secondary schools is carried out in the Italian or German mother tongue of the students by teachers for whom that language is equally mother tongue. Instruction in the second language is mandatory in the elementary schools, beginning in the second or third grade, according to what is to be established by provincial law by the respective linguistic group, and in secondary school, given by teachers for whom the language is mother tongue.[7]

This basic framework remains in place today, with each separate school system having its corresponding political referents and administrative apparatus. As a result, we find two different elementary schools in the village serving a tiny group of students.

The local population of the village has undergone a dramatic shift in recent years related to demographic trends affecting the entire province. First, the Schengen Treaty permitting free movement since 1994 between the Italian and Austrian borders, and the relative calm following periods of great ethnonationalist tension in the post-war decades, have led to a demobilization of the agents of the Italian state in the village and in other similar settlements. At the same time, since the early 1990s there has been a quite significant rise in the numbers of migrants arriving and settling in South Tyrol, gradually expanding from the larger urban areas to peripheral locations like the village. Former residents who could afford to do so have moved to other, more appealing towns and villages in the vicinity, leaving behind housing available at lower costs to a burgeoning local population of migrants (ASTAT 2015).[8]

We thus find today, at the intersection of various biopolitical measures through the last century involving migration, reproduction and identity, the counterintuitive situation of the village's Italian-language elementary, where not a single student is a mother-tongue Italian speaker, and yet it is these 'foreign pupils'[9] and the migrant population more generally that keep afloat an outpost of the Italian language, culture and State. This is one unintended consequence of a type of security apparatus that developed around the need to protect ethnolinguistic minority identity and its reproduction, itself a reaction to Italian internal migration in the Fascist period and its aftermath in the twentieth century. Today this apparatus in South Tyrol has to

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[7] Translation by the author. Article 19 raises numerous interrogatives that will be pertinent to the discussion here. First, it is based on a scenario in which the mother tongues for instruction are only the three languages that are officially recognized—German, Italian and Ladin—and does not include languages that are newly present with migration. As many families, commentators and activists have pointed out, the Statute makes the concept of mother tongue exclusive and does not allow for bi- or multilingual situations, whose numbers have increased in recent decades. It should also be noted that the idea of *Hochdeutsch* as a language of instruction does not correspond to the actual mother tongue of most German-speaking South Tyroleans, which is in fact a variant of South Tyrolean dialect. As we will see, families' decisions of which system to enrol their children in is a matter of free choice.

[8] I avoid providing specific figures here in order to protect the locale's anonymity.

[9] I use inverted commas here to indicate the problematic features of this label, which—as will be clearer below—embraces a host of different situations, while neglecting others. The official categorization does not always coincide precisely with broader public perceptions. For ease of reading, I will not use the inverted commas elsewhere.

engage with a changing population that—according to the narratives suggested by the statistics[10]—is characterized by, on the one hand, the demographic decline of the historical groups, and on the other hand, the increasing presence of new residents from outside the Italian state.[11] I will examine this more closely below.

Migration in Political Discourses

As elsewhere in Italy, the presence of migrants in the South Tyrol's workforce is widely and often grudgingly acknowledged as a necessity by the long-standing residents. From the 1990s on, right-wing forces in both the German language and Italian language groups have often displayed anti-immigrant, xenophobic or racist rhetoric. Even moderate political representatives occasionally suggest or argue that migrants and their families access too great an amount of public resources or are disproportionately responsible for violent or criminal behaviour.

As the phenomenon of immigration has increased and become structurally constant and considerable, over the last decade an awareness has gradually developed of the need for a reflection on how the migrants are becoming incorporated into South Tyrolean society. This need for reflection has given rise to discourses in the public sphere favoured by the mass media, numerous debates in the Provincial Council, and the gathering of statistics on the migrant population. Because the social fabric in South Tyrol is marked by a strong social division of language groups, immigrants who settle in the province are fundamentally required to 'choose sides'—that is, for the most part, integration does not occur within a unified multilingual receiving society, but rather into a portion of the society in which one of the official languages dominates.

Without offering here a meticulous reconstruction, I would like to simply signpost a few significant moments that frame the ongoing attention to foreign pupils that I discuss below. Representatives of the Italian-speaking centre-left began to argue for a provincial law to favour immigrant integration in 2007.[12] In the same period, a striking policy paper was produced by representatives of the hegemonic German-language party, the Südtiroler Volkspartei (Pahl et al. 2007). The document speaks openly about political competition between the Italian and German-language groups to win over immigrants as future citizens and voters, a 'natural and legitimate' competition for the 'sides' [*Seite*].[13] Again in 2007, the Provincial government created a new organ, the Language Centres, to promote instruction in the local languages for school-age children of migrants (I will treat this further below).

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[10] In his discussion of state writing, Gupta (2012: 157) points out that '…the comparison facilitated by statistics creates narratives of its own.'

[11] See, for example ASTAT 2008 for a lengthy version of this narrative and its consequences for the South Tyrol educational system.

[12] Interview with Paolo Atanasio, 14.01.2013.

[13] p. 13. I would like to acknowledge Paolo Atanasio for making this document available.

Subsequently, in 2010 a number of German-language politicians were alarmed when the national Italian government made Italian language learning a new requirement for immigrants' long-term stay permits. Seeing this as a risk of creating further incentives for immigrants to integrate into 'the Italian side', they argued that in South Tyrol, German should be accepted as an equivalent alternative, otherwise the new requirements would constitute a violation of the Autonomy Statute. In the end, they wrangled a compromise whereby German language acquisition would entitle immigrants to a significant number of extra points toward gaining a stay permit. In this way, a technology aimed at favouring Italianization on the national level was neutralized as a threat to the province's German-speaking group. The ambivalence towards migrant incorporation is also visible in the difficulty in passing effective provisions for social 'integration': in 2011, after several years of debate, the Provincial Council passed a long-awaited provincial law, which in the end established rather vague and lukewarm measures, criticized on both left and right ends of the political spectrum.

With this bit of background regarding immigrant incorporation in South Tyrol, it is necessary to emphasize that in this context, as they eventually naturalize as Italian citizens, immigrants will be asked to declare their belonging or affiliation with one of the three recognized language groups. That is, 'siding' with one linguistic group or another is not an abstract notion, but one that is solicited in concrete practice by another security technology through which they will be called upon to essentialize their identities: the Declaration of Linguistic Group Belonging. The discussion that follows treats such practices of self-essentialization as technologies to combat the risk of ethnic identity decline, and I will gradually trace the connections of these practices with schooling and the category of foreign students.

Self-Essentialization as Defence

Schooling is a site for disciplining individual pupils, as Foucault has so well pointed out (1977), but on the level of the *population*, it acts as a key agent of social reproduction. In South Tyrol, however, this social reproduction entails first and foremost the reproduction of the social division between the leading groups, the Italian and German speakers (cf. Nardon-Schmid 2008). The configuration of the South Tyrolean educational system, with its rigid separation into sub-systems according to language of instruction, is quite explicitly a technology for the defence of minority language, culture and identity. Over the last two decades, the unification of the school systems has been utterly taboo on the part of the hegemonic German-speaking political forces, and even milder proposals of more efficacious plurilingual language instruction—sought by sundry grassroots actors and some single school administrators—have had to battle their way strenuously to emerge as 'experimental' projects (cf. Pichler 2008). The reason for this is that the prevailing ideology holds that forms of 'mixing' would erode the German mother tongue and lead to a loss of language, culture and identity (Baur 2000).

Although keeping enrolments robust is a concern, the stakes are not simply the schools themselves and the civil enculturation effected through them (Schiffauer et al. 2004; Bourdieu 1999: 62) based on the different language and cultural content transmitted. What is also at stake is the demographic balance of (self-)essentialized groups in the population, a balance that determines the distribution of various positions and resources. Here we must consider another technology promoted by the Second Autonomy Statutes for guaranteeing the defence of the minority linguistic groups: the ethnic *Proporz* and the declarations on which it is based. At Census time, every resident who is an Italian citizen is called upon to fill out a form declaring him or herself a member of one of the three officially recognized ethnolinguistic groups, defined in essentialistic terms according to language: Italian, German or Ladin speakers. There is no category for 'other', multiple or hybrid identifications, and citizens who do not consider themselves members of these groups are requested to affiliate themselves [*aggregarsi*] with one. The results of the Census are then used to establish quotas for public jobs and some resources (such as public housing) on the basis of the resulting proportions of each group in the total resident population of citizens.[14] In the 2011 Census, this declaration was made anonymous for the first time; however, citizens who intend to compete for public jobs or access certain public resources must file a personal declaration with the court in Bolzano.[15] Until only very recently, foreign nationals residing in South Tyrol were not allowed to file a declaration. Because this caused their de facto exclusion from public employment, even in cases in which they had won competitions, it was hailed to be a victory by migrant advocates when, in April 2014, it was decided that non-citizens, too, would be allowed to categorize themselves into one of the three official groupings.

We must therefore keep in mind that a rhetoric of demographic and cultural danger and technologies to combat it were already well in place before the so-called new migration in South Tyrol began to take off from the early 1990s on. This rhetoric and these technologies have justified practices of self-essentialization that call upon an individual to make a choice of self-definition. As I will seek to demonstrate below, practices of self-essentialization are also related to the schooling of foreign pupils.

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[14] The *Proporz* was initially conceived as a form of affirmative action to redress significant historic imbalances that worked against public sector employment for the linguistic minorities.

[15] This declaration depends on individual decisions: in effect, people are called upon to essentialize themselves. There are also forms of 'strategic essentialism', particularly in the case of Italian speakers who declare themselves members of the German language group, for example to have a better chance of gaining a post, seeing as the numbers allotted are higher. While I know of no empirical data on this phenomenon, anecdotes related to me show that German speakers in the workplace may not take kindly to such 'eccentric choices.' It should also be noted that self-essentialism is not necessarily forever: it is possible for citizens to modify their language group identification. Foucault (2009: 45–49) points out the role played by free choice or laisser-faire in security apparatuses, as opposed to disciplinary ones that seek total control: 'The apparatus of security… 'lets things happen" (ibid.: 45).

The Provincial Statistics Office

First, however, I would like to make an excursus through the security apparatus by way of the Provincial Statistics Office, ASTAT. With its offices housed in a vast provincial administration building in Bolzano whose interior vaguely resembles New York's Guggenheim Museum, ASTAT is a useful barometer for gauging how foreign students have become an object of political and administrative attention. ASTAT assiduously gathers statistics and issues rigorously bilingual news bulletins and reports regarding foreign students under various rubrics, from their statistical yearbook to studies of immigration in South Tyrol, as a category within their annual monitoring of the educational system (entitled *Instruction in Numbers*), and since 2006, in periodic reports specifically dedicated to data regarding the presence of foreign students. As one of the friendly employees explained to me, they receive the mandate to prepare reports on specific issues directly from the Provincial government.

Following Gupta (2012), I consider statistics to be a form of state writing. Gupta argues that state writing is not an epiphenomenon, but instead constitutive of the state itself (ibid.:143). Although we commonly dichotomize narrative prose and statistics, statistics have become 'part of the prose of the world' (ibid.:153), and I therefore seek to demonstrate how they narrate the South Tyrolean case. Up until the early 1990s, the majority of immigrants arrived in South Tyrol from German-speaking areas: (West) Germany, Austria and Switzerland.[16] The children of these families overwhelmingly entered the German-language school system. As migration from other areas began to become a somewhat visible phenomenon, first from Morocco and subsequently from Albania, foreign pupils began to enter into the Italian-language school system as well. By examining the data reported in the Statistical Yearbook from 1985 to 2012, we see that foreign pupils get 'on the map' as a category only starting in 2002. The 2002 Statistical Yearbook, in fact, marks a new phase in the analysis of the provincial population: for the first time a series of tables report statistics on foreign students, displaying tables covering the preceding ten school years. Of course, analogous to what many observers have noted in discussing 'second generations' in Italy as a whole, the definition of a category denominated 'foreign pupils' [*ausländische Schüler/alunni stranieri*] in the statistics is itself problematic in that a large segment of these pupils were actually born in South Tyrol.[17] The Italian citizenship regime, however, does not recognize *ius soli*.[18]

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[16] In 1990, nearly ¾ of foreign residents were from German-speaking countries (Schmuck 2012).

[17] In the 2013/2014 school year, 74.5% of foreign students in nursery school were born in Italy (ASTAT 2014c).

[18] The current Italian citizenship law heavily favors the criterion of Italian ancestry; while it is possible to acquire Italian citizenship through marriage and residency, it is an extremely lengthy and complex process whose outcome is uncertain. Upon reaching age eighteen, children born in Italy to foreign parents who can demonstrate continuous residency from birth can apply for Italian citizenship, but it is a very short window of opportunity that generally expires after 1 year. For further discussion, see Zinn (2010, 2011) and Decimo (2015).

At the same time, this category does not include children of couples formed by an Italian citizen and a non-citizen, nor does it comprise children who have arrived through international adoptions, who automatically acquire Italian citizenship through the adoption process.

The various charts, graphs, tables and texts relating to the presence of foreign pupils offer wide-ranging data on different aspects: their presence in absolute figures and percentages in the school system as a whole, with breakdowns according to the single language systems and level of schooling; numbers on the nationalities present and breakdowns of enrolments by continents; breakdowns according to specific zones of the province; rates of school failure as compared to the population of Italian-citizen pupils in each language system. With all this proliferation of statistical data, however, it is striking that not all of forms of information are presented in equal measure in the more comprehensive reports. For example, for the 2012/2013 school year, data are offered on the school choices of foreign students in kindergarten: 54.7% enrolled in German/Ladin-language schools, and 45.3% in Italian-language schools. The text in the special report *Foreigners in the Schools of Bolzano Province, 1995/1996–2012/2013* qualifies the Italian-language statistic as 'the lowest figure in the last 18 years' (ASTAT 2014a: 11), echoing a similar remark in the 2011 version of the report (ASTAT 2011: 12). Yet no corresponding figures nor comments on school choice are provided for the other four school categories; as it happens, kindergarten was the first category of schooling in which enrolments of foreign students in absolute figures were greater in the German-language system than in the Italian-language system.[19] Interestingly, the story told in this state writing, as described below, does not yet translate into a wider shift on all levels of the school system, in fact leaving open the possibility that alternative decisions are made subsequent to kindergarten or elementary school. On the ethnographic ground, indeed, I encountered numerous examples of students moving from one school system to another.

When I first began to discuss the presence of foreign pupils in the school system with actors in the local migration field, the narrative I heard depicted the Italian-language school system as, until quite recently, the default choice for foreign students. In point of fact, in absolute numbers, there has been a relatively balanced distribution between the Italian and German-language systems (cf. Table 2).[20] It would appear that, although they appear statistically, the numerous students who are citizens of German-speaking countries simply have not figured in general narratives describing enrolment trends.[21] Indeed, if we break down the category of foreign

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[19] Subsequent to that publication, the 2013/2014 school year registered the first incidence in which more foreign pupils enrolled in German-language elementary schools than Italian-language ones (the author's elaboration of data from ASTAT 2014b).

[20] This is true even looking at the statistics available from the mid-1990s on. However, the absolute figures are somewhat less balanced between the German and Italian-language systems if we consider single levels of school from middle school and high school levels.

[21] As recently as the 2011/2012 school year, 410 out of 3383 foreign students in German-language schools were citizens of Austria or Germany (Atanasio 2012).

students into sub-categories by continent, we see that an overwhelming 69.4% of these students and those from other E.U. countries choose the German-language schools.[22] In a specular fashion, 68% of students of African and Latin American nationalities enrol in Italian-language schools, and in the narration of 'foreign pupils' as a whole, it is this latter presence that has striking visibility. Students with nationalities from non-E.U. European countries and Asia feature an almost equal enrolment distribution between the two systems, with a slight preference for German-language schools (54.2% and 53.8%, respectively).

The picture looks quite different, however, when we consider the numbers of pupils as a percentage of the total student population in each system. Because the total student population in the German-language system is much larger than that of the Italian-language system, the presence of foreign students is much more diluted within it. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the substantially greater weight of the foreign population in the Italian-language school system.

Moreover, foreign-pupil school choice percentages should also be compared with the percentages represented by the language groups themselves in the general population. According to the 2011 Census, self-declared German speakers represent 69.4% of the resident population, while self-declared Italian speakers are 26%. In absolute numbers and considering the percentages in relation to the Italian-language

Table 1 Foreign pupils (non-Italian citizens) in South Tyrol as a percentage of total enrolment within the Italian and German-language school systems according to school level, 2013/2014 school year[a]

School level	German-language school system	Italian–language school system
Kindergarten	10.0%	25.2%
Primary school	7.0%	22.7%
Middle school	5.2%	22.5%
High school	3.5%	17.5%
Professional schools	5.4%	35.2%

Data from ASTAT (2014b)
[a]NB: ASTAT statistics provided for the German-language schools aggregate enrolments in German- and Ladin-language schools; the latter are not considered in this discussion, as they account for a small percentage of the total

Table 2 Foreign pupils (non-Italian citizens) in South Tyrol as percentages of total enrolment within the Italian and German-language school systems, 2013/2014 school year)

School system	Total enrolment	Foreign students	Percentage of foreign students/total
Italian-language	21,359	4871	22.8%
German-language	63,087	4263	6.76%

Author's elaboration of data from ASTAT (2014b)

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[22] Data on school system choice according to geographic areas are from Koordinierungsstelle für Einwanderung/Servizio Coordinamento Immigrazione 2013:25.

Table 3 Foreign students (non-Italian citizens) according to language choice for schooling, in all South Tyrol schools, 2009/2010–2013/2014 school years[a]

School year	Total foreign enrolments	German-language schools		Italian-language schools	
		Absolute	% of total	Absolute	% of total
2008/2009	6413	2750	42.9%	3663	57.1%
2009/2010	7071	3084	43.6%	3987	56.4%
2010/2011	7695	3351	43.5%	4344	56.5%
2011/2012	8447	3800	45.0%	4647	55.0%
2012/2013	8906	4106	46.1%	4800	53.9%
2013/2014	9257	4386	47.4%	4871	52.6%

Author's elaboration of data from ASTAT (2014b)
[a]NB: ASTAT statistics provided for the German-language schools aggregate enrolments in German and Ladin-language schools; the latter are not considered in this discussion, as they account for a small percentage of the total

population as a whole, then, foreign students are disproportionately represented in the Italian-language schools. Taken together, these sets of statistics point to a 'browning' of the Italian-language school system. Despite the widely held (and racializing) perception that foreign pupils go by default into the Italian-language system, a more recent discourse in the last few years holds that the trend is shifting, and that foreign pupils are tending to favour German-language schools.[23]

The data over the last several years (Table 3) do bear out the trend toward German-language schools, but it is most visible at the level of kindergarten, where since 2009/2010, foreign pupils enrolled in the German-language kindergartens have outnumbered in absolute terms those enrolled in Italian-language kindergartens. Even the small differences in percentages, however, become the object of intense scrutiny, for as we will see, the Statistics Office projections suggest high stakes in the struggle to secure recruits to each side.

Another Ethnographic Detour: Eccentric Choices

Foucault (2009) points out how the security apparatus is predicated upon freedom of circulation; at the same time, though, it seeks to 'normalize' the individual actions in order to steer (*conduire*) action in the proper direction. In the case examined here, we are considering the free choice of school system. Without taking into account the presence of immigrants and their children, in the existing system 'proper' choices are made when families simply stick to their self-essentialized identities: an Italian-speaking couple would therefore send their children to Italian-language schools, and vice-versa, German-speaking couples would send their children to German-language

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[23]Cf. ASTAT 2011.

schools.[24] In recent years, however, it has become somewhat common for families to cross over and enrol their children in the school system of 'the other' language.[25] But what is a family to do, when neither of the parents is a mother-tongue German or Italian speaker? In theory they have the right to enrol their children where they please; in practice, some choices are seen from the school's point of view to be more proper, while others, more eccentric.[26]

I was sitting in the Teachers' Lounge at the German-language elementary school where I was conducting fieldwork, when Fifth Grade teacher Emma burst in a couple of minutes after the recreation bell rang. She vigorously plopped a load of books and papers on the centre table, exasperated, and began to complain loudly, rapid fire in South Tyrol dialect, about Bairam, one of the foreign pupils in her class. It was hard for me to follow her steam-blowing, but I did clearly get the gist that her opinion (shared by the other teachers present, who occasionally put in a comment when she paused to catch her breath) was that Bairam should be in the Italian school system. Although he was not born in Italy, Bairam has spent most of his life here; his family had lived in various other areas of Italy before arriving in South Tyrol after the school year had already begun, and in fact he attended Italian schools up to now. His little brother Mehmet was enrolled in First Grade, even if he had already done First Grade elsewhere in Italy. One of Mehmet's teachers told me that rather than having an advantage over his classmates by virtue of this repetition, he is consistently among the slowest pupils. Bairam keeps almost completely silent during lessons, except during Italian, when he is confidently able to exhibit his oral competence, even to the point that the teacher has to constantly shush him. A bit weak academically, even in written Italian he has some difficulties. He listed me the six languages he says he knows. Bairam's teachers told me that they had said to his parents several times that the kids would do better in an Italian school. In April I learned from the teachers that, much to their relief, he and his brother have been pre-enrolled for next year in the Italian-language school system.

Not all such eccentric choices are experienced so problematically, but Bairam's case, along with other ethnographic work I have conducted, has allowed me to reflect on the criteria of what constitutes a 'proper' choice for foreign schoolchildren from the German-language school's point of view. It appears that the school

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[24] For the sake of simplicity, I am leaving aside consideration of the Ladin-speaking population and their school system, a wholly different model of instruction featuring the equal use of all three official languages. The Ladin schools are not available throughout the entire province and in any case involve much lower numbers of students.

[25] There are no official statistics on what 'mixed language' couples (an Italian speaker and a German speaker) choose, nor on cross enrolments between language groups; there are only statistics regarding non-Italian citizens. Even so, newspapers and personal anecdotes relate with some frequency about schools (especially kindergartens) in which a significant proportion of the children—both Italian citizens and non-citizens—are not from families whose mother-tongue is the language of instruction. Many parents also choose to send their children to one system for part of their schooling and then subsequently switch them to the other system: this, too, may constitute an 'eccentric choice', as we will see in the discussion of the case of Bairam that follows.

[26] Cf. Foucault's notion of 'counter-conduct' (Foucault 2009: 191–216).

personnel perform an essentializing affiliation of the families in line with the local language the latter appear to know better. For example, one Albanian mother told me that when she wanted to enrol her daughter in a German-language kindergarten, the Director tried to discourage her:

> If you speak Italian [the Director said], how come you want to send her to a German kindergarten? It's going to be difficult for your daughter.' In that moment I told her, 'No! I speak Albanian at home. At any rate my daughter doesn't know […] Italian or German. […] So for her it's all new. (interview, 04.11.2013)

In the Italian-language school where I conducted research, there was a much more relaxed attitude about language use in the home. Although—as in the German-language school—teachers in the Italian-language school strongly emphasized the need for the parents' active support of their children's learning, this did not seem to be so significantly predicated on the parents themselves having linguistic competences in the language of instruction.[27] In the German-language school, instead, whether for students from Italian-speaking families or foreign pupils, teachers commented extensively on the degree of parents' competence in German as a determining factor in their children's schooling outcomes. In contrast to the case of Bairam, the was the situation of three siblings who arrived late in the school year from South America through an international adoption to a German-language couple (one spouse is actually from Eastern Europe and not a native German speaker); two of the children ended up in the school where I was conducting research. The teachers commented approvingly that they spoke only German in their family, though the Italian as a Second Language (L2) teacher told me that the parents did not want the children to study Italian—a mandatory subject—until the next school year, despite the fact that their knowledge of Spanish could have facilitated them and also have served as a social bridge in this initial phase, in which they arrived with no knowledge of German.

Another example of the reductionist emphasis on language in the German-language elementary was in a chart I was provided upon requesting a list of the foreign students enrolled in the school. The list of 'children with migration background' included two students, both of whom were born locally and had Italian citizenship; their parents came from Morocco and Albania. The chart featured general personal data, and within this it included a column listing each child's 'first language': strikingly, along with 'Albanian' and 'Turkish' speakers, we find children whose mother tongues are purportedly 'Pakistanish', 'Moroccanish', 'Tunesish', and 'Peruvianish'.

Given that language competences are so central a focus of teachers' concerns when new foreign pupils arrive, as this category increasingly became subject to attention, in 2007 the Province established the special Language Centres, which constitute yet another technology in the wider field of the Province's governance of its population. In actual operation since 2010 and spread over various districts

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[27] I should perhaps say 'languages', in that the classes observed were part of an innovative project of trilingual CLIL instruction using Italian, German and English.

throughout the territory, these centres have several responsibilities, mainly as a support for recently arrived foreign pupils in the school systems, as well as those parents who are not yet proficient in the local languages of instruction. The following are the services offered with the aim of promoting integration:

– Consultation for parents and guardians of students with migratory background with regard to school choice;
– Establishing the level of knowledge for the language used in instruction;
– Planning and activation of interventions for language promotion: the consulting and support for kindergartens, schools and networks of schools;
– Collaboration with the districts' communities, with associations in the social sector and private associations and institutions;
– Planning of literacy courses for parents, also in collaboration with permanent education organizations. (Provincial Government Deliberation N. 1482/ 07.05.2007, author's translation)

The Language Centres have been criticized by political representatives on both the German-language right and Italian-language right because their target population is exclusively non-Italian citizens; the argument is that these resources should be available to all in order to improve proficiency in the mother tongue or 'the other language.' As Schrover and Moloney (2013: 8) have noted, it is often in such moments of debate that a greater understanding of workings of categorization processes. In reply to an official interrogation raised in the Provincial Council, a document by the heads of the three school administrations replied that these resources are destined exclusively to foreign pupils and adults, and that if mother-tongue speakers of the officially recognized languages needed extra support—for example, because they attended school in 'the other' language system—they would have to resolve this with their own means or with the resources available to the single schools. In this way, then, the Language Centres act as a normalizing technology: they offer consultation for foreign parents to sort out who should go where and thereby minimize eccentric choices; they activate measures for the students who are at risk 'inasmuch as most foreign parents do not possess sufficient competences in Italian/German/Ladin to be able to support their children in learning the languages of instruction…'; they also effect a disciplinary 'normation' by transforming the student from abnormal to normal (Foucault 2009: 57). But they are also implicitly telling Italian and German-speakers to 'stay in their place' and attend schools in 'their own' systems by not facilitating cross-enrolments with Language Centre support: '…at the moment of enrolment, it behoves parents to thoroughly evaluate the real use of the mother tongue in the family environment' (citations from Document in response to Interrogation n. 2841/2012, 'No language course for Italian citizens', author's translations).

Political Discourses Regarding Schooling and Foreign Pupils

Given that Italian speakers are numerically a minority within the province as a whole, the presence of foreign students does to a good extent keep schools viable in many smaller and/or peripheral urban areas by bolstering a declining Italian-language student population. Foreign pupils also play a significant role in Italian school enrolments in the capital city of Bolzano, because although Italian speakers are the numerical majority there, many families are sending their children to German-language schools as part of a strategy of language immersion. These points have often been made in Provincial Council sessions in recent years. As noted above, by 2007 there was an open discussion of the long-term ramifications of immigration among the hegemonic German-speaking party, the SVP. As regards schooling, the policy paper cited argued that 'the German side' should make their schools attractive for the integration of foreign children. This was justified in terms of humanitarian obligations, but also in the German side's 'long-term political interests' (Pahl et al. 2007: 7). In the same period in which this paper was circulated, on May 7, 2007 the Provincial government approved establishment of Language Centres.

The work of the Statistics Office has played no small role in feeding the discourses of politicians. The supposed neutrality behind the statistics reveals an ambivalence, as we note in this comment on the constant rise in numbers of 'second generations' by an ASTAT researcher in a recent publication:

> The majority of them were born in Italy, so we can speak of foreigners only in a relative way. The proportion of these 'second generations' in the total of minors has tripled over the last decade, passing from 2.9% to 9.0%, while the number of their local peers is stagnant. *This tendency is a great challenge especially for the school system.* […] *From a demographic point of view, however, this phenomenon can be evaluated positively, because these youths function as a brake on the growing aging of our society.* (Schumuck 2012: 44, 46; my emph)[28]

In 2008, ASTAT produced a booklet called 'Forecast of schooling trends for the province of Bolzano (2000–2020)', ASTAT n.145 (December 2008, presented in January 2009). This document makes predictions regarding the different languages of instruction: it identifies a trend in decreasing percentages of enrolments in German and Ladin-speaking schools, based on the 'tendency of [foreign] students to prefer Italian-language school, even if in the last few years there has been a growing number of children with migratory background in German-language schools' (ASTAT 2008: 51 ff.). On the other hand, according to their forecast, foreigners choosing Italian-language schools will counter Italian demographic decline (ibid.: 26).

Behind the talk—at times triumphant, at time exasperated—of increasing foreign students (and Italian speakers) enrolling in the German schools, I suggest that there is a subtle concern with the Proporz system: it is not the absolute numbers in the long run that are crucial, but it is instead the balance of the 'ethnic proportion'

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[28] On similar hidden value orientations of demographic analyses of foreigners, see Decimo (2015).

that is at stake. A changing balance in the schools might prefigure a changing Proporz down the road, with effects on access to resources. This preoccupation with the Proporz is visible in competing claims by both German and Italian-language groups, and it is precisely in this regard that politicians have invoked the question of student school enrolments through the years. In 2002, for example, a Provincial Councilman of the Italian right, Alessandro Urzì, sounded an alarm regarding the decline of the Italian population on the basis of overall school enrolments (Provincial Council Minutes, 18.12.2002). On the German-language right, in 2010 Council member Sven Knoll complained that the Italian share of foreign school enrolments has climbed by 36% over the previous decade (a figure contested by the Italian school alderman). Knoll invoked immigration projections to argue that this will influence the Proporz and that it is the fault of the German-language politicians for 'foisting' foreign students upon the Italian system (Provincial Council Minutes, 02.03.2010).

At the same time, the desire to bolster numbers through schooling foreign students has to contend with alarm that immigrant pupils might compromise the quality of instruction for the rest of a class. Such discussions often ignore the fact that most of the students categorized as 'foreign' have been born in Italy, so there is a slippage that assumes that non-national citizenship determines a lack of linguistic competences in the local languages. In South Tyrol the issue of L2 competences takes on a particular tone due to the social division based on a reified association between linguistic and social categories. Here, a discussion of foreign students inevitably entails broader references to the status quo of relations among the historically present language groups. For example, one politician of the Italian-language far Right has interpreted the presence of foreign students in the Italian schools as the result of a design on the part of the German-language group to ruin Italian-language education: in his words, it is an 'operation of ethnic cleansing'.[29] One controversial proposal to deal with the purported problem of foreign students lacking adequate L2 competences is that of creating separate schools for foreign pupils, a fourth school system in which foreign students would study German and Italian on an equal footing.[30] Without dealing here with the merits of such a proposal, what is interesting to note is the recourse to the strategy—familiar through the Autonomy Statute—of *separating* in order to 'protect' a minority. In fact, in recent years there has been a repeated association between claims of 'German students being a minority in their own schools', and calls for separating out foreign students, either by capping their numbers or creating an ad hoc school system. In March 2013, the German-language Pestalozzi Elementary School in Bolzano made headlines when it became known

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[29] Donato Seppi: 'There is no doubt that sending 50–60% of non-EU kids to Italian-language school is another subtle operation of ethnic cleansing' (Provincial Council minutes 10.01.2008, author's translation).

[30] This was an idea originally floated in 2002 by then President of the Province Luis Durnwalder, subsequently taken up by the Italian-language right since 2010, and again put forward by Durnwalder in June 2013. The proposal has found a consensus on the far Right of both Italian and German-language political groups.

that the principal had created a foreigners-only section, so that 'South Tyrolean students don't form a minority in the class.' Up to now, however, no concrete proposal for separating foreign students has actually been under serious discussion; the upshot has been little more than sabre-rattling, which nonetheless features an interesting echo of the logics of the wider security apparatus.

Conclusion

'This place is like Alice's Wonderland: from one moment to the next, you find yourself going down the rabbit hole,' a school administrator originally from another part of Italy told me (interview, 28.12.2012). If Wonderland had the Queen of Hearts' archaic discipline of 'Off with her head!', though, I have tried here to illustrate some of the aspects of South Tyrolean governmentality in relation to the population changes linked to immigration. As Gray writes:

> Governmentality denotes historically and spatially specific modes of problematisation of particular populations; the forms of knowledge that inform the definition of such populations; and policy concerns about the individual's ability to fulfil particular 'processes of life' […]. Governmentality, then, does not refer to the government, but to the many heterogeneous and pervasive ways in which the conduct of individuals and groups is shaped and directed. (Gray 2006: 122)

As elsewhere in Italy, in South Tyrol migrants tend to a good extent be viewed with some suspicion, negatively and even criminalized; at the same time the prevailing security apparatus for protecting the minority groups conditions migrant incorporation in quite a different and more ambivalent way than it does elsewhere. The research presented here offers support, from a different angle, for Wisthaler's argument (Wisthaler 2015) that political elites in South Tyrol do not see the presence of migrants as a stimulus for blurring ethnolinguistic group boundaries, but instead their reception reinforces pre-existing divisions. In a context in which the migrant population can gradually be incorporated into the ranks of the different sides in the social division, foreign pupils as a category have been intensely scrutinized and an object of ambivalent contention. The educational free market with respect to language choice has important consequences for the longer-term trends: that is, schooling plays a key role in the type of social insertion that takes place subsequently. Considering that the number foreign citizens in South Tyrol is already more than double the entire population of Ladins,[31] based on the existing logics one other possible scenario might be that one or more nationalities eventually stake a claim to their own 'linguistic minority' status, with all of the technologies involved in securing such a presence. At present, however, Article 19 of the Second Autonomy Statute does not yet provide for these groups: as regards the population of immigrants and their children, the security apparatus designed to protect the official linguistic

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[31] Albanian citizens alone in South Tyrol are currently more than a quarter of the entire Ladin population.

minorities acts, more than anything else, in the direction of encouraging the reinforcement of division of the population into the three official language groups. It remains to be seen whether or not the conduct (or counter-conduct) of the non-citizen population, along with the with various 'intercultural' policies aimed at 'integrating' them, finally provoke greater intercultural and integrated relations among the general population itself.

On the other hand, if the deployment of the category of foreign students has been effective in drawing a certain attention to this object of biopolitics, the various erasures it entails should also be borne in mind. This category, which is constituted simply on the common basis of non-Italian citizenship, actually bears differences within in it, but as a single category it masks the differential ways in which groups may be incorporated according to racializing distinctions. Thus, for example, while the foreign pupil of German nationality appears to blend in seamlessly within the German-language school system, it remains to be examined how others—particularly people of Romani or non-European origin—may get incorporated into the school systems within new social hierarchies, and what the longer-term consequences of such a process will be for the society. But this is a development that would merit attention in another essay.

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Part III
Weaving Kinship and Shaping Identities in Global Mobility

Rethinking Kinship, Mobility and Citizenship across the Ethiopian-Eritrean Boundaries

Aurora Massa

Introduction

This chapter analyses the interlacement of migration with senses of belonging and familial ties across Ethiopia and Eritrea, a context where the process of defining nation-state borders can be observed in its making. Indeed, the institutional border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, only built in 1993 (de facto in 1991) and closed since the war of 1998–2000, has made many families 'transnational', and has broken down a historical and cultural continuum where people used to circulate freely.[1] These political transformations have determined new criteria for defining nationalities and citizenship rights, calling into question kinship ties. This has resulted in painful consequences in the most intimate relationships, but has also opened new possibilities for handling family networks. By focusing on the point of view of children of mixed couples, I analyse transformations in family making, and how these changes are intertwined with obstacles to migration and with desires of global mobilities.[2] Kinship and national genealogy, together with citizenship and mobility, create an interplay of strategic and arduous choices, fortuitous and forced positions,

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[1] Eritrea and Ethiopia are characterized by the coexistence of a variety of languages, religions, and ethnic groups. My investigation is focused on Tigrinya-speaking people from the highlands who constitute a relatively homogenous group, sharing religion (Orthodox Christianity) and historical and cultural elements (e.g. land tenure systems, political structures, kinship organizations). They are the largest in number, as well as the community in power. Together with other Semitic-speaking Eritrean and the Ethiopian Highlands inhabitants, they are collectively called *Habesha* (Abyssinian).

[2] The interlacement between alternative ways of family making and the transnational mobility emerges also from marriages arranged for migration purposes, which are spread among the Ethiopians and the Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia as well as elsewhere. Cf. Costantini and Massa 2016.

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and opposed and conflicting options that demands further reflection on individual actions within a field marked by strong emotional involvement.

The chapter begins with a prologue that presents one family's story, in order to introduce the reader immediately, *in medias res*, as well as to reflect my research approach, marked by the continuous and indissoluble circularity between empirical investigation and analytical reflection. The story also works to support the theoretical background and methodological perspectives orienting my research, which I explore in the second paragraph. In the third, I sketch the current dynamics of regional and global mobility and the tangle of symbolic boundaries within which the children of mixed couples are embedded. The following two paragraphs then focus on the stories of two families. In the first ethnographic case I analyse the lived experience of nationalistic belongings and their use as narrative frame to give meaning to family pasts from a painful present. In the second case I examine the interplay between family, nation-state and citizenship, focusing on the way in which knowledge of migration reconceptualises in practice family relationships, as well as the insoluble contradictions among mutually exclusive options in a scenario experienced by subjects as both local and global. I conclude by stressing the ambivalence of the category of choice in a context crossed by irreconcilable differences, and by reflecting on the construction of subjects tangled up between national belonging and family feelings.

Prologue

In 2013, Abel and Issak lived in Mekelle, the chief town of the Ethiopian Regional State of Tigray, in the cosy house of their father Gebremeskel, an educated and wealthy man of 70 years.[3] Their mother Letai was born in a village not far from Asmara, the main town of Eritrea where she currently lives, and where years ago she met the schoolmate who would become her husband. During the 1950s Gebremeskel migrated from Tigray to the close Asmara, the then economic and social capital of the northern highland of the former Ethiopian empire, looking for a better life. Both the Gebremeskel and Letai families were somewhat against the marriage, though nobody openly opposed it. The Letai's relatives did not gladly accept a marriage with an *agame*, a derogatory epithet used to refer to Tigrayan migrants in Eritrea,[4] and Gebremeskel's relatives would also have preferred a marriage with someone from their own area. The marriage lasted a few years, but ended due to misunderstandings that Gebremeskel defined in our conversations as 'personal and not political', though they remained on good terms. In Asmara, Gebremeskel had a prestigious job and was an important non-combatant member of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) – the opposition movement to the

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[3] Personal names are fictitious and biographical details are omitted or changed.

[4] *Agame* is the name of a sub-region of Tigray along the border with Eritrea. The term refers to a stereotyped image of migrants thought of as poor, dirty, traditionalist manual workers from the countryside who move to the modern town.

Ethiopian dictatorship of Derg ('committee' in Amharic) that ruled the country from 1974 to 1991 – and was also a strong supporter of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Although the ultimate target of the EPLF was Eritrean independence from Ethiopia, for Gebremeskel, like many others, the war was intended as a united effort against a common enemy: the Derg.

When Eritrea gained independence in 1991 the situation changed dramatically. Ethiopians in Asmara became the target of discriminatory attitudes that did not spare Gebremeskel's work place. Within a few months, the situation became unbearable, and so he resigned and temporarily moved to Mekelle. It was a hard decision for him; since educational opportunities were much better in Asmara Gebremeskel did not want to bring his children with him to Mekelle. On the other hand, Asmara was only few kilometres away so the children were able to spend their holidays with their father. Some years later, his son Abel joined Mekelle University to avoid the Eritrean compulsory national service established after the indipendence. The occurrence of the 1998–2000 war between the two countries made the relocation of Gebremeskel and Abel permanent. With the closure of the border, they could never return to Asmara, and so could only receive news about their family indirectly. Eventually, Abel became an Ethiopian citizen, graduated in Social Science, found a well-paid job and bought a house.

Meanwhile on the other side of the border, his younger brother Issak acquired Eritrean citizenship and, after he completed university, was forced to serve his country. He soon escaped from his national obligations, however, and found a job in an international organization. Looking for a way to cross the border to pursue his education he applied for and won several scholarships from US universities, however since Issak could not obtain a passport, like many of his generation, he decided to illegally cross the border with Ethiopia. Four years before our meeting, Issak arrived in Mekelle as a refugee, moved to his father's house, and, at the age of 26, started a new life. Even though during my fieldwork he worked as teacher, he still did not feel at home: he hid his refugee status and his nationality because he was afraid that his being an 'enemy' might complicate his career and his social life. When I asked him if he had tried to procure Ethiopian citizenship he told me that he had never even considered it because he still loved his country and that Mekelle was not his final destination.

Reflecting on the significant differences characterizing their conditions, both brothers focused on the issue of their citizenship. Regarding his brother's life, Abel told me: 'Issak was really talented at school but, due to the military service, he did not have the chance to continue his studies. Since he is Eritrean, he has suffered a lot. If I compare my life with his, I can say I was luckier than him!'. Considering his own circumstances, Issak sometimes told me that he regretted choosing Eritrean nationality: 'I did it because I was born and grew up there and my whole life was there', he said. He wondered if had he chosen to be Ethiopian, like his brother had done, he might have studied, taken a Master's degree, and perhaps have a better job. Thus, although Abel and Issak dwelled in the same home and led a similar daily-life, their living conditions were deeply different because they were not citizens of the same country. Abel had the opportunity to pursue his own projects, whereas Issak felt unsettled and silently dreamt of migrating elsewhere.

Theoretical and Methodological Notes

In the nation-building process, kinship emerges both as a principle of inclusion and exclusion from citizenship rights and as a highly evocative language on which the feeling of belonging to the national imagined community is based (Anderson 1991). The political and legal principles at the core of the family and nation-state relationships have strong symbolic and emotional components: social actors draw upon the idiom of law to legitimize their own interests, and the state resorts to the realm of kinship to reify and naturalize its own statements (Herzfeld 1997). Kinship is used to build the integrity of the nation-state and to define its official and symbolic limits, but it is also one of the main fields through which this integrity is disarticulated. The attempt to draw national borders, containing a homogeneous population, is challenged both by family ties crossing such borders and by the incoherent biographical paths and multiple feelings of belonging people have. For instance, the 'luck' or 'regret' to which Issak and Abel referred to also reveals their own awareness that their life courses could have gone in other directions. Though the tightening of the border influences social reproduction, people *in-between* implicitly contradict the monolithic representation of national identities and the institutional labels that try to make citizens collectively uniform and individually homogeneous (Vereni 2004). From this perspective, kinship can be seen as a *medium* through which border enforcement, border crossing and their consequences are thought, re-configured and articulated; a border can be intended not only as a barrier, but also as a field of new options and opportunities (Asiwaju and Nugent 1996; Dereje and Hoehne 2010).

Moreover, geopolitical borders and nationalistic discourses are not simply imposed from above or from the outside. Rather they are experienced, embodied and co-constructed by the subjects that are modelled through them, or in contrast to them. Borders shape feelings and practices that are shared by groups and individuals, penetrating even intimate relationships, provoking either the reinforcement or the breaking of both national and familial ties. The deep intertwining of kinship bonds, national belonging and subjective experience requires the rejection of a dualistic approach to studying relationships between (individual and collective) subjects and nationalism. As Michael Herzfeld (1997) clarifies, nationalism implicates all segments of the population: 'top-down' and state-based perspectives adopted by many theorists of nationalism tend to overlook that nationalistic feelings are produced and reproduced by all social actors within all social fields. In this vein, then, the reproduction of both nationalism and the state power apparatus requires the active participation of subjects, and cannot be analytically grasped neither through 'top-down' nor 'bottom-up' perspectives. Furthermore, following the criticism of Navaro-Yashin (2002) in response to Anderson (1991) and Taussig (1992), such participation cannot be intended as a consequence of deceit imposed on subjects, or of their 'false consciousness'. Rather, state and nation building processes are influenced by feelings, emotions and fantasies (Aretxaga 2003), and, of particular interest here, also by the construction of kinship ties. In the case of Eritrea and Ethiopia, the intimacy of the relationship with the nation has been reinforced by the recent

liberation war against the Ethiopian dictatorship of the *Derg*, and by the cult of the guerrilla fighters (*tegadelti*) as well as of the martyrs (*s'wat*). The martyr is a narrative code through which the unity of the nation is articulated and the kinship bond between citizens and the state is reinforced. Due to the massive participation in liberation wars, moreover, guerrilla fighters and martyrs are effectively part of many family groups.

The process of individual and collective senses of belonging emerges as an even more thorny issue when considered in relation to desired, forced and forbidden migrations at local and global levels. As Fassin (2011) asserts, one of the paradoxes of the interconnected contemporary world is the multiplication of obstacles to mobility, making the possibility of moving an important factor in the production of inequalities.[5] In the context I analyse, the worsening of the Eritrean dictatorship, the war with Ethiopia, and the desire to improve living conditions through spatial mobility, have influenced population movements and have paralleled a process of border closures both between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and between the global North and South. Nevertheless, particularly for the children of mixed couples, experiencing the border as people *in-between* has engendered new possibilities, overcoming barriers and developing innovative projects of movement. Mobility therefore influences ideas and practices of parenthood, and the processes through which potential kinship ties are assembled as well as displaced and erased.[6] Considering family transformations in transnational terms, the weave between citizenship and kinship has become a tool for mobility, a repertoire through which children can build their future (Appadurai 2013), but also a factor that in some cases deepen family rifts. As Franklin and McKinnon (2001) argue, agency, choice and negotiation should become the focus of investigation, framed in relation to the intricacies of cultural, social and historical conditions and limitations. These categories, far from being simply local, are related to a global horizon which shapes not only imagined futures – ideas of personal success or consumption of material and cultural goods – but also the possibilities for action through forms of self-reflexivity, ways of making family and the self, in relation to national and kinship belongings (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001).

From a methodological point of view, the family groups crossed by the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, composed of both Ethiopian and Eritrean members, appeared as a

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[5] The multiplication of borders has produced a new global system of differentiation of rights that moulds spaces and daily life on both sides of their edges (Berg and Ehin 2006; Vacchiano 2011). In the anthropological debate, the terms boundary, border, and frontier are used by different authors to define areas of reflection that partly conflict and partly overlap with each other. Here I follow terminology suggested by Fassin (2011), in which borders represent territorial limits defining political entities, such as states, and legal subjects, such as citizens. Boundaries are understood in Barth's perspective (1969), as social constructs that build symbolic differences and generate national, ethnic, and cultural identities.

[6] I refer to the critical and reflexive perspective on kinship studies developed by Schneider (1968, 1984), according to which family configurations, intended by modernist anthropology as a cultural expression of natural facts, are seen as historically and locally variable symbolic constructions. By analyzing the practices of situated subjects, the focus has gradually been placed on personal choices, in a shift of interest from structure to the individual, and on the role of 'relatedness' in the construction of family ties (Carsten 2000).

privileged field of investigation in order to observe the consequences of the tightening of the border and the sense of national exclusive belonging, by analysing the role played by mobility. As Catherine Lee (2013) asserts, relatedness at both family and national levels is used by people to explain who they are, how they are connected, and how they should move forward into the future, and to confer privileges and responsibilities. Following the biographical path of the Ethiopian and Eritrean children of mixed couples, the intertwining of family lineage, national genealogy and rights of citizenship has emerged as a field of dilemmatic choices regarding which past they should and could refer to. Indeed, the young migrants on the border I met continuously rethink, reconceptualise and handle kinship and national ties, in trying to give meaning to their past, to face their present, and to invent a possible future. Their trajectories thus allow us to observe 'the negotiation of identity in places where everyone expects that identity to be problematic' (Donnan and Wilson 1994: 12).

The chapter is based on an ethnographic fieldwork[7] carried out in Mekelle, the main town of the northern Ethiopian region of Tigray along the border with Eritrea, among communities of Eritrean refugees and Ethiopia returnees. In addition to formal in-depth interviews and informal conversations, the research has drawn upon my participation in collective gatherings and religious ceremonies and assiduous frequentation of youth meeting places, as well as the studying of daily practices and the observation of domestic spaces. It has also included the analysis of cultural productions and investigation into memories of the past and desires about the future.

The three family stories I include in this chapter have been constructed through different methodologies, according to the relationships and communication possibilities that we were able to develop. Meanings are not discovered; rather they are created during ethnographic encounters understood not only as a discursive interaction but as practical, emotional and embodied involvement through continuous relations in various fields of experiences and everyday life. With regard to Eritrean refugees, moreover, my investigation was hindered by multiple levels of silence and mistrust which implicitly tracked the boundary that define the say-able, and which were not only a protective veil from my external eyes, but which characterized their ordinary relationships, pushing me to partially rethink my methodology (Massa 2016). Throughout my fieldwork, I frequently visited Gebremeskel's home, sharing meals, watching movies and having *bunna* (coffe)[8] with him and his two sons. The three men and I reconstructed their stories through informal conversations and formal interviews (these were not recorded in the case of the refugee Issak). With Daniel, a 30 years old Eritrean refugee, I had only sporadic and brief rapport, as he did not live in Mekelle and left Tigray to pursue his migratory desires. Nevertheless,

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[7] I collected these ethnographic materials during a year of fieldwork (Jan. 2013–Feb. 2014) carried out for my PhD program at the University of Bergamo. Nevertheless, the analysis I offer is enhanced by research undertaken, as a member of the Italian Ethnological Mission in Tigray, since 2007 in Tigray.

[8] The domestic preparation of coffee involves an elaborated ceremony and is an important moment for commonality.

our dialogues were deep and intimate, since speaking with me seemed to allow him to temporarily escape his solitude, and to share the secret of his identity. Although I made my research purposes clear, the kind of interaction we had prevented me from using a voice-recorder or writing notes. Finally, Abainesh, a young repatriated, was a friend with whom I hung out in the evenings, sharing free time and domestic commitments, allowing me to reach a comprehension of the social world where I was working that I would never have otherwise had.

Political and Historical Framework

Long before the contemporary conflicts, borders played a key role in the history of the highlands across Ethiopia and Eritrea and therefore should not be understood only as a geopolitical dispositive imposed by colonialism. In the past, territorial control was a major cause of rivalry between the secular and ecclesiastical elites (Chelati Dirar 2007; Taddia 2004). Feelings of belonging, even in homogeneous linguistic and religious communities, have always been characterized by an internal pluralism as well as by dynamic processes of creation and demolition of the frontiers (Smidt 2010). Genealogical ties were pivotal in legitimating political power and in building solidarity networks, often crossing ethnic and regional boundaries (Conti Rossini 1916; Nadel 1944; Smidt 2007).[9] These were closely intertwined with land distribution that, among the inhabitants of highlands, was the basis on which all social life rested defining people as socio-political beings in time and space (Tronvoll 2009). By splitting or including new groups, genealogies constantly changed, and so can be understood as representations that made the social and political relations they organized coherent (Tronvoll 1998a).

With the fall of feudalism and the new land tenure systems introduced firstly by the *Derg* then by the revolutionary movements and finally by the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments, the role of kinship had been progressively undermined (Abbink 2007). The cohesion of rural communities was also weakened by the building of modern states where rights and duties were acquired through the personal status of citizens, instead of by belonging to genealogical groups. Contemporarily, the nation building process promoted by Eritrean independence movements and the introduction of ethnic discourses in Ethiopia[10] have given new relevance to kinship

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[9] Highland kingdoms and dynasties have often based their legitimacy on lineage ties with the mythical figure of Menelik I, considered the son of the Queen of Sheba and the biblical King Solomon, and the founder of the state tradition and of the genealogical bond with the Jewish-Christian tradition (Calchi Novati 1994). At village level, land and political powers were distributed according with patrilineal lineages on which a segmentary system of alliances was based (Smidt 2007).

[10] In the past, geographical bonds were a more salient source of identity for highlanders than ethnic and clan affiliations. The political mobilization of 'ethnicity' is a relatively recent phenomenon, which started during the 1960s among the student movements. In the following decades, ethnic separatist movements, political actors and politicized scholars have played a key role in the projecting into the past the contemporary forms of ethnic consciousness (cfr. Tronvoll 2009).

in defining new, collective and progressively more exclusive, belonging. Moreover, during the liberation war, both the TPLF and EPLF guerrilla fighters used kinship terminology in relation each other and the civilian population (whose members were sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers), shaping intense emotional bonds and moral obligations of mutual support.

With the independence of Eritrea in 1991, a much more dividing and reified state border was placed over traditional flowing borders. The Eritrean and the Ethiopian governments needed to reinforce and partially rebuild the narratives within which the two new nation states could be imagined. These narratives arose before the 1990s: in the case of Ethiopia, they were linked to a long state tradition[11] and, in the case of Eritrea, were bound to the Italian colonialism. Indeed, Eritrea can be considered an 'artefact' of colonialism (Calchi Novati 2009), since the current borderline alongside the Mareb River was drawn during the Italian invasion and, although after colonialism it assumed different institutional roles, has never been dismantled.[12]

The end of colonialism opened a long period of uncertainty with respect to the Eritrean political future: on the one hand, the Addis Ababa government claimed its annexation both to obtain access to the sea and because its state legitimacy was rooted in the glorious past of the northern highlands. On the other hand, in Eritrea the post-colonial principle of colonial border maintenance favoured independence movements opposing the supporters of unionist solutions. The federal assessment resulting from the UN resolution of 1950 left both the Emperor of Ethiopia, who annexed Eritrea in 1962, and a part of the Eritrean society unsatisfied. Over the next 30 years, the latter instigated a war for independence from the Empire and, later, the Ethiopian dictatorship of the *Derg* (1974–1991). The leadership of the war was assumed by the aforementioned EPLF, which interpreted the Ethiopian domination in colonial terms and promoted a synthetic nationalism able to harmonize the heterogeneous religious and ethnic diversity of the country (Hepner 2009; Iyob 1995; Pool 2001). The EPLF built strong, although ambivalent, relationships with the TPLF established during the 1970s in Tigray for fighting the *Derg*: even if the common enemy fostered cooperation between the two, the ultimate goal of the EPLF was to build an independent state.

After the overthrow of the *Derg*, Eritrean independence was ratified in 1993 by a universal suffrage referendum, maintaining the colonial track as a borderline. The

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[11] The myth of origin of this tradition dates back to the Axum kingdom, established in the first millennium B.C. by Emperor Menelik I, and is supported by numerous historians and by the so-called 'Greater Ethiopia' thesis. A different historical interpretation has been offered by scholars who interpret the Ethiopian state as a recent construction, dating back to territorial annexations during the nineteenth century.

[12] At the beginning, the borderline marked the edge of the Italian colony, then was dissolved with the fascist conquest of Ethiopia (1936–1941). Next, it outlined the border between the Ethiopian Empire and the British military protectorate (1941–1951) and subsequently between the Empire and the so-called Autonomous Federal Region of Eritrea (1952–1962). Finally, with Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea, the political border became an internal frontier.

leadership of the two countries was assumed by the liberation fronts,[13] which had to legitimize their statehoods and nations. In the independent Eritrea – deprived of its 'significant other' around which the 'We' was built during the years of the liberation war (Tronvoll 1999) – , the national narrative was based on values such as national unity, sacrifice and struggle. Sovereignty was asserted also among Eritreans who are in diaspora, which had always been involved in the political affairs of the mother-land (Bernal 2004; Hepner 2009; Reid 2005).[14] On the Ethiopian side, the events of 1991 deprived the country of part of its imagined centre; the new government built its legitimacy around the respect for multi-ethnicity through federal organization (Clapham 2002; Sorenson 1993). The new Ethiopian Constitution of 1994 subsequently established Ethiopia as an ethnic federal state and ethnicity was placed at the core of all state affairs (Tronvoll 2009).

Nevertheless, the distinction between Ethiopia and Eritrea remained ambiguous because of the cultural continuity and the presence of the same ethnic groups. Uncertainty was increased by the post-independence policies that encouraged commercial collaboration and did not resolve questions related to sovereignty and the geopolitical frontier (Reid 2003). In Ethiopia, the acquisition of citizenship was initially regulated by the Ethiopian Nationality Law of 1930 that followed patrilineal criteria then, after 2003, by the Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality that removed gender discriminations. On the other side of the Mareb, the Eritrean Nationality Proclamation of 1992 is highly inclusive and issues citizenship according to bilateral lineage and naturalization, including both people living in Eritrea and in diaspora.[15]According to my ethnographic material, after Eritrean independence, a relevant part of the Tigrayan community, who in the previous decades had crossed the Mareb looking for better life conditions, continued to live in Eritrea opting for Ethiopian citizenship and, unlike Gebremeskel, did not consider their nationality problematic.[16] Thanks to the freedom of movement and the strong relationships between the two countries, many families became 'transnational', usually composed of an Ethiopian man and an Eritrean woman, leaving the nationality of underage children undefined.

Thus, the situation was ambiguous: the persistence of large areas of overlapping and multiple cross-border practices intertwined with the creation of a national bor-

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[13] In Eritrea, the EPLF established a single-party government named PFDJ. In Ethiopia, political leadership was assumed by the EPRDF, a coalition chaired by the TPLF and composed of the opposition fronts arouse during the dictatorship.

[14] At the end of the 1990s about a quarter of the population was estimated to live abroad (Al-Ali et al. 2001). Political violence and the material precariousness occurring during the liberation war led to a massive migration to Sudan, Ethiopia and Western countries, establishing the transnational character of the Eritrean nation-building process (Bernal 2004; Hepner 2009; Kibreab 1996; Riggan 2013a).

[15] The decision to go beyond patrilineality and to evade the international practice of restricting voting rights to residents was linked with the need, which emerged during the guerrilla, to broaden the human and economic resources for fighting the huge Ethiopian enemy (Iyob 2000).

[16] A relevant exception were the thousands of Ethiopians citizens who under the *Derg* had governmental and military positions, and who after Eritrean independence were expelled together with their families.

der capable of changing legal statuses and strengthening, from both sides, the practices of distinction. Things fell apart in 1998 with the outbreak of Ethiopian-Eritrean war, causing social divisions that crept into intimate relationships.[17] While armies tried to force the territorial border, governments tried to erect boundaries in the social fabric, so as to strengthen, through propaganda and violence, the ideal model of two distinct national communities (Clapham 2001; Guazzini 2001; Riggan 2011; Triulzi 2002). Citizenship, border and country of residence therefore assumed predominant roles with respect to rights and constraints ascribed by state powers. Those who were in a liminal condition – like the Eritrean-born Ethiopians and the Ethiopian-born Eritreans, the so-called *amiche*[18] – faced dispossession, arrest and forced deportation because of the confusion their position aroused (Appadurai 2006; Douglas 1970).

The repatriation flow from Eritrea is nowadays overlaid with the displacement of thousands of young Eritreans fleeing the authoritarian and repressive regime of Asmara. With mobilization against Ethiopia, political freedoms and civil rights have been suppressed, arrest and torture have become systematic instruments of control, and a compulsory, unlimited national service for all citizens has been imposed (Bozzini 2011; Riggan 2013b; Treiber 2013a).[19] The large flows of young people coping with the risks of crossing the desert and the Mediterranean Sea, flocking to the refugee camps in Ethiopia and Sudan and seeking refuge in African cities are evidence of lives with few prospects except exile.

Mobilities: Local Boundaries and Global Desires

The recent political changes have reshaped mobility across the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, turning the town of Mekelle into a place of arrival and transit for the multi-faceted migration flow from Eritrea. This flow is mainly composed of families of Ethiopian citizens who migrated to Eritrea and returned home after the war, and of young Eritreans fleeing the dictatorship. From an institutional point of view, they

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[17] Concerning the border war, see Berdal and Plaut (2004), Negash and Tronvoll (2000).

[18] *Amiche* is the epithet by which people from Eritrean born in Ethiopia and repatriated in Eritrea are commonly called. Showing an implicit but remarkable postcolonial irony, people explain this nickname referring to the Automotive Manufacturing Company of Ethiopia (AMCE), a company whose vehicle parts were manufactured in Italy and assembled in Ethiopia. Like AMCE vehicles, *amiches* have parts (i.e. parents) that come from one country (the Italian colony of Eritrea) and are assembled in another (Ethiopia).

[19] Compulsory national service was introduced with the goal of transmitting the values of the Eritrean revolution to the new generations and to pursue a self-reliant development. According to the official proclamation, all Eritreans aged between 18 and 40 years have to serve 6 months of military training and 12 months of military or civilian services. However, after the outbreak of the war with Ethiopia and the introduction of the so called '*Warsay-ykaelo* development campaign', national service has become unlimited for the vast majority of conscripts and implicate military and civil duties (cfr. Hepner and O'Kane 2009; Müller 2008).

are distinguished in two different categories that have been created by the border tightening and by different migration routes and reception systems: the Eritrean refugees and the Ethiopian returnees. For young Eritreans, leaving the country means breaking a significant governmental restriction: borders are highly controlled and those who cross them risk being arrested or killed. For these reasons the journey is often organized with the help of guides, called *pilot*, who lead the would-be migrants along safer paths. Those arriving in Ethiopia obtain refugee status and are required to reside in refugee camps located in Tigray, but have several possibilities to legally live outside, as well as ways to illegally get out.[20] During and after the war, the repatriation of Ethiopian citizens has been managed by humanitarian agencies with the agreement of both governments[21] and it raised issues of 'loyalty' similar to the ones the returnees had in Eritrea. Arrival in Ethiopia is a critical moment for them too, because it implies breaking with their previous life and getting to an unknown place: many, especially among the second generation who have always lived in Eritrea, sometimes not knowing themselves to be Ethiopian.

In the years when the numbers of arrivals were greatest, despite the lack of special areas of settlement, the returnees lived separated by a symbolic boundary (Barth 1969), existing within the group of Tigrinya-speakers. I refer to a symbolic line of distinction based on the geographical origin of the people, between those who were born and grew up in Asmara (*deki* Asmara, children of Asmara) and those who were born elsewhere, in this case Tigray. The *deki* Asmara, regardless of their nationality, self-attribute a range of positive features (cleanliness, work skills, certainty in life objectives, sincerity) which are linked with the colonial past and therefore provides a basis for their claim to ties with urban and Western culture. The *deki* Tigray thus accuse the *deki* Asmara of 'acting superior' and being excessively emotional. This panorama of 'minor differences' also includes variance in language at dialectal level, which is used as a criteria to draw boundaries that render the separation between Ethiopian and Eritrean, refugees and returnees, more porous, producing high levels of uncertainty (Appadurai 1996, 2006). This boundary frames feelings of belonging, intended not as the result of a stable set of cultural features, but as dynamic and contextual processes of inclusion and exclusion. It often appears in ordinary practices and discourses, as a topic of benevolent irony or bitter criticism, as a tool to define themselves and the others and, especially for the children of mixed couples, as a way to give meaning to both major difficulties and the minor setbacks of everyday life.

The young people at the core of this chapter are situated on both sides of the institutional border between returnees and refugees, and therefore between Ethiopians and Eritreans, yet they share the experience of migration, the role played

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[20] In Ethiopia, there are 86,010 Eritrean refugees registered (UNHCR 2013), who are mostly allocated across four camps in Tigray. Since 2010, refugees meeting specific criteria have had the right to reside outside the camps and to attend university.

[21] The humanitarian corridors across the border have been closed in 2009 due to the Eritrean closure towards international organizations. Since then the migration routes are partly self-arranged, and pass through Sudan.

by the institutional border in their family and, in many cases, the desire to go to 'elsewhere' (Massa 2015). As in other African realities, the latter is related to the derailment of the narrative of progress (Ferguson 2006) which has produced a growing gap between past experiences, concrete opportunities and aspirations for the future, intended as the collective ability to imagine a map of conditions that are alternative to those moulded by social and material constraints (Appadurai 2013). Their future desires are indeed influenced by a global horizon of meaning, values, and models of individual success (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Graw and Schielke 2012) that shape a request to be part of a world of opportunity from which people feel disconnected (Ferguson 2006).

The shifting of the idea of improvement, from a movement through time to a movement through space, is widespread among young Ethiopians (Mains 2011); but for the returnees it is linked to critical elements connected to repatriation such as having already moved away from the social context they considered their home, and facing conditions far from their expectations. The reasons why Eritrean refugees feel in transit in Ethiopia are related to some features of Eritrean mobility, thus precede their border crossing, but are reinforced by the paradoxical situation of being refugees in a hostile context (from a political point of view, Ethiopia is the old oppressor and the current enemy). Social bonds and linguistic similarities, although avoiding the feelings of isolation that often characterise the migratory experience, thus have contradictory effects: thanks to the presence of close family and cultural similarities, Eritreans can present themselves as Ethiopians, nevertheless, these similarities make identifying who is who difficult, and fuel feelings of uncertainty. Furthermore, although legitimately labelled as 'forced migration', the border crossing is imbued by complex meanings that cannot be reduced to an escape. Their journey is rooted in a culture of migration that is historically profound and made up of ideas, values and social practices that shape collective discourses and orient behaviours and self-representations (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011; de Bruijn et al. 2001; Hahn and Klute 2007). For many refugees, living in Ethiopia is not to be in diaspora (*siddet*), which means more than being outside national borders, but rather is a liminal condition, 'a migratory stage between Eritrea and "something"' (Treiber 2014). Although both refugees and returnees have few legal, illegal or semi-legal possibilities to leave Ethiopia and to realize their plans, ideas of mobility underlie their daily life and are frequently a field where they imagine themselves in the future, intended as a cultural fact filled with expectations and a resource to drive the action in the present (Appadurai 2013).

'You and your father must go to hell'

With the establishment of two new states, the border policies between Ethiopia and Eritrea have been strengthened and senses of belonging have been reified. In the first ethnographic case, despite the unenthusiastic opinions of the families, Gebremeskel easily overcame obstacles to his marriage with Letai, and yet the post-independence

atmosphere made Asmara a no longer liveable context for him. Since the war, borders and boundaries have been designed to be inviolable, dramatically calling into question the permeability of belongingness. The connection between citizenship, national identity and their dividing logic has produced practical consequences for the families: by diversifying institutional status, by imposing specific constraints on the freedom of movement, and by producing contradictory feelings.

Daniel's accounts about his family are particularly useful in shedding light on the complex interplay between the coercive nature of national labels and identities and individual choices. Daniel had arrived – or rather returned – to Ethiopia 4 years before we met: he is in fact an *amiche*, born in Addis Ababa, and moved to Eritrea during the war. He is the son of an Eritrean doctor and a woman from Axum who he described as really proud of their origins: his father was politically active in the Eritrean community in Addis Ababa, while his mother constantly exhibited, through her ways of dressing, speaking and cooking, to be a *gual* Tigray (daughter of Tigray). With the exacerbation of the conflict, the intensity of their quarrels grew and, in Daniel's words, 'they chose their country rather than their own family and lost their love'. As a result of the father's decision to return to Eritrea they divorced and Daniel chose to follow him. Despite the attempts of the mother to dissuade him, he was eager to fulfil the dream of knowing those 'wonderful things' that the father had always talked about. In his eyes his father was a sort of hero: Daniel loved to listen to stories about his father's childhood and the years of the war, and to speak the language (Tigrinya) he taught him. He described his arrival in Eritrea as an arrival to a known place, where he was already familiar with the people and their ways of talking and joking.

Daniel's dream (or The dream of Daniel), however, became a nightmare when he was recruited by the national service and was forced to live in the countryside, doing a job he disliked for miserable pay. After the death of his father he began looking for a way to leave Eritrea, but because of his poor economic conditions he was only able to cross the border years later. When he arrived in the refugee camp, Daniel got the phone number of his mother who had moved to Axum with his sisters not far from the camp. For a long time he avoided telling me about the phone call he had made to her, until one day he briefly said that his mother had refused to see him; she considered him responsible for the divorce because of the support he gave to his father regarding his decision to go back to Eritrea. Daniel sadly told me: 'All they said was: "You and your father must go to hell"'. Like Issak, Daniel hid his status and his nationality and constantly planned to migrate elsewhere, but unlike Issak, although he had close relatives in Ethiopia, he lived illegally in a village near Mekelle, suffering from material precariousness and social loneliness.

The reaction of his mother – or better, his explanation of her attitudes – shows the contradictory consequences that national identity dynamics can produce in family relationships. Far from being only a coercive obligation, nationalism is acted, made and remade by the subjects through various daily practices, from the style of dressing, as in the mother's case, to the intertwining of individual and collective memories, as in the father's case. According to Daniel's accounts, the man built his Eritrean identity by emphasizing his memories about the childhood in his home-

town, his youth as EPLF member, and his active participation in the Eritrean community in Addis Ababa. Echoing the official nationalistic rhetoric, these narratives produced strong emotional and imaginative bonds, and can be conceived of as a part of those social poetics that link 'the little poetics of everyday interaction with the grand dramas of the official pomp and historiography to break down illusions of scale' (Herzfeld 1997: 26). Therefore, nationalism constitutes a narrative framework through which Daniel composed his own past, investing it with a meaning and with an (at least illusory) coherence. The ways in which he decided to tell his family's stories to me, and thus to himself, appear largely related to the fractures, the isolation, and both the forced and desired mobilities he faced throughout his life in Eritrea and in Ethiopia. The portraits that he painted of his parents, from their childhood to their relationships with their children were imbued with details that reflected their nationalities, and seemed to prefigure the rift that there would emerge later: while Daniel spent time with his father passionately listening to stories about Eritrea, his mother was teaching her daughters how to dress in Axum style. Sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, Daniel linked the difficulties hindering his life to his parents' choices, and often blamed them for having chosen their countries instead of their family.

In his accounts Daniel never portrayed himself or his family as passive, but rather as active subjects who could decide to repatriate or to follow one parent instead of the other. The transnational families I met frequently used the idiom of choice for speaking about family issues, especially regarding citizenship and mobility. For instance, as I mentioned, during our meetings Issak sometimes regretted not having *chosen* Ethiopian citizenship. Regardless of the actual possibilities of choosing, I want to highlight that, both in discourse and practice, citizenship appears as something that is possible to choose *through* kinship ties. The language of choice in family relationships is the focus of an Ellison's (2009) article about Ethiopia, in which he opposes this idiom to the genealogical logic and interprets this as a consequence of neoliberal individualistic rhetoric spread by governmental and transnational policies. Looking back at the modernist anthropological debate, the couple individual-kinship can be placed alongside other antinomies, such as autonomy-dependence, change-permanence, or choice-constriction, in which the first term was associated with modernity and the second with tradition, and which has shaped the opposition of Western Us versus Others. The focus on choice therefore contrasts the perspective according to which, in the societies traditionally investigated by anthropology, kinship systems are holistic structures where the person (outer-self) prevailed over the individual, and where the latter is understood as the result of a liberation from kin bonds intended in terms of 'constraints' and 'ties' (Cutolo 2010).[22] From this

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[22] Focusing on the relationships between the whole and its parts, kinship studies have contributed to considering dichotomies such as individual-social role and inner-outer self, as universal oppositions, and this has been recently questioned by anthropological attention to the Self (i.e. Rosaldo 1984). Since kinship is a relational language, however, the Self is always defined (and defines itself) as the *alter* of an *alter ego* (Solinas 1996) and cannot be considered as preexisting and independent of the relations and the roles in which it is embedded and that build his/her concrete manifestation (Cutolo 2010).

perspective, as noted by Marilyn Strathern regarding English kinship conceptions (1992), choice is often associated with a process of emancipation from the binding nature of familial relationships that would hide a more authentic individual self. On the contrary, for Issak, Abel and Daniel, choosing citizenship through kinship had ambivalent connotations and only occasionally and in some respects assumed a positive value.

In a context where national identity is an arena of political struggles and of radical symbolic claims, the possibility to choose appeared frequently associated with coercion rather than freedom and is often interpreted in almost negative terms. Daniel often said he considered himself unlucky because he loved Eritrea and Ethiopia, his father and mother, but he was forced to choose and by choosing the one had necessarily lost the other. Similar views were shared by those who chose their citizenship and consequently used their family ties to cross the Mareb. As I will show in the next paragraph by addressing Abainesh's case, choosing cannot be reduced either to utilitarian behaviour or to acts of resistance to state borders. It is a complex practice through which people try to adapt to a scenario where the radicalization of nation-state logic made the border both coercive and unquestionable.

Going Back to an Unknown Homeland

Abainesh was born in Asmara to a young *Asmarino* (Tigrinya word from Italian means 'from Asmara') woman and a man from Ethiopia who more by his absence than by his presence marked his daughter's childhood. As a result of the border war, the man moved to Tigray and broke down any possibility of communication with Abainesh, reappearing on the horizon of her life only when she was almost 18. One day, while we were sharing an *injera*[23] in one of our favourite restaurants and discussing the reasons why she had moved to Mekelle, she told me that shortly before her birthday one of her cousins in the national service asked her: 'Do you really want to go to Sawa and spend so many years in the national service, as I am doing? Maybe you should think about the possibility of declaring yourself Ethiopian'. She had never considered not to be Eritrean, but reflecting on the living condition of her peers, convinced herself. After the complicated and expensive bureaucratic procedures that were necessary to obtain the yellow identity card that identifies Ethiopian national in Eritrea, Abainesh started to work. A couple of years later, she understood that in Asmara she would have never improved her own life and the life of her family and so decided to 'repatriate' to Tigray, a place where she had never been. From the transit camp in Tigray, she got in touch with her father and reached him in Mekelle, where, during my fieldwork, she was living while attending high school.

The intertwining of political changes and intimate family relationships emerges, even in this case, as very tight and contributes to sketching the setting in which Abainesh could conceive of and organize the possibility to migrate. Revitalizing the

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[23] Unleavened sour dough flat bread made from teff or other cereals and eaten with every meal.

bond with her father the young woman had been able to safely cross a border that is closed and militarized, and to arrive in Mekelle not as refugee and enemy but as repatriated citizen. From this perspective, kinship can be understood as a part of a migratory knowledge, which is widely spread among *Asmarino* youth and in which mobility emerges as a strategy of living, developed through time and characterized by its own moral economy. The Eritrean migration can thus be seen as an individual and collective learning process that, with the risks and difficulties it entails, favours the acquisition of specific skills (Treiber 2013b), but it is also based on previous practical knowledge that make it thinkable and, therefore, possible. Abainesh's choices show her knowledge of the role that kinship plays in border policy, and this knowledge enabled her to elaborate tactics to face the constrictions oppressing her life. Family and mobility appear therefore intertwined in many ways; family has a central role in moulding migration projects and in transmitting of a culture of migration, but also in providing effective tools of mobility through the possibility of changing citizenship. By acting tactically, Abainesh drew on her family resources and, at the same time, reshaped her familial network that was built on the basis of consanguinity and affinity as well as on other non-kinship elements, namely the practical and theoretical realm of migration (Strathern 2005).[24]

Even if she had not created new family ties nor changed her genealogical conceptions, emphasizing this knowledge allows us to better understand the practical implications of her choices. Abainesh had practically changed her way of *being in relationship* with her parents and with their family groups, giving her father a central role in her daily life, thanks to his new proximity, and to her mother a more marginal position. Her way of *making* and *thinking* about family was therefore associated with migratory knowledge and practices, interwoven together with a family *unmaking*, or the loosening of the family ties in which she grew up. In order to escape the oppressive conditions reserved for Eritrean citizenships she chose blood and the law, renouncing the people she loved. In the time we spent together, she often lingered on her nostalgia for Asmara, her mother and siblings, and, in moments of discouragement regretted having crossed the border. Abainesh constantly manifested her discomfort toward Mekelle and its inhabitants by expressing negative opinions about the services offered in restaurants, the school system, the cleanliness of the town, and by limiting her relationships with the local population to formal contacts with classmates or neighbours. The minor differences between *deki* Asmara and *deki* Tigray were the interpretative frame she frequently used to explain the difficulties in the relationship with her father and her stepfamily and in the process of homecoming.

Among the children of mixed couples, the relationship between kinship, nationalism and citizenship is based on a mutual interdependence, so that the involvement

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[24] Regarding the link between kinship and other domains of knowledge, I refer to Strathern's analysis of the influences of genetic and reproductive technologies in the Euro-American ideas on relatedness (Strathern 2005). Changes in the ways of building and conceiving family ties has suggested emphasizing the relationship between conceptualisations and practices of kinship and the knowledge that comes from other, seemingly separate, domains.

of one of these aspects necessarily implies the involvement of the other two. When I both naively and provocatively asked her if she felt more Ethiopian or more Eritrean, she responded that she feels Ethiopian because of her citizenship, but continues 'to be an Eritrean inside', weakening the link between citizenship and nationality. Her 'being an Ethiopian' was infused with implications that went beyond the institutional level; rather it was a lived experience (Siu 2001) shaped by practices, meanings and concrete discourses, in relation to not only cultural and political processes but also to her changing and peculiar biographical conjunctures (Amit 2014).[25] Becoming an Ethiopian citizen, she crossed geographical and institutional borders (border of status and of state) and came to be part of another state community. This step was symbolically relevant, and was reinforced through her daily relationship with state institutions (i.e. the school), which entailed other moral economies, other readings of the past and different ways to build citizenship. Her change was therefore not a neutral one, since the state, though reified as a coherent entity, is made up of small daily practices and of experiences 'close to the skin', shaping an intimate, personal and embodied relationship with its citizens (Arextaga 2003; Herzfeld 1997).

Because of the way it is built through and by subjects, citizenship is also difficult to distinguish from nationality, and is closely woven to the participation in a common destiny. In line with this intertwine, although legally and genealogically part of it, Abainesh felt marginal. The relationship with her father played a central role, even in this light, since he was absent during her childhood in Eritrea, and in her accounts appeared distant and detached, even when she arrived in Ethiopia. Though from an institutional perspective Abainesh was fully an Ethiopian citizen, from an affective point of view, she was *in-between* the borderland. Her practices of distinction can therefore be understood as a continuous game of closeness and distance, similarity and difference, through which she constantly and contextually repositioned herself in the social field. In her practices and narratives, her 'being an Eritrean' never took the shape of patriotism or of participation in those great symbolic and rhetorical frames that mould the collective national project, i.e. the rhetoric of sacrifice, the liberation war, or the narratives of conspiracies (Dorman 2005; Tronvoll 1998b). It did not even refer to experiences such as travel arrangements, the border crossing and the arrival in Ethiopia, which connect the younger generation of Eritrean migrants. Rather, it was composed of private and ordinary practices such as ways of preparing food and decorating the coffee ceremony, the cleaning of public spaces, or the feeling of sincerity in relationships. She was referring to those elements that mark the boundaries between *deki* Asmara and *deki* Tigray that are shared by refugees as well as by returnees, and that are encapsulated in the Eritrean

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[25] Following Ong (1999, 2003), I consider citizenship as an ongoing process, taking shape through the interactions between the nation-states governmental powers, that mould values, speech and behavior on the basis of specific ideas of nationality, on the one hand, and the individuals, who continually create expressions and alternative notions of what being a citizen means, on the other. Far from being a homogeneous category, various understandings, perspectives and experiences of citizenship emerge even within a single state, according to different and unequal positions occupied by individuals and groups in the local and transnational networks of power.

nationalism at various levels, from official rhetoric to embodied practices. Whereas for Eritreans these elements were part of a larger collective frame, for Abainesh they were fragmented and depurated by political reference in *strictu sensu*. Her claim to be 'Eritrean' can then be understood as a way to maintain a glimmer of coherence against the changes characterizing her conditions and the contexts around her, and as a way to rebuild those affective ties that the political constraints forced her to break.

Conclusion

The biographical paths that I have examined show the fluidity of what we can define as kinship, suggesting a reconsideration of the processes through which potential kinship relationships are assembled and disassembled. On the one hand, recent historical events such as the establishment of the national border and the outbreak of war violence have strengthened already existing differentiations and have partially reconfigured the role, meaning and structures of family ties. On the other hand, the latter have become a practice that people can make and unmake, and can reconceptualise according to the conjunctures. For second generations, the transformation of the family in transnational terms has made kinship networks an effective instrument of mobility and a repertoire for imagining their future.

Being *in-between* the two borders, although offering a greater range of possibilities, appears also as an uncomfortable position. The category of choice that in westernised environments is usually linked to a process of liberation from constraining social and family roles here seems instead a cause of suffering, for the losses each time imposed. In a context marked by policies characterised by irreconcilable differences and underlying binary logics, for multi-positioned subjects each choice excludes other options: in Abainesh'case, for example, these included being with the mother *or* improving living conditions, affective ties *or* Ethiopia, national service *or* the father, Eritrea *or* safety. The desire of the elsewhere that Daniel, Issak and many other children of mixed parents shared with local youth, is imbued with the stories of their families. Listening to their voices, migration appeared often as a way of escaping from a context where every choice meant the loss of a part of themselves and of their families and as an option to achieve a neutral stance. Staying at the margins of the Ethiopian and Eritrean national communities – that are imagined to homogeneously share a collective history, as well as certain ideas about the future and a set of values – affects some children of mixed couples, acting as a mechanism of expulsion from social and political frames and ascribed identities. Their being outside such collective containers sharpens the contradictions associated with the difficult choices they have to make with regard to their biographical conjunctures and to relevant aspects of their life. The desire for migration can thus be intended also as way to access to a global imaginary through which subjects rethink their family ties and try to overcome the nation-state logic that has been deeply involved in provoking the split of family groups and the individual difficulties.

At the same time, subjects take part in the construction of nationalism and share feelings of national belonging. Therefore, the relationship between nationalism and subjects cannot be understood as an imposition of the first on the latter, or as a use of people for strategic ends, such as gaining advantages within a power-resistant perspective. Indeed, subjects do not exist outside the feelings of belonging, the symbolic horizon, the minute gestures and the ordinary daily practices that compose the web of significance into which everyone is, in phenomenological terms, 'thrown' (Dei 2002). Borrowing Nordstrom's (1997: 185) words, 'experience is not something that happens to the self, but *experience becomes the self* – it is that though which identity is forged', by means of a set of social discourses which are both discursive and practical, and which constantly change (Moore 1994). The use of nationalist narratives, or the performance of acts that reinforce symbolic boundaries, does not necessary reveal a total adhesion of the subjects to nationalist ideology. There is only a partial overlapping among the practices, what the subjects say they believe, and the consequences of their actions, which cannot be reduced to the aims subject have consciously in mind (Ortner 2006). Therefore, the children of mixed couples can be understood as multi-positioned subjects who build their sense of self in situational terms, and who return to a range of heterogeneous, and sometimes contradictory, discourses and practices as they try to find an agreement in their choices, between options that are often irreconcilable.

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Male Adulthood and 'Self'-Legalizing Practices among Young Moroccan Migrants in Turin, Italy

Alice Rossi

Introduction

The biographical accounts at the heart of the ethnography presented here illustrate several regulatory paradoxes characterizing the Italian policies developed to manage the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors. Following a historical reconstruction of this phenomenon in Italy and Europe, the first section indicates the current scope of migration by lone, unaccompanied minors. Through an overview of the main international conventions and a comparison between European and Italian legislation, I identify the various approaches and models of intervention used at the European level and the way these have influenced contemporary Italian policies. The third section, devoted to methods, outlines the professional and academic developments that made this research possible and the contexts in which it has developed in Morocco and Italy. I also describe the origins of the chain migration examined in this multi-sited ethnography conducted over the course of more than 10 years at different times and in different places.

Following this analysis of intergenerational trajectories, I consider the economic and historical conditions, entrenched since the colonial era, that have given rise to this particular migration, which takes on varying forms depending on different economic circumstances and Italian migration policies.

This latter aspect is the focus of the fifth section: here, I explore young men's processes of transitioning to adulthood and transforming from the status of unaccompanied minor to that ir/regular migrant. The biographical account of one young migrant, Jamal, illustrates the complexity of the constant changes and shifts required to maintain his family of origin and deal with two repatriations, the experience of 'passing through', and undocumented life in Turin, Italy. This young man's narra-

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tive intersects with the voices of fellow minors, members of the same migratory chain, outlining the moral careers and models of masculinity they adopted after having migrated.

The section devoted to 'multiple families' explores the familial configurations and individual positionings through which young migrant self-legalize themselves. The way they create two sets of relatives, one in the country of emigration and the other in the immigration context, emphasizes the circumstantial and socially constructed nature of kinship as a means of acquiring regular status and, at the same time, a chance to continue legally crossing national borders.

Unaccompanied Minors in Europe and Italy: Legislation on a Liminal Condition

This analysis aims to retrace the trajectory of constructing adulthood and masculinity that young men embark on beginning from a specific legal construct: 'unaccompanied foreign minor.' In Italian law, this figure is defined as 'a minor not possessed of citizenship in Italy or another European Union state who, not having applied for asylum, is present for whatever reason in Italian territory without means of assistance and lacking representation by parents or other adults legally responsible for him.'[1] This category, known as unaccompanied minor (UAM) in international terminology, was first formulated in the European resolution of 1997. In addition to defining the phenomenon in question, the 1997 resolution also established measures for preventing such migrants from illegally entering member states while at the same time acknowledging their high degree of vulnerability as minors, recommending that they be given legal representation and assigned a guardian.

Although the first unaccompanied minors crossed the borders into Italy as early as the 1980s, it was not until the 1990s that this phenomenon of minors emigrating on their own began to acquire more significant proportions in the Italian context. As of today, a considerable share of all the unaccompanied minors in Europe arrived in Italy (European Migration Network 2015). Italy has been host to a growing number of arrivals that peaked between 2014 and 2015 at a total of over 10,000 individuals. According to official data (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015), there were 8260 unaccompanied minors in Italy in 2015, an increase of 54% over the last 3 years. Furthermore, this number does not reflect the total population, failing as it does to account for the 5434 untraceable individuals, that is, minors reported as having left reception facilities or host families.[2] In 95% of cases, these minors are

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[1] Consolidated Law 286/98 on Immigration and subsequent modifications; legislative decree 113/99, law no. 189/2002.

[2] According to the Ministry's Monitoring report (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015), 541 unaccompanied foreign minors arrived by sea in the period from January to April of 2015, down 75.6% as compared to the 2216 minors who entered the country in the same period of

young men aged 15–17 coming in particular from Egypt (22%), Albania (12.7%) and sub-Saharan Africa (Eritrea, Gambia, Somalia, Nigeria and Senegal). Turin, the urban setting I will go on to describe in the following sections, is the capital of the Piedmont region and in 2014 hosts 250 individuals, nearly all of whom are under the authority of the Municipal Office of Foreign Minors[3] (Osservatorio interistituzionale Torino 2014).

At the current moment, the high degree of divergence among the practices of various EU member states means that minors' mobility varies according to the different national laws and historical-political circumstances, such as amnesties or relatively permissive legislative frameworks facilitating regularization (Senovilla 2007). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most important international legal instrument for protecting and supporting the rights of minors, be they migrant or non (UNHCR 2008; Smith 2009). In reality, however, different national legislative frameworks have different regularity approaches which, according to Jacqueline Bhabha (2008), can be understood as representing three main strains: *punitive-criminalizing*, in which the unaccompanied minor is considered an irregular migrant who has been either an accomplice to trafficking operations or the victim of traffickers, and only in the latter case is deemed worthy of protection; *regulatory*, an approach aimed at identifying the individual conditions and familial relationships that would make it possible to regularize the foreign minor; and *protective,* the orientation underlying recent efforts in the field of human rights and international law to protect specific groups: refugees, migrant workers and their families, children and the victims of the most serious forms of child labor.

Various destination countries such as Canada, the US, the UK and Belgium, along with several supranational bodies including the EU, have developed specific guidelines for minor migrants and asylum seekers (Bhabha 2008). The United Nations Committee in charge of children's rights has released a detailed commentary that outlines multiple reasons why minors might be driven to emigrate, including not only persecution directed at them or their parents, international conflicts and civil war, child trafficking in various contexts and forms, but also the pursuit of better economic opportunities (United Nations 2005: 1). And yet Bhabha argues that, despite these recommendations, unaccompanied minors are generally viewed with suspicion, considered undeserving illegal migrants or adults masquerading as minors.

In the Italian context, the legal status of unaccompanied minors has undergone profound changes. The measures and regulations currently in force derive from a multiplicity of legal acts governing different areas having to do with the identification of minors, their legal protection, arrival and reception, permission to remain in the country and the conditions governing such a stay, short-term residence permits

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2014. In the report, this decrease is partly attributed to the increase in the number of unaccompanied foreign minors who applied for international protection.

[3] Osservatorio Intersituzionale sugli stranieri in provincia di Torino (2014).
http://www.comune.torino.it/statistica/osservatorio/stranieri/2014/pdf/17%20C.diTO-Dir.%20Politiche%20Sociali-Uff.Minori%20Sranieri%202014.pdf.

and repatriation. In implementing these diverse measures and regulations, local authorities, administrative bodies and public security agencies have encountered various problems of coordination. Moreover, the field as a whole is governed not by well-defined legislative acts but by a series of governmental regulations and ministerial and administrative circulars. As a result, numerous challenges have been filed over time regarding defects of form and substantial, normative and procedural defects ranging from doubts about constitutional legitimacy to conflicts with previous legislation, gaps in administrative procedures that exclude the Juvenile Court from matters properly under its jurisdiction and the violation of children's rights (Coccia 2005). As a matter of fact, Senovilla (2010: 208–211) argues that 'the Italian system does not promote a system of robust protection for unaccompanied minor migrants. Rather, it tends to limit opportunities for integration and regularization'.

Current procedure dictates that, after having been registered with social service systems and assigned a legal guardian, solitary minors are entitled to a short-term residence permit that lasts until they reach their age of majority and that they cannot be expelled except for reasons of national security. Nonetheless, only a relatively small percentage of minors actually receive this short-term residence permit, depending on whether or not they meet the constantly fluctuating legal requirements (Rossi 2012) and succeed in weathering the unpredictable waiting times for the central police stations to generate such permits, as well as whatever problems the Rome-based Committee for Foreign Minors might encounter. This Committee, established at the central level, is tasked with protecting the rights of unaccompanied minors; if it fails to rule on a case before the minor in question turns 18, the local police authorities reject the young person's application for a short-term residence permit. In addition, the social service systems vary from Region to Region and, in practice, the centers for housing foreign minors, besides being frequently overcrowded, are not the same ones used for Italians (Rozzi 2011). Minors are assisted, placed and assigned legal representatives in the form of private or public guardians (if public, the institution falls under the authority of the municipality). Depending on the city, the process of assigning this guardian may take months, so long that it interferes with the minor's application for a short-term residence permit. Finally, these guardians may find themselves facing a conflict of interest in cases in which they are obliged to represent or advocate for the interests of the municipality rather than the interests of the minor they officially represent.

The regulations regarding the status of unaccompanied minors on reaching their age of majority, varying as they do from one European country to another, are even more complex and ambivalent. I propose to focus on this specific institutional threshold and the way it is regulated in Italy because, as my analysis will show, this threshold is decisive in shaping the life trajectories of unaccompanied minors and migrant young adults.

According to the 2009 Italian security and immigration law (Law 15/07/2009 no. 94), only minors who arrived in Italy before the age of 15 and spent at least 2 years participating in an integration program are eligible for a residence permit on reaching their age of majority. This requirement effectively excluded minors who were

older than 15, the majority of cases, and discouraged many of these young men from joining integration programs. It is important to keep in mind that the phenomenon of unaccompanied minors both in Italy and elsewhere has historically involved young people aged from 16 to 17 years old (Pittau et al. 2009). The Italian regulations thus effectively violated the rights to reception, education, health and protection from exploitation set forth by the UN Convention on the rights of childhood and adolescence for all minors (Rozzi 2011). This law was modified in August of 2011 to allow minors who do not meet the requirements of having lived in Italy for 3 years and participated in a program for 2 years to apply for regularization, provided they obtain a positive ruling from the Committee for Foreign Minors. The problem of long delays in the authorities' management of regularization procedures has not been resolved, however. Young people who do not access or end up withdrawing from the system of reception and regularization are classified as untraceable minors, a population which, as mentioned above, is constantly growing.

Ethnographic Methods

In the winter of 2000, I began working as an educator at the City of Turin's Office of Foreign Minors. At that time I began conducting an initial ethnographic investigation[4] as part of my Ph.D. research[5] by collecting the accounts of so-called 'street kids' in the urban setting of Porta Palazzo, where I was doing outreach.[6] This initial period of research began in 2003 and ended in 2007; it involved an average of 100 young men per year, specifically between 80 and 120 individuals, approximately 70% of whom continued to attend and participate in the activities organized by the social services program. Over time, I was able to go on collecting the life stories of a smaller group of approximately 20 minors and young men in the 3-year period between the end of my professional position (2007) and the beginning of my Ph.D. program (2010). In order to track their family networks and experiences, I extended the research lens to include approximately 40 additional participants, both adults and minors; some of these participants lived in Morocco, where I carried out a component of the fieldwork. My field in Turin comprised multiple sites: the streets, coffee shops, squares and parks of the Porta Palazzo and Barriera di Milano neighborhoods; houses, garages and courtyards located in other parts of the city; the 'Uberto Radaelli' primary reception center (*centro di prima accoglienza* or C.P.A.)[7]

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[4] Under the supervision of the F. Fanon Center of Clinical Ethnopsychiatry in Turin.

[5] Doctoral School of Human Sciences, Doctoral Program in the Anthropology of the Contemporary, University of Milan – Bicocca (XXV).

[6] A social service activity consisting of disseminating socio-legal information, encouraging young people to use the services available in the city area and at the day center located in Porta Palazzo, and providing first aid, entertainment and outreach education.

[7] These structures, established by Law 448/88, are centers built to detain minors, sent there by order of a magistrate when caught *in flagrante delicto,* while they await a ruling as to whether or not they will be released.

and 'Ferrante Aporti' juvenile detention center, public bathrooms, dormitories, schools and immigrant health information centers (centers of *informazione salute immigrati* or I.S.I.).[8] The sequence of events I describe in this chapter took place in the Porta Palazzo neighborhood, an area local residents renamed 'Bab Al-Maghreb' (the Port of Morocco): 'if you live here you don't miss Morocco at all, actually it's like being in Morocco, everyone speaks Arabic, there's the mosque and the market with Halal meat and the women sell fresh bread even on Sunday' (Zakaria, Turin, May 2, 2003).

When I was first assigned to this particular municipal department, I disregarded the scope of this phenomenon; I did not know about the tight web of transnational relationships that linked the city I lived in with another city far away in Morocco. Nevertheless, by the time I went to Morocco for the first time in 2007 I had already become familiar with Khouribga and the outlying rural areas. I had heard about these places from the kids hanging out in Porta Palazzo and its suburbs as they recounted their stories of leaving home alone and the remittances they sent to build the houses they would someday live in or to pay the debts their relatives and neighbors had incurred financing their journeys. I should note, however, that the unaccompanied minors currently settling in Turin come from quite different areas. After the migratory waves associated with the Arab Spring uprisings, armed struggles and political instability in Africa and the Middle East, the unaccompanied foreign minors arriving in Turin are still predominantly male (254 out of 261) but now mainly Egyptian (98) followed by Albanians (22), Senegalese youth (14) and a minority of Moroccans (13). In 2015 there were also 65 asylum seekers, arriving from Turkey, Gambia, Mali, Pakistan, Nigeria and Afghanistan (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy Report 2015).

Over the past 7 years the countries of origin have changed, but there have also been changes at the micro level, in the lives of the young Moroccans I first met in early 2000, profound transformations involving their legal and social status, especially as a result of having become fathers. In addition to the fact that I had my own children during these years, this extended period of interaction made it possible to transform some of these ties into relationships less based on professional consulting though still providing mutual support in complicated moments of life, even when I myself needed help with my research. Thanks to these relationships, I was able to collect several accounts spanning 15 years, allowing me to identify shifts in life experiences and kinship bonds as well as the outcomes of processes of regularization and failed attempts at regularization; in other words, the trajectories through which young people became unaccompanied minors or ended up excluded from this category.

The ethnographic material presented in this chapter describes the life of a young man from Khouribga (Morocco) who grew up belonging to the *Qabîla* of ben Iklef. After emigrating, the members of this *Qabîla* renamed it the 'team' in reference to the way the various members of this chain migration survived by working together

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[8] The I.S.I. Centers were established in order to create a centralized registry of all the users enrolled in health services for foreigners with short-term residency permits, in keeping with the provisions of paragraph 9 of Article 50 of Law 326/2003.

as a team, both before emigrating and in the host setting. The term *qabîla* defines a geographical origin and sense of common ancestry; it is also the bond that gradually gave rise to this particular male chain migration. The participants are tied together by social, friendship and kinship relationships built in Morocco and maintained and extended as part of the migratory experience. For those who remain at home, the *Qabîla* defines the social relationships that, according to local tradition, bind male extended family members into a long-term training program in which boys begin from a young age to prepare for horse-riding competitions. Family groups from the neighboring areas face off in these serious contests, called *moussem*. There are various royal stables scattered throughout Morocco and in the Khouribga area, the families that hosted me in 2007 owned a varying number of horses, depending on their means. They continue to collaborate as a 'team' (*qabîla*) to perform and compete every year in the national tournament.

After outlining the main historical and economic forces that gave rise to the specific Moroccan chain migration under investigation, in the following sections I will describe the processes and emerging ambivalences of identity characterizing the lives of young migrants who have embodied the category of unaccompanied minor while remaining formally excluded from it. In examining these young men's complex transition to the status of adult migrant, I will show how Italian immigration policies, by introducing this legal category and associated institutional threshold of age of minority, have contributed to shaping migrants' choice of the best age at which to emigrate in hopes of later attaining regular status; while at the same time generating structural uncertainty in defining the cutoff point between these two legal statuses of minor vs adult. To guarantee the anonymity of my research participants, all the names used here are pseudonyms.

Trajectories and Intergenerational Networks between Morocco and Italy

The city of Khouribga is located in the Chaouia-Ouardigha region of Morocco, part of the Middle Atlas. It is home to the Office Chérifien des Phosphates (O.C.P.), which was established in 1920 during the French Protectorate (1912–1956) to extract and export the phosphate that abounds in this area. Having depleted available reserves and following the global phosphate crisis, the Office began mass layoffs in the 1970s, a move that was met with protest on the part of the workers. In this period Italian law was still relatively permissive in allowing migrants to enter and obtain regular status (Barbagli et al. 2004), and these workers began to leave Morocco for Italy (Refass 1999: 100; de Haas 2007). During the 1980s and 1990s the first generation of immigrants, the fathers, maintained contact through periodic return trips and invested their earnings in the city, making it possible to open bars and markets as well as schools and businesses named after Italian cities. This helped to fuel narratives of the (typically male) migrant hero. By the time I came to Morocco

for my doctoral fieldwork in 2011, Khouribga was a cosmopolitan city populated by a transnational community. Thanks to ongoing exchanges with migrants' destination sites, it had become a space of local reception powerfully characterized by transnational flows of people, imaginaries and consumer goods.

The specific chain migration I investigate here is composed exclusively of men, both young men and minors. For the purposes of this research, I focused on the generation of sons who emigrated from Khouribga to 'take over from their fathers' (Mohamed, Khouribga, July 22, 2007) after 1998 when passage of Italy's Consolidated Law on Immigration introduced the figure of unaccompanied minor. As I have shown, this legal construct immediately proved to be quite fluid. The Maghrebi teenagers of the succeeding generation immigrated to Turin using forged documents and makeshift itineraries, with the aid of smugglers or hidden under trucks; they identify with the term *harrâga,*[9] which means 'those who are burning' but, as I will show in the course of this ethnography, in this contextrefers to the fact that these young men are burned, wrecked.

In the city of Turin, the *Qabîla* has retained its character as a collective entity while at the same time being locally redefined. It is not necessarily based on blood ties; rather, it involves the kind of relationships based on common belonging and mutual sharing of life experiences that make kinship, (Sahlins 2013), relationships that are not without their share of ambivalent meanings, contradictions and subtle forms of violence, however (Rossi 2014).

While the initial generation of fathers managed to support their families by regularly sending money from Italy to be invested in Morocco, subsequent legislative shifts fluctuating between inclusion and exclusion have had ambiguous legal effects on the official status of migrant minors and young men, exacerbating living conditions that were already more unstable than those of their fathers.

Indeed, as early as 2000 a collection of various social groups based in Turin circulated an appeal specifying that:

> Under these conditions, the pathways of integration (school, professional training, work) successfully pursued thus far have become unworkable and lose all credibility in the eyes of the young people: if they cannot work, if they will be expelled at 18 no matter what, why get up early in the morning to attend the professional training course, rush to do an internship in a company and then back to school until late in the evening…? Why follow the laws if they block any possibility of your working honestly and integrating into Italian society? (VV.AA. 2000, 191).

As a matter of fact, a circular published at the time (no. 300/2000) effectively invalidated the process of social integration that the Consolidated Law of 1998 had established for all unaccompanied minor immigrants not assigned a custody placement by the Juvenile Court, that is, the over-15 years old majority of them. Further

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[9] The term *hreg* indicates bothirregular migration and the act of burning, cutting, leaving. *Hârig.* (pl. *arrâga*) is someone who burns, transgresses and, by extension, an irregular migrant who burns his documents on arrival to avoid being identified and repatriated.

modifications introduced by the circulars conditioned the subsequent direction of regulatory procedures for dealing with unaccompanied minors in Italy.

From Minors to Ir/regular Migrants

The term *harrâga* is claimed by young Moroccan migrants who cross national borders, are forced to repatriate, and must hide out waiting for the right moment and the right truck. It refers to the act of illegally crossing borders but also the position of someone who has been burned: someone who is no longer entitled to respect in familial and social settings. The informal economies (Colombo 1998) through which these minors navigate do indeed guarantee the means to live and earn money in both Morocco and Italy, but this often requires that they enter into the sphere of illegal activities. Illegality is intended not so much or not only in formal, legal terms, but also and especially according to the set of values associated with the feelings and norms they were taught growing up. Normally the abuse of alcohol, hashish and substances such as cocaine, which they often take to "have the drive needed for robberies" (Khamal, Turin, January 20, 2004) is considered illicit: 'you risk burning your brain' (Hassan, Turin, September 5, 2008). On the other hand, getting sent to jail, for example, might be considered a experience that strengthens you: 'it robs you of your nerve, then you aren't afraid of anything' (Otman, Turin, February 22, 2013); however, it depends on the crime in question as well as the reasons why it was committed. In the context of undocumented status and life on the streets, it is crucial for young men to prove their endurance and physical and psychological strength. Going in and out of jail in particular can potentially add to male prestige if it is part of a long-term project of gaining economic advantages and showing respect for the hierarchies of the various actors involved in illegal activities. The sum of these heterogeneous elements constitutes a kind of moral career (Goffman 2003; Becker 1966) and contributes to young men's self-image and sense of identity while at the same time reflecting their official, legal position and lifestyle. The minors on the streets of Porta Palazzo therefore identified with young and adult migrants who they perceived to be their equals and with whom they shared certain aspects of daily life, thus generating a sense of belonging to collective entities such as the 'team'. Jamal, a 28 years old man from Khouribga who is part of the ben Iklef *Qabîla*, views the 'team' as his group. As I will describe, Jamal's migratory experience has been conditioned by an ability to exploit and optimize the status of ir/regular migrant made possible by the instability and revocability characterizing the status of immigrant in Italy. In 2007, I met his entire extended family in Morocco, including the newest member, his brother's son. Though only 4 years old at the time, Jamal's nephew already expressed a desire to migrate to Italy. This desire was so powerful it had even been incorporated into the gestures of struggle and resistance that prepared these young men for the harshness of migrant life, the construction of male prestige and the risks associated with the condition of *harrâga*.

According to a Moroccan mediator with whom I worked for many years, *har-râga* relates to sin, *haram*, and is linked to *mahram* (incest) and *harem* (forbidden). In the familial context, this word can be traced back to *hasciuma,* shame, an emotion associated with the parents' power to establish the purpose of the voyage and judge its success or failure. In this case *hasciuma* therefore indicates the minor's feelings about the transgressive way he has acted far from home, far from Morocco. It should also be noted that the mother can influence the life of her migrant son with either a curse/*sakht*, or a blessing,/*rda.* It is the son's duty to carry out the mandate established by his parents. Paradoxically, however, in order to obtain this *rda,* many minors and young people are obliged to enter into the sphere of *haram,* often resulting in a loss of self-esteem (Rossi 2012: 49).

As I will show, the sum of these meanings and values comprises a veritable emotional education aimed at cultivating mobile adult migrant men through a process in which they must learn to deal with forms of ambivalence from an early age. In an effort to satisfy the desires of his parents, a son engages with 'sin', crossing the boundaries of what is allowed into the sphere of the forbidden. These boundaries become blurry far from home in the process of legitimizing the new subject, a subject that is required to be economically productive as well as re-productive as befits the role of responsible adult male. The intergenerational transmission of the roles and skills needed to be mobile and transnational plays a fundamental role in teaching boys to be men. Jamal's father, like other fathers in this chain migration, embodies this model of masculinity made possible by the profitable intersection of earning potential and mobility. The sons of the following generation, however, have faced harsher socio-economic and legal conditions in the new context of immigration; for them, it was necessary to maximize the time spent in Italy before reaching their age of majority, as their status in this period was less subject to restrictive and penalizing measures and offered more opportunities for regularization than the status of adult migrant. This set of factors functioned to promote a model of adult masculinity rooted in the transnational ideal beginning from a young age.

Jamal 'burned' his documents multiple times on arriving in Italy under a false identity, illegally crossing countries and borders. The following biography involves life experiences that frequently straddle the border between allowed (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*) in a (re)productive intersection of blood ties and acquired relationships. In this story, Jamal repeatedly draws on mixed (familial and informal) social networks for the means and alliances he needs to face the various phases of migration, including deportation and detention.

The extract below was selected from an interview I conducted with Jamal in 2012, when he had already reached his age of majority. He was 24 years old at the time and living stably in Turin following a lengthy 'forced' stay in Morocco after being repatriated the second time. I transcribed what was said during the interview and then shared and re-read the transcript together with Jamal.

> They repatriated me the first time in 2006, during the winter Olympics [in Turin]. I spent too much time in Morocco…in 2011 I left again, and was sent back. We paid some people and together with a friend, Mohamed, I traveled to Greece on foot, walking for two days in the mountains without food or water; they showed us the road leading to a town with lights,

we swam across a river, we all crossed it but some of us didn't make it. Many people died there, ten people a day […] when I arrived in Italy I was 12. I saw death many times, it doesn't have much effect on me, I saw my aunt with a yellowed face and wide-open eyes, my father closed them for her. When someone dies they feel something like a heavy weight, that is why she [my aunt] cried before dying. In Khouribga I saw someone riding a bicycle, a truck swerved and crushed his head, only the body was left […] After being arrested, we stayed for two months first at the primary reception center and then in four different jails along the border. In the reception center there were men, women and children from all over: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Cameroon, the Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. They treated us like animals, at 11 in the morning they would give us croissants and juice and then potatoes, we had ten minutes of fresh air once a week only for the cleaning, there were no lawyers, I never asked any questions, I only signed to go back to Morocco and went back. In 2012, with another friend, I found a trafficker who took care of everything, the short-term residence permit and documents; we left from Tanger Med [the new port of Tangier] for Spain, then by car all the way to Turin. (Jamal, Turin, May 5, 2012).

This account, collected many years after I first met Jamal in 2003, does not include a description of his first entry into Italy, in 2000, when he was 12 years old. Jamal lived in Italy continuously from 2000 to 2006 without obtaining legal status, and since 2012 he has lived here legally. When I stayed with his family in Khouribga in 2012 and he had come back there after having been repatriated for the first time, he spoke at length of how frustrated he felt and how much he wanted to return to Italy; here below are extracts from a conversation that took place later in 2012, after he had succeeded in returning to Turin. The first time Jamal came to Italy he arrived with his father, who departed again almost right away, leaving him with other fellow Moroccan adults. During the years between when he first arrived (2000), and when he encountered me and other social service operators working on this project in the streets (2003), Jamal supported himself with petty thievery to pay for a place to sleep; even when provided by relatives, places to sleep are not free because, as he himself would often tell me, 'not even your uncle feeds you' (Jamal, Turin, June 6, 2004). After his father moved back to Khouribga for good, Jamal, as a minor and young migrant, carried on his father's business. Together with the members of the 'team', Jamal made the rounds of the markets throughout the Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta regions selling small household objects. When the occasion presented itself, he would 'round out' the meager profits from this official activity, itself lacking authorization, with petty theft. According to the group's internal logics, theft was not considered *haram,* but refusing to pay for a place to sleep would have been. 'I would get up early, at dawn, we would take the train all around the province, whenever there was a market we members of the team were there' (Jamal, Turin, May 17, 2014).

These economic activities were part of the daily struggle to get by in a complex dynamic that can be described using the phrase *economie de la débrouille* developed by Sylvie Ayimpam (2014). The concept of *débrouille* is useful in that it captures a vast array of social practices in which economic, social, political and cultural dimensions overlap. In these practices, cunning, theft and extortion play just as important a role as commercial trade, cooperation and solidarity. It is the ability to get by and make do but also a way of reinventing and resolving problematic

situations. In this case, the activities were carried out as a group, specifically within the networks built around the 'team'.

At the beginning of their stay, it is also common for migrant minors who becoming 'untraceable' by leaving or never entering the official system of reception, to experience instances of humiliation (*hogra*) and subservience in relation to the adults on which they depend. For instance, Jamal always rented a bed in overcrowded apartments, sometimes even garages and makeshift accommodations, that were managed according to precise, internal hierarchies based on age, gender, and the geographical location and socio-economic conditions of the individual's family of origin. Like his age-mates, Jamal experienced forms of subservience in these contexts that he described as humiliating instances of feminization which nonetheless had to be endured. 'A man has to be like a hammer, otherwise you're a woman', Hassan, a young man in the 'team', explained to me 1 day:

> when I was living with my uncle and the others [fellow Moroccan roommates], they treated me badly because I was the youngest, a minor, and a problem if the police had come to check on us, so, since they were housing me, they made me do everything they didn't do around the house, I was the woman of the house. I didn't have my own money yet… (Hassan, Turin, May 5, 2012).

Here, Hassan refers to the roles that the youngest and newest arrivals are assigned in relation to the oldest: washing their feet, doing the grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning. At times these young men's daily experiences may involve playing on the ambiguity generated by these roles. There is a Moroccan proverb often heard among the minors at the Porta Palazzo center: 'if you're not a wolf, the wolves will eat you'. In this complex context of life experiences and meanings, Jamal's daily life often included intense events full of powerful tensions and emotions, such as when he had to run away from the *Carabinieri* police because he was an illegal immigrant without documentation. The members of the 'team' frequently consumed substances such as hashish and alcohol, and this potentially brought discredit on the minor when 'someone, in order to fan the flames, told your parents, and your mother in Morocco found out, even though there was nothing to know about!' (Hassan, Turin, summer of 2004). While using was not forbidden in and of itself, it became illicit in the way it was communicated to their families of origin, that is, when reported with the aim of eliciting a negative judgment which, as explained above, had the potential to trigger a mother's curse.

The migrant adolescents often ironically alluded to the ambivalent position in terms of gender and power they had come to occupy as a result of migrating. It was as if they sought to underline their feelings of dependence, frustration and passivity in a world turned upside-down, a world that, for example, turns men into women. Hammoudi (1997) has noted a particular characteristic of the foundations of power in Morocco that is helpful in better understanding how these young men were affected by these relations of dependence, so necessary to the achievement of their migratory objectives, during their period of growth. Hammoudi sheds light on a specific process of inversion that occurs in the development of adult male subjects, namely the *feminization of the subservient subject,* and the ambivalence intrinsic to

the cultural framework that serves to regulate access to any position of dominance in Morocco society. In this conceptualization, the inversion experienced by the disciple represents the exemplary form of domination and submission – indeed - the markers of femininity that take form of subalternity and service are defined on the basis of the unequal power relations between father and son or superior and subordinate.

If we apply Hammoudi's analyses to the sphere of immigration, the process of gender inversion constitutes the condition of subalternity that young men must go through to achieve the position of adult, mobile migrant male and is thus experienced as appropriate. In my research field, minors had to show that they were capable of accepting and playing along with the daily provocations, jokes and ridicule through which these forms of submission were expressed. They then imitated and reproduced these same interactions in relation to other minors occupying an inferior position due to age or life conditions. It is important to note that these trajectories did not involve the negation of adult male status, however. Rather, they contributed to generating and disseminating a model of adult masculinity based on the acceptance of these forms of humiliation perceived as appropriate as long as they were perpetrated by male figures possessed of socially recognized authority and thus deserving of respect. By demonstrating an ability to show respect for male figures occupying positions of superiority, the young men were able to acquire the pride and power necessary to demand an equal degree of respect. Whenever this gender inversion becomes a permanent and widespread condition enveloping all of migrants' lives in relation to both the power of the state in the host country and fellow countrymen, however, they risk losing themselves and ending up burnt.

On the other hand, the intensity of these experiences is closely connected to the young men's experiences growing up and varies depending on what meanings their families granted to emigration as a process involving the risk of death, to the process of becoming adult (Cassiman 2008) and transnational, and to being ir/regular, understood as the ability to maximize the benefits of an uncertain status.

Jamal lived for years outside the system of reception set up for managing minors (2000–2006): initially, when arriving in Italy for the first time, he was 12. His father never applied for family reunification even though he did have documented status in Italy because in practice he lived most of the time in Morocco. When his father subsequently settled in Khouribga for good, Jamal refused to have his name put on the waiting list to access night-time accommodations: 'I always preferred staying on the street rather than going into a shelter or emergency winter housing' (Turin, April 17, 2013). Just before turning 18, however, he contacted the relevant authorities to apply for a short-term residency permit for minors (MSNA). His application was turned down on the grounds that he did not meet the requirements, which at the time specifically entailed some sort of job prospect but, even more importantly, endorsements from social services and the Committee in Rome.

Jamal never willingly spoke about his initial voyage, but he was always proud to recount what came after, his experiences of repatriation, dangerous border crossings and daily violence. Becoming an emigrant marks a fundamental step in the transition to adult male status, and from a young age these boys undergo an emotional

education focused on developing the ability to face dangerous conditions that might even involve the risk of being killed, getting lost, never arriving or never coming back. As they grow, these experiences of facing and overcoming challenges become normalized and commonplace. Cast as sacrificial objects, many minors who migrate alone are tasked with 'saving their parents' (Vacchiano 2010); later, they continue to display this attitude of daring and facing down dangers in relation to life in general.

Similar to what Sheper-Hughes (2008) observes in her study of chronic 'states of emergency' among families living in the shantytowns of rural north-eastern Brazil, on reaching adulthood individuals who survive childhood traumas such as those suffered while crossing national borders display few of the classic symptoms of trauma victims. This phenomenon can be seen in Jamal's account when he depicts himself as a sort of winner, someone who has faced death time after time and emerged victorious. For those who live in environments characterized by constant crisis and repeated trauma, emergency is not an exception; it is the rule (Kleinman 1995; Young 1996).[10]

Multiple Families and Multiple Affiliations

There were two specific events in Jamal's life that enabled him to turn the corner, namely his marriages with two different women, one in Italy and the other in Morocco. With these alliances he proved to his family that he was capable of remaining mobile, like his father, and becoming a father in turn. What follows is Jamal's account of how he formed these marriages. His narrative and the field notes that follow illustrate how his position in relation to his wives served to convert his previous experience of submission and rehabilitate him as a man, an adult, a migrant and a mobile subject. In particular, the story as a whole shows how the practice of marriage is interwoven with contemporary Italian policies of migration management. Indeed, the formation of families is what enables young men to achieve not only adult status but also the status of legal migrants in Italy.

> Before returning I got married to a girl, the daughter of family friends. Then in Turin, after burning my false papers, I got married to another Moroccan girl in order to reestablish my identity in Italy; her parents migrated years earlier and she has citizenship, she grew up here but we were neighbors in Morocco. I paid them and, in exchange, they host me in their house. Life is better in Morocco, but we grew up here and cannot live there. Now, in Turin, I have to stay with them in the San Giovanni[11] neighborhood to prove that we live together for when the police come to check. A policeman once told me, the police commissioner

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[10] Medical anthropologists have shown that conventional conceptualizations of human vulnerability and resilience, specifically based on the clinical model of 'post-traumatic stress', are insufficient. The literature in this field criticizes the 'traumatic vision' of negative events by noting that, for most of human history, people have responded to traumatic events (floods, epidemics and wars) by treating them as social and religious issues.

[11] A pseudonym.

cannot annul a marriage, but he can annul a residence permit! […] I had a child with Kadija, my wife, and as soon as I go back I'd like to have another. With Amal [the wife in Turin], instead, I do not want children. I warned her, otherwise I will take her to the hospital to get the contraceptive injection, the one that lasts five years. She is in love with me. I play along, and tell her I will get a divorce from Kadija, and when I am with Kadija I tell her I will get a divorce from Amal as soon as I get ahold of the documents; that is what I want to do because, when I return to Morocco, I want another child. (Jamal, January 7, 2014, Turin).

We were in a bar when Jamal confided in me. I had only recently learned that he was in Turin and I had contacted him to suggest we meet to discuss some aspects of my research. By this time we had known each other for quite a while and he was used to my calling him to 'better understand' the events, words and habits characterizing the spaces where young ir/regular migrants hung out. He knew that I had been working for years as an unpaid volunteer, alongside volunteer lawyers and other professionals, to provide legal and health information, especially to help young people handle the issues that arise when living without a residency permit. He also knew that, as part of my fieldwork, I took note of situations that I felt should be reported to the other professionals and people involved. Furthermore, in 2007 I had traveled together with a former colleague to Khouribga to visit him and we stayed with his family. At that time Jamal had been repatriated and he was deeply discouraged about his situation, smoking hashish all day long. However, time we spent together represented a chance to recall epic moments in his life in Porta Palazzo, the roundups and escapes and the time I went to the local police station, in my role as a municipal social services worker, to request that they release an entire soccer team, including him. When Jamal came back to Italy in 2013, I was reviewing the material I had collected about the life stories and male imaginaries of the young Maghreb migrants who arrived in Turin as unaccompanied minors. Some of my research participants made short work of the question, however, partly out of embarrassment and partly because it was hard for them to address certain issues with me as a woman, despite our close relationships. In Jamal's case, I did not know beforehand about his marriages and was surprised at the complex intertwining of relationships and identity he had built for himself. Whether we met in a café or at home, I wrote as he talked because a recorder would have been inappropriate in either Italy or Morocco, seen as a tool of investigation, police control and potential blackmail. Nonetheless, it was only after I had quit working for the City and tried approaching individuals with fewer illegal issues than Jamal that I was most successful in collecting certain interviews.

As a result of shifts in the regulations governing Italian migration policy over the past few decades (Barbagli et al. 2004; Zincone 2000) and, specifically, inconsistencies in procedures for regularizing unaccompanied minors who alternately met or failed to meet legal requirements based on age (Rossi 2012), family reunification has become one of the main official channels for obtaining a residency permit in Italy (Pittau 2013).

While the previous generation of fathers mainly used employment as a channel for regularization, in the networks I observed family reunification represented the most accessible means for potentially legalizing one's migratory status in a period of economic crisis and associated decrease in job opportunities. The legal identity

of regular immigrants was thus associated with a specific social position, namely that of family member rather than that of worker. Jamal's marriage in Turin, which he made with the intention of obtaining regular status and then getting divorced, also laid the legal foundations for his future reunification with his Morocco-based wife and son. His plan reveals the ultimate purpose of this particular familial arrangement: the first residence permit, obtained on the basis of family ties thanks to his union with Amal, served to obtain a second residence permit for Kadija and their young son.

According to Jamal's familial and moral culture, only sexual reproduction that takes place within the relationships established and anchored in Morocco is considered both socially appropriate and allowed (*halal*): the 'real' marriage is distinguished from the 'fake' one, created for specific ends but nonetheless imbued with sensitive emotions. Indeed, although Jamal proudly described his ability to manage the marriage with a certain degree of detachment and authority, avoiding the complication of children, he also noted that he was forced to lie to both of his wives in order to reassure them since the economic exchange with Amal's family had not entirely exonerated him from emotional involvement. Amal, who was aware of the economic exchange, benefitted from the marriage in that she was able to exchange her former condition of 'woman alone' for that of wife, a much more socially esteemed status, especially in her own kinship circles. Moreover, unlike the wife in Morocco, Amal was the woman with whom Jamal was spending his daily life and sharing the identity he had constructed in Italy, although this element did not emerge clearly in his narrative. As a result of their marriage, to all appearances both of them seemed to be immigrants so well 'integrated' into the Italian context that they had even formed a family. At the same time, Jamal was able to achieve the status of mobile migrant and productive husband, one who supports his 'real' family in Morocco and thus acts as a responsible adult worthy of the respect of his relatives.

In Jamal's account, reproduction is tied to Morocco. Indeed, as Rebucini has shown with his research on the sexuality of young men in Marakesh (2013), here the essential element in the construction of hegemonic masculinity is not sexual identity in itself but more specifically marriage and reproduction, understood as fundamental steps in becoming and gaining recognition as adults and fully realized men. In Jamal's conceptualization of what is allowed (*halal*) and what is not (*haram*), a conceptualization shaped by the emotional education he experienced growing up and living as a migrant, there is a dual idea of sexuality. The first is reproductive in character and identified with Morocco, the second, although part of an agreement between families, must not be reproductive and is confined to Turin. Thanks to this unproductive marriage, the sought-after remote destination becomes simply a step along the way and the departure and arrival points cease to represent two different shores or countries; instead, they become two points along a circular trajectory. The model of masculinity that emerges, though still associated with reproduction, depends in part on the migrant's own ability to juggle both his local moral and familial codes and the immigration laws of the host context. In Jamal's specific case, this involved an aptitude for transforming the intrinsically multidimensional character of the state of being mobile into a means of strengthening his own gender identity.

In Jamal's life story, the immigrant family was created specifically in order to maintain a migrant family and reproduction takes on a different meaning in the Turin immigration setting. Performing the role of adult male for Jamal involves one kind of behavior in public and another, different one in private. At home, he and his 'fake' father-in-law, who knows about Kadija and Jamal's son in Morocco, share the understanding that theirs is a purpose-made marriage for which Jamal paid a significant amount but which Amal nonetheless experiences as real. It is a real fiction, a device constructed by both the families involved in order to reproduce mobility and take advantage of the associated economic benefits. In public, in compliance with the law, Jamal must validate his position as husband by showing the police that he lives together with his wife and submitting to his 'father-in-law's' demands, both economic and relational. And lastly, in the café and other informal spaces around Porta Palazzo where the young men hang out, in the social circles of the "team," everyone knows that in reality he has two wives, a 'fake' one in Italy and a 'real' one in Morocco.

Mimesis (Taussig 1993), pretence and other temporary strategies comprise a vast repertory of simulation that individuals can use to enact whatever realities and identities are most useful for the present situation or moment (Fabietti 1995) and to comply with the requirements of the law, which are themselves variable, discretionary and temporary. These projects of simulation are conceived and negotiated in response to institutional limitations and barriers. Like other young men, Jamal was able to transform events, in this case elements of the life cycle (marriage, procreation, fatherhood), into opportunities, thereby regularizing himself through his own actions. His reality was made up of a multiplicity of actors and interests: the need for migrant mobility, the economic benefit earned by Amal's family, his future prospects for bringing his wife and son to Italy through family reunification. Jamal constructed two complementary familial systems through various affiliations, first and foremost the 'team', that enable him to juggle two lives, one as an immigrant and the other as a migrant. Paradoxically, living far from home in a context in which paternal authority wanes allowed him to continue supporting the family he formed in Morocco, motivated by this same paternal urge. His transition to the status of adult took place through experiences of direct and indirect violence, endured and perpetrated on multiple levels including symbolic, such as for example in relation to Amal, who is not considered worthy of becoming a mother. The multiple meanings (symbolic, social, emotional, identity-oriented and economic) underlying Jamal's choice to divide and dislocate his emotional and reproductive capital derive from his long-term plan to move his Moroccan family to Turin, settling down there in order to take advantage of the various legal, social and economic benefits available to immigrants.

In order to pursue the specific requirements for regularization, migrants must have a multi-layered understanding of regulations, procedures and legislative gaps. They acquire and pass on this understanding thanks in part to regular consultation with Italian lawyers, some of whom are motivated by political principles and professional interest, others by the possibility of lucrative earnings.

Through *in-between* practices (Bhabha 1994), migrants produce social ties that effectively evade dominant classifications. With this in mind, it is important to not

automatically privilege religion as the main element of Muslim identity (Abu-Lughod 1989). For instance, it would be reductive to interpret Jamal's marriage choices exclusively through the lens of religious significance, as an example of Muslim polygamy. As a matter of fact, I believe such an interpretation would conceal the complexity of the actual stakes and practices involved, stakes and practices which are always co-constructed, contextual and specific to the situation. Rather, I would argue that these strategies imply specific practices that should be investigated in terms of what they produce in the here and now: not so much the figures of the first and second wife, but the maintenance and reproduction of migrant mobility and the struggle for a life that must satisfy material, symbolic, individual and collective needs within a specific understanding of what is and is not allowed. It should also be emphasized that Jamal simultaneously maintains two families as a result of the multiple affiliations and identities he built over the course of years. Jamal learned to juggle the multiple categories of his migrant life in order to most effectively exploit the different periods of time he has spent in Italy both economically and symbolically: periods as a registered but untraceable minor, as an aspiring unaccompanied minor and then as a husband with the prospect of later becoming an immigrant who can bring his Moroccan wife and child to live with him in Italy. Just like the urban *Qabîla*, these multiple families represent an example of contemporary reconfigurations of kinship ties ranging from formal to informal. In the context of immigration, these collective formations provide the kind of social and economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) migrants need to reinstate the possibility of attaining social mobility and retaining the status of migrant. This status is itself associated with the model of male prestige passed down from generation to generation, according to which the figure of the migrant guarantees social reproduction in keeping with familial and moral codes by enabling individuals to acquire an economic, social, legal and identity-based position in Italy, at times only wished-for and at any rate impossible to achieve without emigrating.

Conclusions

Jamal's life story provides an exemplary illustration of fluidity in the process of constructing the status of adult, migrant and mobile man as well as the multiplicity of relationships and identities involved in this process. By analyzing the practices Jamal employed to achieve regular status as practices of agency, it becomes clear that agency is always co-constructed within networks made up of relatives and friends (Donzelli and Fasulo 2007). Paradoxically, this reality stands in sharp contrast to the figure of unaccompanied minor, who is depicted as a lone, uprooted and vulnerable young person. In my analysis, furthermore, I have used the term self-legalizing to underline the symbolic and material process migrant subjects go through in constructing their selves through the manipulation of social and legal norms.

Exploring the life stories of the migrants I met over the years, I noticed that they share a desire to construct and define themselves as contemporary subjectivities

prioritizing criteria that would allow them to retain the status of migrant. Indeed, transnationalism is a matter of power disparity; what is at stake in the migration process is not only settling down but also being able to move, inasmuch as transnationalism represents a form of access to mobility and a marker of social distinction (Faist and Shiller 2009). Within this horizon, the status of adult comes to constitute a form of distinction composed of changeable, fluid positions, such as the condition of 'fake husband,' arranged in relation to the social boundaries these migrants seek to subvert.

At the same time, as I have described regarding the systems for regularizing unaccompanied minors in Italy and other European countries, 'irregular' status results from the lack of consistency between national legislative frameworks and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. There are two main factors that determine this lack of consistency: first, the absence of a set of regulations specifically focused on unaccompanied minor migrants who are not covered either by the laws protecting 'native' minors or by those regarding political asylum. Second, the tendency for minors to become untraceable when faced with a system of reception and regularization that is not capable of providing adequate protection. Indeed, given the lack of integration, limited opportunities for achieving the status of 'unaccompanied minor' and variations in criteria for accessing services, these young people have little motivation to enter into social service systems or tend to abandon such systems during their stay in Europe (European Migration Network 2010; Senovilla 2007), thereby adding to the number untraceable minors.[12]

In conclusion, analyzing the intersection of migratory processes and migration policies (Foucault 2008, 2009) in relation to the transition phase from unaccompanied minor to adult migrant, what emerges is a particular liminal condition of ir/regularity and the fact that marriage comes to represent a tool for legally achieving migrant status (D'Aoust 2013). Under the contemporary bureaucratic regime for producing illegality through uncertain statuses (Inda 2006), the subject is never constructed within the system alone. Rather, migrants as cultural creators (Williams 1975) circumvent, contest, transform or adapt to the regulations and categorizations shaping their lives in the new context. In the lives of young people such as Jamal, degrees of everyday transgression, forms of diversity and attempts to find compromises with their own values and familial expectations represent efforts to negotiate independence. Their practices of self-legalization in particular highlight the socially and politically constructed nature of age and kinship, a process of construction that responds in part to the changeable regimes governing contemporary instances of migration.

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[12] In relation to this phenomenon, see the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010–2014) SEC(2010)534.

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Structural Restrictions and Personal Desires: Arranged Marriages between Punjab and Italy

Barbara Bertolani

Introduction

This chapter examines some characteristics of the transnational marriage practices of Indian and Pakistani Punjabis living in the provinces of Mantua, Reggio Emilia and Modena, Northern Italy. My analysis studies the combined results of structural limits and subjective and family migratory initiative in the transnational social field, reporting some examples of the ways in which formal restrictions (such as national immigration laws) and informal obligations (like family expectations and cultural practices) may be turned into possibilities by individuals and networks through personal agency. It also shows how this affects the formation of transnational families and the definition of roles within them, according to gender and generation. In other words, I will explore the affective economy of arranged marriages and the agency that emerges in the interweaving between social structure, coercion and desire.

The contribution is divided into six parts, including this introduction. The following section describes the method of research. In the third part, I frame my analysis in respect of the international literature on arranged marriages between Punjabis. Then, I present the analytical frameworks that underpin my analysis; I refer to the transnational approach to study kin-networks (Wiltshire 1992; Bertolani 2011c), to the notion of civic stratification (Kofman 2004; Kraler et al. 2011; Lockwood 1996; Morris 2002) applied to the study of migrant families (Bertolani et al. 2014) and to the linked concepts of social capital (Bourdieu 1990; Portes 1995) and agency, especially related to women in contexts of social coercion (Madhok 2005, 2007; Madhok et al. 2013). In the fifth part I analyse three stories of Punjabi Indian and Pakistani extended families, with regard to their practices of arranged marriages. Finally, I

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bring together all the issues raised, relating to migrant women's agency and transnational arranged marriages.

In recent years we have experienced a growing political control over the migrant family, through the enactment of increasingly strict laws that govern its morphology and its times of formation or reunion in Europe. Reproductive practices which are different from those of Western culture – like arranged marriage – are under particular scrutiny, as they are mostly considered as instrumental strategies for immigrants to evade laws, rather than as specific modes of family reproduction. In this way, such families may no longer be considered as places where the stabilization and integration processes of migrants can be achieved, but rather as instruments of oppression of personal freedoms. Some risks arise from this: The first is to make an unfortunate overlap between 'combined' and 'forced' marriage. Then, the actual diversity within this practice – which leads some authors to speak about arranged *marriages* (Pande 2016) – may not be taken into account. Thirdly, these reproductive modes may be considered as static cultural baggage that inhibits the initiative of individuals, rather than as a set of dynamic and elastic practices that can be adapted and reinterpreted instrumentally according to circumstances. This strengthens a stereotypical interpretation of arranged marriage, which does not count the complex interlacing among different regulatory levels, like the legislative, the relational and the cultural ones, at the same time losing sight of the agency of subjects that are reputed passive elements, conditioned by external structural factors.

In this chapter I analyse a topic that is sometimes overlooked in the literature, that is how the complex interplay of different regulatory measures can support the agency of women, which may also manifest itself through a traditional practice such as that of arranged marriage. The three family stories presented here differ from each other and are not meant to represent all 'types' of arranged marriage; they have been chosen because they clearly point out the ways in which conventional reproductive family practices may be elastic and change or assume new purposes during the migratory process, according to structural conditioning exerted by national borders and by laws. Reproducing family and kinship ties may become a means of agency and of mobility as well as a discursive practice to combine collective belongings and personal desires.

Method

The outcomes presented here are based on data which were not specifically collected for this chapter with a single methodology. As background research I will refer to previous sociological and ethnographic studies of Punjabis and Sikhs in Northern Italy, including my PhD, studies conducted on second generation Sikhs in Italy (Bertolani and Perocco 2013), on religious pluralism among Sikhs (Bertolani 2013) and on reunited Pakistani and Indian families in the province of Reggio Emilia (Bertolani 2011a, b). These pieces of research permitted me to interview about 20 brides and grooms in Indian and Pakistani reunited families and 40 young

Sikh men and women (14–23 years old). Especially during these studies, I begun to explore the theme of transnational arranged marriages (Bertolani 2012). Two of the family stories which I shall report in this chapter have in part been derived from empirical data collected during these projects. Moreover, I will refer to information and data resulting from my private life and also my professional position, as a researcher and as a social worker at a women's association. It is important to define my own position to understand the type of data collected, starting from the relationship of proximity/distance and power between me and my interlocutors (Singh 2015).

Since my husband is a Punjabi Sikh of Indian origin, thanks to my family ties I sometimes position myself as an 'insider' in relation to my object of analysis, because I have access to a range of contacts and information, for example about family life in its emotional and relational aspects, that would normally not be told to an external researcher. I have often shared my opinions with my immediate family on the data collected in the course of my studies; sometimes, my own relatives were included among my informants. In particular, one of the family histories that I will present concerns a girl who belongs to my extended family and whom I have named Nittu, using a pseudonym. I got to know her closely over time, and with her consent I had access to private information (her diary) for my research and we conversed several times about her personal opinions and decisions concerning arranged marriages. Since I am an in-law, I took part in ritual practices and in some stages of the 'search' for her husband, I witnessed her engagement in Italy and I acquired direct and indirect information from many other sources, namely not only from the girl but also from Nittu's close relatives. Her family members expressed opinions and points of view which sometimes were very discordant with hers and which were due to their position, that is the relationship of affection but also of power towards her, defined in relation to parental role, gender, seniority and also to migratory status (the ability to migrate/live in Italy). My own relationship with Nittu has also not been free from expectations and power dynamics. In fact, I think that in her eyes I have embodied the 'Western culture', thus I was identified as the person to whom she could confide her expectations on love marriages and arranged ones. At the same time, however, I myself could be a vehicle of information to the family network. My position as insider as well as outsider (as a Western and 'white' researcher) has certainly played a role in the selection and quality of information, exposing me to the risk, which is always present when doing research, of being told what your interlocutor thinks that you expect to hear. The events reported took place over a time span of about 4 years, both in Italy and in India, as a number of events occurred during a family vacation when I was in Punjab.

Another family story which I will refer to, that of Sonni, a young Punjabi Sikh man, was selected from a range of data collected during two ethnographic studies of young Punjabi Sikhs through semi-structured interviews, informal talks and participant observation in places of worship. One of the aspects which I investigated concerned the personal expectations related to arranged marriages of forty young men and women who arrived in Italy while they were of school age and who, for the most part, were not yet married. Also, the interviews explored the practices, reproductive

choices and migration histories of their extended family.[1] I was introduced to Sonni by my husband (because Sonni's father is one of his acquaintances) during one of our family visits to the gurdwara (the Sikh place of worship) in Novellara, near Reggio Emilia. This is a place where I often go to find useful contacts for my research. In this case my specific position 'inside' and 'outside' the Punjabi community has facilitated the first contact, but my role as researcher was immediately clear, and the interview was conducted some days later with the consent of Sonni's parents at his house.

Finally, I met Asna and Inah, two Pakistani Punjabi sisters, as I belong to a women's association, during the course of my daily work. Initially our relationship had nothing to do with research purposes and was asymmetric, that is, based on a request for support by the two women. Over time, however, we have built up a relationship of trust and greater personal knowledge while remaining in our different positions. During the period when the two women attended the association, we also met several times outside the setting of a structured interview, sharing some experiences that concerned Pakistani traditions and family life: for example, I was invited to taste traditional Pakistani foods, or we looked at photographs of the women's marriages and CDs with films from weddings of their extended family in Pakistan. On several occasions I talked to Asna and Inah about my research and, informally, I asked advice and explanations about cultural meanings and traditional practices (such as arranged marriages), starting from my personal family experience. Although I presented myself to Asna and Inah as a sociologist, who autonomously led research on Pakistani families and wedding practices, in their eyes I was primarily perceived, almost certainly, as a woman working in a female association, supporting them in overcoming difficulties related to migration. Since my relationship with them was in the context of social work, I never specifically asked them to participate in an interview, to avoid the risk of confusing the two roles. Therefore, the data gathered were obtained through informal conversations over a time span of approximately 3 years. I am obliged to guarantee their privacy, thus I partially changed their family history and omitted information that was not essential to my topic, or which could render the story attributable to them. For all three family histories reported, I used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of my informants.

Transnational Arranged Marriages in Relation to the Traditional Punjabi Extended Family

To understand more closely the affective and relational economy of transnational marriages, it is useful to start from the characteristics of the traditional Indian and Pakistani Punjabi family, understood as an 'ideal type'. I will outline a model which

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[1] The main outcomes of these studies have been reported elsewhere (Bertolani and Perocco 2013; Bertolani 2012, 2015).

is subject to endless variations, depending on the social and spatial contexts, in relation to which arranged marriages ought to be interpreted.

Traditional Indian and Pakistani families have some similar characteristics. Both can be defined as reproductive and productive, patrilocal and agnatic units, organized on the basis of reciprocity and asymmetry between sexes and generations (Ballard 1982). To be understood, this family model must be related to the *baraderi*. *Baraderi* is a polysemic term that, depending on the circumstances, can mean kinship or a wider patrilineal group of descendants that belongs to the same lineage and that has a common ancestor. *Baraderi* however should be understood not only as something objective but also as something symbolic, in relation to which the social identity of the individual is defined. The structure of the kin-network is linked to the cultural practices which regulate the reproduction of the nuclear family, namely by means of marriage rules. Indeed, these rules have a decisive impact on this set of wider relationships, defining them specifically while distinguishing the Sikh from the Muslim family. In an influential essay on Jalandhari Indian Punjabi Sikhs and on Mirpuri Pakistani Muslims in Britain, Ballard (1990) points out that, among those communities, weddings are arranged by the families of origin of the spouses, because it is believed that such unions are more solid, since they are not based on a passionate feeling which has an ephemeral nature, but rather on family ties. This system should involve the families of origin of the spouses throughout the matrimonial life as well, because they should play the role of intermediaries and promote the renegotiation of the marital relationship in case of crisis or conflict. Despite these similarities, marriage rules follow different customs: in the traditional Muslim Pakistani family marriages tend to be arranged within the same *baraderi* and there is a certain preference for marriage between cousins of first or second degree; in the case of Indian Sikhs and Hindus, marriages follow the rules of caste endogamy and lineage exogamy. The spouses should be part of the same caste, but unions between members of the same lineage (*got* or, more broadly, *baraderi*) are not permitted, and people cannot marry within the lineage of their mother and their maternal grandparents. This set of customs guarantees that Indian brides have no pre-marriage family ties with their sisters-in-law or mother-in-law. This results in a number of differences: Pakistanis' kin-networks may be geographically less extensive and more dense, as they often present overlapping affinity and agnatic roles and bonds: people can be at the same time spouses/cousins, uncles/in-laws, cousins/in-laws, etc. and, consequently, the control over and the family expectations on individuals' choices may be more stringent and the moral bonds stronger. More rarely Pakistani brides may become part of a family which is completely unknown to them; conversely, marriage involves always a measure of migration for Indian brides, a displacement that is not just spatial but also social, with subjective and emotional implications such as the departure from one's loved ones.

There is another important cultural difference: in the traditional Pakistani family, men and women constitute two separate universes, both from a physical and functional point of view. This separation is regulated by behavioural conventions – called *pardah* – that define gender identity and roles (Shaw 1994, 2000; Werbner 1990; Saifullah Khan 1977). These conventions have some consequences: women are the

only ones responsible for the activities concerning the domestic reproduction that mostly takes place inside the house; men are concerned instead with economic activities occurring in the outside world and with the set of relationships that fall outside the narrow family circle. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims share a number of similar expectations related to the idea that women must be formally subordinate to male authority, but there are substantial differences between the traditional Hindu, Sikh and Muslim family concerning the degree of women's access to public space, wider in the first and second and more limited in the third case. Matters of honour (*izzat*) and modesty or shame (*sharam*) are closely related to the idea of *pardah*. In the traditional Pakistani Punjabi family, more severely than among Punjabi (Hindu and Sikh) Indians, a great deal of attention is given to the maintenance and increase of family honour, to which the respectability of the individual is also linked. In fact, honour is a male issue, but is closely related to female behaviour because it is mainly women that can compromise it, transgressing the roles and hierarchies mentioned above. These habits thus reinforce the asymmetric structure of the traditional family. Honour is also related to wealth and to whether prestigious marriages are arranged for daughters. In their influential studies of Pakistani Muslims in Britain Werbner (1990) and Shaw (2000) showed that the ritual exchanges of gifts that occur during these events are acts in which the prestige of each group of origin of the spouses is measured. Pakistani women play a very important role in these processes, as they are entrusted with the registration of the flows of gifts, as well as with the assessment of the value of the goods given and received. They prepare the ground for marriage deals between families, which will then be publicly finalized by men. In this sense, just in playing a role that formally subordinates them to men, women actually gain power over them (Ballard 1982).

Starting from these arguments, Ballard predicts that with the passing of time in Britain transnational marriages with spouses from the country of origin will be less common among Sikh Indians than Muslim Pakistanis, in favour of arranged matches with youths who live in the UK or in other countries of the Sikh Diaspora. Moreover, he argues that Sikh transnational marriages themselves, allowing the construction of broader kin-networks, will be more strategic and contribute to the upward social mobility of the community. According to Qureshi (2015), after a few decades this prediction is confirmed by statistical data; also, the author points out that transnational marriages favour a male hypergamy, since it is mostly men – providing an opportunity to migrate through family reunion – that tend to marry 'Shehri brides', namely women from urban and wealthy families who are more acculturated than them. In other words, making the migration of brides possible may compensate for the deficit of human capital of the bridegrooms, at the same time confirming the asymmetries of power within the traditional family.

As shown by numerous studies, arranged marriages and the subsequent reunions are important means for Indians and Pakistanis to emigrate legally to Western countries (Mand 2002; Charsley and Shaw 2006; Qureshi 2015). According to Nicola Mooney (2006) these matches are conventional in their form, but modern in their substance, as they often permit the circumvention of restrictions and limits to human migration and 'are fully modern means of negotiating the boundaries of citizenship

imposed by states' (ibid.: 389–390). Nevertheless, according to her studies, migration does not change the asymmetries of the traditional Indian family. Speaking of Jat Sikh women who immigrated to Canada, Mooney affirms that they embody the notions of tradition and collective identity. Family reputation depends on their behaviour and conformity to traditions (including marriage practices). As a consequence, women themselves reproduce a system of relationships in which they are in a subordinate position. In fact, the cultural customs surrounding marriages are one example of this, since the dowry and the patrilocal residence often put women in positions of inferiority. The dowry system forces the bride's family to be burdened by a substantial economic load, while the tradition of patrilocal residence sets the woman in a position of disadvantage as she is expected to leave her native family at marriage and enter the groom's household, where she is subordinate to the material and moral authority of her in-laws. According to this author, young girls' wishes might not always be considered in the arrangement of their transnational marriages and these brides might be 'in essence sacrificed for the potential migration benefit of other family members' (Mooney 2006: 398).

My ethnographic data show that arranged marriages may sometimes be a factor in female subjugation and coercion and that they may strengthen asymmetries of power within the traditional family. This occurs particularly when it is women that are reunited from India, and in those cases where the migratory status of brides depends on their husbands, or, where the woman is completely isolated from her family network which remains in the country of origin. However, transnational arranged marriages may also be a channel for women's social mobility and for the redefinition of power relations within the family, for example when the groom is legally and economically dependent on his wife. Also, migratory contingencies may impose redefinitions of marriage and family traditions, and this may challenge traditional positions of power among genders and generations. In a previous study on transnational Sikh arranged marriages in Italy (2012) I have argued that the process of selecting a partner, the enactment of wedding ceremonies and other formalities have the important symbolic function of publicly reaffirming the borders of the transnational social fields of Italian Sikh families. In Italy as elsewhere, these marriages may sustain the aspirations of social improvement of the people involved (Walton–Roberts 2003). If a Punjabi family arranges the marriage of their daughter or son with someone who lives in Italy they will gain new migration opportunities and maybe a flow of remittances. The spouse already living in Italy and his or her family may profit as well by attaining a privileged position which improves their social standing in the transnational social stratification. For example, this might exempt the bride's family from the payment of the dowry at her marriage. Therefore, Sikh families of middle-to-low status in Italy can aspire to arrange prestigious matches for their children in India in ways that would not have been possible in the home country. Moreover, the strategic arrangement of transnational marriages and the social construction of kin ties may allow people to reunite with their loved ones, to honour family obligations and to extinguish moral debts to relatives. These 'facilitated marriages' (Somerville 2009) may also involve the elders in India and Pakistan in the choice of candidates and in all the ritual practices, giving them added

prestige (Shaw and Charsley 2006). Arranged marriages can therefore take on different forms and meanings and be the final outcome of different practices.

Analyzing motivations, performances and discourses of arranged marriage among British-Indians, Pande (2016: 390) identifies four types of matchmaking modes: 'traditional arranged marriages' embody the tradition and are completely organized by families, spouses are only allowed to see each other before marriage in a meeting in the presence of their relatives to give their consent to the proposal, or only through the exchange of photographs. In 'semi-arranged marriages', the spouses meet in their family's presence but, if they agree on the match and once the marriage data is fixed, they are allowed to meet each other alone and 'fall in love'. In 'love-cum-arranged marriages' brides and grooms choose each other without the mediation of families, but normally take into account their parents' expectations and evaluation criteria. Once they have fallen in love and willing to marry, they speak with their relatives to take over the arrangement of the marriage. Finally, 'arranged weddings' are closest to Western traditions: the families of the spouses participate, bearing the costs of the wedding ceremony, which is considered the occasion for them to establish their place in the community.

These practices have numerous variants, adapting to different situations. They define a unique spectrum, stretching from arrangement to choice, from tradition to modernity, where increasing degrees of freedom to contact, know, date, court and fall in love are allowed to potential brides and grooms. The author affirms that, depending on how people understand the two themes of choice and arrangement, they tailor-make the type of arranged marriage which best suits them and their families. Pande also analyses people's discourses about those practices, that is the way they are understood and talked about. Those narratives serve to fix their meaning in relation to the two discursive domains of 'tradition' and 'modernity'. According to the author, brides and grooms interpret creatively the question of arrangement and choice with reference to the individual and to the collective self, thereby carving out hyphenated identities as 'British-Indian' and transnational forms of belonging. In the case stories that I present in the next sections, this process is often intertwined with the migration process and with the legal conditions that govern it.

Structural Restrictions and Personal Desires: Revisiting some Analytical Concepts in Relation to Arranged Marriages

Punjabi families resulting from an arranged marriage between spouses that may live in different contexts are inherently transnational, as they involve a series of activities that take place over time in the transnational social field (the choice of candidates, the definition of dowry or marriage settlements, the building of kin-ties, the organization of the ceremony and of the possible reunion, etc.). These activities do not end in the aftermath of the marriage but continue in the form of migration and remittances, gifts and continuous exchanges between members of the kin-networks

over time. To paraphrase Wiltshire (1992), the transnational family is typically a network of interdependent kin-links scattered across national frontiers, where critical family functions – like decision-making, economic support and nourishment – are shared among the central connections within the network. The study of transnational arranged marriages enables one to detect symbolic and social links and the economic dealings that lie outside the host country, placing them in a single social field embracing the motherland, the host context and the elements in the transnational network.

My point of view is that we need to consider several formal and informal constraints which are intertwined with one another and combine with the agency of the migrants and their family networks. First there are legal constraints that are not immediately controlled by individuals. Laws rule the family migration and outline a system of civic stratification (Morris 2001, 2003), that is a system of differential access to citizenship status and rights (such as the right to reunite one's family), recognized on the basis of specific formal requirements. There is now an extensive literature on the effects of that system on family life in Italy and elsewhere (Kraler et al. 2011; Fix and Zimmerman 2001; Menjivar and Abrego 2009; Bertolani et al. 2014). Then there is another socially binding dimension, which is certainly subject to change and manipulation by individuals. This dimension is related to traditions and social norms regarding family and marriage, that we have already discussed. As mentioned, the traditional rules of arranged marriages and family organization may guide the personal or collective choices. Nevertheless, they can also be redefined, depending on the contingencies in the context of migration, to become elastic and contextual identity resources. Finally, also the informal and socially binding dimension plays a role. This dimension is made up of social relationships and kinship networks that link migrants to their sense of identity, to social expectations, and to a range of obligations related to gender, role and seniority. All these regulatory dimensions – one formal and the others informal – are interwoven with personal desires to define relational agency outcomes, as I shall explain. My main focus is on women's agency: in some cases, it challenges both the habits and the family aspirations relating to marriage, promoting the search for innovative solutions. In other cases, however, it seems to succumb to structural constraints and the desire of the subject may not reflect the action.

Mary Evans (2013) and Kalpana Wilson (2013) argue that 'agency' is a concept which is strongly imbued with liberal assumptions related to Western culture and male gender. There are in fact preconditions of individualism, self-sufficiency, voluntarism and free action underlying the idea of agency or autonomy. These assumptions run the risk of devaluing the initiative of women living in oppressive social contexts and judging them incapable of owning their own agency. According to Madhok (2007, 2013) this idea of autonomy and agency suffers from an 'action bias' since it focuses solely on the action preferred by the individual in isolation from the context in which it should be acted and emphasises individual sovereignty and emotional separateness, ignoring other value codes which allow interdependence and relationality. The sociality of persons in their real-life context is therefore disregarded. Madhok (2007: 344) suggests that, 'persons do not always act in

accordance with their preferred desires or preferences' and considering the process of action we have to 'shift our focus from the act itself to the reasons behind the actions'. This enables one to redefine the concepts of agency and autonomy in 'relational' terms, starting from the idea that people's identities are made up of several contextual factors such as social relationships and even 'in terms of the gendered, racial, ethnic and class based realities of their lives' (ibid.: 348). This conceptual shift allows us to recognize implicit forms of coercion. It is these implicit forms, according to Evans (2013: 60) that affect women at a time when, for example, the pursuit of their personal desire could mean the abandonment of those relational bonds or those cultural practices that make up an individual sense of identity. 'Acquiring agency, and/or following the example of those who appear to possess this capacity, may appear to carry with it loss as much as gain, loss not just of the possibilities of various forms of co-operative action but also of a place in a community.'

This way of conceiving agency is closely linked to the study of social networks and to the concept of social capital. In fact, the social capital consists in the use of resources for the realisation of goals which may otherwise be difficult to achieve. These resources are made accessible to the subject by virtue of his/her membership in a social network. Literature on South Asian migrants has shown that their transnational networks, rather than being static, tend to change over time due to the action of those who are part of them (Gardner 1995; Mand 2002, 2006). The emphasis on change allows one to focus on the rules and the internal dynamics of kin-networks that often reflect positions of power which are legitimized by tradition. In fact, although the social capital is available through relationships, relationships themselves do not always generate useful social capital for the subject's goals. For this to happen, it is necessary that the network members engage in a continuous activity of tie-weaving and of redefinition of the internal balances of power, for example through the exchange of symbolic and material gifts and the creation of social obligations (Bourdieu 1990). Paraphrasing Portes (1998), therefore, the social capital consists in the *ability to mobilize* scarce resources due to the fact of being part of social structures, and for purposes that would otherwise be out of reach.

This definition combines with the idea that personal agency may manifest itself as a sort of 'relational entrepreneurship' by members of a network, as the ability, in the transnational social field, to create, strengthen or re-signify family ties and, by virtue of these, to access useful resources. In these complex activities that lead to the construction of ties, to the redefinition of people's identity and of positions of status and power, several factors come into play, among them gender and generational affiliation (Gardner 1995). In other words, the access to social capital is also mediated by gender and generation (Mand 2006). These identity characteristics, in fact, define role expectations which subjects must deal with, even critically.

The activity of relational entrepreneurship is inevitably conditioned, supported or hindered by external factors such as, for example, the system of rules and laws that regulate family migration. The system of civic stratification, as previously mentioned, can support the agency of subjects, modifying their position and influence in the network and promoting or preventing their access to social capital. For example,

the fact of being able to guarantee someone's migration may enable subjects to modify or transgress the traditional rules of arranged marriages, or to change the conventional distribution of tasks in the family care. Alternatively, the control over the choice of those family members to whom the opportunity of migrating is reserved can lead to the redefinition of someone's status and prestige in the transnational social field. I will try to illustrate these concepts starting from the ethnographic data collected.

Three Cases of Arranged Marriages

The story of Sonny is an example of how a transnational match may be a strategy to reunite with family members left behind in India and of how it sustains further migration by creating moral obligations. It shows as well how migration and the civic stratification regime may impose redefinitions of the traditional organization of family life and of the balance of power between the sexes. Sonny is a 15-year-old Sikh boy who, together with his mother, brother, and one of his sisters, was reunited 9 years ago by the initiative of his father. His older sister could not join them when they moved to Italy because she was already an adult and could not obtain a residence permit. When Sonny's father was unable to reunite his eldest daughter, he decided to arrange her marriage with a Sikh in Italy. The wedding allowed the whole family to be reunited and subsequently the Italy-based son in law proposed that Sonny's younger sister should find a bridegroom from Punjab.

Sonny's story is interesting because it illustrates how the traditionally arranged marriage may be used to achieve goals that have little to do with tradition and much to do with personal and family agency. Through marriage, the adult daughter left behind in the first phase of the family reunion process is allowed to arrive in Italy. This match determines another one, since Sonny's family has a moral debt toward the son-in-law and consequently marries the youngest daughter to one of his relatives in Punjab. Therefore, the first transnational match creates conditions for another arranged marriage to take place through which the bride reunites with the groom. The building of kin-ties fostered the widening of the network and of the social capital of its members, even allowing a redefinition of conventional family rules. In this example, both arranged matches are very 'traditional' (Pande 2016), since spouses don't know each other before marriage, can't date and meet alone after engagement and agree to marry after having met once in India in their family's presence. But migration allows them to include aspects of 'modernity' in the organization of their daily life. Especially in the case of Sonny's younger sister, the traditional principle of patrilocal residence is set aside. She can count on the support of her native family to take care of her child, and this may allow her to work, gain economic autonomy and participate actively in the budget of the widened family. Her groom from India, on the other hand, is in a position of subordination at least in the first phase of the settlement, as he is a guest in his in-laws' house and economically dependent. The system of civic stratification determines that his permit of stay (and

therefore his legal status) depends on his wife who has reunited him, therefore creating a disparity of power between the spouses to the benefit of the young woman. Finally, in the family's economic organization, the salary of the reunited bridegroom is pooled for the maintenance of the widened household.

The second case study to which I refer – Nittu's arranged marriage – shows on the other hand that the administrative and migratory status (for example the fact of already being in Italy and of having a residence permit, a house and stable employment) can be factors of female empowerment in the process of mate selection. Nittu is a 20-year-old Sikh woman who has lived in Italy for 2 years, sponsored by her paternal uncle with a job contract. She also has another uncle in Italy, who lives nearby with his wife and children and offers to arrange her marriage as he knows a beautiful young man from a good family. Nittu expresses her gratitude to her uncle but refuses his proposal as she is still young and without any desire to marry. She does not want to have any family responsibilities, but is more concerned about saving and sending money to her own parents in India. The girl's relatives in India react strongly to this proposal as they have not been consulted. Nittu's paternal grandmother especially considers it to be her role to find a suitable spouse as she is the eldest member of the family. The negative reaction of Nittu's kin-network, however, seems to be due to the fact that, had this marriage been arranged, it would have deprived Nittu's family of a precious financial resource of remittances and of a potential means of migration that would be to the advantage of her aunt's kin network. In fact, Nittu's mother reveals to her that the proposed groom is a cousin of Nittu's aunt and therefore a close relative of hers, 'almost a brother'.[2] Nittu reports in her diary that 'my aunt arranging this marriage, and subsequently making the family reunion, wanted to fix one relative of hers up in Italy. (...) Because of my 'no' she has not obtained what she wanted and she also became angry.'

Speaking with me the girl is very upset about how things turned out and declares 'something like that will never happen to me' referring to the fact that she will never accept an arranged marriage. At the same time, however, Nittu does not take a clear position against arranged marriages as such with the uncle who proposed the first transnational match and her grandmother and parents, because otherwise, as she tells me, she will be told: 'If you say no, it is because you already like someone: no problem, present him to us and we will speak with his family to arrange the wedding!' Nittu tells me that people that she likes would not be accepted by the family because they do not meet the traditional criteria of selection (caste inbreeding and lineage outbreeding). In addition, she says, 'If you choose a love marriage and things go wrong, the whole responsibility is yours, not that of the family', thus reiterating the expectation – which repeatedly emerged during my research with young Punjabis – that, in the event of conjugal conflict, an arranged marriage entails a greater degree of protection and responsibility on the part of the families of origin towards the spouses. The words of Nittu show that, on the crucial issue of marriage and family reproduction, the failure to comply with traditions and parental expecta-

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[2] This expression has been literally translated from the diary of Nittu, to indicate the close proximity between the two people concerned.

tions can have very heavy emotional costs, leading to the breakage and loss of important social ties and to the denial of critical aspects of her cultural identity. Her strategy seems to be that of deferring as much as possible the arranged marriage which seems an inevitable outcome, whilst meanwhile acquiring as much stability and economic autonomy as possible. Nittu's words that 'something like that will never happen to me' after the first marriage proposal should perhaps be interpreted as 'something like that is not going to happen to me, *in this way*', reflecting the effort of the girl to find a compromise between the desires of modernity (Pande 2016) and her need to fulfil her extended family's expectations.

In fact, 3 years later the question of Nittu's marriage comes up again, because her extended family realises that the girl has secret love affairs. Her paternal grandmother says that 'when a girl behaves like this, she is asking her family to find her a suitable husband.' Remembering what had happened a few years before, the whole kinship group changes its strategy: the young woman has now been living in Italy for several years, she speaks Italian, and has a steady job and a driving license. The family looks for someone who is already in Italy and has an 'open' mentality because Nittu would refuse a husband chosen by the network, whom she had never known directly and who was being 'reunited' from India. The mother and the grandmother of the girl talk about these issues with Nittu and the girl agrees to meet some candidates.

During the Christmas holidays in India, when much of the family comes together for a few weeks, a first attempt fails. Once back home from their vacation, Nittu's father and brother come to Italy for a few months and another encounter with a possible groom is organized at the paternal uncle's house. During this second attempt Nittu's and the young man's closest female relatives are absent because they could not come to Italy. The attempt fails for aesthetic/physical reasons that the young people give after the meeting: he/she it is too skinny, too tall, too small, etc. Actually, Nittu confides that the reason is also related to her expectations of the quality of life after getting married: although the groom offers economic guarantees because he works permanently on a stall, their future family life looks as if it would be subordinated to his having to work at night, and would be a ménage without days off, as the 'cows are milked every day'.[3] Then, Nittu's paternal grandmother (who is in India but is also organizing her regular family visit to Italy) asks a fellow villager for information on one of her in-laws who lives with her in Italy. Since the young man's age, caste and lineage (*got*) reflect the traditional requirements for marriage, the grandmother tells Nittu's mother and she speaks on the phone with her daughter. Nittu agrees that members of her family and the young man's family that live in India and in Italy, respectively, may meet each other, but migration requires traditional habits to be reviewed and the tie-weaving activity is again activated through the transnational space: Nittu's uncle, father and brother will meet the boy and some of his in-laws in Italy, as his parents are in India. Then Nittu's mother, grandmother and another paternal uncle (since the father and the brother of the girl are in Italy)

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[3] Many Indian Punjabis living in Emilia Romagna and Lombardy are employed as milkers in stables of the supply chain of Parmigiano Reggiano (Bertolani 2015).

will meet the boy's parents and close relatives in India. Finally, if these first approaches are successful, the two young people will meet each other in Italy. The encounters are positive: a few weeks later Nittu's grandmother arrives in Italy and explains directly to her niece everything that she learned about the family of the possible groom. A few days later, the two young people meet at Nittu's uncle's house with other relatives, and are left alone to talk together in a room. When they go out, both say 'fine with me'. Nittu says to her relatives that 'We talked and we agreed' and that 'he's cute, is not at all shy and in fact I was immediately asked for my phone number'. In the following months, their kin-networks are mobilized to agree on ritual prenuptial gifts, on the dowry and on the organization and location of the ceremonies. The engagement is celebrated after about a month with a big party at an Indian restaurant: all the relatives of the couple who are in Italy and even some of the young man's relatives who come specially from England participate; the whole ceremony is streamed live to relatives in India. At this point, the girl's grandmother and the father depart to India. The groom's family does not claim the dowry but rather asks a gold ring for all his male relatives. Nittu's parents find themselves in trouble, unable to respond to the request, and ask the grandmother to act as intermediary to solve this matter. In the meantime, Nittu and her prospective husband phone each other every day and meet discreetly with the tacit agreement of their families. The traditional marriage ceremony is conducted after about 6 months in India, during the Christmas holidays. A few months later the couple returns to Italy and lives at Nittu's brother's house. The bride's household is not traditional in its composition, nor is the degree of access to public space determined by gender. In fact, in this case the contingencies of migration require that, in the concreteness of everyday life in Italy, the patrilocality and submissiveness to the will of the mother-in-law are put aside. Also, because Nittu has an Italian diving license and a better knowledge of the local language than her husband, it is she who ensures the daily commuting of the family members and, figuratively, who acts as a link to the outside world, gaining power through the control of space and of relations with the surrounding environment.

The history of Nittu's arranged marriage exemplifies the complex interweaving between personal desires and transnational family dynamics. The first attempt to marry Nittu off shows how transnational arranged marriages – thanks to the opportunity of migration they entail through family reunion – may be perceived as a strategic resource to widen one's network, to gain prestige and respect in the transnational social field. In this case a series of rules and traditional roles concerning the choice of the spouse are broken for the purpose of initiating the migration of someone who is linked with the person that proposes the match (the aunt) and not with Nittu's family. Rules are strategically put aside or reaffirmed when needed, as the same persons who avoid involving Nittu's grandmother put pressure on the girl by referring to social customs of seniority and of the respect which is due to them. The subsequent attempts to arrange Nittu's wedding are different, as she has gained a more stable economic, administrative and social position. She appears very aware that she will not refuse an arranged marriage in favour of a love marriage, as the emotional costs associated with this option are too high. Choosing a love marriage

involves a potential loss of significant ties and affections and of a piece of her identity. To accept a marriage which is arranged by the kin-network means instead starting to build her own role and power from her new social status as an adult and as a married woman. Nevertheless, in this negotiation Nittu in not powerless and dependent; she accepts the arranged marriage, but she guides her kinship to look for a 'suitable' husband.

In effect, this case shows in a different way the influence of the civic stratification system on migrants' reproductive choices. The first attempt to arrange the marriage demonstrates that the kin-network may put strong pressures on those who are able to allow the migration of others through marriage. As Nittu has a stable migratory status in the civic stratification system (she is economically autonomous, has reliable documents and a job contract of indefinite duration), she is able to refuse and counter this proposal. In other words, and contrary to other cases presented in this chapter, Nittu does not need to get married to migrate or to stay permanently in Italy. In addition, the girl does not have to repay any moral debts towards those members of her kin-network that are proposing her the first arranged marriage. In fact, her migration to Italy did not happen thanks to the help of people who would like to impose a groom from India on her. Considering emotional, relational and cultural aspects, for Nittu the choice is not so much between an arranged marriage and a love marriage, but between an unknown husband reunited from India and one who is already in Italy and whom the girl may meet and know before the wedding, that is, between a 'traditional arranged marriage' where spouses are not allowed to meet each other and fall in love before marriage and a 'semi-arranged marriage' that allows young people to combine aspects of modernity with tradition. The absence of bonds of gratitude towards her close kin and the migratory stability of the young woman enable her to negotiate, promoting her empowerment in her choice of a husband. At the same time, through complex transnational negotiations with her kinship group, Nittu is able to choose the features that her arranged marriage must have, and which she prefers, refusing, for example, a match that forces her into an isolated country life. The arranged marriage becomes therefore a cultural and social custom that is negotiable in its forms; Nittu adjusts it mixing practices of arrangement and choice, discarding a 'love-cum-arranged marriage' because she knows that the men she likes do not correspond to her family's expectations. In addition, the girl's 'performative' narration of the several attempts to arrange her marriage shows the construction of a discourse through which meanings concerning the various and possible practices of arranged marriage are defined. Thanks to this discourse Nittu articulates her desires for both modernity and tradition, individuality and transnational collective membership (Pande 2016).

Finally, the story of Inah and Asna shows the effectiveness of arranged marriages to create a transnational network in which it is possible to find useful resources to realise personal desires. Inah and Asna are two motherless Pakistani sisters who have grown up in Pakistan with their paternal grandmother. Their father reunites them in Italy during their teens, but after a year he decides to bring them back to the country of origin because he cannot maintain them economically. What the young women want, however, is to return to Italy before their documents expire, even

though they know that their father will not be able to house them. The extended family in Pakistan mobilizes in support of this project, but to go back the girls need somewhere to live. Moreover, even if someone is willing to house them in Italy, the girls cannot migrate as unmarried women and live in a stranger's house. To preserve their honour and also that of the entire extended family, it is necessary that the sisters are already married and that the host is somehow 'a relative'.

In fact, the family or marriage home and the kin-networks are not just relational but also symbolic resources: they symbolize a protective environment that can guarantee the separation of the sexes (*pardah*), as both *izzat* (the honour of women and their family) and *sharam* (female decency) are linked to this (Shaw 2000). Since the two young women cannot count on the support of their father in Italy, they must recreate this security in an innovative way, through a flexible and instrumental review of traditional practices. The cultural and symbolic plan thus requires the marriage, intertwining itself with the migration strategies of individuals and of the extended family, as well as with the formal and legal plan: not only will marriage allow, at a later time, the migration of the girls' spouses through family reunion, but above all it makes possible the return to Italy (and thus the new migration) of the two women. The weddings of Inah and Asna are arranged by the paternal grandmother and uncle. These two figures are respectively referred to by them as 'my mother and my father in Pakistan', indicating the deep bond and the strong obligations that the young women have for the support and the help that they have received from them. Their grandmother has raised and educated them and taught them all that a mother should pass on about being a woman. The uncle, on the other hand, has maintained them for years and has provided them with the means to return to Italy.

Following the Pakistani (Muslim) tradition, Asna agrees to marry her first cousin, the son of her paternal uncle, thus demonstrating in practice the respect and the deep bond of gratitude that links her with this part of her family of origin. Inah, by contrast, marries a man who is not part of her enlarged family (*baraderi*). This marriage is strategic because Inah's father-in law knows a compatriot in Italy, one of his dearest childhood friends, who is defined by Inah as being 'like an uncle', and who offers to host the two girls at home together with his family, in exchange for a financial compensation. The migratory project, in which the entire transnational parental network invests resources, implies that the two women live at the home of this 'uncle', contributing with their own work to the family ménage of their hosts, waiting to obtain the legal requirements to be able to reunite with their husbands. Then they will be able to live with their spouses.

After a few years in Italy, and when they get a job, the two sisters emancipate themselves from the control of the 'uncle' who houses them, they put their incomes together, provide guarantees for each other and are able to rent an apartment independently. Asna gets a permanent work contract and, thanks to this, satisfies the requirements to apply for a long-term residence permit; also she can prove that she has sufficient income to reunite with her husband/cousin, honouring and paying back diachronically the moral debt that both sisters contracted with the uncle and the paternal grandmother. Immediately after the reunion, however, Asna and her

husband get divorced. After about a year Inah – who in the meantime has obtained a stable job – also gets a permanent residence permit (thanks to Asna acting as guarantor) and the requisite income to reunite with her husband in Italy, in the house where she still continues to live with her sister.

This story is emblematic because it shows how 'traditional' arranged marriages can be used strategically by kinship networks to facilitate the migration of their family members, and by women to be able to migrate autonomously; also it shows how cultural practices (concerning the family, women's and men's roles and the distribution of formal and substantial power between sexes and generations) can be reaffirmed or, conversely, transgressed, depending on the contingent necessities. In this case, the conventional pattern of migration that sees men as the prime movers of the family migration chain is reversed: two women promote the migration of men and their migration is decided and organized by the family network which is appropriately widened by matrimonial strategies, in contradiction to a decision by the girls' father.

It would be a mistake to think that the two girls are simply 'manipulated' or exploited by the transnational kin-network they belong to. While remaining formally placed in a precise and traditional family hierarchy and formally subordinate to the will of their husbands, uncles and male cousins, the story of Inah and Asna contradicts the idea, often reported in the literature, that Punjabi Indian or Pakistani women are lacking agency and are subordinated to the interests of others (Mand 2006). The sisters use their status as reuniting subjects to ensure a degree of autonomy for themselves that would not otherwise have been possible for them. In fact, traditionally, the Pakistani woman doesn't live alone in a migratory context, without a husband or another male relative to watch over her safety and morality, nor does she regularly work outside the home, managing her own income. In this case the tradition is cleverly set aside with the implicit consent of the widened family network. After being reunited in Italy Inah's husband cannot find a job and this forces the couple to a drastic redistribution of tasks and roles within the family: Inah gets pregnant and has a child but, contrary to tradition, she carries on working outside the home, continuing to be the sole breadwinner. Therefore, she ensures with her work the economic survival of the family and the legal status of her spouse, since his permit of stay in Italy is linked to Inah's income. Inah's husband, instead, looks after the house and the child, allowing through his domestic work the reproduction of the family unit. While not escaping the bonds that bind her to her relatives in Pakistan (sending constant remittances, especially to her seriously ill grandmother, as well as to her husband, as long as he is in Pakistan, and to in-laws at a later time), Inah reinterprets her role as wife and mother in Italy. In this case, the system of civic stratification seems to favour a change in family patterns and in power balances with regard to the couple living in Italy, and a contextual and situational redefinition of those tasks and roles which socially identify what it means 'to be a woman' or 'to be a man'. Asna's and Inah's arranged marriages are very 'traditional' in their form but 'modern' in their substance. Thanks to this practice both girls combine their collective membership in the transnational network with their desire for change (Pande 2016).

Conclusions

The three family stories presented, however different from each other, show the impact of civic stratification and the value that the residence permit might assume in the arrangement of a transnational marriage, from the point of view of the women involved. In the case of Sonni, an arranged marriage allows his eldest sister to migrate to Italy, completing diachronically the reunion process of the boy's nuclear family. Meanwhile, his younger sister, although she does not personally need to get married to stay in Italy, accepts the transnational combined marriage to honour a moral debt contracted by her family. Her legal status as reuniting spouse, however, allows the woman to revisit the household organization in her favour. Instead, the history of Nittu shows us that a permanent and regular immigrant status can be a factor in female empowerment in mate selection, enabling the girl to reject proposals of a 'traditional' arranged marriage, especially when it is to the benefit of others. In Nittu's case this is possible because she and her family of origin have no moral obligations towards those who propose the wedding. Finally, Asna and Inah's family history confirms the impact of civic stratification on the traditional practice of arranged marriages. In this case the two sisters need to get married to migrate, though not so much to acquire the documents as to meet tradition and to be able to acquire material resources that are necessary for their stay in Italy.

The family stories of Sonni, Nittu, Asna and Inah impose a redefinition of arranged marriages as a set of elastic traditions and customs defining different degrees of choice in spouse selection. These stories also impose a redefinition of the concept of agency in a gender perspective: all the protagonists accept arranged marriage, knowing that this may also benefit someone else. At the same time, however, women show how they can gain new power in the daily setting of family tasks and in the balances between the sexes, reconciling their desire for modernity with traditional practice.

Laws governing family reunion in Italy may act as a mechanism that further limits women's agency, expanding the asymmetries of the traditional Punjabi family. At the same time, however, they may also foster changes in traditional practices concerning family reproduction: in some cases, arranged marriages become an assertion of women's own aspirations, not in absolute terms, but as subjects in relation with others and starting from their own generational and gender position. Arranged marriages, as a set of flexible rituals and discursive practices, can allow women to renegotiate their need for belonging and their desire for change. The stories I have reported show a high degree of awareness about one's own cultural identity, relational belonging and one's own desire. Awareness, whether or not it translates into action, involves a choice and the concept of choice refers to forms of protagonism in a complex interweaving made of social and legal demands, coercion and desires.

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When Politics Meet Marriage: Changes in Marriage Practices among Migrated Yi Cadres in Liangshan, China

Zhitian Guo

Introduction

It is the 7th of July in the traditional Chinese lunar calendar, the Han people's Valentine's Day, and there is a grand wedding ceremony going on in a restaurant in the city of Xichang. The groom is the son of a local government official from the Yi ethnic minority, and the bride is a Han woman from a city near Xichang. The Party secretary from the nearby county acts as the officiator of the wedding and delivers a special speech in which he describes this wedding as a great example of 'national integration and ethnic unification'.

This ceremony follows a formula that is more or less the same as that of ceremonies elsewhere, especially in the cities. Before the ceremony, the bride dressed in red and the groom in black tie stand at the entrance to the dining hall to welcome their guests, who are relatives from either the bride's or the groom's family, and clerks stand nearby to record the names of attendees and the amount of money they give as a gift. When all the guests are seated, the dishes are served and then the ceremony begins. Following instructions from the host, the newly married couple make their debut in front of nearly 1,000 people.

The message conveyed in the host's speech emphasizes the union between the ethnic minorities and the Han, as well as the culture of the Yi ethnic minority. The restaurant is a large venue well known for its Yi food and ethnic decorations and performances. The dishes served for the wedding are mainly traditional Yi dishes, including buckwheat cakes, boiled potatoes and large cuts of meat, but Han dishes such as shrimp are also presented. There are both Yi and Han guests sitting at the tables; they are aware of the ethnic characteristics permeating the wedding but they rarely refer to their own ethnic identities. One Han veteran cadre points out the combination of Yi and Han food on the table and makes it known that she strongly prefers the Yi food. Actors and actresses from the Liangshan Singing and Dance Group are invited to perform Yi songs and dances for this special occasion. I am seated at the same table with several veteran cadres from the county in Liangshan the

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groom's father originally hails from, and many younger cadres or officials come to greet them and make toasts together.[1]

The wedding ceremony described above appears to be an open performance that is politicized to some extent. Apart from the mention of 'ethnic integration' in the speech given by the officiator, there were other details revealing the influence of politics as well. Inviting the nearby County Party Secretary to be the officiator showed the newly married couple's family connection and the influence they enjoyed in the bureaucratic system. Moreover, many guests invited by the groom's family were veteran cadres of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture who had previously helped the groom's father advance along his career path or individuals who could be considered relatives in one way or another; in addition, several of the clerks who helped organise the wedding were colleagues of the groom's father.

Starting from this ethnographic sketch, I wish to use this chapter to investigate marriage as a pivotal element for understanding social practices within the Yi from Sichuan province and to highlight the way these practices intertwine with local and national politics in a context of internal migration. Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, part of Sichuan province, has been shaped not only by all the national socialist movements but also by internal shifts in the political administrative demarcation which resulted in the decision to change the prefectural capital city from Zhaojue County to Xichang City in 1978. This change of capital city in turn led a group of Yi cadres to migrate from Yi towns and villages to Xichang City. Like other ethnic elites, ethnic cadres[2] play an intermediate role between local society and the state (Murphy 2003) and have become important for understanding the social changes occurring after 1949. This paper will focus on how marriage practices in the Liangshan area play an important role in the construction of a collective identity that brings together both local and national dimensions as well as the intertwining of the social and the political.

To understand marriage strategies among migrated Yi cadres, for my ethnographic fieldwork I interviewed 20 Yi cadres who migrated to Xichang after 1978. I began the fieldwork for my PhD research on the Yi cadres in Liangshan in August 2012, selecting Zhaojue, Meigu and Xichang as the main counties and cities for this research. My initial fieldwork lasted 10 months, and I went back to the field in pursuit of further data in April and May of 2014. I interviewed 14 Yi cadres in the first stage of my fieldwork between 2012 and 2013; in April and May of 2014, I inter-

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[1] Edited fieldnotes. This wedding ceremony took place in Xichang in August of 2012. Xichang is the capital city of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture and one of the main field sites for this research.

[2] Cadre, or *ganbu* in Chinese, is relatively ambiguous from an academic perspective but seems quite self-evident in people's lives. Oksenberg (1969: 157) has used cadre to refer to those who have 'power and influence at the administrative levels', which includes not only civil servants but also military officers, leading figures and clerks of social political organizations, technical/professional cadres and administrators working in state-owned enterprises and public-sector organizations.

viewed the remaining six cadres and revisited six respondents to whom I had spoken previously.[3] The data used in the article includes not only the interviews but also other informal conversations with local residents as well as my observations.

Of these migrated Yi cadres, two were brought to Xichang by the political demarcation, six moved to Xichang after being promoted, seven were the offspring of migrated Yi cadres who had migrated along with their parents and were now working in the bureaucratic system, and four had migrated to Xichang of their own accord. Compared to their fellow Yi residing in the mountainous areas, they were better educated, particularly those born in the 1980s – all of them had been to university, and four of them held Master's degrees. The senior cadres had also attended training programmes and other courses, but they had not received degrees or certificates for these programmes. Also, these Yi cadres spoke both the Yi language and Mandarin; the senior cadres spoke Mandarin with a Sichuan accent while the younger ones could speak both the Sichuan dialect and standard Mandarin (putong hua), and some had even learned the Xichang accent. Some of these individuals could not speak Yi very well, but they had no trouble understanding it.[4]

In the following sections of this chapter, I will first give a general picture of Liangshan Prefecture and the Yi people, including the geographical setting, traditional marriage practices and the traditional social environment in which these traditions have been embedded and made meaningful. I will then examine a specific marriage practice – spouse selection – paying special attention to inter-ethnic marriage and endogamy in the present moment. Next, I will discuss how bride price, a custom that is not promoted by the government, finds a place among migrated Yi civil servants. Finally, in the concluding section, I will summarize the major findings of this chapter and highlight how ethnicity, state bureaucracy, local politics and hierarchies are intertwined in the case of the marriage practices of migrated Yi civil servants.

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[3] Even if scholars are researching topics that are 'politically innocent' (Thøgersen and Heimer 2006:13), when conducting fieldwork in China they are nonetheless concerned with ideo-political control, politics and the sensitivity of research projects. Interviewing Yi cadres initially appeared sensitive and political, but when it came to the topic of marriage many interviewees, especially female respondents, showed great enthusiasm in telling their stories as well as gossiping about other people. Moreover, although I was born and brought up in a different city in China, my parents came from Liangshan and I am Yi myself. Being a female Yi from Liangshan quickly brought me closer to my research participants, which made it much easier for these Yi cadres to share their thoughts about marriage practices.

[4] Because all the respondents were able to speak fluent Mandarin, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Yi words and phrases were sometimes used, and I wrote these words down phonetically. There were times I did not know the meaning of the Yi words, and in these cases I just made note the sound and asked for clarification before moving on to another topic. In writing this article, both Mandarin and the Yi language are presented using the Roman alphabet. The Hanyu Pinyin system is used by the PRC, and has been internationally recognized as the standard system for transcribing Mandarin (Stockman 2000). The Yi alphabet is slightly different from Hanyu Pinyin, and in order to differentiate between these two alphabets I have italicized the Yi pinyin.

Liangshan Prefecture and Yi Ethnic Minority

Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture is located in the south-western part of Sichuan province and adjoins the northern boundary of Yunnan province (see Fig. 1). It has an area of 60,423 Km^2 and over 4.5 million inhabitants, 50% of whom are classified as belonging to the Yi ethnicity. It is part of 'eight-hundred-li[5] Liangshan', a transitional area between North Hengduan Mountain and the Sichuan basin.

The prefecture is a relatively independent geographical unit, with the Jinsha River running along the southern and eastern borders of the prefecture and the Dadu River to the north. It presently governs 17 counties (as shown in Fig. 2), and the current capital of the prefecture is Xichang City.

The official categorisation of 55 ethnic minority groups, finalised in the 1980s, makes China a 'multi-ethnic nation' (Fei 1989: 1). The Yi in Southwest China is one of the largest recognized ethnic minority groups with a population of over eight million. As early as 1882, the British orientalist and traveller Edward Colborne Baber described this group of people through the specific race-focused lens of the time: '(they) are a far taller race than the Chinese; taller probably than any European people…are almost without exception remarkably straight-built, with slim, but

Fig. 1 Location of Liangshan Prefecture in China (Source: Remote Sensing Image of Chinese Administrative Division, Chinese Academy of Science. http://ids.ceode.ac.cn/ftpdownload/ftp-Download.aspx, accessed 16 May, 2014)

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[5] 'Li' is a Chinese unit of length. One li equals 0.5 kilometres. 'Eight-hundred-li Liangshan' is also called 'One-thousand-li Yishan', and both names are a general designation of this specific area, including southwest Sichuan and some areas in which Sichuan adjoins Yunan and which hosts the majority of the Yi people.

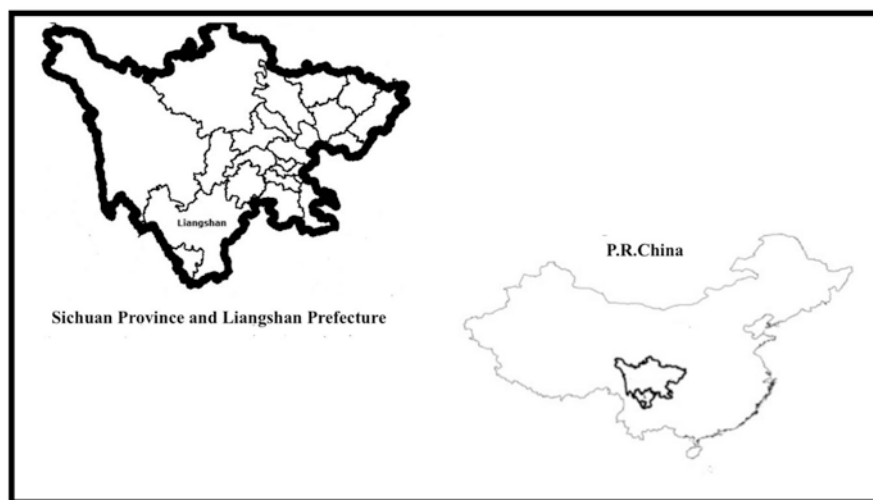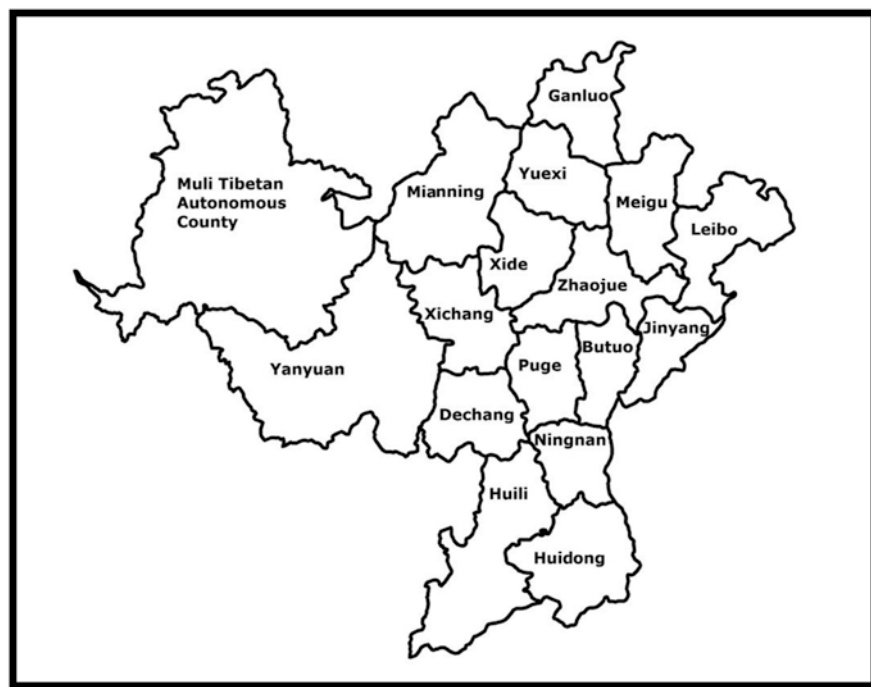**Fig. 2** Administrative Map of Liangshan Prefecture (Source: Remote Sensing Image of Chinese Administrative Division, Chinese Academy of Science)

muscular limbs; many of them are robust but anything approaching the pork-fed obesity of an affluent sedentary Chinaman seems unknown' (Baber 1882: 60–61).

Yi society has been described as a caste-like society governed by blood, property ownership and personal rights in which marriage practices such as endogamy, a preference for early marriage and bilateral-cross-cousin marriage and the calculation of bride price and dowry were strictly determined by regulations shaped by the social order (Lin 1961). Before 1949, people in Yi society were strictly categorized into different social classes. Although there is no consensus regarding the exact categorisation and nomenclature of each social class, the majority of scholars (Lin 1961; Ma 1989; Yuan 1992; Xu 2000) agree that traditional Yi society consisted of the *nzyho*, *nuoho* and *jieho* (see Table 1). The first two categories, the *nzyho* and *nuoho*, were also referred to as the 'Black Yi' or 'Black Bones' and constituted the noble classes in the traditional society. The *nzyho*'s social status was slightly higher than that of the *nuoho* since the *nzyho* were usually the actual rulers of Yi areas and in most cases the *tusi*, the local official appointed by the emperor, was a member of the *nzyho*. The *jieho* – including the *quono*, *mgajie* and *gaxy galo* – were subordinate to the Black Yi and worked for their Black Yi masters. What differentiated the *quono*, also known as the 'White Yi', from the *mgajie* and *gaxy galo* was that *quono* referred to commoners who worked for the Black Yi in the traditional society but

Table 1 Socio-ethnic classifications in Yi society

Nobles or Black Yi	nzyho	Governors of Yi areas
	nuoho	
Commoners or White Yi	quono	Bondsmen
Slaves	mgajie	Yi slaves who lived separately from their owners
	gaxygalo	Han slaves who lived with their owners

Drawn from Lin (1961), Ma (1989), Yuan (1992), and Xu (2000)

who enjoyed more freedom and were allowed to hold property and keep slaves. The *mgajie* and *gaxygalo* were both slaves but ethnically speaking the *mgajie* were Yi while the *gaxygalo* were of Han descent. Moreover, the *mgajie* were permitted to live separately from their Black Yi owners whereas the *gaxygalo* were required to live with them.

Another important concept that is fundamental to Yi society is that of *cytvi* or clan. In Liangshan, a clan refers to a group of people who claim descent from the same patrilineal line and are associated with each other, which is similar to a *zongzu* in Han Chinese (Hu 1985: 247). In the past each clan belonged to a specific caste, and the caste of each clan could easily be identified through its family name. According to Yi legend, the nobles descended from a common ancestor, Lapudior, about thirty generations ago (Winnington 2008 [1950]). In pre-revolution Liangshan, there were nearly one hundred Black Yi clans with a population of less than 50,000, of which only approximately ten clans comprised over 1000 male members (Hu 1985: 248). The White Yi also had clans, but their population was far more numerous than that of the Black Yi. While the Black Yi accounted for only 7% of the population in pre-1949 Liangshan, the White Yi made up 55% of total inhabitants (Xu 2000: 31).

Because clans answered to a specific caste and recorded their bloodlines, it was important for the Yi people to be able to trace their fathers' clan pedigrees and, in most cases, their mothers' clan lineages as well. In the past, the fact that Yi people were able to recite their patrilineal pedigrees was evidence of the purity of their blood, in addition to representing an important means of recognising relatives and thereby avoiding fatal or unnecessary fights as well as forming unions when necessary. The patrilineal lineage recorded in clan names revealed their relationship with other clans, which acted as a framework for considering marriage partners or establishing alliances.

Before the founding of New China, the Yi people's marriage practices were strictly regulated by rules developed on the basis of the traditional social structure and its emphasis on blood. Firstly, the Yi in Liangshan practiced strict endogamy, with marriage allowed only within the same caste. Marriages between different castes as well as non-marital sexual relationships between individuals were forbidden and punished. Ahei has noted that, when an affair between a Black Yi man and

a White Yi woman was discovered in a county inside Liangshan in 1964, the man was expelled from his own clan while the woman was sent away to marry outside of Liangshan (Ahei 1994).

Secondly, the Yi preferred bilateral-cross-cousin marriage. In his ethnographic research, Lu Hui recorded two old proverbs that most clearly expressed this preference: 'The father's sister's daughter is naturally the daughter-in-law of the mother's brother' and 'It takes no effort for the father's sister's family to obtain the mother's brother's daughter' (Lu 2001: 69). And thirdly, marriage was not possible unless the groom paid a certain amount of money to the bride's family.

These rules still affect the Yi people even after decades of reforms. Several social scientists have revealed that, even though the founding of New China and a series of socialist campaigns abolished the traditional social system, traditional social stratification is still preserved today, especially in the core areas of Liangshan, and therefore continues to play a significant role in Yi people's marriage practices (Feng 1996; Zhang and Hu 2001; Qiu 2010). According to research carried out by Yao Hong and Wang Xuemei in 1988 in the Butuo and Zhaojue counties in Liangshan, marriages that could be identified as bilateral-cross-cousin marriages still accounted for 17.6% of their sample, and over 31,000 teenagers who had not yet reached legally marriageable age were involved in bilateral-cross-cousin marriages. In his own investigation in 1993, Ahei (1994) found that all the husbands on the 1020 couples he studied had paid a bride price, and a survey showed that the total amount paid in bride prices between 1988 and 1989 came to 12.72 million yuan (Feng 1996). Moreover, scholars have found that the custom of marrying at an early age has persisted up to recent times. Ling Guangdian, one of the most famous *tusi*[6] in Liangshan and a man who is widely known for his contributions to the development of Yi culture and education through his participation in the Sichuan People's Political Consultative Conference, expressed concerns regarding the trend he had observed: 'Delayed marriages resulted in fewer off-spring…bad habits cost every opportunity. If we don't change thoroughly, it will be a great obstacle to our development' (Ling 1988: 220). An investigation carried out by the Liangshan Women's Federation between 1983 and 1987 suggested that 56.2% of the 88.615 people aged between 7 and 17 under examination were engaged to be married or had already married (Ahei 1994: 71).

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[6] *Tusi* were local officials appointed by the central governments of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties to govern ethnic regions. In most cases, local officials were elites from ethnic groups. Although the central government in the Ming dynasty tried to replace local officials with mobilized officials, the attempt was not very successful. Many ethnic regions, especially ethnic regions in Southwest China, still had *tusi* until 1949. The majority of Yi in Liangshan were governed by *tusi* from influential Black Yi clans before 1949. After the liberation of Liangshan, some *tusi* and headmen of large Yi clans who had helped and supported CCP campaigns were selected as representatives of the People's Political Consultative Conference.

Choosing a Spouse among Migrated Yi Cadres

The Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture celebrated its 60th anniversary recently, in 2012. Just like other regions in China, it experienced various socialist campaigns, including Democratic Reform, the Socialist Education Movement, the New Marriage Law, Open up and Reform and so on. One of the most influential political administrative changes that occurred in Liangshan was the merger of the Xichang region and Liangshan Autonomous Prefecture. Before 1978, Liangshan prefecture consisted of counties that were dominated by a Yi population, the majority of whom were agricultural labourers. The Xichang region contained the majority of the Han population, with other ethnic minorities living separately in different areas.

Many changes occurred in the years following the merger of Xichang and Liangshan, including an increase in migrants in Xichang. Due to specific historical reasons[7] there is a lack of available data regarding migratory flows from the Yi counties to Xichang City at the end of the 1970s and during the early 1980s, but the statistics for 1985 and 1990 show that migration became an important social phenomenon in this period. Of those who migrated to Xichang, 92.27% came from Sichuan province and 54.84% migrated from rural villages and towns. The main reasons for migration were to join family, to find a different job or conduct business, and in response to arrangements made as part of the national plan (for example, job transfers and job assignments).[8] Many Yi cadres who had previously worked for the Prefectural government in Zhaojue County were included in this migratory flow. All prefectural organisations and their offices were required to move to the new capital city of Xichang, and around 3,000 cadres were forced to move because of their positions (LSSZB 2010: 309).[9] Once they had settled into the new environment, many of their relatives followed.

In addition, Xichang became more ethnically heterogeneous after this political demarcation. Because it is the capital city of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, signs of Yi culture can be observed almost everywhere. Road signs, public facilities and shop names are all written in both Mandarin and Yi scripts, and grand celebrations of traditional Yi festivals such as the Torch Festival were brought to the city and became increasingly well-known. Ethnic diversity is also obvious within the bureaucracy. Tibetan, Hui and Mongolian cadres were all serving in the prefectural offices alongside Yi and Han cadres. According to the Ordinance of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yi, Han and other ethnic minorities living in Liangshan were to have representatives in the Prefectural People's Congress, and the exact

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[7] There were many administrative problems in the first few years after this demarcation. For example, Xichang was set up as a county-level city in 1979, but there was also a Xichang County at the same time. It was not until 1986 that Xichang County was abolished. There are statistics regarding the Xichang population from 1953 onwards, but there is a lack of clear explanation for these statistics.

[8] http://szb.lsz.gov.cn/read.aspx?id=22810. Accessed 4th, November, 2016.

[9] Office of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture's Chronicles Compilation, abbreviated as LSSZB according to Hanyu pinyin.

number or percentage of representatives was to be determined according to the associated provincial regulations. The Ordinance also states that the Prefectural Governor should be Yi, and that Yi and other minorities should be included in the prefectural government according to the ratio of their population in the prefecture as a whole.[10]

The 1978 change of capital city from Zhaojue to Xichang not only brought the first 3000 cadres to a densely Han-populated city, it also indicated the future direction of migration for Yi who attempted to pursue more successful political careers despite the difficulties they faced in doing so. For cadres, the competition for securing positions in prefectural governmental offices in the counties is fierce. Yypmop was an ordinary official working for the prefectural government at the time of the interview. After graduating from a university in Beijing, he passed the civil servant examinations and became a civil servant in the prefectural government. He complained about the limited opportunities for Yi cadres to gain promotion to prefectural government organisations:

> There are five or six thousand Yi cadres in each county, but how many positions are there at the prefectural level? You can count. One prefectural governor, three members of the prefectural party standing committee, two vice prefectural governors, and some other positions in the Prefectural People's Congress and Prefectural People's Political Consultative Conference.[11]

Yypmop only pointed out the competitive situation at the prefectural level; there were also many posts at the township or equivalent levels to be found in Xichang. However, these positions were also competitive; in 2015, for example, the Liangshan Prefecture planned to employ 234[12] civil servants, many of whom would be sent to work in the counties instead of remaining in Xichang. Moreover, these positions were open to all eligible individuals from around the country, which increased the difficulty for the local Yi people significantly. Already during my research, I met two cadres who came from cities outside of Sichuan province, both of whom had graduated from reputable universities in China.

Historically, blind and dumb marriages[13] were quite popular in traditional rural Chinese societies. The family decided whom their children should marry based on family status, economic conditions and future prospects (Croll 1981).

As the CCP gradually established its authority in the Liangshan area, it carried out three marriage reforms in 1960, 1977, and 1987 respectively. The first reform in 1960 was initiated to promote the New Marriage Law promulgated in 1950, and its main purpose was to propagate the idea of free marriage and equality between men and women, to forbid marriage at an early age and marriage between close relatives,

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[10] http://fgk.chinalaw.gov.cn/article/dffg/198707/19870700322460.shtml. Accessed 17 November, 2016. See regulations 14 and 18.

[11] Personal interview with Yypmop, 25 May, 2013.

[12] See http://file.scpta.gov.cn/2015327/2015327164656_n_13237.html. Accessed 17 November, 2015.

[13] In Chinese the phrase is 'mang hun ya jia'. It stresses that the two people who are about to get married, particularly women, have no say in their own marriage.

Table 2 Ways of getting married after democratic reform in Liangshan, between 1956 and 1988 (181 respondents)

	Blind and dumb marriage	Consulting with parents	Other	Free marriage
1956–1965	24	5	0	28
1966–1976	18	1	0	29
1977–1988	37	2	1	36
Total	79	8	1	93

Source: (Yuan 1992, 126)

and to stop enforced dowry payment. The subsequent reform, in 1977, was to some extent a follow-up to the first one, aimed at consolidating the changes that had already been achieved. The third reform, which took effect beginning in 1987, mainly involved the marriage law promulgated in 1981 and the regulation introduced by the Prefecture government to implement this marriage law, at the same time tackling the problems that had not been completely resolved by the two previous reforms.

The marriage reforms had a limited impact, which seems to confirm Diamant's assertion that the party and the state were largely unsuccessful in seeking to make themselves politically legible among peasants (Diamant 2001), (see Table 2).

The situation was slightly more complicated for the migrated Yi cadres. Of the Yi cadres I interviewed, four had married Han, one had married a Tibetan cadre, and the remaining fifteen had all married someone from the same 'caste', be it *nuoho* or *quono*. Inter-ethnic marriage was not very common for the Yi in general. Researchers have found that Yi people in the 1950s were among the groups least inclined to marry out (Ma 2001: 166), and in 2000 the inter-ethnic marriage rate for the Yi was 19.34% (Li 2004: 69). Ethnic identity was less problematic for the migrated cadres, however: they reported that they were able to freely choose their spouses and that these choices were supported by their parents.

For the other Yi cadres in this research who married other Yi, it appeared that practices tended to preserve endogamy, or at any rate that this model influenced their decisions. According to the Black Yi couple I interviewed, the tradition of endogamy and pride in one's bloodline was the dominant factor in their marriage. Latvie[14]'s clan is a famous Black Yi clan, and her husband is also a Black Yi. She studied law at a university in Beijing, and at the point when she was considering her career her family telephoned her frequently to persuade her to return to Liangshan, informing her that they had already chosen her fiancée. Having few expectations regarding her love life, she agreed to her family's arrangement. She admitted that, despite being a law student and believing in equality for all, she had no reasons to object to her parents' decision:

> They told me that he also had a bachelor's degree from a university in Chengdu[15] and is from a Black Yi clan. It is actually a good match. My uncles were satisfied, too. They were

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[14] All names in this article are pseudonyms. The pseudonyms are common Yi names.

[15] The capital city of Sichuan province.

worried about me because I used to tell them about the principles I learnt in university, about free marriage and equality for all. They thought I was insane. Now they don't think so.[16]

It is true that the White Yi cadres married Yi who were also from White Yi clans, but the rationale behind the consideration was different. Lisse was a Yi man who migrated to Xichang together with his parents. When he was in his twenties, people around him thought that he would have a promising career. He recalled that there was a person from a Black Yi clan who came to his parents and asked if he could introduce his niece to Lisse. Lisse and his parents refused this proposal. In their view, Black Yi blood was not noble but rather 'unhealthy'. Because Black Yi were scrupulous in following the rule of endogamy despite their relatively small population, there was a high possibility that this practice would result in consanguineous marriages entailing high reproductive risk. The emphasis on reproductive risk seemed to be widely accepted, as bilateral-cross-cousin marriages are not found among these migrated Yi cadres. Indeed, bilateral-cross-cousins were the first to be excluded from their list of possibilities following, in this case, the warnings of the otherwise not-thoroughly-successful New Marriage Law propaganda.

Another reason that Lisse's parents did not want him to form a marital relationship with a Black Yi clan was that the Black Yi lacked relatives. There is a saying that 'Black Yi relies on clan, and White Yi relies on relatives'. Since clans are made up of patrilineal ties while relatives are people connected through marital relations, this saying suggests that White Yi clans stressed the importance of relations formed through marriage. Many White Yi believed that the Black Yi population was suffering a decrease in numbers and deterioration in terms of physical condition – because Black Yi followed strict endogamy and faced higher risks of the genetic diseases caused by reproduction among close relatives – and were therefore less able to offer aid within the family. Lisse's parents had helped each other's family members on various occasions, and they hoped that this tradition would continue. He finally married a White Yi girl who was introduced to him by one of his parents' colleagues.

While Lisse's considerations seemed to be influenced by biological and genetic theories, Vieshy, a Yi woman whose father was a veteran cadre for the prefecture, displayed more politicised concerns. As she had graduated from a university in Chengdu and was the daughter of a retired cadre, she could not imagine herself marrying someone introduced to her according to traditional regulations. In her view, her parents were both 'progressive' and 'revolutionary', and they were not interested in the idea of arranging marriages for their children as early as possible. They were more persuaded by the idea that a person should establish a career before considering marriage. As a result of her parents' open-minded attitude, Vieshy's choice of husband was largely her own decision. She admitted that the fact that her husband was the son of a high-ranking Yi cadre who lived in the 'courtyard'[17] helped

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[16] Personal interview with Latvie, 8 December, 2012.

[17] 'Courtyard', as used here, refers to a community in which the cadres' families live.

her finally decide to marry him. A residential area patrolled by armed security guards, the 'courtyard' symbolised a different social status. She said she felt proud every time she told other people that she now lived in the 'courtyard' as well. Compared to the traditional social structure based on blood, Vieshy was apparently more accepting of her new social status based on the power that came with a bureaucratic position. Living inside the 'courtyard' was far better than marrying a Black Yi and living in another area, no matter how luxurious the living conditions might be there. During the reform period, the party and government tried to intervene in the traditional social stratification by awarding high political status to poor peasants and soldiers and encouraging them to marry within their own class (Diamant 2001). After almost 60 years of Democratic Reform, it seemed that many people in Liangshan were more accepting of this new society in which social status was significantly influenced by bureaucratic positions.

Several factors may help to explain the decisions of these migrated Yi cadres. Firstly, the migrated Yi cadres were well educated and many had attended universities outside of Liangshan. They were less concerned with blood and questioned the legitimacy of the traditional social structure built on blood. Instead, they were more accepting of the fundamental principles they learned through either training courses or formal education. They valued personal achievement highly, and they believed in the tenets of science. Secondly, these Yi cadres, together with their parents, had moved to a new environment that was more diverse economically, ethnically and socially, and the relative importance of their clan relatives was reduced. Furthermore, although this new social status constructed on the basis of economic and political position has not replaced the traditional stratification of blood completely, since most marriages still occur within clans from the same castes, an individual's rank in the bureaucratic system is gradually gaining importance in practices of spousal selection. Although some people have suggested that the party failed to make itself legible in many ways (Diamant 2001), the stories of these migrated Yi cadres seem to indicate the contrary.

Bride Prices and Dowries

In pre-revolutionary Liangshan, bride price was largely determined by the bride's blood, that is to say the caste to which her clan belonged. According to Yuan (1992), for a girl whose family was of the *nzyho* clan, the normal price was around 1000 liang[18] of silver while a girl from the *nuoho* clan was usually assigned a price of 800

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[18] 'Liang' is a Chinese traditional measurement for silver. Silver was always the currency in pre-revolutionary era, and there is ongonig discussion in the field of historical studies as to the effective weight of one liang of silver. In current daily usage, 1 liang equals 50 grams, but in the the Republic period (1912–1949) 1 liang equaled 31.25 g.

liang of silver and one from the *quoho* clan a price of 200[19] liang of silver (Yuan 1992; 113). Money could be substituted by sheep or cattle if both families agreed. Other factors that could influence the bride price included the young woman's appearance and the dowries provided by her family. In cases in which the bride and groom were from families that had a close relationship, the price could be reduced by mutual agreement.

The government has largely prohibited the custom of bride prices, but in reality this prohibition has not been particularly successful. Grooms whose families did not pay a bride price are subject to ridicule and, for an ethnic group that views dignity as being of paramount importance, being laughed at by others is undesirable in the extreme. Moreover, the bride price continues to provide an important economic function, particularly for the bride's family. People are still wont to declare in some parts of Liangshan that 'because the father paid a price when marrying the mother, they must receive a price when marrying their daughter'. Since the daughter has been part of her husband's family since the day she was born, it is natural for the bride's parents to ask to be compensated when she is married because they have been raising her for her husband's family (Zeng 2001). In addition, when the bride's family is not very wealthy the bride price received as a result of their daughter's marriage represents an important source of income. This bride price can be used to prepare a dowry for the daughter, or it can be spent on their sons' marriages (Feng 1996). The majority of Yi families have more than one child[20] and, in many cases, more than one son; it can therefore be highly burdensome for a Yi family to find wives for all their sons. When a family finds it difficult to pay a bride price other families from the same clan sometimes lend them money, which further supports the payment of the bride price.

The bride price still exists among the migrated Yi cadres, but they have developed new interpretations of it and methods for calculating it. These Yi cadres see nothing wrong in giving a price for a bride and have developed new explanations to justify this custom. They argue that pricing the bride is not a backward (*luohou*) custom; it is so common that even the Han people whose culture is said to be more advanced than those of the ethnic minorities maintain this tradition. Furthermore, some people have suggested that bride price is only one side of the story, and it is unfair to talk about bride price without also considering the dowries that families give to the bride. Literature about the Yi people's traditional marriages rarely discusses the rationale behind the value of dowries because traditional marriage was more like marriage by purchase. By stressing the value of dowries, the migrated

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[19] There is no unanimous agreement on the value of silver. Some people have estimated that, in middle of the Qing dynasty, one liang of silver is equal to approximately 150–220 yuan, which is about 15–22 pounds today. See http://history.people.com.cn/GB/198593/18159620.html, accessed 17 November, 2016.

[20] The state's birth planning policy is more relaxed in relation to the Yi, especially those who live in remote areas. According to the regulations, Yi couples who are registered as non-agricultural population and agricultural Yi couples who live in low mountain areas or river valleys are allowed to have two children; Yi people who live in remote and high mountain areas and are registered as agricultural producers are allowed to have three children.

cadres sought to prove that the bride price is in fact a custom that showcases equality between the bride's and groom's families and provides protection for the woman. Bburxddur was a cadre in his late thirties, and he was proud that he had paid ten thousand yuan to his wife's family in early 2000. He explained that it was a deposit paid to his wife's family which represented his promise to treat her well. He vehemently denied that the bride price is an in-between practice halfway to purchase. Furthermore, the bride's family is not 'selling' their daughter to make a fortune, because the family is expected to return approximately the same amount of money or gifts to their daughter as a dowry. Bburxddur's wife agreed, and told me that her family not only gave the ten thousand yuan back to the new couple but that they also gave other gifts equivalent to the same amount, gifts that they began to prepare once they had agreed on the price. This suggests that the new couple had a total of twenty thousand yuan to start their new life together.

In my study I did not encounter any cross-'caste' marriages; more than blood, therefore, there were other factors that could be observed to play an influential role in determining the price of a bride. When I went to a veteran cadre's house to interview him about a bride pricing, the old man held up his granddaughter as an example and explained his views regarding the pricing system:

> You see my granddaughter. She is a graduate student from one of the best Chinese universities, her parents are both intellectuals working in large cities and party members, and she also has her grandma and me who were prefectural and vice-prefectural level cadres before we retired. If someone is asking to marry her, I see nothing wrong in asking for less than one million yuan (approximately 100,000 pounds sterling).[21]

His statement revealed some important changes in bride price setting practices. Firstly, there was no indication of forced marriage in his discussion, and he seemed quite accepting of his granddaughter choosing her own groom regardless of his ethnic identity. Secondly, the criteria that he applied to valuing a bride was no longer the bloodline into which she was born; rather, they revolved around other characteristics that were acquired later in life, either through her own personal efforts or via her family's achievements. In this case, the veteran cadres placed high value on knowledge and political positions; knowledge was measured by the granddaughter's degree and the reputation of the university she attended, and political positions were valued by party membership and rankings. Moreover, we can infer from the old man's statement that her family could afford a dowry of one million yuan.

Even though the veteran cadre did not say anything about arranged marriage or his own expectations regarding his future grandson-in-law, his pricing indicated that he preferred his granddaughter to marry outside of Liangshan. The veteran cadre was clearly very proud of his outstanding granddaughter, and one million yuan is a large sum of money, especially for people living in Liangshan where the economy is less developed. Very few people in Liangshan prefecture could meet his requirements, and the requirements he suggested were not regionally or ethnically specific.

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[21] Personal interview with Jiemu, 30 November, 2012.

Others have developed more flexible ways of paying prices and giving dowries. Awu married her husband Yyhmy in the early 2000s and, according to her, the groom's family did not pay a bride price. She recalled what happened to her in the 'pricing' procedure:

> My father said something like 'our two families are close. You two are Party members. We can just skip the dowry and those complicated matters'. Later my uncle went to negotiate this. Of course, his family did eventually bring our family something – several goats. (Turning to her husband) Do you remember how many? (Husband: Can't remember. That was so long ago.) Well, you see, he did not remember either. He just herded those goats from our home to the roundabout in Sanchakou[22] and then herded them back on the wedding day. Quite simple, wasn't it?[23]

Although their marriage was a typical Yi marriage – both Awu and her husband were from White Yi clans and her maternal uncle negotiated the price for both sides – the way of valuing the bride price had changed. Although bilateral-cross-cousin marriages have almost disappeared among these migrated cadres, the maternal uncle retains his traditional authority. He still fulfilled part of his duty as *fuga*[24] – namely, negotiating bride price and dowries. The maternal uncle accepted that party membership has become a significant factor in Yi cadre marriage practices. Moreover, what was not revealed in Awu's statement was that both of their fathers were veteran cadres, which contributed to the 'closeness' of their families even though Yyhmy's father held a more prestigious position. Thirdly, although these two families did not talk about bride price, other people in the community did not know that they had not done so, and the fact that they herded several goats along the streets suggested that they had arranged the marriage in a traditional way. Li (2012) reported a similar finding in that, since 2000, the 'price' for brides who are cadres has been calculated at between 50,000 and 500,000 yuan, but this is only the 'tag price' – the actual amount of money paid is significantly lower (Li 2012: 130)

Many of the Black Yi families I spoke with seem to have quite different opinions about pricing a bride. For them, blood still takes precedence over all other criteria. No other considerations, such as party membership, education, political position or ranking, or the success of personal business are more important than the purity of blood. The position family members hold in the bureaucratic hierarchy may not be a crucial factor in determining a bride's price from the family's perspective, but it still has significance for the individuals entering into the marriage market. Because the CCP sought help from Black Yi clans to implement socialist reforms during revolutionary period and many Black Yi headmen and other influential individuals were given positions in the government and party as a reward, many of the Black Yi

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[22] Sanchakou is to the northeast and about 5 min' walk from their home.

[23] Personal interview with Awu, 10 November, 2012.

[24] *Fuga* is the word for matchmaker in traditional Yi society. Luobian and Mose (2014) define the *fuga* as someone 'who makes money from matchmaking and at the same time carries the responsibility of culture inheritance' (Luobian and Mose 2014: 117). It is his responsibility to find potential marriage partners, persuade the families on both sides and negotiate the bride price and dowries.

clans do not consider political career an influential factor in pricing a bride. However, individuals with family members working in government or party organisations were inclined to assign themselves better prices and marry better. This is especially true for those young women who think of themselves as sexually unattractive and thus have to rely on other factors to secure a good match. For instance, one girl who returned from Beijing to marry was actually quite grateful for the fact that she was from a Black Yi clan and had relatives working for authoritative departments in the government, because this meant that she had a less disadvantaged status in the marriage market:

> Just look at me. I don't have good looks or a good shape, so I have no expectations for my marriage. I always thought that because of my clan and my relatives working in the government, I could have a marriage that is not bad… I have no idea about the exact 'price' for me as a bride, but I guess the political background my family has would increase it.[25]

Others, dissatisfied with the unmarried Black Yi people in Liangshan, had moved to other, larger cities in hope of finding better spouses.

Conclusion

By examining marriage practices among the migrated Yi cadres, we can see that marriage practices endure and change according to new ways of considering identity, power and social mobility. The Yi have long been a stratified society with a hierarchy based on blood, and traditional marriage rules were strongly influenced by this, as reflected by the Yi's past attitudes towards gender, family and social status. Schoenhals (2001) has suggested that Yi ethnicity was, in essence, the purity of blood, and it was unnecessary for Yi people to recognise their own identity by referring to an 'ethnic other' (Schoenhals 2001: 253). The Black Yi's considerations in relation to marriage seem to indicate that they continue to have a strong identification with their noble blood. All the external factors, such as the political status awarded by the state, level of education and personal income for example, simply represent added value. The practice of endogamy that prohibited marriages between different castes seems to have had a long-lasting effect on the Yi people's choice of spouses, particularly among the Black Yi. In addition, having relocated to a more urbanized and ethnically-diverse environment, they feel more obliged to marry someone from their own group and remain distinctive.

However, the White Yi cadres showed a different set of considerations, ones that are deeply influenced by the state. The state has permeated everyday life since the revolutionary period and established its image through the cadres' exercise of power. These White Yi cadres are more accepting of a society in which social status is determined not by blood but by economic and political factors and the power that comes with bureaucratic positions. Ethnic identity seems less of a problem for inter-

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[25] Personal interview, 8 December, 2012.

ethnic marriages: unions between White Yi and Han individuals are more common than they were in the past and potential brides and grooms are more concerned with social status and future upward mobility.

The influence of the state is also exercised through education. It is through their experiences of education – be it training programmes or formal studies – that the Yi cadres came to accept scientific principles, the modern nation state and its government. These principles in turn have an effect on the marriage strategies of young, migrated Yi cadres: the bilateral-cross-cousin marriage that was once the preferred choice is no longer favoured by Yi cadres in large part because they have adopted the modern scientific belief, supported by the government, that marriage between close relatives increases the risk of genetic diseases.

Moreover, these well-educated Yi cadres have come to recognize the inappropriateness of bride price – whether because it contributes to gender inequality or fosters the commodification of women – and have therefore interpreted the bride price as 'guarantee money' that protects women's rights in a family, or have chosen other forms of exchange. More specifically, their practices for setting a bride price shows that familial and personal status as determined by social and economic factors has gradually replaced the traditional understanding of social status. Education, occupation, and party membership are all important factors that can be attributed valued.

The power of the state has a profound influence on these migrated cadres for diverse reasons. Firstly, their migration was the result of political administrative demarcation. The older cadres who experienced the early years of the demarcation witnessed the difficulties involved in arranging the migrated populations and were impressed by the government's authoritative power in solving these problems. Because of their current positions in the bureaucratic system, younger cadres know even more about the power of the state. Secondly, as Yi cadres who migrated from a densely populated Yi area to a more heterogeneous environment, they have had more direct experience with ethnic policies such as the use of ethnic languages, preferential policies in birth planning, education and politics, all of which influenced their considerations in relation to marriage. Thirdly, pursuing a career within the regime, the increased ethnic diversity in their working environment encouraged their sense of competition and collective identity as Yi. Although the direct promulgation of the New Marriage Laws seems to have failed in many aspects, this does not mean that the state has been unsuccessful in carving out a place for itself in people's family lives and identities. Young migrated Yi cadres' marriage practices and narratives in Liangshan reveal the intertwining of the region's complex ethnic landscape, state bureaucracy, local policies and hierarchies in a context that has undergone substantial political and economic changes.

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Part IV
Conclusions

Key Remarks and Research Notes on National Boundaries, Kinship and Migration

Francesca Decimo and Alessandra Gribaldo

The Strength of Controversial Boundaries: Categorization without Belonging

In dialogue with recent debates on nation and identity, the analyses in this volume have shown that the process of defining a national population as an object of governmentality cannot be reduced to a simple isomorphism between territory and society. Indeed, the processes of social transformation generated by contemporary global mobility regimes make it difficult to use the nation's geographical borders as a meaningful criterion for delimiting and recognizing its subjects. In addition to the borders and citizenship demarcations that play a primary role in establishing who is considered part of the nation and who is not, the various studies presented here expose the institutional processes that produce criteria for creating and distinguishing among different categories of individuals. In so doing, they shed light on the incessant activity that takes place inside of national identity in terms of discriminating among and locating national subjects. These lines of demarcation are never fixed: through these chapters, we have seen them made and remade just as the body of the nation itself undergoes constant redefinition. And yet, despite the fact that these lines of internal division have contradictory, paradoxical and unexpected repercussions, they nonetheless function to categorize identity and belonging, giving rise to material as well as subjective effects. In keeping with this perspective, these analyses make an initial foray into investigating the dynamic that is activated

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when categories of nationality persist, evolve or take on new shape regardless of meaningful they may be for the people they classify.

There has been a wealth of research in recent decades about boundary making in relation to the construction of ethnicity, understood as an issue of collective mobilization and identification set in motion in the name of shared culture, nationality or race. Drawing on the teachings of Fredrik Barth (1969), these studies have systematically disentangled the knot of divergent and intertwined phenomena that underlie what we recognize as shared ethnic identity (see, e.g., Alba 2005; Brubaker 2004; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Tilly 2005; Wimmer 2013). These scholars abandoned the search for examples of cultural homogeneity and cohesive community to instead focus their analyses on processes of boundary making, uncovering the more or less fortified, blurred or permeable shape these processes may assume depending on the contexts and actors involved. Furthermore, these studies all identify a precise nexus between practices and representations of boundaries, recognizing that boundaries "display both a categorical and a social or behavioral dimension" (Wimmer 2013: 9). In other words, current analyses of boundary making have focused on these processes' emic meaning (Lamont 1992; Lamont and Molnar 2002), privileging the investigation of those "internally connected clusters of population and/or activity for which human participants create shared representations" (Tilly 2005: 134). Nonetheless, as Sciortino (2012: 376) justly notes, by taking on this perspective "the theoretical consequences of the discrepancies between the two become a residual category". In particular, these scholars have neglected to explore what happens when the boundaries associated with the institutional categorization devices in question are imposed from above and, therefore, to take into account the indeterminacy of the resulting processes of identity construction.

In relation to the significance of institutional identity categories, David Kertzer's chapter presents a fundamental premise of this volume. His brilliant analysis reconstructs the genesis of a wide variety of categories designed to pin down the multiplicity intrinsic to national identity, inevitably raising the question of who considers these categories substantial representations of reality and how so. Indeed, one of the initial conclusions suggested by all the chapters collected here is that there is a gap between the effectiveness of the categories used to govern the nation, migration and citizenship and the meaning of these categories as experienced by the subjects they harness. There is a systematically recurring element that can be seen in all the various research settings explored thus far, specifically the problematic significance that such distinctions take on when they reify cultural, ethnic, racial or national differences, especially in view of the power exercised by the social, legal and political categorizations they give rise to.

The controversial character of identity categories emerges in Aurora Massa's account of Tigray family histories, in Vanessa Grotti's ethnography of the medicalization of French Guinean women's pregnancies, and in Dorothy Zinn's exploration of the rigid choices imposed on the children of immigrants living in the province of South Tyrol. All of these stories, relationships and choices are crosscut and conditioned by ethno-national boundaries, boundaries that are forcefully imposed despite their incoherence and ambivalence. In the same way, Viola Castellano and Jaroen

Domernick reveal the workings of statistical classifications based on enduring ethno-racial definitions in New York and the Netherlands respectively, showing how these classifications aggregate and label subjects. These analyses clearly illustrate how boundaries and categories work as well as the weighty consequences they may have in the lives of the individuals they target, whether or not these individuals endorse their underlying logics.

By exploring the perspectives of categorized individuals, the chapters in this volume reveal first and foremost how these categorization processes affect and intertwine with subjectivity in contexts of mobility. At the same time, they also show how this intersection often renders bounded identities more manifold rather than affirming them, complicating such identities to such an extent as to create an as-yet-unexplored gap between people's lived experiences and the classifications ascribed to them. The studies of marriage practices presented here are exemplary illustrations of this process. As Zithian Guo's analysis so eloquently demonstrates, conjugal unions that contradict conventional norms of endogamy may nonetheless be granted subtle new meanings; in so doing, they do not so much reconfirm the inescapability of ethnic belonging as ritualize its permeability, in a way that consolidates new social alliances between local and national identities. Alice Rossi's and Barbara Bertolani's contrasting accounts of marriage, one involving young Moroccan men and the other young Indian women, also contribute valuable insights in this arena. Although these marriages are endogamous, they are such according to complex dynamics: in this case, the choices of the young people are conditioned even more heavily by restrictive policies for governing global mobility than by kinship or traditional obligations. Although preferred marriage choices are typically considered a powerful indicator of ethnic density (Wimmer 2013: 68), it is precisely these choices that in the sphere of migration take on surprising new meanings, evading any facile attempt to cast kinship as the hotbed of ethnicity. This does not mean that the intersection of national and kinship boundaries does not impact the level of identity and relationships; rather, as these studies show, even when people establish such marriages within established boundaries and categories, they do so without necessarily referring to ethnicity as the first or primary issue at play.

The various studies collected here thus shed new light on the connection between boundaries and identity, inviting us to more systematically consider how and when categories of nationality may be effectively imposed as criteria of social and legal segmentation and exclusion despite their incoherent and controversial character: through what processes, in relation to what subjects and in what contexts? With this in mind, it makes sense to focus our inquiry on the structures of power that make it possible to effectively implement these lines of identity demarcation, considering the more or less injunctive ways these boundaries are deployed. This analytical perspective, which has been thoroughly developed in studies of nation-state formation (Anderson 1991; Appadurai 1996a, b) and the problematic effects of the resulting categories of identification (Amselle and M'Bokolo 1985), takes on new relevance when it is turned on the most controversial processes of attributing nationality and identity within the space of migration. Specifically, the studies collected here describe the complex strategies individuals enact in order to migrate and obtain

citizenship, strategies that suggest that the simultaneously transnational and global scale of contemporary mobility has created new conditions for the enforcement of legally institutionalized boundaries both within and between nations. In this context, we might productively explore the new channels through which nationality, and the categories of identity it generates, operate as "effective and legitimate institutions to discriminate against individuals" (Wimmer 2013: 67).

Kinship and National Metaphors in a Mobile World

At the same time, the chapters of this volume show how the subjects targeted by these policies endure or act to overturn or appropriate the very categories used to identify them. Responding to the continuous production of migration and population politics that engulfs them, the individuals described in these research studies work just as incessantly and tirelessly to redefine the boundaries of their identities. They do so not by calling into question generic ethnic affiliations but rather by specifically mobilizing the sphere of kinship as the main site of belonging and channel of mobility available to them. It is precisely this field that we wish to privilege as a second line of inquiry connecting the studies presented in this volume. We seek to underline the link these chapter make between boundary making, migration, and kinship in order to better understand the strategies and practices that mobilize identity and relatedness across national boundaries.

Social scientific research has succeeded in identifying and deconstructing the naturalization processes underlying the alleged overlap of space, population, ethnicity and culture, but it has been less successful in recognizing kinship as a practice characterized by tensions, strategies and constant transformations. Kinship embodies one of the most significant components in the construction of individual and collective identity: it comprises a form of belonging established by a space that unfolds over time and represents a key element in the construction of subjectivity as an embodied memory of continuity. In migratory contexts, the construction of kinship-based ties re-establishes a connection with temporality, creating links between spaces in which belonging is played out across national boundaries. A crucial role is played by individuals' relationships with the places where they were born or where their ancestors were born, ancestors who represent relatives from the past, relatives who produced other relatives. These connections may be more or less intense, but they are unavoidably relevant given that they animate the sphere of emotional bonds, intimacy and identity. With this in mind, we are particularly interested in examining the highly complex relationship between this sphere of intimacy and identity and the nation. This point highlights in particular the way national metaphors draw on the sphere of loyalty and recognition represented by kinship, to accrue meaning and forge collective imaginaries. Indeed, modern notions of the nation are characterized by an idea of genealogy and national reproduction that is linked to bounded places and shared culture through metaphors of family, arborescence and roots (Malkki 1992; Nash 2003).

Migratory processes doubtlessly undermine an imagined moment in time when place, nation and culture coincided. What we seek to emphasize, however, is that these processes also destabilize another foundational paradox in the nation's construction and reproduction over time. On one hand, the state uses idioms of kinship by constantly invoking the intimate and physical spheres that are at the foundation of kin relations and mobilizing cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 2005) in order to produce national identity. On the other hand, the state structures identity on the basis of a definition of citizenship detached from other forms of ascribed membership, that is to say, a definition focused on the individual. The paradox lies in the fact that local interpretations of belonging are cast as conservative, backward and inconsistent with a nation-state vision of modernity (ibid). Migrants in particular are implicitly perceived as bearing this non-modern or "immodern" (Lambek 2013) way of experiencing and conceptualizing kinship. This supposed lack of modernity is consistent with teleological narratives that view kinship as a pre-modern or obsolete framework: these narratives reference a sort of evolutionary model of modernity that moves away from family and kinship bonds in favor of the nation-state, with a corresponding emphasis on individualism, secularism and rationality (Chakraborty 2000; McKinnon and Cannell 2013).

Mobility regimes thus not only undermine the homogeneity of the national population by rendering the process of identity categorization within the nation exponentially more complex, as Kertzer clearly illustrates. They also reveal that the relationship between kinship and nation comprises a dialectic of recognition and non-recognition in that the supposedly fixed elements of the nation-state "are the product of the very things they deny: action, agency and use" (Herzfeld 2005: 211). Indeed, embedding kinship within the logics of the state does not succeed in erasing it, because kinship constitutes the foundation of the state itself: the very act of making citizens involves birth and death certificates and defining the means by which people are related to one another as kin and relatives (Lambek 2013). In contemporary contexts, mobility engages the state-kinship relationship in an ever more pressing way, invoking processes of classifying and certifying nation-state belonging: where you were born and where your parents were born, but also what your ancestry is and what generation "after migration" you belong to. These all represent meaningful issues in an intersection bringing together the definition of boundaries and a perception of kinship as a naturalized genealogical space for reproducing identities and cultures. Doomerik's analysis is particularly clear in showing how categorizing the descendants of immigrants as distinct from "nationals" quickly becomes nonsensical from the perspective of classificatory logics in that it opens the door to a scenario of infinite regression: for how many successive generations should individuals be considered migrants? And yet, despite or perhaps thanks to these contradictions, classificatory logics go on operating in political assumptions and processes of discrimination.

The sphere of kinship, therefore, is invoked to verify the truth of a migrant's identity when certifying his or her belonging to the nation-state: who was she born to, who did she marry, who did she in turn give birth to? Kinship and alliance-based identity must be subject to governance and control precisely because of the central place it occupies and the fact that it is always viewed with suspicion in migratory

contexts, raising the specter of arranged or forced marriages, false familial reunifications and non-existent offspring. Nonetheless, this 'worldwide manufacture of fake kinship ties' is not only 'testimony to the force of kinship in transnational movements and in claims to citizenship in the current global political economy' (McKinnon and Cannell 2013: 38, footnotes); it is also a product of the logics that grant kinship the status of truth and constitute the foundation of the nation-state. In the end, there is always the potential that migrant subjects will be cast as inauthentic or non-legitimate: terms such as bogus, fake and illegal invoke a field in which "all judicial and policing systems of the modern state presuppose organised suspicion, incorporate margins of uncertainty" (Asad 2004: 285). In this way, the idea of intimacy and kinship as uncertainty intersects with the issue of belonging to a national community and citizenship status to reveal the foundational incompleteness of any notion of identity. As Rossi describes, Jamal's complicated position in between Italy and Morocco illustrates the agency of a subject called on to move on multiple levels simultaneously: his practices of weaving together kinship, alliances, emotional bonds and reproduction are intensely conditioned by national boundaries and migration policies.

Kinship, Migration and what Remains of Agency

Lastly, we seek to stress that in migratory settings kinship is not simply a resilient field. That is, it is not something that persists *despite* deterritorialization. It is not an autonomous space that reproduces itself, along with identities and forms of belonging, across and in spite of borders. Rather, borders mold kinship where and when they intersect and impact it: within regimes of mobility, kinship is produced through borders, that is, through the constant interplay among legal structures, margins and exceptions involving the very construction of states.

   With this in mind, migrants' agency should not be understood as a simple act of resistance but rather as a complex articulation that emerges at the intersection of the state, the law, identity and intimacy. Focusing on kinship in migratory contexts allows us to analyze complex arenas that cannot be reduced to a clear opposition between power and resistance, structures and acting subjects (Ahearn 2001; Das et al. 2000; Ortner 2006). The forms of subjectivity that emerge within networks of relatedness call into question analytical perspectives that position the individual, singularity, independence, choice and agency in opposition to embodied identities, radical belongings and the collective norms and values that subject individuals within broader kinship and social logics. In other words, the dichotomies that have given rise to stereotypical oppositions between nation and kinship can be overcome by identifying the field of migration as a means of reconsidering the complexity of the practices, choices and strategies that subjects enact.

   Within the field of transnational mobility, migrants thus deploy kinship in powerful ways when interacting with national borders and the requirements of host states, and this deployment has direct repercussions on their lives and relationships. State

efforts to govern migration extend to kinship relations in an attempt to define what constitute proper ties and how they fit into the 'natural' relationships deserving of state recognition. Migrants' choices intersect with the sphere of kinship and identity as a contested field (Franklin and McKinnon 2001) in that marriage strategies, codes of solidarity, the reunification of spouses, partners, ancestors and offspring grant recognition to – and, together, produce – the value of affinity and ancestry across national borders. In migratory contexts, kinship first and foremost constitutes a space of tension among bodies, laws and mechanisms of discipline, by virtue of the way it forces the borders of the state to engage in a continuous process of reestablishment (Das and Poole 2004). Yet, although kinship constitutes a resource for agency and mobility as a sphere of allegiance and belonging across borders, it is nonetheless not immune to the violence of national categorizations. Within this framework, Massa's analysis of family relationships crosscut by national borders between Eritrea and Ethiopia offers insights into chosen and ascribed identities, overturning assumptions regarding kinship as an unquestioned and taken-for-granted dimension and highlighting the violent repercussions of boundary making on intimate relationships.

The issue of marriage strategies or, in other words, how to construct consanguinity and alliances over time and space, is therefore exemplary of the way borders and migration policies come to constitute a crucial component of the familial and interpersonal politics surrounding the choice of a bride or groom. As clearly demonstrated by studies of familial reunification and marriage such as the cases Rossi and Bertolani analyze here, the importance of kinship goes hand in hand with nation-states' efforts to fortify their borders. While migration policies increasingly impact on the quality of migrants' family relationships, kinship politics literally embody state borders: marriage choices become crucial in that they ensure individuals' freedom of movement while at the same time springing up as a consequence of mobility and, in the opposite direction, tying people to a specific place. The process of forming a sanctioned and legitimate couple brings people into contact with legal regulations as well as socio-political values that are themselves conditioned by stratified and widely debated cultural idioms. In the same way, family reunifications are subject to legal restrictions that illustrate the various ways the state regulates kinship and the specific devices it uses to govern migrant populations. As Lee reminds us, family reunification 'is an expression of what constitutes a legitimate family, which families should be united, and whether such families should be allowed to join the nation' (Lee 2013: 6).

Mobility regimes and the transnational arena thus breathe new life into the structure vs. agency dynamic involved in choosing a spouse. Bertolani's article is particularly effective in exposing the dual character of kinship, that of simultaneously enacting subjection and subjectivation. Indeed, this chapter offers an ethnographically dense and lucid account of the way kinship as a system of subjectivation (Faubion 2001) affects both the processes through which individuals are corralled into kin roles and the processes through which individuals have the opportunity to make themselves into subjects/agents. In other words, the sphere of kinship offers a space for practices, choices and options, what Faubion calls 'an ethics of freedom'

(2001: 12) that exists in a constant state of tension with cultural, structural and normative possibilities. In the politics of kinship within migratory contexts, agency is particularly susceptible to these tensions. Migration allows us to rethink kinship not only as a field of action but also as a space that is deeply conditioned and crisscrossed by borders.

The production and regulation of difference is an ongoing social dynamic that involves processes of governmentality, classification and agency, thereby engaging individual and collective identity on multiple levels. Indeed, the social sciences, constantly called on to recount the ever-changing dynamics of identity and classification face a significant challenge. We hope that this volume might offer some possible clues for understanding the multiple implications at play in the production of identity and boundaries in times of global mobility and its politicization.

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