Daniel Göler[1][*]

ELUSIVE MIGRATION SYSTEMS. LESSONS FROM EUROPE'S NEW MIGRATORY MAP

Abstract: Europe is facing a new era of migration. During the last decades, the European migration system underwent several shifts due to different reasons. A basic observation is that general changes, on the political map for example, do not necessarily have the same consequences in European regions, even in seemingly similar contexts. The major changes started in 1990 accelerated with the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and found its continuation by crisis-driven migration from south European countries into Western European labour markets after 2008. All of these "migration waves" have been topped by a massive inflow of refugees in 2015 creating new migratory map of Europe. Thus, important stages of contemporary and present European migration history are interpreted as indicators for a surplus in diversity, flexibility and spontaneity and will serve for formulating the hypothesis of Elusive Migration Systems as an analytical framework and a kind of hypothesis to study new features of migrants' trajectories, which became more and more variable.. Being grounded may be the wish of the majority of Europeans and, in effect, the global population, but being on the move, voluntarily or forced, is reality for a certain number of migrants inside and heading towards Europe.

Key words: migration, transnationalism, transregionalism, labour migration, Europe

[1] daniel.goeler@uni-bamberg.de
[*] Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Germany

Introduction

Europe is facing a new era of migration. What started in 1990 accelerated with the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and found its continuation by crisis-driven migration from GIPS-countries[2] into Western European labour markets after 2008. Recently all of these "migration waves" have been topped by a massive inflow of refugees in 2015. Against this backdrop, the aim of the following contribution is less a detailed analysis of recent migratory movements but a discussion, on a theoretical basis, on similarities as well as differences of the challenging new migratory map of Europe. The resulting proposal is the model of Elusive Migration Systems as an analytical framework and a kind of hypothesis to study new features of migrants' trajectories, which became more and more variable. Elusive Migration Systems are, with regard to various causes and consequences of migration in sending and receiving regions, highly flexible, spontaneous, divers, and unpredictable.

Elements of Europe's new migratory map

Looking back for slightly more than 25 years – a time-span of more or less one human generation only – we can state that Europe's new migratory map changed dramatically several times. The division of Europe in a Western and an Eastern part seemed to be a remaining from times of Cold War and overcome with the fall of the Iron Curtain. Subsequent years defined an era of integration and disintegration at the same time: On the one hand the German Reunification, which was contrasted by, on the other hand, the breakup of the former Soviet Union and wars of secession in former Yugoslavia. More or less as a matter of course, parts of the former Eastern European migration system (which may be represented by the COMECON-states) started to integrate themselves into the Western system. In terms of migration in the post-socialist context, the pre-accession period has been marked by sometimes illegal or even informal and often temporarily limited (seasonal) forms of migration and a wide-spread occupation in low qualified jobs.

A quite noticeable uplift for a couple of East European countries meant the enlargement of the European Union by eight new members in 2004. The so-called A8-countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) accomplished the step towards the final integration into the EU and Western systems; at the same time the border between "East" and "West" moved eastward and a lot of "active trans-boundary migration zones" (Molodikova, 2008) between neighboring East-European states emerged. So, migration patterns in both periods, before and after accession, are part of the Socialist legacy and another indicator for the so-called longue durée of post-socialist transitions (Brunnbauer, 2009).

An integral element of this fundamental change and part of the "New Face of East-West Migration in Europe" (Favell, 2008) is the implementation of free movement of labor force to East European accession countries. Some EU-countries followed this regulation without any restrictions. So did the United Kingdom and Ireland. Both labor markets became very attractive for migrants, even more due to a certain shortage of labor force in problematic segments such as healthcare or low-paid jobs in 'picking & packing' for example. Emigration from countries like Poland or the Baltic States has been

---

[2] Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain. Sometimes the 'I' represents Ireland.

contrasted by strong immigration to UK and Ireland and the crucial question who (East or West?) benefitted more from brain drain, or respectively suffered from brain gain, seems hard to answer. Today most scholars assume a kind of win-win-situation, in which the EU-15 receiving countries gained economic growth by immigration, but sending countries generated brain gain through circular migration and/or remigration as well (Favell, 2008). Mostly they benefited from the huge volume of remittances – financial and social ones (Grabowska & Garapich, 2016) – sent by migrants, which facilitated life for a lot of families and the parents' generation.

The global financial and economic crisis which started in 2008 provides another brick in Europe's new migratory map. In some cases it came to a reversal of well-established migration patterns, and sometimes it strenghtened existing trends. At first, so-called GIPS-countries in the south of Europe have been heavily affected. Unemployment rates, especially youth unemployment, increased and led to out-migration of young, well-educated people. As a kind of chain reaction, other, sometimes remote parts of the world have been affected, too: Migration from the Southern Americas to Spain declined due to economic problems there, the same is true for migrants from South-East European countries like Romania. In the context of the South-East European migratory sub-system, a lot of migrants from countries like Albania have been heavily affected by economic problems and consequences for the labor markets, not in the home country, but in the main destinations of long-term emigration like Italy or especially Greece (Göler, 2016).

According to the motto "last hired, first fired", especially less-qualified and some-times informally employed migrant workers got problems on the labor market in the receiving countries (!) and were more or less forced to return home. Migrants from Baltic states reacted in a different manner to the crisis in their home countries (!) as they remained abroad (McCollum et al., 2016) or even started to move on to another, more prosperous labor market inside EU like the German one (Göler et al., 2016).

Recently, all this has been topped by the 2015-refugee crisis, which divided Europe into transit countries (among others Greece, Macedonia and Serbia), welcoming reception countries (Germany and some Nordic countries) and restrictively hostile countries (Hungary). And, as if we did not have enough bamboozling elements, the Brexit gave the European migration system a complete new but still unpredictable perspective with lots of uncertainties for immigrants from Eastern Euope and elsewhere to the UK.

All these examples show that Europe's new migratory map entails more confusing elements instead of clear and stable patterns during the last one-and-a-half decades. In fact, post-socialist transition, EU-enlargement or the global financial and economic crisis defined a similar general framework. Impact of these incidents manifested in comparable individual, regional or national contexts in form of quite different reactions, especially with regard to mobility and migration. Both are marked by increasing variability and diversity.

Transnationalism: Some critics on concept and theory

A certain part of mobility and migration mentioned in the previous chapter took place in the transnational social space (Pries, 1999; 2001). In fact, transnationalism may serve as appropriate theoretical framework for analyzing all these migratory movements and

subsequent socio-spatial phenomena. Transnationalism as key concept in migration studies for almost two decades is understood as "increasing interconnections between nation-states across borders" with "political, economic, social and cultural dimensions" (Faist et al., 2013; Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Khagram & Levitt, 2008; Vertovec, 2009). Main outcome of transnationalism from the geographical point of view are the various effects of international migration. Among them are intensive spatial and social interlinkages, for example capital flows, mutual communication and advocacy or transfers of innovation etc. (Fig. 1). Each of these assets is based on migrants' activities.
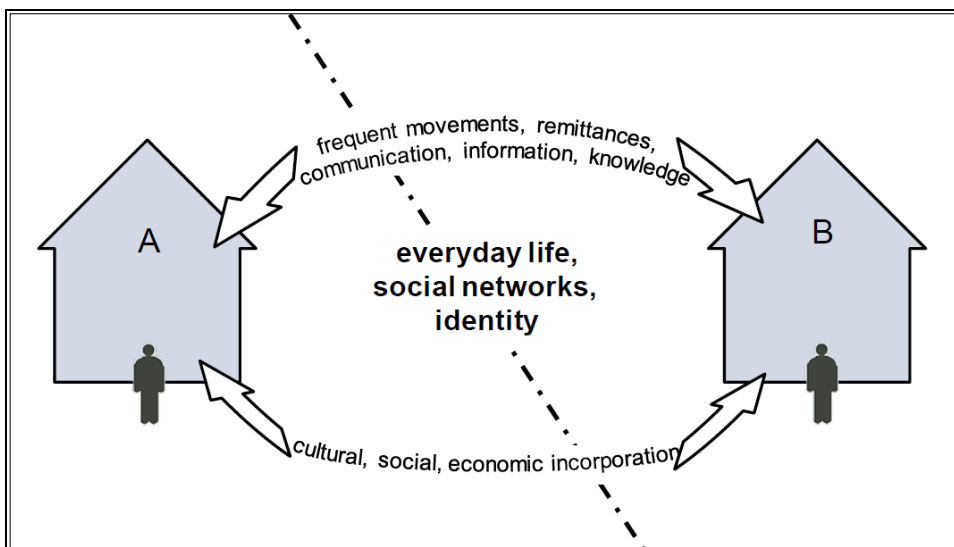

Fig. 1. The spatiality of transnationalism (draft according to Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Pries, 2001)

Adapted to transnationalism, the perspective in migration research shifted from a classical perspective to a new one. "Classical" studies drew attention to courses and consequences of migration as change of the permanent residence. Contemporary theoretical and empirical analysis in terms of transnationalism and even more since the "new mobilities paradigm" (Sheller & Urry, 2006) appeared in accordance with the mobility turn within the social sciences (Faist, 2013), then focused more on the variability of social spaces which are defined by migrants, permanently and individually. Consequently, interest began to concentrate on different forms of circularity as well. Meant hereby is an episodically, periodically or even spontaneously repeated migratory movement with the result that different "places" get connected. Internet-based virtual communication and social media may sustain connectivity as a necessity. It makes individual networks larger and more differentiated at the same time and will go on in substituting physical movements. In addition, with this new perspective and bringing the argument back to transnationalism, the transnational social space can be interpreted as an arena of social interactions (Dahinden, 2009; Pries, 1999).

On the one hand side, the concept of transnationalism has made, without any doubt, a big contribution to determining new characters of migration and to establishing an

advanced interpretation of migration and mobility. On the other hand, more and more criticisms were formulated regarding the painful issue of an implicit "methodological nationalism" and, therefore, the aspect of territoriality as weakness of the concept especially from the geographic perspective – the arguments do not have to be repeated at this point[3].

Several approaches dealt with the, obviously to some extent superficial and, again, from the spatial point of view insufficient and somehow patchy, concept and tried to stress the above mentioned new elements like variability, flexible spatiality and individuality of migration and mobility as a new challenge for research in that fields. The most recognized conceptualization at the moment may be the concept of liquid migration. In this regard Engbersen et al. (2010) wrote, allegorically referring to "the Van full of Poles":

"To paraphrase Bauman's (1999; 2005) work on "liquid modernity", international migration has become "liquid". The fairly stable migration patterns that marked the period 1950-1990 have dissolved into more complex, transitory patterns in terms of transient settlement – transnational or otherwise – and shifting migration status" (Engbersen et al., 2010).

This sounds convincing in the sense of widespread and increasing individualisation, with regard to the rise of distinct lifestyles of mobility and the emergence of a well-defined migrant habitus (Bygnes & Erdal, 2016), mainly when referring to contemporary intra-European migration in termes of internal migration and immigration to EU. What makes things different and, as a consequence, difficult when generalizing "liquid migration" in a narrow sense is the degree of organization behind. In fact, the "Van full of Poles" on the way to UK is highly organized: There is a group of eight people, they have a driver, a van, a clearly defined destination, a minimum of money for their re-start when having reached the destination, maybe already a working contract and, not to forget, the group is allowed to enter the UK without any restrictions. Labor migration in this sense seems to be privileged in comparison to other forms of migration like those already mentioned from Latin America, Balkans, Eastern Europe or refugees from Arabic or African countries. These groups, even the European ones, have a lower degree of freedom; a certain part of these migrants are forced to move back and forth several times, following the principle of trial and error, acting less reflected and often reacting spontaneously. It is hard to sample this diversity of migratory movements empirically and to categorize and theorize the phenomenon systematically. The following chapter may serve as an attempt of a proposal for a new concept, meant as contribution for a new interpretation of mobility to and inside the EU and beyond.

---

[3] There are a couple of contribution with Author's involvment that deal with empirical studies that will sustain the argument of missing Geography in studies on transnationalism and a plee for strengthening the geographic perspective, transregionalism and Elusive Migration Systems (Göler & Krisjane, 2016; Göler, 2016).

A proposal

Europe's new migratory map may illustrate the ability of migration systems to deal with changes in political, social or economic framework conditions. Being grounded may be the implicit wish of the majority of Europeans and even of many migrants (Bygnes & Erdal, 2016), but there are too much motivations and triggers for mobility. This could be voluntarily, when due to payment gaps, or forced, when due to shifted framework conditions as it may come as a consequence of the Brexit. Being on the move is the reality of a certain number of migrants inside and coming to Europe. Empirical results show, that migrants are able to reorganize during this process in a novel and creative manner and, if necessary, to redefine themselves as new social systems. These systems are characterized by widespread multi-local, social networks led by migration, individual migration experiences, and migration culture. Migrants are able to adapt social practices from different economic, social, and cultural contexts. Such kind of permanent resilience as performed social practice is based on creativity, knowledge, and other individual skills and capacities of the participants in the network. All these considerations are in line with arguments that lead to a slightly new paradigm that is called "Elusive Migration Systems" (Göler & Krisjane, 2016).

This concept tries to take account of recent changes such as migrants' spontaneous decision making which finds its expression in highly flexible migration trajectories which, in fact, became more and more divers and variable. Thus, resulting mobility is statistically and intentionally unpredictable. Resulting Elusive Migration Systems are slightly intangible and hard to analyse empirically. For doing so, the concept tries to satisfy the need – following an inspiration given by Düvell (2009) – "to generate fresh results" by analysing scales, interdependencies of immigration and emigration and the role of choice and coercion in decision-making by migrants, both strived by a mixture of methods with quantitative as well as qualitative elements. First, the mixed-methods approach of analysis use explicitly the bottom-up-approach with individual biographies as basic elements for exploration and further modelling and considerations. Second, the bottom-up analysis is able to strengthen the regional dimension of spatiality in migration studies, in order to overcome trans "nationalism" (Göler & Krisjane, 2013). As a result, a pattern of transregionalism, again created "from below" (Smith & Guarnizo, 1997), is proposed as a new framework to study spatiality of migration beyond transnationalism and to take specific characteristics of recent migratory movements into account.

References

Brunnbauer, U. (2009). Labour Emigration from the Yugoslav Area from the late 19th Century until the End of Socialism: Continuities and Changes. In: Brunnbauer, U. (Ed.), *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics. Migrations in the (Post-) Yugoslav Region*. 19th –21st Century. Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 141, 16-49.

Bygnes, S. & Erdal, M. B. (2016). Liquid migration, grounded lives: considerations about future mobility and settlement among Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1211004

Dahinden, J. (2009). Die transnationale Perspektive. *terra cognita*, 15, 16-19.

Düvell, F. (2009). Migration, Minorities and Marginality: New Directions in Europe Migration Research. In: Rumford, C.. (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of European Migration Research*. London, 328-348.

Engbersen, G., Snel, E. & deBoom, J. (2010). 'A van full of Poles'. Liquid migration from Central and Eastern Europe. In: Black, R., Engbersen, G., Okólski, M. & Panṭiru, C. (Eds.), *A Continent Moving West? EU Enlargement and Labour Migration from Central and Easter Europe*, 41-64. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Faist, T. (2013). The mobility turn: a new paradigm for the social sciences?, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(11), 1637-1646.

Faist, T., Fauser, M. & Reisenauer, E. (2013). Preface and Acknowledgements. In: Faist, T., Fauser, M. & Reisenauer, E. (Eds.), *Transnational Migration* (pp. vii-ix). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Favell, A. (2008). New Face of East-West Migration in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34 (5), 701-716.

Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L. G. & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (p. 259). New York: New York Academy of Sciences.

Göler, D. (2016) (in press). From an isolated state to the migration society – Transnationalism and multilocality as lived social practise in contemporary Albania. IRS

Göler, D. & Krišjāne, Z. (2016). Elusive Migration Systems. Shifting from Transnationalism to Transregionalism. In: Domínguez-Mujica, J. (Edt.), *Global Change and Human Mobility. Advances in Geographical and Environmental Sciences* (pp. 25-36). Singapore: Springer.

Göler, D. & Krisjane, Z. (2013). Anmerkungen zur Variabilität von Migrationssystemen (mit Erfahrungen aus Lettland und Albanien). Transnationalismus oder Transregionalismus? *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Geographischen Gesellschaft*, 155, 125-147.

Göler, D., Krišjāne, Z. & Bērziņš, M. (2014). International Migration in the Periods of Transition and Crisis. The Example of Latvia. *The Baltic Region*, 20(2), 97-110.

Göler, D., Krišjāne, Z. & Winkler, A. (2015). Letten in Deutschland. Liquide Migration oder stabile Zuwanderung? Berichte. *Geographie und Landeskunde*, 89(1), 73-89.

Grabowska, I. & Garapich, M. P. (2016). Social remittances and intra-EU mobility: non-financial transfers between U.K. and Poland. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42(13). Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1170592

Khagram, S. & Levitt, P. (Eds.) (2008). *The transnational studies reader: intersections and innovations*. London & New York: Routledge.

McCollum, D., Apsite-Berina E., Berzins, M. & Krisjane, Z. (2016). Overcoming the crisis: the changing profile and trajectories of Latvian migrants. In: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2016.1232161.

Molodikova, I. (2008). Patterns of East to West Migration in the Context of European Migration Systems. Possibilities and Limits of Migration Control. In: *Demográfia (English Edition)*, 51(5), 5-35.

Pries, L. (Ed.) (1999). *Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Pries, L. (Edt.) (2001). *New transnational social spaces. International migration and transnational companies in the early twenty-first century*. London: Routledge.

Sheller, M. & Urry, J. (2006). The New Mobilities Paradigm. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(2), 207-226.

Smith, M. P. & Guarnizo, L. E. (Edt.) (1997). *Transnationalism from Below. Comparative Urban and Community Research*, 6. New Brunswick & New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Vertovec, S. (2009): *Transnationalism*. London & New York: Routledge.

Daniel Göler[4]*

"НЕУХВАТЉИВИ" МИГРАЦИОНИ СИСТЕМИ. ЛЕКЦИЈЕ НОВЕ ЕВРОПСКЕ МИГРАЦИОНЕ МАПЕ

Резиме: Европски континент се суочава са новом ером миграционих кретања од 1990. године. Од тог периода можемо говорити о новој европској мапи миграција, која је имала драстичне промене, а које грубо можемо генерализовати у два периода. Први период је од 1990-2004. године, када Европу делимо на Источну и Западну, када имамо процесе интеграције и дезинтеграције. Са једне стране долази до уједињења Немачке, а са друге стране до распада бивших СССР и СФРЈ, што је условило и различита миграциона кретања. Други период почиње од 2004. године, када је осам централно и источно европских држава присједињено Европској унији. Тада земље некадашњег источног блока улазе у западноевропски систем миграција, а интегрални елемент ове фундаменталне промене јесте могућност слободног кретања радне снаге у оквиру земаља чланица ЕУ. Значајно је и интензивирање пограничних миграционих зона међу суседним, источноевропским државама, због чега се у раду наводи значај концепта транснационализма, као једног од кључних концепата у студијама миграција. Нове промене на миграционој мапи се јављају 2008. године са светском економском кризом, када земље Јужне Европе постају мање миграторне услед успоравања економског раста, а последње промене се дешавају са појачавањем интензитета ирегуларних миграција ка Европи од 2010. године, а нарочито од 2015. године. Из свега напред наведеног, аутор као предлог за праћење ових веома променљивих миграционих токова предлаже модел *"Неухватљивих" миграционих система*, као аналитички оквир и неку врсту хипотезе како би се пратиле нове, веома променљиве миграционе трајекторије. "Неухватљиви" миграциони системи су, у складу са различитим узроцима и последицама миграција у земљама порекла и дестинације са високим степеном флексибилности, спонтаности, различитости и непредвидивости.

[4] daniel.goeler@uni-bamberg.de (аутор за кореспонденцију)
* Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Germany