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The Role of Ethnicity in Qualitative Migration Research

SUMMARY

In contemporary social science research, researchers largely perceive ethnic groups as a result of a process of boundary making rather than a taken for granted part of our world. However, in methodological terms, researchers often still see ethnicity as imposed on the research process rather than as constructed throughout it. Using personal experience from several research projects, the author first presents the role of ethnic belonging in her research. She then identifies other factors as crucial in negotiating her insider/outsider status in the "field". The author shows that the researcher's insider/outsider status is not a fixed category, but is rather negotiated in the research process, depending on the researcher's multiple and shifting positionalities. Drawing on the critique of methodological nationalism and on the theories of transnationalism in the social sciences and the humanities, she discusses the recent transformations of research designs in qualitative migration research and argues for more de-ethnicised research on migration. On this basis, she calls for migration research beyond locally bounded research sites.

KEY WORDS: qualitative methods, migration research, insider/outsider status, ethnicity, positionality, female migrants, transnationalism

INTRODUCTION

A widely shared conceptualisation of ethnicity, based mainly on contributions from anthropology and comparative ethnic studies, has been accepted lately among social sciences researchers as a dominant frame of research.[1] Within it, the definition of ethnicity is "the result of classificatory struggles rather than a given division of the human population that both researchers and members of society simply

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describe" and ethnic groups are "seen as the result of a reversible social process of boundary making" (Wimmer, 2007: 16–17).[2]

However, such a perspective has not been thoroughly incorporated into researchers' methodological analyses. Although migration researchers have discussed widely how the ethnic identification of the researcher could be affecting the field research (cf. De Andrade, 2000; Weiner-Levy, 2009), De Andrade (2000: 269) argues that in methodological terms ethnicity is still mainly perceived as "imposed on the research process rather than as a dynamic phenomenon that is actually constructed and reinforced through it".[3] Such a definition of ethnicity is evident, for instance, in debates on insiderness/outsiderness in migration research. Many researchers still regard "shared ethnic belonging" of the researcher and the research participants as having the greatest impact in terms of affording the researcher insider status in the researched community. "Native" researchers are thus often "perceived as insiders regardless of their complex backgrounds" (Narayan, 1993: 677). Most researchers in migration studies also still conceptualise their research along ethnic lines, perceiving ethnic group belonging as the primary unit of analysis. However, researchers have recently tackled the relationship between the researchers and the research participants in more critical terms. They have directed their attention to examining how the multiple roles and perspectives of the researcher shape the research process (De Andrade, 2000: 270). Some researchers have moved beyond the primacy of the "ethnic group" category both in developing their research designs as well as in understanding migration (cf. Glick Schiller, 2007; Wimmer, 2007).

In this paper, I present some methodological insights into these debates by drawing on personal experience from several projects. Firstly, included are the experiences and results obtained in the framework of the European Commission 6th Framework Programme project "FEMAGE – Needs for female immigrants and their integration in ageing societies".[4] Life-story interviews (supplemented by a semi-structured and a structured part of the interview) with women from Bosnia-

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[2] This perspective builds on the pioneering work in ethnicity research of the anthropologist Fredrik Barth from the 1960's onwards.

[3] De Andrade (2000) maintains that researchers often define the category of race in the same problematic way.

[4] Project "FEMAGE – Needs for female immigrants and their integration in ageing societies" of the European Commission 6th Framework Programme (contract number – SSP4-CT-2005-022355, duration 2006-2007, web page: www.bib-demographie.de/femage/). The synthesised results of the FEMAGE project, which, in addition to the interviews with female migrants, also encompassed a focus group with migration policy stakeholders, an analysis of a database of the attitudes of Slovenia's population towards foreigners and subsequent policy recommendations, are available in the article "Intercultural dialogue between lip service and practice" (Knežević Hočevar, Cukut and Černič Istenič, 2009).

Herzegovina (Bosniaks)[5] and former Soviet Union republics residing in Slovenia were carried out as an integral part of the project. The sample was chosen to represent a variety of life situations including age, education, socio-economic background, reason for entry, time of residence and residence status in Slovenia, and marital status. The aim of the interviews was to capture female migrants' experiences of migration, life in the new society and their expectations towards old age.[6] Furthermore, I conducted additional interviews and participant observation among migrants from these two groups for my doctoral dissertation that dealt with the experiences of female migrants in Slovenia.[7] In 2006, I thus collected thirty-six life-stories of these women. The aim of the interviews was not to gain an accurate statistical representation of female migrants, but to acquire a more thorough understanding of their migration and inclusion into the "new society" through a detailed analysis of case studies. I also participated in some of migrants' social activities (e.g. meetings and gatherings) and recorded my observations in an ethnographic diary. Secondly, I present some preliminary insights into my ongoing research within the project "Social constructions of migrant statuses and their influence on the processes of selection and integration of migrants".[8] In the scope of this project, the categorisation and classification of different migrant groups along gender, ethnic and class lines in migration policy at the European Union level are to be analysed.

In this paper, I would hold that other categories – rather than ethnicity – are of crucial importance in outlining the research design, gaining access to the research participants as well as in interpreting the obtained data. I would focus on three main domains that I identified as topical when analysing the role of ethnicity in qualitative migration research methodology. Firstly, I would draw on various examples from the field to show how my insider/outsider status[9] was not a fixed category, but was rather negotiated throughout the research process depending on my multiple

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[5] I refer to Bosniaks as one of the three "officially" recognised major ethnic groups (besides Croats and Serbs) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The collocutors also stated "Bosnian" or "Muslim" as their declared ethnic group. Such an identification points to ethnic group identifications that extend beyond narrowly defined statistical categorisations.

[6] The main themes of the interviews were the following: life in the society of origin, family background, division of labour and relationships within the family (both in the society of origin and in Slovenia), decision for migration, arrival to Slovenia, formal and informal social networks, economic, social and political integration into the new society, paid work, expectations regarding retirement, and understanding of integration.

[7] *Gender and migration: experiences of female migrants in Slovenia*, defended at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 2008.

[8] Postdoctoral research project "Social constructions of migrant statuses and their influence on the processes of selection and integration of migrants", financed by the Slovenian Research Agency (Contract Number 1000-09-212066, duration: 2009–2010, 2012).

[9] Other similar dichotomies could be, for example, "native"/"non-native", "observer"/"observed", etc.

and shifting positionalities. Secondly, referring to the boundary making perspective discussed in depth for example by Wimmer (2007), I discuss the possibilities and challenges of conducting migration research beyond the ethnic group signifier. Thirdly, basing my argument on the concept of transnationalism and its subsequent (re)evaluations developed extensively by researchers in migration and ethnic studies, I call for more migration research beyond locally bounded research sites.

DOING MIGRATION RESEARCH "AT HOME" – NEGOTIATING "INSIDERNESS" AND "OUTSIDERNESS"

The crucial importance of the researchers' social location has been pointed out particularly by feminist epistemologies. The researchers' relation to the research participants also influences his/her access to the field and the process of data interpretation (Aull Davies, 1999; Findlay and Li, 1999; Borkert and De Tona, 2006; Ganga and Scott, 2006; Soni-Sinha, 2008). How my diverse social positions influence the research process is the question integral to my research, as I agree with Temple and Young (2004: 162) who maintain it is important for the researcher to situate herself/himself within the issues he/she is debating.[10] Standpoint epistemology, pointing to the importance of social location of the researcher in interpreting the world, has helped me become more reflexive during all stages of research, and has enabled me critically to reflect upon my relationship with the social milieu in which my research is situated.

During the interviews with female migrants, it seems that my collocutors perceived me both as an outsider and an insider (cf. Narayan, 1993; Kusow, 2003; Soni-Sinha, 2008; Poonamallee, 2009). Although I was carrying out interviews "at home", in a society I supposedly knew, I was constantly reminded of the fact that a dichotomy between an outsider and an insider might not be constructive. Neither the researchers nor the collocutors possess a complete repertoire of knowledge of what is going on in "their" societies, since they both become familiar with these societies from particular social locations; nor do they share knowledge about the society they live in (cf. Georgiadis, 2007). Construction of insiderness and outsiderness is therefore always an interactive process differently experienced by members of a particular community and is dependent on shifting identifications of the researcher with mutable standpoints (Narayan, 1993; Sixsmith, Boneham and Goldring, 2003; Borkert and De Tona, 2006). Naples (in Borkert and De Tona, 2006: par. 24) argues that a discussion of the insider/outsider debate in bipolar terms "sets up a false

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[10] Kusow (2003: 591) maintains that, in the last few decades, the trend of an increasing number of researchers studying their own migrant communities has placed the politics of representation and authenticity at the forefront of contemporary migration research.

separation that neglects the interactive processes through which "insiderness" and "outsiderness" are constructed. Insiderness and outsiderness are not fixed or static positions, rather they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members". Or, as Sixsmith, Boneham and Goldring (2003: 579) state, "access to the community is a complex process of managing social relationships and personal impressions". Thus, several signifiers were revealed as crucial during my fieldwork.

I found it unintelligible when questions about my own ethnic belonging arose, since I come from a so-called "mixed marriage". Nevertheless, I was prepared to answer questions about my personal history, and the background, values and interests I brought into my research. Thus I had to, as Henry (2003: 230) holds, make critical decisions about representing myself to the research participants. While I was committed to the principle that I would reveal my personal history when asked and that I would not withhold any personal information,[11] since I was also interviewing Bosniak women, I was slightly concerned by the fact that my father is a Bosnian Serb, which could have been a potential obstacle to "opening up" for some of the interviewees.[12] Thus, when asked about my own ethnic belonging, I opted to state that my father was from Bosnia-Herzegovina and my mother from Slovenia and did not dwell on this issue any further.

Such a statement, it seems, facilitated the interview process. A similar advantage arose due to my command of the Bosnian language, with regard to my recognition of some common (be it Yugoslav or Bosnian) cultural references and texts and my previous involvement with migrants (refugees and asylum seekers) in several non-governmental organisations. On the basis of such knowledge about me, it seems that women from Bosnia-Herzegovina often assumed I possessed certain common-sensical and "taken for granted" knowledge about their "cultures". Being constructed as an insider to some extent on such occasions, I often felt it was difficult not to succumb to the impression of being knowledgeable about my collocutors' lives, an issue also noted by some other researchers (Gibson and Abrams, 2003; Pajnik and Bajt, 2009). The collocutors' assessment that I possessed certain knowledge about their experience led to phrases, such as: "but you already know about it". At such occasions, I responded: "I know what you mean, but please tell me more".

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[11] In this regard, Soni-Sinha (2008), who has studied jewellery production in India, provides an interesting example of how she was compelled to hide her positionality as a feminist and had instead highlighted her background as an economist interested in a gendered perspective on employment, when negotiating access to entrepreneurs. The display of overtly feminist attitudes to family and working life might also not have been appropriate on some occasions during my research.

[12]   My collocutors that came to Slovenia during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, fled from attacks by the Bosnian Serb forces, backed by the Yugoslav Peoples' Army. Some had also lost their family members and friends in the conflict.

Throughout the interviews, besides perceived (to a certain extent) shared "cultural and regional background", my age was also quite an important factor. It seemed that younger collocutors often referred to my age when discussing experiences I supposedly knew about (e.g. experiences at the university) and did not feel the need to explain them in greater detail. Older women often deemed me as too young to remember or to be familiar in greater detail with the events and cultural references they were describing (for example, events during the socialist/communist times). Some collocutors were worried whether they would be able to provide the "right" answers to my questions. Clearly, during my research, certain power relations and differences in social status were self-evident: I approached the women primarily as a researcher (although some women seemed to perceive me more as a student): I was born and employed in Slovenia while the participants in my research often had unstable legal, professional and economic status in Slovenia. Therefore, my positionality as an outsider was quite clear in these instances, an issue also observed by Weiner-Levy (2009).

I believe sharing my own personal history through the field work helped me gain trust of the research participants and enabled them to speak in greater detail about their experiences, while it also undoubtedly constructed a particular picture of me as a person and as a researcher that might have influenced the interview process, as Chavez (2008) has also found. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to take into consideration the opinion of Weiss (1994: 79), who believes that self-disclosure shifts the attention of the respondent to the interviewer and further complicates the interview situation. My previous personal involvement with migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers in several non-governmental organisations, might not have been an advantage at all stages of the research. Several challenges arose when presenting a textual representation of the results. It is still not entirely clear to me how and to what extent to include painful and extremely intimate revelations and stories into the analysis, and how to include and analyse stories that, as Gibson and Abrams (2003) note, might bear the potential of pathologising and medicalising migrants.

While being strongly committed to the principle that research should be to the benefit of the people being researched, the dilemma whether to choose the role of an advocate for the researched group or an analyst (researcher) arose. Jacobsen and Landau (2003: 186), writing about refugees, identify this challenge as a "dual imperative" of research achieving both academic rigour as well as being policy relevant in terms of protecting refugees and influencing institutions dealing with refugee populations. The emotion and pain experienced by my collocutors might have been more difficult to deal with since I felt personally connected to their experience, due to my family background and previous professional and personal

experiences with migrants. It has been extremely difficult at times to focus both on the flow of the interview as well as on the collocutors' stories and I acknowledge the role of such personal emotional engagement as undoubtedly influencing the research process itself.

However, I quickly found both the Bosniak as well as Russian/Ukrainian communities to be divided across different markers, for example, through membership in different associations. Their members often viewed these associations as mutually exclusive and questions about my "support" for such ethnic and/or cultural associations arose. At times, I was challenged to provide my opinion on various issues regarding the community under study. Questions about another insider – a community member – and what she had disclosed in the interviews were also common. Key people in these associations were persistent in acting as a sort of interpreters of their "culture" in Slovenia. Some were also gatekeepers enabling my access to the community and its members and thus giving credibility and legitimacy to the project and myself as a researcher (on this issue see also Sixsmith, Boneham and Goldring, 2003; Chavez, 2008). From such often competing viewpoints, it soon became clear as Ganga and Scott (2006) have also demonstrated how internally differentiated the ethnically defined migrant communities actually are.

On the basis of these insights, it could be concluded that ethnic group belonging is only one among the differentiating factors bearing an impact on researchers' relation and "perceived proximity/similarity" to the research participants. In my research, I identified other factors as crucial, such as age, common educational background, and common background from the period of the former Yugoslavia and previous contact and experience with the research participants or the communities to which they belonged. In the next section, I move on to discuss the topic of ethnicity in migration research from a different angle: whether and in which ways is ethnic group belonging significant for differentiating between migrant groups?

ETHNIC GROUP AS THE PRIMARY FACTOR DIFFERENTIATING MIGRANTS?

The second issue to be addressed when discussing the role of ethnicity in migration research methodology is the issue of achieving comparability of research results across ethnic groups in different countries, and the dangers of essentialising ethnic identities, i.e. migrants of specific ethnic groups, by assuming the equivalence of culture, community and ethnic category (Wimmer, 2007: 8). In this respect, McHugh (2000: 74) writes about the necessity to challenge the hegemony of essentialist notions embedded in data categorisations of ethnicity. What is problematic in data on ethnicity, as Glick Schiller (2007: 51) maintains, is that a particular mode

of ethnic identification is often presupposed before the research has even been conducted.

Research designs are often constructed along ethnic lines, while not placing sufficient emphasis on other factors that might differentiate migrants. Within the FEMAGE project, for instance, where partners from nine European Union member states participated, two ethnic groups per country were chosen in order supposedly to achieve international comparability of interview results. It seemed imperative that the project should cover "similar social groups" which usually mean similar ethnic groups.

These groups were to be as closely similar as possible in the countries under study. Although the sample was designed to include diverse categories of migrants (differentiated for instance by age, socio-economic position, length of stay in the country, education, reason of entry), ethnic group was initially perceived as the primary signifier distinguishing female migrants. For example, Croats and Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina were not included in research, despite forming two of the three major ethnic groups in this country.[13] When narrating about reasons for migration and their experiences in Slovenia, Bosniak women, especially those who came to Slovenia before the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, often reminded me that the experiences of Croatian or Serbian women were strikingly similar to theirs. One of them stated: "we have similar stories, regardless of our nationality". Indeed, rural/urban background and time of migration (e.g. socialist vs. post-socialist migration) were identified as two of the crucial factors differentiating Bosniak women. In a similar manner, following the project research design, it was planned at first to interview only "Russian women" as the second ethnic group chosen for the interviews in Slovenia. "Russianness" was quickly found to be a context-dependent category. To put it with the words of one of the interviewees from Ukraine: "I am Russian in Ukraine and Ukrainian in Slovenia". As Aull Davies (1999: 34) reminds us, there exist various ways in which individuals are felt to belong or not to belong to different social categories and groups. These different constructions of ethnicity point to (De Andrade, 2000: 272) multiple and shifting ways of labelling oneself in ethnic terms. The criterion of "declared ethnicity" is thus problematic not only in the view of inclusion and exclusion of certain groups of people. It also binds together people into a uniform mass of carriers of a given culture, simply because they have of-

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[13]   The research partners in the FEMAGE project designed their project as a comparative study of female migrants. The requirement for comparability thus led the partners to focus on selected groups of female immigrants, who had to be comparable by their declared ethnic affiliation in selected European states. Bosniaks, for example, were also interviewed in some other countries participating in the project. The methodological and conceptual consequences of such a choice are discussed later in the text.

ficially stated their collective identification (Knežević Hočevar, Cukut and Černič Istenič, 2009: 46).

Regardless of their declared ethnic group, it was found that interviewed female migrants coming to Slovenia after its independence in 1991 had similar experiences. Deskilling, long periods of unemployment and/or performing occasional jobs after coming to Slovenia, limited job opportunities and complicated and lengthy procedures for obtaining more long-term legal status in Slovenia, were prevalently described by collocutors from Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as those from republics of the former Soviet Union. Throughout the interviews, concrete effects of a commonsensical notion of supposedly irreconcilable cultural differences between "the native population" and "ethnically and culturally different foreigners/immigrants" were revealed. However, it also became apparent that factors that were unrelated to the (re)making of ethnic boundaries and/or discrimination practices based on ethnicity significantly influenced female migrants' life courses. Such factors were, for example, their own and their partners' socio-economic position, age, education level, reasons and mode of entry into Slovenia and the existence and strength of social networks. Gendered[14] barriers to migrants' greater equality in the society were also identified in some of the interviews (e.g. stereotypical views of mothers on part of the employers). In this vein, Wimmer (2007: 28) maintains that group formation might follow principles other than ethnic community building, and that the notions of community and belonging can be defined in cross-ethnic terms. He suggests the use of the "ethnic group formation perspective" and calls for non-ethnic units of observation to be developed, to study "whether and which ethnic group boundaries emerge, are subsequently transformed or dissolve – rather than to assume their existence, relevance and continuity by binding the observational apparatus to such groups and communities" (Wimmer, 2007: 28–29).

In my current research work on the classification and categorisation of migrants, I have therefore decided to interview both female and male migrants from "third countries", regardless of their ethnic origin. I do not focus on specific ethnic groups of migrants, but instead on different categories of migration and their overlapping and dynamics throughout the life-course. Following the argument of Wimmer (2007), the aim is to analyse processes of class reproduction and their impact on migrants' position in various spheres of social life, regardless of the ethnic origin of migrants. For this reason, it seems that multiple sites extending beyond a geographically bounded ethnic group need to be incorporated into research designs that no longer focus primarily on explorations of a culture within small-scale place-

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[14] The influence of gendered factors influencing female migrants' lived experience was thus studied in relation to other axes of difference.

based social contexts (Fitzgerald, 2006; Wilding, 2007). Groups are, as Appadurai (1991: 191) argues, no longer "tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious or culturally homogenous". Such revised notions of culture are transforming our research fields in different ways.

TRANSFORMATION OF FIELD SITES AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

By drawing on the critique of methodological nationalism of many scholars in the social sciences and the humanities that perceived the nation-state as the natural, taken-for-granted socio-political form and equated society with the nation-state, researchers have proposed the concept of transnationalism as a more appropriate term to grasp contemporary migration (Fouron and Glick Schiller, 2001; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003; Glick Schiller, 2005; Weiss, 2005; Chernillo, 2006; Beck, 2008). The focus of such studies is, to put it in loosely defined terms, how the transnational activities of migrants across specific nation-state borders are transforming our research fields beyond the "traditional" nation-state paradigm.

Migration, as Wilding (2007: 339) maintains, is an ongoing process of negotiation between people and places, not a singular and unilinear event in people's lives. However, when conducting research among numerous ethnic groups and/or migrants from many different countries, it seems almost impossible to gain deeper insight into the socio-political context in the migrants' countries of origin.

Furthermore, beginning with the transnational activities of migrants might be equally problematic as focusing on the nation-state. Within transnational models, researchers still assume that a transcendence of nation-states is the preferred means of everyday life and that the nation-state is the most significant social structure for migrants (e.g. Glick Schiller, 2005; Fitzgerald 2006). As Wilding (2007) and Glick Schiller (2005) argue, a connection to multiple nation-states does not necessarily apply to all migrants' life paths and careers. In the majority of transnational studies, Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2003: 598) state, researchers tend to essentialise transnational communities by overstating the internal homogeneity and boundedness of transnational communities and thus overlook cross-community interactions and the internal divisions of class, gender, region and politics.

Female migrants I interviewed maintained diverse links in both their "country of origin" and their "new country" that were characterised by more or less regular movement across the nation-state borders. Thus, it seems both "sending" and "receiving" societies should be incorporated in research designs. However, for my collocutors, being transnational and highly mobile was also not the universal way of

living, often due to financial constraints significantly limiting their contacts to the "country of origin". More extensive use of communication technologies to maintain transnational links was limited to certain, usually younger migrants. For some interviewees, certain transnational activities with people in their country of origin could also be perceived as cumbersome (e.g. an obligation or at least an expectation to remit to their relatives).

In the view of Glick Schiller (2005: 442), the transnational approach still privileges an ethno-cultural unit of analysis. While researchers often do define their research subject as not being constrained by time and space, they perceive the populations they study as still contained within the boundaries of ethnic/national identification. In this way, they homogenise migrants into ethnic groups perceived as bearers of discrete cultures. Yet many possible ways exist for organising relationships and identities both in the "new country" and transnationally (Glick Schiller, 2005: 442; 2007: 43).

Glick Schiller (2007: 41) instead proposes a global power perspective on migration that would "theorise the reproduction, movement, and destruction of various kinds of capital and human populations across national borders and look at the construction of social relations, institutions, systems of governance and modes of identification in particular localities and across space and time".

However, linking multiple localities together by following the relationships linking these sites is a time and finance-consuming task, which most national and international research projects on migration are simply unable to address. This is largely due to technical and structurally related constraints. Most national and international projects are limited by their duration (usually two or three years) and should usually aim for a comparability of results across different nationally defined contexts.

Such was also the experience in the scope of the FEMAGE project where both interviews with female migrants as well as their interpretation were to be completed already in the first year of the project. As mentioned earlier, female migrants were also essentialised as early as at the outset of research, by choosing their ethnic belonging as the primary social signifier differentiating them. Indeed, such commonly assumed starting points in contemporary European Union research projects automatically lead to methodological inconsistencies. The requisite intensity of fieldwork at multiple sites and the needed linguistic competence may be impossible to achieve in such a short time-span as Fitzgerald (2006: 4) has argued. Time and financial constraints also pose various practical problems to engaged multi-sited field work. Hage (2005) writes extensively about such challenges while he was conducting his multi-sited ethnographic research, such as, for example, physical exhaus-

tion, jet lag and balancing family obligations at home. Overcoming these issues might require a radical reorganisation of the prevalent short-term and project-based structures of funding, upon which both national and European science is becoming increasingly dependent. Alternately, approaches based on analysing only several case studies (individual biographies) that could be conducted only in a given locale might also merit more acknowledgement in evaluating scientific projects.

To conclude, it has been demonstrated that ethnicity is still a useful concept in contemporary migration research, since the empirical material has shown that factors related to ethnic belonging of the collocutors influenced their life-courses. For this reason, ethnicity cannot be simply ignored or substituted with concepts such as, for example, citizenship and denizenship that pertain to a migrant's level of access to different social, economic and civic rights. The approach studying these and other factors influencing migrant experience, such as age, education, gender, and socio-economic position in intersection seems to be the most fruitful.

Despite my own research experience and that of others, there is evidence, in the opinion of Borkert and De Tona (2006), that more research beyond simplistic national categories is being conducted by incorporating various field sites into the analysis. Consequently, an increasing number of migration researchers are crossing existing nation-state borders for the purposes of their research, themselves leading transnational lives in a variety of ways. But the importance of border-crossing might not only be in the crossing of geographical but also of intellectual and epistemological borders. As Wilding (2007: 332) argues, the value of such a "mental move" could lie in the possibility of the researcher transcending and encompassing alternative frameworks for perceiving, understanding and acting in the world, resulting in the migrancy of ideas, perceptions, worldviews and frameworks that could also enable the familiar to be rendered unfamiliar.

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Sanja CUKUT KRILIĆ

Uloga etničnosti u kvalitativnom istraživanju migracija

SAŽETAK

U suvremenim istraživanjima u društvenim znanostima istraživači percipiraju etničke skupine uglavnom kao posljedicu postavljanja granica među njima, a ne kao dio svijeta razumljiv sam po sebi. Ipak, u metodološkom smislu etničnost još uvijek vide kao izvana nametnutu istraživačkom procesu, a ne kao kroz njega konstruiranu. Na temelju osobnog iskustva iz nekoliko znanstvenih projekata autorica najprije govori o ulozi etničke pripadnosti u svom istraživanju te potom određuje druge faktore koji su se pokazali značajnima u (pre)oblikovanju njezina statusa insajdera odnosno autsajdera u proučavanim skupinama. Autorica upozorava da taj status nije fiksna kategorija, nego se o njemu pregovara u istraživačkom procesu, ovisno o istraživačevim višestrukim i promjenjivim pozicioniranjima. Oslanjajući se na kritiku metodološkog nacionalizma i na teorije transnacionalizma u društvenim i humanističkim znanostima, autorica raspravlja o suvremenim transformacijama nacrta istraživanja u kvalitativnim migracijskim istraživanjima i zalaže se za više deetnicizirano istraživanja migracija. Na temelju toga zagovara istraživanje migracija izvan isključivo lokalno ograničenih istraživanja mjesta.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: kvalitativne metode, istraživanje migracija, status insajdera/autsajdera, etničnost, pozicionalnost, migrantice, transnacionalizam

Sanja CUKUT KRILIĆ

Vloga etničnosti v kvalitativnih raziskavah migracij

POVZETEK

V sodobnem družboslovnem raziskovanju raziskovalci etnične skupine prevladujoče razumejo kot rezultat procesa razmejevanja med različnimi etničnimi skupinami in ne kot samoumeven del sveta. Vendar v metodološkem smislu etničnost še vedno vidijo kot zunanjo raziskovalnemu procesu in ne kot konstruirano skozi le-tega. Na podlagi osebnih izkušenj iz različnih raziskovalnih projektov avtorica najprej predstavi vlogo etnične pripadnosti v svojem raziskovanju. V nadaljevanju predstavi druge dejavnike, ki so se na terenu pokazali kot pomembni pri (pre)oblikovanju njenega statusa *insiderke* oziroma *outsiderke* med proučevanimi skupinami. Avtorica pokaže, da ta status ni statična kategorija, temveč je del pogajanj v raziskovalnem procesu in je odvisen od raziskovalčevih mnogoterih in spreminjajočih se pozicij. Na podlagi kritike metodološkega nacionalizma in teorij transnacionalnosti v družboslovnih kot tudi v humanističnih znanostih, obravnava nedavne spremembe raziskovalnih načrtov v kvalitativnem raziskovanju migracij. Zavzema se za raziskovanje migracij, ki ne bo prevladujoče temeljilo na etnični pripadnosti migrantov in bo segalo preko zgolj lokalno določenih raziskovalnih lokacij.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: kvalitativne metode, raziskovanje migracij, status insiderja/outsiderja, etničnost, pozicionalnost, migrantke, transnacionalnost