

LANGUAGE AS B/ORDER

CROSSING

European Borders and Boundaries through
Mandatory 'Pre-Integrative Language Testing'

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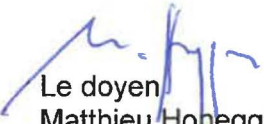
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Le doyen
Matthieu Honegger

Abstract

Over the course of the last 15 years, a growing number of European nation-states have attached the granting of family unification rights to the condition that arriving family members should fulfil a so-called 'pre-departure' or 'pre-integrative language requirement. This restriction requires newcomers to prove a certain level of skill in the hegemonic national language of the country where they aspire to live, even before submitting their visa applications. According to official statements, this regulation aims not only to facilitate integration but also to prevent sham and forced marriages (Block 2019; Grote 2017; Wray 2006).

In this thesis I show how such a use of language and language testing through nation states' institutions functions as a highly efficient form of extraterritorialized and externalized border technology. I do so by applying a fine-grained discourse analysis mainly of narrative interviews with aspiring cross-border spouses in Kosova and Turkey, who are preparing for the A1 level test in German or English in order to eventually join their partner in Germany, respectively the UK.

Although the border has long been deconstructed as being much more than a mere geopolitical line (Andreas 2000; Balibar 1998, 2009; Cooper and Perkins 2015; De Genova et al. 2015; Fassin 2011; Vaughan-Williams 2008), border theorizations continue to centre largely on more materialized and rationalizable forms of border technologies. This centring within critical border studies has led to an imbalance in the development of border ontologies in favour of such 'smart' bordering technologies, which govern their subjects as mere bodies or 'living matter'. In my thesis I argue that while borders are growingly theorized as "becoming more complex, dispersed and chimerical entities than they have been before" (Green 2012, 583), in contrast the subjects they govern often appear simplified, solidified, objectified and reduced to their bodiliness and (bodily) suffering.

In my analysis, I aim at restoring this imbalance and the resulting asymmetry in the theorization of borders in three ways: The first is by thematically focusing on 'regular migration' (as opposed to irregularized migration). The second is by analytically focusing on borders as boundaries, or, more precisely, on the framework of subjectivation, considered as a complex, multi-layered, and dynamic process of bordered boundary making that actively engages rather than simply selects the 'migrant subject'. The third way entails using an intersectional feminist and race critical/raciolinguistic methodological and epistemological approach.

My main argument is that what I call 'soft' governing technologies play a vital role in the functioning of these extraterritorialized forms of border regime. From afar, the border apparatus of European nation states intimately grasps its subjects and ensures their compliance

by shaping their migrant subjectivities: through *language practices* (comprising *language learning and testing*), *discursive certainties*, *emotions and imaginaries*.

By applying a critical raciolinguistic perspective, I show how in addition to selecting newcomers, contemporary externalized border apparatuses rearticulate the distinction between Europeaness and non-Europeaness by means of subjectivation, while claiming to facilitate 'integration'. Integration, I argue, is one of those taken for granted categories related to language (and, though notoriously invisibilized, to race) that has been 'co-naturalized in particular societal contexts' (Rosa and Flores 2017, 622). This thesis contributes to denaturalizing this concept of 'integration' and demonstrates how, institutionalized as part of the European border apparatus, it is rooted in colonial forms of hegemony. Thus language, as a means of political force, becomes part of the border itself.

Adding a meta-reflexive and knowledge- and genre-critical layer to the analysis, I bring a multiplicity of voices and experimental writing into the text, as I draw a line from the objectivation and silencing of migrants in language-based border regimes to feminist standpoint theory and to the conditions under which migration studies still widely operate today, namely the division into migrants as those affected and researched versus "non-migrants" as the experts doing the research. The subjectivation as "migrant other", I argue, translates into academia as a migrantized research positionality and pushes to transform its epistemologies.

Keywords: Critical Border Studies, Externalized and Extraterritorialized European Border Management, Family Unification, Mandatory Language Testing, Subjectivation, Discourse Analysis, Raciolinguistics, Postcolonial and Feminist Theory

Résumé

Au cours des 15 dernières années, un nombre croissant d'États-nations européens ont subordonné l'octroi des droits au regroupement familial à la condition que les membres de la famille arrivant dans le pays remplissent une exigence linguistique dite "pré-départ" ou "pré-intégration". Cette restriction impose aux nouveaux arrivants de prouver un certain niveau de compétence dans la langue nationale hégémonique du pays où ils aspirent à vivre, avant même de déposer leur demande de visa. Selon les déclarations officielles, cette réglementation vise non seulement à faciliter l'intégration, mais aussi à prévenir les mariages blancs et forcés (Block 2019 ; Grote 2017 ; Wray 2006).

Dans cette thèse, je montre comment une telle utilisation de la langue et des tests linguistiques par les institutions des États-nations fonctionne comme une forme très efficace de technologie frontalière extraterritorialisée et externalisée. Pour ce faire, j'applique une analyse fine du discours, principalement à partir d'entretiens narratifs avec des aspirants conjoints transfrontaliers au Kosovo et en Turquie, qui se préparent au test de niveau A1 en allemand ou en anglais afin de rejoindre leur partenaire en Allemagne, respectivement au Royaume-Uni.

Bien que la frontière ait depuis longtemps été déconstruite comme étant bien plus qu'une simple ligne géopolitique (Andreas 2000 ; Balibar 1998, 2009 ; Cooper et Perkins 2015 ; De Genova et al. 2015 ; Fassin 2011 ; Vaughan-Williams 2008), les théorisations des frontières continuent à se concentrer largement sur des formes plus matérialisées et rationalisables de technologies frontalières. Ce centrage au sein des études critiques des frontières a conduit à un déséquilibre dans le développement des ontologies des frontières en faveur de ces technologies frontalières " intelligentes ", qui gouvernent leurs sujets comme de simples corps ou de la " matière vivante ". Dans ma thèse, je soutiens que si les frontières sont de plus en plus théorisées comme " devenant des entités plus complexes, dispersées et chimériques qu'elles ne l'étaient auparavant " (Green 2012, 583), en revanche les sujets qu'elles régissent apparaissent souvent simplifiés, solidifiés, objectivés et réduits à leur corporéité et à leur souffrance (corporelle).

Dans mon analyse, je vise à rétablir ce déséquilibre et l'asymétrie qui en résulte dans la théorisation des frontières de trois manières : La première est de se concentrer thématiquement sur la " migration régulière " (par opposition à la migration irrégulière). La deuxième consiste à se concentrer analytiquement sur les frontières en tant que telles ou, plus précisément, sur le cadre de la subjectivation, considéré comme un processus complexe, multicouche et dynamique de création de frontières qui engage activement le "sujet migrant" au lieu de le sélectionner simplement. La troisième voie implique l'utilisation d'une approche

méthodologique et épistémologique intersectionnelle féministe et critique de la race/raciolinguistique.

Mon principal argument est que ce que j'appelle les technologies de gouvernance "douces" jouent un rôle essentiel dans le fonctionnement de ces formes extraterritorialisées de régime frontalier. De loin, l'appareil frontalier des États-nations européens saisit intimement ses sujets et s'assure de leur conformité en façonnant leurs subjectivités de migrants : à travers les pratiques linguistiques (comprenant l'apprentissage et les tests de langue), les certitudes discursives, les émotions et les imaginaires.

En appliquant une perspective raciolinguistique critique, je montre comment, en plus de sélectionner les nouveaux arrivants, les appareils frontaliers externalisés contemporains réarticulent la distinction entre l'eupéanité et la non-eupéanité au moyen de la subjectivation, tout en prétendant faciliter l'"intégration". L'intégration, selon moi, est l'une de ces catégories considérées comme allant de soi et liées à la langue (et, bien que notoirement invisibilisées, à la race) qui a été "co-naturalisée dans des contextes sociétaux particuliers" (Rosa et Flores 2017, 622). Cette thèse contribue à dénaturaliser ce concept d'"intégration" et démontre comment, institutionnalisé dans le cadre de l'appareil frontalier européen, il est ancré dans des formes coloniales d'hégémonie. Ainsi, la langue, en tant que moyen de force politique, devient une partie de la frontière elle-même.

En ajoutant une couche méta-réflexive et critique des connaissances et des genres à l'analyse, je fais intervenir une multiplicité de voix et d'écritures expérimentales dans le texte, car je trace une ligne entre l'objectivation et la réduction au silence des migrants dans les régimes frontaliers basés sur la langue, la théorie du point de vue féministe et les conditions dans lesquelles les études sur la migration fonctionnent encore largement aujourd'hui, à savoir la division entre les migrants en tant que personnes affectées et étudiées et les "non-migrants" en tant qu'experts effectuant la recherche. La subjectivation en tant qu'"autre migrant", selon moi, se traduit dans le monde universitaire par une position de recherche migrantisée et pousse à transformer ses épistémologies.

Mots clés: Études critiques des frontières, gestion des frontières européennes externalisées et extraterritorialisées, regroupement familial, tests linguistiques obligatoires, subjectivation, analyse du discours, raciolinguistique, théorie postcoloniale et féministe

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PART I

INTRODUCING

Prelude: Assumed Positions

I like introductions. Even scientists do not dare mess them up with dry facts and figure-talk. They know it is the one shot they have at drawing you in, dear reader.

And introductions are exciting, too. Anything is possible yet (even a dissertation).

In fact, I think there is a lot more to introductions than what they are credited with. For even if the life of an introduction unfolds on the outskirts of the central body of the academic text, away from where the major thoughts, analytical twists, and findings reside, it does have a way of disclosing things that otherwise tend to remain obscured throughout the main scientific text. And these disclosures, even if they often assume the form of almost imperceptible signs, can be essential for an understanding of the text. They are important not just because the reader is as yet unaccustomed to the author's voice and may be disoriented about where it is coming from but also because the introduction is the place where readers can learn about their own positions, both in relation to the world and the author. And as the author is the one who has to establish that relationship, the introduction needs to make up for more or less everything readers may be unaware of regarding the perspective with which they are about to approach the topic of the text. By perspective, I mean all kinds of potential assumptions entailed in beliefs, attitudes, expectations, affects, and other kinds of knowledge. The latter includes, of course, knowledge of languages (for instance, Albanian, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Tamil or Arabic works perfectly well as an 'object language' in research, but communicating that research to an international readership in one of those languages is tantamount to scholarly self-marginalization).

Evidently, to succeed in actually writing for others, authors have to guess their readers' perspective, guess their knowledge, their position in the world, and adjust some of their own language accordingly. Only then can they lay out a trail of breadcrumbs that readers need in order to get from where they are to where the author stands and be safely navigated through the woodland of untold meanings that is all around. This is why at least here, at the beginning, authors themselves have to give away their standpoint. That is, unless they manage to hide behind more authors or among the readers, assuming that their perspectives are just about identical, though these hiding spots obviously cannot accommodate everyone.

However, I do not want to begin reasoning here. I prefer to give you, my reader, the straight-out best and most noteworthy introduction I can think of.

It was written almost a century ago, that introduction to an essay today known under the title *A Room of One's Own* (by Virginia Woolf, but I am guessing you already knew that). Initially the respective sentences had served to introduce a speech.

The author had been invited by the very old and prestigious University of Cambridge to deliver a lecture on the topic of 'Women and Fiction'. The essay is based on the speech that Woolf presented that day (in truth, two speeches were delivered on two different days at two Cambridge colleges, but truth can be narratively challenging in terms of introductory breadcrumbs. . .).

So I imagine Woolf getting up on some kind of pedestal or stage. She lays out her notes in front of her and looks at the faces in the audience. (In my imagination, the overwhelming majority are men, when in reality they must have been almost exclusively women, for the colleges where she spoke were the first in England to have been founded for women only). Anyway, she looks at these men's faces, some of them stern, some leery, some amused, and then she says:

BUT, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction – what has that got to do with a room of one's own? I will try to explain. When you asked me to speak about women and fiction I sat down on the banks of a river and began to wonder what the words meant. They might mean simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticism if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs Gaskell and one would have done. But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion. I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer – to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece forever. All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point – a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved. (Woolf 1954. p. 5f)

This Woolf truly is worthy of all the feminist love she is showered with, straight out refusing to do what she is asked to, and so elegantly. Rather than buying into the dominant

sexist discourse on what women are like as fiction writers, she . . . well, she prefaces her thinking and writing with 'but', and then she takes a deep dive into the material, the structural conditions for becoming a member of that boys' club of fiction writers. This is what makes her so exciting to me. For even though I have not yet fully grasped what exactly her words move within me, I already sense it has to do with my experience of being both a migrant and a researcher of migration.

I admit I was wrong to have avoided finishing her book—hard for me to grasp then—for so many years, even though from my literature studies curriculum, I knew her to be one of approximately three women to have made it into the 'canon', represented by about 120 works.

And, as we are well into confessions now, finally, I have to say that not only do I enjoy reading introductions but they are also one of my favourite parts of the text to write. I will even admit that the thought of writing this dissertation entirely in the form of introductions has crossed my mind more than once.

That said, I think we are finally good to go.

1 Introduction

1.1 From linguistic assimilation to language as b/order

European nation-states and the European Union (EU) have accumulated ample historical experience with cross-border movements from what they have come to call their 'third countries'. Over the course of the last 60 years or so, this experience has densified, beginning with the recruitment of 'foreign workers' or 'guest workers' across those borders to help rebuild national and regional economies after the destruction wrought in Europe by the Second World War. This 'migration' history of European nation-states is mirrored in the terminology (often cast into legal terminology) through which these more recently joined populations are grasped and the place they can assume within those states. In a nutshell, the imagined space conceded to them shifted first from a logic of *assimilation* to one of *multiculturalism* (an approach quickly discarded by most as a dead-end even before people become aware of its presence in national policies; see, for instance, Schinkel 2018), and subsequently to the current paradigm of *integration*.

What has remained largely unchanged in this terminological dressing room of European national self-reflection is the position to be assumed by those 'third country' newcomers within the nation. They continue to occupy the problem spots of the national body, marked-off as 'foreigners', 'migrants', 'refugees', and so forth (Extra et al. 2009). Or rather, within these dominant discourses, it is their culturalized and, upon a closer look at the texture of these discourses, detectably racialized bodies (Mayblin and Turner 2021 138ff), which become the carriers of allegedly migration-related problems. Hence the 'migrants' or 'immigrants' or 'refugees' themselves (but notably not the 'mobiles') are perceived as being responsible for those 'integration problems', oftentimes through the blanking out of structural factors, such as socio-economic and political inequalities (Duchêne et al. 2013 9). They themselves are essentialized into being the problem. So how could they; how could 'we' ever integrate fully and irrevocably? Integration thus appears to function

somewhat like a magic trick in which the audience is distracted through the exaggeration of what is visible. All the while, the machinery that enables the trick to work remains hidden.

Within the field of migration (and integration) studies, scholars have recently begun to excavate the deep-running but often blanked out historical roots of current European/Western national and regional policymaking within a racializing and racist colonial order (see, e.g., Mayblin and Turner 2021 or Schinkel 2018). However, scholars in the fields of critical race studies, black and intersectional feminist studies, and post- or de-colonial studies have been working on excavating these roots over decades (see Abu-Lughod 1991; Bhabha 2004; Bhambra 2014; Crenshaw et al. 1995; Hall 1992; Lorde 2007; Saïd 1978; Spivak 1988). With the growing uptake of works from these fields, the tracing of key concepts within mainstream migration and mobility studies, such as 'migration', 'diversity', 'superdiversity', 'modernity', 'integration', and perhaps, most importantly, 'society' to a normalized and obscured colonial logic becomes increasingly legible (Ndhlovu 2016; Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Schinkel 2018).

This notoriously blurry notion of 'integration' has proven a very powerful policy tool for nation-states and for the migration policies of the EU as a whole, keeping their order in place by means of mandatory integration measures, as discussed in the literature (Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Goodman 2011; Hadj Abdou 2019; Korteweg 2017; Rytter 2018; Schinkel 2017, 2018). Often this mandatory integration has been operationalized via language skills, as the 'key' enabling this ominous integration process, with this metaphor unceasingly conjured up by politicians, law makers, and their entourages of enforcers (Bonjour 2014; Extra et al. 2009; Flubacher 2014; Mateos 2009; Plutzar 2010; Shohamy 2001). Moreover, as I argue in the following pages, language skills continue to serve this purpose.

A growing number of European nation-states have discovered that language skills, which were previously applied more as an internal migration policy instrument (often described earlier as 'civic integration' associated with citizenship-related

restrictions), serve as a useful border policy tool as well. Among these countries are Germany and the UK, which are at the centre of the present study. Over the course of the last two decades, European nation-states have increasingly linked the granting of citizenship, residence, and entry rights of migrants to policies of mandatory integration in the form of language tests, and such measures have come to be applied as a condition for initial entry into European countries. This has been the case with family reunification involving those from so-called third countries coming to Europe, which is the migration policy field that is the focus of this thesis. It is important to note that language requirements are only one example of the increasing restrictiveness of European family reunification schemes; others operate, for instance, through age restrictions, economic, or residential requirements (Block 2014; De Haas et al. 2018). Equally important, too, for putting these restrictions in perspective, is the observation that within the overall apparatus of European external borders, which is highly complex and restricted, family unification has become one of the last remaining legal pathways for 'third country' citizens to move to Europe (a point made also by Block 2014 amongst others).

Over the course of the last 15 years, a growing number of European nation-states have attached the granting of family unification rights to the condition that arriving family members should fulfil a so-called 'pre-departure' or 'pre-integrative' language requirement; before submitting their visa applications. This restriction requires newcomers to 'integrate' and prove a specific (or rather unspecific) level of skill in the hegemonic national language of the country where they aspire to live even before they have set foot there.

The Netherlands was the first European country to adopt such a regulation in 2005, followed by Germany in 2007, France in 2008, Denmark and the UK in 2010, and Austria in 2011 (see Bonjour 2014; Goodman and Wright 2015). According to official statements, this regulation aims not only to facilitate integration but also to prevent sham and forced marriages (Block 2019; Grote 2017; Wray 2006). These official narratives feature stereotypical figures, such as the poorly integrated, violent,

second-generation migrant man and the voiceless Muslim 'imported bride' in need of saving by Western state institutions (Abu-Lughod 2002; Strasser et al. 2009; Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Bonjour and Kraler 2015; Block 2019). In these highly gendered, culturalizing, and politicized discourses that legitimize the respective legal restrictions, cross-border marriage is presented as a problem not only for the respective destination countries, threatening national identities and family norms through 'chain-migration' (Bonjour and Kraler 2015) but also for the (female) spouses themselves, which is where the argument of the language test comes in. Supposedly, the hurdle of the language test should serve as a kind of 'emergency exit' for the incoming partners (again presented mainly as women, which is not at all the case, at least in Turkey and Kosova) to escape a forced marriage, or, for those who do join their husbands to live more independently (Plutzar 2010). The argument about force is not only used by European policy makers but it has also been reportedly reproduced within the institutions of language teaching and testing in the respective third countries, mostly lacking a solid factual basis (Gutekunst 2018), as confirmed by my study.

Within the European context, Switzerland is the latest country to introduce such a pre-departure language requirement, albeit without tying it to a standardized test requirement. This requirement was implemented along with Switzerland's new 'Aliens and Integration Act' of 2019, in which the term 'integration' was formally added to the definition of the policy field. Hence, the trend of restricting family unification rights by means of mandatory 'integrative' language requirements seems to prevail notwithstanding ongoing criticism from many quarters, such as language teachers, linguists, human rights advocates, as well as migration officers, who have to implement such measures. The concerns that have been raised range from the inadequacy and arbitrariness of the test constructs to the high costs of language courses, the geographic remoteness of language schools and test centres in many regions of the 'third countries', and the problem of test providers' undue influence, given the fact that they profit from the resulting language market, through to more

fundamental ethical, language, and human rights concerns (Extra et al. 2009, Plutzar 2010, Shohamy 2001). These critiques are not only theoretical; they have concrete consequences too; for instance, pointing to the problematic conditions and existential consequences of these tests, Büro des Österreichischen Sprachdiploms (the Office of the Austrian Language Diploma) turned down the offer of Austrian authorities to develop a test as part of the so-called 'integration agreement' (Plutzar 2010). Furthermore, there have been developments at the level of international legislation that are unequivocally opposed to such restrictions, as, for example, in the Doğan verdict of the European Court of Justice of 2015, which did not result in their being banned by the German government but opened up the possibility for Turkish citizens (specifically) to plead a hardship case (Grote 2017). What is striking is that concessions are being made only in 'extreme' cases considered as exceptions to the rule, while language-testing practices, in general, continue to be conducted and remain relatively undisturbed by such legislation, as authorities hold to the general value of and need for such tests. Accordingly, official narratives also continue to uphold the infamous metaphor of language as the 'key to integration' (Flubacher 2014; Mateos 2009).

In this thesis I argue that language, along with discursive certainties, imaginaries, and emotions, functions as a border technology, shaping the subjectivities of those it seeks to govern. Although the border has long been deconstructed as being much more than a mere geopolitical line (Andreas 2000; Balibar 1998, 2009; Cooper and Perkins 2015; De Genova et al. 2015; Fassin 2011; Vaughan-Williams 2008), border theorizations continue to centre largely on more materialized and rationalizable forms of border technologies within critical border studies. This centring is in part due to a dominant focus on 'irregular migration' within border studies and has led to an imbalance in the development of border ontologies in favour of such 'smart' bordering technologies, which govern their subjects as mere bodies or 'living matter' without an interest in shaping their

subjectivities (Walters 2006). In effect, this imbalance has also lead to an emphasis on the border governance function of 'selection' and the neglect of 'subjectivation'.

In my analysis, I address and aim at restoring this imbalance by focusing on a form of 'regular migration' and applying a lens of 'subjectivation', which opens up new perspectives on and conceptualizations of current border technologies. In following such an approach, my aim is to trace the problematic objectivation of the 'migrant' as a bordered body or as embodying borders. Through a close reading of interview narratives, and using a feminist and raciolinguistic lens, I extend the study of how the 'migrant other' is produced by European bordering institutions, as well as within the Western migration research tradition. I accomplish the latter using autoethnographic writing and a narrative analysis of the academic genre.

My study's primary contribution is to the field of critical border studies, bringing a form of 'regular migration' into the picture. Furthermore, studies on family unification have traditionally and almost exclusively examined this cross-border phenomenon through the lens of migration, often referring to the notion of 'marriage migration'. My contribution is to open up a critical border studies perspective on this issue (the work of Gutekunst, 2015, 2019 has notably paved the way in this direction).

I apply an open approach to the bordering apparatus surrounding the 'pre-departure language requirement for third country incoming spouses at large. In doing so, I also consider the more easily graspable, materialized aspects and functions of the border apparatus, such as the socio-spatial setting of the language classroom or the hybridized practices of language testing and border control. However, my main approach entails tackling the finer, less graspable power lines at play. I see them as vital to this extraterritorialized form of border regime; a regime that necessarily functions largely 'from afar'. I show that hard power lines, such as economic and political hierarchies and the concrete materiality of territory and other spatial surroundings, as well as the governed body itself, while remaining crucial to the functioning of the border apparatus, shift to the background of the bordering

process, as in the embassy, the language classroom, and in test centre. Instead, the mind, emotions, imaginaries, and speech are foregrounded and actively engaged in the fulfilment of a key bordering function.

In this thesis, I aim to contribute to the field of critical border studies that has been on the losing side of that border ontological imbalance in three ways. The first way is by thematically focusing on 'regular migration' (as opposed to irregularized migration). The second is by analytically focusing on borders as boundaries, or, more precisely, on the framework of subjectivation, considered as a complex, multi-layered, and dynamic process of bordered boundary making that actively engages rather than simply selecting the 'migrant subject'. The third way entails using an intersectional feminist and race critical/raciolinguistic methodological approach.

The main argument that I make in this thesis is that what I call 'soft' governing technologies play a vital role in shaping migrant subjectivities through the intimate grasp of their subjects. The forms of soft bordering technologies, described below, emerged as particularly relevant within the extra-territorialized and externalized border apparatus of European pre-departure language testing regimes. The first is *discursive certainties and emotions, both in dynamic interrelation with imaginaries*, that I tackle in Part II of this thesis, and the second is *language practices*, comprising *language learning and testing as border policies*, which I develop mainly in Part III of the thesis.

The application of a feminist and critical race lens to examine emotions (as opposed to mere affects) (Åhäll 2018; Ahmed 2014; D'Aoust 2014) constitutes a further contribution of this thesis to the field of critical border studies, which has not engaged much with feminist scholarship so far. In this (feminist) approach to soft border technologies, the emotion perspective on borders serves as my conceptual point of departure. To date, migration and border scholars have evinced very little interest in theorizing emotions and affects as part of bordering processes (for existing works applying different takes on emotion and affect, see Andrikopoulos 2021; Bilgiç 2018; D'Aoust 2014, 2019; Scheibelhofer 2020; Schmoll 2014). The

works that do apply such a lens often remain centred on notions of embodied borders and the 'migrant body' that approach 'traceable and steerable bodily affects' (D'Aoust 2014, 325), rather than emotions as (inter)subjectively experienced, socially constructed, and personal. I subscribe to the importance of including a focus on the body as a central bordering and governing site. I argue that to acknowledge that 'migrant subjects' are human beings with full inner lives, a voice, and agency, researchers must develop methodologies and epistemologies that release the 'migrant body' from the object-position in which it has been fixated by both Western nation states as well as bordering institutions and academic institutions of knowledge production.

My analysis of the European border regime as a language-testing regime is largely based on narrative and interpretative discourse analysis. It meanders in an exploratory manner among disciplines, such as sociolinguistics and ethnomethodology, encompassing the study of discourses circulating at a macro level as well as a detailed micro-analysis of narratives and social interaction. I approach macro-discourses via their reification at the micro level. This type of broad, interdisciplinary approach 'combining holism with the fine detail of interaction' is, according to Duchêne et al. (2013, 11f), particularly fruitful for the study of soft power, conceived as a normalized and obscured power that 'does not look like power, but just order'.

By applying a critical raciolinguistic perspective, I show how in addition to selecting newcomers, contemporary externalized border apparatuses rearticulate the distinction between Europeanness and non-Europeanness by means of subjectivation, while claiming that the language requirement facilitates 'integration' into the European nation-state. Integration, I argue, is one of those taken for granted categories related to language (and, though notoriously invisibilized, to race) that has been 'co-naturalized in particular societal contexts' (Rosa and Flores 2017, 622). This thesis seeks to contribute to efforts to denaturalize this concept of

'integration' and demonstrate how, institutionalized as part of the European border apparatus, it is rooted in colonial forms of hegemony.

As raciolinguists view race through the lens of language and vice versa (Alim 2016), I want to explore bordering through the lens of language (Part II of the thesis), and language through the lens of bordering (Part III), showing how these two technologies intersect, producing hybridized forms of governance and subjectivities. Hence I intend to show how language, often referred to as a 'barrier' in the communication between 'migrants' and a long-established, normal(ized) European population, when used as a means of political force becomes part of the border itself.

1.2 Questions, perspectives, and the structure of this thesis

To explore the above-described complex interrelations of language as border, I will seek to answer the following questions. How does such a border regime, based on 'mandatory language learning', function? What are the elements that hold together the border apparatus and that make it work? And what effects does this apparatus have on the people ordered to pass through it? Here I would like to outline the research perspectives that have informed my own perspective in answering these focal questions as well as its limitations.

The first perspective brings together three words: 'cross', 'border', and 'marriage', whereby certain marriages are distinguished from others, shaped into a particular type of marriage, namely one that is marked by a border and its crossing by one of the partners involved. However diverse the couples falling into this category are, all of their stories appear to have these two dimensions in common: the marriage and the (intention of) crossing the European border. As I will explain later, the marriage dimension itself will remain relatively in the background of my analysis, enabling me to focus on the latter dimension as the common structural feature that shapes these marriages into (tokens of) a type: the border crossing. I will examine a particular subtype, namely marriages between individuals from a 'third country' with somebody from a European country that demands a pre-departure language certificate.

In this analysis, I am especially interested in the particularities, the details through which the narrators express their perspective and make sense of their experience with 'the border' and with learning or being tested in 'the (hegemonic) language'. These particularities and the narrative composition chosen by individuals during an interview with a researcher allows for the grasping of the 'surplus' of meaning described as 'sense-making strategies' within a narrative-interpretative analysis (Rosenthal 2003). Such an analysis evades direct ethnographic observation of people and how they act, for example, in front of an embassy building. I have found a close analysis of these narratives to be highly informative not only with

regard to that micro level of bordering and 'linguaging' processes (Shohamy 2006), but equally with regard to the macro level in which power is executed via borders and boundaries. This perspective is expressed in my grounded discourse analytical approach (Strauss 1996) to the study of borders, conceived in Foucauldian terms (Foucault 1990, 1991, 1994, 2006, 2007) and, following Butler (1989, 1997a and 1997b, 2010, 2011) as the study of how populations are governed by means of subjectivation. Hence studying those subjected to the processes of European border regime is, in my view, not so much about studying the 'affected subjects' by focusing the lens on their negotiation strategies, struggles, and sufferings in the face of the border. It is more about studying the 'effected subjects' as people who observe and interpret what the border apparatus 'does to them' or 'with them'. In that sense, it could be argued that an in-depth study of peoples' border stories that is also comparative (examining how they come together and display common patterns and particular differences) is the most direct way of studying how the border apparatus functions as an apparatus aimed at governance through 'subjectivation'.

Thus, this thesis explores the phenomenon of spousal unification across European borders, applying a border regime perspective that is mainly based on narrated experiences. However, it also includes some additional sources, such as ethnography and online content, especially in the last section.

As I have previously noted, the argument of this thesis is developed in two main steps. In Part II, which centres conceptually on border/ing, I will conduct a discourse analysis of what I call the 'discursive cornerstones' of the hegemonic discourse on 'cross-border marriages', elucidating how *discursive certainties and emotions, in dynamic interrelation with imaginaries, function as technologies governing and shaping the subjectivities passing through the border apparatus*. However, before doing so, I will present an in-depth single case analysis that illustrates how the particular 'hard' bordering technologies (in the wider institutional, socio-spatial, and material senses) converge with 'soft' technologies (discursive

boundaries, imaginaries, and so forth) to shape the complex, multidimensional overall apparatus.

In Part III, which focuses conceptually on language/ing, I will trace how (and what particular notion of) *language and language practice becomes a bordering technology in the context* of the extraterritorialized and externalized border apparatus of pre-departure *language learning and testing*.

A conceptual binary of borders and boundaries helps to structure my analysis. Thus, the two parts of my thesis can be conceived as follows. Whereas the first part of the analysis is mainly concerned with the socio-symbolic *boundaries* that discursively uphold and legitimize the border, the second part focuses on a particular language-based form of border regulation, tackling the *border* in a narrower sense, with 'language' functioning as its instrument. However, this binary structure of *boundaries* and *borders* (like the languaging of border and the bordering of language) is far from being clear-cut, for the manifold interrelations that tie them together are extremely tightly knit. In fact, as I will subsequently argue, ultimately, this binary logic cannot be upheld. This is also the reason why I chose not to structure the chapters according to this basic binary, for the multiplexity of the border apparatus defies such a clear-cut text-structure.

My analytical exploration of the semi-structured narrative interviews I held with individuals immersed in the legal-procedural process of crossing that border via 'spousal reunification' is guided by my focal questions: *What does border and language mean for people? And: How do the two aspects function within that intersection?* I will try to answer these questions by applying a trans-disciplinary intersectional approach, integrating border regime studies, sociolinguistics, raciolinguistics, and postcolonial studies within critical, feminist discourse analysis, (Ahmed 2014; Alim 2016; Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Blommaert 2005a, 2005b, 2009; Duchêne et al. 2013; Fairclough 1989; Harding 1991; Heller and Duchêne 2008; Rosa and Flores 2017; Wodak 2015). I will trace the border's particular

manifestations, functioning, and its effects, which are often contradictory to its acclaimed goals, to make underlying discursive patterns and logics visible.

I seek to address these questions with reference to several countries and their transnational family unification procedures (mainly, but not only, Turkey and Kosova on one side and Germany and the UK on the other). Therefore, my analysis cannot claim to do justice to these outgoing countries' complex legal, historical, socio-political, and economic particularities, which is a deficiency of this work. Through the cases, additional (online) sources, and the literature that I review, I can only provide a more (Kosova) or less (Turkey) detailed picture of the most pertinent legal and political aspects as opposed to a full-blown ethnographic field study and literature review. This is the advantage of conducting research that focuses on one transnational line, wherein only two countries are involved in migratory processes. A good example is Miriam Gutekunst's case study of what she describes as Moroccan–German *migration through marriage* (Gutekunst 2018). She presents an analysis of the bordering process conceived not only as a matter of European borders but also as one marked by the involved "third country's" border regime, making an important contribution to what Dahinden (2017) has called the de-centring of migration studies. However, inclusion of a multiplicity of migratory lines has the advantage of enabling a focus on the respective instruments of border regimes, viewed as a broader and interconnected phenomenon: The researcher can thus elucidate the patterns, functionings, and effects of mandatory language testing, emphasizing its particularity, while tracing the ways in which it shapes various contexts and lives.

Furthermore, given its focus on bordering processes and their subjectivating effects, my analysis does not encompass the entirety of the administrative milestones of the legal pathway of 'spousal unification'. The marriage-related steps are more or less blanked out, which is certainly another weakness of this study, for this form of im/mobilization is strongly associated with marriage regulations and, on a personal level, deeply embedded in peoples' intimate lives and future plans.

Therefore, my work is not, in a direct sense, positioned within the rich and diversified literature on cross-border-marriages or marriage and family migration to Europe (see Andrikopoulos 2021; Aybek et al. 2015; Block 2014, 2019; Bonjour 2014; D'Aoust 2013, 2014, 2019; Bonizzoni 2018; Bonjour and Kraler 2015; Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Charsley 2005; Dahinden et al. 2020; Moret et al. 2019; Wray 2006; Strasser et al. 2009 —and, although only partly positioning herself in the field— Gutekunst 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018).

The literature on the topic of 'marriage migration', which I share, has, of course, seminally informed my work. However, I decided to refrain from articulating this thesis within the explicit framework of this field of scholarship, mainly because I chose to view the phenomenon through a border lens instead of the migration paradigm, adding to the above-described research gap in border studies (as a field predominantly dealing with irregularized forms of migration). The predominant use of data collected in the 'third countries' of Kosova and Turkey allowed for the application of this perspective, considered as a way of de-centring (Dahinden 2016) the study of 'family unification' and 'family politics' related to migration, which are still often centred on the receiving side of transnational families. Furthermore, a focus on language as a border technology meant that I had to make some hard choices. I discovered that a large body of scholarship focusing on transnational intimate partner relationships/choices and marriage per se already existed (Andrikopoulos 2021; Aybek et al. 2015; Charsley 2005; Dahinden et al. 2020; Strasser et al. 2009; Wray 2006 to mention just a few studies).

A second important reason for choosing not to focus on the intimate relationship and marriage aspect as such was the extremely stereotypic and politicized public discourse on this topic, with the question of the legitimacy of these marriages being at the heart of highly polarized debates. As a new scholar in this field, I quickly realized how strongly this discourse affected and confined me in my thinking and choice of research focus. Consequently, I often found myself looking for 'antithetical' perspectives to counter the dominant ones. While it is certainly not

wrong for a scholar to be politically driven, the immediate 'push' effect of public discourse on my work bothered me. Unlike some works in this field I was not interested in seeking answers to that pervasive question of how (romantically, rationally, by arrangement, forced etc.) and why 'ethnic others' 'choose' to marry across borders; rather, I wished to explore institutional power structures. I was curious to learn more about the particular and unabated power line that 'the border' represents, sparking the legitimacy discourse with regard to transnational movement so intensely in times when it has become such an omnipresent everyday phenomenon.

The (European) border, its logic, its constant and expanding bordering (Andersson 2014; Cooper and Perkins 2015; Yuval-Davis et al. 2018) and borderness (Green 2012) permeated the narratives of all the individuals with whom my colleagues and I spoke, whether in Turkey or Kosova, who were setting out to join their partners in Europe (Germany or the UK). Consequently, I have positioned the *border* in cross-border marriages centre stage in this thesis. For despite the heterogeneity of cases from Kosova and Turkey, covering a wide spectrum, and the significant variations among individual narratives, they entail recurring aspects, which condense into regularities in their stories. These regularities, at times loosely dispersed through the cases and at other times forming a surprisingly uniform pattern, shaped the experiences of these diverse individuals. The conversations about their experiences that unfolded during the data collection phase along with the interviews held with individuals working in different related fields (embassy officials, NGO staff, and language teachers) and my own observations and reflections slowly came together to form a multimodal and multi-sited bordering pattern. Across different contexts, it was discernable as a legal pattern, a procedural or bureaucratic pattern, a narrative pattern, a discursive pattern, a spatial pattern, an affective pattern, a pattern of practices and experience, and also one of imagination, a structural pattern of power and so on. But it was always a *particular* pattern, following a particular logic.

This pattern shapes the bordering experience specifically in the context of the legal pathway of spousal reunification from third countries to Europe, as it reaches across and functionally interlinks highly heterogeneous qualities, such as feelings of degradation, the socio-spatial hybrid 'materialization' of the language classroom as a border place, the equally hybrid or mixed role of language learner/visa applicant, and the extraterritoriality of this pre-departure language requirement. As became apparent during my investigations across these sites and modes, the border integrates these elements into a particular system of interrelations— an apparatus of a border regime. This pattern is multidimensional in the sense that these diverse qualities and practices (and therefore different types of data) come together, intersecting at different levels (structural, symbolic, and at the level of identity) (Winkler and Degele 2009). Thus, they need to be conceptualized together in order to understand the forms, functions, and (sometimes quite well hidden) effects that 'the border' and the prospective move to cross it generate in this context. Like others before me, I struggled with 'too much' and 'too wide' when embarking on this project, at some point coming to linger at this multilevel, multi-relational, and multimodal intersection of all the different things that border means here.

Ultimately, it is this multiplicity that has come to shape the somewhat wild-growing, rhizomatic pattern of this text in terms of its structure as well as the style of writing as a way of attempting to translate my voice, unaccustomed to speaking with research *authority*, into academese. I will return to this aspect of meta-reflexivity in detail in the following chapter on methodology.

2 Data and Methods

2.1 The institutional context of this project

The research project, 'Cross-border marriages under the conditions of transnationalization and politicization', conducted at the University of Neuchâtel and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) provided the institutional context for developing my PhD project. More precisely, the core project team at the *laboratoire des processus sociaux*, comprising Janine Dahinden, Joëlle Moret, and myself, carried out the research between 2014 and 2018. The original project had been conceptualized by my two colleagues and had in turn been accepted for funding by the SNSF. I joined the project team in spring 2014 as a PhD student.

To elucidate the particular methodological rootedness and conceptual decisions that came to shape my research, but also, of course, to make visible and pay tribute to the work of my colleagues, I will very briefly outline the overarching SNSF study. This outline is primarily based on a summary of the original study.¹

The SNSF study was aimed at deepening understanding of the complexity associated with two prevailing and opposed forces: an increase in transnational marriage practices on the one hand and the politicization of these practices on the other hand. It set out to investigate the practices and strategies of the persons involved and representations of gender, family, religion, and ethnicity, among others, as well as the conflicts arising in this type of marriage. We considered these conflicts to be closely articulated with the political, economic, and discursive frames at all of the sites of the transnational network. Within the project, this issue was viewed mainly through three lenses: a transnational approach, a boundary work perspective, and a gender perspective within a qualitative-interpretative methodology. Our original research concept, formulated as a case study in Switzerland, was intended to include such cross-border couples, wherein one person

¹ SNSF-project **100017_149924**: https://www.unine.ch/maps-chaire/de/home/recherche/projets/mandats_en_cours/cross-border-marriages-under-con.html

who had been born and/or had grown up in Switzerland (categorized as a so-called second-generation migrant) had married or was about to marry someone from their parents' (non-European) country of origin, categorized as a 'third country'. We chose this approach because such cases can reveal distinct legal, political, and discursive patterns. The plan had been to conduct, as a first phase, a range of biographic interviews with such 'second-generation migrants' engaged in or about to engage in this type of cross-border marriage and, if possible, with their partners. During a second phase, a number of case studies would be selected from these cases for an in-depth investigation. For this step, we also wanted to grasp the transnational 'marriage network' of the couple and conduct a third round of interviews with key persons at all relevant sites of the transnational marriage-networks.

Although we ultimately retained this multisite approach as a feature of our study of cross-border couples, we soon realized that the original concept would need to be adapted to the reality that we encountered in 'the field'. The personal nature of the topic, strong politicization, and the negative stereotypizations at play turned out to be even more sensitive than we had anticipated, resulting in considerable difficulty finding interviewees who were prepared to convey their stories to us during interviews. This challenge was aside from the usual difficulties of finding research participants that have to do with individuals' uneasiness about being 'researched' or the time that they need to take out of their busy schedules to contribute to a work that does not necessarily promise a visible or immediate benefit for them. Thus, it took us about one and a half years to complete the first phase of our study, which involved interviewing 29 people (15 women and 14 men; we did not explicitly search for gender queer couples), who were in a cross-border relationship with someone from Turkey (nine cases); Kosova (eight cases); Sri Lanka (seven cases); Somalia (two cases); and Bosnia, Serbia, or Eritrea (one case each). The decision to include a wide range of 'third countries' reflects our wish to try and methodologically 'de-nationalize' transnational studies (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002), while aiming to understand the structural traits of this type of cross-border

marriage as such. Simultaneously, we wished to avoid a potentially essentializing grasp of the phenomenon viewed through the lens of one particular national, ethnic or cultural 'group'.

As difficult as it was to find interview participants for the first part of our study, once we were seated opposite each other, the biographical narratives and conversations that developed between them and us, the interviewers, usually turned out to be rich, detailed, and marked by an atmosphere of trust and openness. Whereas Joëlle Moret covered interviews with people in French-speaking Switzerland, I covered interviews with those who spoke German or Albanian.

However, it generally took a lot of effort and time to schedule a second interview successfully, be it with the initial interviewee to discuss their social network during the second part of our study or with their spouse. We gave up on the latter fairly quickly, conducting just four interviews with partners of our respondents in Switzerland and only when these interviews came about easily, as we had come to understand that respondents committing to include their partners or others within their personal networks was far from simply being a matter of investing time. But again, the delicacy and depth of the stories they had shared with us was the central issue. Our repeated broaching of the subject with members of their families and friends within their networks was problematic given its aforementioned sensitivity arising from its positioning at the intersection of the highly personal and the highly political.

However much of a tour de force it had turned out to be, we held on to our plan of conducting these ego-centred network interviews with 'second generation spouses' to gain insights into what we termed transnational 'marriage networks'. Although the network-maps that we created using the VennMaker software provided very interesting and nuanced insights into the socio-spatial relations at play in these marriages, I decided against including them in my PhD study, mainly for reasons of confinement. As my focus now was on the outgoing side of bordering processes, I let go of much of these data, retaining mainly the perspectives of

spouses in Switzerland.

As we had realized that the plan to interview multiple individuals' who were from our interview participants marriage networks would not work out, we modified our research plan as follows. Instead of tracing the spouses' "marriage networks" across borders, we decided to decouple individual empirical cases, while conceptually maintaining a transnational perspective. Thus, we chose to look for new cases of this type of cross-border marriage in the 'countries of origin' so that we could still include the experiences of people on the other side of this transnational phenomenon, usually those who were yet to join their partners in Europe. This was an important feature of a study that aimed at de-centring the dominant Eurocentric perspective on migration phenomena (Dahinden 2017). Concretely, we focused our multisite approach on the three countries that were the most pertinent with respect to Switzerland, namely Kosova, Turkey, and Sri Lanka. We conducted semi-directed narrative interviews with women and men who were about to join their partners in Europe as well as interviews with representatives of embassies, intermediary agencies, and NGOs.

2.2. Selection and overview of research sites and cases

We began the field data collection process in Switzerland, which also provided the largest data set in the overall corpus (especially as it included two waves/types of interviews). Even if the Swiss data are not part of the main corpus of my thesis, which is based on interviews with people in 'third countries' before they moved to Europe, the interviews we held with descendants of migrants from such countries located outside the European borders are still a valuable project asset. The main reason is that they enable tracing the discursive continuity of the bordering process, rendering visible how bordering and boundary making pass into each other throughout the different stages of the migration process. So, this Swiss 'second generation' data sample reveals how the social boundaries that newcomers applying for spousal reunification encounter during their visa application procedures are still pertinent in some ways for those 'others' who themselves may never have migrated but who remain labelled as some form of 'migrant' in their country of residence, despite being a citizen and/or having been born there. I will draw on this parallel in the last empirical subsection of this thesis (Part III).

The selection of a very small number of cases within this large data set was made at the end of the research process after the analysis was complete and the major part of the thesis had been written. I added the respective three cases to my corpus to indicate how the bordering process, centred on the integration and force discourse, continued to unfold long after the border has been crossed, as did the contradictions inherent in these policies. I picked out the case of Bardhyl O.*² as a singular story representing what I found to be a characteristic trait of the biographic narratives of these Swiss 'second-generation migrants' at large, namely the negotiation and sense-making associated with the eventual realization of not being considered a 'real Swiss'. Thus, while I could just as easily have chosen another case, I selected Bardhyl's account of this realization for its particular narrative density and

² Anonymized names are marked with *.

the explicit connections he made not only to the difficult experience of cross-border marriage procedures but also to previous biographic experiences, interpreting his change of attitude towards the Swiss state according to these lines of argumentation. I added the two cases of Shqipe N. and Amine M. to the text to advance my argument that when it comes to the actual selecting or excluding function of the bordering institutions, highly gendered discourses lose their argumentative validity. I chose these cases because of the striking parallels between the two women (medical professionals and female incoming spouses from North Macedonia who eventually got divorced in Switzerland) and because of their different legal outcomes relating to post-divorce rights of residence.

The core of the thesis, however, is based on the semi-directed narrative interviews conducted in Kosova and Turkey during the third phase of the study. This choice hinged on the obvious reason of my project's focus on the outgoing side of the bordering process. The choice of the general data sample within these two fields was just as self-evident: I included all of the interviews and field notes relating to mandatory pre-departure language testing, but I used the data from these two fields in a complementary way. The Kosovar data were mainly based on field research and expert interviews, whereas in Turkey, I drew on data collected by my colleagues, Ceren Topgül and Joëlle Moret, conducting mainly narrative interviews with individuals preparing to take the German language test.

Because I had started my field research on pre-departure language requirements in Kosova without having an explicit focus on border regimes, and came across this thread at a relatively late stage my stay, I was not able to find too many interview participants with the right profile at such short notice and in the remaining time. Instead, I focused on conducting field research and held a broad range of expert interviews focusing this type of border regime. I included all of my field notes in the analysis as well as most of the expert interviews. However, only two out of three Kosovar cross-border spouses (one withdrew from the interview) ultimately entered the text. The case of Doruntina H.* was selected for two reasons.

On the one hand, she was the only interviewee who had already taken the test, thus providing rare insights, and on the other hand, her partner was in the UK, which enabled me to develop a broader perspective in terms of national regimes and their outsourcing to private actors (adding the British Council to the Goethe Institute). The case of Florent S.* was exceptional in that his girlfriend did not live in a country with a mandatory language requirement in place. However, I included it all the same as a contrast to my regular data set, which centred on this requirement and to explore how the softest, discursive bordered boundaries reached subjects in very powerful ways before they had even begun the legal procedures for spousal unification.

Last but not least, I have to say that the choice of cases from Turkey was nowhere near as strategic as the ones selected for the Swiss and Kosovar interviews. The first case that I analysed in depth was that of Yüksel K., whom I had chosen as the subject of a paper that I was co-writing, before I had decided to make mandatory language testing the general focus of my PhD. I had picked out her case more or less randomly, initially thinking that I would develop the paper on the basis of five cases. However, I ended up developing the entire piece around this single case, which helped me to decide on the topic and focus of this thesis. My choices of the other Turkish cases that appear in this text, namely Sinem Z., Nevcan B., Adil T., and Mirsat I. were, as I have noted, rather unstrategic but intuitive, following from the main question with which I approached my data: what does 'language' and 'language requirement' represent in people's narratives, and how are they affected by it? Moreover, how do these representations and affects/emotions/imaginaries relate to the border? After conducting a combined global analysis of the Turkish and Kosovar interview data, I extracted codes that I used to identify the main lines of argument and then choose the cases according to the content and density of the emerging key citations.

I decided not to include the Sri Lankan data after the first global analysis of my initial sample (all of the cases in Kosova, Turkey, and Sri Lanka concerning pre-

departure language testing), even though most of these interviews conducted by my colleague, Janine Dahinden, were with individuals who were taking language classes at the Goethe Institute in preparation for the Start Deutsch 1 Test. The reason why I excluded these interviews was mainly because of the differing interview conditions in this research site. Most of the interviews were conducted using an interpreter and were thus rather short and lacked the encompassing narrative quality of the other data, which was an important condition for the type of in-depth analysis that I was doing. A further reason was that I simply had to set limits for myself. Sri Lanka was characterized by different historical, socio-political, and geographical conditions compared with those in the other two countries. I would thus have needed to address this issue carefully and devote considerable space to it in the thesis.

In the following table, I present an overview of the various sources of data that I included in my analysis. I summarize the overall data sample in the column to the left and identify the particular cases and data elements that served as the basis of my in-depth analysis in the column to the right.

Table of Data:

Switzerland		
	Overall data sample	Data appearing in the text
A	Thirty-one biographic interviews conducted with second generation migrants married to individuals from Turkey (9 cases), Kosova (8 cases), Sri Lanka (8 cases), Somalia (2 cases), Bosnia, North-Macedonia, Serbia, and Eritrea (1 case each)	Bardhyl O. , male; 24 years old; CH ³ and KS citizen; specialized educator; spouse from KS; living together with his spouse in the canton of Vaud, where he grew up
B	Thirteen network interviews (with part of A) using the VennMaker software	-
C	Five problem-centred narrative interviews with the partners of A	-

³ Abbreviations used in this table: CH: Switzerland; KS: Kosova; NMK: Northmacedonia; TR: Turkey; D: Germany; B permit: a multi-faceted residency and work permit for foreign nationals in CH; GI: Goethe Institute; SLZ: Sprachlernzentrum; BAMF: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

D	Two biographic interviews held with divorced women, both from North Macedonia (NMK), who had joined their spouses in Switzerland and later separated	Shqipe N. , female; 35 years old; NMK citizen; and medical professional trained in NMK; divorced from CH-NMK husband after living with him for about a year in the canton of Zurich, and had to leave the canton after the divorce
		Amine M. , female; 24 years old; NMK citizen; residence permit B in CH; midwife in NMK; divorced from her husband, but still living in CH (canton of Zurich)
E	Notes/memos based on field observations, my participation in topic-related events and reflections on the research process throughout its different stages	Phone conversation with a recently appointed cantonal migration officer
		Informal conversation with the migration officer of a cantonal 'competence centre for integration'
		Field notes and field diary

Kosova		
F	Fifteen problem-centred narrative interviews held with prospective cross-border spouses moving to Europe (7 to Germany, 4 to Switzerland, and 1 each to Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, and Italy), conducted in Prishtina, Lipjan, Kaçanik, Roganë, Mitrovicë, and Ferizaj	Doruntina H. , female; 34 years old; KS citizen; intermediate school teacher from Prishtina; husband in the UK (had left KS as a refugee); she had already passed the English test at the British Council in Tirana
		Florent S. , male; aged 24 years; KS citizen; information scientist from KS; girlfriend in CH; not yet entered into legal procedures for marriage/family unification His girlfriend was the woman who withdrew from the interview
G	One biographic interview held with the partner ('second generation migrant' from Switzerland) of one of these participants (F)	-
H	Two problem-centred narrative/expert interviews held with second-generation migrants (1 from Switzerland and 1 from Germany) who (re)migrated to Kosova to join their husbands and work as German teachers in a private language school in Prishtina	Teachers at a private language school in Prishtina (one was the wife of the director of this school)
I	Eight expert-interviews (with different staff members at the Swiss and German embassies; the owner and staff of private travel agencies in the embassy surroundings; a private security guard at the Swiss embassy; the directors of the GI test centre, the SLZ (the GI's official partner school) and that of a private language	Directors of GI (also called test commissioner) and SLZ (double interview)
		Director of a private language school in Prishtina

	school in Prishtina; the minister of diaspora)	Director/owner and one staff member of a private travel agency near the Swiss embassy
J	Ad hoc conversations/informal interviews	Staff member ('runner') at another private travel agency
		Security guard at the Swiss embassy
		Woman coming out of a private language school in Ferizaj (failed 'recruitment')
K	Extensive field notes and field diary with observations and reflections as well as photographs taken in the field	

Turkey		
L	Thirteen problem-centred narrative interviews with prospective cross-border spouses (all of them heading to Germany), of which one was a group interview with 3 participants; all of them were taking language classes in Istanbul	Yüksel K. , female; 26 years old; TR citizen; inspector in a bank and master's student; civil marriage with partner in Germany; taking language classes at GI
		Sinem Z. , female; 22 years old; TR citizen; student; civil marriage with partner in Germany; taking language classes at GI
		Nevcan B. , female 25 years old, a professional day care worker, wedding with partner in D, taking language classes at the European Language and Cultural Centre in Kadıköy (participant in a group interview)
		Adil T. , male; 54 years old; TR citizen; high school graduate and retired driver; divorced for 7 years (with 3 children); civil marriage with current wife living in D (also divorced with 3 children); taking language classes at GI after having overstayed a tourist visa
		Mirsat I. , male; 31 years old, TR citizen; finished university; works as a sales person in a furniture shop; takes language classes at GI
M	8 expert-interviews	Two German teachers at GI, Istanbul
		Işıl M. , female; teacher/consultant at <i>Yeni vatanım önuyum projesi</i> ('My New Homeland Preintegration Project') in Istanbul, where she holds seminars on integration issues for future cross-border spouses traveling to D, while also staying in touch after migration
		Martina Priessner , female; filmmaker of German origin living and working in Istanbul (made a documentary on people studying for the <i>Start Deutsch A1</i> test at the GI in Istanbul); also taught German at GI

Sri Lanka	
Nineteen narrative interviews held with prospective migrants (with 1 conducted as a group interview with 7 women) and 3 'expert'-interviews	-
Three expert interviews	-

Online data sources (multimodal)	
N	Two preparatory model videos (available online), one produced by GI for the German test <i>Start Deutsch A1</i> , and the other produced by a private provider for the <i>IELTS Life Skills</i> test
O	Content from the websites of GI, the British Council, and BAMF
P	Graphic from the European Commission's 'Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation' (2010)
Q	Graphic from a strategy paper published by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (2019)
R	Lyrics of the song ' <i>Hape portën moj Evropë!</i> ' by Nazif Çela and the polyphonic group, Ante

2.3 Research sites

In this section, I discuss the various sites, local and non-local that formed the basis for the collection of the data on which I based my analysis. This discussion not only presents a rough sketch of these sites but it also includes some reflections on the different conditions under which they were accessed. I will begin with some general remarks about multisite migration research as a particular modality of entering into and studying a place that is considered a 'field'.

2.3.1 Conducting multisite migration research

This research, which entailed studying the im/mobilization of particular people in particular places, was facilitated by, among many other things, my own mobilization. But this mobility, I argue, is not just a mere prerequisite to the actual physical movement of the researcher from site A to site B. It is also a research *modality* in the sense that it shapes the way in which the researcher comes to perceive these different research sites in different ways, depending on whether and how far one has to travel in order to conduct the research. In other words, these two aspects of mobility, i.e., the movement as a research prerequisite and a research modality (so the circumstances under which the researcher moves, and especially the hurdles encountered), affect the perspective from which the researcher perceives the place to which they move.

Therefore, to conduct multisite research (Marcus 1995) and include the voices of prospective cross-border spouses in the 'third country' of Kosova, I availed of the opportunity to travel. This change of place required more or less lengthy and detailed preparation as well as the booking of tickets and accommodation and the journey itself, undertaken by tram, plane, and taxi. It culminated with me standing by the window of my hotel room on the northern hillside of Prishtina overlooking the cityscape at dusk. As I watched more and more of the city lights, outdoors and

indoors, come on, a happy and excited sensation was awakened in me. In my mind's eye, I was already walking through these streets, which I actually knew quite well, but this time, I would walk them *differently*. I would be there as a researcher, meeting some of the people inhabiting those apartments and houses scattered around down there. It was there and then, on the evening of my arrival as a researcher in Prishtina that a thought struck me. Probably this kind of fetishization of 'the field' played a role in the decision made by Gupta and Ferguson (1997) to dismantle this 'field'; the anticipative sensation of the 'ethnographer' about to plunge into that *foreign space* in search for answers. (And Later on, back in Switzerland, I thought: ... as opposed to the 'migration scholar', who is looking for answers by gazing intensely at or into the 'foreign individual' more than at the normalized 'Western' space around them. For surely it is too familiar to retain any answers?)

Already there, a strange feeling that would remain with me throughout the duration of the project took hold of me: The feeling was one of catching myself as I acted out a role that I was not supposed to play, rather like a kid caught putting on their mother's lipstick. I felt that this role of the Western researcher, which actually came with some clear mobility privileges and other comforts that I was not used to, would not be that comfortable *all* the way through.

In the following section, I will take an opportunity to step back into some of the comforts and discomforts that came with the multiple sites where we conducted our project, sketching out the particularities that these fields entailed for the project and for myself as a researcher and as a person.

2.3.2 Switzerland

In addition to the twenty-nine biographical interviews with cross border spouses, the thirteen network interviews, and the four partner-interviews conducted by Joëlle Moret and me in Switzerland, the data that forms the basis of my PhD project includes five more interviews that I conducted by myself. Two additional

biographical interviews had been conducted with individuals who had moved to Switzerland at the age of fourteen, so they clearly occurred too late in the respondents' life cycles to fall indisputably into the category of 'second generation migrants'. We had excluded these interviews along with that of the wife of the second individual, who had dropped out of the original sample. Aside from the interviews with this couple, we had conducted two more partner-interviews with women who had come to Switzerland from Macedonia to join their spouses, again having moved to Switzerland when they were older than twelve years, which was the limit we had set for defining this category of spouses. I decided to include these five cases in the Swiss data sample, which therefore comprised a total of thirty-one biographic interviews, thirteen network interviews, and seven partner-interviews, as I had increasingly shifted my attention from a primary focus on Switzerland to the particular situation of the prospective cross-border spouses who still found themselves in the countries of departure. Therefore, the insights provided by the three additional interviews with the spouses were especially valuable to preserve, along with the complementary perspective that one of them revealed through her narrative as an 'almost second generation' spouse.

2.3.3 Kosova

In March 2016, I spent about three weeks in Kosova, where I conducted fifteen interviews with prospective cross-border spouses preparing to travel to Europe (seven to Germany, four to Switzerland, and one each to Great Britain, Norway, Denmark, and Italy). I also conducted two interviews with cross-border spouses who had migrated from a European country (one from Switzerland and one from Germany) to join their spouses in Kosova—their parents' country of origin—and one interview with the partner of one of the 15 prospective migrants, who was a 'second generation migrant' from Switzerland) and who happened to be in Kosova for an extended weekend. In addition, I conducted ten interviews with individuals whose work had a bearing on the topic in one way or another, such as officials at

several embassies of European countries, language schools, and private travel agencies. All of the conversations with individuals who were in cross-border relationships were held in Albanian, whereas the interviews of the latter group were conducted in Albanian, German, Swiss-German, and/or French.

I will speak more about this research stay, describing some of its particularities as well as my relationship to this particular site on different occasions throughout this thesis according to their relevance for the respective empirical chapters. Here, however, I would like to present the basic framework of how I organized and conducted research at this site.

Part of the reason for my pursuit of a multifaceted, equilibrated data sample was to try and find people living in different localities in Kosova, which meant including those from different regions in Kosova, possibly villages as well as towns. Contrasting with the Swiss interviews, as noted above, I had a very limited amount of time available for conducting the interviews in Kosova. Therefore, I decided to find as many interview participants as possible beforehand, reaching out to them predominantly through my connections to the socially, professionally, politically, and culturally active Kosovar diaspora but also through my limited connections within Kosova itself. This approach, as I will later show, certainly had its own disadvantages. However, it turned out to be a very good way of achieving the aforementioned equilibrium in terms of the geographical (and to some respect also socio-economic) situatedness of my interviewees. From each of my intermediaries, I received one or even two contacts, usually drawn from their family networks, located in different places/regions of Kosova. As my own intermediaries were not, for instance, connected through family networks or, say, a shared (classed) connection to the capital of Prishtina but were in some way politically active members of the diaspora, their help resulted in 'natural' data diversification in terms of the localities of origin.

So, I flew to Prishtina with a list of around fifteen pre-confirmed interview participants from the cities/towns of Ferizaj, Kaçanik, Lipjan, Mitrovica, and Prishtina and the village of Roganë. As it turned out, most of the people whom I met,

especially in Prishtina, had moved there from surrounding villages because of studies or work and were still living there. They had just mentioned the name of the city/district as a point of reference for me and as a more practical locale for meeting up for the interview. In general, I found that attributing an individual's origin to a rural or urban area was a rather artificial endeavour. Such a clear-cut distinction is generally difficult to make, given the current context of a heightened level of mobility and communication, and particularly so in the case of my interview participants, most of whom were somewhere between twenty and thirty years of age at the time of our meeting. Thus, they were young people who spent a lot of time in urban areas, be it for educational, professional, or leisure purposes.

It appeared to me that the best way to organize this multisite fieldwork within a relatively small area of the country was to base myself in the capital of Prishtina—located in the centre of the country—and travel to the other places from there by bus or taxi. Apart from the village of Roganë in the far east of Kosova (where I was invited by my interviewee and her parents to spend the night), travel distances to and from places were easily covered within a day.

The choice of the hotel in Prishtina was easily made: I decided to stay in a hotel where I had previously stayed during a visit to attend a conference. So arriving there felt a little bit like coming home, or at least coming back, although the fact that this time I was not staying there as part of a large conference group gave me a different experience, a more lonely one, starting with the uneasy realization that now I was the only Albanian-speaking person in the building who was there as a guest and not a staff member. The fact that this venue was a comfortable three-star hotel, relatively expensive by local standards—as well as my own—was also a contributing factor for my choice. Luckily, I did not have to pay for it out of my own pocket, and the project leader, Janine Dahinden, encouraged me to choose a place where I would be comfortable, especially given my pregnancy at the time. And I certainly did enjoy the comfort it provided!

But more than that, I figured that this place would be ideal for my purposes

because it is located on the northern hillside of the town, which would allow me to pass by the Swiss embassy every day on my way to the city centre and observe the scene there. This vantage turned out as a huge benefit. I will describe the 'scene' I encountered in detail in chapter 5.3.5 on 'private visa agencies', where I examine the ways in which the area around the embassy has developed due to its presence.

Generally my research approach for studying border regime apparatuses in the Kosovar field included participant observation, which I had not been able to do in Turkey for instance. Such a multimodal methodology is beneficial for developing an encompassing, multidimensional conceptualization of the functioning of bordering regimes (as also pointed out by Hess and Kasperek 2019 and Scheel and Gutekunst 2019). Going to the actual places where these bordering processes are implemented and observing the particular ways in which this happens can direct the researcher towards the different power dimensions at play, even if the main focus of a study lies on narrative data. The main methodological 'hint' I took from my observations in the Kosovar field was to incorporate a space/place approach derived from human geography (Genova et al. 2015; Löw 2011; Massey 1994) into an interdisciplinary analysis of the extraterritorialized and externalized border regime operating with a pre-departure language requirement. These concepts are important for understanding the ways in which concrete places, such as language classrooms, test rooms, and embassy counters, but also objects like exercise books or passports, come to shape the bordering experience of visa applicants, producing particular subjectivities. I will come back to these analytical concepts in my discussion of my theoretical framework. I now come to the last research field', Istanbul. At the time when interviews were conducted here, I did not realize that this was the departure point for most of the people whose stories appear in this text.

2.3.4 Turkey

It was my colleague, Joëlle Moret, who was responsible for the Turkish field, where our research took place, mainly in Istanbul, during April and May 2016. To

facilitate the fieldwork in this site, our team was extended. We collaborated with Ceren Topgöl, a Turkish researcher based in Istanbul. After Joëlle Moret's visit to Istanbul to conduct some initial interviews and to discuss and harmonize the interview modalities with her, Ceren Topgöl found and contacted the interview-partners. She conducted most of the thirteen interviews with prospective cross-border spouses (all of them headed to Germany), including a group interview held with three participants as well as eight 'expert' interviews.

Ceren Topgöl transcribed the interviews and provided a translated English version of each transcript. Almost all of the interviews were undertaken with students enrolled in the so-called 'Pre-integration Course' conducted at the Goethe Institute in Istanbul, which is exclusively targeted at migrants who move to Germany within the framework of the family reunification scheme. The researcher could contact these students after being introduced to them by the teacher. All of the interviews adhered to the principles of anonymity and confidentiality and were conducted during or after class at the school or at a nearby café. It was important to bear these details in mind when I was analysing the respondents' positioning strategies, as they formed part of the context in which the narrative developed.

To pass the German language test, family reunification applicants are strongly encouraged to take German classes, and the Goethe Institute in Istanbul (as well as the branches in Ankara and Izmir) is one of the few schools whose courses are recognized by German authorities. Given my conceptual and methodological choices to include the dimension of space/place described above, I considered the classroom as well as the test room as part of the socio-spatial context of experience; a 'lived place' where a struggle for recognition and position takes place. Depending on the course, the class would meet two to four times a week for at least two months (longer for those who failed the test) (Goethe-Institut 2017), which is time enough for specific social structures to emerge. Consequently, I conceptualized the classroom as an integral part of the border-regime apparatus that confronted these

people (Gutekunst 2015), together with other important aspects, such as their emotions and imaginaries, to name only a few.

The socio-spatial context of the classroom, together with more detailed historical and socio-political contextualizations that are necessary to understand the cases from Turkey, will be discussed in the relevant chapters, where they are shown to be pertinent. The insights and critical questions raised by my friend and colleague, Zeynep Sariaslan, were indispensable in advancing my understanding of these contextual particularities.

2.3.5 A non-local approach to multisite migration research

In addition to the interviews and participant observation that were carried out in the places and in the ways described above, I decided to include a range of online portals of different state and private actors in the analysis. This decision stemmed from one that I had already taken quite late in the research process, which was to centre my analysis on the intersection of border and language, that is, on those of our cases that were related to mandatory language testing as an element of border regime. These particular materials will be further discussed in Part III.

Here, however, I would like to stress that while my research methodology does rely on a multisite approach and also includes ethnographic fieldwork techniques, such as participant observation, I do not consider it a multisite ethnography in so far as 'it is not built on the "local" as such', to cite Feldman (2011, 45); rather, it entails a *non-local approach to multisite research*. I adopted this approach not only because my main access to these 'fields' occurred via narrative interviews; this decision also reflected my choice to include the most appropriate methodological and analytical tools for grasping the multiplicity and heterogeneity of a transnationally functioning border regime apparatus. Concurring with Feldman, I opted for a 'non-local' perspective on sites, as well as non- or virtual sites (which I will explain later on). Such a perspective in no way implies that the specific locales of power are irrelevant or that they do not require a historical reading. In his

programmatic, article Feldman (2011) argues for a non-local rather than a 'traditional' multisite approach to ethnographic studies of current globalized power apparatuses, such as those of European border management. His definition of this notion indicates a change of focus from locales to discourses:

Nonlocal' thus describes discourses that are present in multiple locations but are not of any particular location. The challenge of nonlocal ethnography is not simply the logistical one of connecting ethnographic dots separated in space-time that compose a regime of population regulation; rather, it is to uncover how discourses give an emerging regime its shape and direction, i.e. that which gives the dots a particular configuration. (Feldman 2011, 33)

In developing his ethnographic approach to the study of (border) apparatuses, Feldman builds on the seminal work of Gupta and Ferguson (1997), who questioned the empiricist assumptions that continue to uphold notions of immersion in cultural difference and displacement as the royal road to a critical perception of what is 'normally' hidden. Their postcolonial critical approach, in turn, draws on feminist standpoint theory, as reflected in their suggestion to demote the 'field' to just '*one element in a multistranded methodology for the construction of what Donna Haraway has called "situated knowledges" (1988)*' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, 37)

Departing from such an intersectional point of critique, Feldman calls for a shift in the primary object of ethnography from location-specific practices to *discourses* that enable, organize, and effectively combine a wide range of disparate policy practices, reaching beyond that locale (Feldman 2011, 33) according to the methodological demands of an ethnographic approach to the study of apparatuses:

The ethnographic challenge is to illuminate how an apparatus historically emerges, logically functions and fabricates what it presents as an objective target of regulation. To do so, nonlocal ethnography does not call for the ethnographer's immersion in "place" in order to represent daily practice per se. Rather, it investigates the discourses that enable the emergence of such a construct as the apparatus. (Feldman 2011, 45)

As the 'field' becomes disenchanting, in the sense that it does not serve as the bearer of truths to be found through the research process, and the focus shifts to discourses, which are not fixed in or confined to locale, it becomes pertinent to draw from and combine a variety of data and methods. To grasp the heterogeneity and

multiplicity of current border phenomena, such as those manifest in the externalized/extraterritorialized 'pre-departure language testing' regime, I needed to apply a heterogeneous, multimodal methodological framework—what Gusterson (1997, 116) has called a 'polymorphous engagement'.

However, my decision to gather multimodal data by including virtual 'sites', such as the home web pages of public or private actors in the relevant policy field or model videos that visa applicants could use for test preparation, was not so much the outcome of prior methodological consideration informed by disciplinary debates. Again, this was a decision that came 'naturally' in the process of developing my interdisciplinary approach to discourse analysis, as I was following my research questions and finding that my data (alone) could not provide sufficient answers.

Whichever way around it came about, a non-local approach to multisite research was important because it helped me to grasp highly mixed, transient, and complex forms of government and discourse. The reason why I chose to add the notion of 'non-local' to that of 'multisite' instead of replacing the latter reflected my desire to apply it as a critical lens with which to approach the various 'fields', while remaining somewhat cautious with regard to the call for discarding 'the local' altogether.

2.4 Methodology and data analysis

This study, generally speaking a discourse analysis, follows a (partly) multimodal (Kotthoff et al. 2013), qualitative and interpretative (Flick 2009), grounded theory (Strauss 1996) approach for analysing biographic and other narrative data as well as some visual data. Each of these data types required its own methodological approach, even if the overall analytical lens through which I approached them remained the same. Whether I was looking at a segment of a transcript or a screenshot capturing the images and words arranged on a website, my departure point was from the same basic constructivist and pragmatic assumptions, namely that meanings are not inherent in those symbolic forms themselves or in the ways in which they refer to each other; rather, they are performatively produced in a very particular socio-spatial and temporal discursive context. With the focus on the analytical axis of *meaning* and its *performative production*, the interpretation entails working out the semantic ascriptions attributed to particular categories of meaning (Hausendorf 2002). It requires a process of ‘reading’ that is facilitated by the performative, stylized character of biographic narratives (Rosenthal 2005) as well as other carriers of meaning, such as the body (Butler 1999). The premise behind this readability is that while biographic narrators—less so than the designers of a ministry website—may not necessarily be consciously arranging the semantic and indexical elements of their narrative, they *do* organize and stylize them as they tell their story. In that creative process of stylization, they express their particular experience, interpretation, and positionality, but—and this is important to point out—this expression always occurs within a given discursive powered context that determines, for instance, what is sayable and what is not; what is considered a fact and what is not, and so on.

Thus, the process of interpretation does not begin with the researcher analysing a particular narrative. Rather, the interpretive process begins much earlier, that is, not just at the level of narrated actions but also as a constitutive part of those actions, which carry particular meanings when they were performed within a

particular discursive context. Flick (2009) has examined this process through a lens of 'mimesis':

A biographical narrative of one's own life is not a representation of factual processes. It becomes a mimetic presentation of experiences, which are constructed in the form of a narrative for this purpose—in the interview. The narrative, in general, provides a framework in which experiences may be located, presented, and evaluated—in short, in which they are lived. The issue studied by qualitative research (here) is already constructed and interpreted in everyday life in the form in which it wants to study it (i.e., as a narrative). In the situation of the interview, this everyday way of interpreting and constructing is used to transform these experiences into a symbolic world – social science and its texts. (82)

It is this mimetic character of narratives, but also other forms of symbolic-performative representations, that make them readable to an analyst. Furthermore, the meanings expressed and arranged in those narratives and images, being part of this overall discursive context, fulfil a discursive, communicative, and overall social function within a particular apparatus (Agamben, 2009). It is not possible to understand these narratives/symbolic forms and performances without embedding them within the concrete apparatus and the respective functions that they fulfil as part of that apparatus. To get to this function within the interpretive process, it is crucial to reflect on the particular types of data sources (biographic interview, expert interview, ministerial or embassy homepage, model video etc.) and their conditions within the analysis. Furthermore, it is important to reflect on the categories of analysis and the genres of scientific texts through which these various sets of data are re-interpreted.

In the following section, I will delve a little deeper into the analytical particularities of each of my main data types: biographic data, narrative data, in general, and multimodal data (video/images and text). The order in which they are listed represents the chronology of their emergence as being pertinent in my analysis.

2.4.1 Biographic interviews

It is important to note here that what I refer to as *narratives* in this thesis are already second- or third-order texts consisting of a transcript or translation of a transcript that is based on an audio recording. This was the case for the Turkish interviews, which were conducted and translated into English by Ceren Topgöl, as well as the Albanian and Swiss-German interviews, which I conducted in Switzerland and Kosova, directly translating them into (standard) German during the transcription process so as to make them accessible to everyone in the team.

Furthermore, compared with the norm, for instance, in conversation analysis (e.g., GAT 2, as noted by Selting et al. 2009), these transcripts were much less detail-oriented. They did not systematically include paraverbal or nonverbal information, for example, emphasis, coughing, simultaneous speech, or pause-lengths (although I did note the latter if especially noticeable, as in laughing and crying). In this sense, they are literary transcriptions that are primarily aimed at being true to content and less so to the morphological or phonetic form or the exact interactive sequence of turn-taking. As I based my analysis mainly on the semantic level of sense-making processes, this rough notation sufficed for my analytical purposes.

Considering the biographical interviews concretely, here I need to point out that at the beginning of my analytical process, they took centre stage, serving as the starting point of my global analysis (Flick 2009) in which I was able to make preliminary observations and identify central themes. However, as I subsequently decided to base my thesis mainly on the topic of the pre-departure language test, I foregrounded the narrative interviews, and the Swiss data became somewhat peripheral. It was only during the very last stage of my analysis that they returned, and together with meta-reflexive autoethnographic memos, they enabled a bridge to be forged between these two sites as stories from before and from after the border crossing, thereby opening up a transnational perspective on the 'integration' discourse.

However, I came to realize that although the narrative interviews that we conducted were not biographical in the full sense (for instance by allowing the respondent to develop a lengthy uninterrupted account at the beginning of the interview), we did provide space for biographical questions. In some cases, such as the interview conducted with Yüksel K. that I analysed as a biographical narrative, they also enabled case reconstruction (Rosenthal 2005). The benefit of including this single case study, as I will further elaborate in the respective chapter, lies in the in-depth insight it provided into the multifaceted institutional dynamics at play. A fine-grained analysis of the categories that appear in an individual's biographical background can open up various starting points for further generalizations in this field of study (Zittoun 2017). This is the reason why it featured at the outset of the main part of my analysis presented in Part II.

2.4.2 Theme-centred narrative interviews

The theme-centred narrative interviews that we conducted focused in general on the two (interrelated) topics of the marriage process on the one hand and the migration process on the other hand. The latter included everything relating to the mandatory testing of language skills. In the case of the interviews conducted in Turkey, the second migration-related aspect was almost entirely covered by the mandatory language learning and testing theme, as the interview participants in the Turkish field were recruited solely through the language learning and testing institutions in Istanbul.

By going through the entirety of our common corpus of data, I was able to identify all of the relevant data, that is, those interviews held with individuals whose partner lived in countries where a language certificate was mandatory (basically all of the Turkish cases and a selection of the Kosovar cases, as well as large parts of the Kosovar field research).

As a second step, I re-read all of the narrative interviews, taking notes and writing summaries, on the basis of which I generated case profiles and identified

important themes and key passages. I conducted another global analysis of the main data corpus that I had defined and narrowed down in this way, including the field observations and expert interviews. At this point, I selected the cases that I wanted to analyse in detail and went through them again, coding them thematically (by hand), drawing up a matrix depicting the relevant themes/aspects and the respective cases and codes, and in turn choosing which of the respective excerpts I would analyse further.

Here, I should explain what I mean by 'analyse further'. This question was actually not that clear-cut for me, as I took to this detailed analysis more intuitively than through (conscious) alignment to a particular linguistic (semiological) or qualitative data analytical programme. But as I reflect on this process of analysis, I find that it probably represents the most interdisciplinary part of this thesis, inspired by the different fields that have been important to me in the course of my scholarly education in one way or another. These fields are semiotics and semantics (Derrida 1992), also with regard to visual analysis (Barthes 1990); pragmatics and speech act theory in particular (Austin 1975); ethno-methodological conversation analysis (e.g., Kotthoff 2002); and critical, and mostly Foucauldian discourse analysis (Foucault 1994 as in Blommaert 2005 and Heller and Duchêne 2008). These influences informed my analysis, especially as I also incorporated performativity within gender studies (especially Butler 1999) and concepts from ethnographic methodology such as thick description (Geertz 2015 [1973]), place-making within human geography (Massey 1994), and boundary-making practices in the social sciences (e.g., Dahinden et al. 2014 and Moret et al. 2019, both with reference to Barth 1970). Of course this reflection on influences on my work is highly fragmentary; its purpose is merely to sketch out and acknowledge the main inspirations behind my overall analytical approach to discourse analysis.

Therefore, I applied analytical lenses provided by these various fields to what I have referred above in an in-depth reading of the selected excerpts to work out the argumentative, semantic, and indexical steps of the narrative sequences (in their

specific contexts). This close look at the text was characterized by openness and, to some extent, a playful-creative approach to what I should or could find. With reference to ethnomethodological conversation analysis, Eberle (1997) described this approach as essential for the innovative process of discerning relevant patterns of speech, and, I would add here, of meaning-making for all kinds of 'symbolic surfaces' (Jashari 2013). Reading and re-reading, as well as rearranging texts visually enables different aspects to be highlighted and opens up various perspectives, which is helpful in rendering visible constitutive carriers of meaning. In this way, I scanned the chosen excerpts for what might 'strike the eye', be it on the level of semantics, pragmatics, parts of speech, metaphors, direct/indirect speech and so forth.

Parallel to this process, and where pertinent, I worked out relevant boundary-making categories, along with semantic ascriptions and evaluations that the narrator attributed to them. Hausendorf (2002) proposed the application of this categorizing trio with regard to an analysis of representations of belonging, illustrated by advertisements, but it can very well be applied as a minimalistic framework for the analysis of positionality discourses in general. This reduced analytical matrix of categories as well as ascribed meanings and values is also what makes it appropriate for analysing multimodal data (images and text). The testing ground for this kind of multimodal analysis was a previous project (Jashari 2013) on transnational sketch-comedy by tracing the semantics and indexicality of video and audio data, which brings me to the last part of the discussion of my analytical approaches here.

2.4.3 Multimodal content

The multimodal online content that I analysed and will present in the last part of this thesis mainly consists of the two model videos provided by the Goethe Institute on the one hand and a private English teacher and provider of online learning materials on the other hand, as well as some further images/textual content available on the website of Goethe Institute.

I first watched the videos several times, one or two times in slow motion, taking notes. During these repeated viewings I would focus on different aspects, defining the central sequences/dramaturgy of the model-test proceedings, making out the general features of the spatial arrangement (space, objects, bodies etc.) as well as the position of the camera. In light of this examination, I would select the scenes of particular interest for my questions, namely what notion of language is constructed in these videos as well as what kinds of learner-subjectivities and hierarchies are made visible.

To prepare the data for an in-depth analysis, I took screenshots of the videos in very dense consecution (approximately 10–20 images/min), and then chose those that marked the specific scenes I had defined as particularly relevant for my research questions. Again, I made transcripts that were based on this selection and (in one case) translations of these scenes, but I usually transcribed larger portions of the videos in order to have a stronger basis for the global analysis and definition of relevant aspects.

As a result of this process of viewing, analysing, and selecting, the method I followed was analogous to that for the excerpts of text in my narrative data: I retrieved entities of multimodal data material to analyse in depth. However, in this case, the meanings and indexicalities to be analysed were spread out not only at the different levels of the text but also on those of the visual and audio material. To conclude my in-depth analysis of these elements, I revisited the overall context of the video, as I had done for the narrative interviews.

2.5 Ethical considerations

While conducting this research, my colleagues and I guaranteed confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent, while also allowing for the possibility of leaving questions unanswered or reframing them as well as giving participants an opportunity to withdraw from the entire interview at any time. We explained these principles to intermediaries and participants before conducting the interviews and introduced ourselves, the project, as well as its underlying motives.

While these fundamental ethical principles are certainly crucial in every study involving the participation of informants (Iphofen 2009), in the case of our project, which revolved around the sensitive personal and highly politicized topic of marriage and migration, these considerations were critical as well as being particularly challenging. Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz (2020) have pointed to the specific ethical pitfalls that can accompany qualitative migration studies, possibly appearing at every moment of the research process. Therefore, merely fulfilling some prescribed ethical research standard is not sufficient; the researcher needs to keep their 'ethical radar' on during all of stages of the research.

Pre-given ethical prescriptions, while providing some standard for good research practices, are often far from addressing the complex ethical issues emerging during the fieldwork. Therefore, ethical research becomes the one that is capable of evaluating each research instance from an ethical lens, reflexively responding to unexpected situations and developing a critical ethical consciousness. (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2020, 6)

Thus, as researchers working in a complex transnational and oftentimes sensitive field, such as migration studies, we need to engage in critical reflexivity, ethical thinking, (re)acting constantly and in an 'ad hoc' manner as noted by Barrero and Yalaz (2020). Clearly, this process commences from the initial stage of designing the research plan and applying for funds. However, in my view, this ability to act and react ethically becomes most pressing from the moment one 'enters the field', getting in touch with intermediaries and (possible) research participants because there is no longer time to think things through.

In the case of our project, this meant that pointing out which type of

migration through marriage we wanted to study in advance often led intermediaries and participants to make assumptions about our motives. They often thought we were looking at this type of marriage as a 'problem', and I found that they were considering this perspective almost as common sense, concluding that we probably wanted to 'do something to counter it' through our research project. Not only did we have to clear away such preconceptions among those who were sceptical in order to reach out to participants but we also had to do so among those who were not reluctant to participate. Rather, in line with the 'problem-marriage' notion, they sometimes pointed out that they themselves were exceptions (as in 'not arranged' or 'not doing it for papers'). In these cases too, to go into an interview with as clean a 'slate of presuppositions' as possible, it was important for us to clarify that we did not judge anyone's marriage or migration; we only wanted to learn about their experiences and perspectives.

But regardless of our efforts, the polarization of this topic within the public discourse demonstrated its influence, affecting the opportunities available to us to gain access to interview participants, just as it affected the narratives that actually emerged during the interviews. I soon learned that there was no way that we could work on a topic this politicized and maintain an illusion of 'research cleanliness'. Already during our initial attempts to enter this field we had encountered assumptions that our project goal was aligned to dominant stereotypic perceptions. Thus I repeatedly found myself being 'stirred' up against one or other direction of such assumptions. Voluntary participation could be ethically delicate, as reassuring people with whom I did not share dominant problematizing views on cross-border marriages could feel similar to persuading them to participate. Put briefly, I found that in the process of reaching out to recruit informants for this study, it became apparent how ethical tensions could arise between guaranteeing *informed* consent and guaranteeing *voluntary* consent when the studied topic has become so problematized, politicized, and, at the same time, strongly normalized.

In some cases, the introduction and use of recording devices during

interviews threatened to become another hurdle in this sensitive field. Together with the general ethical principles laid out above, we asked for consent to record the conversation, which in some cases did not seem to be an issue at all and in others needed some adjustment time before the device would disappear from focus. As it was, none of my interview participants refused to be recorded. However, there was one case of an informant in Kosova who withdrew her interview, which left me wondering whether she would have done so had there not been a recording. There were certainly multiple factors that led her to make this decision, but as she also asked me to explain the purpose of the recording once again the day after the interview, I am sure that the recording was one of the reasons for her withdrawal.

Here I would like to make a brief remark about recording that relates to the notion of the interview. As I had anticipated, it was not necessarily clear to people what I meant by *interview*, and they sometimes believed that what they told me would appear in the media, in the written or spoken word. Clearly, recording played a role in this perception. So one of the first things that I would explain to potential interview participants was what an 'interview' actually meant; it was not 'difficult' to answer our questions—another perception accounting for some individuals' reluctance—basically, it would be a free conversation evolving around the life and marriage of the participant, and their identity would remain protected.

I ensured that confidentiality was maintained in this PhD thesis by anonymizing the names of all interviewees as well as those of others whom I mention. There were a few exceptional cases, notably the filmmaker Martina Priessner, my friend Julia Schmid as well as several of my family members, such as my mother, Jashari-Xhemaili, and my uncle, Bejtulla Xhemaili, who are difficult to anonymize and from whom I received explicit permission not to do so.

Regarding the *how* of naming the individuals whose voices feature in this text, I came to the decision to cite them using a fictional first name as well as a fictional initial indicating a family name, as making up a full name seemed to entail too much unnecessary fiction. But alluding to a family name (even if I was aware that

having one was not a given, for instance, in the case of Tamil names) was important to me, as doing so created a certain respectful distance towards the interviewee. And this is not necessarily because of any formality in my interactions with interview partners or during the interviews, for as was frequently noted by participants and intermediaries, we generally shared a common Albanian or 'migrant' background that fostered a feeling of mutual understanding. In the case of the interviews conducted in Turkey, however, I am talking about people and the words of people whom I never even met, and in some cases, these people are considerably older than me. Although there are good reasons to create a little more formality than the use of first names would allow in this case, my main argument has a slightly different aim. While citing respondents using their first names is widely accepted in the social sciences—and there are certainly good arguments in favour of this denomination—it did not sit well with me in the context of this particular research process. Specifically, I was trying to deconstruct a little bit of the build-up of academic writing, tracing how different voices are cited in different ways and with different weights.

This division of voices and the double standard in naming occurs in relation to migration and migrants on a daily basis, for instance in reporting within the Western media. The example that often comes to my mind in this regard is a journalistic article that I read some years ago in a major Swiss newspaper on a mentoring project, in which local politicians supported refugees with regard to different 'integration' matters, such as a job search and language learning. Whereas the politicians were obviously referred to using their full names, the refugee mentees, less obviously, were referred to only by their first names. My perception of a sense of belittlement associated with this choice of introduction was reinforced by the photograph that accompanied the article, in which all the mentees (of colour) sat on chairs in front of their (white) mentor-politicians, who stood behind them.

Although a research project on a topic related to migration is not directly comparable with a journalistic article, I find that the core problem of denomination remains the same. Therefore I am somewhat critical of the practice (in migration

studies and beyond) of distinguishing the voices of those who 'deliver' their knowledge as content for us researchers to analyse from those voices whose knowledge we collect in 'expert interviews' along with those of the scholars upon whose knowledge we build our research. In referring to a respondent by their first name, we may want to emphasize that the knowledge they convey to us is *biographic*, but what I find seeping through this conception is the view that we are in the realm of *the personal* and pre-scientific here. By contrast, researchers are not only habitually mentioned by their full names (and sometimes we even find an initial in the middle like a beauty mark attached to a famous name), but the high(er) status of their knowledge actually demands an unmistakable citation. The freedom of playing around with alternative, fictional names created for the cited researcher is not even a consideration. Clearly, ethical principles, just like the naming tradition within academia, are distributed in accordance with a researcher–researched divide, with anonymity issues being irrelevant in the case of the former, while issues of author's rights and research honesty have gained ground.

Although I see the relevance and value of both of these ethical principles of research as indisputable, I find it interesting to look at them in this contrasting light: On one side we see the full names, and sometimes even just the family names of public, well-known (subject-)voices of scholars whose publicity and prestige increases every time they are mentioned. On the other side, we find the (object-)voices of those conceptualized as personal, authentic, and vulnerable, with their names remaining hidden behind a fictitious personal name for the sake of protection, which is so important. But, viewed in this contrasting light, we may also ask: Does it matter, in the end, who *in particular* lived through the narrated experience and who *in particular* narrated it and reflected on it in that specific way?

Certainly, the academic work of re-narrating and analysing that account, maybe even making it heard, deserves recognition. For this work is all the more important in a field such as migration studies, which is marked by and closely bound up in normalizing discourses of otherness. And not only does the academic voice

possess the necessary authority to do this work but it is itself not in need of the kind of protective anonymization, as the voices of those appearing as informants often are. For the academic voice stands not as a vulnerable, futile, and at times shaky voice but as a solid structure of text that is well founded on an entire complex of other texts. As such, it can give shelter to that other(ed), *human* voice, citing its authentic grassroots experience, marking it off, as well as sheltering it (and freezing it?), as I too will do in the coming analysis, placing it within those little indented blocks and in smaller font size:

Creating an excerpt of something resembling the real world. But the repetition of this binary composition of voices, migrant experiencer and non-migrant analyst results in something resembling a border. And suddenly it marks off, unintentionally maybe but essentializingly, one particular group of voices and bodies on this side of that bordered boundary.

And another, just as particular, group of voices and bodies stands on that side of the same bordered boundary.

This is just one way of thinking about the effects of denominating and writing voices in our research field. And it does not lever out established and important ethical norms, especially and crucially because the division of voices within academic knowledge production remains; no matter how I choose to name and cite people, there are those voices and words and oftentimes also languages that we look at as data. Therefore, we cannot avoid objectifying them to some degree and those we deal with as authorial, ascribing to them analytical capacities — and here we include our own voice, that of the ‘researcher’, who unites authorship and authority. But as somebody who is still unaccustomed to participating in scientific migration discourses *and* as somebody positioned within the studied ‘group’, I am experiencing the at times painful contradictions that come with having ‘joined the table’ while still being ‘on the menu’, as Sirma Bilge puts it (2020).

That pain can emanate from the realization that it is completely banal, whether I call somebody by their first name, writing, ‘. . . as *Shpresa* mentions in the beginning of her narrative, her father had moved from Macedonia to Switzerland as a *saisonnier* initially, later bringing her mother and her along through family

unification . . . or whether I say '*. . . as Shpresa J. mentions . . .*' or '*as Ramize mentions . . .*' or '*as Ramize T. mentions . . .*', Shpresa can never produce anything but a mere stream of data here as long as she is sharing her knowledge that comes from her own so-called migratory experience. This is so even if she has some reflection or other to offer along with it; even if those reflections may be interesting, inspiring, or in any other way serviceable to me as a researcher. Her voice remains one of many; her name, as a specific name, exchangeable. It is only as a researcher, that she, now named as Shpresa Jashari, may be able to carry her voice across that boundary, which distinguishes the researched from the researching. But, even if she does manage to do so, the order of things in migration research will not be touched by that one act. The boundary remains intact, and many more voices like hers but different, remain on the other side of it, kept in place as first hand, second generation, third country, third world and whatnot kinds of 'raw data'.

Putting down my name like this, as an example of those *other(-ed)* migrant voices, comes with a surge of uneasiness. And I am pointing this out because I take this sensation as feeding into the process of ethical reflexion that Richard and Evren mention – that is: Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz (2020), to stick to the norm. For emotions, those of the researched as well as the researching, tell us a lot about the structure of the power architecture in which we do our research, as my colleague and friend Faten – and I happily cite her as Khazaei (2019) – has argued:

If the emotions can reveal what words and institutional frameworks silence, it is not only helpful for the analysis but also the responsibility of an ethnographer, in relation to her interlocutors, to adequately convey their experiences and emotions in her final report (Khazaei 2019, 42)

Hence I believe that the writing process, as the particular way in which we do and do not, in which we can and cannot put our (and not our) words together in a scientific text is very much part of the analytical process. So in my view, the continuing 'ad hoc' ethical activity that Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz (2020) call for translates into the writing process as well, which is also part of the analytical process.

In the following chapter, I will briefly outline how I analysed 'my' data and then sketch out some of the epistemological ramifications of this decision to tap into such meta-reflexive voices associated with my personal position. I hope to show that 'mixing it up a bit' when it comes to the rules of academic genre can indeed be beneficial for research and not just perturbing.

Admittedly, though, I would not mind a little bit of perturbation. For in the end, the meta-reflexive 'rabbit holes' through which these voices have continued to delve into the body of this text seem to aim at just that. They try and push through or somehow destabilize that bordered boundary between the researched and the researching so as not to leave the voices of 'the migrant respondents' cut off on its far side (where I myself am still at home). Drilling some holes into the academic text here and there might allow for a breath of fresh air and, most importantly, for more comfortable future comings and goings across that boundary. Furthermore, researchers' biographic experiences can provide some valuable coordinates as to where one could look for answers and, more importantly, questions.

But before going on to describe and further argue for this criss-crossing of boundaries of genre and voice, I would like to introduce one of these personal, autobiographical or meta-reflexive voices. Being in favour of securing some order and most of all reader-friendliness, I will demarcate these meta-reflexive textual elements using a smaller, cursive font.

2.6 Positionality and writing: *Going down the rabbit hole*

Dissection of the tongue

Neither do I remember exactly how old I was—it must have been sometime during the fifth or sixth grade—nor the name of the institution that had sent out for me to answer those questions. But I do have a vivid memory of many other details surrounding that encounter, my first of the kind, with a Swiss authority seizing me as their object of interest in my capacity as ‘Albanian’, ‘migrant’, ‘2nd generation migrant’, ‘foreigner’ and so on. And although I could not, and still cannot, imagine that they would have neglected this in a place as orderly and professional as Switzerland, I don’t remember having been asked for my consent to that questioning or prepared for it in some other way.

Because what I do recall strongly is my surprise when one afternoon, right after the school bell rang, my teacher asked me to stay a little bit longer, for a lady had come who wanted to talk to me. Already she stood there in the doorway, wearing a necklace that I vaguely remember, for it struck me as absurdly big and strange with its giant beads made from a mash of wool or felt or something. And while she was smiling her way across the classroom towards me, the other children trotted out, gawking at us and whispering, leaving me behind with the two adults. After some explanations (apparently the woman wanted to find out more about my ‘mother tongue’) and some further smiles, the teacher left too or retreated behind his desk, I don’t recall anymore.

And the nice lady, after offering me a chair (that of Rolf, who picked his nose all the time) and sitting down next to me (at Heini’s spot) started her interview in the now empty classroom. She had brought with her a piece of paper, and printed on it were some official looking signs and letterings as well as, I supposed, the questions she was going to ask me. As she directed them at me with a serenity and warmth, which I was aware was meant to make me feel safe, there was nothing left for me to do but give her my answers, as good and truthful as possible. But the feeling of confusion and of something else, something harder to grasp, lingered. How come I was the only one in class she wanted to see? Was there something wrong with me? Had I done something wrong? What would happen if I gave a bad answer?

But she was the one asking the questions, of which I remember only two, because they still echoed in my head long after she spoke them out to me; long enough to become

the subject of deliberation in this text. She asked me: "In which language do you think?" And also: "In which language do you dream?"

She gazed at me attentively, expectantly, smiling her compassionate smile. And I answered. Or rather, I tried to answer, as I had never thought about such a thing. But she had. And there she was, I am thinking—that former I from my schooldays mingling with the linguist and social scientist I quite hesitantly am today—as I go back to that little scene like I have done many times by now. Here was this person, to whom it seemed to come all naturally, claiming access to the most intimate, hidden areas of my inner life: my mind, even my dreams. So well hidden indeed, that I myself had been blind to the apparent conspicuousness of my inner language, to the fact that it was . . . what? Not whole, not wholesome, but parted in two? I had, of course, long gotten used to the fact that some of my classmates, teachers, and certain people in the village I grew up to be a foreigner in would look at me and, from the outside, see a child who was out of place, suspicious, or pitiful even. These were the feelings some of their gazes—at least enough of them—left me with, most of which caught my body and more so the bodies of my family members, as direct, unhidden and thus rightful gazes. But now this strange gaze somehow turned around and opened up on myself, from my very inside, unsettling me.

To my interviewer, however, all of this seemed to be routine and quite obvious; the asking of questions as well as the reasons for asking them. And because I did not want to admit to her that it had never occurred to me to question the workings of my own mind, I tried to speak my answers with a great deal of certainty and confidence in an attempt to re-establish myself as the expert over myself. At least, this is how I interpret my memory of these fleeting, all in all insignificant minutes, having found, over the years, some words to describe that inenarrable feeling that had taken a hold of me that day, steering my voice, hiding my surprise and my shame. Basically, at any time, some representative from some important institution could approach you in a most natural manner, casually waving an official document at you and asking you all kinds of questions. And with the self-confidence of the professional, of the researcher, they can shake you up and show you how little authority you have over yourself.

I remember hurrying home that late afternoon in a haze of confusion and with embarrassment stirring inside of me, while I kept trying to listen to the thoughts in my head. What was their language? Were there really two separate languages instead of my one

language, my one voice, developing my thoughts and creating my world, as I'd always felt it was? Apparently quite naively so. Were they still my own thoughts, even if I produced them in German? (A language that now seemed to belong to that woman, and to people like her. But not to me). Was she going to determine which one of my languages was my mother tongue? Would she find that my mother and my tongue had been separated? And how was it possible that my thoughts and dreams were built out of a thing as prehensile as a language apparently was? A thing therefore, that some felt-necklaced expert can check in a box or take a note of. A thing – literally an object – that she could slide into her briefcase to take away with her to a place unknown and inaccessible to me.

As you might have guessed, what I want to do by bringing in the above piece of autobiographic text and other meta-reflexive pre- and interludes like it, is to open a parenthesis and with it a different kind of space inside this PhD thesis. For I hope that bringing in a variety of writing-voices will allow me to reflect on the writing process and on the analytical process itself. This is because that process has a part to play in how knowledge is produced within academia and in how academia produces its particular subjects, namely academics, researchers, scholars, and experts. How are those subjectivities formatted through academic activities and writing? What are the formal and informal conditions of becoming an academic subject and whom do they possibly exclude? Which kinds of knowledge and voices appear in academic texts, in which forms, and with what functions? Are there any givens in the migration research apparatus that tend to fixate us either to the subject-position of researcher or that of migrant? And what role does biographic experience and emotion play in the process of 'becoming' an academic (writer)?

Questions like these ones arose every now and again throughout my process of entering into and engaging with the field of migration research, but I did not really address them let alone see them as part of 'the research' for a long time. They remained an uneasy background noise. It was only once I sat down to 'write up' my research that they became simply impossible to ignore. For now, I had to write, and academically so. In the particular case of my project, this meant writing a thesis in

the field of migration studies—something I had wanted to do for years—while in many ways continuing to ‘be’ one such ‘migrant’. To be able to get that writing done now, I had to take seriously at least some of those questions.

And this is where ‘dissection of the tongue’ comes in, as a parenthesis opening up the biographical space between these two relevant subjectivities or positionalities. The first is the position of ‘researched migrant’ in which I found myself on that day in primary school and the second is the position of somebody researching migration, which I am trying to assume today, together with some form of academic authorship. But how does this swapping of positions work? Is it even possible, or necessary, to leave one position and move to the other? And again, what is that, really, an academic voice and from where does it draw its undeniable authority?

I hope that I will be able to explore these questions by using a multiplicity of voices in this text, and thus trace how the boundary between what one might consider scientific, and what not so much (scientific), is constructed. And while luckily there are by now many authors within feminist, queer and postcolonial studies who have paved the way for such an enterprise of reflecting on research epistemologies (Abu Lughod 1991; Ahmed 2007; Bhaba 2004; Bilge 2020; Ghorashi 2005, 2014; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Haraway 1988; Harding 1991; Lorde 2007), in this text I prioritize an empirical approach. Hence, I will develop my arguments through meta-reflexive writing and less so by conducting an encompassing foray into the respective body of literature. This is by no means unproblematic; in fact, it continues to bother me even as I have taken that decision, for certainly this literature deserves to be given the same space and acknowledgement as border studies and sociolinguistic works on migration in this PhD thesis.

However, in the end, it is not just a question of resources of time but also a matter of staying true to the way the writing process actually developed. I only discovered that literature quite late (and continue to do so). And even then, the ‘field’ did not ‘open up’ as such; rather, slowly, patch by patch, I found one text

through an erratic online search or got some other recommendations made by some much better-informed friend and colleague.

So, unlike what the above discussion of this form of multi-voiced writing may suggest, in the end the decision to do things in this often felt to be 'disorderly' manner was not the conscious and carefully thought through result of ethical or epistemological considerations. Initially, it was something that just happened, as I sat at my desk, trying to write. Nor was it primarily based on my—very much existing—desire to go with a somewhat creative and rhizomatic approach (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) rather than a more traditional hierarchical tree- or body-structure, as is taught, for instance, in academic writing courses. Even if such classes have been very useful in helping me to structure my thoughts and learn about what is expected from scholars today, they did not help me solve my main writing issue. Neither did the writing retreat that I had the privilege of participating in, as I succeeded only in retreating from rather than doing writing. As I came to realize only later on, what I experienced was another very privileged situation, namely a form of 'writers block'.

This is not the place to get into the particularities of this realization, but I would like to point out that the related writing difficulties had to do with my ideas of 'scientificity'. These notions of what an academic text and academic writing was and was not had for the most part not been explicitly taught to me. Instead, they seemed to have seeped in somehow *en passant*. And I felt that those ideas were not compatible with my writing, for I was not able to assume or hold the speaking position of an 'academic voice'. As far as I could make out, that position was from somewhere above "'the field', entering it like the 'off'-voice in a documentary.

What I observed during these moments when my voice would fail to take up this particular tone (that I thought of as academic) was that I would either fall silent or fall 'back' into what I started to call my 'other writing'. Or sometimes, it happened the other way around; I would write in 'my' way and then fall silent because I felt that this kind of writing had no place in an academic text. And this silencing effect, as

pointed out above, has a lot to do with the particular positionalities on all sides that are at play in the study of migration.

Furthermore, the following paralleled positionalities stand out. The binary of 'researched migrant' and 'non-migrant researcher' finds an approximate counterpart in the dichotomic legal categories of 'unskilled migrant' and 'highly skilled mobile', which is not only linked to differing mobility rights but also to the demand for, respectively the dispensation from mandatory integration and language requirements. While this parallel alone might not qualify for its inclusion in the reflexions of the thesis, the fact that it can be seen as a line of continuation may do so. Tracing that line would mean starting at the moment when people attempt to cross the national border, going over to the actual legal and geographical crossing, and then to the various moments in which they try to cross the respective boundaries associated with it too, continuing to uphold a division between "them" and "us" (learning to express oneself in dominant languages and registers is part of this socio-economic and -symbolic crossing).

I hope to close the parenthesis opened up at the beginning of this chapter in the concluding chapter, tracing this line through the text of the thesis by including some writing that departs right from where I stand, thereby exploring and making use of that standpoint (Haraway 1988). For along with other educational institutions in Western countries of migration, and somehow I forgot about this fact once I held my PhD contract in hand, the gates of academia too have a part in upholding that bordered boundary. This is why I decided to retain at least some of the many 'meta-reflexive rabbit holes', as I came to call these interludes in my PhD text, further encouraged to do so by my thesis supervisor, Janine Dahinden.

And finally, with 'language' playing a 'key' role in my analysis, it remains to be noted that of course the fact that all of these voices are expressed in English is not accidental. Rather, English provided a possibility (at first unconsciously) to evade the linguistic dualism (between German and Albanian) that has accompanied my

educational and general upbringing. For once, I could take a U-turn around the German postulate.

Though I am not blind to the fact that English too shares such a postulate, in my case it was somehow more welcoming. This has a lot to do with my fondness for a particular strand of contemporary essayistic and novel writing, largely published in English, which treats, among other issues, transnational life worlds and the contradictions opening up between nationalizing notions of belonging and the complex realities of mobile individuals who 'trespass' this order. While only two of the respective authors (Jhumpa Lahiri and Ocean Vuong, joined by Virginia Woolf from another time but not an entirely different direction) appear in my text, all of this literature allowed me to find some version of 'my own voice' within the English language, with the genre of 'fiction' somehow having a liberating effect on me. And this I mean, very pragmatically, effected through a rite of passage into writing. Because of my previously mentioned writing trouble, I would often start my work day feeling nervous and reading a beautifully crafted novel while having a cup of coffee, which not only brought down my stress levels but also provided a gentle segue into writing.

PART II

BEFORE THE TEST

3 Encountering language as border

3.1 Appropriating Prishtina: The hierarchy between private and professional

I step into the café-restaurant 'old house' in Prishtina's city centre, feeling buoyant. It is one of the city's countless stylish places, marking itself off from its competition through a fusion of the building's preserved wood and stone structure and the smooth elegance of modern furniture and décor, nurturing the urban clientele's nascent village-nostalgia.

Doruntina, an acquaintance I had made through a mutual friend when visiting a conference a few years earlier, and I had agreed to meet up there for dinner. Actually, I had been the one to suggest this restaurant, instantly feeling slightly embarrassed about the casual tone in my voice. It seemed to convey mimicry that probably only I was aware of, and maybe only became aware of once I heard the words coming out of my mouth: they did not sound as casual and natural as I had intended. Still in the course of phrasing them, I realized they were the words of a host, which I clearly was not in this case. And not only was it not my place to take over the role of host but I also did not know if the restaurant I proposed was a place Doruntina would normally go to, a place she liked, or that was in her budget range. While I knew she had a steady income as a high school maths and physics teacher, I did not take her to be part of the city's upper-middle-class coffeehouse and bar-hopping crowd. But even without considering any of these more practical objections, my taking over the arrangement of our meeting felt wrong.

However stupid that little slip-up was, it brought into the open what I had been doing ever since I – that is the researcher – arrived in Prishtina, taking the lead in organizing my interview dates. As I had been suggesting meeting points and cafes for the interviews, I had been taking charge of the situation, and in doing so, I had assumed the role of host, enacting the habitus of the person in charge, the local person in some sense. Now with Doruntina, as we were meeting up under normal

everyday circumstances as private people, that hierarchical position of the researcher/interviewer that, after some time of adjustment, I had come to inhabit quite naturally vis-à-vis my interview partners suddenly became apparent. That position did not seem to be fully appropriate for me to assume now; hence the irritation.

But had it ever been appropriate? With the people I met for interviews, that position had been legitimized by my role: I wanted something from them, so I had to be the one to arrange for everything. There was nothing conniving about that; it was simply a practical matter. And yet, when I think about it now, it seems to me to be something miraculous: the authority a 'function', a 'job', or a 'position' confers to a person, bringing about a change in the social relationships and dynamics between them and the surrounding world. And that is the case, disregarding of their, my, newness or foreignness in that place as well as role. My position as an interviewer and my affiliation with this Swiss university had provided me with the legitimation to roam around Prishtina as if I belonged; to take charge of things; to take the lead in my encounters with the local residents who met with me to answer my questions. And therefore I had in a way taken over their home place. Of course, one can argue that it is perfectly reasonable to perform such a takeover because performing 'being in charge' is part of the job. I had to search for a locality where there was not too much noise, no cigarette smoke if possible, and a table that was a little bit secluded in order to secure some privacy. And so it happened that I somehow made myself at home at the coffee places where I met my interviewees, as I spent a fair amount of time there, and their owners and the people working there knew me and supported my project and my role as host.

This situation, of course, did not differ fundamentally from the organizational requirements of my interviews in Switzerland. But the takeover had felt distinctly different there. Taking over the role of the host in an unfamiliar coffee place in the neighbouring canton of Aargau appeared to be less of a stretch in terms of

assuming the role of the host than doing the same thing in a different country; one located beyond the hierarchized European border.

But now with Doruntina, the professional host role was misplaced, and so the familiar feeling of being a foreign visitor in this city I had felt so attracted to since I visited it for the first time in my early twenties had returned. And that meant awkwardly claiming to belong to this city, to know my way around it, and enact moving through it with self-assured, casual movements. What I had attempted to do during those visits was somehow to mimic being a part of this place, a performance of 'at-homeness', which had been facilitated by my newly acquired role as a researcher. And so today I landed in that act with much less effort than I did during earlier visits: walking through streets that have become familiar, meeting, every now and then, somebody I know, and right now going out to meet a friend. But did my relationship with Doruntina really support the friend label? Considering the cordial, welcoming way in which she and her family had treated me from the first time we met, yes, indeed, even though I felt that I had done nothing to deserve their embrace and attention. In fact, this thought made me think of the way some of my relatives in Macedonia would confer the uncomfortable status of guest of honour on me and my family when we visited them in their well-tended homes in villages with dusty, then still unsealed roads. Afterwards, when I would climb into my parents' car, it looked too big, too glossy, too new. Although Doruntina's kindness towards me, and the rose her mother cut from their garden as a goodbye gift the last time I had met her, or the hand-knit scarf she had given to me almost furtively did not have anything to do with that Swiss premium privilege I 'enjoyed' when I was in my parent's home country, this friendship nevertheless felt just as . . . undeserved. Or maybe I am just being too complicatedly Swiss, framing simple, hospitable, friendly gestures in this light.

But there was more to my desire to call Doruntina a friend—in Prishtina. Kosova's little capital, which even before I had visited it or seen any pictures of it, had occupied a large and special place in my imaginary. Silently, fed by the

anecdotes of my youngest maternal uncle of his student days there during communist times, it had grown into some sort of a promised land in my child's mind. Uncle Bejtulla, who lived with my family during our early years in rural Switzerland, and whom we called uncle Bedush, had through his stories about Prishtina come to mark that place for me with my fondness for him and everything that I associated with him. These associations had to do with his love for rock music, the jocular way in which he liked to question social morality and religious norms, the fact that he read the newspaper, the genuine interest in and time he took out for us children. Prishtina, in his stories, was a place of freedom, intercultural friendship, cosmopolitanism, and persistent smoking. There were universities, parties, and heated discussions about politics, exchange-students from China, and other communists. And while in all of this Prishtina may not have been in the least bit more spectacular than any other city in the world, this city had held my cool uncle, just as it generally held . . . well, cool Albanians.

Uncle Bedush's studies, like those of many young people from all over the former Yugoslavia, had been interrupted by the onset of the political tensions that followed at least since the death of Tito, and so he had eventually joined my parents and the other non-university-educated members of our family, 'guest working' in the salad fields and construction sites of Europe.

But these political realities did nothing to tarnish my image of Prishtina. Over the years, the idea of Prishtina continued to grow into an Albanian utopia in my mind, with 'Albanian' being silent—a self-evident, normal Albanianness that needed no pride to uphold its value. It continued to be a place where one could be Albanian and love rock; where one could be Albanian and be part of an intellectual or creative elite; where one could be Albanian and antinationalist—all things that seemed to be mutually exclusive in the place where I lived. Here, in my little 'Swiss miniature diasporic world', being Albanian seemed inherently incompatible with all of these things—with almost anything really—but some version of harvesting salad, criminally assaulting the local population, or becoming somebody's oppressed wife.

And as these stereotypes grew into the cast-iron Albanian ensemble that figured in every public debate about 'us' during the years of my adolescence, my search for a place where I could be Albanian differently, alternatively, only became more pressing. My search, as much I could tell, was one for an Albanian world that was part of the regular world, for Albanian friends and an Albanian self-confidence that was not tied to ethnic or national classification but rather carried its Albanianess as casually as the Swiss, English, or Swedish carried their national or ethnic belonging—as one among many. But this should become a practically impossible endeavour for somebody in my position—that it was a classed position, in particular, was something I could not fully grasp then. And by the time I started university in Zurich, it had become something like a Swiss national neurosis to point out people's Albanianess as well as any other form of culturalizing or racializing foreignness for that matter. The prospective imaginaries of a future as an Albanian designed in such a way were, of course, not very promising for the young people of my generation, and so many of us searched for a different model. Among the excessively celebrated few of us who made it to university, there was, for instance, a group that sought delight and self-empowerment through the excavation of nineteenth century Albanian national renaissance literature. But I had no wish to join them for anti-nationalist reasons and because of various insecurities standing in the way between me and these other, undoubtedly more Albanian Albanians. What I continued to project myself into was o a place where these kinds of boundaries were ineffective, neutralized. And Prishtina, still fresh and sparkly in my mind, despite the war, seemed to accommodate such a life.

And so I finally went to my utopic Prishtina when the chance arrived somewhat ironically in the form of one of my Swiss friends attending a summer school there. That was during the time when Kosova had declared independence before 2008. As her summer school coincided with my family's annual summer holiday in Macedonia, I was able to join her for a few days – more was not in it for

me during that time; the liberties of being able to travel the world that she enjoyed were still well beyond my reach.

But this brief first visit was to become one of many to come in the following years. During this time, Prishtina, which in 2015 had a population of which more than half was under the age of twenty-five years,⁴ increasingly came to assume the appearance of the place I had been dreaming of as a child – minus the communists maybe. For instance, a lively artistic and club scene, activist groups fighting for feminist and LGBTQ causes, and even a satirical political party – all of which I was still not part of despite the warm social networks I had developed – came into being. Of course, I was to remain an outsider; my life was not in Prishtina. I was a Macedonian Albanian, and a rural one at that, as well as a ‘shaci’ (‘darling’, derived from the German ‘Schatzis’), as the locals in Kosova teasingly or mockingly call the diaspora.

But my research stay in Prishtina, those three short weeks, held the promise—although I was not aware of it at first—of indulging for a while in my adolescent dream of being part of this utopian city scape and getting a taste of the unmarked sense of Albanianness that its inhabitants seemed to exude. With Doruntina on the phone, the very real Doruntina, and my dissonant host’s voice reaching over to her inappropriately, I was roused abruptly from this dream.

Now, stepping through the wooden door panels of the ‘old house’, I shake off these nagging thoughts about the past, power, and belonging to places. I am really looking forward to spending this evening with Doruntina, whether I am to see her as a friend or as an acquaintance, a host or a guest. After four days of a scheduled existence composed of interview appointments, bus and taxi rides, and one-woman meals in restaurants or the mostly empty hotel lobby, I am grateful to be able to meet up with somebody in a non-work-related way, to have a chat and unwind a bit.

⁴ <http://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/social/population-and-housing-census>

But once more, this conceptual separation of the professional and the personal does not bear up against the intricacies of 'real' life. At first glance, she detects what by now is impossible to overlook, my pregnancy. And after we have discussed the salient points of this novelty briefly, she tells me with a happy laugh that she too has news: she is engaged! To somebody living in the UK.

And there it is! The detail that makes all the difference; that is, since I started working for this research project on cross-border marriages. I lean in a bit closer. Within seconds, I find myself unexpectedly immersed in another story of a budding cross-border couple relationship, feeling the inevitable interviewer mode of listening kick in. A brief rush of excitement surges through me as the particular type of biographical situation that I need, initially so hard to find, suddenly comes jumping right at me! And here I go again, trying to grasp every relevant detail, to preselect the information, to collect all the bits that later would be needed for a coherent interpretation, to keep the overview, to not get lost in the other person's stream of words, to leave them as much space as possible in the beginning. But as time goes by, I try to lead them, subtly or directly, towards our and/or my points of interest in their lives. And as I again take on a vigilant pose, a focused and refrained mode of listening and conversing that by now I have developed as a qualitative interviewer, I start to hold back on many of my spontaneous reactions and judgements. What unfolds is the enactment of the role of an interested, sympathetic but somehow uninvolved person, somebody outside of the narrative of the opposite person—which is also not the other person's narrative but rather a narrative of theirs that is spun in between the two of us as we are in that particular situation. Sometimes, when I set up the recording device between the person sitting opposite and me, the thought crosses my mind that I am—as inconspicuously as possible—attaching a machine to my body to prolong its abilities. Equipped with an extremely heightened sense of hearing and memory, I become an extreme, bionic listener. Now, sitting across the table from Doruntina sharing her transnational relationship news with me, I instantaneously switch to that listener role, feeling the absence of my technological

extension (I need to make her repeat it into the recorder!). By now Doruntina, friend-acquaintance-host, has involuntarily become my interviewee.

As she starts to tell me about how a work colleague had first told her about the man who is now her fiancé, I not only feel my listener-perspective shift, but I also witness her living, tender narrative of the exciting changes and newly growing fears spanning her life and her future plans turn into raw data, as my research-interest steers my attention, making her experience into part of a 'field'. To plough through with my necessarily restricted and at the same time necessarily too sharp research instruments: the questions and categories with which we, as researchers, address people's lives and experiences, cutting out the bits and pieces we need and bringing them into a scientifically digestible size and order. In doing so, I am also cutting myself off from the life on the other side of the table in order to harvest as much of their narrative as possible—an exaggeration, of course as well as an illusion— but nonetheless an effect of switching roles from a private listener into a professional one. And more than that, it is a role switch that has ramifications for the narrator, who is positioned on the other side of that boundary, ascribed and bounded to the 'private' (unless of course, they are considered an expert, for which social sciences have come up with a separate interview concept). This division of labour between the researcher and researched, however much discussed, criticized, and declared unsustainable and yet inescapable (for instance by feminists: Harding 1991 and Haraway 1988 or more recently Ghorashi 2014), still appears to be unharmed. Thus, it continues to serve as a general basis for research conduction—an institutional, methodological, and identificational condition for the work of research. And even I, a not very disciplined interdisciplinary researcher, feel effects of this separation of roles, acutely conscious at this moment of crossing the boundary between acquaintance and researcher. So I give in to it, reluctantly, asking Doruntina to tell me her story sometime and be part of my project. She agrees, friendly as always, and we resume the evening as friends, finally getting to choose one of the updated interpretations of traditional Kosovar dishes from the menu.

3.2 Border regime as language-testing regime

It is two weeks and two such private, normal meetings later that we meet up for the purpose of the interview over mushroom soup and salad at another restaurant to which I bring my listening and memorizing device. There we have that conversation known as a narrative interview. Zigzagging across the boundary between friend and researcher, I recollect Doruntina's words from my plough's furrows. She, astonishingly immune to the change in the conversation mode and impassive vis-à-vis the hybrid recorder-researcher-me, generously and humorously confides to me (not the recorder) her story in detail before heading to her afternoons physics class with her eighth-graders.

And today, back at some library in Switzerland, long after Doruntina got married, moved to London, and gave birth to her first child, I appropriate these words in order to *understand*. And the text into which I understand them begins with the following summary of a reluctant love story, suddenly interrupted by a different issue: *the border as language*.

At first, Doruntina put her old college friend and work colleague off when she offered to connect her with this man because it felt absurd to her to be set up like this with a stranger. But then, intrigued by the fact that the stranger had studied literature and theatre and was described as being very similar to her, she changed her mind and agreed to let her friend give him her number the second time she spoke about him. Thus, slowly, over a span of two years, she got to know him, mainly through texting and phone calls, sometimes receiving little gifts by mail, such as a pair of gloves that he sent by mail across the continent. At the time of the interview, he was forty-two years old and had spent almost half of his life in London, where he had gone as a refugee when what had been termed 'political unrest' in Kosova turned into a war in the late nineties. In the new country, his educational qualifications were not recognized, so he studied electrical installation, a field in which he currently works. He still loves literature more than anything else, and they

discuss it often, although she claims to be more inclined towards reason, rationality and numbers, as she told me, laughing. She takes pleasure in joking with him about the fact that he will be more in charge of the literary-musical education of their children, whereas she will teach them maths and a pragmatic approach to life. While most of her narrative evolves evenly (apart from an extended anecdote every now and then that nourishes the story with important little details, such as those mentioned here), there is one moment that stands out in her entire narrative that solidifies and thematically lingers for the remainder of the conversation. It centres on the language test, introduced along with more restrictive UK immigration policies in 2011, which she had to take to apply for a spousal visa to join her partner permanently in the UK. According to Rule 281(i)(b)(ii), she, like every applicant between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five years, had to prove that she had ‘sufficient knowledge of the English language and sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom’ (Home Office 2012: 238). So now, in addition to the language and integration component of the *Life in the UK* test, which spouses from third countries are required to pass two years after their arrival in the UK, they also have to show basic English skills *prior* to their arrival (level A1, which focuses only on listening and speaking in contrast to comparable regulations in Germany and Austria, for instance, where writing skills are also tested).

I was somewhat surprised to learn about the level of anxiety that Doruntina experienced during this test—with her master’s degree in engineering and her job as a high school teacher, she had plenty of practice with learning and test situations. She compared this test to a *military regime*, describing the process of taking the test as ‘unusually stressful and a very big pressure’. She stated that ‘the whole education I have completed in Kosova, I have not felt the [kind of] stress that I had on that one single day in Tirana’. What followed was a detailed account of what she experienced, during which she explained how she came to choose this strong metaphor. I found her account striking, as it dealt with a requirement quite different from what I had heard about in the approximately two years since our research

project had started. There was not only a difference in the particular quality of the language requirement as compared to the wide range of other legal requirements, such as the civil marriage of the spouses, 'adequate' accommodation, the ability to financially maintain themselves without assistance from public funds (paragraphs 281–282 of the UK immigration rules) but also in the very encompassing type of power that it executes over people. What I had thought from afar, when hearing occasionally about the 'language requirement' during those years, and what I heard here from the perspective of somebody who had been touched by it were two very different things. Having studied the particularities of this form of border regime, I now realize that the oddly inattentive, unsuspecting kind of gaze that I had previously met this phenomenon with should be seen as part of the functioning and productivity of this legal instrument. It is based on and reproduces an everyday ideology about the interrelation between language and so called migrant integration, producing many shades of legitimate and illegitimate as well as legal and illegal members of the nation. The normalizing and naturalizing view on this interrelation, which I had largely internalized, is central to the power of this ideology.

But I had left the normality of the pre-departure language requirement unquestioned for a long time, and it had not featured in our research so far. This is because during the first phase of our project, we had conducted interviews in Switzerland, where pre-entry language skills for spouses were not required (at least until 2019). And while preparing for my research stay in Kosova, I had viewed language institutes mainly as entry points for finding interview partners. Also I had made rigorous preparations for my research stay in advance in order to manage this relatively short time frame as effectively as possible. These pre-arrangements made with the vast majority of interview contacts revealed that by 'chance', nine of them were planning to move to a country requiring a pre-departure language certificate (seven to Germany and one each to the UK and Denmark). As mentioned above, it was only during our research stay in Turkey and Sri Lanka, that we sought access to participants principally through the Goethe Institute and the British Council as well

as some other private schools. However, at the time, we chose this recruitment strategy not because we had decided to focus our analysis on this topic but rather for practical reasons of access, as we were lacking the dense social network that I had in Kosova in these countries. When I realized later that it was in fact this type of border regime, conjoining school desks and language testing with embassy counters and passport control, that I wanted to look at more closely, this methodological contingency came in very conveniently.

3.3 A first glance at the test: '*Not even a military regime...*'

During my first meeting with Doruntina I had only gotten a glimpse into the vast and complex apparatus of European language-based border regimes and was eager to learn more by conducting an actual interview with her. Initially, no matter how much interest I took in the phenomenon, I was still somewhat held back by the fact that hers was a very particular case that was not in alignment with the types of marriages we had set out to study, namely marriages between individuals legally categorized as third country citizens to those who had grown up in a European country. Clearly, Doruntina's case was different, as her partner had gone to the UK as an adult. Also, in terms of the typical candidates taking the pre-departure language test, she is an unusual example in so far as she chose to take her test one level higher than that required for the so called *Life Skills* test, which tests only speaking and listening skills. She took the *IELTS (International English Language Testing System) General Training Test for UKVI* (UK visas and immigration), which like *Life Skills*, is a Home Office-approved secure English language test, in order to have more possibilities to find a job or study. This test is also at the A1– A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), but it also assesses reading and writing skills.

Regarding the first deviance of Doruntina's case from the majority of the data, it soon became apparent that from the perspective of individuals on the outgoing side of the transnational marriage and migration procedure, the question whether the partner was born in the European country or whether they went there at the age of fourteen years, or even as an adult, was not generally a preoccupation for them. This situation applied even more to visa applicants, who are required to pass a pre-departure language test and whose lives are put on hold for at least three months. In order to overcome this test hurdle, everything else is delayed for most people up to the time when they are finally with their partners. When it comes to the experience of the 'pre-integrative language testing' regime, the particular level of the partner's membership of the receiving country only represents a significant

dividing line in as far as their residency status is concerned but does not affect any of the 'softer' aspects that define 'belonging'.

The second deviance, namely the fact that Doruntina took the test at a higher than required level, does not, in my view, count as a reason for excluding her case, not just because it propelled the direction that my research project took but, most importantly, because of the exceptional insight provided by its accidental discovery. It is very rare to find such interview partners who have already, and very recently, taken the test in the countries of origin. They will usually have already left the country, or, having failed the test, be even harder to win over for an interview, considering their heightened sense of the precariousness of their situations. Consequently Doruntina's case can very well serve as a valuable entry point for exploring the issue of European pre-departure language-testing regimes, providing that the necessary differentiations relating to the UK are clarified in the respective chapters.

So, what was it that had stressed Doruntina so much regarding this test situation? Where had the huge pressure and anxiety come from? In the following citation from my formal interview with Doruntina, she describes her experience of the IELTS test that she took at the British Council in Tirana. She had to take the exam in the Albanian capital, where it is conducted by the British Council at least two times a month, because in Prishtina, it is only held once every three months and is therefore booked up months in advance. She was aware of her privilege of having the money to enable her to save (waiting) time by travelling to Albania, spending the night in a hotel room before the test, which began early in the morning, and taking the test there. And she pointed out that the drive there from Prishtina before the test, which most people have to make, would have caused additional stress given the risk of arriving tired from the journey or even late. Doruntina had been positive that she was one of the candidates most likely to pass the test, for which she was very well prepared, having studied for months in advance. She had had a good night's sleep at the hotel and had felt ready. But once she arrived at the test

centre, this anxiety started to grab a hold of her; an anxiety springing up from the high-level security measures that she repeatedly compared with a military regime. In her narrative, Doruntina described the testing procedure in detail, including these security measures and the effects they had on her, providing a close-up look at what concretely defines a Secure English Language Test (SELT):

Doruntina: So on that day it was: "Welcome to our test." [Continues in English] "And please turn off the phone." [Back to Albanian] We turned off the phones. And in the moment when they called out our names— Doruntina Hasani—we had to go and hand in our bag, our coat. They put numbers on them so they wouldn't get them confused. And they said: "Just a bottle of water, a transparent one, you can take with you. Nothing else". . . .

So now after we left these things there, they told us in which room we would be for the test. And we went there. Before we stepped into the room, there was . . . One [of them] sat there at a table in the corridor with a laptop. She told me: "Take off the glasses, take off the earrings." [This was] so that she could catch all of your facial traits. I thought that was because of manipulation. Maybe they have had such experiences before. So I removed the earrings and the glasses. They took photos. And again, when we stepped into the room, there were two of them, who told us that mobile phones and writing pads are prohibited, even though it was impossible to have writing pads or mobile phones with us because we had handed in everything at the cloakroom.

And then she says: "Please, put your passport on the table and leave it there lying open at all times" [during the entire duration of the test]. And when we went to take a seat, we found that they had been previously set out for each one of us individually: Doruntina Hasani, passport number, number of test candidate, General Training Test for UKVI. . . . I placed my passport on the table and they told us: "It starts with listening. Listening takes forty-five minutes. That means we hand out the tests to you and you are not allowed to open them before we tell you to do so. And if you have to go to the toilet, you are not allowed to go during the last 10 minutes. You have to raise your hand and . . . and go with one of the examiners [laughing] to the toilet." [I join in her laughing: Ah yes?] Yes.

Shpresa: And she waits in front of the door then?

D.: Certainly. [Laughing] But I didn't have to go, I don't know where she waited. And, Shpresa, you should have seen them moving around that room! They came to look at the passport, not only mine, but those of all the people there, which was very frustrating at times, because it distracts you, when there is constantly someone coming to look at you.

Sh.: So you're saying that the passport control is done more than once?

D.: Not more than once, but [laughing] I don't even know how many times! This means whenever they came up to me I didn't focus on . . . I didn't focus on the test and . . . I wasted time. And then, for instance, the time for listening was over: "Please, the time is over, close the test sheets." And they came to collect them. But now when they collected them, they of course [in Albanian: normal] counted us. So they started like: one of them counting, the other one writing it down to see if it is

this and this number of tests. Even though you had to . . . everyone had to hand in the test and there was no possibility for anyone to take a test with us.

Then the part with reading started. They handed out the tests. Again this took an hour. Now, they said: "thirty minutes till the end." Then: "ten minutes till the end." And: "five minutes till the end." And then you had to finish. They collected and [laughing] counted again, this one counting, the other one counting. And we . . . we did not even have the right to stand up. I don't know why. That was . . . not even a military . . . I don't know what kind of regime I should say.

So far, her description had been of the first phase of the test, with its two written parts. After this, the test candidates had two hours of free time to get lunch and some rest before the oral examinations, which were held in the afternoon. As I will analyse this oral part later, I will interrupt Doruntina's account here for the time being, letting it stand as a concrete sketch of what the pre-departure language testing regime amounts to, with all the questions it opens up.

In Part II of this thesis, which is the main empirical section, I will present a comprehensive discourse analysis of the pre-integrative language testing regime with all its particularities. In doing so, I will follow the different steps involved, discussing the way in which it affects visa applicants during the period leading up to the test. I will primarily draw on the narratives of a diverse range of Turkish and Kosovar cases. In the following chapter, I will lay out the relevant concepts and literature, developing the necessary theoretical framework derived primarily from the field of border studies.

4 Theoretical framework I: Borders

In my analysis of the many ‘faces’ of the European border regime visible to individuals undergoing the ‘spousal unification’ process, I show that however divergent and polyvalent their individual manifestations may seem, they all stem from and feed into the same border regime pattern, grasping people in particular ways and providing them with particular experiences. I suggest that this pattern can be conceptualized using Michel Foucault’s notions of the *apparatus* and the *subjectivities* it produces in his work on governmentality (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine 2017; Foucault 1991, 1994, 2007 and 2008; Nilsson and Wallenstein 2013; Walters 2012, 2015). This analytical framework can be further strengthened by incorporating the performativity and embodiment at work in these powered processes, applying Judith Butler’s approach to the latter (Butler 1997, 1999, 2010, 2011; Ong-Van-Cung 2011).

Given my focal interest in the power dynamics at play within this multiplex of border-related practices and actors, from the outset, I was intuitively inclined to think of this pattern in terms of a Foucauldian ‘apparatus’, which seemed fit the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the interrelated elements that made up my subject, namely the border, and its power effects on the people it seeks to govern. Another reason for my choice of a Foucauldian take on this border phenomenon relates to my interest in the discourse analytics of the particular, linking details (narrative, performative, visual etc.) at the micro-level upon which power operates with the macro-level within which it is set (Duchêne et al. 2013). Foucault’s focus on historicity and on examining the particularity of social practices rather than looking for generalizable traits or universally applicable rules informed my decision to apply this framework (Feldman 2011, 33; Nilsson and Wallenstein 2013, 10ff).

My project shares these theoretical cornerstones with other works in the interdisciplinary field of critical border studies from which I draw and to which I hope to contribute (Feldman 2011; Green 2012; Hess and Kasperek 2019; Scheel and

Gutekunst 2019; Van Houtum 2010; Walters 2011 to name just a few). And while the border studies perspective, based on Foucault and Butler, is only one leg on which this transdisciplinary analysis comes to stand – the other one being a sociolinguistic approach to the topic, to be discussed in part III –, it represents the principle field from which this project departs (further reinforced by a feminist intersectional lens, a social boundary lens, anthropological and postcolonial literature).

4.1 A border analysis conceptualized in terms of power

Contemporary borders, as researchers conceive them and with regard to the significant historical transformations they have undergone, are made up of a multiplicity of dimensions and processes on multiple levels: political and economic but also imaginary or affective (Berg and Ehin 2006; Cooper, Perkins, and Rumford 2014; Green 2019). This thesis too departs from a conceptualization of such a multiplex border. Emphasizing the complexity and multiplicity of borders, although by now certainly part of scientific consensus, is not self-evident per se, as the idea of the border as a quasi-natural, fixed line dividing (national) territories still has major discursive currency in politics and everyday discourse and practice. And given the re-nationalizing political effects/reflexes in light of the spread of COVID-19 in Europe (and globally), with nation-states solitarily steering their respective border policies rather than cooperating at the supranational level, one might be tempted to predict a comeback of the singular, slow, geopolitical border. But notwithstanding possible shifts in the ways in which we may think about borders and about what they can or cannot do with regard to Europe's pandemic-related policies (or rather individual European nation states), I argue that there is currently little reason to assume that the overarching logic steering Europe's bordering processes, and its family unification regimes in particular, would not apply. However, it remains to be seen, and researched, how the COVID-19 outbreak and its effect on Europe's internal border strategies will impact on this type of border regime.

However, multiplication and de-territorialization were basic characteristics of the border that I encountered at the time of conducting interviews and field research for this project (during the spring months of 2016), and the associated legal norms and administrative procedures remain in place. Hence, the conceptual cornerstones of this study are not fundamentally dislodged or overthrown. And aside from this ontological question of how borders are perceived at a particular historical time, the epistemological and methodological approach adopted here does not necessarily shift with changing perceptions. I may still choose to think

about and analyse the border in terms of complex multiplicity, thus incorporating not only its more easily graspable manifestations but also more ephemeral ones into the analysis, even if border ontologies are constantly changing and may even drift back towards more material or solid 'border paraphernalia' (Green 2012).

Accordingly, I continue to argue for a multilevel, multimodal, and, in some respects, multidisciplinary analysis of the border. I see forms of power installing and upholding but also contesting and subverting the border, conceived as multiple, multidirectional, and conflicting. Power is not a given; rather, it is constructed on all kinds of sites (spatial, virtual, discursive, embodied etc.) and by all types of actors (public, private and 'mixed'). This also applies to the power of the state, as Foucault has argued in *his History of Sexuality*:

The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the overall unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes. It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallisation is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. (Foucault 1990, 92–93)

With this basic conceptual anchoring in a Foucauldian notion of power (but also, as I will discuss later, Butler's notions of interpellative and performative subjectivation), I set my analysis within the interdisciplinary field of critical border studies within which such an approach has been widely adopted (Feldman 2011; Green 2012; Hess and Kasperek 2017, 2019; Parker et al. 2009; Scheel and Gutekunst 2019; Van Houtum 2010; Walters 2011). Although Foucault himself had no notable interest in migration, as Fassin has noted (2011), his framework of power has been fruitfully introduced into the study of borders. William Walters, in particular, has scrutinized the implementation of a Foucauldian research terminological 'inventory' in the field of border governmentality in informative ways, adapting and

developing it further throughout the various fields or types of border regimes that he has investigated (Walters 2006, 2011, 2012).

The expanding research field of critical border studies has evolved over the course of the last two decades, and it continues to do so, given the continued relevance of migration and globalization issues not just in the European context. The interdisciplinarity of the field can be seen not only as a consequence of a general and growing interest in bordering processes but also, I would argue, as an implication of precisely this multi-layered and decentred notion of power. In order to understand the multiple interrelations through which the governing function of the border is executed—governing people and their mobilities—an analysis of the border must look for that power ‘everywhere’.

[Power] is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. (Foucault 1990, 93)

Power, understood as a complex process and not a ‘substance’ that can be held or contained by a singular institution such as the state, can become manifest locally and very concretely, but it is also unstable, fluctuating and possibly permeating everything. Thus it transcends different materialities, places, and institutions, manifesting in terms of more graspable power ‘solidifications’, while also condensing into more ‘atmospheric’ manifestations, for instance, with regard to emotions or imaginaries, as noted in recent studies (e.g., Dijstelbloem and Walters 2019; Green 2012; Scheibelhofer 2020) This conceptualization has general methodological implications, such as the adoption of a multisite and nonlocal multimodal approach as well as implications for the transgression of disciplinary fields and theoretical concepts informing such a border analysis. I am neither alone in making this observation nor in my appeal for a multisite, relational approach to border studies that is inter- or transdisciplinary (Castagnone 2011; Feldman 2011; Gutekunst 2018; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Scheel 2013b; Wastl-Walter 2011).

I differentiate between two sets of theoretical concepts with reference to the

interdisciplinary literature that informs my analysis of border phenomena relating to spousal unification. On the one hand, I apply basic concepts relating to notions of border, apparatus, and subjectivation. On the other hand, I discuss concepts that only emerged as particularly relevant in the course of the analysis, such as social boundaries, spaces and materialities, emotions, imaginaries, and postcolonial perspectives on 'othering' and power hierarchizations as well as, of course, language itself. I will focus on the latter separately in the second theoretical chapter in Part III on linguistic approaches relating to language (learning) and power, particularly language policy and language ideology in the context of migration.

4.2 Border studies: A critical shift to multiple and fluid borders

As noted above, the border represents the major common denominator in the biographical accounts of getting together and getting married that individuals shared with us, featuring at particular moments in their lives. However, in these narratives, the border, as I intend to show, becomes visible and assumes many forms: an embassy official, a police order received in the mail, an administrative path stretching far and wide across the supranational European territory into the territory of so-called third countries, time wasted or a wedding postponed, a general suspicion or silent nagging fear of 'dishonest' marriage intentions, anxiety before the language exam or, as I will argue, as language itself. In this project, I seek to grasp this wide and heterogeneous range of bordering elements and trace the logics and ways in which these different lines are interrelated, coming together within one border apparatus.

The expected value of such an explorative 'tracing' of the many shapes and meanings whereby the European border (German, British, Swiss, Danish etc.) manifests itself to aspiring cross-border spouses in Kosova and Turkey is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relational workings of border power and the respective processes of subjectivation. My wish to span the wide scope of bordering practices involved in spousal reunification from 'third countries' was initially inspired by a particular observation. I noted that this (sub)type of border regime (a migration regime, viewed from the angle of mandatory integration policies) is particularly encompassing in its demand for a language certificate as a precondition for starting the visa application process. While initially my approach to the cross-border topic at hand was inspired by critical discourse analysis (for introductions, see Blommaert 2005; Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Wodak 2015) and a space/place perspective on mobility issues (Löw 2011; Massey 1994; Schmoll 2014; Silvey 2006), that have continued to lead my analysis, I only began to read more about border regimes once I had taken the decision to apply a 'border' lens instead of a 'family migration' lens. It was then that I realized that such a multidimensional, critical, constructivist,

and performativist approach is exactly what critical border studies is about, and so I found my way into the research area within which this study is mainly situated.

The description of the growing multiplication and fluidity of contemporary borders is one of the major achievements of scholars in the field of critical border studies (Balibar 1998; Balibar 2009; Vaughan-Williams 2008 are seminal contributions). For instance, Cooper and Perkins (2015), who comprehensively summarized the relevant debates and concepts within critical border studies, made the following observation:

[T]here has been a critical, theoretical and methodological shift away from observing singular borders (seen as fixed geopolitical lines) to approaches that consider bordering as a complex array of overlapping socio-political spatial processes. Where the former rendered borders stationary, peripheral and at best secondary to the seemingly more important business of what went on within or across the state, indicative of a 'container model of society' (see Beck, Bonss, Lau 2003), the latter approach places borders more centrally and integrally to the daily lives of 'ordinary' people and sees them as prime sites where continual state construction, re-construction and transformation can be studied (see Anderson, O'Dowd and Wilson 2002). An important outcome of this empirical and methodological shift from borders to bordering has been the key acknowledgement that borders are diffuse and infused throughout society and very much part of political life (Vaughan-Williams 2009). As Balibar (2002) puts it, borders are heterogeneous and ubiquitous. This has important consequences when considering what a border is, where it is located and what it should (or should not) do. (Cooper and Perkins 2015, 14)

The shift from a conception of the singular border as a demarcation line to one of a border viewed as a heterogeneous multiplicity is thus mirrored in the shifting terminology; from the border as a 'thing' or a line, expressed through a noun, to the border as a practice (Parker et al. 2009, 586), which is best described by a verb (Green 2012, 580). To this conception, Green (2012) adds an adjectival perspective, speaking of 'a sense of border' or 'borderiness' when analysing the genealogy and ontology of current borders. Pointing out the particular relevance of this key acknowledgement for the EU, Green refers to Robinson (2007) in her discussion of this growing complexity and fluidity of borders, described as *dispersed and chimerical entities*:

[B]orders are becoming more complex, dispersed and chimerical entities than they have been before, in the light of economic globalisation, the development of increasing numbers of transnational political and economic entities (the World Trade Organisation, the European Union, the International Criminal Court at the Hague, and so on), and the development of new information and communications technologies. This has been particularly noted by those studying the European Union and its panoply of diverse policies on border. (Green, 2012,583)

This fluid, de-essentializing notion of the border (understood as both an ontology of contemporary borders as well as a way of looking at them) is not to be equated with claims of the de-bordering of the state, which emanate from the rhetoric of globalization in the early 1990s (Walters 2006). The 'more breathless pronouncements' of a such a de-bordering, as Walters ironically notes, is perhaps most prominently met in a critique by Andreas, who argues for a simultaneous process of rebordering:

Debordering is being accompanied in many places by a partial rebordering in the form of enhanced policing. Even as many borders have been demilitarized in the traditional realm of national security, as well as economically liberalized to facilitate commercial exchange, they are also now more criminalized to deter those who are perceived as trespassers. Thus it may be more accurate to say that the importance of territoriality is shifting rather than simply diminishing. (Andreas, 2000,3)

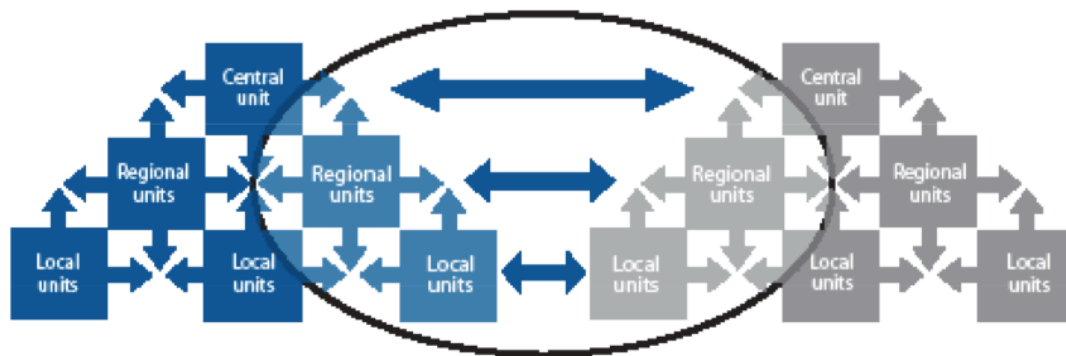
What Andreas refers to as the growing criminalization of borders relating to those crossing them without permission has become one of the most acknowledged developments of contemporary borders. Scholars have commonly described this development as the *securitization of borders*, indicating a trend that is particularly well-documented with regard to the external borders of the EU (e.g., Ceccorulli 2018; Moreno-Lax 2017) but also those between Mexico and the United States (Locas 2011).

Two decades have passed since Andreas made this statement, which remains as salient as ever, considering the ways in which borders have been continuously transformed during this time span. These observations are especially pertinent in the context of the EU's external bordering policies. The plural is an expression of the above-described multiplication of the border. To think of Europe's external border

as a singular geopolitical line drawn around its territory would mean to ignore the basic features that define how the so-called *integrated European border management* (IBM) functions; features that can be described as different facets of this process of multiplication of the border.

To provide a broad impression of what this multiplication process looks like with regard to levels of cooperation between state and private agencies nationally as well as internationally, here I reproduce a figure from the European Commission's (EC's) 152-page 'Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation' (2010). Intended for EU and EC staff, their partners, and other donor agencies in the field of IBM, the Guidelines are aiming at strengthening external cooperation (2010, 2). The figure below reveals shows the multilevel interagency cooperation of the various concerned actors:

Figure 1. Source: European Commission (2010, 24)



4.2.1 Borders that differentially include and exclude

One facet of the multiplication of borders is the *differential inclusion and exclusion*, through which they operate. De Genova, Mezzadra and Pickles (2015) have applied the notion of differential inclusion/exclusion, which is a critical perspective initially introduced by Stuart Hall with regard to race and ethnicity (1986) in the particular context of borders, migration and subjectivity. They argue that it '*draws attention to the effects of negotiations between governmental practices, sovereign gestures the social relation of capital, and the subjective actions and desires of migrants*' (2015, 79f). However, this concept contrasts with that of

'differential exclusion' (e.g., Castles 1995), which describes the selective incorporation and exclusion of migrants in different areas of the national society. Thus, they argue that:

[D]ifferential inclusion registers the multiplication of migration control devices within, at and beyond the borders of the nation-state (point systems, externalisation, conditional freedom of movement, fast-tracked border crossing for elites, short-term labour contracts, etc.) and the multiplication of statuses they imply. It provides a handle for understanding the link between migration control and regimes of labour management that create access to resources and rights according to economic, individualizing, and racist rationales. (De Genova, Mezzadra and Pickles 2015, 79f)

What I find particularly valuable about this approach is that it allows for the further tracing of bordering processes into nation-states, which established those regimes, thus advancing understanding of what happens with the migrant/mobile subjectivities that are thus produced after the border crossing. How does the nation-state utilize these different subjectivities that were (roughly) 'carved out' through the bordering apparatus? In their definition of differential inclusion/exclusion, DeGenova, Mezzandra, and Pickles rightfully state that '*[p]lacing emphasis on the continuity of exclusion and inclusion, it draws attention to the violence that underlies both*' (2015, 79f).

But more important than these further implications and consequences of the subjectivation function of the border apparatus, this differential notion of exclusion/inclusion is a useful tool for analysing power hierarchizations, as produced within the bordering processes at play. As Lentin and Titley (2011, 204) have pointed out, 'integration' is a '*border practice, beyond and inside the territorial border*'. Gutekunst refers to their argument that the border not only excludes but it also includes, thus resulting in a hierarchization of subjects. In her analysis of the externalized migration through marriage regimes, she argues that:

extension of the timespan until entry leads to an extension of the space, in which migrant subjects can be governed. . . . Hereby the integration paradigm functions as a normative instrument of interpellation and

hierarchisation that brings along inclusions and exclusions. (Gutekunst 2018, 178, translation by author)

Taking into account the subjectivities produced through such processes of differential exclusion and inclusion is crucial for understanding them. Taking this production seriously also means countering methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) and the reproduction of nation-states' categories (Dahinden 2016; Moret, Andrikopoulos, and Dahinden 2019) by going against the impulse to assume that inclusion implies merely moving closer to a centre of a nation-state and away from its margins (De Genova, Mezzadra and Pickles 2015, 80). Instead, every form of inclusion and exclusion has to be seen for its particular functional qualities, as every level of exclusion contains a particular type of inclusion into the nation-state in the sense that it co-constructs and upholds the overarching system of national belonging/citizenship. This is also what Korteweg aims at in her work on Western integration discourses, when she claims that immigrants 'always already' belong:

Immigrants 'always already' belong because the presence of immigrants has become integral to narrating belonging in the nation-states in which they live; they have become the subjects against whom belonging is defined, both by pointing out the ways they do and do not belong. (Korteweg 2017, 2)

She demonstrates how 'real' citizens are constructed alongside their presumed difference from immigrant others, and how it is through the integration discourse that their ways of belonging are erased. This is, of course, a highly racialized discursive endeavour; a fact that has been largely obscured in the European context (Korteweg 2017; Lentin 2008; Schinkel 2018). However, over the last two decades, this racializing othering discourse has been conjuring up, solidifying stereotypical images of gendered Muslim others in particular, as the literature on boundary work and migration, to which Korteweg contributes, has shown (Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013; Block 2019; Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Dahinden, Duemmler, and Moret 2014; Lamont and Molnár 2002).

It is important to note that this discursive production of the migrant other has

not only been operating within political, media and everyday discourse, but the academic apparatus of knowledge production has also played a part in nation states' migration apparatuses, and a crucial one at that. In her plea for the 'de-migrantisation' of research on migration and integration, Dahinden has pointed this out, building on the ongoing debate on methodological nationalism, but going a step further as she proposes a concrete methodological toolkit that is aimed at overcoming this discursive production (Dahinden 2016). Detangling the ways in which migration and integration research are intertwined with the nation-state's migration apparatus discourse, she shows how the discipline is very much part of that same apparatus, which roots the assumed 'otherness' of migrants within normalizing discourses:

It is therefore not surprising that this migration apparatus and its corresponding normalisation discourse generated the field of migration and integration research. If migration appears as an anomaly in the "national container" and becomes the most important category of difference therein, then it is not astonishing that specialists and social scientists are required to describe, investigate and theorize this "difference". Migration research is therefore not only an essential part of this institutionalized migration apparatus, but also causally articulated through this paradigm of normalized difference. The "difference" between migration and non-migration is ultimately the *raison d'être* of migration research. (Dahinden 2016, 4)

The terminological doubling in the 'de-migrantisation of migration research' points to a paradoxical position that we, as researchers, hold vis-à-vis our research subjects when we try to approach it critically; it is therefore a position that we cannot leave. We can, however, be aware and reflexive of the ways in which we contribute to reinforcing the 'migratedness' of people into the 'most important category of difference' between 'us' and 'them'. My own situation as a migration researcher with a 'migration background' reveals quite plainly the binary simplification at play, whereby migration serves as a dominant lens of explication. These considerations relating to the construction of difference via 'integration' are vital to my analysis. This is the reason why I present a brief chapter on this topic before delving into an in-depth (sociolinguistic) discussion of 'integration' in chapter 6.

The problem of integration

Entering the field of migration studies via interdisciplinary linguistics, I knew that I would have a lot of new concepts to think and work with, and I was looking forward to that engagement for the most part. But I was sure of one thing: *integration* was something that I would never want to get into, neither as a theoretical concept nor as a topic. The reason was that first and foremost, growing up with the call to integrate ringing constantly in my ears, I have become severely allergic to this word. Secondly, the little bits of reading that I did on the works of the incumbent integration pope of the German-speaking world, Hartmut Esser, which I did (as a favour to a politician-friend of mine preparing for an interview about ‘the state of integration among Albanians’), confirmed my negative apprehensions about this ‘scientific instrument’. The writings contained a sleek, ‘objective’ rhetorical and statistical collection of pressing questions such as: *How best to measure integration? What are the decisive variables? What role does language play? What part does the proper motivation of migrants play in learning that language?* And so on. . . . It seemed like the ‘pope’ had jumped so quickly into solving ‘the problem’ that they may have forgotten to ask who or what exactly is problematic because the need for migrants to integrate is so obvious and so urgent that there is not even a spare moment available to ask the most basic questions. This ‘research’, viewed as part of the ongoing integration circus did provoke me but not to think and write against it.

Despite my aversion, here I am, ultimately having to deal with ‘integration’ because, it could be argued, there is no way around it when it comes to contemporary migration. I do not find it necessary to conduct a literature review of the mainstream integration research, as there have been numerous recent critical discussions about the issue (e.g., Favell 2019; Hadj Abdou 2019; Rytter 2019; Saharso 2019; Schinkel 2017, 2018). I would, however, like to point to some of the critiques within this multifaceted debate, focusing on those of particular relevance to my analysis.

The major conceptual and methodological inconsistencies that Schinkel (2018), a social theorist, has pointed to in his provocative case study criticizing 'immigrant integration' in the Netherlands concerns the nativist and racist divisions defining the socio-political and socio-economic governing work of 'immigrant integration'. Immigrants are problematized and ethnicized as lacking (lagging), yet having to work towards being counted as actual members of a 'society' in which they de facto already live in, are raised in, or are even born into. In this era of neoliberal rule, they are conceived as individuals, who with the help of an entire integration industry, are responsible for fully 'arriving' in this 'society', which is defined as a static, homogenous, and pre-given entity according to a fuzzy notion of a non-'ethnic', 'modern', 'secular' 'autochthonous' population. Moreover, as Schinkel concludes, it is defined by its assumed wholesomeness and purity:

This way, "society" is imagined as a pristine, pure domain that is without problems. Problems are problems of "integration", and integration has to do with the position and opinions of non-white individuals. (Schinkel 2018, 5)

Thus Schinkel and others dismantle 'immigrant integration' as a form of *social hygiene*, producing (while obscuring) a racialized divide between those who have to integrate and are monitored (not just migrants but also their descendants) on the one hand and, on the other hand, those who have a general dispensation from doing so based on their whiteness (as a political and not a biological category of difference). Moreover, as Schinkel (2018) notes, referring to Stoler's (2002) work on Dutch colonial rule in the East Indies, immigrant integration is a neo-colonial mode of governing populations. Specifically, nineteenth century administrators in the East Indies, performing what Stoler refers to as 'moral measurements' to assess the 'complete suitability for European society' of people of 'mixed blood' as well as 'poor whites' (Stoler, 2002, 17), are the predecessors of social scientists who monitor and assess 'integration' .

The importance of adding a postcolonial and race perspective has been emphasized by many integration critics, as it makes visible what the lens of

integration obscures, namely that the problem is not one of migrants' in/ability to integrate but rather that of the racist structures of power and inequality within society. Saharso (2019), who edited a collection of articles focusing on the debate ignited by Schinkel, has summed up these issues. Moreover, she has raised a fundamental critique, namely that the concept of integration is normative rather than descriptive, contrary to what its supporters claim:

It would suggest that immigrants' integration requires that they identify with the country of settlement, socialize with the majority population, preferably through intermarriage, and take over the norms and values of the majority population. Successful integration is defined and measured in these terms. (Saharso 2019,2)

Referring to the socio-cultural dimension of the myriad of fuzzy meanings infused into the demand for 'integration' (apart from the socio-economic dimension and the barely heard socio-political one), the citation points back to the topic of this thesis, namely the marriages of migrants and how even the most personal aspects of life can become targets of integration policies. And with that observation, I now address the question of how I intend to treat 'integration' in my analysis.

A diverse range of scholars, such as the sociologist, Adrian Favell (2019), the anthropologist, Mikkel Rytter (2019), and the political scientist, Leila Hadj Abdou (2019), have sought answers to this key question of how to deal with the highly problematic and faulty concept of integration. In his response to Schinkel, Favell (2019) introduces twelve propositions to be kept in mind when working on integration, of which I will mention only one that is of particular interest to me here, namely bordering processes, which take centre stage in the production and reproduction of global inequalities. Favell links the limitation, control, and governance of transnationalism to global inequality, referring to it as '*a mercantilist political economy of global colonialism*':

It is the very source of the national power of state-making. Increasingly in a global and porous world this action of bordering is how state (political) power is generated from cross-border mobilities, otherwise known (in neo-liberal terms) as the free movement of capital, goods, services and persons. Here of course, we enter an interesting debate with (Italian)

Marxists who see bordering as a production essential to neo-liberal capitalism rather than/as well as nationalist state power. (Favell 2019, 7)

Here he cites some of the authors who are key contributors to my approach to borders, such as Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) and de Genova (2002), pointing to the influence of Agamben on their writing. This approach explains, in part, how I deal with 'integration', namely as a discursive practice tightly interrelated with border control as a means of wealth control. But this will be explored further in the forthcoming theoretical sub-sections on bordering.

Here I would like to introduce Leila Hadj Abdou's response to Schinkel, and what I take from it:

[R]ather than abandoning immigrant integration as a field of research, we have to turn around the telescope. Immigrant integration has to be understood and approached as a phenomenon that reveals more about those who articulate ideas about integration and decide on integration measures than it does about those who are the target of integration (i.e. the migrant "other"). In a nutshell, the key proposal I am making is that immigrant integration should be conceptualized and approached as a governance technique rendering ethno-cultural differences purposeful for certain ends. This technique and its varying purposes can be traced analytically in discourses, practices, regulations, and institutions. (Leila Hadj Abdou 2019, 1f)

I subscribe to the above proposition, which is further strengthened by that of Rytter (2019) (not, however, as a response to Schinkel). Referring to Lila Abu-Lughod's seminal text *Writing against Culture* (1991), he proposes to 'write against integration' by applying the following strategies. The first is to ask fundamental, critical questions, problematizing the problematization and developing a new language to enable a more inclusive analysis, which is to say that integration should not be used as an analytical lens, as this would conflate emic and etic perspectives. (Rytter 2019, 690ff) All of these suggestions are also at the heart of any critical discourse analysis, which is the analytical approach of this thesis.

The above points roughly circumscribe my perspective on integration. What remains to be added is an explanation of how I bring the relational notion of differential inclusion/exclusion to the topic. Criticizing the application of this concept by scholars like Korteweg, Schinkel has argued that it leaves untouched the notion

of 'society' as a given bounded entity from which individuals are then excluded or into which they are included. (Schinkel 2018, 8)

However, I believe that it is possible to grasp differential exclusion/inclusion without necessarily assuming a societal whole. Rather, I would depart from very particular processes and social spaces (for instance the job market or higher education) and access other particular practices (e.g., voting rights), which can be observed and described without assuming an overarching abstract society and its 'members'. At least this is the case in qualitative-interpretative analysis, which is based on narratives and not on quantifications of a large number of cases. The focus on the particular and an awareness of the partial and positioned character of all research is what Abu-Lughod (1991) calls for in *Writing against Culture*; a call that Rytter renews in a context of writing against integration.

But there is also a conceptual dimension at play here, for the focus on the particular, that is, on some smaller entity, as an escape from the overarching macro-notion of 'society', has come to be just as problematic as 'integration' itself. This would not, of course, solve any problems. Rather, Hall's concept of differential inclusion/exclusion, which I understand as being a structuralist one, entails inclusion-exclusion. Inclusion conveys the incorporation of the newcomer into an *imagined* 'society', 'nation', and so forth, which defines and normalizes itself by excluding that newcomer from that imaginary as its other, thus legitimizing all sorts of inequalities. This is how I will use this concept of differential inclusion/ exclusion, referring to Charles Taylor's (2004) work on 'social imaginaries' when analysing the particular work and effects of 'integration'.

4.2.2 Borders that 'filter'

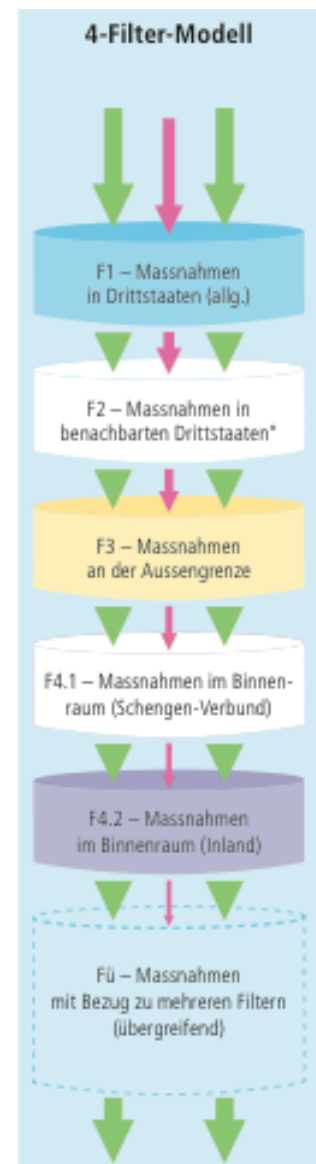
The notion of differentially including/excluding 'borderwork' has been described as a key characteristic especially of EU borders and addressed from many angles by theorists and EU policy makers alike. Accordingly, the image of a *filter* has been used, often in a context of sorting people/bodies using (digital) technologies

(Broeders 2007; Gutekunst 2016; Topak 2014; Walters 2006). The EU's IBM (Integrated Border Management) has formulated a 'four-tier access control model', widely known as the '4-filter model' (European Commission 2010, 20) to 'ensure efficient, extensive and cost-effective management of the external borders of the European Union' and to reach the acclaimed goals of 'safeguarding internal security', 'preventing irregular immigration and other cross-border crime' and 'ensuring smooth border crossings for legitimate travellers' (European Commission 2010, 19).

Especially in German-speaking contexts, this revealing terminology, as illustrated in a recent strategy paper released by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) is customary (2019: 12ff). The graphic depiction of the 4-filter model to the right visualizes the metaphor.

The filter-metaphor expresses the idea that this efficient (neoliberal) filtering border, differing from the traditional border-wall, does not slow down or halt everyone who seeks to enter; rather, it is capable of differentiating between entrants. Some experience a 'smooth' (European Commission 2010, 19), fluid passage through the border, like water, almost without becoming aware of the border, whereas others are 'filtered out', as the metaphor (dehumanizingly) implies. The SEM diagram reduces human beings to abstract arrows shown in different colours. Although I do not want to take the metaphor-analysis too far, it is striking to observe how both the 'wanted' (for instance, so called highly skilled workers and tourists) and the 'unwanted' (refugees or migrants joining through family reunification for example) are turned into some kind of metaphorical, paradoxically immaterialized, *material*, as they are categorized as essentially different kinds of 'filter-material'. Those passing through freely appear as *things* that

Figure 2.
Source: SEM 2019, 13



are profitable and valuable to be won for consummation or further use, while those remaining in the filter are associated with some sort of residue or waste, lacking use or value and conversely being harmful in the destination country. This heavily loaded imagery has been surprisingly widely adopted within the scientific literature, often without any discussion of terminology or distancing attempts. However, this dehumanization and reduction of the im/mobilized person into matter or a mere physical body has emerged as a topic of analysis within the field of contemporary border regimes. Henk van Houtum (2010), for instance, addresses the ethical implications of this growing dehumanization and criticizes the racist EU mobility government according to people's birthplace by means of a 'white list' and a 'black list' of countries. The name change to 'positive' and 'negative' lists, in Van Houtum's view does not, by any means, change the bottom line. Specifically, this binary regime (which he analogizes as a digital regime 1/0 – in/out) has led to a global 'mobility apartheid' (Van Houtum 2010). William Walters, who has made a seminal contribution to a genealogy and ontology of today's borders, also draws on computational metaphors adding the notion of 'firewall' to that of the 'filter' (Walters 2006, 197). He points out that this sorting function, whatever its terminology, has indeed become a core function of borders.

[T]oday borders operate like filters or gateways. Not borders as iron curtains or Maginot Lines, but more like firewalls differentiating the good and the bad, the useful and the dangerous, the licit and the illicit; constituting a safe, 'high-trust' interior secured from the wild zones outside; immobilizing and removing the risky elements so as to speed the circulation of the rest. It might be objected that borders have always served this function. But borders did other things besides. Perhaps this sorting function is becoming far more central to the practice of the border than before. (Walters 2006, 197)

This strengthening of the sorting function has also been facilitated by the growing use of technological means of border control (Broeders 2007; Topak 2014; Van Houtum 2010; Walters 2006). The question of how fundamentally these new tools of border regime have changed what borders and border control mean today has been extensively discussed (e.g., Verstraete 2001; Walters 2006). The use of terms

such as 'firewall', the 'smart border', 'remote control' or 'asymmetrical membrane' (Hedetoft 2003) reflect this change at a discursive level. But they also imply transformations at a deeper level. One example is the externalization of bordering tasks to private security agencies, increasingly introducing private actors into nation states' border 'management structures. This privatization and the way it grows through and hybridizes state structures are symptomatic of the neoliberal market logic informing state government practices (Sparke 2004; Walters 2006).

The second example I would like to discuss here concerns the effects that these technologized bordering/selection practices have on the people selected as the subjects of governance. Walters points out that the treatment of people as 'living matter' (Walters 2006, 198) has become characteristic of the way contemporary border regimes govern and hence constitute their subjects through the use of high-level technology. Such regimes are no longer interested in forming subjects (disciplining them to use Foucault's terminology). Rather, they simply aim to control the movement of bodies. Walters, who emphasizes that changes are not just the means of surveillance but also their ends, has discussed Sparke's (2004) study of the introduction of a new biometric border-crossing scheme, NEXUS, at the border between Canada and the United States. He has also explored Verstraete's work on the joint venture between Belgium's Zeebrugge Harbour and DielectroKinetic Laboratories (DKL), which utilizes a remote sensing device (LifeGuard) with the ability to detect ultra-low frequency signals of a beating heart's electromagnetic field (Verstraete 2001). Arguing that some might see such bordering technologies 'simply as further steps towards a panoptical society', he makes a convincing point:

[D]iscipline, and the panopticon are specific technologies pertaining to particular historical and social contexts. Consider that NEXUS and DKL are not in the business of individualisation, at least not in the sense of encouraging subjects to govern themselves as 'individuals'. They are in many ways less deep, governing persons rather like baggage, mail, or in the case of LifeGuard, living matter. (Walters 2006, 198)

Drawing on Deleuze, Walters sees an overarching sociotechnical arrangement or diagram of control rather than one of discipline at play here. He argues that the

subjects whom it shapes can be better described by applying the Deleuzian notion of the *dividual* in place of the *individual*. He goes further:

This is not to suggest that dividualisation bears no relationship to practices and processes of identity. As NEXUS suggests, its version of dividualisation is continuous with the culture of the reward card, of gold- and platinum-coded club memberships, and their associated “lifestyle” of mobility and access. By contrast, LifeGuard is legitimated by the idea of “asylum-seekers” and “illegals” as the new kind of wandering, dangerous classes. But in both cases as a technology, control expresses little interest in shaping the identity, moulding the subjectivity of its targets. It’s got no time for that. (Walters 2006, 198)

I find it important, in this research endeavour, to attempt to theorize the observed bordering regime in order to shed light on the underlying logic or structure, or, what Walters refers to as the *diagram* into which bordering practices are inscribed and which they articulate. Only then does it become possible to see or imagine the outlines and the direction of a particular border regime, given that we are dealing with not with historical but with current, and thus necessarily blurrier, phenomena. I will return to these ontological deliberations in the concluding chapter, hoping they will help in the theorizing of the results of my border analysis.

4.2.3 Extraterritorialized and externalized borders

The point of departure of the [4-filter]model is that a successful and efficient fight against illegal migration does not just start at the external borders of the Schengen area, but must start already in third countries. (SEM 2019, 11, translated from German by the author)

As illustrated by the examples from which Walters’ draws in his discussion of the roles and effects of the *technologization*, *digitalization*, and *biometrization* of borders, illustrated by the *LifeGuard* device, these transformations towards ‘smart’ borders also have implications for the spatial dimension of nation states’ border management strategies. Walters claims that ‘remote control has become an intrinsic feature of the way in which states and other international agencies imagine and pursue border control’ (Walters 2006, 194). Whereas remote control is in many ways facilitated by technological advancements, it alludes not only to the semantics of technology, as in the very literal technological remote sensing device known as LifeGuard, but also to spatial remoteness; the geographical distance between a

(Western) nation state's territory and the places abroad where its border regime is put into force through embassies, consulates, and private security agencies. Studies have shown that many contemporary bordering practices are outsourced not only to private agencies but also to the governments of other nation-states (Andersson 2014; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Walters 2011), which is less costly on the one hand and more efficient on the other hand. This type of border 'management' from afar allows selective bordering functions, as discussed earlier, to be executed before a country's territory is reached by those seeking to enter– and with that possibly to human rights claims through, for example, the principle of non-refoulement of refugees. Studies have also shown how a 'buffer zone' is created through extraterritorialized procedures (e.g., Andreas 2003), which , if not ultimately and consequently pre-selecting 'welcome' from the 'unwelcome' mobiles, can certainly hinder or delay the arrival of a large proportion of the latter.

This conspicuous spatial dimension of the border's multiplication addresses the question of the locations of contemporary borders. The answer to this question provided within critical border studies is literally everywhere (Lyon 2005; Paasi 2020). This 'de-localization' of borders (Walters 2006, 193) is evident in their manifestation outside national/EU territory or anywhere within the national territory, for example, along roads, in airports, or in camps. Borders can even be seen on the bodies of the individuals they seeks to control (Hess et al. 2015; Kreichauf 2018; Lyon 2005; Schmoll 2014; Walters 2006).

The above-mentioned de-localization of borders is highly relevant to my research topic, both in the sense of their transferral to foreign countries as well as to the body – and I will show that these two sites of delocalization are connected and only function through that connection. This is because a large part of the bordering process and its logic regarding the pre-departure language-requirement of people from 'third countries' are tied to their settings in the territories of these countries as a prerequisite for embarking on the visa application procedure.

Within the literature, the term externalization is sometimes used synonymously with extraterritorialization. An example can be seen in the definition of externalization provided in a new compendium of keywords on migration and borders:

Border externalisation refers to the process of territorial and administrative expansion of a given state's migration and border policy to third countries. The process is based on the direct involvement of the externalizing state's border authorities in other countries' sovereign territories, and the outsourcing of border control responsibilities to another country's national surveillance forces. Border externalisation changes the understanding of the border by reworking who, where and how the border is practiced. . . . In this way, the definition of the border increasingly refers not to the territorial limit of the state but to the management practices directed at "where the migrant is". (De Genova, Mezzadra, and Pickles 2015, 73)

The de-territorialization of bordering practices becomes apparent as borderwork increasingly focuses on the (moving) location of the migrant, which is, by now, a paradigmatic observation within border studies (Hess et al. 2015). Guiraudon and Lahav, for instance, address the implications of this policy, offering a differentiated image of the variety and heterogeneity of actors tasked with the policing of those mobile individuals, whose mobility is unwanted but hard to negate or control. And while the above definition derived from Genova, Mezzadra and Pickles (2015) does not address externalization relating to private agencies, Giraudon and Lahav name private actors alongside state actors, simultaneously emphasizing the importance of the concrete level of individuals doing the work of remote border control.

Along with civil servants (immigration officers, border patrols, liaison officers and consulate personnel), a wide range of "sheriff 's deputies" (Torpey, 1998) that include sending and transit countries, carriers, security agencies, travel agents and hotel personnel, employers, local social services, hosts and sponsors are all urged to reach deep into societies to uncover undocumented foreigners, deter asylum-seekers and prevent the exit of the "huddled masses". (Guiraudon and Lahav 2003, 191)

As I will show, when it comes to the pre-departure language requirement that is part of European states' border regimes, not only the 'remote control' aspect but also the involvement of private actors is crucial to the functioning of this particular

type of border regime. Both of these aspects fundamentally shape the experiences of the people undergoing this type of visa procedure. Hence, it is important to give space to each of these aspects in the analysis and to apply a clear terminological distinction between them. Accordingly, when I speak about the outsourcing of nation states' bordering practices to private institutions or other state institutions, I will use the term externalization. When speaking of practices that are implemented in the territories of other states, away from the borders of the concerned European states, I will use the term extraterritorialization.

Both externalization and extraterritorialization (or, more generally, deterritorialization), as crucial features of contemporary border control strategies and add to border multiplication. Both the geographical unboundedness of the border as well as the implementation of private actors into the migration government apparatus of nation states have contributed to the blurring of the border both in terms of its location as well as the distinction between private and public actors/institutions. In this way, both of these dimensions contribute to the production of ubiquitous borders.

4.2.4 Individualized borders

It is important to point out, however, that this ubiquity or border blurring not only affects the actors on the side of the governing. They do, of course, have a fundamental impact on those who are governed by this type of border regime. For instance, the ability of the border to react 'smartly' has led to the border's individualization in the sense that it reacts differently to each traveller/subject who seeks to cross it. The idea of the 'smart' border, as formulated by the Commission of European Communities (2001), was of creating *'multi-layered borderscapes that stretch to the outside as well as to the inside and enact a punctuated and selective filter mechanism'* (Hess et al. 2015, 5). Thus, it should seamlessly distinguish between 'desirable' travellers and professionals and 'undesirable' migrants/workers by effectively 'filtering' out the latter, while ideally remaining invisible to the former.

This individualization of the border, wherein it takes hold of every individual in a different way, depending on their nationality, education, economic possibilities, racialization, age, gender, social networks and so forth, is again related to its *detritorialization* and *technologization*. These lines of transformation that convey the meaning of a border are part of the response to what has been called the 'control dilemma' (Lahav and Giroudon 2000, 844). Hess and Kasperek summarize this dilemma, pointing to its role in the frequently invoked securitization of borders.

This dilemma refers to the question [of] how to reconcile a neoliberal economic paradigm epitomised by the foundational European project of the Single Market and its projection onto a global economic order built on the free circulation of goods, services and capital with a continued biopolitical will to control the movements of people. While the EU upholds these four freedoms internally (their inalienability is the pivotal question of the Brexit negotiations), towards the outside, the EU is merely committed to the first three of these freedoms. There is no – however abstract – commitment to a global freedom of movement for people. Rather, many authors of border studies or studies of European integration have pointed to the fact that the creation of the Single Market in conjunction with necessary abolition of internal border controls opened the door to a wide field of security actors. (Hess and Kasperek 2019)

Moving border controls 'away from the border and outside the states' has been described as the main practical response to the control dilemma (Lahav and Giroudon 2000). To take account of the control dilemma when dealing with this process of border-individualisation is to acknowledge that a study of contemporary border regimes and their effects on the people they seek to govern cannot be accomplished without considering the economic power structures and history into of their setting, and which have structured them a large extent.

Brown (2010, 25) too focuses on the question of securitization, that is, the relations between the globalization of national economies on the one hand and the attempt to immobilize certain parts of the world's population on the other hand. However, she adopts a slightly different perspective, claiming that the recent intensification of border reinforcements and migration restrictions indicate a loss of state sovereignty. Green takes up Brown's point, noting that '*state authorities are behaving a little like the Wizard of Oz: the more sovereign state power wanes, the*

more big walls and expensive high-tech security systems are put in place to make it look strong and real' (Green 2012, 586). But to this perspective, she adds another analytical lens, as she reflects on the semiotic implications, such as the intensified 'production of all this border paraphernalia' (Green 2012, 586) may have in terms of border ontology:

Perhaps; but those practices are also increasingly emphasizing the nonindexicality of border as line: the line could be anywhere, and it could stand for anything; there are endless ways to measure it, ascribe it with capacities to define, mark or reflect, to do things in the world, to have agency. And the "smart borders" are going one step further in this nonindexicality, explicitly suggesting that the line is not only an abstraction that could mean anything, but that this means it is simultaneously the marker of many places, many worlds, and perhaps many logics too: tailor-made borders that might, if the securitisation specialists can achieve their fantasy, be a unique border for each person. (Green 2012, 586)

According to Green the 'borderiness' of such a 'smart border' overcomes its lack of indexicality in terms of the abstract line it represents by shifting its indexical direction away from that line towards the subject it seeks to control, so the indexical place of the individual body. Thus, *'the fantasy end point of "smart borders" is that they become so individuated that they involve no relations at all'* (Green 2012, 586). Applying Green's logic, and the border ontology that she conceptualizes, we can understand the border's individualization from a conceptualization in which it remains one and the same, but with the world in which it is set differing for each subject.

Such an understanding of the border and its functioning is strongly informed by a subjectivation perspective. Applied here, this means that on the one hand, the experiences and boundary-making processes of the people undergoing the spousal unification procedures are vital to the analysis, making their narratives the major data source and a boundary-making perspective as well as a general narrative-interpretative reading central analytical tools for understanding those data. In other words, Installing and upholding borders is inherently linked to the drawing, re-drawing, and challenging of boundaries, with theorists from different disciplinary perspectives all pointing to an interrelation between bordering and othering (e.g.,

Dahinden, Moret, and Jashari 2010; Fischer, Achermann and Dahinden 2020; Korteweg 2017; Van Houtum 2010).

The above discussion also suggests that bordering can be conceptualized using a combination of Foucault's and Butler's approaches to discourse analysis and governmentality, in which the governing power is understood to be effectuated precisely through performative processes of subjectivation. In the following section, I will discuss these conceptual foundations in relation to discourse analysis.

4.3 Macro-concepts: At the border with Foucault and Butler

Although border and migration issues have not been a central part of the work of either Foucault or Butler, their ways of thinking (about discourse, power, and governing subjects/subjectivities) have been integral to a critical 'shift' in border studies. As reflected in this frugality of the critical discourse analytical approach, a Foucauldian perspective lends itself to a reading of the above-discussed heterogeneity and ubiquitous nature of contemporary borders.

However, before engaging in this reading, a discussion of the factors that led me to rely on these macro-concepts in my work is warranted. In the following section, I will lay out how my approach to the critical study of borders is informed by a Foucauldian notion of governmentality and power as well as by Butler's performative understanding of subjectivation. Adopting a relational approach to power as a discursive practice that is pivotally inspired by Foucault and Butler, I focus on discursive and other institutional practices, actors, and socio-spatial conditions as well as on the relations between them, which produce that border and constitute its power in their interplay.

4.3.1 The apparatus

Even though, or rather precisely because, the notion of the apparatus initially suggested itself to me somewhat spontaneously in the course of the research process, it is nevertheless necessary to question its adequacy as a conceptual tool that can be applied in my study context and explore its meaning. Would the multidimensionality and heterogeneity of the processes and institutions of border regimes actually fall within the purview of Foucault's notion of apparatus? Is the phenomenon that I am describing, even on the scale foreseen by Foucault in his theorization of an apparatus? Does the apparatus not imply a kind of centralized congregation of (bureaucracy-based) state power? And finally, can the somewhat mechanistic and rigid image conveyed in the metaphor of the apparatus really serve to express the more fine-grained and futile elements of the border, such as forced

language learning, feelings of shame, or the imaginary of a criminal self? Following a more avowedly poststructuralist way of thinking about power and governmentality, it could be argued that a more fluid and even less centralized ontological framework, such as that conveyed by the notion of an 'assemblage' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) could be applied. This approach has indeed been adopted recently and convincingly theorized in relation to boundaries and borders (Amelina 2017). Applying this terminology would also have the benefit of further emphasizing what in recent critical border regime studies has been described as the 'autonomy of migration approach', which aims to shed light on the intrinsic dynamics of migration processes, highlighting the agency and creativity of migrants in subverting national borders and border policing strategies rather than depicting themselves as victims of powerful state institutions, or a *state apparatus* for that matter (Hess 2017; Scheel and Gutekunst 2019; Scheel 2013a and b).

However, my research process lead me to the decision to stick to the term *apparatus* or *social apparatus* (Deleuze 1992), for state power conceptualized monolithically and/or (predominantly) bureaucratically would be a misreading. Thus, my terminological choice is in no way a positioning against an approach that favours autonomy or the fluidity concept; on the contrary.

First and foremost, I am sticking to the apparatus concept because such a purely associative reading of the apparatus does not do justice to the Foucauldian concept; it also does not mirror the manifold hard and soft power lines that appeared in my research data, intertwined within a multimodal complex. This misreading of the term (social) apparatus, as it may echo predominantly its bureaucratic dimension, is to some extent simply due to the fact that the English term is an approximate translation of the original French word *dispositif* as used by Foucault. The French term already introduces very different semantic associations, implying much less a sense of centralization or stability and emphasizing the procedurality and perpetual change inherent in power formations.

A closer look at the concept of the apparatus (or *dispositif*) shows that it does indeed encompass many of the dimensions I am seeking to grasp in my analysis of a border regime. Although a definition of this term is absent in Foucault's elliptic writing (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine 2017: 110), and irrespective of the centrality of the concept in his works on governmentality (Foucault 1991, 1994, 2007, 2008), he nevertheless defines it in an interview conducted in 1977:

What I'm trying to single out with this term is, first and foremost, a thoroughly heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements...

...by the term "apparatus" I mean a kind of a formation, so to speak, that at a given historical moment has as its major function the response to an urgency. The apparatus therefore has a dominant strategic function...

...I said that the nature of an apparatus is essentially strategic, which means that we are speaking about a certain manipulation of relations of forces, of a rational and concrete intervention in the relations of forces, either so as to develop them in a particular direction, or to block them, to stabilize them. The apparatus is thus always inscribed into a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain limits of knowledge that arise from it and, to an equal degree, condition it. The apparatus is precisely this: a set of strategies of the relations of forces supporting, and supported by, certain types of knowledge. (cited in Agamben 2009, 2)

Pointing to the '*thoroughly heterogeneous set of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions*' or when calling these the '*elements of the apparatus*', Foucault's definition resonates strongly with the multimodal, multisite heterogeneity of the border's manifestation in the narratives of prospective cross-border spouses, which I am trying to conceptualize.

What Foucault conceptualizes as the (dominant strategic) function of this heterogeneous apparatus-formation, transferred to the subject at hand, namely the border, here describes its function(s) as a border *regime*. This function is to govern people outside and inside the (European) border and to regulate the access/movement of those outside into the territories of the concerned nation-state.

The strategic element incorporated into the notion of apparatus is the gravity centre, which holds together its various heterogeneous elements and directs them towards a particular goal, while also having effects that extend beyond these strategically targeted functions. Although I apply the notion of the apparatus in my analysis, I keep referring to the notion of a border regime; a notion which in many works within critical border studies is actually replacing the term apparatus. I do so because I find that the term 'regime' clearly foregrounds the strategic or functional element that Foucault speaks of. In other words; I conceptualize the particular border apparatus as the ever-changing network/cluster of manifestations in which a particular type of border regime (here spousal/family unification from third countries to Europe) is realized at a particular point in time. Therefore, I maintain both terms, speaking at times of a *border regime apparatus* as the subject of my analysis.

Finally, as many passages of this text have thus far highlighted, and as is characteristically noted in a Foucauldian analysis of governmentality and power, I have emphasized the importance of the *historical moment* and *concreteness* of the interventions shaping the apparatus. This primary focus on the particular rather than the generalizable or deductible traits of a social phenomenon is central to my exploration of what a border regime means in the context of this type of 'cross-border marriage'.

In my quest to gain a clearer, more concrete understanding of what an apparatus is and what it is not meant to encompass, I found that this very question has been of abiding concern to renowned philosophers/scholars. Thus, for example, two essays, one by Gilles Deleuze and the other by Giorgio Agamben, both ask the same question in their title: *What is a dispositif?* (Deleuze 1992) and *What is an Apparatus?* (Agamben 2009)

These readings were liberating for me in the sense that they confirmed my impression of the wide scope and fuzziness that are integral components of this analytical macro-tool, making it so flexible and therefore productive for an analysis of a broad range of contexts and types of power relations. This flexibility and

productivity is of course evident in the vast and unabated reception of Foucauldian discourse analysis throughout numerous disciplines. But with regard to the discussion of the apparatus in particular, it is reflected in the examples selected by Agamben (2009) in the course of defining his take on Foucault's concept, which includes language:

Further expanding the already large class of Foucauldian apparatuses, I shall call an apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings. Not only, therefore, prisons, madhouses, the panopticon, schools, confession, factories, disciplines, juridical measures, and so forth (whose connection with power is in a certain sense evident), but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones and – why not – language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses. (Agamben 2009, 14)

The productivity of the concept has been confirmed with regard to my research endeavour, while remaining sufficiently vague to leave room for its application to a particular context of European border regime. At the same time, it is specific enough to inspire and direct my exploration into various relevant dimensions entailing the execution of power in its different forms. Ultimately, this was another important reason for me to stick to the notion of apparatus up to the time of writing up this project rather than attempting to dress it in another, more fluid terminology, such as that of the 'assemblage'. At this point in the analytical process, it is no longer just a matter of being inclined towards a particular perspective, style or intuition; rather it is one of scientific transparency. Throughout the entire research process, the 'apparatus' has continued to function as the main conceptual tool, helping me to shape and reshape my understanding of the regulation I study. Applying a different concept at this stage would therefore obscure more than it would reveal.

4.3.2 Subjectivation

While this study focuses on exploring the operations of the bordering apparatus installed to govern family unification, mobilizing some people and

immobilizing others, the methodological and epistemological pathway it takes to accomplish this goal comprises mainly of conversations with the governed. When conceptualizing this project, this approach was not conceived as an indirect way of getting to the bordering institutions themselves; rather, it is one aimed at the core function of the apparatus, namely the production of its subjects, which in this study are *visa applicants for spousal unification* but also *pre-integrative language learners* and *test candidates* and, finally, *migrants* or *foreigners*, encompassing that part of the populations of European nations that is perpetually bound to 'integrate'. But I am getting ahead of things; these layers of subjectivation (or interpellation) that are specific to the bordering processes of a pre-integrative language-testing regime will be explored in detail in the following empirical chapters. Here, it is important to note that this perspective on the primary function of the border, namely governing those who want to pass through, is integrally effectuated by shaping the subjectivities of the latter. This is already set as paramount to the functioning of the apparatus as conceptualized by Foucault:

Indeed, every apparatus implies a process of subjectification, without which it cannot function as an apparatus of governance, but is rather reduced to a mere exercise of violence. . . . Apparatus, then, is first of all a machine that produces subjectifications, and only as such is it also a machine of governance. (Agamben 2009, 19f)

An understanding of the governed subject, paradigmatically discussed with regard to the prisoner in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1994), extends well beyond the passive notion of a receiving or enduring body/individual that is being shaped by (violent) controlling acts 'from the outside'. Moreover, a particular subjectivity (the prisoner) that comes into being is shaped by a particular apparatus (the prison), through its disciplinary regime and signifying practices that are applied on the body and soul of that subject. It may be somewhat surprising to see the latter notion, which rarely features in studies, in a Foucauldian text, but Foucault's statement that 'the soul is the prison of the body' (cited in Butler 1996, 85) points to a quality of power that surpasses or rather underpins the use of violence as a measure for

controlling and shaping the bodies of the governed. This interpretation would appear to be counterintuitive, as he speaks of incarceration (in the sense that some given material characteristic of the body, such as its sex, would determine its social construction in terms of a gender identity). The soul in this reading does not refer to some metaphysical pre-given essence; rather, it is a non-(purely) bodily aspect of the governed or, as Butler refers to it in her discussion of Foucault and Freud, 'a kind of psychic identity' (Butler 1997, 85), that 'is taken to be an instrument of power through which the body is cultivated and formed' (Butler 1997, 89).

This notion of the soul seems to be conceptualized to function as a gate of entry into the body, through which the symbolic codes of the apparatus of power access the body or are transposed on to it, resulting in a totalizing subjectivation of the governed individual. Hence, it is the non-material and the discursive that represents the primary source of governing power according to Foucault. The analysis at hand supports Butler's reading of Foucault's notion of governance, with power understood as functioning for the most part through knowledge rather than through sheer acts of violence. The potential exercise of violence by the nation-state through, for example, the police or military institutions, remains essential for facilitating these subjectifications. This structural aspect, which is external to the performative re-enactment at the individual level, remains pertinent, even if it may remain in the background most of the time. Thus, applying the ideas of both Foucault and Butler, I see power at work in the production of subjectivities as fed by an interrelation of the 'hard' factors of a particular apparatus of governance, surpassing the single performance, and 'soft' factors, which depend entirely on discursive interpellation and individual activation or reiteration. Of course, the hard/soft binary is a simplification; I would argue that it should instead be imagined as a merging and heterogeneous network set in a spectrum of differently 'solidified' power lines.

In his study on deportability and the production of 'illegals', De Genova provides a memorable example of the role of knowledge-power and its

subjectification in relation to borders. He demonstrates how power does not function merely through repression; rather, it is productive in the sense that it works through the creation of subjectivities. He argues that *'it is deportability, and not deportation per se, that has historically rendered undocumented migrant labor a distinctly disposable commodity'* (De Genova 2002, 438). Peutz and De Genova further elaborate on this functional correlation, highlighting the part that the 'border spectacle' has in making border governance effective through a process of interiorization:

It is deportability, then, or the protracted possibility of being deported . . . that is the real effect of these policies and practices. Deportation regimes are profoundly effective, and quite efficiently so, exactly insofar as the grim spectacle of the deportation of even just a few, coupled with the enduring everyday deportability of countless others . . . produces and maintains migrant 'illegality' as not merely an anomalous juridical status but also a practical, materially consequential, and deeply interiorized mode of being – and of being put in place. (Peutz and De Genova 2010, 14)

So before any form of physical violence or other type of measure is applied by nation-states' bordering institutions, knowledge-power or discursive power has already done a large part of the borderwork via processes of subjectification or embodiment. The fact that individuals deeply interiorize the realities thus produced into a mode of being and are hence put in place, is strongly correlated with my findings regarding the production of illegality, criminality, and (racialized, culturalized, and gendered) alterity in the context of family unification and the pre-departure language testing regime. Therefore, including such a performative perspective and foregrounding the individual who is undergoing this apparatus of the border regime is indispensable to my analysis, which seeks to grasp not only the harder and evidently violent elements of the border-making process but also the equally vital softer forms. Only then does it become possible to understand the myriad ways in which both are interrelated (or disconnected), each representing integral parts of the border apparatus. Many of these 'softer' forms of migration government, as I refer to them here (and as they have been referred to before, for

instance, by Hess 2010) function through discourse and processes of subjectification/embodiment, and these processes also ensue through performativity. Here, the second basic conceptual pillar comes into play in my analysis, namely Judith Butler's approach to performativity and the discursive self/re/constitution of the subject within epistemological fields; an approach that is radical in the sense that it does not depart from the idea of a subject standing outside of discourse.

Foucault's binary of body and soul differs from Butler's conception of subjectivation, ultimately seeming to rely on some pre-discursive quality of the subject. This contrast is apparent in Butler's reflections on the process of subjectivation, which Foucault views as an effect of subjection:

Subjection is neither simply the domination of a subject nor its production, but designates a certain kind of restriction in production, a restriction without which the producing of the subject cannot take place, a restriction through which that production takes place. (Butler 1997, 84)

To put this complex normalizing interrelation simply, when somebody is subjected to a dichotomising gender regime and produced as female, for instance, their possibility of identifying as male is restricted. Or, when somebody is subjected under a dichotomizing border regime and produced as a foreigner, their sense of belonging to the nation as a citizen or a local is restricted. But in these processes of subjection, subjectivation, and normalization via restriction, what appears to be implied is that a non-restricted, somewhat neutral, uncoded being is pre-given. Counterposing her reading of Foucault by engaging with Freud and Lacan, Butler analyses this requirement of a material body as opposed to discursive power as something that occasionally emanates in Foucault's writing, but is then withdrawn again, as he unpacks his notion of subjectivation, conceived as a process of normalization, which is neither unilaterally imposed on the governed body nor exterior to it. Now, Butler's particular approach to subjectivation fits into my theoretical framework because on the one hand, her perspective on performativity allows for a better grasp of the *how* of subjectivation, and on the other hand, it

emphasises the possibilities of resistance. The central notion upon which Butler builds her concept is reiteration, whose insertion point she finds to some extent in Foucault, though not as a central theoretical focus (Butler 1997, 99). The necessity of the reiteration of particular symbolic forms, which stabilize a subjectivity, is also what provides the entry point of resistance:

a subject only remains a subject through a reiteration or rearticulation of itself as a subject, and this dependency of the subject on repetition for coherence may constitute that subject's incoherence, its incomplete character. This repetition or, better, iterability thus becomes the non-place of subversion, the possibility of a re-embodiment of the subjectivating norm that can redirect its normativity. (Butler 1997, 99)

4.3.3 Performativity

Although Butler has predominantly (but not exclusively) focused on the field of gender/queer studies, her work has become widely influential, finding its way also into border regime studies (Glouftsiou and Scheel 2020; Gutekunst 2018; Heinze, Illigens, and Pollok 2016; Scheel 2013a, 2013b; Wonders and Jones 2018).

But Butler herself expands and extends her approach to gender performativity to different areas. For instance, in an article published in the *Journal of Cultural Economy*, she lays out the different possibilities and general benefits of such an approach with regard to the study of gender that can be applied just as well to the study of the state and economy:

[P]erformativity seeks to counter a certain kind of positivism according to which we might begin with already delimited understandings of what gender, the state, and the economy are. Secondly, performativity works, when it works, to counter a certain metaphysical presumption about culturally constructed categories and to draw our attention to the diverse mechanisms of that construction. Thirdly, performativity starts to describe a set of processes that produce ontological effects, that is, that work to bring into being certain kinds of realities or, fourthly, that lead to certain kinds of socially binding consequences. (Butler 2010, 147)

The use of the verb 'counter' points to the critical scientific impetus inherent in a performativity-centred approach to power and governance, but it also hints at the critical potential of this perspective, as the subject's possibilities of resisting that

power are discussed and explored. Certainly, the potential of this perspective to counter positivism (the state is also not a given, with regard to the topic of this study, namely the border) and (cultural) essentialism (relating, for example, to genders, nation(state)s, respective populations but also to global hierarchies) has made it appealing for scholars working on borders. This is because it not only opens up a window for the subjects' self-empowerment, enabling them to (co-) construct and subvert identities subjected on them, or what Butler, referring to Althusser, calls interpellated subjectivities (Butler 1997, 95). It also makes visible the constructed nature and arbitrariness of apparatuses/institutions that are generally perceived as powerful and (relatively) unchanging over time. This particular interest of Butler is echoed in the application by Heinze, Illigens, and Pollok (2016) of her performativity concept to 'doing frontiers' in their study of European border regimes, which they describe as:

a productive approach to thinking about borders because it is rooted in a way of regarding differences as always precarious, thus re-definable and in permanent need of stabilisation. These differences cannot refer to anything predefined and therefore natural. Instead, they are brought into existence through ever-changing discourses. All of this applies to borders as well. (Heinze, Illigens and Pollok 2016, 5)

This critical potential arising from Butler's radically performative reading of subjectivation and power has had a role in inspiring an approach to migration studies that has come to be known as *autonomy of migration*. The aims of this concept, which emphasizes the intrinsic dynamics of migratory processes as well as the agency of people on the move (countering the idea of 'Fortress Europe'), is to open up a perspective on the phenomenon whereby 'migratory movements yield moments of autonomy in regards to any attempt to control and regulate them' (Scheel 2013a, 575) Countering criticism that centres on the romanticization of migration that may be conveyed by the concept, Scheel emphasizes the constructivist perspective that it opens up:

What the adoption of this analytical focus (autonomy of migration) affords to acknowledge is, however, that neither migration, nor borders exist as such, but are brought into being in

the innumerable encounters between people on the move and the actors, means and methods of mobility control. (Scheel 2013b, 279)

Hess and Kasperek (2017, 60) accentuate a different aspect of the autonomy concept in their conceptualization of borders as spaces of perpetual conflict and contestation:

This approach allows [us] to look at the border regime as a space of conflict and contestation between the various actors trying to govern the border and the movements of migration – without minimizing the border regime's brutality.

Although I too apply a discourse-performativist approach to the study of borders and am highly interested in shedding light on the interactive ways in which borders are constructed, I am not entirely at ease with the notion of autonomy of migration in my research. This is partly because even if I learnt a lot about individuals' ways of challenging and subverting border regimes, their accounts led me to think of this regime as very powerful and encompassing. So ultimately stuck to the term apparatus, instead of using the notion of assemblage, which implies the fluidity of contemporary borders. However, I figure that both terms *apparatus* and the *autonomy of migration*, applied together, hold potential for revealing both the depth and width of the particular bordering power that I encountered in my field, without making the analysis too rigid and obscuring the manifold dynamic and interactive aspects at play.

Returning to Butler's listing of the aims and possibilities of a performativity perspective, her inclusion of *diverse mechanisms* and a *set of processes* are indicative of the strong applicability of her conceptual framework to border studies. Transposed to this field, it enables the multiplicity of contemporary border notions to be grasped in terms of the multisite and multimodal production of the border, which, in Butler's words, entails the co-production of *certain kinds of realities*. In the context of this study, what emerges is a world marked by states, borders, and highly contrasting levels of mobility of different groups. Moreover, this production also *leads to certain kinds of socially binding consequences*, as, for example, a division of

people into welcome and unwelcome mobiles, which comes with different labels/subjectivities (such as expatriates and refugees, or in the case of the individuals I spoke with during my research, third-country citizens). But most of all, such a division brings to light dramatically diverging risks for the people classified in these ways.

4.4 Border making and boundary making

Last but not least, the notion of borders on which I want to base my analysis of the 'pre-departure language testing' regime is inherently associated with that of boundaries. This is due to my understanding of borders as, ultimately, discursively constructed, but is also follows from the fact, that the analysis at hand is based on the narratives of people governed by means of border. The particular ways in which they construct their narratives are largely representative of the discursive negotiation of that border through socio-symbolic boundary making (Barth 1970). My theoretical point of departure here entails a perspective whereby individuals are socially situated within multiple intersecting hierarchies related to social categories such as class, race, gender, culture, ethnicity, place, and age (Anthias 2013; Winkler and Degele 2009). The 'cross-border spouses' whom we interviewed for this project, when confronted with negative identity markers, developed strategies to regain positive identifications (Tajfel 1981). These strategies involve actively responding to boundaries and attempting to modify or re-draw specific symbolic boundaries (Barth 1970). Boundaries allow social actors '*to categorise objects, people, practices, and even time and space . . . [to] acquire status and monopolize resources*' (Lamont and Molnar 2002, 168).

The individuals who become involved in the 'pre-departure language testing' regime that governs their im/mobilisation continually confront specific hierarchies in the process of being granted the necessary documentation to move. This process renders visible how European bordering processes go hand in hand with othering processes, which is to say that including a boundary perspective in the analysis of borders is essential.

It is the dimension of discursive/narrative processes subsumable under the notion of boundary making that leads to a focus on subjectivation as a central aim of the border apparatus. The particular boundaries that emanate from individuals' narratives reveal how the apparatus imagines or 'formats' its subjects, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, being an expression of how individuals respond to

these imaginaries or, in Butler's words, interpellations of the apparatus. Hence it is through boundaries that we get from the border apparatus to the subjectivities it produces.

This conceptual framework, linking borders with boundary making, is by now well-established in border and migration studies (Amelina 2017; Fischer et al. 2020; Nieswand 2018; Wimmer 2002), distinguishing between those who do and do not belong, who to let in and with what rights' (Dahinden et al. 2020, 513). Hence, the relation between borders and boundaries could be defined as follows:

Symbolic boundaries regulate membership in terms of the distinction between "us" and "them", while borders regulate membership in legal, infrastructural and spatial terms. Both are involved in the (re)production of systems of dominance and inequality (Dahinden et al. 2020, 513)

My analysis of boundaries in the context of the 'pre-integrative language testing' regime initially takes up this terminological distinction (for a further elaboration of this distinction, see Fischer et al. 2020). However, one finding from my analysis, informed by a constructivist approach to discourse and borders, is that the distinction cannot be upheld. I will further scrutinize this division in the last section of this chapter's discussion on theory. But first, I will turn to the final two intersecting perspectives of 'second order' that informs my approach to border analysis.

4.4.1 A postcolonial perspective on bordered boundary making

As previously mentioned, I consider it necessary to apply a postcolonial perspective to the study of borders and boundaries, arguing with Mayblin and Turner (2021) that current migration processes build on colonial socio-spatial power divisions. Thus, I observe, for instance, how the boundaries invoked in my respondents' border narratives relate to spatial imaginaries that are historically rooted in colonialism, such as 'the West and the rest' (Hall 1992). These imaginaries continue to circulate within European bordering institutions, meeting visa applicants as interpellations on the part of immigration officials, embassy agents, or language

teachers. By reinforcing culturalizing and orientalizing stereotypes (Saïd 1978), these imaginaries function to legitimize global power hierarchies (Hall 1992) and (im)mobilizations (Schmoll 2014).

The linking of borders to a postcolonial perspective has not yet acquired the same resonance within the migration and border studies literature as have their linkages with boundaries. However, interest in this topic is on the rise, as evidenced, for instance, in the work of Mayblin and Turner (2021) or Schinkel (2019). Another example is Miriam Gutekunst's Moroccan–German case study on migration through marriage, which highlights the intersection of current migration processes and regimes with colonial power hierarchies (Gutekunst 2018, 54ff). She refers to the work of Sandro Mezzadra, who makes a particularly compelling argument for studying contemporary mobility regimes from a postcolonial perspective (Mezzadra 2009). Mezzadra is a member of a group of researchers-activists engaged in border studies, who in a programmatic paper titled 'New Keywords: Migration and Borders' (2014) contended that a de-colonial perspective is one of *'the critical concepts that deconstruct and transform the established repertoires of both traditional and critical migration studies in productive ways'*, which is their formulated goal (De Genova, Mezzadra, and Pickles 2014, 59). In recent publications connected to the larger multisite research project, within which this dissertation is embedded, the authors also apply such a combined perspective, looking at boundaries and border making through a de- or post-colonial lens. (Dahinden, Moret, and Jashari 2020; Jashari, Dahinden, and Moret 2019). Thus Dahinden et al. demonstrated how *'[p]olicies restricting family reunification constitute a form of neo-colonial governance of borders and boundaries that reinforce global hierarchies'* (2020, 518). In my thesis, I apply this approach to open up a socio-spatially and historically encompassing view on how current hegemonic and Eurocentric boundaries that legitimize the EU's border regimes are derived from a colonial repertoire of imagined 'others'. A postcolonial lens is indispensable, enabling me to situate my observations and findings within a wider context, particularly in the concluding chapter.

4.4.2 An 'emotional' perspective on bordered boundary making

A final salient point relates to my understanding of how subjectivation is associated with boundary-making processes. Here, I would like to emphasize that this notion of subjectivation is performative in the sense that it involves the active participation of the governed (with regard to activation through pre-departure language testing; see Gutekunst 2018, 172ff). This implies that boundaries are vital to the functionality of the border apparatus in so far as they reach the subject at a socio-symbolic and identificatory level, producing the subject, to then tie it back to *'a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject'* (Agamben 2009, 11).

Thus, the subject is always partaking in those acts of border governance as a 'body' too, living through the respective experiences of the bordering procedures. As an individual encounters the various institutions of the border apparatus, they come to embody those experiences and performatively re/enact the role of 'visa-applicant', 'migrant', 'language learner', orientalized 'housewife' and so forth, irrespective of the level of compliance or resistance with which they meet these roles. A focal area in my analysis of border governance is the significant role that affects and emotions play, often in interrelation with narratively performed self-imaginaries and imaginaries of the nation(-state), in the process of subjectivation. Both, emotions and imaginaries, however fleeting in nature they may appear, are far from being 'byproducts' of the subject's passage through the border apparatus; rather, as I argue, they offer the apparatus a highly effective grasp on the subjects it seeks to govern.

This approach to emotions is rooted in a feminist, anti-racist critique in which affects and emotions are theorized as part of political power hierarchies and traditions (Abu-Lughod 2016; Cvetkovich 1992; Gorton 2007; hooks 1989; Lorde 1984). The co-constitution of spaces and bodies, as theorized within critical human geography, is not reduced to the level of the symbolic/discursive; rather, it involves

everyday practices, such as walking, eating, and feeling (Schurr and Strüver 2016, 88). From its beginnings in the 1980s, the study of emotions has been on the rise within the social sciences, cumulating in what has been called the 'affective' or 'emotional turn' towards the turn of the twentieth century (Woodward 1996). Of particular relevance to this study is the work of Sarah Ahmed, who in her book titled *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2014) in which she analyses right-wing discourses that are not only fed by an opposition to 'foreigner' figures, but also serve to align people within groups through emotions, resulting in naturalizing senses of belonging (to a particular nation, group, territory etc.). Ahmed's performative approach to the embodied 'doing' of emotions resonates strongly with my own perspective on subjectivation forged through emotions, as boundaries are manifested on/in the body:

The 'doing' of emotions, I have suggested, is bound up with the sticky relation between signs and bodies: emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds. (Ahmed 2014: 191)

Applying an affects- and emotions-focused perspective in relation to the study of borders and boundaries during the so-called 'refugee crisis' of 2015 in an Austrian case study, Scheibelhofer (2020, 542) described this relation in the following way:

[E]motions are understood as shaped by social context and relations of power. Through emotions, the personal is connected with the social, and it is through emotions, that the social is engaged with in [sic] everyday life. (Scheibelhofer 2020: 542)

Scheibelhofer's study examines how emotions as part of 'doing boundary' affect 'doing border' from an Austrian (non-migrant) perspective, thereby generating both a 'politics of fear' (Wodak 2015b) as well as solidarization. However, my interest lies in the ways in which emotions, as part of a border apparatus, shape the subjectivities of those labelled as 'migrants'.

In concluding this section, what remains is to emphasize that such a (radically) performativist-constructivist notion of subjectivation, as expressed in Agamben's notion of apparatuses, entailing '*pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation*' (Agamben 2009: 11) has yet another important implication with regard to a critical ontological conceptualization of borders relating to the border/boundary binary, which I will briefly discuss in the last two sub-sections of this conceptual framework on borders.

4.4.3 Materialities, spaces, and places and their intersecting boundaries

The analytical focus on the particular, concrete manifestations of border phenomena implies not only the inclusion of the more 'ephemeral' and embodied bordering aspects but also a heightened attention to materiality and spatiality. Such a focus on materiality is characteristic of recent Foucault-based approaches to border studies, as Dijstelbloem and Walters (2019) point out when calling for a more dynamic and morphological approach to studying the spatialities and materialities of the border.

I argue that to understand how socio-spatial boundaries and national borders are dealt with discursively, we have to focus on the multi-layered embeddedness of cross-border phenomena in space and place (see also Jashari et al. 2019). On the one hand, I examine space as 'a distinct dimension of social inequality, along with the dimensions of gender, ethnicity/race and class, among others' (Amelina 2017, 61),. On the other hand, I examine place as a concrete, experienced environment. I understand place to be a particular articulation of space (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Massey 1994) that partakes in shaping individual experience (Löw 2001). This broad, multilevel approach to spatiality enables the avoidance of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) and the reproduction of nation-states' categories (Dahinden 2016; Moret et al. 2019).

Space and place are always gendered, as feminist geographers in particular have demonstrated (Massey 1994; Riaño and Baghdadi 2007; Silvey 2006). Hence

gender, understood as a relational and analytical category comprising the social production of identifications such as feminine and masculine together with other intersecting categories, plays an important role in the spatialization processes of the border apparatus. Gender relates not only to identities and subjectivities but also to systems of domination and subordination (Butler 1999). What a person should be or do according to their ascribed gender thus varies over time and place, but the idea that 'men and women' should be and do radically different things is what constitutes the structural and symbolic basis of the (heteronormative) binary differentiation process. Gender is an element actively reproduced and transformed in social practices and interactions that entail 'doing' and 'undoing' gender (West and Fenstermaker 1995), as will become clear in the analyses of gendered narratives throughout Part II of this thesis.

Gender is constitutive of the dominant hierarchizing discourses on Europe, the West, the Orient, the Balkans and so on. These discourses build on dichotomous culturalizing spatial oppositions, as they draw seemingly geographic lines between 'modern' and 'traditional' places, thus constructing global hierarchies, which make the application of a postcolonial perspective imperative (Saïd 1979; Hall 1992; Todorova 1997). These gendered, racializing, and culturalizing ascriptions come together in Western imaginaries of figures such as the 'Turkish import bride' (Dahinden et al. 2014). Several scholars working from different perspectives have demonstrated how this particular intersection of gender with (spatialized) othering categories, such as race, culture, and ethnicity have fed into nationalist discourses and policy agendas (e.g., Abu-Lughod 2002, 2013; Dahinden et al. 2014; Duemmler et al. 2010; Khazaei 2019; Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009). In doing so, they have applied notions such as femonationalism (Bader 2018; Farris 2017) or gendernationalism (Dahinden et al. 2018). The heavy focus on forced marriages within European migration policies, which is used to justify the language requirement, is an example of such gendered culturalizing, racializing, ethnicizing, or orientalizing representations. Critical anthropologists (e.g., Gupta and Ferguson

1992, 12) as well as critical discourse linguists (e.g., Blommaert and Verschueren 1992) have observed the racist equating of a country with a people and their supposed culture, that is crucially shaping European imaginaries of the nation. And the 3rd country foreigner has to submit to this hegemonic 'culture' by means of assimilation/integration (without a true prospect of ever being counted as part of the people) – while marriage migrants from other places, such as the United States, Japan, or Brazil, are mostly unaffected by such policies (Gutekunst 2015). Thus, racist spatial hierarchies also appear to be strongly related to social class. I understand class as an overarching category of difference and not as an objective, quantifiable entity. And I am interested in how class is lived and experienced by gendered, ethnicized and spatialized social actors (see, for instance, Skeggs 2004).

My focus on space demonstrates that the boundarywork of visa applicants/language learners mobilizes but also challenges global spatial hierarchies while emphasizing local spatial distinctions, particularly the urban–rural opposition. Consequently, I include a theoretical perspective on this opposition. The phenomenological and epistemological distinction of this rural-urban dichotomy continues to pose challenges in an increasingly globalized and interrelated world. (Woods 2009). This conceptual dyad has yielded new terminology within the social sciences, reflecting its blurriness, interconnectedness, and hybridity and has prompted interdisciplinarity, resulting in identity crises for sub-disciplines, such as rural or urban geography, (Cloke 2006; Champion and Hugo 2003). However, regardless of how problematic any scientific definition is, the power of this dyad as a boundary marker within everyday practices, such as subversive mobilization, remains untouched.

4.5 Border making as boundary making

This study seeks to contribute to the literature through an analysis of the workings of borders beyond those that are most visible as the palpable 'hard' power lines that are commonly associated with them, such as fences, walls, or border checkpoints. It does so by integrating a boundary-making perspective into the analysis of bordering processes. A notion of the border that is primarily based on material and space that are 'solidified', and on a narrow understanding of institutional border manifestations, cannot do justice to the manifold 'soft' power lines that are constitutive of the border; hence, the adduction of the boundary concept. This terminological opposition is useful for conceptually grasping the fundamentally discursive aspects of border power, that, is the symbolic representations and identity formations linked to knowledge, beliefs, emotions, and imaginaries; in short, the multiplicity and multimodality inherent in the border apparatus.

However, I need to emphasize here that it has to remain a mere conceptual tool, an approximation. Borders are discursive-performative constructs, albeit very powerful and densely materialized as a range of border paraphernalia and bordering procedures. I am thinking of them in a way that parallels Butler's conceptualization of the relationship between biological sex and gender. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the essentializing assumption behind the idea of the border as a physical, territorial given is much more obvious and even less contestable than the discursive-performative construct of gender as an identity anchored in a given physical body (Butler 2011). In fact, Butler herself draws on a similar parallelism, not with regard to borders per se, but one of 'the state' and 'the economy' as performative effects rather than pre-existing, delimited entities:

In other words, it is not possible simply to situate certain processes and activities within a state or, indeed, an economy, as if “state” and “economy” were pre-given entities, already bounded, identifiable, and knowable. If such notions of the state are produced through state effects, then we must rethink the basic ontologies with which we operate. (Butler 2010: 147)

Of course, along with the state and the economy, the national border too requires an ontological grasp of its radically performative and constructed nature. This means that the attempt to found borders on some ‘material’ basis and oppose them dialectically to boundaries is ultimately theoretically untenable. Moreover, such a dichotomization of the different types of forces at work in the border apparatus cannot be upheld from an empirical perspective either. As this analysis will demonstrate, the interrelations among heterogeneous types of ‘power lines’ (borders and boundaries) are fundamentally mixed in the ways they function, co-constructing ‘the border’ and intersectionally and dynamically producing its power in interaction with the subjects it seeks to govern. At that intersection, boundaries (symbolic and identificatory) appear as parts of the border (a structure), just as the quasi-factuality of the border serves as the basis for boundary work constantly playing on in discourse. In this close-up view, boundaries conceived as symbolic and identificatory ‘stuff’ are just as much part of the structural level of the border as the more palpable, ‘hard’ border manifestations. Therefore, the distinction made by Winkler and Degele (2009) in their very insightful approach to intersectional analysis, which has helped structure my thinking, cannot ultimately be sustained. Thus, the border has to be seen as a more established, stable, and deeply naturalized boundary that is historically rooted and stretched out in time and in space (at the macro level).

In light of this discussion of the conceptual intricacies and imprecisions of the terminological opposition of borders and boundaries that should be kept in mind, I will initially view them as analytical tools that are conceptually distinct to develop a better grasp and structuring of the multiplicity of dimensions and the different qualities at play in bordering practices.

In concluding my first theoretical discussion, I want to point out that in both of my empirical chapters, but especially in the first, lengthier one (Chapter 5), I will build on this conceptual lay-out of the state of the art within critical border studies, adding a postcolonial perspective as well as boundary and emotion perspectives. In a nutshell, my argument is that while the border has long been deconstructed as being much more than a mere geopolitical line or its material and technological reinforcements, border theorization within critical border studies continues to centre largely on the more materialized, rationalizable forms of border technologies, partly due to a dominant focus on 'irregular migration'. This has led to an imbalance in the development of border ontologies and to an emphasis on the border governance function of 'selection' and the neglect of 'subjectivation'. Approaching borders through the lens of 'subjectivation' opens up new perspectives on and conceptualizations of current border technologies and of the 'migrant' as a research subject (rather than an object).

5 Sham, force, integration: Cornerstones of the hegemonic discourse on 'cross-border marriage'

The rationale, with which the pre-entry language requirement was introduced in several European countries and from which it derives its legitimacy usually combines three arguments. Of these arguments, two are related to security issues (foreign and immigration policies) and the *prevention of sham and forced marriages*. The third relates to the issue of *integration* (domestic affairs and an integration policy), aimed at facilitating access to the job market and promoting socio-economic participation in general. Accordingly, three notions, namely *force*, *sham*, and *integration* are prominently interspersed within the hegemonic European discourse on this type of cross-border marriage. The materialization of these notions in the form of legal restrictions (e.g., the lowering of the marital age or other legal requirements that specifically tackle the 'protection' of migrant women) are evidently substantial elements of the European border regime apparatus. Of vital importance to the (subjectivating) functioning of this apparatus are the discursive 'doings' of these notions and their argumentative interrelation, at times hard to grasp, with these particular forms of cross-border movements. Understanding discourses as institutions to be analysed as part of a system of power that produces 'ethereal' realities, such as truths, affects, and subjectivities as well as the more materialized structures of those realities, such as legal articles, border checkpoints, police corps, and prisons, all of which are included in the boundary- and border-making work 'in' the apparatus appear central to this analytical endeavour.

The prominence of the notions of sham, force, and integration, I argue, function as cornerstones of the discursive field from the Western side of the transnational discourse. While I think that it is possible to speak broadly of a transnational discourse that reaches visa applicants through the various bordering institutions as well as through globalized media, I argue that this discourse remains rather loose or patchy, with certain discursive statements, figures, and arguments

'coming across' the border while others do not. Or else they do so only partially or in a somewhat different form, depending largely on the dominant discourses and historical, political, and socio-economic conditions on this side of the transnational discursive field. Thus, as I will demonstrate in my discourse analysis, notions, such as *force*, emanating from the Western discourse can also be just as prominent in 'third countries'. However, their meanings can be surprisingly divergent, opening up an entirely different perspective on the border regime that they relate to. Furthermore, that transnational field is highly asymmetrical, as I will also show in the following chapter.

I will show how these three notions figure in the narratives of individuals undergoing the language-testing procedure, bringing to the surface the particular discursive and, in a narrower sense, institutional architecture of the power structures (knowledge-based soft factors and materialized hard factors) that characterize this kind of visa requirement. I will do so by examining each of these notions individually, working out the particular dimensions and effects at play in each argumentative pillar that serves to legitimize pre-departure language testing. Thus, I will detangle the discursive interrelations of these central notions and make visible the specific ways in which they intersect at different levels (structural, identificatory, and symbolic), each with different functions and effects.

Applying a boundary-making lens, I will trace the ways in which the particular discursive cornerstones, as naturalized social boundaries in the form of discursive certainties, are performatively re/produced, upheld, and contested, often in interrelation with (socio-spatial) imaginaries. Thus, my main argument in this chapter is that these 'bordering boundaries' become visible as governing technologies.

Before zooming in on those soft technologies or bordered boundaries, I would like to broaden the focus to encompass the entire range of soft as well as hard and more materialized factors and their interrelations. In order to do this, I will depart from an in-depth analysis of a single case that is exemplary; that of a young woman in Istanbul, Turkey, taking a German course at the Goethe Institute so that

she could apply for a visa to join her fiancé in Germany. I will show how the narrative (re-)production and contestation of the (gendered, culturalizing and classed) boundaries conveyed through the sham, force, and integration discourses are played out within this individual's sense-making and positioning strategies, thus adding to subjectivation.

I will situate this analysis of the subjectivating effects of these discourses within the concrete socio-spatial, material, and symbolic context in which they come to be experienced and embodied (the language classroom), as well as within the relevant local, national, and global discursive fields and spatial hierarchizations (e.g., urban vs. rural and West vs. 'the rest').

Rooting my discourse analysis of these key notions in a biographic account on the one hand, while situating it within the socio-spatial context in which it is enacted, on the other hand, enables me to show not only how these discursive boundary markers co-effectuate subjectivities but also to highlight the ways in which boundaries are put at work within specific bordering institutions or places, such as the language classroom.

5.1 Alternative spatial hierarchies: Transnationalizing and contesting the 'import-bride' in the language classroom

Situating the analysis of bordering and boundary making within a concrete biographic experience and simultaneously rooting it in a specific historical and socio-spatial context (here, Turkish) serves to counteract a one-sided, dehistoricizing approach to the study of border power. Although the transnational approach has been widely adopted within migration studies, there is still a need to decentre research in this area (Amelina and Faist 2012; Dahinden 2017); an argument that has also been taken up by researchers studying the EU's external borders (e.g., Gutekunst 2018; Scheel and Gutekunst 2019). It is not surprising that within academic migration research funded by Western states, the primary research focus continues to be on the 'receiving' side of cross-border phenomena. Therefore, although the effects of these policies and stigmatizing discourses in European countries are described within an extensive body of literature, the contexts and conditions of the 'outgoing' side, set in the countries of departure, are often neglected (but see Gutekunst 2015 and Aybek et al. 2015 for exceptions).

When it comes to the politicized and transnationalized discourses legitimizing the increasing restrictiveness of European family reunification schemes (Block 2014), cross-border marriage is portrayed as a problem, a sign of failed integration, and is met with the suspicion of fraud or force (Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Strasser et al. 2009; Wray 2006). Researchers have shown how, for instance, stereotypical figures, such as the poorly integrated, violent second-generation migrant man and the voiceless Muslim 'imported bride' who needs to be saved by Western state institutions feature in these narratives (Block 2014b; Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Bonjour and Kraler 2014; Jashari et al. 2019; Moret et al. 2019; Strasser et al. 2009).

The case study of Yüksel K. is exemplary in its demonstration of how the discourse on 'marriage migrants' is met on the outgoing and, in that sense, transnationalized side of the bordering process as she deals with it through a

complex processes of narrative-performative positionings and sense-making strategies. I will show how these culturalizing, gendered, and classed discourses cross borders as well, reaching prospective migrants. The introduction of pre-entry language tests is a striking example of the institutional rootedness of such transnational discourses, seeing that border regimes are increasingly being externalized and outsourced to actors located in the territories of so-called third countries (Cuttitta 2010, Hess et al. 2015). For as Gutekunst (2015) argues, institutions such as the Goethe Institute, whose traditional goals were to promote the German language and culture, have become active players in enforcing Germany's border regime. The following case analysis will examine how these 'material/spatial' structures carry the transnationalization of discourses, shaping the boundary making of Yüksel K.

5.1.1 Yüksel K.'s life story: 'Only one dream'

The first sentence with which the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees receives visitors to its webpage on 'Subsequent entry of spouses' is: "Language skills are an elementary requirement to ensure successful integration' (BAMF 2019). In 2007, the German authorities issued a new regulation, requiring citizens of what were referred to as third countries to prove their basic German language skills before being eligible to apply for a family reunification visa to join their spouses. According to official statements, this regulation is aimed not only at facilitating integration but also at preventing forced and sham marriages (Block 2019; Grote 2017), including all three of what I have proposed are the conceptual cornerstones of the hegemonic discourse on marriage across European borders.

In the following section, I will show how this legal outline manifests discursively in the language classroom of the Goethe Institute in Istanbul, where Yüksel K. was studying to prepare for the *Start Deutsch A1* test at the time of her interview. Passing it was a condition for submitting her visa application for family unification and joining her fiancé in Germany. My in-depth case analysis relies on a semi-directed theme-centred interview, conducted skilfully and translated by Ceren

Topgül. It is for the most part based on a paper that I wrote in close collaboration with my colleagues, Janine Dahinden and Joëlle Moret (Jashari et al. 2019).

Ceren Topgül added the following brief description to the transcript of the conversation with Yüksel K:

She seemed very extroverted and was very eye-catching, with her brightly dyed blond short hair. She also has a tattoo (handwriting) on her chest.

These remarks open up a crack in the dominant image of who a cross-border spouse is and what she is supposed to look like. A stereotypical 'Turkish import bride' wears her dark hair long, and it is probably covered by a scarf, not short and blond. Her hair and tattoo clearly do not fit Western orientalist images (Saïd 1979) of the Muslim 'import bride'; rather, they convey a 'modern' urban woman with traits reserved for collective stereotypical imaginaries of 'the Western woman' (Dahinden, Duemmler, and Moret 2014; Korteweg 2017).

Yüksel's appearance broadcasts the positioning she elaborates in her account of her life, her relationship, and her experiences during the German class she attended at the Goethe Institute: she is different. But the question is from whom and precisely from what? The contrast created by her 'modern' look—and the fact that the interviewer deemed this look worth pointing out—implicitly reinforces generalizing spatial distinctions, both global ('the modern West' vs. 'the traditional Orient') and local ('the modern city' vs. 'the traditional village') (Erman 1998). Throughout her narrative, Yüksel draws abundantly on these spatial hierarchies and develops her life story around them. She responds to the boundary with which she is confronted, categorized as a 'Turkish spouse', by drawing different boundaries based on education, spatiality, and gender. This boundary-work allows her to place herself on the positive, meriting side of the hierarchy as an urban, well-educated, 'modern' woman.

Yüksel, who was twenty-six years old at the time of her interview, grew up in a small city in northern Turkey. She lives in Istanbul in an apartment building for female professionals, a point that recurs frequently in her narrative and reveals the

core element of the self-image she presents. She places the figure of the (female) professional within an urban imaginary and stresses the fact that she lives in an apartment. As has been pointed out in previous studies on rural-to-urban migration, apartments—as opposed to squatter settlements—are an indicator of urban identification (Erman 1998). Primarily, however, Yüksel's emphasis on her urbanity says something about her socio-economic background as the daughter of a relatively well-off middle-class family. Her father, a university graduate and self-employed civil engineer, and her mother, a primary school graduate and housewife, moved from a village to the city with Yüksel and her two younger siblings. Her family seems to embrace Kemalist secularism, a set of values that though not expressed explicitly or in the form of a political conviction, shine through strongly in her self-positioning and are reinforced by the fact that she makes no mention whatsoever of religion.

The predominant narrative lines in Yüksel's life story, which simultaneously run parallel to and in conflict with each other, consist of the education/career theme on the one hand and the relationship/marriage theme on the other hand. These lines are presented as mutually exclusive, as revealed in her account of how she and her husband, whose families have known each other for generations, met as children 15 years ago at a festival in Turkey. He sent her a little love letter, which she—an unknowing child, as she refers to herself at the time—showed to her mother:

She immediately took me away from there and took me home. Then my husband came to the door of our apartment building and sat there every day. When my mom saw him there, she took me inside and didn't let me go outside. Because my mom had one dream: "My daughter should study, reach a good place in her career, be successful, do great things".

From the very beginning, Yüksel's story of falling in love is linked to the story of her striving for an education and career, the former endangering the latter. The emotionally loaded term 'dream' is attached to career aspirations and not to the idea of a marriage, which already represents a positioning: she situates herself as an individual, with her own path and ambitions, and not as part of a couple, at the centre of her story. This choice resonates with her self-portrayal as a

'professional' a positioning that has to be understood in its historical particularity in the Turkish context, where the figure of 'the new woman', who is equal (to a man), educated, and employed, was promoted as part of the modernization project during the founding of the Turkish Republic (Arat 1997; Kandiyoti 1997; Sarioğlu 2014).

A narrative develops around this positioning; one that meanders through her personal and professional life. Her mother's attempts to keep her daughter's admirer away by confining her to the domestic space fail, as they move their encounters to virtual space, namely the social network, Netlog. After six years of being '*actively in love . . . but without seeing, without touching, only hearing his voice*', he comes to visit for the first time after their initial meeting as children, and they confirm their relationship, continuing it for another nine years in this manner. In the meantime, she is accepted at a high school in another, larger city; a place that offers her new experiences and opportunities, culminating in a spontaneous job offer by the assistant manager of the bank where she had been a customer:

I said: "Me"? She said: "Yes. I saw a different light in you". She said: "You can do it, you can be successful". At first it was strange to me. She said: "You will be an employee at the bank". . . . I couldn't believe it; everything happened so fast. It really was the turning point of my life.

It was this moment, namely the inception of her career that she defines as the turning point of her life. This moment marked the primacy of career matters over relationship matters, and is confirmed in the account of the following years of her life that reflected a steady ascent towards higher studies and greater professional responsibilities, occurring concurrently with her moving to bigger, cities further away, not only within Turkey, but also in Russia and in the United States; she lived in each country as a student for several months. This career focus eventually resulted in a breakup with her boyfriend, because, she said, she had neglected him during that time, and he had become engaged to someone else. When they met at a funeral half a year later, he broke his engagement, proposing to get back together with Yüksel. She accepted the proposal:

In fact his engagement had been because of me. I accept that. Because he specifically told me: "I want to get engaged; I want something (formal) between us. How long can this silly, childish thing go on, calling each other "my love, my darling" on the phone, etc.? I'm sick and tired of your ambition and your career goals etc."; the typical man–woman conflict. Then he broke up with me.

Notwithstanding her constantly stressing over her career orientation, she agreed to marry her boyfriend without having accomplished her career goals yet. This decision meant that she would probably not be able to finish her master's degree, because she had to interrupt it in order to attend the German class at the Goethe Institute. This is when and where the interviewer met Yüksel.

5.1.2 Positioning against the suspicion of being an 'import bride'

Yüksel K.'s life story already demonstrates the important role that spatiality and mobility have played in her biographical sense-making: her story is not only one of increasing geographical mobility but also, and more importantly, one of ascending social mobility. This movement from the small to the big, from the remote, enclosed, and confined to the openness and opportunities of 'the world'—a term she uses often—is characteristic not only of Yüksel's narrative account of her life but also, and especially, of her account of her experience with the German class and her thoughts about cross-border marriages. These classed spatial imaginaries predominate in her explanation, functioning as landmarks in her boundary-work.

De-nationalization of belonging as 'classization'

In her argumentative strategy, Yüksel first challenges the spatial category of the nation-state as an adequate basis for determining the admissibility of people into Germany, proposing the category of education instead. What kind of boundary-work is at stake here? One of the first crucial spatial categories encountered in Yüksel's narrative is that of the nation-state, which, not surprisingly, is the basic spatial category in cross-border marriages, bringing together border and boundary. In the case of marriages between a German partner and a partner from a non-EU country, the national border is regulated through, among other things, a language

test. For Yüksel, however, the importance of this category seems misplaced, and she suggests an alternative selection criterion, drawing a different boundary through the group of candidates for a residence permit in Germany:

I mean, there are people who worked all their lives, studied, and dedicated their lives to school . . . who can have really good jobs at really good places in Germany. But there are also the kinds of people whose lives revolve around getting married and having children. I think there should definitely be a distinction between these two types of people. Not separating people, just the schools they went to, the education they attained, etc. I think there should somehow be a distinction on this basis. Okay, we're citizens of the Turkish Republic or other countries. I just get upset about this. I don't approve much of this.

Yüksel meets the rigid nation-state-based classification with sharp boundary-making of her own based on class, dismissing the former classification as arbitrary. Therefore, what appears as a concession—being Turkish—is actually an objection that takes the following form: 'OK, we're all non-Europeans, but . . . '.

A classed notion of education allows her to posit a defining characteristic that is, at first sight, less random and essentializing than nationality and based on personal merit. She proposes that German authorities grant residence permits to people on the basis of their skills, rather than considering other factors such as whether they have a German spouse or even their origin, as she claims later in the interview. With her proposal, she challenges the existing border regime, which she views as being highly generalizing with regard to how it considers people from third countries. Her imaginary of a different spatial order speaks of the frustration caused by the fundamental legal division upheld by Europe towards so-called third-country immigrants. In countering the nation-state-based category of a 'Turkish cross-border wife' with an alternative category based on skills and education, she employs a class-based neoliberal myth according to which people are categorized on the basis of their qualifications rather than according to where they were born.

I should point out here that European border regimes in general and the German one in particular do take into account the qualifications of visa candidates, allowing persons from certain professions and with a certain income, commonly referred to as highly qualified, to enter the EU without having to fulfil a language

requirement (BAMF 2018; Grote 2017). However, this is not the legal path for entering Germany on which Yüksel finds herself. The interview data does not indicate why Yüksel has chosen family reunification rather than a student visa as the vehicle for migration. As I subsequently discuss, one reason may be that she aspires to make such a move for the sake of her relationship and not for her studies and can no longer postpone it.

Of immobile and mobile 'mentalities': Women of the village, the city, and the world

As Yüksel's narrative proceeds, she re-spatializes her classed self-positioning not on the basis of nation-state hierarchies but rather by introducing a distinction between the village and the city, or, more precisely, a person's proximity to the metropolis of Istanbul. Following the interviewer's follow-up question of whether she thinks educated people should be permitted to skip the test, she provides the following response:

Definitely. I mean educated people. . . . I mean what's the reason? For instance, I look at my classroom. All their life—I'm giving an example—someone who has never been to Istiklal Street, someone who has never been to Istanbul in their life, and someone who travelled the world—we're in the same category.

Her example links implicit but vibrant allusions to Europeanness and cosmopolitanism—considered as identificatory rather than political or institutional notions (Woodward et al. 2008)—to education. Notably, Istiklal Street, with all of its shops, cafés, and people is not only on the European side of Istanbul but it also represents modern urbanity. Yüksel reveals her association of both the urban and the European space with modernity and cosmopolitanism many times during the interview, including when she refers to why a match between someone from Turkey and someone from Germany (which she often points out is a European country) cannot work, having claimed an exception for herself:

There is a serious cultural difference. . . . I wish you could interview everyone in our classroom so you could understand it better. There's a huge gap between someone living in Germany and someone who comes from a village. . . . This girl hasn't seen anything in her life, hasn't sat down in a luxurious place to have tea. But moving from here to Germany . . .

[it's] like a 180-degree shift. You'll be able to see how difficult it is to go, how wrong it is. I'm opposed to this; I'm totally against it. In my opinion, this is indeed a huge problem. Because I look at my friends [classmates], at the very least even the places where we sit down in our daily lives are normally very absurd for them. They're so anxious: "Did I hold the glass wrong? How did I drink from the cup? How did I hold the fork?" . . . I can't believe it. I mean, how can a person like that make it with a guy who was born and grew up in Germany?

The urban life, in her imaginary, which is a life of luxury, of going out to eat and drink in fancy public places, is presented in stark contrast to the lives of the majority of her classmates, 'the villagers', as she refers to them. She places a great deal of emphasis on this contrast, placing herself on the positively evaluated side of that boundary. She highlights a different boundary between herself and the other students in the class based on education and spatiality, concrete urbanity, which should, in her eyes, be the only issue determining accessibility to Europe.

Later on in the interview, when she is asked about her thoughts on leaving Turkey, her positioning vis-à-vis the country, after being limited to its urban parts, she shifts away from it altogether, disavowing her national belonging:

I think great things about it! [Laughter]. Anyway, I tell my parents: "I was born in the wrong place", I say. I've never felt Turkish. The blood in my veins may be Turkish, I can wave the red flag, I'd sacrifice my life for Turkey, but I've never felt Turkish.

She views chaos and violence as characteristics of Turkey, illustrated mainly through anecdotes from her daily struggle with Istanbul traffic, which, she explains account for her feeling of not belonging. To understand these ascriptions of chaos, we should keep in mind recent events in Turkey, such as the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the series of bombings in large cities, which occurred only weeks before the interview took place.

When Yüksel denies her Turkishness, while upholding a sense of nostalgic patriotism, she defines spatial belonging as a subjective quality. Consequently, when moving to Germany, she will not, as an urban and therefore global citizen, have trouble adjusting to the new place, unlike her classmates. On the contrary, she will be moving to the place where she truly belongs.

In this culturalizing and classed argument of de- and re-spatialized belonging, she uses alternative spatial boundaries to those imposed on her. In her view, the crucial difference is not between people from Turkey and those from Germany; it is between villagers on the one hand and inhabitants of the city and of Germany on the other hand. According to this logic, it is not the national border that determines whether a cross-border marriage will work out; rather, it is the 'cultural' boundary between people 'from Germany' and those 'from the village' that is key. The selective splitting of Turkey's urban parts from the country as a whole and their characterization as Western, leaving Turkey to be represented by its rural areas, is a discursive representation that reaches far back into Western self-imaginaries (Hall 1992).

But Yüksel's self-positioning as modern and urban has to be understood not only in terms of these global spatial hierarchies but also as part of a dominant local/national modernity discourse, which is based on a similar spatial dichotomy of rurality and urbanity (Arat 1997; Erman 1998; Sarioglu 2014), but which demarcates spatial hierarchies within Turkey.

As the interview proceeds, it becomes apparent that Yüksel herself is "originally from a village too" but claims to have left her village mentality behind; a transcendence she does not confer to those women she frames as typical cross-border spouses, stating that no matter how long they live in Germany, they will fail to 'improve their mentality'. In Yüksel's opinion, an individual does not dissolve their mental ties to their village of origin simply by moving to the city; they must 'really want to improve', and therefore to move (on) not only physically but also 'mentally'. Once more, she employs a neoliberal sense-making strategy that legitimizes (im)mobilization on the basis of the individual's level of education or use for the 'workfare' state (Lanz 2009), which again is presented as a matter of personal ambition and merit.

Yüksel's mostly negative portrayals of her classmates and her self-presentation as a modern, urban professional are formative of a spatialized and

classed hierarchy of supposedly typical cross-border spouses and herself as an exception to the rule. But this hierarchy is not only produced through the intersection of place, mobility, and class. Gender also plays a role, as revealed by her description of who exactly these people are:

I describe them as people who dedicate their lives to silly things, who have five or six children, who stay at home, who cook for their husbands, who stay within walking distance of their houses, who go at most from Hamburg to Dusseldorf to visit their relatives. . . . I describe them as people who continue their unnecessary silly marriage[s]. I know many people, both from my hometown and . . . the language course, who have only one dream: to go there, join their husbands, have kids.

In her interview, Yüksel refers exclusively to women, even though the questions are phrased in gender-neutral terms (in Turkish, personal pronouns are not gendered). This reveals how profoundly gendered Yüksel's experience is: it is self-evidently (heteronormal) female and cannot be conceived outside of this gender framework. For this reason, and because of the central place that gender identities, in general, and the condition of women, in particular, occupy in contemporary discourses about modernity and re-traditionalization in Turkey (Kandiyoti 1997), the second part of this case analysis focuses on the category of gender. Yüksel's use of the figure of the village woman is shown to be part of the dominant gendered modernity discourse, rather than simply being a personal idiosyncrasy.

5.1.3 The classroom as border space

The interviewer, Ceren Topgül, met Yüksel at a turning point in her life, when a lot had changed and more was about to change. But it was not only at a challenging and difficult time when she met her but also in a challenging and difficult place for her. Therefore, to understand her biographical narrative and positionings, it is crucial to look at space not only in terms of spatial imaginaries but also to consider the specific place in which the experiences that she interprets during the interview occurred. What kind of place is the classroom at the Goethe Institute then, and how does it play into Yüksel's boundary-work vis-à-vis her (female) classmates?

A classroom 'we' against generalizations

At the beginning of the interview, before portraying her classmates negatively, Yüksel describes the classroom as a place of solidarity. Regardless of their differences, they share the experience of having a long-distance, cross-border relationship and of dealing with the challenges that come with it. These challenges consist partly of paying for and attending the German course, which for many of them entails a long and expensive journey and finding and/or paying for accommodation, learning the language—which for some means first learning how to read and write—and, finally, paying the test fee and then attending and passing the test. In addition, they have to face stereotyped assumptions about who they are and what their marriage motives may be. For Yüksel, it is clear that these women, herself included, implicitly stand accused of a sham marriage. This negative image, as the following quotation makes clear, is revealed in their class routine and leads to Yüksel's defence of her classmates, as she positions herself within a 'we' in the classroom:

There are people from all classes, all races, all nations. We all have different perceptions, and we're all there for the same reason, to join our spouses; merge our lives with theirs. That's why . . . I think this exam is truly very unnecessary. I believe in my heart that. . . . Honestly, I don't at all believe that any of the people who come to this language course got married as a formality. Everyone is very sincere and warm, very nice and kind.

In order to understand the classroom as a particular place, the acknowledgement of this feeling of solidarity as a reaction to the dominant boundaries is important: they all have to undergo the same process, master the same challenges, and face the same negative preconceptions. All of them are precariously situated in the classroom, across from the teacher's desk—a group of adult, (soon to be) married individuals seeking to join their spouses in Germany who have been regressed to 'school children' again by the German state. This feeling of degradation was described by many of our interviewees in Turkey and Kosova, whether or not they endorsed the language test. They spoke of 'being forced to learn by Germany, an anonymous, abstract, and far-away but powerful spatial entity

that defends its borders by keeping them apart from their spouses. Interestingly, this defence of the German border happens on Turkish territory, which spatio-symbolically makes the classroom into a sort of exclave. Before these individuals even set foot on German territory, German legislation gets a grip on them in the classroom, where they have to prove themselves worthy of living there.

Struggling with German, just like ‘the villagers’

Whereas Yüksel positions herself throughout her narrative as being different from her classmates—she is educated and needs much less time and effort to understand the teacher, even assisting her—she eventually reveals that she too has great difficulties in learning German:

I find it hard to understand German. But if it were maths, the teacher would explain, and I would write down the answer and directly tell it to her. . . . I find this hard, really hard. I go home and tell my husband: “I couldn’t ask because I was ashamed. Can you explain to me if there’s a logic to this?” He says: “Darling, please forget maths, there is no logic. You need to memorize the structure. You need to memorize”. But my brain isn’t open to memorizing. I find this language course really hard, incredibly [so]. I don’t let my teachers know, but I know that I have difficulty. . . . That’s why I find these language courses very unnecessary. [Silence].

Yüksel’s sudden confession is a striking narrative turn that sheds light on her strong positionings vis-à-vis her ‘villager’ classmates. Not only is she herself also from a village, but, even though she left the village and its ‘mentality’ behind to become an educated urban professional, she struggles a lot with the demands of the course, not unlike the rest of her class. However, there is one difference; learning, for her is supposed to come easily. Both the shame she feels about her struggle and the way she makes sense of it indicate how strongly this difficulty affects her, causing a rupture in her self-image, which she tries to repair by emphasizing the lack of logic to the language, stressing her ease with maths by contrast.

The classroom functions as an equalizing place that, to some extent, levels individual differences, both positive and negative. It simultaneously fosters a sense of solidarity with her classmates and poses a threat to her (gendered, classed, and

spatialized) individual self-image. It is precisely this threat of being labelled an uneducated 'import (house)wife' from the village that Yüksel repeatedly challenges. Consequently, the classroom becomes a place that threatens her identity as an educated, independent woman, as she experiences the same feelings of frustration, pressure, and dependence that everyone else in her class does.

From 'mobile cosmopolitan' to 'migrant wife'?

In switching from one status (student) to another (wife) within a 'mobility regime' (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), Yüksel has had to deal with the negative ascriptions that come with both (Amelina 2017; Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). While earlier in the interview, she revealed that her mobility was derived from her academic and professional work—in addition to her family's relatively well-off socio-economic situation—the legitimation for her aspired mobility now comes from her personal relationship with her husband. Student mobility was something that allowed her to pursue her career goals and, arguably, to avoid or defer the loss of individual freedom that marriage would bring. However, the type of mobility she is applying for now is only possible if she, at least temporarily, gives up those goals and invests her time and energy into fulfilling the family reunification requirements. Accordingly, her case is another example that belies the assumption that the language requirement strengthens women's positions and facilitates independence.

It is against the portrayal of this specific biographical background—revealed in our interviews in Turkey and Kosova to be omnipresent within the institutions and processes surrounding the language learning apparatus regulating family reunification—that Yüksel's strongly-felt need to distance herself from the supposedly typical cross-border wife becomes intelligible. As noted earlier, it is in the classroom that these gendered and classed stereotypical assumptions touch upon those who involved not individually, as, for instance, when obtaining a form from the embassy, but rather collectively, as a group whose defining characteristic is the simultaneous physical presence of its members for a common reason. As I have

shown above, the classroom setting effects a certain equalization, which both fosters a strong sense of solidarity among course participants and poses a threat to their individual self-images. It is precisely this threat of being labelled 'uneducated export housewives from the village' that hangs over the classroom as a collective, and that triggers strong individual boundary-work in an attempt to restore a sense of individuality.

5.1.4 Concluding remarks on the case study

In this chapter, I have examined the positioning strategies of Yüksel K. when confronted with the European border regime and one of its specific elements, the classroom, where she learns German in order to obtain a visa and eventually join her husband. Her spatialized and classed boundary-work vis-à-vis the other women in her class can only be understood by considering its gendered intersection with her biography and experiences of this particular type of border regime. Moreover, this experience is not adequately legible without analysing the places where it occurs. Yüksel's strong positionings and recourse to alternative hierarchies are a reaction to a situation in which she is vulnerable and her self-image is attacked, all come together in the classroom context. In her role as a third-country migrant, her self-image as a modern, urban, mobile professional is threatened by the highly gendered dominant image of the 'Turkish import bride', whereas in her role as an educated person she is strongly challenged and frustrated by the process of learning German. Thus, Yüksel is exposed to a specific net of implicit and explicit limitations and expectations that result from a complex interrelation between the categories of gender, space, and class. This case study demonstrates how the language requirement, instead of protecting women like her from gender inequality, as claimed, builds on and reinforces transnational inequalities. The oppressed, oriental, uneducated 'import bride' appears as the 'other' and marks the boundary to the spatial (self)imaginary of the European receiving country, serving to legitimize its global border politics. The power of this institution to control these so-called

third-countries' territories and their citizens' mobility is further strengthened by its externalized location within these states' territories. From afar, these individuals are asked to integrate into German society and demonstrate their integration through a language test. This requirement creates pressure and frustration among course participants, who are confronted with generalizing negative preconceptions, paradoxically challenging their individuality in the process of requiring them to demonstrate that they are 'not like the other women'.

In order to distance herself from the negative national and gendered ascriptions that are mobilized through the family reunification process, Yüksel draws on an alternative set of dichotomous spatializing imaginaries at the local level: the village and the city. She positions herself in relation to the latter in two ways. First, she equates Europe, and Germany in particular, with modernity and women's emancipation. Second, she builds on the dominant discursive distinction between rural and urban Turkey, challenging the negative national ascriptions that she faces while attending the Goethe Institute's pre-integration course by mobilizing local spatial belongings. Hence, her reproduction and challenging of global spatial hierarchies and boundaries are interrelated within a complex spatialized positioning strategy, which can only be understood through a de-centring analysis that includes the transnational, national, and local discursive categories that are involved.

The other cases from Turkey and Kosova demonstrate that the need to prove that she is 'different' and to reclaim a sense of individuality is not unique to Yüksel; rather, it is a structural challenge that visa applicants face. The border-regime apparatus, which combines language testing with the socio-spatial arrangements of the classroom collective and with implicit negative nationalizing generalizations about cross-border spouses, puts considerable pressure on visa applicants, prompting a need to distance themselves from these prevailing (stereo)typical figures. Although the national context of Turkey differs from that of Kosova, the positioning strategies of individuals in these different places are similar. They often mobilize alternative boundaries on the basis of gendered, classed, and spatialized

distinctions, claiming to represent a 'different' Turkey or Kosova than the one portrayed in stereotyping discourses. This alternative features a different social class (the highly educated, more mobile and economically better-off), a different socio-spatial unit (cities), and a group with different gender norms ('modern').

The interview situation to which we, as researchers, subjected our interview participants, for example, Yüksel, is also implicitly incorporated into the border-regime apparatus because regardless of its de-centring intention, the inquiry originates from a Western institution. Furthermore, it offers a way to reflect on and process these experiences, but it is also in danger of reproducing the images it wishes to challenge, as it focuses on the respondents' specific role as a cross-border spouse to Germany, leaving out all other possible focal areas. This situation would have increased the likelihood of Yüksel dwelling on the aspects of her story that foreground her self-portrayal as a career woman, striving to depict all of the qualities that counter the prejudices that the interviewer, Ceren Topgül, may have held about her when asking her questions about her life, marriage, and German course.

Furthermore, in light of this in-depth case analysis I argue that in addition to selecting applicants (rather than 'integrating' them, as claimed by the implementing institutions), the pre-departure testing regime governs these potential newcomers through processes of subjectivation and 'neoliberal activation' (Gutekunst 2018; Ronneberger and Tsianos 2009). Yüksel's argument of 'mobility as individual merit' appears to be rooted in a neoliberal European migratory regime, which classifies sending countries into two categories: desirable and undesirable, thereby legitimizing the im/mobilization of the 'migrants' in question. This global spatial hierarchy does not allow for much differentiation on the basis of spatial or classed distinctions, including the alternative categories Yüksel adduces against the nationalizing imaginaries of the typical 'Turkish import bride'. Given the contradictions between the effects of these policies and their acclaimed goal (to 'save' Muslim women), their function of legitimizing a global hegemony relating to the control of mobility becomes apparent. Yüksel K.'s positionings can be seen as a

reflection of this Janus-faced neoliberal migration regime; on the one hand, she perceives herself as belonging to the highly mobile, highly skilled modern urban Turkish elite; on the other hand, she finds herself shoulder to shoulder with those she perceives as 'village housewives' and against whom she positions herself so definitively.

As I proceed to carve out individually the three conceptual cornerstones of the dominant discourse on cross-border marriage in the following chapter, it will become apparent that Yüksel's self-positioning as 'urban, modern, and highly skilled' and thus 'different from the typical case' is not a singular case; rather, it reflects a structural trait of this discourse. Nor is it restricted to a female perspective, as I will demonstrate in the next case study; that of Florent S. In an intersectional analysis of this second case study, I will explore how each of these key notions are produced alongside particular intersecting boundary markers. I will demonstrate that the suspicion of sham is a common discursive element that confronts 'third-country citizens' in general, but in differing ways, depending on their intersecting gendered and classed positionalities.

5.2 Sham: The elephant in the transnational 'marital space'

The idea that cross-border spouses from so-called third countries are 'in it' for the papers is omnipresent in the discourses surrounding this type of marriage, and it is a transnational idea. It is present, implicitly or explicitly, in all of the sites of these cross-border relations: in receiving countries as well as countries of departure, in media discourses, political debates, and in everyday conversations that take place on streets and in living rooms. It is a hot topic within every institution, public or private, involved in this area, featuring in the questions asked by civil officers in Western countries concerning the forms handed out to visa-applicants by their colleagues working in embassies and consulates in the capitals of the respective countries of origin and in the narratives circulating in language schools and test centres. It is also reflected in the non-judgemental, hands-on advice meted out by the staff of private agencies, which have mushroomed in the immediate neighbourhoods of these embassies over the past ten years or so. Such agencies have found a new source of income offering their services to visa applicants overwhelmed by the ever-changing and growing list of requirements imposed on them. And from the very outset of my appointment to this project, the sham argument had been presented to me and my colleagues as a sheer fact with which we had to deal when addressing intermediaries and potential interview partners. Not only did this argument resurface over and over again, articulated as self-evident, shared knowledge by intermediaries and participants, who often enough assumed our study was aimed at contributing to solving the *problem* of sham marriages but it was also reflected in the difficulty of finding interview partners in the first place.

The interrelations between the discursive and legal workings of the suspicion of sham can, I argue, be addressed more systematically than has been the case within the literature on borders and boundary-work. This analysis will, I hope, render visible how, in concrete terms, and to what extent these couples encounter the suspicion of sham at different stages of the process of getting married and getting together across borders. Furthermore, through an intersectional analysis, I wish to

trace the particular ways in which it affects them, depending on their gender, socio-economic situation, education, age, and so forth. Although an entire thesis could focus on discourse analysis of the sham notion in relation to family unification across European borders, here I must be content with working out some of its basic features relevant to the particular questions that I focus on. After a brief diversion into the different ways in which it affects individuals at different moments of the family reunification process, and from different positions within different types of border regime, I will explore a few of the particularities of this suspicion of sham in the way that it is experienced by individuals who are compelled to take a language test. I will subsequently conjoin the sham argument with its co-arguments (the prevention of forced marriages and integration) used to legitimize the language test. In doing so, I will attempt to deconstruct the deployment of these arguments according to the effects that these border regime measures have on people and their contrast with their stated goals.

5.2.1 The assumption of sham and its nuances in everyday discourse

The assumption or suspicion of sham, as briefly mentioned above, touches the lives of individuals involved in a cross-border relationship long before they step into an embassy or look up any information about the visa procedure on the internet. The particular form and strength of this discourse's *touch*, which ranges in degree from 'marriages of convenience' to the more drastic 'sham marriages', depends on a wide variety of factors. Some of these factors are commonly understood to be related to the particular individual who is being *touched* by it, such as their specific social position relating to gender, age, socio-economic status, race, looks, and migration history. Others are shaped by their own citizenship as well as that of their partners and their place of residence, which includes not only the country but also the particular socio-spatial setting in which they live (region, small town, big city, specific neighbourhood, village etc.). Only by including these factors in the analysis can these more subtle manifestations and smaller scales within and

upon which the sham discourse is enacted can we develop an understanding of the particular ways in which legal procedural apparatuses function, operating through and cooperating with discourses. Or phrased as a question: *What is the difference between being affected by the sham discourse as part of a boundary-making practice as opposed to the sham discourse as part of an official border regime practice?* Keeping in mind this chapter's focus on the pre-departure language test, it is necessary to step outside of it briefly to discern, more clearly, what it means to be affected by this discourse from within the institutional setting of the pre-integrative language test. In doing so, our focus on the phenomenon at large opens up, and the wider traits and transnational meanings of the concept can be captured.

Florent S. was born and raised in a small town in Kosova. He was 24 years old when I talked to him, and he lived in Prishtina and worked as computer engineer for a transnationally operating tech company based in the Netherlands that operated transnationally. Although at the time of the interview, he had not (yet) had any direct contact with these bordering institutions, he had nevertheless encountered the respective social boundaries that co-construct the border. At this time, he had been together with his girlfriend from Switzerland for about two years, but they had not yet initiated any administrative procedure either to officialize the relationship or to apply for family-reunification. Although the sham discourse and its effects on cross-border spouses are traceable explicitly or implicitly in all of the interviews that we conducted, Florent S. is one of our interview partners who addressed the issue very directly and actively. In fact, our conversation started with his admission (or warning?) that he did not initially want to participate because we, as the researchers on this project, could approach him with the stereotypical idea of sham marriages in our minds. He had interpreted our interview request as being based on a framing of him and his girlfriend as, and I quote him, *'being like that'*. As officialise he elaborated on what *'being like that'* signified to him, he used the expression *'marriage out of interest'*, which is commonly used among Kosovar Albanians and the diaspora to describe self-interest or vested interest rather than the term 'sham'

or 'marriage of convenience'. This reading implies or assumes that these cross-border marriages are to a certain extent always motivated by an interest aside from that for the particular partner:

F: When we meet up for a chat or when we hang out at a coffee place, there are different opinions Somebody might [draw conclusions about you [as] they themselves are thinking of their own interest, and when you tell them that you met a girl or a man, whichever way around, who lives somewhere abroad, immediately they will say something to you. Maybe they don't say it to your face but to somebody else. That it is a marriage of interest or only [entered into] in order to go there, where it is better than Kosova for instance, or else for financial reasons.

. . . And this is also why I did not want to do the interview at first because I thought that one would think we were like that. . . . Every time I walk through the streets and hear something like that, it always bothers me to hear this word [*it means papers*] being said, you know?

Sh: You hear it often? [*clearing my throat*]. You often hear about this issue?

F: Yes, yes! Because say you're [staying] somewhere as a guest, [and] you're visiting somebody and [this subject comes up], then they don't say, for instance: "The son of such and such person has found a girl. But as soon as it's about "papers", there is a kind of umm. . . . Everyone's mood there somehow changes. Not . . . neither for the better nor for the worse, but you feel a kind of . . .

Sh: It is something . . . (yes) special?

F: Yes, special. They say: "Ah, with papers!" You know?

The border is a constant presence in Florent's everyday life and so is the assumption that any couple's relationship that is tied across that border must be, at least in part, also motivated by the perceived benefits that come with crossing that border westwards. Florent encounters this border regularly in his everyday life. It is present, not like an embassy building that one walks up to or a line in the sand (Parker and Vaughan-Williams et al. 2009); rather, it is like self-evidence filling up a room; a subtle but enduring component that is *in the air*. For in his vivid description of what happens as soon as people learn that his girlfriend is in Switzerland, the effect that this information has on people is described as something as hard to grasp and as 'natural' as a change of temperature. The 'change of mood' that he observes is thick with that assumption of 'papers' as a motivator for his choice of partner, functioning as an inevitable implication so obvious, that it does not need to be rendered explicit. For Florent, the fact that this assumption is treated in this taken

for granted, implied way makes it difficult to deal with, because it offers him little opportunity to position himself against it. However, this is something that he can, however, do in the interview.

And so, Florent tells me about all the things that he and his girlfriend, Valbona have in common, like listening to music, watching movies, and, most of all, having a good education—and emphasizing that initially it was with respect to *educational matters only* that he contacted her on Facebook. Furthermore, he compares the relationship he has with her to the cross-border relationships of others, positioning his girlfriend and him as ‘not like that’.

But while writing these words, I realize, it feels increasingly strange to cite, analyse, and comment on these commonalities and differences and the way Florent presents them to me . . . as if making a case for his relationship and his pure intentions (Andrikopoulos 2021). It seems to me that the sham suspicion hangs so heavily in the air that one cannot talk about the testimony of a ‘third-country citizen’ without giving his words that strange tone, almost as if they were part of a questioning, spoken into the room of some embassy or registry office.

And this sense of him ‘making a case’—a sense of border? (Green 2012)—somehow translates into my writing. A kind of writing in which I take his words and present them to a third party—a party he has in mind, when talking to me; a party of which I am a part, an academic part and, I figure, a ‘Western’ one too. Hence, when presenting and discussing these words, there seem to be too many levels of audiences included, and most importantly maybe, a sense of desertion.

In order to try and counteract this, I will change the perspective, addressing him instead of speaking about him, even if such an experiment has to remain in the realm of hypothetical, imagined communication (for now). But still, maybe it will be less like talking around the elephant in the room and then to a third party; an academic readership. So let me, just briefly, take the liberty of getting back to the dialogue with Florent in Prishtina.

In that coffee place on Mother Theresa Square, you told me about the things that you and Valbona have in common, about your shared interest in academia, pop and rock music, and cinema. I remember how you mentioned that for you it became more and more evident during your studies that the person you wanted to spend your life with should, like yourself, be somebody with a good education. You had gotten to know such educated women in Prishtina, who spoke, as you pointed out, at least one foreign language, and you appreciated sharing ideas and discussing researchers with them. The woman in your life should be somebody—and this expression stuck with me—with a good ‘profile’, meaning something related to her field of study and profession. Allow me to go back to your exact words, yes, an advantage that I have over you here, due to the recorder that lay between us then:

F: I thought that when I come home and my wife has nothing she can tell me about herself, about what she has done the whole day, you know . . . ? [Valbona] has a very good profile, because she [laughing] can fill a whole day telling you about what happened with her pupils. She can talk about it for two, three hours [we laugh]. There are many things to talk about.

Sh: [Laughing]. You have enough stuff to talk about. . . .

F: Yes, we have plenty of stuff to talk about. . . . And then she is also a bit . . . passionate about movies, about music. We have things in common to busy ourselves with.

I think I understand the point you are making here: She is everything you could have hoped for! And yet, the way you refer to the academic or professional ‘profile’ of Valbona (as if in comparison to the kind of woman who lacks such a profile) resonates with me as somewhat hurtful—and familiar. When you say that you could not imagine having a wife who has nothing to tell you about, I see behind these words the assumption that such women do indeed exist, that they might even be something like regular cases or even like the kind of women, whom you might have been expected to get together with. And seeing this is also seeing Yüksel’s ‘housewife from the village’ and the way she positions herself as an exception to the rule. But I’ll get real with you: seeing this implication about some ‘normal case’ is also seeing a stereotypical solidification of the young men—or their families—who have proposed to me in the past, while hardly knowing me. And most of them were from my parents’ region of origin in Macedonia. As a young woman, I could not see myself with any of them. There were certainly many reasons for that, but there is one specific reason I’d like to address here. Because it seemed to me that it did not matter so

much who in particular I was, nor who in particular he was. And that, I think, was the border, which I felt creeping up on me. . . .

So although I did not use the word 'profile' to describe what a potential partner needed and an unimaginable partner lacked; nor did I explicitly locate them in 'the village', like Yüksel does with the image of the housewife, I think I meant to address something quite similar when taking them as being so very different from me. I too claimed that 'we would have nothing to talk about', and I too assumed they had to be 'uneducated', 'unmodern', or 'not emancipated', and that is almost regardless of a person's actual level of education. It sometimes sure felt like I was, with sentences very similar to yours, defending myself from these boys' whole-hearted approaches. But what I was actually doing was to try clearing off the mark that the border was throwing in my face due to my 'having papers'. I was looking for a way to protect my sense of individuality and humanity from the Swiss border's power. That is what I think when I look at it now, from a safe distance.

It did not matter to me who the person on the other side of the border was, what he liked, what he had studied or how he had grown up, I was generally more than willing to leave his individuality and humanity in the dark, overshadowed by the border. I did not wish even to get close to the border in such a way, allowing the hopes in that other person to bud and then having to crush them over a cup of coffee, as I was certain I would have to. For what kind of freedom could there possibly be between two people like us that would make up for the separating force of the border in-between? They would have to make a case for themselves, how their (free!) choice came to fall on me, of all people; a case they could never win, and certainly not in such an arranged setting, as in the small town's Pizzeria Roma or sitting at one of the little glass tables at Café Romanca a little further down the road. I was as certain as I needed to be, to save my sense of particularity, that these guys were as typical as the border implied. Thus, the border threatened to eradicate my face and theirs; it neutralized our particular features, made us into one of those on this side and one of those on that side. But the treatment on my side was different; because of my Swiss C-permit, the border had conveyed its power to me one-sidedly, a private and political power-tension that many experience in our bordered world (Anna Wyss, for example, describes it as a severe ethical problem in research, 2019, 55ff). The border seemed to have cast a spell on both sides, holding each of us in place. What I encountered there must have been

Bourdieu's 'magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated' (2000, 169), only our case it is an actual border.

I don't know if you can relate to this, but the way you emphasize that a woman with little education would not have a lot to tell you about her day—or may also be less passionate about music and movies and such things—and the way you make your case for yourself and your girlfriend being different reminds me of my own readiness to assume the essential difference of men 'from across the border'. This is what I meant by my admittedly quite strong choice of the word 'hurtful'.

But it is painful to realize that I ascribed these culturalizing, generalizing features to people, and in that sense gave in to the boundary drawn by the border, offering up their personal humanity to this idea of them being 'the other'. My question is why did I, why did Yüksel—and maybe you too—imagine these 'others' as some sort of cultural default cases? I think that to some extent, this can be seen as a reaction to the border and the boundaries defending it, and these boundaries need to be able to neatly separate the imaginaries of the 'cultural other' from the 'normal self'.

Of course, neither you nor I are in any way obliged to consider or date anybody we do not see as being right for ourselves or whom we simply do not feel like getting to know. This is just my attempt at grasping the meanings of our self-positionings. And what I do observe here is that our assumptions about the typical or normal Albanian marriage candidate, whether female or male, are in line with this culturalizing and classed imaginary of 'the West and the rest', and so these potential spouses' figure as uneducated, unemancipated and rural in both of our narratives. And my hypothesis here is that this readiness to demarcate ourselves as different from these others has something to do with the border and the suspicion of sham that it conveys, although reaching for us from different angles. It is, I would say, one way of pushing back on the pressure and the threat it exerts on us by pushing 'downwards'.

And in what you told me during that interview, there was a whole lot of pushing back! In fact, when I asked you why you ultimately agreed to talk to me, after you had had such reservations at first, fearing that I might see you as such a 'typical' case of 'marriage with interest', you told me that it was precisely because you wanted to 'fight this thing':

I accepted because now I will be telling [you] what people think, what I think and what . . . the reality [is] [laughing] and also to do a good deed [we both laugh]. . . . With me, the thing

is, that I . . . I would like to fight this thing, this thing about . . . the papers, the self-interest and so on because it bothers me; I don't like it.

And with this 'because', you follow up seamlessly with another 'because', giving me a whole list of reasons why you are not one of the notoriously suspicious 'usual cases':

Because I had the opportunity to go abroad to study. I had the opportunity to go to Finland. I was in a kind of university in Austria, in Graz, for computer engineering.

You already went there?

No, no. I wasn't there.

Ah, you had the opportunity to . . . ?

I had the opportunity to go to Finland. I only had to go to Graz and get the visa. I mean, everything . . . I was accepted at the university and so on. Had I wanted to go out of self-interest, I would have gone. I would have found another way. I wouldn't have, for instance, needed to find Valbona [for this purpose]. We entered this relationship spontaneously because I'd seen that she is studying there, I mean in a university and so on. . . .

Also, as far as I am concerned, I don't see this migration thing as such a big deal because we have family [who have been] there for a long time ago. And I had visited Switzerland. . . . I liked it, but I never thought of going there. Because, for instance, I have a good study profile, I have found work. I have also worked online before. The thing is not that I want to go to Switzerland economically. . . . But I have found a person who matches w me in [terms of] all [our] ideas, and now we will decide if [we will live] here or there. This is how it is.

With these words you made it clear to me from the beginning of our conversation that the stereotype and the sham assumption do not apply to you as somebody with a good education and job; as somebody with a good economic situation; as somebody from a well-off family; and as somebody with transnational family networks. In short, I take from this list that you do not need to find a partner in order to go to Europe. For all of these reasons, you do not need Valbona to cross that border, and so your decision to be with her was made freely. And this freedom, I understand, is of great importance to you. Assuming you might have been unfree in this particular decision would somehow sully what you and Valbona have together, and what ties you to her.

And there might be one more nuance to your wish to fight this idea of 'marriage with interest'. The notion of dependence also hints at yet another degrading stigma that clings to those suspected of marrying because of another interest apart from a 'pure' love interest, which applies to men in particular: that of the 'kept man' who depends on his wife. Who would want to be seen as such a man? I know I would not want to be seen as such a woman, even if it would not imply the same kind of face loss for me that it might imply for a man.

These, of course, are just some lines of thought. And one might say much more and interpret these things very differently. But what I would like to say here, and with that conclude the subject for now, is that from your narrative I learnt how intimately the border touches people, who are in couple relationships across it. The border discourse and all the generalizing assumptions that it entails is present in these people's everyday lives, even before having started any official procedure. And when one follows the fine and finest narrative threads, thoughts and memories, one discovers that fact and realizes that shared knowledge of the border—on both sides—touches people's lives in an almost impalpable and subtle way that at the same time is powerful and inescapable. The border could simultaneously be an elephant as well as a mood swing in the room within the cross-border relationships of the people I talked with during the course of this project.

Before continuing this analysis of how the sham assumption affects different people, and taking up on the dimension of gender that I briefly suggested plays into it, I will present some meta-reflexions. They concern the way in which this sham stigma affected the research process. In doing so, I will depart from my experiment with second-person speech, which, through the somewhat misplaced sense of intimacy that it creates, brings about its own epistemological problems.

5.2.2 Transnational social networks of support, obligation, and trust

Despite his strong reservations, Florent S. had agreed to participate in an interview, deciding that he could take it as an opportunity to counter the negative preconceptions that were so blatantly apparent in his everyday encounters. However unintended on my part, my request for an interview had induced feelings of hurt, consternation, and annoyance on his part and maybe, I figured, anger too. This much became clear during our little bit of small talk before the official part of the interview and continued to get more pronounced as it proceeded. This is enough of

a reason to think a little bit about who this 'me' might have been to him before he agreed to meet up with me despite his reservations.

That me at that moment must have been this researcher-subject from Switzerland; someone with Swiss residential status who was at least secure enough to work from there and think about Switzerland, Kosova, and the world. That me was a privileged young professional equipped with the vague yet strangely powerful authority associated with a Western university logo; a logo plastered across the heading of an official information-presenting flyer, letter, and call that she sent out to recruit interview participants. That me was a young professional, sitting in her chair in her office in a Western university; reaching into her transnational network through social media, emails, and the phone; securing the support of Albanian professionals and activists in Switzerland and Kosova alike. That me heard voices, usually sounding older and often more at ease with standard Albanian than her own, saying: *'How many do you need? Yes, no problem, I'm sure I will find you at least one or two people for your interviews. I have this niece, who . . .'*

With this, one might say, transnational grasp, I blended the Albanian connections I had acquired during my years of anti-discrimination-activism with my newly acquired academic authority to create 'data'. And this somewhat ill-fitting, unaccustomed authority is not just that of a *Western academic* but is, quite concretely, Swiss, as it was mediated indirectly by the Swiss nation-state through the Swiss National Science Foundation that funded our project. A state that apparently has enough interest in cases like Florent's, or at the very least in cases *unlike* his, to fund a project such as this one, provided me with a seat at the 'research table'. For this reason, the term 'national' is slipped in between the notion of a 'transnational grasp'.

So, this was me, more or less; me, casting my net far and wide across the Swiss and Kosovar border without much restraint, getting to Florent and into his messenger account through one of my younger contacts, an acquaintance from

university. *Would he be ready to talk to me about his relationship with his girlfriend in Switzerland?*

Luckily for me, he would eventually be ready. Even though at first, he initially did not feel at all comfortable with the fact that here was one more person—or rather one more institution—addressing him as somebody who belonged to the category of people whose marriages were based on self-interest, at some point, he changed his opinion. This change of heart was also brought about by his conversation with his girlfriend, Valbona, who knew my intermediary contact, also a Swiss-Albanian PhD researcher. Therefore, the transnational Albanian network to which I had access played a considerable part in facilitating his cooperation. More precisely, the personal–professional nature of the diasporic network and the feelings of solidarity and trust forged by working within it played a key role. And so it is only at a first glance these networks can be seen as ethnicity-based. For ethnicity featured only in so far as it is a category of discrimination in and beyond the Swiss context, both spatially and historically. Thus, the category of Albanian-ness functioned as an identificatory category, which provided me with the support and cooperation necessary to conduct this research project in the way that I did. However, in Florent’s case, my connection to his girlfriend’s friend provided just about the right ratio of trust and obligation necessary to overcome his negative reception of my request.

Aside from the power of this network, it was also, of course, the power inherent in his own social and economic position that made this interview possible, or, more precisely, his ability to position himself differently from the way in which he feared he would be placed by my request. The prospect that I would have the stereotype of the ‘sham marriage’ in mind when addressing him ultimately did not seem all that threatening to him. Rather, it would give him the opportunity to make some things clear and to voice his consternation about the dominant image circulating all around him. Or to use the words he himself chose that day, sitting in a

coffee place in Prishtina and talking about an issue chosen by me: *'I would like to fight this thing. This thing about . . . the papers, the self-interest and so on'*.

5.2.3 'We leave out of necessity. But why do you go?'

The list of arguments that Florent presented in his fight against the 'thing about the papers', which, one might add, was a fight in self-defence, not only featured at the beginning of our conversation. These same arguments came up again and again throughout his entire account, as he felt bound to counter the recurring assumption that his relationship was linked to crossing the European border; one that he faced in various encounters with people. They foreground another one of his assets in this respect: his transnational family network. Such is the case, for instance, in his description of the spontaneous reaction of one of his acquaintances, who himself engaged in a cross-border marriage, after Florent told him about his getting together with his girlfriend in Switzerland:

He said to me: "you know, we have to leave out of necessity, but you, who finished university, why do you go?" You know, he thinks that I want to escape because I can't do anything here. Just like those, who were not able to find their way around here. I told him [laughing slightly]: "No, man, this was my fate, I was not looking for somebody who by all means has papers. Because fact is . . . another fact is, that I had my family there. They could have found somebody with papers for me".

In his exposition of his independence, the bottom line is that he does not *need* a family reunification visa as a way to migrate to the West. Moreover, he does not *need* to migrate at all. But if or when he goes to live with his girlfriend in Switzerland, he will do it differently from how 'traditional' Kosovar migrants do it. In fact, the way he describes his situation resonates strongly with the figure of the 'highly skilled' and 'highly mobile' individual, although he does not employ either of these terms explicitly. He does, however, position himself decisively against the notion of '*gurbetli*', a word loaned from Arabic/Turkish that roughly translates as 'work migration', which I introduce into our discussion at some point. Although I cannot go into the details here, it is important to note this appearance of a type of mobility associated with Western modernity in a politicized discursive context, which

contrasts with an opposing type of mobility associated with figures labelled 'migrants' and imagined as poor, unqualified, and a potential burden on the welfare services of Western nation-states. This divide, in which the Global North is privileged over the Global South in terms of mobility, has been demonstrated within the literature (Kunz 2020; Mau et al. 2015; Yeung 2016). However, reflections on its reproduction and essentialization, and the formulation of separate concepts and research fields are at an initial stage (scholarly voices on this topic include those of Berry 2009; Cranston 2017; Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014). Hence the "migrant" has had an epistemological life quite separate from that of the "mobile", each of these figures circulating quite without touching in their own field of research, that is migration studies on the one side and mobility studies on the other. However, throughout this project, we repeatedly came across people who identify as the one, while being discursively—and legally—treated as the other.

Now, even from afar, this binary categorization of people and places, operating alongside notions of utility, profitability, and economic independence is recognizable as being drawn from the same arsenal of neoliberal imaginaries exemplified in Yüksel K.'s positionings as a modern, urban, mobile and independent professional. Interestingly, however, while Florent's positioning as a highly skilled, well-off professional bears many similarities with that of Yüksel, there are also important differences between them. These differences, when addressed analytically, can advance understanding of the particularities of the differing circumstances under which the sham argument touches them. With this consideration in mind, the goal of the following chapter is laid out.

The first difference I would like to draw attention to is linked to the *gendered* implications of the sham argument; how gender is discursively activated in some contexts, while being withdrawn to the background in others. I have already alluded to the fact that there is a gendered component in Florent's extended discussion of the myriad of reasons why he is not 'like that'. Gender affects the way in which an individual is targeted by stereotypical assumptions related to cross-border couples. I

will take up this gendered dimension by comparatively tracing these two individuals' positionings back to the negative imaginaries against which they are concretely set.

5.2.4 Gendered boundaries of the sham assumption

Yüksel K., like the rest of her female classmates, encounters the obviously gendered and ethnicized negative stereotype of being a 'Turkish import bride from the village, 'whereas the one encountered by Florent S. (being with his girlfriend out of 'self-interest') is not recognizably gendered, per se, at least not at first sight. There are several reasons for this asymmetry. One has to do with how binary gendering processes function generally, often constructing the female role as marked and dependent on the male role, whereas the latter is considered the default gender. Hence, is not necessarily surprising that the gendered-ness of derogatory assumptions about the stereotypical female cross-border spouse are more pronounced compared with those about the male counterpart.

Aside from this asymmetry of the marked versus default gender, Florent's choice of words seems to bear witness to a discourse in which Kosovar cross-border spouses are seen as being motivated by their self-interest independently of their gender. This is evident when, for instance, Florent talks about the reaction to telling people about having met *'a girl or a man, whichever way around, who lives somewhere abroad'*. I would argue that the distribution of this stereotype within everyday discourse only seems to be gender-neutral at first glance, whereas in fact it is very much gendered. This is because on the one hand, it results from my perception that he is using a gender-sensitive and inclusive language. On the other hand, and more importantly, his choice of examples points in a different direction. Whenever his narrative extends beyond general phrases into more concrete accounts, which he illustrates with examples, he exclusively mentions male cases, which, of course, is not proof of there being only male cases but simply an indicator of what is assumable and sayable (Jäger 2012, 161). An example is his description of the mood shift usually induced by news about some recently formed cross-border

couple; he states that people mention 'the son of so and so' as having found a girl', and *not* the other way around. Another example is his reference to the previously mentioned acquaintance who is in a cross-border marriage himself and who assumed that Florent's relationship too was initiated to help him overcome the economic hardships of life in Kosova. This concrete example regarding the taken-for-grantedness of a vested marriage interest also centred on a male cross-border spouse. Or else, when he speaks of people, who, he says, differ him, as they do actually meet the stereotype of the Kosovar on the lookout for a spouse abroad, consequently fuelling this negative stereotype he wants to fight, he only mentions male cases, for example, in the following citation:

And he said he absolutely had to get out, at any cost. . . . And so this is how the thing with the self-interest is born. If he should find somebody, even if she does not match with him, he is bound to go.

It is striking how whenever the narrative about this assumption of self-interest/sham becomes concrete, whenever examples are used to demonstrate its presence and its workings from close up, the protagonists chosen for illustration are mostly male. This observation applies not only to Florent's narrative; it emanates from the entire body of interviews conducted throughout this project, including the biographical interviews with spouses who grew up in Switzerland. This gendered portrayal of men being more prone than women to choose a spouse in line with their wish to migrate to Europe is a reflection of the dominant politicized discourse re/produced by Western bordering institutions.

Whereas potential shams are often attributed to men in these 'concerned' discourses on cross-border marriage, this is not generally the case with women. However, as the media discourse, the many existing studies about cross-border marriage, and the story of Yüksel K. in this thesis reflect, women are clearly not situated in a discursive-normative void. On the contrary, women are very much present in these discourses, but they are assigned a different role, which is generally that of the victim. Through an emphasis on the personal sphere, and operating on

notions of female vulnerability within the heterosexual 'oriental' couple, a whole other level of moral judgement is added to the sham accusation, whereby the threat to the European nation-state is translated into a threat to 'their own women'. Thus, gender, in its binary functioning, is made productive in 'both' ways to feed the securitizing discourse surrounding the 'threats' that cross-border marriage pose to European nation-states.

Through this binary gendered logic, the sham notion is connected to the second omnipresent securitizing notion in the discourse surrounding the issue of cross-border marriage from third countries to Europe; that of forced marriages. Accordingly, women (particularly 'oriental' or Muslim women) are portrayed as victims and objects of the respective patriarchal cultures/religions/ethnicities ascribed to them within marriage, which is conceptualized as an orbit of force. In this discourse, the male and female spouses, drawn from ethnicizing, racializing, and culturalizing stereotypes and, increasingly, from imaginaries of muslimness, are given complementary roles within these debates. Whereas men are presented as threats, women are depicted as threatened. The argumentative workings of intersections between gender and culture, race, religion, and other categories of distinction within discourses surrounding 'migration issues' at large have been pointed out and thoroughly analysed within the academic literature during the last ten years (Abu-Lughod 2002; Block 2019; Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Bonjour and Kraler 2015; Dahinden, Duemmler, and Moret 2014; Strasser et al. 2009). Therefore, it suffices here to pin down the particular traits and functioning of this type of marriage across European borders as an effect of the discourse that surrounds and constructs it.

An examination of the particular negative ascriptions against which Yüksel K. and Florent S. have to position themselves in order to claim a positive sense of self reveals that the binary complementary logic of the threat/threatened role is manifest in two very prominent imaginaries of the 'import bride' and the husband marrying 'for papers'. On the one hand, Yüksel is left struggling with the objectification and

degradation that comes with the ascription of being 'brought' to Europe as a 'typical import bride from the village'. In trying to reinsert her own agency, individuality and humanity denied to her by this gendered assumption, she makes her case by counter-positioning herself as different from that negative image, relying on classed spatialized imaginaries of urban versus rural femininity. On the other hand, Florent has to put up with the assumption of his having initiated a sham' or something close to it; a role which, contrary to its female counterpart, is portrayed as having agency, albeit a potentially 'criminal; or disingenuous one. So, while Florent, like Yüksel, feels compelled to show how different he is from the (stereo)typical cross-border spouse, unlike her, he has to make his case proving the genuineness of his feelings for his girlfriend by making it clear that he does not depend on her papers. In short, Yüksel, conceptualized as an oriental woman, and therefore ascribed an object-character by the dominant discourse, is clearly not being accused of criminal agency. By means of this intersectional logic combining culture and gender, she is not confronted with the sham assumption in the same way that Florent is.

The above discussion shows that the basic structure of the dominant discourse on this particular type of cross-border marriage entails an asymmetric gendered distribution of the suspicion of sham within it. In other words, an individual does not attract suspicion simply by being the joining partner; the one benefiting from the European residence status. Rather, suspicion falls on the *male* joining partner. A similar structure is traceable with regard to the functioning of the forced marriage argument. Here too, the use of force is assumed to be directed at women rather than men. Both argumentative structures assign the role of victim to (oriental) women, no matter on which side of the border they are located. Accordingly, regardless of which side of the border he stands on, the male migrant is under general suspicion of violating the rights of his wife as well as the law of the European nation-state. This particular argumentative interrelation of gender and culture (or the categories of religion, ethnicity, or race that often function as its proxies by fulfilling the equivalent function but using a different essentializing

‘filling’) featured in the narratives of Yüksel K. and Florent S., and in those of our interviewees in general. It is also characteristic of how gender intersects with culturalizing imaginaries in the discursive production of Europe’s contemporary other (see also Block 2019 or Bonjour and De Hart 2013).

This argumentative architecture of the suspicion of sham follows a dichotomizing logic, which provides separate discursive-interpretative patterns for men and women. The border is, all the while, highlighted in the negotiation or estimation of a male spouse’s marriage motives, the evaluation his trustworthiness, or, like Florent, his self-positioning to counter assumptions about male spouses. It is foregrounded in the differing values of the two spouses’ passports, the hierarchy and inequality between the two respective nation-states, and the benefits of moving from the ‘poorer’ state to the ‘richer’ one. This is not the case when it comes to the discursive negotiation of female spouses’ marriage motives, trustworthiness and so forth. Their discursive construction is usually limited to the depiction of culturalizing and gendered imaginaries of female victimhood, while the border argument is silenced or rendered harmless. Not only are female spouses’ motives and considerations very rarely an area of focus in this discourse, which ascribes little agency to women from ‘third’ countries, such as Turkey or Kosova, but the spotlight is instead on their families and spouses as agents and plotters, according to the assumption that these women subordinate their will to the interests of these other parties anyway. As with men, the arsenal of female figures in this discourse is limited to one: the stereotypical figure. Thus, women who are actively on the lookout for a husband abroad, so female figures portrayed as self-paced, active, sly, powerful or strategic architects of their own fortune, do not occur in the dominant imaginaries of the female cross-border spouse. Consequently, female spouses are not met with the same general suspicion of sham as men are, or to put it somewhat uncouthly, shamming wives are not a thing—at least, not in the dominant *discourse* on *this particular* type of cross-border-marriage based on a gender binary. The figure of the shamming cross-border wife seems to be of no use to the hegemonic discourse; however, the manner in which such cases are treated within specific institutional bordering settings is another question entirely.

The addition here is crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of the way that the suspicion of sham functions with regard to family reunification from third countries to Europe. The fact that it is not a prominent issue at a discursive level does not mean it is not an issue at all; it just indicates that the discursive figure of the shamming wife is evidently unproductive for the dominant discourse, rendering visible the different functions of boundary-making discourses and bordering institutions in the narrower sense. Considering this binary discursive logic, I conclude that gender is used to silence the border only in so far as it reinforces the culturalizing boundary between 'the West and the rest'. This is only one manifestation of this particular use of the intersection of culture and gender within dominant Western discourses, as gender inequality has come to serve as perhaps the most productive marker of difference between a Western 'us and a non-Western 'them', claiming to give proof of Western superiority.

In the following section, I will demonstrate how gender loses its monopoly defining-power to ascribe the assumption of sham to cross-border spouses (it is no longer deployed for this cause), once these individuals enter the institutions of the border-regime apparatuses of particular European nation-states. I argue that within these institutions, the suspicion of sham takes on a different function, as its ascription has legal consequences for the suspect. Suddenly, the national border becomes clearly visible again as the deciding factor in categorizing visa candidates, trumping gendered ascriptions.

5.2.5 Gender as boundary making versus gender as a bordering category

I had just started my work in the research project on cross-border marriage when the first inquiry reached me, now viewed a 'professional' in the field. It was from a migration officer in one of the cantons, apparently just as newly appointed. He told me that in order to do his new job properly, he was seeking expert advice on a legal issue relating to a cross-border case. His depiction of the problem went something like this: 'There is this woman from Kosovo, who had come to Switzerland through her husband, a Kosovar too originally, but she got divorced. And now she should go back home. But her advocate is pleading for a case of forced marriage, and she is showing all that video footage of her client's wedding, in which the bride looks sad, with her eyes gazing down

and so on. However, I have heard that in the Kosovar culture, women typically do not laugh or smile at their weddings. Can you maybe help me with that? Surely there must be some research literature demonstrating this?’

Pushing this analysis of the gendered ways in which the assumption of sham meets cross-border spouses further reveals that a separation in terms of discursive labour assigned to cross-border “husbands” vs. cross-border “wives”—men typically imagined as perpetrators and women as victims—is dismissed as a primary boundary-making category at a very specific point. This point is the moment when the individual leaves the sphere of everyday discourse and enters the concrete bordering institutions of the nation-state. The brief interlude, described above, in which I was asked to help invalidate the argument of the advocate for the cross-border divorcée by providing the grounds for authorities to repatriate her, is one such example. The cantonal officer did not see her as a Muslim woman who was a victim, but rather as an illegitimate resident, trying to remain in Switzerland by invoking the category of ‘forced marriage’ thereby overturning the purpose served by this category. This example shows how a gendered category is manufactured to serve particular discursive aims, that is, to serve those who control mobility and not those who are portrayed as victims.

The same conclusion can be derived from two interviews that I conducted with two divorced women, Shqipe N. and Amine M., coincidentally nurses, who had joined their husbands in Switzerland from Macedonia. I talked to Shqipe N. in Macedonia after her repatriation. She had tried to make her case by showing that not only was she very well-integrated, speaking the language fluently after less than three years of residence and fully acknowledging ‘the Swiss way of life’, but she also emphasized that her husband had been living with another woman, leaving her alone and, in her words, isolated in the apartment. She had also pointed out to me earlier in her account that to the surprise of his family, he had asked her to wear the headscarf, but only after they had gotten engaged. In retrospect, she believed that he was attempting to stop their marriage from happening, as he assumed this

gesture of control would meet with her resistance. After all of this, as Shqipe N. told me, she had truly wanted to live her life as a modern woman in Switzerland, but she had been rejected.

By contrast, Amine M. had managed to remain in Switzerland. The experience of her married life in Switzerland had been marked by numerous grave difficulties relating to health problems and family planning, not only as described in her interview-narrative but also according to what I witnessed, having been her German teacher during the year of her divorce. During this year, she had also studied hard to pass the A2-level test and to embark on a fresh start in her profession as a medical apprentice in a hospital. However, ultimately these biographical matters were not what determined Amine's residence status; what mattered was simply the fact that she had managed to persevere in her husband's family's household and in her marriage for long enough to complete the three years required to be granted residence independently from her marriage licence. These cases demonstrate the legal situation of women from 'third countries' following marriage and migration, pointing in the same direction as the first one that was sketched out in this chapter: The discourse on 'helping Muslim women' is one thing; the legal procedure is another one entirely. Furthermore, the resistance to marriage demonstrated by the husband of Shqipe N. reveals how the gendered stereotypes of migrantized Muslim women as victims of forced marriage versus migrantized Muslim men as 'fanatic patriarchal perpetrators' can meet with a much more complex and layered reality in terms of individuals' roles and their strategies of resistance.

However, this two-faced narrative figure, which is functional in terms of boundary making but not in terms of bordering, can be traced not only in cases of women who are already in the destination state, or involved in legal procedures but also prior to these stages. To demonstrate this, I will return to our interview partners in Istanbul.

Returning to the narrative of Yüksel K., we may recall that from the inside perspective of the border-regime apparatus, in this case the classroom at Goethe

Institute, men and women shared a perception of being confronted with the suspicion of marrying a European spouse 'for the papers'. The language test itself is understood as somehow preventing unlawful marriage-migrations to Germany: As Yüksel K. noted:

Honestly, I don't at all believe that any of the people who come to this language course got married as a formality. Everyone is very sincere and warm, very nice and kind.

As I have traced in detail in section 5.1, for Yüksel K., it is obvious that the people obliged to attend language classes are generally under the suspicion of marrying 'as a formality', which would be considered illegal as well as illegitimate. The moral judgement behind this suspicion that people who would actually 'marry as a formality' is indirectly framed as the opposite of sincere, warm, nice, and kind, that is, *bad people*, corresponds to what Florent S. takes as offensive in the assumption uttered by people in his milieu, namely that his interest in his girlfriend was more or less directly related to her Swiss residence permit. However, differing from Florent, for the men and women in Yüksel's class, this moral evaluation could mean not only the possibility of being deemed an illegitimate cross-border spouse but also being considered illegal, leading to a refusal of the family reunification visa and a permanent entry barrier.

Whereas the assumptions made about Florent's marriage interest induced a strong sense of uneasiness within him that propelled his desire to fight them, they are not necessarily expressed in the form of moral judgements by the people with whom he negotiates these meanings of his choice of partner. Moreover, even if there were moral judgements, ultimately they would not have power over him or determine his future (mobility). As long as he has not initiated the procedure of spousal reunification, it is 'only' the 'soft' effects of the discourse on cross-border marriage that will affect him. Consequently, the general assumption preoccupying Florent is of a softer quality in the sense that it is expressed not as an immediate threat, such as legal repercussions, but, for now, as a threat to his self-image, making it harder to ward off than when it is uttered directly to his face. The general

assumption about men in cross-border relationships having more interest in crossing the border than in the relationship as such is an omnipresent and yet subtle assumption that ascribes a particular classed masculinity to that person. This kind of discursive power, however soft it may be, works largely from 'between the lines', as a discursive certainty. It featured in Florent's story in the form of words unsaid rather than those he actually uttered, in his perception of a mood swing going through the room, and in his 'I know what they think' narrative. The threat of losing face was no less real than that Yüksel met, but for now, it was restricted to the realm of symbolic boundary making and identity ascriptions. And it was strongly gendered, as he would be confronted by the convenience/sham preconception in ways that a woman would not be. I argue that the discursive negotiations relating to cross-border marriage may extend so far as to evolve around 'marriage *with* (the benefit of) papers' (marriages of convenience) when it comes to women joining their spouses, but they only sharpen the notion of 'marriage *for* papers', with an emphasis on fraud or sham in cases of men joining their spouses. As dominant gendered imaginaries do not grant the same agency to women as they do to men, they are not sought out systematically as subjects of debate in this respect; neither as, at best, actively seeking to shape their mobility, nor, at worst, as villains seeking to trick their way into Europe.

But as we shift away from the fuzziness of bordered boundary making and enter into the concrete institutional structures of European border regimes, general assumptions that increasingly coming from actors authorized by the nation-state authority can turn into legal repercussions. As this shift from the symbolic level to the more solidified structural level occurs, the focus is no longer on the construction of gendered moral evaluations; it also shifts as gender primacy is overruled by what actually matters to the institutions and to which end they were set up in the first place: the control and selection of the individuals to be granted entry visas. And suddenly gender, a boundary marker here, is no longer the defining category; the border is. This makes women as vulnerable as men in terms of being ruled out

through the selection mechanisms of border regimes—perhaps even more so, as some studies have shown (Dahinden et al. 2020; Gutekunst 2018).

As I have already shown, the sense of being under suspicion of marrying ‘for the papers’ is very strong in the accounts of cross-border spouses attending pre-departure language classes. But it is not ‘only’ something that they sense in the form of the discursive certainty about ‘marrying with interest’, which is upsetting for Florent; it is not ‘just’ something that permeates the gestures and silences of the teachers and other staff of the language institutes and test centres. It is also a suspicion that is made very explicit to them in class, potentially evolving into illegalization or criminalization.

For instance, for Sinem Z., aged twenty-two years, who is attending one of the pre-integrative German classes at the Goethe Institute in Istanbul, it is clear that a prospective cross-border spouse is generally suspected of wanting to commit a ‘fake marriage’. Just like Yüksel K., who defends her class against the suspicion of sham, a solidary act which, as was illustrated in detail in her case, is born from the collectivized and equalizing socio-spatial arrangement of the language class, representing one of the effects of this particular type of border-regime apparatus. However, unlike Yüksel, Sinem explicitly positions herself on the inside of the ‘we’ in the classroom as she embarks on her defensive narrative:

After all, nobody is going there for pleasure; everybody is going to join their spouses. I don't know. . . . In fact our teachers always tell us, ‘this (pre-integrative language test) is all done in order to avoid fake marriages. Yet, they can't avoid fake marriages like this. A person who wants to do it will do it anyway. But we also pay the price for it. We, the entire class, are complaining about this a lot.

Sinem makes it clear that the suspicion of attempting ‘fake marriage’ confronts the class as a whole—herself and all the other women in the class—resulting in a collective reaction to this assumption. The teaching staff at the Goethe Institute itself point out the function (or one of the functions) that this regime of language classes and tests is intended to fulfil, namely avoiding ‘fake marriages’. However vague the term ‘fake’ may be, or for that matter, any other term that

attempts to concoct some clear-cut distinction between legitimate and illegitimate marriage motives, whether it is derived from everyday language or legal terminology, the legal consequences for somebody stuck in the 'throat' of this border regime apparatus are apparent. They are being selected out of the classroom collective and denied entrance into the country in which their partner resides.

The teachers working for Goethe Institute confirm this information given by Sinem Z. as well as the impression conveyed by Yüksel K. of being put under suspicion collectively. One of the teachers at Goethe Institute in Istanbul addresses this issue with her reading of the pre-integrative language testing regime, which like Yüksel's, takes up the moralizing discursive basis of this legal concept:

(Germany wants) to avoid marriages of convenience but most of our students are in love. We see that. So far, there has been no one that I think had a marriage of convenience. That's why I mean the law was set up because of this. I don't know how it is for all over Turkey and for other countries, but for our students here, I cannot say this.

The teacher clearly supports her students in their attempts to challenge the sham-assumption and defend the integrity/purity/authenticity/legitimacy of their marriage motives. She does so by calling out the word on the other side of the discursive opposition, which usually remains unheard but is implied in notions such as fake/sham/convenient/self-interest/vested interest/for papers: love. Imagined as true, real, maybe even inconvenient, selfless, non-strategic, their marriage motives serve no other purpose and are sourced by no other well but one filled with a pure feeling of love. This opposition has been described in the literature on cross-border marriage and other fields (Bonjour and De Hart 2013; Moret et al. 2019; Strasser et al. 2009).

However ethereal, inexplicable, mysterious, and seemingly groundless the idea of love as the model legitimizer of marriage may be, with their idea of the pre-integrative language test, the European nation-states claim to have found a rather profane instrument for measuring it. The effectiveness of this instrument has been widely criticized in the social sciences and linguistics literature (Flubacher 2014;

McNamara 2009; Mateos 2009; Plutzar 2010; and by Piller 2001; Shohamy 2001), and as I will show, is of an equally groundless and mysterious nature as the concept of a love-marriage itself. As a discursive imaginary, the concept of true love serves as a counter-imaginary for distinguishing a legitimate/legal Western model of marriage (conceived as culturally neutral and the norm) from its illegitimate/illegal counterpart. That counterpart is discursively conceptualized as a threat coming from the outside 'the Western world', with the outside being not as much a geographical distinction (a border) as a culturalizing and spatializing socio-economic one (a boundary).

Thus, on the other side of this confrontation with the sham discourse and the respective legal restrictions instituted by European nation-states, individuals are confronted not only by moral judgments but also by criminalization and permanent exclusion from the respective nation-state's territory. This was pointed out by another teacher at Goethe Institute in Istanbul, who explained one of the ways in which the German nation-state tries to examine the authenticity of a marriage when suspicion has been raised:

If there is such a suspicion, they perform a cross-examination on the same day at the same time; she/he is here in the consulate, and her/his spouse in the foreign office in Germany. They ask hundreds of questions. If they determine that it's a fake marriage [marriage of convenience], he/she cannot enter (Germany) for the rest of her/his life.

The assumption of suspicion of the joining partners being in a cross-border relationship for the benefit of obtaining papers follows the persons involved throughout the entire process of getting together: At first, it manifests as a soft but persistent ascription within everyday and media discourses; one that is especially directed at men. Subsequently, it becomes a general, and increasingly gender-neutral suspicion, still mostly implicit but now accompanied by the danger of suddenly turning explicit and concrete, serving as a founding idea within the institutions of language teaching and testing and penetrating all the way down to the more traditional instruments of border regimes of these nation-states. These instruments include concurrent interrogations or other forms of questioning, which

are systematically conducted to seek indicators that point in the direction of 'sham marriages', which in a worst case scenario, can solidify into legal repercussions. As for the genderedness of the embassies, which are the last 'station' in this boundary-making and bordering process, I observed that the catalogues of questions as well as the imaginaries of embassy staff that shape their interactions with visa applicants are still largely characterized by the gendered dichotomies described above. Whereas this makes it still more likely for men to be targeted for these embassy checks than women, this is not so much the case anymore since the introduction of the pre-integrative language-testing regime, which has placed a new tool of restriction in the hands of embassy officials. The restrictions are effective in different ways, making women just as likely to be filtered out of the visa application procedure as men, or even more vulnerable than men, as I will conclusively demonstrate here.

While the apparatus of the border regime benefits from the gendered distinction immanent in the discursive function of the sham assumption, strengthening the legitimacy of these language-testing regimes, the bordering institutions that partake in this regime do not. The test has been instituted as a seemingly objective instrument (Shohamy 2001), which replaces (or rather precedes) the more subjective evaluations of embassy staff. This makes a distinction informed by gendered assumptions—or any other identificatory distinction for that matter. Subjective assumptions are seemingly replaced by a means of assessment considered objective. However, this by no means implies that culturalizing, gendered categories have no effect in shaping this 'filtering' process; they do, but in comparison to the loud politicized discursive life of these categories as boundary-markers, they operate much more silently within the bordering institutions.

Looking at who is likely to be rejected using pre-departure language-testing regimes, I found that not only do social class and age play a crucial role but also gender, albeit in the reverse way to that claimed by the institutions in chief. Women are among the most vulnerable applicants, often being more likely to be ruled out

through the testing regime compared with men, as they are more often socio-economically weaker and more dependent than the latter (Dahinden et al. 2020). On the other hand, it is necessary to stress that there is no logic or evidence in the claim that the pre-departure language test would actually function as a 'filter' for catching cases of sham-marriage, as Sinem rightly argues.

However, the workings of the sham notion (alongside the force notion) as a gendered (as well as classed, and ethnicized) category of boundary making, and as a category underlying bordering processes, can be defined in this way as a general logic in which discursive and institutional dimensions—in the narrower sense—come together in the structures and procedures of the border regime apparatus.

In this discourse analysis I have shown how the categories of gender and culture intersect with bordering and boundary-making practices, as they are arranged within a particular argumentative figure in the discourse on sham-marriage on the one hand and in its legal implementation on the other hand. It becomes apparent that this intersectional interrelation is multidimensional in the sense that it exists at different levels: structural and symbolic, and identificational (Winkler and Degele 2009). A comprehensive analysis of such intersectional phenomena, which develop in the interplay of boundary making and bordering processes, would have to take account all of these levels.

5.3 Contestations of embodied, imagined, and linguistic criminals

The pressure, stress, and struggles of individuals undergoing the pre-integrative language test, as well as significant economic, time-related, and emotional costs involved in this process, have been well-documented and discussed (Dahinden et al. 2020; Gutekunst 2015, 2018; Plutzar 2010; Shohamy 2001, 2009). This study strongly endorses these findings. Whereas Gutekunst has demonstrated the close relation of this border regime instrument to the notion of integration (2012, 2018), its particularities remain to be explored in detail.

I suggest that in order to understand how these particular experiences, described and discussed in literature, are produced and arranged into components and effects of this particular power apparatus, we need to look at them from close-up. In doing so, we can examine the particular shapes, functions, and effects of this apparatus, and of its products as well as the (assumedly unintended) by-products: newcomers'/visa applicants' subjectivities.

My earlier discussion of the case of Yüksel K., in which I showed how the socio-spatial arrangement of the classroom and the practices surrounding it, are an exemplary illustration of this process. Specifically, I showed how the course participants are regressed into school children/students as they are activated in terms of their productivity for the European nation-states' workfare (Lanz 2009; Ronneberger and Tsianos 2009); how their individuality is threatened, and how they are put under suspicion of being (stereo)'typical' or even 'sham' cross-border spouses.

In the following analysis, I will delve deeper into this problematic of 'criminalization' as an experience and emotional effect that is particular to this kind of border regime apparatus and that featured as a recurring element in the narratives of the individuals we interviewed. I argue that these affects and emotions are part of the embodied experience 'formatted' by the border apparatus, producing particular subjectivities through differential inclusion/exclusion (De Genova et al. 2015; Korteweg 2017) Thus, they are not to be seen as a matter of

personal disposition or 'by-product' of the apparatus, but rather as a detrimental, functional part of its governance, namely its outcome. Taking this dimension of embodiment through emotions and affects into account will allow for the reconstruction and deconstruction of the particular structure or arrangement of the power relations at work between visa applicants and European nation-states, which are shaped through this particular apparatus. I will begin by exploring the feeling of being treated as criminals, which is not specific to the discourse evolving around the language requirement; rather, it applies to cross-border spouses from third countries. However, to remain focused on this type of border regime and its particularities, I will not, as in the analysis of the sham discourse, include cases outside of this category. Instead, I will only and specifically address the structural features particular to the pre-integrative language requirement: My analysis will focus on the criminalization, resistance against it, the fact and feeling of being forced into a difficult situation, as well as the effects of this use of force in terms of the proclaimed goal of this pre-departure measure to foster the early integration of newcomers into their prospective 'host countries'. I will begin with some field notes from Prishtina.

'We are no criminals!'

In the course of the weeks that I spent in Kosova as a researcher, I realized that Florent was not an exception in his wish to fight the negative assumptions circulating about individuals like him, whose intimate partners were in Europe. Time and again, there would be someone among our interview partners in both Kosova and Turkey who saw this study as an opportunity to speak up about what bothered them as well as the hopes and expectations they had regarding the outcome of this project.

The level of specificity of these wishes would seem to reflect the differing situations in which they found themselves. Thus, for instance, Florent, who had not yet begun the visa application procedure, wanted to counter the taken-for-granted

dominant discursive notion that he was with his girlfriend 'for the papers' more generally, without having a specific recipient in mind for this message—except perhaps us researchers.

However, another of my interview partners, a 30-year-old woman from a small-town in Kosova, who was preparing to take the pre-integrative language test and join her fiancé in Europe⁵, had a very concrete institution in mind at which to direct her criticism: the embassy of her fiancé's country of residence. It was only at the very end of our conversation that she expressed to me her hopes that this interview would bring about an improvement in the visa procedures for spousal unification. She accused the embassy of being corrupt by taking so much money from people and putting them under such pressure when they just wanted to join their spouses. She felt that she was treated like a suspect and a criminal by the respective authorities that had instituted this long and frustrating administrative pathway towards the language test and visa procurement. She said to me, and I remember her words clearly because she said them in a combative, insistent tone that she had not used during the rest of the interview, *'we are no criminals!'*

Before making this assertion, she spoke to me in great detail about her struggle with learning the new language while being in a long-distance engagement, that is, a relationship that had no legally binding character yet. This fact she pointed out to me several times during our conversation. She was anxious. She had described to me how much effort she was putting into learning and how much trouble she had memorizing the words and sentences in that complicated foreign language. She felt like the anxiety made her brain go blank. And the fact that she kept hearing so many horror stories about repeatedly failed tests and subsequent break-ups was also stressing her out. I remember that she mentioned a divorce she had just recently heard about, concluding that even a civil marriage did not offer any guarantees. The implication of what she was saying seemed to be:

⁵ In order to anonymize her further, the destination country is not mentioned. The fact that this country is one of the nation-states requiring visa applicants to pass a language test is sufficient.

'Who knows, what will happen to me and my fiancé, if I don't pass the test?' And it had been the shaky laugh and somewhat exaggerated ironic expression on her face when she talked about these rumours and fears that had allowed me to intuit her vulnerability.

But then all of a sudden, no guessing was necessary anymore. For early in the morning after she had talked to me openly and at length, she called me, telling me that she had had a horrible sleepless night. She wanted to hear again which precise institution I was at and why they would want to know all of the things I had asked her. Her trust as well as the combativeness she had shown the previous night were gone, and she was plainly scared now. She asked me how I could guarantee that her talking to me would not have any negative consequences for her visa application procedure. I tried to reassure her and restore her trust, attempting to get back into the confidential tone of our conversation during the previous evening, telling her everything I had told her about me and the project again in more detail. I also told her that I would send her the official project description again, with the university logo and all that. But the situation was already beyond repair. I felt terrible. In her eyes I was likely to be part of some obscure threat; an *apparatus* indeed (rather than an assemblage), comprising the embassy, language school, testing centre and whatever authority was behind me; an obscure and powerful apparatus, on which her future depended. Although I managed to allay her fears slightly, she ultimately withdrew her interview.

5.3.1 Facing 'the state': Naïve or light-hearted subversion attempts?

In the previous sections I have described how, when embarking on the administrative path through the apparatus of border regime, the discursive confrontation with question(ing)s of the legitimacy of cross-border spouses' marriage motives changes from a 'touch' into a 'grip'. As soon as a person steps into these nation-states and (semi-)private institutions, initiating the official procedures for family reunification, this legitimacy issue becomes a legal one. Consequently, an

attempt to cross the border without complying with the legal requirements of the respective nation-state would mean committing a criminal act and becoming *illegal*. What shape this illegality takes depends on the type of restrictions standing between the spouse in the “third country” and the one in the European country. With regard to the pre-departure language requirement, becoming illegal takes on a particularly strange form: someone who sets foot on, say, German territory without having demonstrably learnt to speak German to the extent required, would become a kind of *linguistic outlaw*.

Nevcan B., aged twenty-five years old and a professional day-care worker from a city in central Anatolia, was attending a German course at the European Language and Cultural Centre in Kadıköy, Istanbul, in order to join her husband in Germany. During a group interview, she described how she had come to understand this fact, that is, the threat of becoming such a *linguistic outlaw*. Her account of the moment of this realization follows the discussion of her struggle to focus on learning German, while manoeuvring the challenges of a long-distance relationship; an experience she shares not only with the two classmates participating in the group interview (a woman and a man who are roughly her age) but also, in one form or other, with all spouses in her situation preparing for the pre-departure language test. As discussed in the case analysis of Yüksel K., the pressure and test-related anxiety of these ‘pre-integrative language learners’ cannot be understood without considering how their life plans and future as a couple weigh in heavily on the precariousness and (largely negative) emotions surrounding everything to do with the language test. Additionally, in contrast to their partners in Europe, they are the ones responsible for mastering the test and, in the case of failure, for months of further waiting and postponing of plans. With all of this pressure and anxiety negatively affecting their ability to concentrate on learning (these effects have been demonstrated by Horwitz et al. 1986 and Klass 1990), our interviews showed how individuals’ thoughts often revolved around the following question: *Why do we have to learn German from afar, when it would be so much easier to do [it] on the spot?*

This alternative would solve two major problems at once, namely the difficulties arising in the couple's relationships as well as those associated with the extraterritorialized instructive language-learning setting, which inevitably provides very limited language-learning inputs. This reduced instruction-based input presents the language in a necessarily abstract manner along with dry exercises that are most probably far removed from the learners' life-contexts. But, in general, unless one pertains to one of the privileged 3rd countries and/or particular (highly-skilled) groups of professions that are explicitly exempted from the mandatory language testing rule (BAMF, September 2019), getting started with German *after* arriving in Germany is generally not an option. The German nation-state's demand is clear: first learn German.

Or perhaps it is not that clear after all. That demand, and whatever sense it makes, is anything but self-explanatory to test candidates, as reflected in the frequently repeated question: 'Why do we have to learn from afar?' This question, sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit, assumes the form of a questioning of the legitimacy and legality of this type of border regime. And some of the people affected by it seek more active ways to challenge this demand rather than simply questioning it discursively, trying to find more concrete possibilities of resistance. One of these individuals is Nevcan B. Looking for a way around and out of this confinement, she attempted to take two different paths before reconciling herself to taking the language class and test in order to join her husband in Germany. Though the details were somewhat unclear, her first attempt was simply to 'give it a shot' at the consulate without having acquired the language certificate. She describes mimicking ignorance as she goes to the consulate to apply for a family reunification visa:

I went there. Of course, I [had] my passport. I had gone to Dubai and other countries. I had had Schengen visa etc. Then the woman in the consulate asked: "Where is your document?" I said: "Which document?" [laughter] I pretended as if I didn't know. Then she said: "Language course document". I said: "I didn't know". A couple of people told me

that, but [I heard that] most people went anyway in old times without any course. This is something new.

As she looks back at that encounter with the consulate official, narrating it in direct speech, she re-enacts it, marking with laughter the fact that already the original exchange of words had been an enactment for her; that she had consciously played a role. She had tried to subvert the conditions imposed on her by putting on an act, pretending she did not know about the language requirement in order to start her life with her husband in Germany as soon as possible. The waiting period is at least six months, with the three months that the course takes and a minimum waiting period of three months before receiving an answer. And that would be after having handed in all of the necessary documents at the embassy after getting an appointment, but most likely longer. The wait depends not only on the test performance but also on the transnational processing period that usually takes longer than those three months, or considerably longer if she has to make a second or third attempt.

Reflecting on how Nevcan acts upon whatever glimpse of an opportunity she sees in that charade, I realise how my analysis circles around an evaluation of her actions, reluctant to write down in this text the following question: *Is she so naïve as to think she could get away with this? Or, why would she walk in there like that trying her luck blindly, hoping the rule might not apply yet or be dropped in her case because of a whim of the consulate official or for some other unforeseeable reason?*

This hesitation to fill the gap in my understanding of Nevcan's action with such a character judgement creates or rather lays open a disruption in my analytical process. I believe that this disruption is useful to the analysis, following its deviation into personal perception and valorization by asking the following question: Why would her actions seem *naïve* to me—or to somebody like me? What other interpretation would offer more insights into her way of approaching the consulate?

If I choose to look at her actions as an effect of the limited room left for agency by Germany's migration regime, what would such a reading make of her? Would she be made into a desperate person without agency, blindly and irrationally struggling to find a way to escape the tightly-knit net of German state regulations? Obviously, this interpretation would be just as wrong as the ascription of naivety. Seeking to understand Nevcan's action in a nuanced way, I realize, as I try to step out of the discursive logic of criminalization within which European bordering institutions operate, how I risk falling into the very same logic, but from the opposite direction, trapping Nevcan B. in its antithesis as a 'victim of state power'.

While the fact remains that the net of European migration regulations is tightly knit, and there is not a lot of room for agency on the part of visa applicants from 'third countries', understanding what seems to be a light-hearted attempt on the part of Nevcan to pierce through it requires a different interpretive approach; one that focuses on her particular experience with and relation to nation-states. In particular, it is important to bear in mind that this relation, which may differ considerably from the analyst's relation to the state, is likely to affect any resulting interpretation.

The spontaneous impression of naivety that she invoked in me clearly stems from precisely this ease and light-heartedness with which she approaches the German state institution and is something that I have a hard time relating to. And, I gather, it is not just the age-difference at play; the attitude that I have come to adopt towards (Western) state authorities appears to be quite different from hers, which I cannot know in reality. My own experience with (Western) nation state authorities has been profoundly marked by the minority status and dominantly negative image of categories of 'foreigners' to which I have been assigned in varying forms and to varying degrees. But more importantly perhaps, the climate of insecurity with regard to the residence status of 'foreigners' has shaped the subject-state relation, perpetuated, for instance, through the acceptance of the popular federal initiative, *Ausschaffungsinitiative* ('the deportation of criminal foreigners')

introduced in November 2010, which has left many people with a sense of legal insecurity and social rejection. But here is not the place to delve deeper into this matter. The point I want to make is that in order to understand the attitudes and behaviours of people towards a nation-state (compliance, subversion, anger, critical questioning etc.) their relation to and history with that state (and others) should be taken into account.

5.3.2 Embodiment and performativity at the consulate counter

The relationship between the individual and the nation-state is highly asymmetric. And while this is true for any such relationship, including mine with Switzerland and Nevcan's with Germany, how this power asymmetry is handled can vary significantly. This handling depends not only on positionality but also on the individual's past experiences with the respective institutions and their position within society as well as on what could be called the 'strength' of the state or rather, the strength of the belief in that state. While my personal relationship with the Swiss state has not been a smooth one, I also grew up in that state, believing strongly in the legal order, functionality, and efficiency of its institutions and procedures. I do not know what the actual experiences and beliefs of Nevcan B. are with regard to Turkey (or Germany), but what I do know is that she belongs to the Kurdish minority. What can be assumed is that her experiences relating to the belief in the strength and impermeable order of state institutions, as reflected in her approach towards the German embassy, differ significantly from mine.

However slim or improbable her chance might have been regarding her first attempt, for her it was good enough to try. Thus, what may be more central to an understanding of her actions in the face of state power is her attitude towards this power rather than the actual configuration of the border regime (what I have called a 'tight net'). She does not take its power so seriously—at least in retrospect. She finds room for action; room that I might have had a harder time finding, given my particular experience with and my somewhat hermetic imaginary of the nation-state's system. I lack the playful attitude towards the state that she displays in her narrative, although I do recognize it in some of my family members in Macedonia, who have not learnt to rely on the state in the same way that I have.

So, to understand Nevcan's attempt at subversion, I would argue that it is necessary to understand her relationship with and expectations of state institutions, that is, her imaginary of these institutions. Hers is a light-footed and light-hearted, trial-and-error approach. She faces the legal demands of these authorities playfully, laughingly talking about her attempt. She does not rush ahead to follow its order before at least having exhausted other possible paths that are more convenient for her and only then acknowledging that there is no way around it. The same goes for her next attempt. After learning that a family reunification visa would not, in fact, be issued without a language certificate, Nevcan tried to apply for a tourist visa, having heard of visa rescindment for touristic purposes:

For instance, I couldn't go to my husband with a tourist visa; I couldn't leave the country. They said "your husband cannot take you there like this. You cannot leave with a tourist visa. If you're working, you may go to Italy, etc. but..." I went to the consulate and the woman there told me face to face "you cannot go (to Germany). You'll go to [attend] a course, your husband [will] make a request for you. You can go this way."

Nevcan's account of her attempt to get a tourist visa is one of its refusal. She starts with four expressions highlighting how it was denied to her, emphasizing the confinement of her mobility with a sequence of negated motion verbs (*not go, not leave, not take . . . there*). Although body and territory are already implied in this utterance of her mobility restraint, it is when she refers to state-territories (*the country, there*) and the persons involved (*I, my husband, they, you*) that the centrality of these aspects of Nevcan's encounter with the consulate official become apparent. Moreover, she explicitly evokes the concerned individuals in their corporeality by pointing to the faces, between which the words of denial are passed. Specifically, she highlights that it is *face to face* that the woman at the consulate, who previously appeared only as an anonymous, undefined 'they', tells her: 'You cannot go to Germany'. As she narrates these moments, using direct speech and interpellating the imaginary of their faces, she re-enacts and re-embodies them. In this re-staging of her encounter at the consulate, its performative character becomes explicit. The utterance of that woman was spoken as a verdict, equipped with the

power to restrain her territorially, which is to restrain her body (Butler 1987, 1997, 1999). Although this restraining action does not happen at the moment of its utterance, conveying only an intended future movement, and it is also not effectuated in some physical way, it represents an embodied experience. Her body's actual presence is a crucial part of this performative speech act (Austin 1975), and of its imagined territorial confinement that is evoked.

The personal pronoun 'I' that Nevcan B. uses to refer to herself at the beginning of her narration does not suffice to mark the body's crucial role in this experience. Hence, I argue, she chooses to re-stage this verdict by referring to the faces of the participants in this highly hierarchical communication setting. The fact that both interlocutors are equally invoked as faces, devoid of any distinguishing attributes and looking blankly at each other, contrasts with the power inequality between them. The contrast is created between that similarity of human faces and the socio-institutional roles that differentiate them, giving one the power to speak out a verdict over the other. The invocation of her own face and that of the state official voicing that restraint for the fifth time, only now lays open the bodiliness immanent in such an immobilization effectuated through the speech act of the state official. It speaks to the metaphors of being 'grasped' by state institutions and 'touched' by the discourse surrounding cross-border marriage. These terms came to me spontaneously while reading the interview transcripts and trying to understand the stories of the individuals in these different situations and the different words and images they applied to narrate their encounters with the borders and boundaries they faced. As I imagine these two faces that Nevcan had originally invoked to convey her experience to her listeners, Ceren Topgül and her two classmates, during the group interview, it occurs to me that maybe I chose these metaphors related to the body and ways of seizing it for the very same reason as Nevcan chose to speak of faces. Both are intuitive attempts at expressing the bodiliness immanent in individuals' encounters with the institutions of the border regime.

As Nevcan continues her account, narrating how, in order to find a way around the language requirement, she came to the decision of trying to apply for a tourist visa in the first place, she points out that the news about the pre-departure language test being illegal reinforced her decision to give it a try:

Then I also saw it was posted on the Internet, written in capital letters "IT'S AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS ONLY APPLIED IN TURKEY" [emphasis added]. Then I [went to the consulate and] said: "It's like this; I want to go and come back as a tourist. Then I may learn [German] there [and] maybe I can get a residence permit there". She said: "No. Like this you'll commit a crime. They may arrest you over there or they may deport you [back] here". Then I said: "What should I do?" She said: "Go [attend] the language course and come back with these documents".

This brief but very dense citation contains indicators pointing to all of the elements, which are in focus of this chapter. It reveals how spouses contest the pre-departure language requirement by trying to find ways around it; how this regulation conflicts with visa regulations and creates further discrimination, laying open the flawed legitimizing argumentation; how the language requirement, if not fulfilled, makes spouses into 'linguistic outlaws' on the territory of the respective European nation state; how spouses contest this language-based criminalization and discrimination by questioning its legality; how state officials 'grasp' visa applicants' bodies performatively through imagined scenarios, executing territorial control from afar; and, finally, how the nation-states' power of control benefits from this extraterritorialization. These questions/phenomena are all interrelated. Thus, the following analysis will not develop in the order presented above because of the linear logic of writing. But it will eventually cover all of them in an attempt to detangle some of this extraterritorialized border apparatuses' major structures and implications. Furthermore, this citation should be understood as an exemplary representation of this set of phenomena, which characterized the majority of the stories of our interview partners in one way or another. Given its density, Nevcan's account allows for an exploration of the complexity and depth of the procedural-phenomenological interrelations listed above. This exploration follows the dramaturgy, the performativity of the text, tracing the nuances of the narratives and

the meanings and sense-making of the narrators. Such an interpretation would not be facilitated by other methodological approaches, such as participant observation. The speech or voice that manifests itself in these narratives, poetologically moulded by speakers in a particular way and according to the particular performative functions that they want to achieve (Blommaert 2009; Hymes 1996), furthers understanding of what happens during such encounters at a consulate from the perspective of the visa applicant. The following questions thus arise: What kind of discursive work is done there? What are the conditions under which this production functions?

To depart in a structured manner on this walk through the maze of the above-listed interrelated phenomena, let us begin with the first question of how spouses contest the pre-departure language requirement by trying to find ways around it. This question has already been addressed in the analysis of the previous citation, where it was interpreted as a performative act of resistance relating to the attempt to apply for family reunification without a language certificate. But, Nevcan B.'s 'lightfooted' resistance does not stop there, as she embarks on yet another way of circumventing the language requirement via a tourist visa. However, this attempt backfires, laying open some of the contradictions of the legal regulation on the 'pre-integrative language requirement'.

When she goes to the German consulate, she applies a reasonable logic that visiting her husband in Germany would have the added value of enabling her to learn some German in an environment where it is actually spoken, while being close to her husband. Of course, this idea, or the fact that she is openly discusses it in front of the consulate official, becomes an (additional) indicator for the latter that the visit is not really for touristic purposes; rather, it may be an attempt to evade the much more extensive procedures that have been instituted for family reunification, and, in particular, the language test. This consular assessment is what ultimately leads to the denial of this application. Nevcan's attempt to subvert the policy on visa categories by switching from the family reunification track to the tourist visa track reveals a contradiction in the argument upholding the pre-integrative language requirement:

The *pre*-aspect of the regulation appears to be of superior importance to the nation state than that of integration itself, that is to say the actual learning of the language, as argued in its public discursive legitimisation.

Additionally, with Nevcan's utterance of the idea that once in Germany, she might even get a residence permit, her attempt at subversion would have become obvious to the consulate official. This example is another expression of Nevcan's light-hearted attitude towards state authorities, as she incautiously plays with open cards. All of this makes her agency apparent in its particularities, with its possibilities and restrictions.

Furthermore, when she blurts out the thought that she may be able to get a residence permit once she is in Germany, she reveals not only her particular logic but also a fundamental structural trait of this extraterritorialized measure of the border regime. Once the border is crossed, denying access that has already been physically attained becomes harder and certainly more costly for the nation-state. Being physically present in a place gives individuals more and new options to act and perhaps opens up further routes for accessing a more permanent residence permit, thus implying a stronger position. It also simply allows them to be with their partners sooner while encouraging the perspective of taking on everything else from there together. On the other hand, it limits the possibilities of nation-states to take action, affording more drastic and costly measures of territorial control. With the person already physically present on the nation-state's territory, their immobilization is no longer possible, and so the only means of rescinding that mobility and denying access is removal, possibly through physical force. Therefore, once again, the conclusion regarding the primacy of the 'pre-' stage before that of 'integration' finds support. In this sense, the term pre-departure language requirement is more fitting, as it reveals the fundamental function of this instrument of the border regime to hold aspiring cross-border spouses at a distance, away from the national territory, thus making it easier to execute control over their mobility. This is one part of the answer to the question 'Why from afar?' that is frequently asked by those who have to take the pre-departure language test. This question is absent in the nation-states' official rationale regarding the sense of this testing regime, in which the prevention of sham and forced marriages is foregrounded. It 'grasps' individuals, controlling their (future) mobility before they have even set foot in the new territory. This dimension of the 'pre-aspect' of this bordering instrument can be described as a very particular form of extraterritorialized border management.

In order to understand the particular operational mechanisms of such an extraterritorialized (element of) the border regime, it is crucial to think about these bordering practices in relation to this factor of spatial 'removedness' from the migration countries' territory. This has implications for, among other things, the role of discourse in implementing this extraterritorialized border regime, which is spatially as well as temporally a regime characterized by pre-ness. At this point of their journey through the bordering institutions, cross-border spouses are not yet under the territorial jurisdiction of the European nation-state. Therefore, the execution of control relies heavily on discursive means. In the following sub-section, I will explore the relevance of this temporal dimension of extraterritorialized border regimes, showing how imaginaries of the future—as a future on the territory of the new country of residence—are crucial to its enforcement through performative speech acts between the visa applicant and the nation-state's representative.

5.3.3 Imagination rules: A 'pre-' kind of border regime

People going to the embassies and consulates of European nation-states to apply for visas to join their spouses in these countries do so to facilitate their *future* mobility, that is, the *future movement of their bodies* from this place to that other place. In order to be able to (legally) perform that future movement across a European national border, first the threshold of its diplomatic representation must be crossed. And so almost every story about crossing the border through the family reunification procedure starts with some version of Nevcan's words: 'Then I went to the consulate and said . . .'. Or, more often, the beginning of the encounter is already focused on the response: 'I went to the consulate and the woman there told me . . .'. The conversation that follows is a matter of future acts, eventually ending with some form of verdict pronounced by the *state representative* over the *applicant*. Taking a closer look at Nevcan's choice of words, it is apparent that this 'not-yet-ness', which is a temporal dimension (a person's life in Germany can only be referred to as something in the future), is as fundamental as the 'pre-ness', which is a

spatial dimension (one has to learn 'from afar') during this phase of her visa application procedure.

What seems like a banality is indeed a structural prerequisite for understanding not only the institutional conditions of this type of communication but also the particular form of rule or hegemony that it produces. A ruling from afar that occurs before the disposition of territorial sovereignty/power is effectuated to a large extent through shared knowledge (about power) and beliefs/shared ideology, as well as the performative enactment of different imaginaries based on the latter, producing imagined futures, imagined places, and imagined selves. With this idea in mind, I undertook a second reading of Nevcan's sentences, accentuating the turn-taking of the different voices in order to reveal the communicative steps that were performed, thereby foregrounding different imaginaries of what could happen in her future. In the future, Nevcan B. suggests, after an introductory statement in the present tense, she appears in the role of a tourist, thus claiming reality for the wish she is about to express:

Then I [went to the consulate and] said: "It's like this; *I want to go and come back as a tourist*. Then I *may learn* [German] there [and] *maybe I can get* a residence permit there".

This imaginary future, described using the modal verb 'want to' and portraying Nevcan in the role of the tourist, is depicted as possibly leading to a variety of positive outcomes. It would basically entail going and leaving again in that role, but it might also mean learning German while she is there, and it could even lead to a switch to a different and more permanent status as a resident. This display of possibilities is cut short, verbally, in the most abrupt way possible, with the consulate official's 'no' cited by Nevcan, followed by a counter-imaginary in which she appears in the role of a criminal:

She said: "No. Like this you'll commit a crime. They may arrest you over there or they may deport you [back] here."

The consulate official in Nevcan's re-enactment is not using any markers of insecurity, such as the conjunctive form or modal verbs; rather, her speech uttered in

the future tense can be read as an expression of her official role; she is endowed with the nation-state's sovereign power to convey knowledge about the meaning of future acts in the form of predictions, which, in fact, function as warnings: '*Like this*'—crossing the German border in the role of a tourist, learning German there, and attempting to get a residence permit—'*you will commit a crime*'. And adding a further warning about the dramatic consequences that this crime could bring about, notwithstanding its declarative phrasing as mere information, it even functions as a threat. The fact that Nevcan's citation of the official's response does not contain any explicitly performative verbs such as 'to warn' (Austin 1975, 62ff) is part of a bureaucratic language (see, for instance, Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996). It represents institutional power precisely through the absence of the personal pronoun 'I', which equally has to be made explicit to invoke the explicit performative verb and form a fully functional explicitly performative speech act, such as 'I am warning you!', or even a milder form like 'I am telling you . . .', maintaining its syntactic and semantic structure but operating with an implicit verb. Expressions such as these provide evidence of some kind of personal, human involvement or at least the presence of a human counterpart in that communicative act. For the bureaucratic speech act to be understood, that is for its locutionary act to be successful (on speech act theory see, for instance, Liedtke's 2018 overview), it is not only unnecessary to make this warning/threat explicit, but the success of the illocutionary act is strengthened by the relative de-humanization of the interlocutor's role. The dry, matter-of-factly, rational depiction of the consequences of overstepping the legal boundaries and borders of the nation state only emphasises the vulnerability of the individual: What she is facing, really, is not a human face speaking out threats, but the abstract state apparatus. Thus, the threat becomes evident as the core element in the production of hegemony. Its performative production, as already shown above, involves the physical body in contrast to the official body vis-à-vis the applicant, a physical body that is only there as a function of the nation-state. In turn, this contrast heightens the individual's awareness of being a

person and a vulnerable body.

And it is at this point that the dimensions of embodiment and imaginary converge in the bureaucratic performative act of presenting oneself at the consulate. The threat immanent in the conjured-up image of becoming somebody to commit a crime and being dealt with by the respective state institutions includes the imaginary of both that body and the person in it. So, however the individual imagines taking up the role of the criminal; of the *imagined* body, being arrested and deported, they undergo a *bodily-felt experience* (of fear, threat etc.). As Nevcan puts herself in the subject position of that sentence uttered by the consulate official, this imaginary of her future affects her in the direct sense of the word as it creates a sense of threat. Moreover, it becomes apparent with the successful outcome of the performative speech act. After two attempts at resisting Germany's demand to learn the language and take the test prior to departure, Nevcan accepts this visa path, complying with the nation-state's rule as she asks about the steps that she has to take:

Then I said: 'What should I do?'

This acceptance, together with the fact that Nevcan is now taking the required steps as a student of the European Language and Cultural Centre to prepare for the test is evidence that the performative speech act at the consulate was successfully performed. It has produced the necessary territorial control and rule *from afar* and *in advance* of the applicant's entry into that territory, prompting her cooperation, as she now readily receives the official's instructions:

She said: "Go to the language course, come back with these documents".

With the termination of negotiations over possibilities, the answer—a formal order—that Nevcan receives to her question is no longer uttered in the future tense; it also does not raise a particular role. The phrasing of the order using the imperative forms of the verbs 'to go' and 'to come' leads to the removal of the receiver of the order. Thus, the person executing the instructed actions is present

only implicitly in the communicative role of the receiver instead of being addressed directly using the personal pronoun 'you'. Now that it has been made clear which visa path is viable for Nevcan, the future is no longer presented as something to be discursively explored and negotiated, thereby interrupting imaginaries of future roles at this stage of the action. Nevcan's imaginary of her future form of mobility is brought in line with the path foreseen for her based on the German migration regulations. In this way, not only control and rule but also factuality are created, as she is communicatively led into a particular subjectivity. These versions of a criminal future self that are laid out for Nevcan B. help to secure her cooperation with the nation-state's regulations, the basis of which was already laid out with her visit to the consulate in order to learn about her legal options in the first place. Thus, it becomes apparent how the nation state *discursively* establishes and executes its power over the third-country individual from afar through their assumption of the subordinate role of applicant within the communicative act long before their body comes to be legally controlled through its presence on national territory. For this type of extraterritorialized border regime, the discursive 'soft' means of control are crucial, effectuated through the discursive imagination of future outcomes. The respective subjects are thus controlled by means of their imaginations in a very intimate, subtle and almost imperceptible way, merely through the 'informing' of the prospective migrant subject. The efficiency and effectiveness of this type of bureaucratic cross-border control is derived from this very 'invisibility', wherein the relevant socio-spatial and temporal relations, roles, and actions are commonly taken for granted. This commonsensical belief in the factuality of nation-states, embassies, officials, applicants, and visas creates them as *real*. The power that this intimate effect has on the subject doing the imagining work by putting themselves into the body of the 'criminal' is already being experienced during this mock demonstration of roles in terms of affects/emotions. Thus, before any form of legal or physical control is applied, the European nation-state's border regime apparatus has already

taken control over the body/subject asking for access to its territory for the duration of the performative imaginary act.

This execution of discursive power is enabled by and anchored in shared knowledge/ideology and quasi-naturalized facts, which is crucial to enable a regime to function from afar. The necessary preconditions for this bureaucratic control at the embassy are co-created by the nation-state's border regime apparatus in terms of material, physical force (fences, border check-points, guards, weapons, economic and other resources etc.) and the respective knowledge regime. This process entails, among many other things, knowledge about the global inequality between Turkey and Germany and the hierarchized nature of the border between the two places that shape Nevcan's mobility options and restrictions.

Nonetheless, Nevcan's resistance continues and is much more fundamental in the sense that she comes to challenge her potential criminalization by the German state by turning the attribution of illegality on to that state herself. She points out having read that the pre-departure language requirement itself is illegal:

Then I also saw it was posted on the Internet, *written in capital letters* "IT'S AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS ONLY APPLIED IN TURKEY" [emphasis added].

Although she does not draw an explicit causal line between her reading of the pre-departure language requirement and her decision to try to get a tourist visa, it is indicated by its position right before the sentence ('Then I [went to the consulate and] said:') as well as by the use of the intensifying particle 'also' as having played a role in her decision. Thus, her subversion or circumvention in her eyes is further legitimized.

Two kinds of rights are set against each other here. The first is the human and national right to family as a right that the individual has vis-à-vis the state, and the second is the right of the nation-state to sovereign power, that is, to defend its laws, control its territory, and have them respected by individuals arriving there.

5.3.4 The temporal dimension of the 'pre-'aspect

So far, I have looked at the extra-territorial and temporal dimension of the *pre*-aspect, mainly focusing on the purposes and implications this has on the rule of the nation-state. But there is also an institutional dimension at work in this temporal 'pre-ness', which can have far-reaching consequences for visa applicants, namely the externalization of migration management tasks from the governing authorities to private actors.

As they are obliged to spend several months completing this procedure, visa applicants are delegated to other institutions by the embassy, namely private institutions, such as language schools and testing centres. These institutions function as intermediaries, selecting and buffering visa applicants for an extended duration before they can get in touch with the embassy itself. The effect is obvious: fewer candidates come to the embassy, as the test fulfils this selecting function.

The temporal dimension of this delay may not have significant consequences for the bordering institutions of the nation-states, apart from this selection effect, but it has very clear effects for the applicants. Thus, they are not only geographically/territorially held at a distance but also institutionally, with the effects extending beyond selecting visa applicants, creating a blurring of the boundaries between state and private institutions with far reaching consequences for all of the actors involved. The case of the woman who ultimately withdrew her interview because of the obscurity resulting from these tight private–public interrelations illustrates the effects that such externalization can have. I will return to this fact and its consequences later.

It is very obvious that this type of visa requirement entails an enormous cost in terms of time for applicants. It interrupts their lives, sometimes compelling them to give up their jobs or studies. The time spent learning the foreign language and being tested is one of the key distinguishing characteristics of this type of border regime compared with most others. This factor makes Germany, Great Britain, and Denmark among the most restrictive European countries with respect to the

regulation on spousal reunification. Therefore, every one of our interview partners going through the respective language-related procedures stressed time lost in one way or another.

A striking contrast appears with regard to the amount of time that visa applicants (are forced to) spend in order to attain the language certificate. Whereas the amount of time that candidates must sacrifice is crucial for the individuals involved, for the state, it is of no consequence, as long as the time frames accord with the state's stipulations. For example, the language certificate is valid for only six months after the test; otherwise it has to be repeated. The importance of the temporal dimension for the spouses is also apparent in Nevcan's case, with which I would like to conclude this section. For one thing, her attempts at evading the language test are not only prompted by the difficulties of learning German and passing the test, which she fears; they are also prompted by her simple desire to be with her spouse as soon as possible. Hence her 'light-footedness' in trying out different options translates into her immediately initiating the procedures regarding the language certificate. She responds quickly to the consulate official's answer to her question, of what to do now, losing no more time, as she realizes that the tourist visa track option is not going to work out for her:

She said: "Go to the language course, come back with these documents". . . . Then I went. As she said this, I hurried to (come) here. I searched on the Internet. They recommended both this place and the Goethe Institute in the other side [*European side*]. The months (of the latter) didn't suit me; there, the course starts at the end of this month. I said (to myself) "Why should I wait for a month?" (The course) started immediately here. I heard that it started on Monday, [so] I came here on Sunday. I talked [to the administration] and I came to the course on Monday. It happened like this.

Here, time is evidently an asymmetrical value in the sense that applicants want to go ahead with the process, whereas consulates have an interest in slowing it down, for instance, by referring them to the (semi-)private language teaching and testing institutions. But in this interplay between private and state institutions on the one hand and the applicant/language learner on the other hand, yet more intermediary actors enter the scene. These actors are the private agencies, sometimes called

'tourist agencies', sometimes referred to as (private) 'visa agencies' that have come about as an effect of the visa industry, of which family unification is a part. They provide various services to visa applicants. Here, I would like to insert a brief ethnographic extract about these agencies in Prishtina. Although they concern agencies surrounding the Swiss embassy, and are thus not linked, per se, to the language requirement, our research on the German consulate in Prishtina and the one in Istanbul yielded very similar scenarios. So I will focus on this area exemplarily, to provide a general insight into this "scene", before continuing with my analysis and the story of Nevcan.

5.3.5 On 'Private' visa agencies

The Adrian Krasniqi street facade has changed visibly over the decades since the Swiss embassy took up residence here. Increasingly, there has been a transformation in the small business stalls on the roadsides from those of tailors and hairdressers to travel agencies. The main business of the travel agencies in this area, however, is not to provide information about bus itineraries, book flights, or sell travel tickets; rather, it is to offer information and assistance on all matters relating to visa procedures. Their agents' daily business involves clarifying application conditions, correctly filling in and copying paperwork as well as actually interpreting the meanings behind the questions posed to applicants by the embassy. For example, I witnessed a young couple walk into one of the agencies in which I did some of my research wanting to know whether their dinner party in a restaurant would qualify as a 'traditional Kosovar wedding', as they felt that if it did not, their visa application might be considered unfavorably:

Agent: How many guests did you have?

Client (quietly): Ten . . . or twelve people, I think.

Agent: No, no, [a] traditional [wedding] has more like a hundred, two hundred or so. Did you have music?

Client: Well, there was music playing in the restaurant. . . .

Agent: No, I mean a live band, some singer whom you hired?

Client: No, it was a small dinner reception just for family and some friends. . . .

Agent: That is not a traditional wedding. If you have photos of your event, hand them in!⁶

As the above example shows, these private 'visa agents' have become highly adept at deciphering the often culturalizing, gendered assumptions underlying the visa procedures, quickly and routinely checking for the necessary 'evidence' of the authenticity of, in this case, a marriage. When I ask the agent, a student in law and public administration, what she thinks that the question about the traditional wedding is aimed at uncovering, she gives me the following response:

If somebody invests money in music, a party hall, food for all cousins and relatives and so on, then they might be less likely to assume that it is a fake marriage. Whereas some dinner with ten people . . . you can do that just like this. I could invite you, for example, to a birthday meal or something. This actually does show something.

When I probe further to explore what is meant by 'traditional', she points out to me, just as she just did to the couple earlier, that it was *'well, an Albanian party, with many people and so on. And what the Swiss do for weddings, you probably know that better. Maybe there are not so many people. And the people at the embassy they know too, what a party is like with us.'* Speaking of the kinds of evidence that couples can provide to the embassy, she mentions photos and video coverage, but she also notes the details of the wedding guests (names and dates of birth), who can then serve as witnesses if the Swiss embassy want to investigate a case more closely.

I ask her, if she sometimes has cases that she thinks fall into the category of marriages only 'for papers'. She says that this is very rare, instead making the following point:

There are also cases of real marriages, but people still indicate wrongly that they had a traditional party, because they think that is better, and then they get tangled up. Before my time here, there was a case where the visa was denied based on such a doubt. Truth is the best in any case.

The door opens, and another customer enters the little 'shack'. Up to the time that the agency closes at 15.00, there is a frequent flow of customers in and out. And even though they do not charge for advice such as that given to the couple

⁶ The citations in this chapter are based on field notes taken about an hour after the event.

mentioned earlier, ('they will come back here when they need further services like at the doctor'), they make enough to endure and even to grow a little.

The business model of these 'private visa agencies' has indeed grown into a lucrative local opportunity, given the stagnation of the visa liberalization process and the high number of visa applications to Switzerland as well as to some other European countries, such as Austria, the Netherlands, and four or five other countries. This is what a security guard tells me during an informal conversation. The Swiss embassy staff apparently process not only the family unification visas but also the tourist visas for these countries against payment, for they themselves have too few 'clients' to make the establishment of an entire tourist visa administration apparatus worthwhile.

However, the business of these small private service providers around the Swiss embassy has been mushrooming over the past decade. One such provider, in particular, advantageously positioned right opposite the embassy, caught my eye when passing by. This was a fast food restaurant that had started as a side business to provide its customers with visa assistance too, aside from selling them burgers and *burek*. A sheet of paper stuck to the entrance door modestly indicated this newly added service.

But the presence of the embassy has not only inscribed itself into the material spatiality of Prishtina's cityscape in this area; it has also come to be manifested in the ways in which people move through this particular space. These modes of movement have been shaped, more precisely, through embassy regulations, revealing how the extraterritorial control that these diplomatic missions exercise in 'third countries' informally extend beyond the immediate premises they occupy into the surrounding public space. For example, the Swiss embassy executes control over the bodies of the people waiting for their appointments in front of the embassy, by confining them to the sidewalk on the opposite side of the road outside of official opening hours, allowing them to cross it and stand by the entry gate only during those hours when visa appointments are held, which at the time

occurred on weekday mornings. Thus, a crowd of thirty to fifty people crossing Adrian Krasniqi Street together at 9 a.m. sharp could be seen. While descending to the city centre from my hotel, which was slightly uphill, I occasionally witnessed this strange morning ritual at this spot on the street, which was otherwise quite deserted at this time, when its lower end, close to the central Agim Ramadani Boulevard was only just starting to awaken.

Another example of how the embassy's presence has come to mark this space can be seen in the way that the movement of the staff of private visa service agencies is confined. They are generally restricted to the pavement on the other side of the 'embassy road'; I was unable to find out which precise (legal) means allows for this confinement to be implemented and upheld, but the fact is that these people are forbidden from crossing the road, except during visa office hours. Thus, the business activities of these private actors 'on the ground' are shaped, with staff members working outside the agency, as 'runners' approaching potential customers and offering them the services of their particular agency. I was informed by an agency owner that this was 'a man's job', whereas it was often (young) women who worked at the desks inside the agencies as the actual counsellors; an occupation that the same agent deemed 'much more suitable and safe for young girls'.

Such conversations with embassy officials, private agency owners, and staff as well as a security guard—also belonging to a private company—during his night watch in front of the embassy confirmed the spatial spread and growing intensification of these control measures aimed at maintaining security and order. This is at least the aim of these measures according to the implementing side; in the eyes of some private visa support agency staff, these control measures are part of the embassy's claim to monopolize the mobility market, allowing them to maintain high visa application hurdles and thus prevent Kosovar citizens, especially older people from villages, from having a fair chance at applying. Or, as one agent put it:

The people who can't manage all the paperwork and have nobody to help them with it need guidance. We tell them: You need this and this and this paper to complete everything; we see what's missing in their documents and make copies ready for them. They drive here from

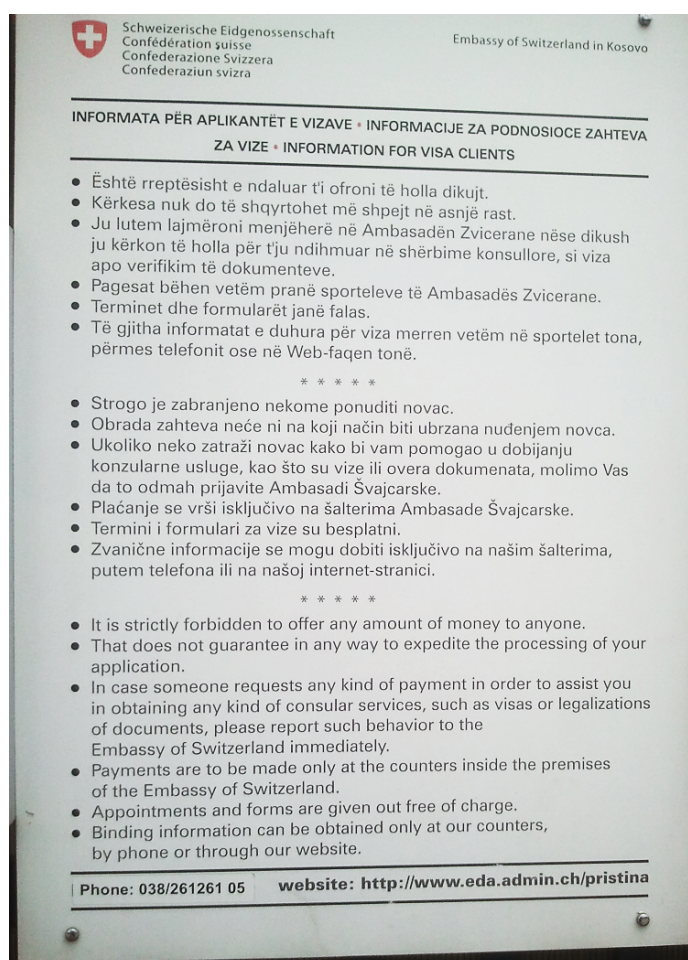
villages far away sometimes; they can't come again and again for every piece of paper they are told is still missing.

The private agencies see their business as servicing those people who lack the knowledge and experience necessary to hand in a complete visa application. This image contrasts with the negative narratives of embassy staff in which the latter appear as immoral or illegal, even as a kind of 'plague', creating confusion among applicants regarding the visa procedures and authorities, as they draw money from their pockets under false pretences, profiting from their hopes to receive a visa. These struggles between the embassy and the private agencies are reflected in several large and smaller signs permanently installed in front of the embassy fence, warning visa applicants about these private actors and asking for their cooperation in prosecuting them. Similar information is handed out to them by the embassy as part of the visa application paperwork.

The image to the right depicts such a metal placard titled 'information for visa clients':

Without embarking on a detailed analysis of the struggles between local private and transnational state actors in the context of visa procedures, the above discussion indicates how extraterritorial aspects and processes of border/migration regimes bring about particular types

of cooperation (such as the security company), as well as particular types of conflict between private and state actors. At the centre of these struggles is the question of



control: *Who are seen as legitimate and legal actors who can participate in governing the mobility of these 'third-country citizens' and in what ways?*

Together with the first example, this struggle over control illustrates a particular dimension of the development towards the extraterritorialization of border regimes (De Genova et al. 2015). This dimension is the spatial materialization of this extraterritorial execution of control, which is also expressed in the local spread of territorial control over particular localities in the countries where these embassies are located. These places around embassies are quite visibly 'occupied' by those embassies in the sense that a power monopoly exists; one that is contested by the private businesses that spring from it. I see this type of spatialized control as being a micro-level expression of the extraterritorialized execution of border control that hinges on macro-level, global, or regional power asymmetries.

5.4 State b/ordered: 'Go to your country, learn, and come back'

In the case of Nevcan and her resistance against the German nation-state's extraterritorialized language-based border regime, I have shown in detail how the state's diplomatic representations become stages of performance where, with unequal roles, that regime is contested and implemented, as it is inscribed into those ruled by it, their bodies, imaginaries, and affects. In this context, I have illustrated the intimate workings of this type of extraterritorialized border regime made functional through imagined future selves and shared knowledge about the power that Western nation-states hold over those classified as third-country citizens. Here, the focus is specifically on the German nation-state, which is ranked above Turkey in the global power hierarchy.

In the following section, I will the case of Adil T., which complements that of Nevcan B. The resistance of the former bears parallels with that of the latter (pursuing an application for a tourist visa, learning German in Germany and trying to obtain a residence permit from there). However, the case of Adil T. allows for a more pronounced exposition of the effects of this extraterritorialized means of border regime. His case illustrates more of the structural machinery of what I earlier termed 'spatial pre-ness', revealing the particular way it exerts control over both the spouse's body and the national territory. What makes the mechanisms of control/rule more visible in this case is the fact that unlike Nevcan B., Adil T.'s application for a tourist visa to Germany was actually successful, and he was able to go and visit his wife there without previously handing in a German language certificate. However, he notes in his own self-narration that 'because of the [family reunification visa] procedure, I had to come back after staying three months [in Germany]. I went to a [language] school there. My visa expired, and sixty days passed. The aliens police helped me, as I had good intentions. I left with a paper; I left [Germany] with a document. Now I cannot go back; I have to pass this school'.

I will first briefly outline Atil T's story before I present an analysis of this case. It introduces additional insights regarding the particular meanings and implications

of the use of language as a means of (extra)territorial control on the one hand, and the effects of this use of force on the individual's attitude/relation towards that state on the other hand.

Adil was 54 years old at the time of the interview; the same age as his wife in Germany and much older than the rest of the students in his class at the Goethe Institute in Istanbul, where he was preparing for the pre-departure language test when Ceren Topgöl asked him to participate in the study. In her introductory words to the translated interview transcript, Ceren describes him as a very kind man, who is respected by his classmates, also because he is older. She remarks that apart from his age, he stands out in class for his more advanced German language skills, which he attained during his stay in Germany and the one-and-a-half months of language training that he took there.

Adil and his wife in Germany met on an online dating platform, and after she travelled to Turkey in order for them to get to know each other personally, they decided to become a couple and remarry at the registry office in Turkey. Both of them had been previously divorced and have three grown-up children each from their previous marriages.

After his wife left for Germany again, Adil decided to apply for a tourist visa to join her. He had been working as a truck driver for many years, most recently in the construction of the Third Bridge in Istanbul, as he points out with a hint of pride, but had to give up his job some time before leaving for Germany because of the time-consuming visa procedure. Although the reason for the positive decision on the part of the German embassy officials to grant him a tourist visa remains somewhat unclear in his narrative, his public appointment with the construction company may have been a crucial factor along with his age and also perhaps maybe the fact that the invitation letter to Germany came from his brother-in-law and not from his wife (though the initial reason for this had been her low income). Once in Germany, he did both of the things that Nevcan B. suggested she could have done: learn German and try to apply for a residence permit from there. Adil attempted the

latter through a lawyer, but as his attempts remained unsuccessful. He overstayed his visa for two months, during which time he spent one and a half months taking language classes. The German course and his stay with his wife in Germany were terminated when he was summoned to the so-called aliens police, who asked him to leave Germany and provided him with the necessary pass document. Adil describes this document as a report containing some explanatory and, in his view, exonerating details about him as a person whose 'intention is clear'. His explanation of how this clarity of his intentions is brought about remains somewhat foggy in terms of the details—for instance, whether he claims to have stayed on unknowingly or not, or what the precise function of his wife's residence permit is in his argumentation. However, it appears that his ability to prove his willingness or intention to leave are crucial here, as he does not make use of an offer to stay for fifteen more days; rather, he points out that he has already bought a ticket to return to Turkey:

C: Then you stayed there ninety days and . . .

A: I stayed. . . . Normally, I should have stayed one month; we stayed two more months without knowing. But the aliens police . . . when the aliens police warned us, I had the ticket to return on the 5th and they invited us on the 30th. He [the police officer] did me a favour, saying: "I could let you stay for fifteen days, now that this has happened". Also [my wife] had a residence permit. We said: "Thanks but [this is] not necessary, the ticket has already been bought. We had to postpone the ticket". Then the police thought, "Okay, this man is . . ." I mean . . .

C: Going back?

A: Of course, I mean [the policeman thought]: "His intention is clear". He wrote a document there, a report. With that report I passed from the customs and came here.

In Adil's perception the pass issued for him by the aliens police, which he describes as a favour and a help, figures as a token of his integrity. Although it is not made explicit what exactly he means by 'intention', the context suggests that once more, the issue of concern is sham marriage, which arises because Adil overstayed his visa. However, his intentions appear to be 'clear' given that he and his wife (claim to) have already arranged for his return to Turkey. Consequently, no doubt is raised about the legitimacy of his marriage. It may not be clear whether they had actually already bought the ticket or had only done so after receiving the invitation to go

and see the aliens police or had even just claimed to have done so beforehand. However, what is important in terms of Adil's self-image and his retrospective interpretation of his experience of having to go back to Turkey is this: no matter the formal warning and order of the aliens police to leave, in the end it was he who took the steps to initiate his departure. In his attempt at subverting or bending Germany's visa regulations, he went so far as to experience being legally forced to leave, but not so far as to risk being forcefully removed; something, which, according to this logic, would have contradicted the legitimacy of his 'intentions'.

Whereas the report contains information about his overstepping the legal boundaries of his stay, it also allows Adil T. to pass through the outgoing border institutions on his journey from Germany back to Turkey without further difficulties. As he highlights the latter, the narrative of his return to Turkey highlights his moral legitimacy, rather than, as could perhaps be presumed, focusing on the illegality of his stay. Therefore, the notions of criminalization and force that appeared in Nevcan's account of her encounter at the consulate are absent here. Adil is not portraying himself as a criminalized person, but rather as somebody who receives help from state authorities, who recognize that his intentions as pure. Nor does he contest his having to return to Turkey. On the contrary, everything is described as having gone smoothly. But this 'smoothness' applies only to the account of the experiences in Germany. As soon as he is back in Turkey, the narrative shifts. It is only here that his account mentions affects, emotions, and evaluations, allowing us (the interviewer, the researcher, and the readers) to acquire deeper insights into his experience.

Only when he finds himself back on the other side of the border does it occur to him that he is indeed stuck. As long as he remains unsuccessful in acquiring the language certificate—the next document in his administrative journey—he cannot return to his wife in Germany. He views this as a 'lesson' that he learned through his experience with the German border regime:

With that report I passed from the customs and came here. Now I'm trying to go again. I learned that whatever you do, obtaining this document [the language certificate] is a must. Whatever you do. This is something horrible [silence].

What he has learned is that there is no way around the language certificate if he wants to join his wife in Germany. This strikes him as horrible. In the narrative that centres on this realization, the quality of this measure of force, which interweaves visa candidates' physical/spatial immobilization with the demand to learn German, is a central theme in his narrative and that of others. In the following section, the analysis focuses on this particular quality of forced language acquisition as a means of extra-territorializing national border regimes, with the starting points being, once more, affects and effects on those facing this conditionality. I will show that pre-departure language testing, mandatory only for people from particular (economically disadvantaged) 3rd countries, creates strong feelings of devaluation, which are reflected in perceptions of discrimination. In turn, I will discuss the severe impact this has on attitudes vis-à-vis the nation-state and reflect on the counter strategies that Adil employs.

5.4.1 'Then perspectives change': The dis-integrative language requirement

The condition of 'learning German first' functions as a powerful aspect of an extraterritorialized border regime executing control over territories and bodies from afar as it immobilizes them—more precisely, the bodies of third-country citizens. The latter are kept in place and away from European territory until—and if—they have fulfilled the particular condition.

Adil's experience of this institutional grasp is not, like Nevcan's, an *imagined* future scenario. He does actually become that 'linguistic outlaw', which Nevcan embodies only imaginatively through the future scenario outlined by the consulate official. In this scenario, a body, which is illegalized/criminalized on German territory, is to be sent back to Turkey to learn the nation-state's official national language, get tested, and then perhaps return via the administrative path foreseen for him by its border regime. For Adil, this is a lived experience, but, as pointed out earlier in his

narrative, he does not address this part of his experience of having to return to Turkey as long as he finds himself in Germany. After all, it was he himself who bought the ticket to return to Turkey. The strangely contrasting conditional triangle of language, territory, and force only features in his account once he is back in Turkey. That moment marks a turn in his narrative; we understand that his situation has changed fundamentally and he is now faced with a different challenge. While in Germany, and when he was visited by the aliens police, his most pressing concern had been to not be registered by authorities as a suspicious cross-border spouse; a possible case of sham marriage, which would lead to a general ban from German territory. He was less concerned about the fact that in order to return he had to 'go to his country' and 'learn'—a complex constellation of force that he was yet to experience at the time. However, finding himself now in the middle of this new constellation, his primary concern relates to the difficulties he encounters while trying to fulfil the language requirement. His narrative reflects vividly the conditionality with which his body is removed and then immobilized through an institutional grasp that affects him deeply:

A: With that report, I passed from the customs and came here. Now I'm trying to go [back] again. I learned that whatever you do, obtaining this document [the language certificate] is a must; whatever you do. This is something horrible [silence]. This is also insulting for a person. My wife is living there, [but] in order for me to go there, I'm obliged to learn German, whereas German people can happily come here without knowing [any] Turkish; whether as a tourist or for any other reason. They cannot speak Turkish like me; I cannot speak German like they do. But we don't have such an obligation. But they . . . [it's] very bad. I think this is a way of insulting people. . . . They say "take it or leave it [*işine gelirse*]; this is how it is". They set this obligation of "you have to know my language". And this is not good. My perspective towards Germany is of course different because of this. When I went and visited, Germany . . . okay, I saw it was very much superior compared to Turkey. How do they say? [deep breath] In terms of both culture and financially, I mean how do they say? It's a rich country. And its position and establishment. . . . It is well-established from the [very] beginning, very well- established. It can't be damaged in any way. We cannot be like them whatever we do. It's impossible. I mean there is such a difference. I want to live there. It's a suitable place for me; a place that sounds compelling to me. Here is where I was born, but I want to live there. There are barriers, there are huge barriers. . . . Then the perspectives change too.

C: *How do the perspectives change?*

A: Germany gives me a rough time. How can I consider Germany's perspective in a positive way? She insults me, she puts up some barriers. But someone from the UK or from an EU country doesn't have difficulty entering the country as I do. It's easy for him/her to enter. Why? I'm a human being, as she/he is. I sell her cheese; she sells me wine. I provide her with all sorts of things, food or other things, she (provides me with) heavy industry. Isn't this the case? I provide her with something in some ways. People . . . all people in the world should agree and be together in terms of communication and help, as if they lived in the same place, as if they were members of the same family. You may need to go to Germany in order to see a doctor. I mean a desperate person, a patient needs [to be able to see] a doctor or let's say a clinic, a hospital. This is the case for all [people] in the world [silence].

C: *You feel like . . . I mean you've started to think negatively about Germany. That's what I understood.*

A: I'm a decided person, I want to stay but you see this barrier, right? My three months here are wasted. I've spent three months [in Germany]. [Authorities] should tell me to come and take this [course] in Germany. I could go [to language lessons] in Germany—I did. Why don't you take this into consideration? Why do you force me to do it in Turkey? I mean I'm not against your German; I'll learn but I say I will learn it in Germany. But you don't accept that either. You say: "Go to your country, learn and come back". I say: "Let me pay its price—I have to one way or another—and learn in Germany. In the meantime [I can] be with my loved ones'. Not necessarily my wife, it can be a relative. But of course, my wife has the priority now that I'm married. Why do you create a distance? This is separating people [discrimination], I mean creating distance between them.

The main traits that characterize Adil's experience of the German family reunification regime function through a combination of two different forms of coercion/force: extra-territorialization and language learning that are conditionally linked. This conditional interrelation of a territorial/mobility component and a linguistic component shape the particular structure and procedure of this border regime apparatus. A crucial part of this apparatus are the effects of subjectivation that it has on the persons undergoing these procedures.

In Adil T.'s case, these are overwhelmingly negative effects, as he experiences being forced and separated, both in terms of a spatial barring as well as discriminatory treatment of him as a representative of 'the Turkish'. Expressions of force and separation mark his entire narrative as he speaks of the language requirement as a *must*, of being *obliged (once)*, of an *obligation (twice)*, (*huge*) *barrier/s (four times)*, *difficulty/ies (twice)*, *force, distance (twice)*, and *separating (once)*; a term, which as Ceren Topgül notes, can be translated as *discrimination*.

The experience of this discriminatory control over territory and body functions via the condition of language learning. Thus, viewed from the perspective of language and what it represents to Adil in this context, we need to understand the German language in its particular functionality as an instrument of border control. Language in this context is a means of force, and it appears solely and explicitly as such in Adil's narrative, as every reference to the German language is accompanied by some notion of force; he points out that it is imposed on him by Germany/the Germans, while keeping him away from German territory and hence from his wife:

I learned that whatever you do, obtaining this document [the language certificate] is a *must*.

My wife is living there, [but] in order for me to go there, I'm *obliged* to learn German, whereas German people can happily come here without knowing [any] Turkish.

They set this *obligation* of "you *have* to know my language".

Why do you *force* me to do it in Turkey? I mean I'm not against your German; I'll learn, but I say I will learn it in Germany. But you don't accept that either. You say: "Go to your country, *learn* and come back".

Adil's experience with the German language as a pre-requirement to joining his wife in Germany results in the perception of the German language as an instrument of force. This experience of spatial removal and immobilization, together with the order 'to learn' affect Adil deeply; something he expresses using the negative qualifiers *horrible, insulting, very bad, not good* and *rough*. For Adil, who is fifty-six years old at the time of the interview, and has been working as a driver for most of his life, being faced with this highly demanding visa requirement is a difficult experience. He feels degraded and discriminated against. Finding himself in this situation of being forced to learn the German language before being able to apply to join his wife is *insulting* to him. This insult hits him personally, evoking strong negative feelings and a sense of being silenced, as I will discuss later on. And it is directed at him by a powerful, far-removed entity named 'Germany' or 'they', the generalizing pronoun diffusely comprising 'the Germans', 'German authorities', or simply 'the others'.

Accordingly, the conclusion of his entire narrative surrounding the issue of the pre-departure language requirement and its primary effect is a change of attitude towards Germany: Now, he feels negatively about his aspired new country of residence. His experiences of struggling with learning this language, while being separated from his wife, of being forced and discriminated against have negatively altered his perception of Germany. What Adil T. has learnt from this experience is not only *'that whatever you do, obtaining this document is a must'*. He has also learnt something important about his status in that new country; the role that it anticipates for him. He is not treated as a human equal to *'someone from the UK or from an EU country'*. As a Turkish citizen, he has to earn such a status prior to his departure by meeting the condition of speaking German at the A1 level. Only then is he considered fit by German authorities to apply for the family reunification visa—his human right.

These basic effects of the pre-departure language requirement are in stark contrast now with the integrative function that it is supposed to fulfil. The key notion of integration and its exact operationalization through language learning remains vague in the European migration discourse, in general, and with regard to spousal reunification in particular. Nevertheless, the negative impact that this forced linguistic integration from afar has on Adil and on his attitude towards Germany clearly conveys the opposite of an integration understood as fostering inclusive and equal treatment of newcomers. We will now leave Adil T.'s narrative for a while, returning to it in a discussion of two more pertinent aspects characterizing the particular quality of his—but not only his—experience of forced national language learning later on.

At this point in the discussion, I would like to open up the analytical scope and bring in more voices, demonstrating that the narrative on force and discrimination as well as the articulation of the resulting negative effects on the relation with the aspired new country of residence are not particular to Adil's case. Moreover, they point to a basic structural trait of this type of border regime; a dis-

integrative, discriminatory or exclusionary effect, contrary to the acclaimed 'pre-integrative' goal of the language requirement. I will reflect further on this contradiction before returning to Adil's case, tying it together with these reflections on integration.

5.5 Cross-border marriage and the discourse of force

As previously noted, this dis-integrative effect of the German nation-state's use of force is traceable, to differing degrees, throughout the vast majority of the interviews that were conducted, being more pronounced in certain cases than in others. Roughly speaking, one can see the emergence of this incapacitating and exclusionary effect as being correlated with two determinants. Firstly, this effect is stronger for those who are further ahead in the procedures surrounding the language-testing regime. Secondly, it is stronger for those who are more vulnerable in terms of their social class, age, gender, and other relevant intersecting categories. This finding confirms previous research findings that the pre-departure language requirement has a predominantly selective effect, further amplifying the discrimination against those groups of people, who are already in weak social and economic positions and are more prone to unequal treatment. (Dahinden et al. 2020; Gutekunst 2018; Jashari et al. 2019) This observation brings to light an effect that clearly contradicts the alleged 'pre-integration' of the joining spouses; the enforcement of their A1-level language competency comes with a 'side effect' of newcomers feeling discriminated against, excluded, or offended.

Notwithstanding their specific individual positions in society and in the classroom setting in particular, visa applicants/language students are generally greatly preoccupied with the question of the sense and legitimization of the (selective) obligation of the pre-departure language requirement. The interviews show clearly that the question, framed by notions of force, is a general topic that is discussed not only among course participants but also in class, where it confronts the language teachers, as well as more broadly within the discourse of the Turkish media. For instance, Nevcan's mentions the headline, in large font, relating to the discriminatory practice of the language test in an online news article.

Sinem Z, who is a younger than Adil T., and also a course participant at the Goethe Institute, offers a different perspective relating to this discursive negotiation. She observes and comments on the matter of force and its effects, sympathizing

with the people in her class who struggle a great deal with learning the language. However, Sinem is quite confident that she herself 'can do it', as she points out repeatedly. This twenty-two-year-old university student, who lives in Istanbul, was born to a working-class family in Kayseri, a large city in central Anatolia, and has already been briefly cited earlier with respect to the sham argument legitimizing the language test. Here I will situate that short citation in its broader narrative embeddedness, as it evolved in response to the question: *'What do you think about the language school?'* Her narrative, although stemming from the solidary reflection on the use of force by German authorities against 'people of a certain age', soon turns from a 'them' to a 'we', revealing her own position inside the 'we' on the receiving side of that force:

S: About the language school. . . . In fact, at first, I found it quite unnecessary. After all, I was saying [to myself] we're not going there for pleasure, I mean . . . I was saying "As if I'm too fond of your country", I was telling [that] to my friends and all . "As if I'm coming there for pleasure". Indeed, honestly I still find the language exam unnecessary, but not the language school. After all, everyone is of a certain age, everyone is not young like me, and there are also some people of a certain age. After all, they are going to join their spouses. It's not a nice thing for Germany to force them like this. We always discuss the reason why they force us this much, but you cannot find any explanation. It's like these [things] are mandatory; they are necessary. On the other hand, I find the language school reasonable; after all they teach you a language so that you won't have difficulty after going there. At least you got some knowledge about Germany; at least you got some knowledge about how to shop, how to walk around etc.; at least you have this information before going there. But the exam and the way Germany (treats) Turks—and I don't know how they treat (migrants from) other countries—as Turks, we honestly don't really like the fact that they force Turkey this much. After all, nobody is going there for pleasure; everybody is going for (joining) their spouses. I don't know. . . . In fact, our teachers always tell us [these things are all] done in order to avoid fake marriages [marriages of convenience]; yet, they can't avoid fake marriages like this. A person, who will do it, will do it anyway. But we also pay the price for it. We are complaining about this a lot, as a whole class.

C: *You are talking about this among yourselves (among classmates), aren't you?*

S: We talk a lot. I mean they also say they have conversations with their spouses, etc. "Why is there an exam? There should be no exam; they [she means the authorities] should test us in another way". Because it gets more difficult to learn something when you know there is an exam at the end, and this in turn weakens your faith and enthusiasm in that country. Then you start hating that country. Without something like this, one can learn (the language) more enthusiastically, one could feel more comfortable. Now are we going to think about the exam, to concentrate on the exam's stress or are we going to try to learn the language?

Caught in this dilemma. . . . It has been one month since we started this language school; we are always caught in this dilemma.

Sinem's narrative provides insights into the discourse that dominates the classrooms at the Goethe Institute, that is, the discourse on the receiving side of the German family reunification regime. This discourse is characterized by the prominence of the notion of *force*. In her account, it becomes clear that the difficult experience of being forced to learn German from afar and its negative effects are not particular to Adil's case; rather they reflect a struggle that preoccupies cross-border spouses in this situation in general and are constitutive not of an individual narrative but of a broader discourse evolving around this type of border regime.

Like Adil, Sinem observes the general effect that this use of force has on the spouses undergoing this procedure of the border regime, more precisely the testing regime. However, she articulates her observation more explicitly when she says that the exam and the stress accompanying it not only makes it harder to concentrate on actually learning the language but that it also 'weakens your faith and enthusiasm in that country'. And she is less reserved and implicit than Adil, who speaks of a 'change of perspective on Germany', concluding plainly: 'Then you start hating that country'. But however tentatively or poignantly put, the general effect that is traceable through the data is the production of an affective relation between the forced and degraded subject and the forcing authority that is characterized by resentment and hostility. Staying with the metaphor of the 'grasp', this 'imprint' of the language testing/border regime apparatus that is left on visa applicants' emotions and self-perceptions is a substantial product of that apparatus. It is through these experienced and felt bordering practices that they are embodied, performatively producing particular subjectivities. The subjectivities thus produced and the relation established between them and the nation-state do not emerge as singular cases; rather, notwithstanding differences in the scope of their impact, depending on individual circumstances and vulnerabilities, they emerge as an integral part of the structural constitution of the apparatus itself. I will take up this

particular type of subjectivity that is produced when resuming my discussion of Adil's case.

Thirty-one-year-old Mirsat I., who also attended a pre-integration language course at the Goethe Institute in Istanbul, was another student who spoke about the issue of force. He had moved to Istanbul from Manisa, a large city in the Aegean region of Turkey for his studies. The first member of his family to complete university some years ago (his father had been a miner and his mother was a housewife), he had been working as a sales person in a furniture shop in Istanbul. Mirsat uses the same words as Sinem, that is, 'forcing us so much' to express his discomfort:

C: *You will have class for one more month and then you'll take the exam . . .*

M: Yes. It will be like that. Ours is the beginning level, the first level. But [I heard that] it will continue when we go there. I don't know how it will help me; there is this language course for 600 hours. I guess that has an influence on residence permits. But I don't know, I think it would be better if they didn't force us this much. Because, I even thought about acquiring German citizenship, but it takes too much time; you need to speak the language at a certain level, [and] you need to fulfil some [conditions] etc. I don't know, after this age, it's tiring for me to study with books and notebooks all the time. Is it a good thing? Actually it's a good thing. After all, I will communicate with the people there, it's good in this respect.

Mirsat points to the fact that *being forced* to learn German as a condition to join their spouse does not end with the visa applicant's acquisition of the A1 language certificate; it will stretch well into their lives in Germany as a condition for retaining their residence permit (level A2) and then further in order to acquire citizenship (B1-level). Knowing this already has consequences for Mirsat's imaginary of his future in Germany, which negatively influences his consideration about eventually applying for citizenship. Projecting himself into a future in which he has to spend so much time and effort studying for language certificates has a discouraging effect on him. These high costs do not seem to outweigh the benefits of citizenship, which in this context figures as the only reason for the whole forced language schooling process that makes sense. This process leaves him somewhat clueless in terms of how it is supposed to facilitate his life in Germany, as the single and tautological sense that remains, the only concrete thing that he can grasp in all of this is the fact that without successfully completing it, there is no secure status in his

new country of residence. *'I guess that [it] has an influence on residence permits'*. Other than that influence, this governmentally imposed education does not connect to his life, leaving this notion of language entirely disconnected from him as a person. The German that he acquires in this context remains, in his perception, only connected to him in the form of force. His tentative response to this situation is that in his opinion *'it would be better if they'*—with *them* again, as in Adil's and Sinem's narratives standing for German authorities—*'didn't force us this much'*. Far from perceiving this force as the integrative measure that it is supposed to be, his imaginary of settling and becoming a part of German society gives way under the demanding requirements already set at the pre-departure stage, before he has even acquired the A1 level certificate.

This example illustrates that although the pre-departure language requirement is a procedure that is so demanding that visa applicants can hardly look beyond the point of passing the test, its fulfilment is only the first part of a language-related administrative procedure that stretches over many years, the end remaining out of sight. Acknowledging this fact is crucial in order to understand the structural anchoring and the workings of the pre-departure language requirement not only as part of a particular border regime apparatus but also as one element in the wider context of a national and European migration regime and the notion/ideology of membership/citizenship with which newcomers are met.

Apart from this important basic observation, we learn from Mirsat that the category of age as well as that of education, and their implications regarding the likelihood that learning a new language will be difficult are relative when dealing with a formal educational context. For Mirsat, aged thirty-one years, all of this is tiring, and is already far removed from his everyday life.

5.5.1 Historical, political, and transnational interrelations of the force discourse

As indicated above, the issue of Turkish cross-border spouses being forced to fulfil the language requirement prior to their departure to Germany is not only a hot topic among course participants, but it is one that concerned persons, namely the staff of the Goethe Institute and other German language schools are acutely aware of. They are the ones confronted with the spouses' questions about the sense of and reasons behind this legal regulation affecting their lives and their self-images on a daily basis. One of them is Işıl M., a teacher, and a consultant at the '*Yeni vatanım önyum projesi*' ('My New Homeland Preintegration Project'), who is working with the Goethe Institute as well as with other organizations. In their pre-integration courses, co-funded by the *Asylum-, Migration- and Integrationfund of the European Union*, the *Alevi Federation Germany*, and the *German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community*, they provide information and advice about language and general visa requirements for migration to Germany as well as about life and further contact points in Germany. Their support services reach across the border, as their offices are not only located in different Turkish cities but also in Germany.

Işıl M., who works from the office in Istanbul, emphasizes a different nuance of what Adil T. described as an *insult*, as an apparent negative effect of the pre-integrative language testing regime on visa applicants. She observes that her clients are generally hurt by this discriminatory immigration policy, describing the questions with which they address her as well as her attempts at answering them:

C: *How do people perceive the language exams? How do they evaluate the language training process?*

I: I'm talking about in general. There are of course exceptions, but in general people are hurt. "Why do they do this to us?" They are seriously hurt.

C: *When they say "to us" [they mean] to Turkey, to Turkish people?*

I: Turkish people. "Besides we have had a mutual relationship since 1961, why do they do this to us?" We try to explain: "My friends, there are people who have been there for thirty years and who cannot speak German. This kind of wrong example leads to this kind of decision. You see it as a burden at the beginning, but this is a phase you need to pass

anyway". But of course there is a lot of money at stake, etc. I get very sad. Let's say she/he came from Nusaybin [a town at the south-eastern border of Turkey, about 1500 km from Istanbul] to go to [attend] the language course. They rent a place for a month, for three months, in a hotel. The money spent there, going and coming, the course fee, exam fee, visa fee . . . always it's about money, money, money. With the little means, they force . . . and if they are rejected, it's very upsetting.

Işıl's rationale for explaining and legitimizing the pre-departure language test when faced with her course participants refers to past experiences. She is reacting to their invocation of the long shared history of work migration between Turkey and Germany in their argument against this hurtful measure of forced integration. The 'mutual relationship since 1961' that they bring up in Işıl's citation is linked to the fiftieth anniversary of the recruitment agreement between Germany and Turkey during the German *Wirtschaftswunder* ('economic miracle'). This event, which was officially marked by a national celebration in Germany, and to which high-ranking politicians like the Turkish premier, Erdoğan, were invited was widely covered in the Turkish as well as German media and through a transnational cooperative television programme. This discursive event has likely helped to keep the historical landmark year of 1961 in Turkish–German relations fresh in the collective consciousness, appearing in some of our interviews, which took place almost five years later. Even though a systematic and convincing analysis of the public discourse in Turkey surrounding this event would be beyond the scope of this study as well as my own proficiency—to begin with, I do not read Turkish—it is important for the contextualization of cross-border spouses' narratives to include it, even if in an abridged form. This is mainly to establish a direct thematic connection of this discursive event with the issue of the pre-integrative language-testing regime, which is just as much of a political event. Thus, the media coverage in the run-up to this celebration in both countries was marked in part by romanticization and in part by critical reflections on fifty years of Turkish migration to Germany, with the so-called '*Gastarbeiter*' ('guest worker') in the lead role and the integration question as a common main thread in these text, radio, and film productions. But it also served as an opportunity for politicians to promote their domestic and international political

agendas. Thus, during his state visit to Germany, Premier Erdoğan, aside from voicing other appeals, criticized the German integration policy, which compels Turkish relatives to learn the German language before joining their family members in Germany, accusing the federal government of breaching human rights law. Chancellor Merkel, in turn, objected to this accusation, claiming that *'to master and learn the German language is mandatory for successful integration'* (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2. November 2011).

These few statements allude strongly to the fact that the issue, taken up explicitly by both heads of government to play into their national and international political agendas, is highly politicized on both the German/European side of the debate as well as on the Turkish side. They bring to light a tense political dynamic with the Turkish diaspora at its centre.

We can now return to the remarks of Işıl M., who stated that this fifty-year-long 'mutual relationship' contrasts with their being forced to learn the language in advance or to Nevcan's reference to the headlines she had read about the language test being discriminatory and 'AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS'. Such remarks confirm that the apprehension that the narratives of individuals facing the pre-departure language test that revolve around the question 'Why are they forcing us?' cannot be seen as expressions of individual sensitivities. Instead, and not only because of their frequent occurrence, they resonate within a broader national and, with some restrictions that I will discuss at the end of this chapter, transnational discourse. In this sense, the force discourse, which dominates the narratives of cross-border spouses in these pre-departure learning settings, should be understood in its broader socio-historical and political discursive context, which in turn serves as a discursive resource for individual narrative sense-making strategies. In her attempt to counter these argumentations of the people she is supposed to prepare for life in Germany, Counsellor Işıl too draws from the topos of historical experience, calling upon them to understand the failure of other earlier Turkish migrants to 'linguistically integrate' into Germany as a direct effect on this pre-departure policy and their

difficult situation. She does not pluck this argument out of thin air; it is very well-established within the German and European integration discourse legitimizing mandatory language learning not only with regard to family reunification from third countries but in the issuance of legal membership statuses to migrants and their offspring in general.

Only as Işıl leaves the mode of direct speech, which she uses to re-enact these discussions that she has with course participants for the interviewer, does she step out of her official work role as counsellor, beginning the account of her personal view on the topic with a 'but'. That personal account is marked by sympathy and understanding for the participants, as she points out that the immense financial costs associated with this visa requirement is their main struggle, concluding—or rather *almost* concluding—that 'with the little means , they force . . . and if they are rejected, it's very upsetting'. This fragmentary sentence could be completed something like this: 'with the little means [these people have], they [the German authorities] force [them to put so much of it into this language test]'. Of course, completing the counsellor's sentence requires a wider interpretative stretch than the reading of the rest of her account. However, I would argue that the blank spots, analysed in the context of her function as a counsellor at an institution that is in part supported by German and European funds are telling enough to allow for this reading. The notion of force in this context, which is frequently and openly applied by those undergoing this visa application procedure, slips out of the mouth of Işıl M. as she tries to incorporate different views/voices into her account; those of the course participants whose situation and worries she knows well, and those of the myriad of official institutions that she indirectly represents. Thus, her speech, like her role, results in a mixture of these different positions. In the forthcoming chapters, I will further discuss this mixedness of functions/roles and their effects, and, in particular, the kind of hesitation it brings about for representatives of these (principally) private institutions working together/for governmental institutions/nation states.

5.5.2 The discourse of force from the other side of the border

By bringing in one last voice, that of the German documentary film maker and language teacher, Martina Priessner to address the issue of force here, I would like to explore further the differing perspectives of the two discursive contexts in this transnational process in which the meaning of the pre-departure/integrative language-testing regime is negotiated. Very broadly, this exploration will cover the discursive context of Turkey and other 'third countries of departure' on the one hand, and that of Germany and European receiving countries on the other hand. At the core of this section is an examination of these two discourses, namely the *forced-marriage* and *forced-language* discourses, as well as their interconnectedness.

Martina Priessner, who at the time of the interview with Ceren Topgül had been living in Turkey for several years, is familiar with the struggles of people preparing for the pre-departure language test. Her familiarity comes not only from her job as a German teacher at the Goethe Institute in Istanbul but also from her documentary titled *650 Wörter* ('650 words') about the difficult situation that her course participants found themselves in, which was released in 2016. In her account, Martina speaks of predominantly negative public perceptions of such Turkish cross-border spouses in Germany, as she points out the role of the media, that is, the *German media* here:

The media are also responsible for this idea that people don't want to learn German in the Turkish context. They have this stereotype in their mind: "Oh, it can't be that difficult, it's only A1 they need to pass, so what's the problem?" They don't really understand. Because they have no idea what it means for people in the end. They don't know any details, like people traveling from the south to the next city, and also there are illiterate people. They have no idea of all these hardship cases. But that's my opinion, I don't think there should be anything forced on people before they enter the country where they want to live. It's so stupid, if you look at it. How do you learn the language? It's through participation. And it happens. I realized people are motivated, they really want to learn the language. And then, because of this enforcement, they get frustrated and they think: "why are we treated like this, and why isn't everybody treated like this, why is it only us, Turks?" Well, it's not only Turks, but they don't think of Africans or Latin Americans" [laughing]. And it really affects them, and the motivation is like a struggle. . . . And then in the general [public] perception

in Germany it's very much about forced marriages; it's very big. At any screening I have, this issue comes up. Even when people see the film and they begin to understand: "oh my god, this is so hard, they should come", then in the end, there is always somebody who brings up this issue: "Don't you think it might be good for people, because at least now there is some kind of control with regard to forced marriages? Isn't it a measure to support women?" We always have this.

As Martina describes the perspectives of her course participants and of the people whose experiences she documents in her film, she juxtaposes the struggles she witnesses with the perspective that dominates the German public discourse on this topic. Whereas the German media downplays the challenges entailed in procuring an A1 level language certificate, can pose for people, the German audience of her documentary regularly raises the argument of the pre-departure language test serving as a means of controlling forced marriages, which would ultimately benefit rather than adversely affect tested Turkish spouses—women in particular. Having already discussed this issue above, here I will not delve any deeper into this discussion. Instead of responding to assumptions about the meanings and functions of the pre-departure language-testing regime that are produced by the dominant German—or generally Western—forced-marriage discourses, I would like to examine the differing discursive formations constructed around the notion of force from a more detached perspective. Approaching the word 'force' in its contexts of use, I would like to look at how it figures in these two discourses. This seemingly accidental and unconnected parallel struck me as quite astounding at first, making me wonder whether there is a connection between them. Which and whose (communicative) purposes do these two discourses on force serve? And what is there to learn from the way they are connected or disconnected?

As Martina talks about the general lack of understanding of the 'Turkish context' in the German public discourse, she brings up the word *force* in relation to both of these discursive contexts without opposing them to one another explicitly as being parallel or contradictory. In one context, there is the *force* that is applied by the German nation-state against aspiring Turkish cross-border spouses to Germany, and in the second context, of *forced marriage*, the term *force*, as a rule, applies to

the use of force among culturalized and gendered others, that is, force used by male 'migrants' and their families ('(male) oriental others') against female cross-border spouses. In this last interpretation, the use of force against third-country citizens is legitimized through the prevention of force used transnationally by these others. Here, I must point out that this opposition of force notions is absent in the dominant discourses of the states implementing this border regime instrument, as the word *force* itself is absent in them with respect to the German nation-state's regulations (where, even so, words such as *requirement*, *duty* or the verb *must* are used). The notion of force in the dominant Western discourse on cross-border marriage is reserved for the representation of the transnational other, increasingly linked to the category of religion, which is to say Islam. Furthermore, following a binary logic, it is opposed to an assumed—modern and gender-equal—European-/national 'we'. At the same time, the issue of forced marriage did not come up in our interviews with cross-border spouses preparing for the language test, unless it did so in the form of a legitimizing explanation given to them by their course teachers or other actors speaking on behalf of bordering institutions. Just as the struggle of the latter dealing with the use of force by nation-states against them generally does not affect the former, the topic of forced marriages, however big and politicized within European discourses, is not of any particular concern to the vast majority of the latter. Therefore, these two discourses on force really do appear to be disconnected except for the fact that they emerge with regard to the very same issue, namely the pre-departure language test applied as a border regime instrument. But before going further with this conclusion, I would like to continue to explore the differences visible in these two takes on force in the hopes that the comparison could lead to a more fruitful conclusion than the stating of a disconnection. So again, the following question arises: Which and whose (communicative) purposes do these two discourses on force serve?

In order to deal with these two discursive complexes more easily in this text, I will refer to them as the *forced-marriage discourse* on the one hand and the *forced-*

language discourse on the other. The forced-language discourse echoes in the words of people who are undergoing this pre-departure language-testing regime, who speak of this experience as a difficult one in practical, identificatory, and emotional terms. Thus, one could say that the forced-language discourse is the result of a stressful, burdened situation, leaving individuals to struggle over how to make sense of their experience and situation, as their interpretative attempts revolve around some version of the question: 'Why do they force us to learn their language from afar?' However, these discursive negotiations remain for the most part confined to the classroom context, occurring among course participants and their teachers, for instance. And although the forced-language argument, criticized, in particular, for violating human rights does have some basis in the media and political discourse in Turkey, as I have shown, the same cannot be said about the German public discourse on this topic. These voices, as Adil's example illustrates, do not usually have a part in negotiating the sense and senselessness of the respective measures of the border regime implemented by those in power. And those in power, who in the forced-language discourse appear in the form of a blurry but distinctive 'they', do have their own distinct take on this topic. Spanning a broad spectrum from political actors and government representatives to the German media all the way through to 'average' German citizens, such as those watching and commenting on Martina Priessner's documentary, the dominant discourse, audible in this conglomerate of voices, is concerned with defending the legitimacy of the language requirement and ultimately the borders and boundaries of Europe and its nation-states. So, the forced-marriage discourse centres on categories of difference, mobilizing and enhancing stereotypical cultural, religious, and gendered oppositions between the people and places on that side of the border and the 'we' on this side. This 'we' speaks from a place of power; a power borrowed by right of association with the national entity on the up side of the hierarchical border between the European and third country. However, the 'we' subsuming the people affected by these hierarchizing bordering and boundary-making processes cannot offer a

position that is in any way equal within this discourse—or any discursive position in it at all for that matter. The voices of the people in third countries, such as Turkey, who depend on and are affected by these politicized discourses and the legal regulations they uphold, are clearly speaking of a force very different from that dominating the discourse in the receiving countries; a force that humiliates and discriminates against them. But these voices rarely make it across the border, even if the people themselves succeed in doing so.

We have seen that the kind of discourse developing dialogically in the political arena between the two heads of government, Erdoğan and Merkel, is formative of what could be called a transnational political discourse, with their different interests, positions, and voices partaking in the negotiation of the meaning and necessity for (future) members of the Turkish diaspora in Germany to learn German. However, this discursive ‘arena’ is not at all as clearly defined in its scope and quality when it comes to the voices of people who speak from positions within society that do not come with an assigned institutional power or some other form of amplifier to their voices. We know, for instance, from the narratives discussed so far in this book, that stereotypical Western imaginaries of ‘import brides’, ‘oriental men’, ‘migrants’ and so forth are very much present in the institutions of the linguistic border regime and in the self-and counter-positionings of those who are positioned/held on the other side of the European border, and in that sense could be seen at least in part as transnational (in its effects). But, as stated above, the positions on this side of the transnational legal regulation and the discourses that accompany it do not have that same power to cross this border in the reverse direction and reach the other side, forming some kind of transnational discursive field. This results in a discursive one-way road across the hierarchized European border, transnational only in a top-down direction—similar to what Eule et al. have termed ‘asymmetrical spaces of negotiation’ (2018, 2722ff).

However, research projects like the present one can be seen to at least have the potential to construct a discursive way back. I am reluctant to present the stories

of Adil T. and others who find themselves in a situation entailing force similar to his own as some kind of counter-discourse to the dominant European discourses, finding the idea of 'speaking for' somebody whose voice is silenced, as argued by Hymes (1996), as highly problematic (Spivak 1988). But the fact that interview partners (like Florent S.) explicitly use it as a means to voice and correct certain issues that bother them or matter to them to some extent already provides a basis for such an aim of this project. Thus, I argue that whereas I am very reluctant to functionalize these individual narratives for whatever purposes, collecting them and pointing out common discursive structures and the respective power relations at play remains an important task of the social sciences as I understand them.

5.5.3 The contradictions of forced language and forced integration

As I noted in my introduction to Martina Priessner's citation, here I will return to her narrative for another reading, seeking to discern the negative effects that this instrument of forced linguistic integration can have on people. As Martina criticizes the German media for their part in upholding stereotypical and, in her opinion, wrong imaginaries of cross-border spouses from Turkey as being unwilling to learn the German language, she is challenging the same assumption that stands behind counsellor Işıl M.'s justification of this test requirement as derivable, in a generalized manner, from 'historic evidence'. Martina challenges this assumption not only in her interview with us but also very proactively through her documentary work, clearly showing how, in her classroom experience, students are generally motivated in the beginning but come to struggle with this motivation precisely because of the enforcement; a discriminatory enforcement which affects them negatively. According to her, the German language being forced on people prior to their departure is at odds with the way one learns a new language, namely through participation. This measure then shows a self-contradictory effect on spouses, who experience being excluded now in order to be included later. This self-contradiction lies in the fact that language-learners are kept in this extraterritorialized instructive

setting far away from any (authentic) context in which they could participatively learn German in everyday situations, while being told that this process is intended to facilitate their future integration in that place. This contradictory or paradoxical logic points in the same direction as the de-integrative or exclusionary effect previously traced in the cases of Adil and Sinem. More precisely, their cases reveal the negative effects it has on peoples' feelings towards Germany when they are forced to learn German from afar and have to pass the language test as a pre-condition to apply for reunification with their spouse. Recalling the way Sinem phrases this counter-integrative effect, we find in her narrative the same argument on which Martina's reflections are based, namely that language learning happens under particular conditions. But where Martina addresses the linguistic environment as a crucial condition, thereby mainly addressing the aspect of extraterritoriality, Sinem's critique is directed more at the issue of being forced through the instrument of the test:

Because it gets more difficult to learn something, when you know there is an exam at the end, and this in turn weakens your faith and enthusiasm in that country. Then you start hating that country. Without something like this, one can learn (the language) more enthusiastically; one could feel more comfortable. Now are we going to think about the exam, to concentrate on the exam's stress, or are we going to try to learn the language?

The direct link that is assumed as a given between the notions of 'language' and 'integration' in migration policies, such as the pre-integrative language requirement, does not hold up against the complex interrelations that open up as a result of a closer examination of the accounts of individuals like Sinem, who are confronted with these measures. This observation is not only prompted by the narratives of the individuals we spoke but has also been discussed and criticized widely within the literature across disciplines (Extra et al. 2009; Flubacher 2014; Mateos 2009; Piller 2001; Plutzar 2010). Thus, in retrospect, I became aware that as in every research process, an important part of understanding the 'field' and the 'data' has been to question basic assumptions of this kind that provide the argumentative basis of the discourses in question. Appearing in the form of self-

evident or quasi-natural givens, these assumptions are so central to the discursive structure they uphold that they tend to remain hidden; an intricacy that Jacques Derrida describes when speaking of the invisibility of the centre in this respect (Derrida 2000). Whereas this central assumption in the context of migration implying that learning the language of the destination country is directly linked to successful integration, has already been addressed, two fundamental questions remain to be investigated further in the particular context of the pre-departure language testing regime. These questions are: *What exactly does integration mean in this context? And what exactly do language and language learning mean in this context?*

I would like to argue here that in order to understand the particularity of this border regime and migration process, it is important to understand the specific meanings associated with language as the 'key' element of this institutional obstacle race towards family reunification. In this context, I see the benefit of applying an interdisciplinary perspective to the study of this subject, looking at the meanings ascribed to language by the bordering institutions as well as those that become apparent in the narratives of the people whose mobility they govern. Accordingly, the last section of the analysis will be dedicated to this purpose. At this point, I would like to turn to the earlier question about the meanings of integration.

The operationalization of integration, like language, in the context of a border regime appears as a goal to be achieved through the use of governmental force, and as such represents an element of the force discourse presented above. With language learning being the operationalization of integration, or its key variable, all of the negative effects of this foreign language being forced on people before their departure apply to the notion of integration that is perceptible in this context.

I have shown the effects of this *forced integration* on the individuals it is forced upon by means of the test, pointing to their contradictoriness. Visa applicants/test candidates feel insulted, hurt, and discriminated against, and their relationship to and view of the new country that they aspire to live in is marked by these negative effects, leaving very little space for a positive and active role within

that relationship. I argue that the degradation that comes with this use of force can be understood as an expression of loss of individuals' agency and sense of dignity, which are being contested. And as I will demonstrate in returning to the case of Adil, this loss of agency is also associated with the fact that here integration is operationalized as language learning, but as language learning understood as a paradoxical process in which the individual is supposed to appropriate a foreign language while having their own voice muted.

So again, if this measure is supposed to ensure integration, what exactly does integration mean? Or, put more pointedly: What is left of participation, when one's voice is being silenced? Let us now direct our inquiry towards the homepage of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees on this matter. Looking at the information provided to spouses about that integrative function ascribed to basic language skills by German authorities, we learn that:

Language skills are an elementary requirement to ensure successful integration into German society. If you wish to move to Germany as a foreigner to join your spouse, you must therefore as a general rule be able to prove that you have basic German-language skills before entering the country. The Federal Republic of Germany wishes to ensure that you can participate in society from the outset. (BAMF, webpage on Spousal Reunification, last viewed in September 2019)

This definition does not provide much further insight into an understanding of integration aside from the terminological association of integration with participation. However, in the German version only, there is a glossary that provides the following definition:

Integration is a long-term process. Its goal is to include all humans into society, who live in Germany durably and legally. Newcomers shall be enabled to participate comprehensively and equally in all social domains. In return, therefore, they are obligated to learn German and [to] know, respect, and follow the constitution and the laws.

(Original text: Integration ist ein langfristiger Prozess. Sein Ziel ist es, alle Menschen, die dauerhaft und rechtmäßig in Deutschland leben, in die Gesellschaft einzubeziehen. Zugewanderten soll eine umfassende und gleichberechtigte Teilhabe in allen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen ermöglicht werden. Sie stehen dafür in der Pflicht, Deutsch zu lernen sowie die Verfassung und die Gesetze zu kennen, zu respektieren und zu befolgen.)

In addition to the entailed notions of integration and participation, this definition provides a paraphrasing of inclusion along with the information that such a thing is a long-term process and that this applies only to humans who live in Germany legally (which is impossible for a third-country spouse without previously having proven their A1 language skills). We also learn that once this status is achieved, such participation shall be comprehensive and equal in all social domains; a notion which again remains foggy but alludes to a lot. All of the previous explanatory notes—and this is an important detail to note—are formulated as things done to or provided for newcomers, who, from an accusative perspective, figure as objects/beneficiaries of this inclusion and enablement, in turn, effectuated by no particular subject but by the process itself. Therefore, it remains unclear, who/which persons or institutions, private or public, are supposed to include and enable the newcomers. It is only in the last sentence that the newcomers assume the position of subjects, as they are instructed regarding their duties, one of which is to learn German. So here, in contrast to the wording of the first citation, learning the German language does not appear as a means for successful integration but as part of a deal: You 'get' integrated, and in turn you have to learn the language.

By the end of this search for a more precise definition of integration and its relation to language learning, which inform the apparatus of the German border and migration regime relating to family reunification, we are left with two differing readings that are even less clear in their meanings than previously. To a certain extent, this blurriness or mixedness has to be attributed to the fact that one cannot expect to obtain a clear-cut and concise definition of a political buzzword, such as integration. As Flubacher and Richter (2006) have pointed out, this word connotes a stereotype, which can be counted as what has been called a 'plastic-word' in linguistics (Pörksen 2004). The vagueness of the integration notion in public and political discourses is multiplied in terms of its legal and policy operationalization into language requirements, given that they are the outcomes of complex and necessarily ambiguous politicized and political discursive processes. And yet official

texts such as these do reflect these discourses with all their inherent contradictions—contradictions that are prone to be mirrored in the application of the policy measures they attempt to define and legitimize. In this sense, I conclude this chapter by noting that a bordering instrument that is as contradictory as the ‘forced linguistic pre-integration’ produces the very opposite of what it is meant to achieve: exclusion instead of inclusion. In other words, when judging the efficiency of this policy measure, one would have to declare it as having failed entirely. Unless it has not.

Because, after all, it is *as a foreigner* that an individual *wishes to move to Germany to join one’s spouse*. Consequently, it is *as a foreigner* that they integrate and are integrated into Germany. What might seem to be a banal observation becomes visible as being precise, relevant, and informative when investigated close up, directing the analytical gaze towards the subjectivities produced by this type of border regime. I argue that we can learn much more about the precise meanings of ‘integration through language’ that are pertinent in this type of border regime by, once more, looking at the effects it has on the people whose mobility it governs. So, asking what role precisely a person is made to assume when going through this type of family reunification procedure bound to language learning and testing ‘from afar’ provides a more reliable answer to the question of what integration means in this context beyond a glance at official definitions or even a more encompassing analysis of the discourses leading to and surrounding this policy measure. Consequently, in the following two chapters, as I once more turn to Adil T.’s narrative, I will ask the question: Who do I (have to) become, when being ‘pre-integrated’ in this linguistic manner? Or framed in more Foucauldian terms: what subjectivities does the pre-integrative language apparatus produce?

5.6 What kinds of subjectivities does the pre-integrative language regime produce?

In order to discuss these questions, I will take up on two more aspects of Adil’s case that are important for understanding the particular quality of this

experience of forced (national) language learning. I argue that apart from the selective function, which has been demonstrated in the literature, particular subjectivities of differential inclusion/exclusion are produced among those who are not selected. Thus, newcomers are taught their role/position in the new country before they actually learn it on the ground, without offering much chance to negotiate that role and challenge it discursively, as, paradoxically, they are silenced with the order to learn to communicate in a new language. In the following two chapters, I will trace these two aspects of what Adil describes as a discriminatory, 'horrible' insult, reconstructing its anatomy, as produced in the context of the unfitting social role of 'pupil/student' ascribed to him on the one hand and by the paradoxical function ascribed to language on the other hand. This reconstruction will partly stray from the narrative data, especially in the first part, in order to include the socio-spatial, material, and symbolic context of the language school in the analysis.

5.6.1 The genealogy of an insult 1: The making of 'pupil-migrants'

How does a person experience and interpret a particular subjectivity ascribed to them within a given institutional power setting that is not always made explicit in their narrative. Accordingly, what it means to be forced to perform the actions associated with the pre-departure language requirement in the context of family reunification regimes is not necessarily or entirely something that can be learnt from narrative data. This is especially so, as these social roles, although relatively durable in the sense that they define a person's position in a given socio-spatial context over several months and are stabilized within the class-collective, as I have pointed out above, are not well-established discursively. Rather, they are relatively new in their particular mixedness between visa applicants and test candidates. This in turn means that individuals often lack the words to make the particular quality of these roles explicit, as the interviews in Turkey, Kosova, and Sri Lanka show, and as I was able to observe personally in my interactions with visa applicants during my stay in Kosova.

This means that apart from the hints that are nonetheless present in the narrative data about what it means to have to assume that role, I find it crucial to incorporate the socio-spatial and symbolic arrangements within which the narrated experiences are set in the analysis of these narratives. So, when we think about what Adil means when, for instance, he says that he feels insulted by Germany, we need to look at these contextual elements with which he—and this always also means his body—is brought into interaction with. Thus, the interpretation of something as fleeting and hard to pin down as an emotional state, such as feelings of being insulted, hurt, or degraded, needs to be understood in its embodiedness, linking the analysis of identificatory processes with the symbolic meanings and structural conditions in which they are embedded. These emotional effects, expressed by interview partners, need to be read as embodied effects of a particular institutional structure, a socio-spatial, procedural, and aesthetic arrangement, such as this apparatus of the border regime, producing particular social roles or subjectivities. In order to bring together these narratively expressed emotions with particular symbolic and structural settings, we need to take into account their specific production and quality. These issues tend to be left on the side or taken for granted by social researchers working with narrative interviews as a result of being primarily focused on the power effects but not their particular socio-spatial, symbolic, and material constitution. These things often remain hidden behind supposedly self-explanatory (everyday) notions such as ‘language-test’ or ‘language-course’, which when made explicit and integrated into the analysis, facilitate a deeper understanding of the meanings of these social practices. Such an encompassing approach, integrating sociolinguistic analytical discourse with border studies, social anthropological and geographical traditions, is useful for understanding/interpreting the effects that this equally encompassing type of border regime has on individuals not only in terms of their scope/strength but also in terms of their particular quality. Thus, applying this approach with respect to Adil’s feeling of being insulted means trying to localize it in the context in which it is effectuated on the one hand, and in

the context of his position in society on the other hand. Before getting into these more implicit contextual aspects, I would like to offer two examples, in which this role is put into words, anchoring the following socio-spatial considerations in the narrative data.

The first example is an anecdote from my field research in Kosova, which provides evidence that the analysis of the respective effects in the Turkish context, however different in many respects, is valid also with regard to Kosovar cross-border spouses as manifestations of a particular European, and in this case German, border regime. During my time in Kosova, having encountered people who had to fulfil the pre-integrative language requirement at a relatively late stage, and understanding that this was a particularly encompassing regime in the way it took a hold on people's lives, I started canvassing some language schools with the goal of finding more interview partners who were preparing for the language test. Although my endeavour remained rather unsuccessful because of the lack of preparation time, leading mainly to interviews with representatives of these institutions than to those with their students, my recruitment attempts yielded some insights. One such failed 'recruitment' happened while I was standing in the inner courtyard of a private, local-owned language school in Ferizaj to which I was directed by one of my interview partners. After having received permission from the school to address their students after they had left the class, I stood there awkwardly as the 'students' trailed out of the door. Finding it hard to approach them in this manner, given that they had not been informed previously by a teacher, as was the case for the interviews held in Turkey and Sri Lanka, I had to summon up my courage to step towards two women apologetically. Their ages were above the average of most their classmates, and they quickly made me feel comfortable, smiling in what I felt was a motherly fashion, listening patiently as I went on presenting myself and the project. But as I became more concrete, asking whether they could imagine participating in an interview and telling me about what it was like for them to visit language classes,

one of them waved me off, laughing ironically, and addressing me in a colloquial way that left no doubt about my powerlessness over her in this interaction:

My daughter, what do you want to interview *us* for? What should we tell you? They are sending us to school at our age! And that is that.⁷

They wished me well, advising me to look for younger people, who were, in their opinion, better equipped to answer my questions. But it was obvious that their refusal had, apart from my clumsy way of approaching them, much to do with them being in a particularly precarious situation, not at ease with these surroundings and already having enough on their minds with classes. They were not to be convinced by me, and I did not wish to attempt to convince them. What the woman had to tell me, she'd already made very clear in that brief interaction. In her words, and the way she spoke them, were frustration and degradation that came with this role assigned to her by German authorities, the role of a 'school-child', but the proud and joking self-distancing stemmed from the imposition that she is faced. The exercise books, too large for her black handbag dangling at her elbow, peeked out and I unwillingly felt the strangeness of this student role on the body of this mature woman, who reminded me of my mother. Not only because she was close to her in age, and not only for calling me her daughter, but more because of the red patches on the sides of her face. They used to appear on my mother's cheeks too during the time when she had to take a mandatory German course in Switzerland.

She had lost her job recently, receiving unemployment benefits. Assigning her to that course was part of the program that should render the unemployed more apt to fulfil workfare-needs. And so she had to sit at a school-desk again after almost thirty years and follow the instructions of a teacher to open the text book on page 23 and fill in the gaps in exercise 8 of the worksheet and name the objects in the funny illustration. The latter were supposed to make the exercise lively, but it had the unfortunate side effect of making my mother feel silly. And then the patches of red: They would appear on her cheeks when, sometimes laughingly, sometimes in

⁷ Citation based on field notes taken some hours later.

an annoyed tone, she would tell a family member or friend about the fact that ‘they are sending me back to school’. This image, an indicator of the embarrassment about being put back in time into the role of a school child again, was resurrected in this research project. And it came back to me in the encounter with that woman in the language schoolyard. Much like I did in that past experience of mine, I felt protective of my opposite, wanting somehow to show her that I understood.

Patches of knowledge, like these, stemming from my personal experience, have been reappearing throughout the entire research process, leaving me unsure about what to make of them. It seemed unfitting in the academic mode of speaking and writing, unsanitized in its mixedness with my life and feelings, disturbing the line between the knowledge of those who experience and those who analyse that experience. To disturb that order seemed inappropriate, unprofessional, and when I tried putting these experiences into words next to the rest of my text, they seemed to fall straight through that solid academic structure into a different space, landing on muddy, sticky ground. But as the reader can witness, this just happened. As the red patches on the cheeks so conspicuously kept flaring up until this last phase of writing down my research, I ended up in yet another meta-reflexive ‘rabbit hole’.

Having passed through several of these rabbit holds by now— and having come back out at the other side—I would like to argue in favour of including this type of knowledge explicitly, as it inevitably flows into the way we as researchers think about and evaluate and value the knowledge of the people we encounter in the course of our projects. Therefore, we might just as well explicitly open up the field of associations, which is at play at the back of our minds and make it graspable analytically. The benefits of this, I argue, lie not only in making the hierarchical boundaries between the researching and the researched more permeable. Sometimes, our personal repertoire of experiential knowledge offers cues to look in a particular direction, possibly one that is not pronounced enough in the narratives to be run through the data as an analytical code. Thus, red patches on a cheek can indicate the affects and emotions that a person embodies, which again can direct us

to the powerful institutions that have effectuated them (Ahmed 2014; Gorton 2007; Schurr and Stüver 2020).

So, the cue I had received from the memory of my mother's experience of being sent to a German course—even if not with the threat of the same dramatic consequences for her life—came back to me during my brief conversation with this woman in Kosova. She was being forced (back) into the role of a school-child; a role in which she was highly uncomfortable and one that she not only had to accept but which she also had to embrace in order to achieve the goal of passing the test, with her marital future in Germany depending on it. The lack of fit of her books into her purse was paralleled by the lack of fit of her attending language classes into her life. The objects, uneasy laughs, and even the red patches and traces of irony, can be seen as functional parts of the intimate, embodied ways in which the border apparatus grasps people across spatial distances and by temporarily installing a new 'time-regime' into their lives, shapes hybrid, 'anachronic' subjectivities as it executes its power over them.

And what should not be forgotten here, of course, is her calling me 'daughter', which was a power-move on her part, and a skilful one at that. For as she resumed her way talking to her 'fellow student', I, the researcher, was definitely put back in my place.

My second example of the more explicit expressions of being put into the social role of a 'pupil' is that of thirty-one-year-old Mirsat I., mentioned earlier. For him, learning the German language in the particular instructive setting of the Goethe Institute does not come easily—notwithstanding his relatively young age and higher education. How relative both the education and the age factor can be is revealed in his brief comment regarding the language course:

I don't know, after this age, it's tiring for me to study with books and notebooks all the time.

In Mirsat's choice of words, the particular socio-spatial, material, and symbolic context comes to life when he speaks of studying 'with books and notebooks all the time'. It is clear that he feels disconnected from these objects, and the effort

required to handle them, and the kind of knowledge they provide, require considerable effort, tiring him out.

It is this world of 'going to school', or rather, 'being sent to school', comprising classrooms, desks, pencils, books, notebooks, worksheets, of time structured into lessons of 50 minutes each, and teachers and classmates and tests, all set in the context of a border regime, which shape the roles that cross-border spouses from third countries to Germany and other European countries are to assume. So, when attempting to interpret the experiences, the affects, and evaluations that Adil T. describes in his narrative, they need to be set in their particular performative 'stage'. This is even more important with respect to the interviews that I did not conduct myself, such as Adil's, for which I mostly lack important non- and paraverbal information; a lack that, however, brings out the relevance of this type of information for the interpretation, which risks staying hidden if taken for granted.

With these considerations in mind, I would like to close this circle of interpretation of Adil T.'s feeling of being insulted and degraded. Learning the German language in the given institutional setting of the language class and under the given circumstances of force and extraterritorialization is not only difficult for Adil in the sense that it evokes very strong negative feelings in him, threatening to degrade him and take away his agency. It is also difficult in the practical sense of completing these tasks; a fact that Adil T. speaks of less readily and directly in his conversation with the young researcher, Ceren Topgül. But the respective difficulties are palpable when he speaks of having a 'hard time', as they clearly stem from the fact that he has not been in a formal education setting since completing high school about four decades ago.

Therefore going to 'language school', as it is mostly called by course participants in Turkey, sitting at a desk in a classroom, taking notes, poring over a textbook, or preparing for an exam must be quite far removed from Adil's life world, in addition to being associated with the realm of school and childhood and the

social role of the pupil. Therefore, a role, which is forced upon a fifty-six-year-old working-class man must come with a sense of loss of authority and humiliation, or, as Adil puts it, being insulted. Unlike a person who has continued their educational path into their adult life, for somebody like Adil T., whose experience with formal learning is likely to have been marked by a rather hierarchical and authoritative relation between pupil and school, the role of the learner in relation to the teaching/grading institution is a different one, more sharply defined by hierarchy. This is important, because in this context, blended into an apparatus of border regime, it translates into the social role/subjectivity a person is placed in vis-à-vis the authorities behind these new agents of teaching and testing, such as the Goethe Institute or the British Council, namely the European nation-states that are the countries that they intend to make their new homes. Thus, the introduction of the pre-departure language requirement has fundamentally changed the 'traditional' role of the visa applicant (for family reunification). It blends into the role of visa applicant that of language student/pupil and test candidate. The two roles are inseparable, forming a new role characterized by both aspects, as the tasks and actions associated with the language school and test are inherently linked with the visa application procedure.

How this role of *learner* is perceived and interpreted by people (being made into a 'school-child', a 'pupil', a 'student', a 'course participant etc.) depends on many individual factors, with education and age being particularly pertinent. However, more generally, the fact remains that this type of border regime fundamentally transforms conservative notions of visa applicants as it mixes/blends bordering with meanings, practices, and objects surrounding the world of learning, classes, schools, and tests, consequently producing new newcomer subjectivities: They are turned into what I will subsume under the term 'l-/earner-applicants' or 'l-/earner-migrants', having to *earn* their entry visa not only by collecting documents, completing paperwork and spending money but also through diligent study and passing a test to be (temporarily) approved for immigration —or not.

This hybridity/mixedness of their role and its varying individual interpretations should be borne in mind when looking at the different classed effects that the pre-departure language requirement can have on individuals with different socio-economic and educational/classed backgrounds, as it points to the fact that inequalities among test candidates in terms of passing and failing not only arise from these differing educational backgrounds themselves but also from peoples' level of familiarity with and uneasiness towards such formal educational settings. Put simply, those who are more familiar with operating within such a setting are less likely to perceive being taught and tested as psychologically stressful and socially degrading. In the context of the pre-departure language-testing regime, where the respective authority is the European nation-state, this means that an individual whose formal education was of shorter duration and further back in time is more likely to experience their role of 'forced test candidate' as that of a pupil/school-child. Thus, they are likely to interpret that role within the framework of a more hierarchized school setting rather a less authoritative and more prestigious setting of a university or some other advanced educational context. However, I would like to point out that this is an interrelation, which can be applied only cautiously, particularly with respect to the creation of subjectivities, which can vary gradually depending on a person's association with the 'world of learning and school'. As many examples show, including those of Yüksel K. and Mirsat I., neither the feeling of degradation nor of loss of face, nor learning difficulties are limited to people with little formal education. And this is particularly so because of the merging of this learning and testing procedure with the context of the border regime, making the pressure of failing an existential one and putting the responsibility for a learner/visa applicant's success or failure to enter the next procedural round—the appointment at the embassy counter—entirely into their hands.

This chapter has shown that visa applicants in the context of the pre-departure language-testing regime are placed in the mixed role of pupil-applicant. Whereas a person's individual socio-economic and educational position partly

determines how they interpret this role of learner on a scale ranging from 'school-child' to 'course participant', its mixedness is a structural trait characterizing the social role/subjectivity that each spouse is forced to assume.

The last section, focusing on Adil's case, probes another aspect of his sense of being insulted, resulting from state authorities' employment of national languages as means of coercion. In its examination of the second part of the anatomy of this insult, it explores the question of the effects of using language as an instrument of force instead of as a means of communication and self-expression (Shohamy 2006). Equipped with the power of a policy tool, language is central to the functioning of this type of border regime, as it is well hidden within discursive self-evidence and also partly hidden from the scientific gaze.

5.6.2 The genealogy of an insult 2: '*Shut up and speak German.*'

For me, thinking about the pre-integrative language requirement has meant thinking a lot about the way certain highly contrasting and plainly conflicting notions are brought together into the most astounding unity. Their divergent meanings appear flattened by the matter-of-fact rational tone of bureaucratic language (Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996), and are anchored in (Western) everyday discourses about integration and language as the 'key' variable facilitating the police; a myth by which it is fed and into which it feeds (Flubacher 2014; Mateos 2009; Plutzar 2010). Thus, the triangle formed by the words, *integration-language-requirement* (the meanings and effects of the equally weighty fourth angle, namely the prefix *pre-* have already been discussed), although increasingly unclear in their content when studied over a longer duration, stand self-evidently next to each other. Even though the logic linking this triangle is not much more than a sturdy assertion, it persists, as it is purported by nation-states with powerful economies and armies, which makes all the difference.

I have shown how the racist and blurry notion of *integration and its relation with language* that dominates official opinion persists in spite of the many criticisms

on the part of linguistics and social sciences (Extra et al. 2009; Favell 2019; Hadj Abdou 2019; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009; Plutzar 2010; Rytter 2019; Schinkel 2018; Shohamy 2001). And I have presented the alternative force discourse marking the language classrooms, which contrasts sharply with the sober notion of *requirement* as well as the dominant discourse on cross-border marriage in which the notion of *force* is reserved for the illegalized kinds of force used by foreign (male) individuals instead of the legalized force-monopoly of the (Western) nation-states. What we have only touched upon in passing here, is the interrelatedness of the *force/requirement* and *language* dyad in Adil's reference to the German language only as a means of force. In the previous section, I demonstrated how this language imposition, added to other aspects of this type of border regime, results in a growing aversion towards Germany. Here, I would like to focus on the implications of mandatory language testing with regard to the way visa applicants come to relate to that new language that is imposed on them. I will therefore think about visa applicants not in their role as pupil applicants or migrants, but in terms of their role as speakers, specifically adult learners of a foreign language. I will ask what effect being forced to learn the hegemonic language of a place and a 'society' in order to be allowed to 'be' and 'speak' in it, having very few or no possibilities for voicing any of the negative effects that this situation, has on their lives.

And here, re-entering Adil T.'s narrative, I am consciously conflating what in this case is German 'society' into which he is to be integrated, with the German authorities asking for the language certificate. For Adil, this does not make a real difference when it comes to this complex of experience. For him, it is evident that the entity behind that order to learn and the entity to which that language 'belongs' are one and the same. This interchangeability of state institution and linguistic community is evident when, for instance, he refers to the German authorities in the third person plural, as *they*, citing their command to learn German in the form of the first person singular, *my* (as in *my language*):

They say: "Take it or leave it [işine gelirse]; this is how it is". They set this obligation of "you have to know my language".

Adil T.'s perception of the obligation to learn German in the context of the pre-departure language requirement as an act of subjugation/ domination is expressed using the first person. For instance, saying 'you have to know the German language' or even 'you have to know our language' would indicate a (civil) society behind the German state functionary, appearing as a third party that is giving this individual orders only in their administrative function of serving the German people but not representing it as a legitimate 'German', with the visa applicant, Adil, being a possible future member to be incorporated into that society. However, because the ruling state apparatus utters its command with the human voice of a German in Adil's narrative, the embodied, personalized act of domination inherent in that language imposition is accentuated. Unlike the hegemonic European language ideology, which notoriously treats and legitimizes language requirements in the context of whichever form of immigration to Europe as a quasi-power and neutral tool of communication (Extra et al. 2009; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009; Shohamy 2006), Adil's reading of this use of language is marked by the presence of power; its function is clearly that of symbolic domination. This goes not only for the manifold expressions of force but also for the here-discussed citation, in particular, in which the German language appears to *belong* to somebody; a perception that Adil expresses when he says 'I mean I'm not against *your* German'. And this legitimate or original owner of that language can demand of him: 'You have to know *my* language'. This demanding entity, generalizingly comprises Germany, the German people, and German authorities; in short, a 'they' and 'you', who are opposed and hierarchically above him, exercising power over him through the use of 'their' language. Adil experiences the German language as a powerful tool for drawing the symbolic boundaries between those rightfully belonging to the nation, namely (native) German speakers and 'third-country' newcomers like him, who stand outside of it, trying to enter. Hence, complying with the demand to learn that language

consequently becomes readable as an act of submission, an acceptance of the symbolic insignia of the rule and rulers of the country he aspires to make his new country of residence; the latter indicated by the fact that this rule is expressed by its representative, personifying both in personal union when addressing Adil with the order: 'You have to know my language'. Again, he narrates an embodied experience, expressing it in direct speech; an imagined direct speech that allows him to address the absent and abstract bureaucratic state apparatus, which effectuated the negative emotions he has come to experience.

A closer look at that citation reveals the contrast that I initially introduced in this chapter, that is, the contrast between the two faces with which Adil's imaginary dialogue presents this German persona in the two sentences it directs at Adil. One says 'Take it or leave it; this is how it is'. The other demands 'You have to know my language'. The first speaks with the aforementioned quasi-neutral and impersonal language of the nation-state, grasping what Adil experiences as forceful or insulting with the dry term *requirement* and exposing a state apparatus that is indifferent to such struggles. The second one brings about the effects of this unequal power relation, affecting him very personally, as discussed above. A contrast opens up between the silencing of Adil's voice, with the German state authorities completely unyielding, immovable, and unapproachable with regard to his grievances. Simultaneously, he is ordered to learn to express himself and communicate in the official language of that state as the only way to gain admission to and participation in that society. This paradoxical instruction, which he receives as an authoritative double message, could be summarized with the order: 'Shut up and speak German!' The effect of such imposed language acquisition/linguistic integration is that he is deprived of the core communicative function of expressing himself to others (Shohamy 2006). Therefore, establishing a voice with which to do that in their new linguistic and social context cannot but lead to feelings of degradation and of being insulted, as Adil points out in his narrative. With the speaker muted, the speech act, performed in that required new language, becomes an empty charade with no

communicative goal but that of performing something labelled 'integratedness' or 'Germanness', turning the speech act into an act of submission.

Questions of what language is, its meaning and function, and what it is made into in the particular communicative context of a border regime are crucial for understanding this type of border regime. Therefore, Part III of the thesis will be dedicated to following the language-based bordering procedures into the moment of the test itself. But to conclude this second part of the genealogy of this effect on Adil T., I would like to trace his being silenced a little further in his account, exploring how he resists this silencing.

5.6.3 Talking back to 'Germany'

Now in his account, Adil finds a way—at least for the duration of the interview—to produce the absent counterpart and make the German state graspable, and addressable narratively. Thus, he comes to do what is denied to him by the inaccessible, anonymous, and powerful apparatus of the border regime and to speak his mind about the matter of the pre-departure language requirement, performatively and imaginatively, negotiating with the nation-state, as he addresses it and lets it speak back to him in direct speech. Adil's narrative performance of this fictitious dialogue allows him to confront the cause of the difficult situation in which he finds himself with the many questions that preoccupy him. These questions, all of which circle around the core question: 'Why from afar?' are not only swirling in his head, but, as already pointed out, they characterize the discursive negotiations about the sense and senselessness of the pre-departure language requirement in general. And in the interview setting, Adil gets to speak out about them. Whereas earlier, his way of addressing the German authorities/Germany/Germans in his narrative shifted from 'they' to 'you', now his questions shift from addressing no one in particular, or the interviewer, to addressing this nation-state as 'you' again:

But someone from the UK or from an EU country doesn't have difficulty in entering the country as I do. . . . Why?

I could go [to language lessons] in Germany—I did. Why don't *you* (emphasis in italic, here and below, by author) take this into consideration?

Why do *you* force me to do it in Turkey? I mean I'm not against *your* German; I'll learn but I say I will learn it in Germany. But *you* don't accept that either. *You* say: "Go to your country, learn and come back".

Why do *you* create a distance?

By addressing this abstract and absent entity, in whose grasp he finds himself because of his visa application procedure, Adil is able to voice his grievances and negotiate with that absent opposite, which he creates performatively, however fleeting its effect. As he gives a human voice to it, sizing it down to an addressable entity and makes it *graspable* (*back*). This is something, which would otherwise be impossible vis-à-vis the entity of the German state as it figures in Adil's narrative:

Okay, I saw it's very much superior compared to Turkey. How do they say? [Deep breath] In terms of both culture and financially, I mean how do they say? It's a rich country. And its position and establishment. . . . It is well-established from the [very] beginning, very well-established. It can't be damaged in any way. We cannot be like them whatever we do. It's impossible. I mean there is such a difference.

The entity's executing power over him appears as far removed, indestructible, and constructed as superior in many respects —hence, the narrative attempts at legitimizing its use of force and its immovability—holding the power to impose its conditions on him and degrade him. Lacking a counterpart to confront with his questions, Adil's voice, in his everyday experiences with the German bordering institutions, private and governmental, remains unheard. His questions and complaints remain unheard, except by the interviewer, Ceren Topgöl; there is no state institution or representative to consider the discrimination and devaluation he experiences. 'Germany' is not accessible to him, as there is no reciprocity in the relation of visa applicants and the German nation-state. Yet the narrative performance allows him to get back into an active role and reclaim, to a certain extent, his voice in a matter of such crucial concern for his life. In this sense, the interview situation, which in fact provides the communicative space—or one could say the stage— is necessary to enable Adil's reclaiming strategy vis-à-vis of the

interviewer, Ceren Topgül, who serves as a listener, without whom his message would again be lost.

Again, as in Nevcan's case, we see the crucial role of the performative narration of dialogues between visa applicants and the nation-state's border regime institutions and the imaginary play entailed in individual's strategies of embodied resistance. In Adil's narrative performance of that dialogue, the realm of the imaginary is key, as the dialogue does not represent a retelling of this encounter from the perspective of the applicant; rather, it is an entirely imagined interlocution between him and the German authorities.

I would like to close here by pointing out the fact that Adil T.'s narrative strategy to counter his experience of institutional violence and silencing is—in its effects—bound to the narrative space in which it unfolds. Apart from the effect it has had with regard to this thesis, it is to be hoped that as his words, after now having been written *down* and analysed, are subsequently put back into the wider social orbit surrounding this kind of 'linguistic border regime', which up to this point is only a matter of good intentions.

5.7. From language as barrier to language as border

The narrative resistance of Adil T. against the silencing of his voice in relation to the situation he was experiencing in May 2016 did not change the fact that he was attending his German lessons as a I-/earner-applicant. Nor did it change the fact that he was having a hard time learning and felt insulted and silenced, while his life with his spouse was put on hold. His resistance can thus be seen to be bound to the narrative-imaginary realm, not affecting the institutions of border regime. This is due to the fact that in this context, the German language, apart from its function of drawing a symbolic boundary between the dominating and the dominated, is equipped with the German nation-state's power to separate those who get to cross the border from those who do not. Thus, language, or more precisely its certified acquisition up to level A1, becomes not only a means of symbolic boundary making but it is also an instrument of border regime, with one being mutually dependent on the other. Language, that is, the official standardized hegemonic variety of language, becomes visible not only as a powerful tool for drawing symbolic boundaries between those who rightfully belong to the nation and aspiring newcomers positioned outside of it, who, in turn, are illegitimized/criminalized; but language in itself becomes an inherent element of the border. In this sense, we can speak of an actual language border that has been installed in a series of European countries to complement the harder, more graspable measures of the border/migration regime. The objectification and instrumentalization of language knowledge through the standardized test construct, which again adds to objectification through the standardized, harmonized, and widely recognized Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), facilitate the commodification of language and its implementation as a technology of border regime, namely the language border. Looking back across the European border at the historical development of the dominant discourse on language and migration in European receiving countries, I observe that somewhere over the course of the last fifteen years, which have been marked by increasing restrictions curtailing the right

to family reunification in Europe, there has been a consequential but discursively obscured shift from the metaphor of 'language as barrier', respectively a 'bridge', and language as the 'key to integration' to language as border. The notion of language as border is absent within the dominant discourse, Western or other, because it is a legal regulation and not a metaphor. This fact could be seen to be very well hidden behind the resilient softness of all the metaphors blooming around the notion of language in the discursive context of migration, multiculturalism, minorities among majorities, and integration.

The commodification of language (Duchêne and Heller 2012) is related to its functionalization or versatility for purposes of border/migration control. This would not be possible, without the CEFR (Extra et al. 2009; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009). Thus, the notion of language value receives a more pronounced, literal meaning as not 'just' the prestige of a language but also its value in terms of a commodity enabling border crossings (Duchêne and Heller 2012). As has been shown, access to the language certificates, in particular, is deeply classed, with lower-income and lower-qualified persons filtered out, according to the economic logic underlying the functioning of this linguistic instrument of the border regime. This, in turn, results in the reinforcement of global inequalities, with access to Europe reserved for only/predominantly those in more privileged positions and the anchoring of the neoliberal merit- and achievement-logic.

Tempting as metaphors are, I will end this chapter by dwelling on one for a bit; the most prominent one about *language being the key to migrant integration*. What are absent not only at the lexical level in this metaphor but also in the logic underlying this integration concept are the door and lock. *Why is this door locked? Who locked it and keeps locking it? And what are the door and lock made of anyway?* Quite unsurprisingly, what is a blank spot in the narratives dominating the European side of this transnational phenomenon of migration is very much present in the many sites outside this discursive realm. So, for instance, there is a motive in the canon of songs about Albanian/Kosovar relations with Europe, referring to

Europe's 'shut door'. In one of these songs, Nazif Çela and the isopoliphonical group Ante appeal to Europe in the polyphonic refrain of one of their popular songs: *"Hape portën moj Evropë! Hape, hape, hape, hape portën oh!"* ["Open the gate, Europe! Open, open, open, open the gate oh!"]

Today, Çela's song can be read with reference to both the EU enlargement project, also phrased as European integration, and the appeal to open the national borders for people from countries outside the Western isle of prosperity and security, which is holding up its borders regardless of the acclaimed unboundedness of globalization. Nowhere does this song mirror the reality more than in Kosova, where public and political debates about visa liberalization are among the most topical and pressing issues as they have been for years since the respective negotiations with the EU were taken up over a decade ago. The issue is on everyone's lips, and in the public space all over Kosova, both of which I came to witness during my research stay in 2016. I took the photograph, below, of a particularly prominent activist street art motif demanding visa liberalization in Mitrovica, a city in northern Kosova.



TREAT US FAIRLY

VISA LIBERALIZATION
PROCESS FOR KOSOVA

I WANT TO STUDY
ABROAD,

BUT WHERE IS MY
FREEDOM

Having demonstrated how and with what effects the dyad of force and language come together in the pre-departure language requirement, in the next chapter, I will look at the notion of language and language learning in itself, analysing the way in which it is interpreted and concretely implemented by the institutions involved.

This section of the analysis, which is aimed at understanding the particular approach to language learning and testing, will lay open yet another level on which the above discussed silencing of I/earner-visa-applicants is effectuated by this type of border regime. In doing so, it will make visible how language, like discursive certainties, imaginaries, and emotions, become powerful soft governing technologies that shape the subjectivities of I/earner-applicants. I will start by discussing the second part of the theoretical framework to support the last part of my empirical analysis, opening up a critical sociolinguistic and raciolinguistic perspective on the topic of mandatory language learning and testing as an integration policy.

PART III

AT THE TEST

...AND WHAT COMES AFTER

6 Theoretical framework II: Language as a bordering technology

As my analysis focuses on the 'pre-departure language requirement', with the aim of developing an encompassing grasp of the subject, it is vital to include a second linguistic perspective. A sociolinguistic and raciolinguistic lens, I argue, allows for an exploration of the phenomena, preconditions, dynamics, logics, and effects at play in this border-regime apparatus, given their interrelatedness with the particular category of language as co-naturalized with that of race (Rosa and Flores 2017). This second part of my literature review will provide the theoretical basis for conducting the last part of my analysis in which I will explore how such a naturalized and racialized notion of language, in interrelation with emotions and imaginaries, comes to function as a soft technology governing borders and subjectivities.

Evidently, an analysis that deals with the implementation of electronic tracking devices as instruments of border regime necessitates the consultation of a different (additional) body of literature that considers very different conditionalities than one focusing on campization, for instance, or, as in the case at hand, an assessment of language skills. There is an evident need to look closely at 'language' in an analysis that is aimed at adopting a critical approach to the associated field of inquiry by encompassing the particularities and the historicity of the discussed phenomena.

However, leaving aside this question of a theoretical research impetus, the issue of 'language' came to show itself in a very 'bottom-up' manner as being increasingly pressing throughout the different stages of this project. Asking the most basic of questions (What is language here? What does it do?), I continued to observe the particularities of this instrument, which state actors have installed within their existing border-regime apparatuses. The ways, in which control is executed through language is very complex, multimodal and, in that multimodal functioning, highly powerful. This kind of power also feeds on harsh contrasts brought about by

tying together the political, remote, and at times abstract and inaccessible sphere of transnational state institutions with deeply personal and intimate aspects of individuals' lives. By means of a border policy formulated as a language policy, state (and non-state) actors literally reach into peoples' throats, grabbing them by their tongues. It is striking how a very immediate, bodily, emotional and 'messy' policy tool is emerging in practice from the sober notion of the 'pre-integrative language requirement'. I realized that this intimate level of embodied, affective/emotional and intellectual governance through which people are activated and subjectivated by means of language imposition was clearly pointing towards the core of this form of border regime. Hence, I decided to dedicate a substantial part of this thesis to exploring a linguistic perspective on the ways in which 'language' is employed as an instrument of border regime. This is a perspective on the topic of 'spousal unification from third countries' that I have found to be largely missing in the current literature.

I see four main reasons for this gap regarding the interrelation of this form of bordering practices and language practice: *Firstly*, the use of language testing as a requirement to apply for family unification is relatively new compared, for instance, with its implementation as a condition to apply for citizenship. *Secondly*, the topic of language as a migration policy measure is mixed in the sense that it falls in between two disciplinary fields (border and migration studies in terms of the social sciences and sociolinguistic approaches). Consequently, its consideration and analysis tend to be focused on one of its two main components, necessarily leaving the other part somewhat obscured. *Thirdly*, the notion of 'language' in its association with 'integration' is obscured, not only in everyday political and administrative discourses, installing and upholding this linguistic border instrument, but also to a considerable extent in the relevant discourses within the social sciences. This absence of a precise notion of 'language' is not incidental; rather, it has a function, which is to contribute to the power of the 'integration through language' discourse, with the relation of the two aspects presented being taken for granted.

In the following three sections, I will discuss these different but interrelated aspects, presenting the relevant literature that has applied the two disciplinary approaches and that helped me develop and clarify my take on the study of 'language and border'.

6.1 The expansion and deepening of ‘civic integration measures’ to ‘pre-departure language requirements’ across Europe

Over the course of the past two decades, European nation-states have increasingly linked the granting of citizenship, residence, and entry rights of immigrants to policies of mandatory integration. Goodman and Wright take up Mouritsen's (2008) argument of the millennium-turn as a 'civic turn' in Europe's immigration-policy agendas, stating that civic integration is not merely new but prolific (2015, 2). Goodman has previously argued that while '[l]anguage and assimilation requirements for citizenship were ubiquitous', and 'nearly every European country had some form of language or assimilation requirement by the mid-1990s', it was only by the turn of the twenty-first century that 'many of these same countries transformed these vague requirements into standardised citizenship tests and integration courses' (2011, 237). Demanding that newcomers (and in many cases 'oldcomers' too) (Extra and Spotti 2009, 125) acquire and often prove language skills and/or country knowledge (often referred to as Knowledge of Society [KoS]) is seen as a way of creating social cohesion and avoiding 'migrant problems' (Goodman 2011, 252; Horner 2009, 118; Van Avermaet and Gysen 2009, 107 among many others). Also, in some cases, these measures are seen as or even explicitly tied to a mandatory (sometimes ritualized) declaration of allegiance to the alleged 'values' of the 'host country' (Van Avermaet and Gysen 2009, 119; Extra, Spotti and Van Avermaet 2009, 13), for instance, by singing the national anthem or taking an oath (Nygren-Junkin 2009, 222). This symbolic declaration of allegiance as an expectation and imposition is highly contradictory and hypocritical. Such hypocrisy has been dismantled by undocumented Latin-American immigrants to the United States singing 'Star-Spangled Banner' in Spanish; a striking example of a performative negotiation of [non-] belonging to a nationalist state that Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak discuss in a co-authored publication (2007).

In the European context, the notion of integration, filled with such contradictions and paradoxes, has come to be elevated to the status of a universal remedy to nations' 'migration problems' by levelling out 'cultural' and linguistic differences as well as socio-economic inequalities (see, e.g., Extra et al. 2009; Flubacher 2014). Irrespective of variations in the measures in terms of their concrete operationalization across European nation-states, their legal-argumentative basis relies on a notion of integration in terms of the level of language skills and civic knowledge required as well as the form of implementation (formal, informal, or evidence of course participation). .

The implementation of these 'civic integration policies' has spread not only spatially across Europe—that is in terms of a growing number of nation-states adopting them—but also in terms of the policy fields it is applied to. While initially such measures were installed primarily with regard to citizenship, so a relatively high membership level, they have increasingly been extended to function as a condition to acquire or maintain (permanent) residence rights and even as a pre-requirement for entry altogether, especially when it comes to family reunification. Thus, the terms 'pre-departure' and 'pre-integrative language requirement' have been coined by state policy makers, getting a hold on (aspiring) immigrants long before they enter European territory and a very long time before they acquire membership status. Put simply, whereas previously it sufficed for an individual to give proof of their 'integration' when asking for citizenship rights, it subsequently also became necessary to do so when they intended to settle down more permanently (without obtaining political rights). Still more recently, this has become necessary even when applying for an entry visa before the individual has even set foot on the prospective European country of residence. This makes visible yet another dimension of the expansion of these measures, as European migration regimes stretch out spatially, externalizing 'migration-management' to extra-European territories, especially so called 'third countries'. Hence, in light of my analysis, I will argue that an extension or a sort of spill-over of the 'integration concept' from a traditionally internal affair to

an external policy affair too can be observed; a process that European Union (EU) institutions have tried to counteract. Saskia Bonjour engages with this issue, demonstrating that there has been a 'transfer of pre-departure integration requirements for family migrants' among member states of the EU. She states that:

while the EU has functioned as a platform for the exchange of ideas, EU institutions such as the Commission have strived to obstruct this process. The only actors promoting the transfer of pre-departure integration measures were national governments. For these governments, representing such measures as a 'common practice' among member states was a strategy to build legitimacy for restrictive reform. (Bonjour 2014, 203)

So even if mandatory integration measures, unlike other European instruments of the border regime, are not part of the EU's harmonized Integrated Border Management (IBM), they have come to enjoy largely uncontested legitimacy within European nation-states. Following these lines of development, a range of European nation-states have installed such 'pre-departure language requirements' into their border regime apparatuses at the intersection of what can be seen as a widening and deepening of policies of mandatory integration. The Netherlands was the first to do so, adopting a regulation in 2005 and enforcing it in 2006 in the form of a (much-criticized) computerized and phone-based language and knowledge of society (KoS) test held at Dutch embassies abroad (Extra and Spotti 2009a, 68ff; 2009b, 131ff). In the six years that followed, five European countries followed suite, putting in force their own language requirements—in some cases with, and in others without additional formal or informal KoS requirements—as entry conditions. These countries were Germany (in 2007), France (in 2008), Denmark and the UK (in 2010), and Austria (in 2011) (Bonjour 2014; Goodman and Wright 2015). The case of Switzerland indicates that this policy continues to be prolific, reflected in the revision of the 'Ausländergesetz' ('Aliens Act'), now 'Ausländer- und Integrationsgesetz' ('Aliens and Integration Act') to incorporate a language requirement, newly tied to family unification (Art. 43d), which has been in force since January 2019. However, in this case, the language requirement is not explicitly tied to passing a test but instead remains rather unclear in legal terms as well as in its implementation, as

revealed in a conversation that I had later on in my research, in 2019, with an officer of a cantonal ‘competence centre for integration’ .

In light of these considerations, it can be stated that while historically most European countries have had some form of assimilation or integration requirement for citizenship acquisition, reiterating the words of Goodman and Wright, *‘mandatory integration-from-abroad is not just a new policy, it is a relatively new idea’* (Goodman and Wright 2015, 237).

Hence, it comes as no surprise that except for some very insightful pioneer work, here I would like to point to the work of Miriam Gutekunst on migration through marriage from Morocco to Germany, of which I will say more later (Gutekunst 2018, 2012, 2011; Scheel and Gutekunst 2019). Mandatory language testing as part of border regimes has received very little research attention so far. A solid basis to build on in this respect is the literature that explores language as an instrument governing the acquisition of citizenship (Extra, Spotti, and van Avermaet 2009; Hansen-Thomas 2007; Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero and Stevenson 2009; Kofman 2007; Piller 2001). In addition, the analysis of migration and in particular (language-based) integration discourses within different national European and other contexts contributes to this effort (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Bommers 2006; Duchêne et al. 2013; Flubacher 2014; Gutekunst 2012; Irvine and Gal 2000; Mateos 2009; Plutzer 2010; Rheindorf and Wodak 2020; Wodak 2012). I would like, through this thesis, to contribute to this literature and explore the ways in which ‘language’ shapes ‘borders’—and vice versa—and to what end.

Approaching ‘language as border’ from two angles

The second reason I see for the research gap regarding language as a means of border regime pertains to the location of this topic at the disciplinary intersection between social science research on migration and borders on the one hand, and the study of language use or sociolinguistics on the other hand. But even if the subject, per se, has not attracted a lot of research attention yet, a rich literature exists in

adjacent fields, which provides the basis for further investigation. In the following section, I will cursorily present the respective work first in border studies beyond what has been presented in the theoretical chapter on borders and secondly, in the linguistic field of study, which has guided my reflections on language in the bordering context at hand, especially with regard to theorizing my empirical findings. This field encompasses sociolinguistic discourse analysis in language policy, language ideology and language and migration, critical language testing, and research on multilingualism. In addition, the literature on applied linguistics, for example, second language learning will be briefly touched upon in order to outline the wider linguistic field surrounding migration and bi/multilingualism. This broad purview renders visible how language policies that install mandatory language learning and testing for immigrants open up a profitable market for linguists and other professionals who are implicated in the 'integration' industry, externalizing certain migration management tasks to them.

6.2 A border perspective on language

In the first part of my chapter on theory, I have already laid out key concepts in the field of critical border studies to which I refer in my work. However, here I would like to add an observation that I made in my reading of the literature on border studies. The theorization of (European) borders has been largely developed in relation to refugee studies. Evidently, this central empirical field has its particular characteristics, opening up a particular perspective on what borders are today. It is within this field that critical border studies have mainly evolved. Hence, to date, border ontologies have been shaped by the respective border apparatuses in focus, emphasizing the impacts and meanings produced, for instance, by technological innovations, campization, and humanitarization (Bendixsen 2020; Broeders 2007; Kreichauf 2018; Topak 2014; Walters 2006). Whereas these key concepts within border studies foreground the overall theorization of the complexity and multiplicity of recent borders, the dominant perspective that they open up can also obscure other dimensions. I argue that by exploring 'family' or 'spousal unification' through a border regime lens rather than through a migration (regime) lens, which has been the predominant approach thus far, it becomes possible to highlight different aspects, processes, and effects of both the legal instrument of 'family unification' and the field of border studies. This will, I hope, shed light on yet another dimension of the overall European border apparatus, making it possible to acquire a fuller picture on its overarching logics and to advance its theorization.

Such a shift from a dominant migration studies perspective to a border studies perspective should be seen as more than merely terminological, for it can add to the de-centring of the study of transnational mobility government. (Dahinden 2017) So far 'family unification', under the conceptual umbrella of migration research, has mainly been studied in the context of the European 'destination' countries. Eleonore Kofman's (2005) study analyses such transformations within family unification and more broadly European immigration policies:

It is not merely that a more repressive immigration regime has prevailed but, more significantly, the European nation-state has in the past few years reasserted its position through the development of managed migration systems, the retreat from multiculturalism and the revival of neo-assimilationist agendas. States have furthermore reinforced formal demands and obligations required not only of citizens but also for those wishing to reside long-term as opposed to sojourn temporarily. (Kofman 2005, 454)

I argue that since the publication of this article in 2005, this trend has continued, and European states have installed such neo-assimilationist agendas more into their border regimes too. Directing the research gaze on borders enables the expansion and tracing of these agendas to the context of border and entry, making visible not only the particular conditions and effects in the counties of 'departure' but also an entirely different set of bordering practices at play. Such a transnational or multisite perspective holds the potential to avoid landing in the much-debated 'national container' of migration research (Dahinden 2016, 2017; Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002).

Miriam Gutekunst's (2015 and 2018) studies on migration through marriage from Morocco to Germany signify an important step in this direction. In her innovative research project, this author applies an ethnographic approach to the study of border regime, highlighting three essential steps that visa applicants need to take in their journey to unite with their spouses in Germany that entail the production of three documents: the marriage certificate, the language certificate, and the visa application. Gutekunst demonstrates how each of these elements of the German nation-state's border regime are informed by intersecting gendered, culturalizing, and racializing practices on the one hand, while also being shaped by the particular conditions of Moroccan authorities, especially with regard to the certification of marriages. There are important parallels between Gutekunst's approach and mine, aside from the decentring aim, one being a governmentality approach, which does not treat 'the state' or 'the visa applicant' as a given, but rather as contestable outcomes of a particular set of practices, activations, and power dynamics. Another commonality is the discussion of the key role of the blurrily shaped integration discourse in these intersectional border arrangements

along with other traits and results of her analysis, which I will return to in the given sections of this thesis.

Of particular interest to my approach to the study of language as an instrument of border regime is, of course, her chapter on the language certificate (Gutekunst 2018, 129–193). Important findings of this chapter are the aforementioned role of the integration discourse in legitimizing the language requirement, centring on preconceptions of ‘forced marriages’ and a ‘housewifeization’ of female applicants, while applying a logic of ‘usefulness’ to a regime, which evidently governs migration through a stalling strategy and clearly selects candidates rather than ‘pre-integrating’ them. Vulnerable groups in terms of gender, age, education, and socio-economic status, who have a hard time learning the language (or how to write and read) and dealing with the testing modalities, are especially likely to be ‘filtered’ out. Which stands in contradiction to the declared goal of the language policy measure of ‘saving’ women from ‘forced marriage’. Moreover, Gutekunst has shed light on the market created around the language-learning and testing regime, with the Goethe Institute emerging as a major player and its staff assigned a role straddling that of language-tester and border official.

My findings resonate with those of Gutekunst, as will become clear in the pages to come. However, there are also fundamental differences between our approaches. Whereas Gutekunst follows the respective individuals through the different phases and institutions of the bordering process, one of which is the language requirement, my analysis focuses on a particular dimension, namely the manifold effects, meanings, and functions that are generated in the interrelation of ‘language’ and ‘border’ (e.g., visa-applicants’ subjectivities). I am curious to learn more about what lies behind the notion of ‘language’ as a functional but largely naturalized part of this border apparatus. For while in the majority of studies in this (non-linguistic) field, the notion of ‘integration’ is critically scrutinized as racist, blurry, and fostering inequality, with the ‘language’ notion often appearing to be taken for granted.

6.3 A language perspective on borders

6.3.1 Language and nation as racialized ideological co-constructions

. . . it has been essential for the modern state to be perceived as having political boundaries that are isomorphic with language boundaries that are themselves isomorphic with cultural boundaries. (Scollon 2004, 272)

A language is a dialect with an army and navy. (Witticism credited to the linguist, Max Weinreich and cited by Maxwell 2018, 263)

Language plays a key role in the construction of national identities (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Extra et al. 2009; Piller 2001) and in the way we 'imagine the nation' (Anderson 1991). Indeed, the association of nations with language is rooted in their invention and establishment at the end of the nineteenth century (Safran 1999, 2004). This association is strikingly evident in the case of naming, as nation-states commonly share the name of 'the language' spoken on their territories (Shohamy 2006, 27). Or, rather, it is the other way around: one particular variety of a standardized language is legitimized as the official or national language and named after the nation-state that it is supposed to represent. In turn, it is charged with the symbolical work of distinguishing, ideologically upholding, and unifying that 'nation' as a particular linguistic and cultural entity, often without regard for a multilingual reality. This interrelation of political and language-related processes has been analysed by researchers in the fields of language policy and language ideology (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Canut and Duchêne 2011; Duchêne et al. 2013; Extra et al. 2009; Piller 2001; Rheindorf and Wodak 2020; Shohamy 2001 and 2006; Wodak 2012). The logic of nationalizing linguistic unifications has been applied with respect to nation-states globally and disseminated through colonialism in particular (Makoni and Pennycook 2007, 4ff; Shohamy 2006, 25ff). Linguists and the invention of the discipline of linguistics entailing the 'collection' and classification of 'languages' as objectified and countable (Heller and Duchêne 2008, 3) entities have played a major role in

politicizing and culturalizing languages and their use (Shohamy 2006, 30ff; on the contemporary culturalization of language, see Rheindorf und Wodak 2020).

However, this dialectic co-construction (Makoni and Pennycook 2007) of 'one nation one language' (Horner 2009, 110), built on the dogma of homogeneity and rooted in the European context, persists. Accordingly, the nation is considered linguistically and culturally homogeneous in everyday ideology (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992; Pavlenko 2002a). Thus, in Italy, people speak Italian; in Germany, they speak German; in Greece, they speak Greek; in Sweden, they speak Swedish; in Spain, they speak Spanish and so on. A congruency, which is widely presented and perceived as quasi-'natural' remains largely unquestioned, with the many 'exceptions' to this alleged rule being disregarded. One prominent example, often cited as an exception, is Switzerland, an officially multilingual federal state. Rather than being viewed as a deficiency, lack of cultural and linguistic homogeneity has come to figure at the very core of Switzerland's national imaginary as a 'nation by will' (Dahinden 2016b). It has been argued, however, that this embracing of local linguistic and cantonal belonging into a Swiss national identity has been achieved by excluding outsiders (Arlettaz and Arlettaz 2004). This hypothesis of national self-affirmation *ex negativo* (Kury 2003) could be one reason accounting for the fact that Switzerland has one of the most restrictive naturalization regimes in Europe (Dahinden 2016b). Hence, even if the 'one-nation-one-language' dogma does not apply in this case, the call for foreigners to (linguistically) integrate remains the same. As Dahinden (2016b) argues, 'while ethnic and linguistic diversity among the Swiss is perceived as a virtue, ethnic diversity with regard to migrants continues to be regarded as highly problematic'.

Other decisive factors, namely political networks during the process of nation building have been highlighted to explain how this state was able to emerge and persist, if not on the basis of cultural and linguistic homogeneity:

Where the political alliances of the elites controlling the nation-building project reach across an ethnic divide, become institutionalised and organisationally stabilised, a pan-ethnic

national identity will develop. Where the networks of political alliances are bounded by ethnic divisions and, importantly, when such ethnically defined networks are excluded from access to state power, ethnicity will be politicised and ethno-national identities will emerge. The boundaries of political networks during the early periods of nation-building and the power configuration between them thus crucially shape the contours of the nation. (Wimmer 2011, 734)

Other examples of countries with pan-ethnic national identities are Belgium and Spain, and, outside of the European context, Canada. Furthermore, outside of the Western hemisphere, the Swiss example appears to be even less remarkable, next to the 'Caribbean rainbow nationalisms, India and Indonesia, as well as a dozen or so of more or less stable multiethnic nationalisms in the Middle East and Africa that remain outside the horizon of mainstream research on nationalism and the nation-state' (Wimmer 2011, 735)

Numerous pan-ethnic and multilingual 'exceptions' across Europe and the globe serve to counter the tenability of the homogeneity-norm as a widespread language-ideology, which is also contested by those marginalized 'others' who remain excluded from states' policies of linguistic recognition. Such others include (older) non-recognized and non-fostered linguistic minorities as well as more recently immigrated linguistic minorities (Horner 2009; Shohamy 2006). Evidently, linguistic realities within nation-states are highly complex and dynamic, as demonstrated by a vast and nuanced body of literature encompassing sociolinguistic and multilingual studies (Busch 2009; Duchêne and Heller 2008; Shohamy 2000; Yilmaz 2019). It can be argued that this complexity is increasingly apparent as national realities continue to be 'criss-crossed' by the transnational ties and mobilities of their populations; a conclusion that has entered (applied) linguistics rather recently compared with transnationalism studies (Duff 2015; Piller and Pavlenko 2007). Within the sub-discipline of multilingual studies, this complexity of speakers' everyday realities was acknowledged during the proclaimed 'multilingual turn' that occurred about a decade ago and that criticized and rejected the still dominant monolingual paradigm in theories, pedagogies, and practices in the areas of second language learning and bilingual education (May 2013; Meier 2017).

The multilingual reality and demands for the linguistic rights of minorities, which are excluded by monolingual policies, challenge nation-states and threaten their territorial sovereignty. Hence, they try to counter, illegitimize, or appease them (Extra et al. 2009, 7; Zeydanlıoğlu 2012; Shohamy 2006, 35). Europe's fear of such border re-drawings is not a matter of the past; it is clearly evident during political debates, for instance, those on the Catalan and Basque independence movements in Spain or the calls for a Greater Albania (to include the nation-states of Albania and Kosova as well as territories in the neighbouring countries where Albanian is spoken). The later calls that have been increasingly raised in line with the continuing deferment of Kosova's accession to the EU (Neue Zürcher Zeitung: 04.06.2019). These instances make visible the vulnerability and instability of national borders, and the belief in them, which is rarely observed in a discourse that otherwise pervasively represents borders as factual and natural. In particular, the EU's external borders are represented as an immovable, insurmountable, and even as deadly force, often by invoking images of walls, fences, and 'the' fortress. It is evident that nation-states and powerful supra-national entities have a vital interest in the endurance of these stabilizing and naturalizing images of their borders. Therefore, claims for linguistic minority rights hold the potential to threaten these established power hierarchies, leading to the redrawing of national borders or the formation of new nation-states.

The fact that both national borders and national languages tend to be naturalized and presented as givens in the hegemonic discourse is not accidental (Duchêne et al. 2013), having a historical foundation. As has been demonstrated from different disciplinary perspectives, such as political science, history, sociolinguistics, and multilingualism studies (Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1990; Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Shohamy 2006), language and the nation coincide as co-constructions. These studies trace the central role of language in the very formation of nation-states; a process that is much more recent than people generally assume because of the strength of the normalization/naturalization of the hegemonic concept.

Nationalist movements in the nineteenth century sought out language as an ideal power instrument for governing and unifying what in many respects were heterogeneous populations on their territories (Hobsbawm 1990). Languages and language use were manipulated in ways whereby they served as an instrument for granting cohesion and unity and ultimately stabilizing a particular social order. (Shohamy 2006) The work of the historian and political scientist, Benedict Anderson (1991), has been highly influential within interdisciplinary research on phenomena related to the formation and power dynamics of nation-states. Anderson introduces the concept of nations as imagined communities, emphasizing the core value that has been assigned to language within this imaginary. Extra, Spotti, and Van Avermaet draw on this concept, pointing to '*two (erroneous) popular beliefs*' about the relation between language and the nation. The first is '*that of the existence of a national language common to all fellow nationals and that of the primacy of the standard variety of this same national language over other territorial language varieties*' (2009, 6). As a consequence of such a language ideology, those who master the standard variety of the assigned hegemonic language hold more powerful positions than those who do not (Duchêne et al. 2013; Extra et al. 2009, 6; McColl Millar 2005).

Thus, the elites at the forefront of nation formation built their founding myths *around* national languages as identificatory core characteristic, but also *through* them. They standardized and established a particular 'correct', 'high' way and style of using language, relegating other (free, non-regulated) varieties to the place of 'dialects', and they (re-)wrote their national histories and literatures in that unified language. Unsurprisingly, many among those implied in these efforts were people working with language: writers, poets, teachers, and linguists (Shohamy 2006).

In her book on language policy, Shohamy (2006) demonstrates how language, essentially a means of communication whose expression is free, dynamic, personal, and lacking clear-cut boundaries, has been manipulated to serve the

political aims of nation-states' governments and of dominant elites to control populations and reproduce their power:

Language turned from being a free communicative means of interaction into a closed and stagnated system. From the early nation-state period, language and culture have served as major tools of the state apparatus. (Shohamy 2006, 25)

Moreover, she deciphers the key role that linguists and the founding of linguistics as a discipline, historically interlinked with the 'birth' of ethnography, have played in this manipulation, contributing greatly to the establishment of normalizing ideas about 'proper' language use:

The field of linguistics, then, played a major role in the process of language becoming a tool of domination and oppression in the nation-state, specifically in controlling the quality of language that was legitimate and that lent itself to notions of memberships and categories. Thus, ideas such as correct and standard languages became other forms of domination. Rather than just describing languages, linguists started dictating strict rules regarding how languages should be used . . . also . . . in terms of words, grammar, pronunciation, syntax, spelling etc. (Shohamy 2006, 33)

Delving into the historical role of the discipline (ethno)linguistics in more detail is beyond the scope of this study. For my purposes, it suffices here to note that language as well as linguists have played a key role in the formation of nation-states and that the birth of linguistics as a discipline cannot be conceived independently from the nationalist and colonialist European enterprise (Mayblin and Turner 2021). To understand why language, in particular, has been ascribed such a key role in contemporary European integration, migration, and border regimes and to grasp the quality and tightness of the interrelations between language and borders, we need to take account of the particularities and the history of this 'duo' that constructs nationhood.

The newly emerging field of raciolinguistics allows for just that. It highlights the interrelation of race and language as it is implemented to function as part of the European border apparatus. Moreover, it shows that this is not an invention of 'modern' Europe; the imposition of hegemonic European languages and the degradation of the languages of racial, ethnic, or cultural others was part of the

colonial endeavour of European nation-states and their identity formation (Alim 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017).⁸

Thus, in my focus on subjectivation and the deconstruction or denaturalization of 'facts', such as the border or 'language as the key to integration', I join with scholars of raciolinguistics in their call to linguists to

shift from privileging individual interactions and speaking practices as the primary sites in which categories of race and language are created and negotiated, toward investigating how institutionalized hierarchies of racial and linguistic legitimacy are central to processes of modern subject formation. (Rosa and Flores 2017, 622)

In my analysis, I too focus on the structural-institutional dimension, albeit approaching that macro-level of bordering through the micro-analysis of its subjectivating effects.

Raciolinguist scholars point to the 'co-naturalization of language and race as part of the project of modernity' in which Europeanness is positioned as superior to non-Europeanness (Rosa and Flores 2017, 623). This hierarchy should be understood as part of a broader process of national-state/colonial governmentality (Flores 2013). By tracing the historical roots of hegemonic European language policies, their discursively obscured racist underworking becomes apparent.

In concluding this section, I would like to highlight some of the important processes within states that have to do with language unification. As states privilege one language variety as 'the' national language, they marginalize other local varieties and languages and, most importantly, their speakers within a process that renders them 'other'. This process can—and as history has shown—does lead to underrepresentation, delegitimization and socio-economic inequality, excluding certain parts of the population of a nation-state from educational institutions as well as the job and housing markets. Whereas the case of Catalan nuances this image, with its speakers representing an economically powerful minority within the whole of Spain, this case is the exception rather than the rule. For the most part, the linguistic

marginalization coincides with classed and often simultaneously ethnicized, racialized, or culturalized discriminatory effects (Blackledge 2009, 82; Blackledge and Pavlenko 2001; Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Pavlenko 2002b; Rheindorf and Wodak 2020). The classicizing effect becomes evident when we look at how proficiency in the prestigious, standardized official language has come to function as a powerful gatekeeper for achieving higher education levels, granting access to better work opportunities and generally more powerful positions within society. Being able to use the spoken and written language code defined as the national language in a manner deemed grammatically correct and accent-free by language policy makers, language planners, and other influential economic and social elites is likely to have a huge impact on the position that a person comes to occupy within a society. Speakers of marginalized language varieties who cannot, or for some reason do not wish to conform with the hegemonic language norm, are at a disadvantage in many respects. This renders visible a politicization, or as Canut and Duchêne (2011) and Shohamy (2006) have clearly expressed, an *instrumentalization* and a *manipulation* of language. The historical formation of national policy regimes as language regimes has gained renewed importance and continues to do so with regard to globalization, migration, and the continuing intensification of transnational life worlds. The latter phenomenon requires yet more reflection within linguistic research. The enhancement of all of these cross-border movements and relations contributes to greater linguistic complexity, with new languages and/or larger groups of speakers of 'foreign' languages joining those already present on Western national territories.

The rule of the monolingual norm can have similar effects of invisibilization and exclusion with regard to 'immigrated' linguistic minorities as it has on long-established local minorities, such as the Catalan in Spain. However, the languages of people within more recent waves of immigration are generally governed by a different set of policy measures and are legitimized through particular discursive argumentations.

It is fair to say that in general, the languages of immigrants in Europe are under especially high pressure in terms of their perceived illegitimacy. Speaking them in public spaces and in official or formal contexts can therefore not only be ineffective or disadvantageous for individuals but it can also provoke negative attention, as dominant discourses often question their belonging to these places, especially the public domain (Jashari and Riehl forthcoming; McDermott 2011; Pavlenko 2003). Here it is important to note that this discourse on foreign languages in Western national contexts is hierarchized (Duchêne et al. 2013, 18) according to dominant global hierarchies in place. Certain foreign languages, generally those originating from economically well-off places, enjoy greater prestige, and speaking and learning them is considered culturally and economically enriching. Conversely, the languages of immigrants from economically less privileged, non-Western countries are associated with lower prestige levels and separated from those 'good' languages by being labelled 'migration languages' (the notion of 'heritage languages' is predominant within the field of applied linguistics; see, for instance, Kasstan (2018), who discusses related research challenges). When speaking of language and immigration in this context, I thus refer to the latter 'group' of languages, as I am looking at bordering and cross-border processes between European and so-called third countries in particular.

So, to come back to the particularities of nation-states' reactions to the growing presence of 'migrant languages', it has been argued that the resulting enhanced linguistic complexity has shifted the entire policy and discourse dynamic in terms of social order and the linguistic alignment of immigrants. And the new diversity-proportions are seen—or presented—as representing a (new) threat to 'national identity' and 'national cohesion' (Extra et al. 2009; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009; Shohamy 2006). The response of European nation-states to the demands associated with this enhanced complexity has been unanimous: the newcomers have to integrate. In this process of integration of 'foreigners' into 'the nation', language is assigned a particularly important role, as is often emphasized in political debates

using the metaphor of language as the 'key' to a 'successful integration'. The integration paradigm has become central to the discursive negotiation of the political and linguistic rights of migrants as well as those of their descendants. This role has been demonstrated by many (socio)linguists and social scientists working within the field of migration (e.g., Extra et al. 2009; Flubacher 2014; Goodman and Wright 2015; Gutekunst 2012, 2018; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009; Korteweg 2017; Mezzadra 2009; Shohamy 2006).

'Multiculturalism' in Europe has failed, as proclaimed by many voices within politics and echoed by some migration researchers (see Lentin and Titley 2011 for a comprehensive perspective on racialization in this regard or Bloemraad and Wright 2014 for an overview of the debate). In the wake of its failure, this more inclusive idea of cultural and linguistic diversity within the context of the nation-state appears to be a short detour from the concept of assimilation to that of integration. Importantly, a critical discussion of this move from multiculturalism to integration (and, with it, integration studies) signifies a *'rhetorical break, which conjured a fictive past in order to change the present'* (Schinkel 2018, 1). This is how Schinkel, a social theorist, analyses what happened when government leaders, such as Merkel, Sarkozy, and Cameron denounced multiculturalism, when no respective policy nomenclature or practice had even been installed, rendering its failure just as fictive. And this is his departure point in his fundamental critique of *"immigrant integration" both as a political way to describe the process in which migrants settle, and as a concept in social science to analyse such processes'* (Schinkel 2018,2).

However, the notion of integration, with which one is confronted in today's political discourses across Europe, seems to function in a way that is very similar to that of assimilation. These two notions might even be considered interchangeable, as not only social scientists such as Favell (2019) have argued but also as they are sometimes used in the official documents and legal texts of nation-states (Kofman 2007, 2ff; Otto and Schrödter 2006; Van Avermaet 2009, 17). This interchangeability dismantles the repetitious statement made by state officials and their 'integration

staff' of 'the mutuality of integration', considered as lip service to fend off criticism on their neo-assimilationist and marginalizing policies.

The development of the integration notion into what has been viewed by sociolinguists as 'the' central common feature of European nation-states' migration and diversity discourses (see Extra et al. 2009 as well as Hogan-Brun et al. 2009) can be conceived as the revival and reformatting of the monolingual norm (or the official multilingual norm in Switzerland). This process occurs as nation-states continue to defend the homogeneity doxa upon which they were founded.

Given that these interrelations of nation, integration, and language are crucial when it comes to the topic at hand, namely border regimes as language regimes, in the next section, I will briefly sketch out the linguistic literature on migration/borders and language. I will conclude the section by carving out some of the findings in sociolinguistic discourse analysis, which will be of particular importance for my analysis.

6.3.2 Linguistic literature on migration and integration

As the literature cited above has indicated, the contributions of studies on language and migration framed using a language lens of this topic have evolved into lively research field over the course of the last ten to fifteen years. Conversation analysis (Kotthoff 2002; Kotthoff et al. 2013) and, more broadly, studies in sociolinguistics and discourse linguistics (Bradimore and Bauder 2011; Duchêne et al. 2013; Fairclough 2003; Maas 2005; Pavlenko 2002; Piller and Pavlenko 2007; Wodak 2012, 2015) and different lines of applied linguistics reveal diverse approaches to critical language testing (Roever and McNamara 2006; Shohamy 2000 and 2001) and second language learning (Pavlenko 2002; Yilmaz 2019). A substantial portion of the above-mentioned linguistic research, for example, the social science literature on approaches to migration regimes focuses on cases in which the individuals governed by means of language requirements are already residing in the respective (European) migration country. This is not surprising

because the integration argument, which is the basis for problematizing, politicizing, and, in turn, legitimizing these mandatory measures and their operationalization in terms of language learning and/or testing, initially emerged from nation-states' domestic policy contexts.

However, the origin of the integration concept in internal national policies has far-reaching consequences for research too, as a large part of this research on integration (asking about the conditions of its success or failure) can be seen to be one effect of this problematization and politicization of migration issues within Western nation-states. This situation has led to a large increase in the demand for researchers and other 'specialists of migration' to address these issues at national and international levels. In the matter of language, this market is particularly easy to recognize, having given rise to a large and profitable language-learning industry, as has been pointed out within the literature (Gutekunst 2018). Hence, one finds on the one hand a body of literature on applied linguistic studies, which critically examines the intentions and effects of these language-based policy measures (McDermott 2011; Rheindorf and Wodak 2020; Shohamy 2006; Van Avermaet 2009). My argumentations on language and border regimes are largely derived from this literature. On the other hand, there is a substantial body of professional literature aimed at cultivating 'best practices' and concerned with the application of language policies to their fields of practice, often with little consideration of the power relations at play. Such studies, given their proximity to official institutions, are characterized by a hands-on approach, which tends to come with the uncritical adoption of essentialist notions and assumptions of problems from the perspective of policy makers. As I do not draw on this literature in my work, I will only single out one of the more recent publications as an example; an edited anthology titled *Wie schaffen wir das? Beiträge zur sprachlichen Integration geflüchteter Menschen* ('How can we do this? Contributions to the linguistic integration of refugees', transl. by author) (Middeke et al. 2017). The editors take up the much-quoted dictum of the German Chancellor, Merkel, 'Wir schaffen das!' ('We can do this!', transl. by author),

which she articulated during the so-called long summer of migration in 2015. Contributions in this book revolve around the question of how to facilitate ‘the linguistic integration’ of these newly-arrived populations, discussing the particular challenges and needs of different ‘target groups’ arising from different institutional settings. One of the contributors is Sibylle Plessmann, the chief test-developer and deputy managing director of telc GmbH (a major European language-test provider based in Germany, where Plessmann works). Plessmann has been tasked with designing the ‘language test for immigrants’ as well as the so-called ‘*Rahmencurriculum*’ (‘*general curriculum*’, transl. by author) (a KoS requirement), which, since 2005, has been mandatory for (certain) newcomers to Germany, who wish to reside in the country for more than one year. The design of these assessment instruments is based on a private–public collaboration between the Goethe Institute, telc GmbH, and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (which mainly provided funding and forewords in resulting publications) (Perlmann-Balme et al. 2009). Unsurprisingly, in her paper, Plessmann presents these instruments and their benefits relating to successfully ‘integrating’ immigrants, concluding by emphasizing their ‘flexibility’ in meeting ‘new demands’ that come with a ‘different composition of immigrants’, especially with regard to ‘*Wertevermittlung*’, so the communication or teaching of values:

Das andere Schlagwort dieser Tage, die Wertevermittlung, ist ebenfalls bereits in hohem Maße in guten Lehrwerken und im Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer umgesetzt. Nicht Belehrung ist hier der Weg, sondern eine Schärfung der Wahrnehmung und Hilfe zur Aneignung zentraler Wertvorstellungen über die Umsetzung im Unterricht. Das Thema stand in Jahren vermehrter Zuwanderung aus der EU nicht im Fokus; jetzt kann es aber ohne Weiteres stärker akzentuiert werden. Es war immer im Integrationskurs angelegt und kann nun bedarfsorientiert eine stärkere Beachtung finden. (Plessmann 2017, 335)

The other catchphrase these days, the teaching of values, has also already been implemented at a high rate in good textbooks and in the German test for immigrants. Here admonition is not the way, but sharpening peoples’ perception and helping them acquire central moral values through application in class. The topic was not in the focus during years of increased immigration from the EU; but now it can easily be accentuated more strongly. It has always been included in the integration course and can now receive stronger attention according to requirements.

(transl. of author)

The perceived need to emphasize the teaching of (German) values to immigrants from non-European countries speaks to how hierarchizing and racializing assumptions emanating from public and policy discourses are directly taken up by collaborating language professionals and incorporated into language learning and testing tools. While this example focuses on one detail within the larger field of private–public linguistic cooperation, it nevertheless highlights the problematic hybrid role of the language professionals involved.

Beyond this field of applied linguistics, some of the most inspiring linguistic literature is aimed at both critical reflexion on as well as the improvement of the concrete application of language teaching and testing, pointing to the necessity for professionals in the field of language learning and assessment to raise awareness of and work against discriminatory and exclusory language policies (Mateos 2009; Shohamy 2006). This literature is in part identical with the critical non-applied-approach, and it represents the basis for my analysis. Therefore, further on, I will say a bit more about it and its critiques.

Here it remains to be mentioned that whereas the study of the interrelation of language and migration has become an established field of sociolinguistic research, the consideration of a border study approach to migration processes and discourses is (still) largely absent. Within linguistic research (areal linguistics), the border features with regard to so-called ‘language borders’—a term sometimes used interchangeably with that of ‘language boundaries’. Such studies focus on the (always blurry and never linear) zones where different languages or language varieties overlap and alternate, as, for instance, with the demarcation of dialects (see Riehl 1999; Höder 2009 for exemplary studies). Whereas political borders can and often do play a role in these questions of language practice and language contact, these studies do not pinpoint the issue at hand. Also, there are socio- and discourse linguistic works that demonstrate how borders are constructed discursively (e.g., Konrad et al. 2018 on the language of borders) as well as works offering a perspective on language as a central boundary for identity constructions (Blackledge

and Pavlenko 2001; Gubbins and Holt 2002; Wodak 2012). Furthermore, in this applied linguistic field, language is conceived as a 'barrier to communication' and thus to equality and inclusion, sometimes entailing the explicit use of the metaphor 'language barrier' (Ding and Hagraves 2008; Gales 2009). Even if this approach is conceptually closer to my own, it is not aimed at the same level of bordering practice.

A field that deals with very similar questions is that of sociolinguistic studies in language policy and language ideology conducted on the neighbouring, or rather, preceding topic of citizenship acquisition under the condition of proving language skills and knowledge of society. Additionally, critical language testing has allowed me to nuance my analysis further by drawing on Elana Shohamy's seminal contributions to this field. This literature will be briefly sketched out in the following sub-section.

6.3.3 Language policy and ideology: From 'integration for citizenship' to 'integration for entry'

The finding of studies on the interrelation between language and borders from a migration perspective that there has been an expansion of mandatory integration measures into wider policy fields is confirmed by the sociolinguistic literature. Two collective volumes, in particular, have advanced the research field and the approaches and topics that come closest to my focus on language as an instrument of the border regime. These volumes are: *Language Testing, Migration and Citizenship. Cross-National Perspectives on Integration Regimes*, edited by Extra et al. (2009) and *Discourses on Language and Integration*, edited by Hogan-Brun et al. (2009). Both collections were the outcomes of a series of workshops held in 2006 that dealt with very similar questions, and some of their contributors also overlapped. Therefore, I will merge and highlight relevant points considering these two collections in combination.

The contributions in these volumes approach the issue of language requirements as a condition for citizenship, settlement, and the entry of immigrants

within a wide range of European nation-states. However, they also, to some extent, present a comparative analysis that includes other 'Western' states. However, the issue of entry is scarcely touched upon in these contributions, given relatively recent attention to this topic. The only contributions that place a particular emphasis on the issue of entry, as such, are those by Extra and Spotti (2009a and 2009b); in all of the other contributions, this aspect is either just mentioned as part of the bigger picture or cursorily discussed.

However, the findings of these two volumes are very important for contextualizing and understanding my own research findings, providing a basis from which to depart and advance the research on mandatory linguistic integration measures in the context of migration. Accordingly, I see my work as representing a continuation of these studies, albeit applying another perspective and, in part, a different set of concepts.

Whereas the analyses presented in the contributions to these volumes, including those of Extra and Spotti relating to the debates in Europe mainly focus on legal and political discourses, I base my analysis largely on the narratives of individuals facing these policy instruments. In doing so, I apply a perspective 'from the other side of the border that is grounded in the context of 'third' countries. I would argue that analysing the European border apparatus from the perspective of those affected does not necessarily position it as 'opposite' these other works, for my aim is to explore and reconstruct that very same apparatus, while taking account of its subjectivating effects on those it seeks to govern. This approach allows not only for the de-centring of migration research with respect to its prominent focus on European countries but also with regard to a certain dichotomization that I find in the way researchers claim either to look at 'institutions' or a macro-level, or at 'affected people' at the micro level. I suggest that this divide is levered out when applying an approach to governmentality that centres on discursive and performative processes of subjectivation and embodiment. So, in contrast to more restricted approaches that consider language as an output (legal texts, politicians'

speeches, parliamentary debates, media texts etc.) of these discourse analyses, I include all sorts of 'texts', forms of 'linguaging', (Shohamy 2006) and materialities apart from the interview narratives in my analyses. Accordingly, individuals' accounts serve in part as a source of information that adds to the ethnographic and document-based 'field research', and in part as a basis for a closer, more narrowly conceived linguistic analysis. The findings of these sociolinguistic case studies do represent an important basis for my analysis, especially with regard to three aspects that I would like summarize briefly below.

Firstly, they show how the notion of integration has become the linchpin of these discourses and the policies that they help to legitimize. 'Integration' across all of the European cases remains a blurred notion, as does its relation to the acquisition of language skills in the dominant language.

Although extremely popular nowadays, the call for integration stands in sharp contrast to the jargon of exclusion [used in the European public and political discourse to refer to immigrant groups and to their languages, SJ] remains vague and therefore politically popular as well. Integration may refer to a wide spectrum of underlying concepts that vary across nation-states' discourses of belonging, being variation over space, and within their discourses of belonging, being variation over time. (Extra et al. 2009, 11)

But not only has the integration notion been criticized as being blurry but its operationalization in terms of required language levels and test constructs, and moreover, the relation between the blurry notion of 'integration' and the blurry definition of the respective 'sufficient' levels of language skill is another central weakness of this policy tool that has been pointed out by critics on many sides. They include many of the contributors of the two volumes discussed here as well as by Plutzer (2010) and by Piller (2001). For instance, Horner notes: *'The vague nature of language requirements and murkiness of the related testing procedures resonate well with the discourse of integration'* (2009, 115)

Horner further traces how during the reform of immigration regulations in Luxembourg, the term 'assimilation' has been deleted from legal texts to be replaced by 'integration' not as a result of structural and attitude-related changes

but rather because it clashes with national self-representations as a 'modern' and 'cosmopolitan' country (Horner 2009, 112ff). These aspects make visible the continuation of neo-assimilationist agendas, which Kofman (2005) speaks of as well as the arbitrariness behind the language and other 'integration' requirements asked of newcomers; an arbitrariness, which is, of course, eliminated in nation-states' official discourses. This rootedness of the linguistic integration notion in the continuingly pertinent assimilation semantics further dismantles the blurriness of this policy concept.

However, some of the authors, for example, Shohamy or McNamara present more fundamental critiques. McNamara points out that a detailed approach to critiquing such instruments of mandatory linguistic integration by revealing and listing its many imprecisions and failings bears the risk of overlooking a more fundamental inherent problem. Specifically, this approach could imply that the unfairness and dehumanizing effects of such tests exhaust themselves in the technical imperfections of the testing procedure, *'when in fact the real problem is not the quality of the instrument, but the policy itself'* (McNamara 2009, 162). The author concludes his critical reflections by stating that language testing is facing a crisis: 'The crisis lies in its inability to theorize its own practice, handicapped by its essentially liberal politics and a view of language that is one-dimensional and functionalist' (McNamara 2009 162).

Secondly, many of the authors highlight the symbolic function of linguistic integration demands, with the foreseen proficiency levels being generally too low to allow for a more functional use of that language. Moreover, the actual life-worlds and demands of their 'target groups' are usually far removed from the contents and modalities of the courses and tests. This is a critique that has often gone hand in hand with the suggestion that the selective and symbolic functions of this policy agenda might actually be the hidden goals behind it. Such hidden agendas have been shown to be an important part of the language policies of nation-states (and other powerful institutions), which are often implicit as opposed to being explicit

(Shohamy 2006). Like Gutekunst, the sociolinguists of these volumes contend that selecting those immigrants according to nation-states' workforce needs is an important function of language requirements, pointing out like many other critics (e.g., Plutzer 2010) that a major selection criterion for such tests is the degree of familiarity with test modalities. With regard to the symbolic function, the authors note that sending out a clear signal to immigrants about their own positions and those of their languages within the nation is an important hidden policy goal.

Thirdly, the authors point to the important role that the dynamics between the national and supranational European levels play in these processes of legitimization and implementation of language policies. Like Bonjour (2014), they point out that increasing restrictions, such as those relating to 'family unification' have spread, as trends in EU countries have been emulated in other European nation-states, while supranational institutions, such as the European Commission, have opposed these policies. Another such dynamic that they point to is that liberalization relating to the award of citizenship has gone hand in hand with the increasing implementation of mandatory integration measures and demands that immigrants align with 'national values', 'Leitkultur' and so forth.

Fourthly, these processes and demands are based on a discourse on nationhood that, again, is almost universal throughout Europe, based on the idea of a culturally and linguistically homogenous population. And those parts of the population that do not merge into this national imaginary of isomorphism between territory, population, and culture/language are marked as 'foreign' through racializing, culturalizing, and gendered discourses. With regard to cultural and linguistic traits and practices, they are constructed as deficient, and hence required to change these traits and practices, replacing them with those deemed legitimate according to the hegemonic view—that is, they are required to 'integrate'. Therefore, based on the division of the population into two parts: 'original' and 'foreign', the belonging of those within the latter category is essentially ruled out and has to be earned through individual effort. This logic describes a process based

on what has been termed a 'neoliberal activation model' in the social sciences (Ronneberger and Tsianos 2009) in which those individuals/migrants who are not seen as useful or productive to the neoliberal workfare regimes of nation-states are filtered out. (Gutekunst 2018, 172; Lanz 2009, 111) This rationale would explain the pivotal emphasis that nation-states place on 'integration' as a kind of panacea for the challenges arising through migration, transnationalization and, consequently, an increasingly diverse population. Some of the authors point out that these migration regimes that are intended to reproduce a hegemonic national order not only bypass the demographic realities but they are also based on the indignation of people and their languages. Shohamy challenges the assumption that knowing the hegemonic languages, while needed in some situations, cannot generally be taken as a prerequisite per se for newcomers to function in the relevant new settings and goes further:

One wonders whether the acquisition of 'national' languages should not be a choice for people who can make their own rational decisions as to the language they need to know and use in a multilingual, transnational world. . . . How essential is knowledge of a specific language in an era of globalisation, diversity, common markets, transnationalism, multilingualism, striving diasporas and flexible boundaries? (2009, 49)

This critical perspective points in another general direction of critique directed at mandatory language testing for immigrants; that of paternalism. Here, once more, Shohamy takes the most radical approach among the authors, scrutinizing not only the notion of integration but also the concept of citizenship still pertaining to a world that has drastically changed with regard to the populations that nation-states are supposed to represent (Shohamy 2009, 52ff). This perspective draws on the work of Soysal (1994) and her claim for *universal* citizenship. Without such universal citizenship rights, nation-states are free to demand that newcomers give up their basic cultural and linguistic identities, and thus their personal human rights, in order to become citizens.

Lastly, the contributions of the two volumes point to the involvement of private test providers in the implementation of such policies. Moreover, they shed

light on the central role of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) with regard to language-testing regimes. The CEFR, which structures language proficiency into measurable and testable levels, provides the basis for implementing such policies, and, as has been argued by researchers within other branches of linguistic research that are important for my analysis, objectifying or commodifying language in turn (Duchêne and Heller 2012; Shohamy 2001). However, these authors demonstrate that while this has problematic consequences for test-takers/immigrants, the problem is not to be seen in the CEFR as such, which actually provides a relatively differentiated and communicative task-based grading system; rather it arises from its use for a purpose for which it was not originally designed:

CEFR, which is essentially meant as a tool to promote plurilingualism, is used by some policy makers as a scientific justification to promote monolingualism in official state languages and to focus more on what newcomers lack than on what they might be able to contribute and add in terms of resources to a more diverse society. (Extra et al. 2009: 18)

These few points already highlight some of the important critiques raised with regard to mandatory language testing for immigrants. Before turning to the third aspect contributing to the 'language gap' within the literature on language-based migration regimes, I would like to conclude this literature review by highlighting one more field of study that is central for my analysis: critical language testing.

6.3.4 The power of tests

[T]he use of tests as disciplinary tools means that certain demands are imposed on test takers from above while they are forced into a position where they have no choice but to comply with these demands. Compliance means a change in behaviour in line with the requirements of the test. While test takers and systems tend to comply with such disciplinary demands, they also resent doing so as they feel that it is imposed on them without their voice being heard. (Shohamy 2001, 19)

A consideration of this literature is imperative for developing a grassroots approach towards understanding the particularities of the phenomenon because it makes a difference whether individuals are ordered to take a language course or whether they take a test to prove proficiency. Furthermore, the precise test

proceedings play a role in how this test affects test-takers and the results they can hope to achieve. Of even greater significance is the particular context in which the test is set, the institutions behind it, and the particular function it fulfils along with the consequences of failing it. In short, tests are evidently powerful tools, which can deeply influence individuals' lifepaths. In her book *The Power of Tests. A Critical Perspective on the Uses of Language Tests* (2001), which has been very influential in the field of language testing, Elana Shohamy provides an encompassing critical analysis of tests, which, as also pointed out by Hanson (1993), need to be understood as powerful social institutions:

The role of tests as disciplinary tools goes beyond the individual test taker, and in a number of domains tests can affect whole societies. Tests can affect and manipulate educational or political systems, control curricula and redefine the knowledge of communities. At the school level, tests are used as disciplinary tools when principals use school-wide exams to drive teachers to teach or when teachers use tests and quizzes to motivate students to learn and to impose discipline. Tests can also be introduced to upgrade the status and prestige of specific topics or subjects. On political and national levels, tests are used as a means of screening populations, excluding groups from participation, ranking institutions, limiting funding, defining knowledge and gate-keeping to prevent the entry of unwanted groups. (Shohamy 2001, 18)

In the cases studied here, particular with respect to the conjunction of language and border regimes, the gate-keeping function is particularly evident when the test-takers' futures (their lives with their partners in Europe) hinge on those results (see also Gutekunst 2018). Scholars in the field of critical language assessment, such as McNamara, have demonstrated how the disciplinary use of tests has come to be applied by political institutions, arguing that they have become 'an arm of immigration policy' (McNamara 1997 cited in Shohamy 2001, 19).

In her book, Shohamy (2001) argues that the belief in the adequacy and legitimacy of tests in measuring and certifying knowledge is widely unquestioned, as is its legitimacy in determining who can and who cannot access whatever field or position is fenced off by the testing regime. Tests, she argues, derive their power from specific features, which enable them to be used in powerful ways with detrimental effects. In short, she discusses the following features:

Tests are administered by powerful institutions, which means that the interaction between tester and the test taker is highly asymmetrical, with the tester holding the decision-making power and determining the tested knowledge. (Shohamy 2001, 20)

Further, tests use the languages of science and numbers, with both, but especially the latter, considered as symbols of objectivity and rationalism, providing *'those who are affected by them with an illusion of truth, trust, legitimacy and status'* (Shohamy 2001, 21f). The power of such a scientific language lies in its widely recognized authority to produce legitimate knowledge:

The language of science in Western societies grants authority, status and power. Testing is perceived as a scientific discipline because it is experimental, statistical and uses numbers. It therefore enjoys the prestige granted to science and is viewed as objective, fair, true and trustworthy. . . . [T]here is an unquestioned belief on the part of managers, policy makers and the public at large that the evaluator is an expert who provides scientifically derived knowledge. (Shohamy 2001, 21)

Another particular feature of tests' power is their use of written forms of communication. This is important because it makes it possible to document tests and objectify test-takers accordingly. Shohamy notes this point with reference to Foucault, stressing that the documentation of written examinations combined with quantifiable marks are necessary prerequisites for both the objectification of individuals and the formation, description, and consequent objectification of groups. In the chapter on examination in *Discipline and Punish* (1994), Foucault describes this objectification of test-takers as part of a historical turn from a 'traditional' power to a 'disciplinary power'. Whereas traditionally, the execution of power functioned through making visible and displaying the powerful and invisibilizing the governed, disciplinary power governs 'by making itself invisible, while forcing visibility upon those subjected by it' (Foucault 1994, 241, translation by SJ):

In discipline it is the subjected that need to be seen, that stand in the spotlight, so that the access of power remains secured. . . . And the examination is the technique, through which power . . . grasps them in a mechanism of objectivation. In the space dominated by it, the disciplinary force manifests its power through the careful adjustment and distribution of objects. The examination is the ceremony of this objectivation. (Foucault 1994: 241f, translation by SJ)

This grasp on and objectivation of individuals and groups through testing is of particular importance for my analysis, as I hope to show with regard to the processes of subjectivation effectuated through the border-regime apparatus. The fact that tests rely on documentation is indicative of the same objectifying feature of the written form, which implies that *'what happens in a test is recorded, remains on record, and will provide those who are interested in the information with evidence for possible sanctions against the test takers'* (Shohamy 2001, 23). For 'pre-departure language testing', this feature is critical, as it enables cooperation between language testing and the official bordering institutions of the nation-state, especially embassies and consulates but also transnationally between consulates and the relevant administrative agencies within the European destination countries.

Finally, Shohamy points out that tests use 'objective' formats, such as multiple choice and true/false questions, implying that there is one correct, true answer. That 'truth' appears as absolute and is determined in advance by the tester, *'who writes the test, while the test taker needs to find out what the truth is'* (Shohamy 2001, 24). I argue that even for tests that use other genres, such as the pre-departure language tests that I will describe, these conclusions are viable, as the fact remains that what is to be considered 'correct' and what is considered 'wrong' is entirely based on the judgement of the testing side.

When it comes to tests assessing language skills in particular, several fundamental questions arise. Some I have already addressed in the discussion of the literature presented above. They include the general constructedness of language as a 'bounded' system, clearly defined by some linguists and other language professionals; the more technical (but also ethical) problems of defining proficiency levels and operationalizing them within a specific test construct; as well as the discriminatory effects of the dominant monolingual norm in a world, in which this norm has come to be the exception. It is the contrast between the last two points that Shohamy may have had in mind when asking what the definition of language is,

which underlies the test constructs produced by language testers and adjusted by them through regular conferences:

I go to these conferences. We never ever talk about what language is. Never! It's all about techniques: It's about how to do it in the most efficient way. How to do it with a computer versus non-computer. How to do in a shorter time cycle, so the testing companies can make more money. . . . But nobody ever talks about: What is language? (Shohamy, plenary talk at the Conference on Critical Language Testing and English Lingua Franca 2014)

The question of what language actually is in my particular context of study is a leading one throughout this thesis, and especially in the second part. And it is also of particular importance because the language notion is obscured by the language professionals designing tests and the hegemonic discourses and statements of officials of the nation-states about the benefits of 'linguistic integration'. Moreover, it seems to me that this obscurity is further perpetuated to a considerable extent thorough research on migration and border studies. With this, I come to the third and last major factor contributing to the lack of research attention that the intersection of language and borders has received, and which, in my view, is warranted.

6.4 Some transdisciplinary spotlights on the obscurity of language at the border

In the above heading, I have used quote marks when mentioning 'language', as I have throughout the chapters outlining the linguistic component of my theoretical framework, to indicate the need for a certain alertness when dealing with this term. As laid out above, the blurriness of the 'integration' notion and its supposed relation to certain (or rather uncertain) proficiency levels in the hegemonic national language has been thoroughly discussed within the literature, which warns against uncritical scientific reproduction of the notion and points to its normalizing effects. Gutekunst has done something similar with regard to the (legal) terms, 'family reunification', 'spousal unification', and 'marriage migration'. Specifically, she has addressed this reproduction dilemma by resorting to the alternative notion of 'migration through marriage' (2018). However, the notion of 'language', which is just as crucial an element in shaping this type of border regime as the other two concepts, has been left surprisingly unchallenged and free of scientific scrutiny. As previously noted, this is the case with regard to approaches to the topic within the social sciences, such as Gutekunst's ethnographic border study. In her discussion of language as an instrument of border regime, she emphasizes the hardship and discriminatory selective function arising from the test. Citing the linguist Salgado (2014), she critically addresses how in language courses participants are 'normatively adjusted' (*'normative Zurichtung'* in German) in such a way that they assume and reproduce certain images and norms of the hegemonic discourse (Gutekunst 2018, 163–64). These contributions to the politicized and culturalizing (and as she shows also highly gendered) functions of the language test and course are key. However, Gutekunst's more general (as opposed to language-oriented) approach to the different elements of the border regime does not tackle the question of what language itself actually means in this context, how it is constructed, and what its particular functions are with respect to border regimes. The notion of language that

she uses, or so it appears to me, is more or less the same as that applied by state institutions and in the official discourse when she speaks of the *Sprachnachweis* (language certificate), *Deutschkenntnissen* (knowledge of German), *Deutschtest auf A1-Niveau* (German test at A1-level) or *Deutsch*, without engaging in any further terminological discussion. Having said this, I want to emphasize strongly that this is just one example of the reproduction of this technical and everyday terminology regarding language within the field of border and migration studies. However, as far as I understand, this reproduction is rather symptomatic of the way migration studies generally deals with the topic of language. The adoption of opaque terminology, however disciplinarily rooted, from policy makers and hegemonic discourse into research terminology carries the risk of overlooking important structural traits of the discourse to be studied. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach that includes the sociolinguistic literature on language policy and ideology is required.

Another point needs to be raised regarding this opaqueness or under-determination of the language notion with regard to the topic at hand. The blurriness of the 'language' element of the border apparatus and of the 'integration' discourse in general is not incidental. Instead, it is part of the power of this particular discursive formation at play, determining what is emphasized, what needs to be explained and legitimized (and by whom) as opposed to what is systematically obscured and can be 'taken for granted' as common sense. Sociolinguist Mi-Cha Flubacher (2014) makes this point with regard to the 'integration' notion. This 'absence' is part of the particular pattern of discourses legitimizing 'integration' policies, and I too witnessed such a systematic obscuring, performed in a very similar way, with regard to the notion of 'language' in the context of my own study. I hope that the multidisciplinary theoretical framework, introduced above, will allow for the discursive productivity of this blind spot to be made visible. Furthermore, I hope that it will further understanding of the particular interrelation of such uses of 'language' and 'bordering' as well as its powerful effects on the people governed through this regime.

For in the way I encountered them within this particular form of migration regime, 'language' and 'border' do not appear as two separate phenomena. Rather, they appear to be interrelated in such a manner that the policy regime and the subjectivities produced by this interrelation becomes inherently mixed in nature, drawing from and resulting in a form of power, which is characterized by this particular mixed quality, as I will try to show throughout my analysis.

And so, finally, departing from the central aspect of subjectivity formation, the particularities of the respective bordering processes at play become clearer by applying a language perspective. But, in addition, the meanings and functions of 'language' that are also co-produced in these processes are grasped more concisely by applying a border perspective. In my analysis, this border perspective is opened up by the means of critical discourse analysis, based on an in-depth narrative-interpretative approach. This approach, which adds one last important disciplinary 'torch' to shed light on the intersection of language and border, derives some important lessons from ethnography, for instance, 'thick description' (Geertz 2015), but, most importantly, from Dell Hymes' notion of 'voice' (Hymes 1996), which he defines as entailing two types of freedom:

One is a kind of negative freedom, freedom from denial of opportunity due to something linguistic, whether in speaking or reading or writing. One is a kind of positive freedom, freedom for satisfaction in the use of language, for language to be a source of imaginative life and satisfying form. In my own mind I would unite the two kinds of freedom in the notion of *voice*: freedom to have one's voice heard, freedom to develop a voice worth hearing. (Hymes 1996, 64)

What I am interested in here is the critical potential of this definition of the relation between language and voice, focusing on the conditions of freedom—the opposite of force—which is how the individuals included in this study described their relation to the hegemonic language that they have to learn in order to 'integrate themselves'. The notion of language, I argue, has been emptied or disconnected from that of voice within hegemonic discourses on 'language as the key to integration'.

Hymes views language as deeply and inextricably situated within social life, pushing the conception of language further than is customarily done in linguistics. Blommaert, who builds on Hymes' work, explains his critical conception as follows:

Hymes differentiates between a linguistic notion of language and an ethnographic notion of speech. Language, Hymes argues, is what linguists have made of it, a concept with little significance for the people who actually use language. Speech is language-in-society, i.e. an *active* (sic) notion and one that deeply situates language in a web of relations of power, a dynamics of availability and accessibility, a situatedness of single acts vis-à-vis larger social and historical patterns such as genres and traditions. Speech is language in which people have made investments—social, cultural, political, individual-emotional ones. It is also language brought under social control—consequently language marked by sometimes extreme cleavages and inequalities in repertoires and opportunities. (Blommaert 2009, 264)

Such an understanding of language as speech has significant consequences for the study of language, as Blommaert pointedly remarks:

For one thing, studying language means studying society, more precisely, it means that all kinds of different meanings, meaning effects, performativities, and language functions can and need to be addressed than those current (and accepted) in mainstream linguistics. . . . From an ethnographic perspective, the distinction between linguistic and nonlinguistic is an artificial one since every act of language needs to be situated in wider patterns of human social behaviour, and intricate connections between various aspects of this complex need to be specified: the ethnographic principle of *situatedness*. (Blommaert 2009, 264)

This necessity to study language use in its situatedness within social practice, and thus power interrelations, has received growing recognition and been further developed within socio- and discourse linguistic approaches (as I will discuss in the following chapter). However, I find that its implications for the conceptualization of the speaker as *an agent with a voice* have not been comprehensively explored, with Blommaert being an evident exception.

In Hymes's analytical grasp of language, speech is manifested in narratives, poetologically moulded by speakers in a particular way and according to particular performative functions. And the speaker takes central stage in this approach to narrative analysis. It is, in my view, this focus on the agency of the speaker, as expressed in the notion of 'voice' that is still largely missing within linguistic conceptualizations of what language is. It would be well beyond the scope of this

study to attempt to show this through a comprehensive literature review. However, I hope to show how 'voice' remains a gap within the language ideologies expressed by policy makers and language professionals with regard to the 'pre-departure language requirement'. The pertinence of applying this notion of voice actually emerged deductively from the analysis, as I will show, for it demonstrates the paradoxical consequences of such a reductionist understanding of language as used within the 'mandatory integration' discourse. It reveals a void where the speaking subject should be, and whose central, active position at the core of their acts of linguistic expression is annihilated in such a 'language without voice'.

Even if the pathway that led me to the notion of 'voice' emerged empirically from an analysis of people's narratives, it is important to define the notion in terms of theory. Moreover, the vivid notion of 'voice', which has long become part of the standard repertoire within critical approaches to inequality and discourse across various fields, seems to meander through them in a somewhat ghostly fashion, often remaining conceptually blurry or metaphorical in use. I will therefore approach 'voice' by drawing, once more, on Blommaert's succinct reading of Hymes:

Voice – this is what functional reconstruction is about. Ultimately, what ethnopoetics does is to show voice, to visualize the particular ways—often deviant from hegemonic norms—in which subjects produce meanings. . . . [V]oice is the capacity to make oneself understood in one's own terms, to produce meanings under conditions of empowerment. (Blommaert 2009, 271)

I remain somewhat reluctant to adopt Hymes' counterhegemonic politics of recognition in terms of 'a restoration of disempowered people' (Blommaert 2009, 271) by reconstructing the functions of their narratives to make their voices heard. Nevertheless, I find the concept of voice to be indispensable for understanding what language means and does to the people using it in the context at hand, respectively what it does to them, when language is used against them in this particular way by the border regime.

This aspect of voice has been taken up by Elana Shohamy (see the initial citation to this section [6.3.4]), albeit in a more alluding way rather than as an

explicit, fully developed concept in her work on critical language testing. Referring to Hymes and Blommaert, I will attempt to sketch out this interrelation between language and voice in the context of language policy and ideology.

In making the case for a multi- or transdisciplinary approach for analysing the intersection of language and border, I argue that an understanding of the particularities of this type of border regime requires one to examine the core aspects that constitute this specific apparatus and the entailed logic, processes and materialities/qualities. Thus, an attempt to grasp the particular ways in which it is shaped by the 'pre-integrative language-requirement' by adding a linguistic perspective is essential, as it forms the key characteristic of that specific apparatus (differentiating it from regimes based on other (additional) instruments, such as age requirements). What, precisely, I mean by linguistic perspective is briefly discussed in the final chapter of my conceptual framework.

6.5 Approaching the ‘pre-integrative language requirement’ through a *critical sociolinguistic discourse analysis*

As previously pointed out, this analysis aims to bring into dialogue a social sciences approach and a linguistic approach on the subject of bordering practice as a language practice, by applying a discourse analytical perspective. The theoretical anchors of this work, which lie in a critical, historical, constructivist, and performativist perspective on discourse and government through subjectivation that draws on the work of Foucault and Butler, have already been laid out. However, adopting a linguistic approach as a major lens framing the analysis, here I need to lay out what this linguistic take on discourse analysis comprises—and what it does not.

First of all, I need to point out that the approach taken in this discourse analysis is not informed by a notion of discourse that treats language and language practice as qualities to be essentially differentiated from other ‘carriers’ of meaning and other forms of symbolic practices. Such would be the case in a structuralist/formalist as well as in—however differently—a functionalist approach to the study of discourse, as I will sketch out briefly. Nor does it selectively focus on only those meaningful practices as ‘discourse’ that are explicitly, or in the narrower sense of the word, tied to language or text, as do studies in the structuralist/formalist tradition (see for instance Harris 1951). Such structuralist/formalist work understands ‘discourse’ as the superordinate unit of a sentence, attempting to determine systematic relations between subordinate elements of that discourse or (predominantly written) text (see Flubacher 2014). Approaches that treat language as a closed system (an understanding of language criticized for instance by Heller and Duchêne 2008 and Shohamy 2006) are focused on that system as an analytically isolatable entity with an (assumed) internal logic. They are not concerned with the practice and functions of language within the particular contexts in which it is used and in which meanings are produced, thus differing from discourse analyses

conducted within a functionalist tradition (Blommaert 2005a). This line of thought, taking into account all forms of language production, whether written or spoken texts, focuses on the function rather than on the form of language (Flubacher 2014). As Cameron points out in her introduction to the analysis of spoken discourse, those scholars who adopt this approach 'are interested in how the two are connected, suggesting that language has a certain kind of formal organisation because of the purpose it is designed to serve' (2001, 13). Here, Flubacher (2014, 57) points to Halliday's (1973) conception of systemic functional linguistics (SFL), whereby language is understood as a system shaped by its use. To understand how language functions as part of a socially organized system, it becomes important to include context and semantic ascriptions. Differing from such an understanding of discourse as 'language-in-use' (Blommaert 2005), functionalist approaches focus instead on discourse as 'language use conceived as social practice' (Fairclough 1995, 135). The crucial distinguishing point between SFL and this variety of functionalism is that in the latter approach, linguistic phenomena cannot be separated from social phenomena. Rather, they are thought of as being mutually conditional and constitutive:

Linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects. (Fairclough 1989, 23, cited by Flubacher 2014)

However close this perspective on language practice and social practice as mutually constitutive comes to the perspective on discourse used in this study, it remains a broader wider approach to which I contribute; one that allows for the inclusion of the entire range of phenomena/practices that constitute the border apparatus and not just the discursive aspects in the narrower sense of being 'language-related'. Even if language is considered as one major component of discourse, it is far from being confined to it. Thus, no part of social life is taken as a given in this perspective. Moreover, discourses are seen as being constitutive of reality. In my analysis, I draw on this notion of discourse, which is rooted in

Foucauldian thinking, as an alternative to both the formalist and functionalist grasp of discourse as language-immanent or language-(use-)related. Advocates of such an approach within the field of linguistics include, for instance, Duchêne and Heller (2012), Flubacher (2014), and Wodak (2013) to name just a few scholars who are of particular relevance to my work. It is within such a notion of discourse that the (wider) field of discourse linguistics converges with discourse analysis across a broad range of fields within the social sciences.

Hence not only narrations but also *'objects and phenomena are all discursive and social constructions'* (translation by SJ), as Flubacher (2014, 61) resumes her examination of the discourse of integration in a case study of Switzerland. Her work has served as an important resource that has yielded insights in my own research, as she too addresses the interrelation of language policy as integration policy, but from a national rather than a transnational angle (Flubacher 2014, 61). What she leaves unmentioned in her enumeration of discursive constructions, probably because her analysis is based on legal documents, political debates, and interviews with policy makers, are subjects. Subjects too—or adopting a Foucauldian governmentality perspective—subjects in particular, are at the heart of powerful discursive constructions, which in this thematic context pertain to the discourse on 'integration through language'. In my study, which is predominantly based on narrative interviews with people experiencing particular border-regime apparatuses, their subjectivations as *to be integrated* 'cross-border spouses', 'visa applicants', 'marriage migrants', and 'third-country citizens' not only appear as part of the discursive effects of this apparatus of the border regime but also as the general aim of this form of government. In this sense, the study at hand represents an important addition to the work of Flubacher and others, widening not only the scope of transnational phenomena but also looking at the effects that the discourse on 'integration through language' has on those who are its targets. Approaching these narratives as discursive productions and performances, I am solidly rooted in a similar critical, that is, historically informed and power-oriented approach to

discourse analysis grounded in sociolinguistics, as Flubacher has succinctly observed:

Sociolinguistics offers to linguistics an alternative to the traditional streams of Structuralism (de Saussure 1916) and Generativism (Chomsky 1965), which depart from a separation between “*langue*” and “*parole*”, that is, between an abstract (ideal) language system and the (fluid but often “*faulty*”) language use. . . . (2014, S. 37f)

This emphasis that Flubacher places on sociolinguistics as an alternative approach is particularly important to me, because by adding a linguistic perspective to discourse analysis, my aim is not to confine the lens through which the meanings and functions of ‘language’ are studied by ‘disciplining’ them with an arsenal of linguistic instruments. This approach entails the risk of viewing language as ‘bounded’ and ‘fixed’ subject to the same criticism as its construction within the ‘national container’. But in addition, adopting a structuralist approach is not on the table here, as I am not looking at language as mere ‘data’ that allow me to decipher the functions of a code. Instead, I am looking at it as a (core) social institution with many (core) functions within social apparatuses. The linguistic concepts and works that I have presented above are intended to facilitate a qualified focus on this appearance of ‘language’ within European border regimes.

7 At the test

7.1 'Say the German words...'

For a while after realizing that the type of border regime that included the so-called pre-integrative language test should become the my main focus, I kept circling around the meaning inherent in the core element of this requirement: *language*; specifically, *learning to speak 'the' language*. What did it mean for the particular functioning of this bordering instrument—and first and foremost for the people who must engage with it—that it is *proof of language skills*, which they have to give? Even though I had originally been trained in linguistics, with a predominant interest in discourse and sociolinguistics, for most of the duration of my work on this PhD project, my readings on the topic of my thesis were almost exclusively within the fields of social anthropology, transnational/migration studies, and (feminist) human geography. These were the fields that I now turned to and with which I wanted to familiarize myself thoroughly to justify writing a thesis straddling those fields. And the central fact that it was *language* at the core of the border regime here, with all of the effects and meanings particular to this subject, seemed to be somewhat out of the focus of this particular literature, with research perspectives on this topic being centred mainly around more immediately graspable solid effects. I am referring, for instance, to legal and selective effects, economic and time costs, and also inclusive/exclusive effects in terms of positionality as well as to affective feelings, such as frustration and anxiety, all of which are undoubtedly integral for developing an encompassing understanding of the topic. Nonetheless, the linguistic 'soft stuff' at the heart of this apparatus, and all of the less visible and less accessible procedures, effects, and affects surrounding it, remained blurry. This blurriness can also be attributed to the specific meta-nature of this topic, with language figuring both as the means and content of the discussion; the latter being a rather unusual conversation topic, requiring a relatively high level of linguistic awareness for the individual to incorporate it explicitly into their narrative. In other words, it usually

does not come up 'naturally' in conversation. Several questions arise. *How* does one practice and experience language (learning), and how does one relate to a newly—and compulsorily—acquired or appropriated language (the choice of words already insinuating a particular relation)? How does one *feel* when uttering the words and sentences in a language one is legally obliged to learn compared with uttering words and sentences in a language one chooses to learn freely or that one grew up with? During the process of learning this new language does one's relation to the places and people associated to it change and, if so, how? And, moreover, the fact that a European(-based) scholar is asking these highly personal and possibly sensitive questions to an individual who is in the middle of the application process for acquiring an entry visa into Europe, which can be ethically problematic and intrusive, has not even been considered. These issues are especially pertinent, given that many of these language- (as voice-) related questions are not only sensitive but are also likely to address issues that people themselves might be unaware of (Busch 2011).

But while all of these considerations are important for understanding the limitations associated with language as an interview topic, in this project, issues of restricted access arose even before all of this. It was only late into my stay in Kosova that I came across this topic (in Switzerland, language learning with regard to migration and integrations was not (yet) relevant as a pre-departure requirement). And it was even later while (re-)conceptualizing my research process and putting it in writing that I decided that this particular type of border regime would be my primary focus when examining cross-border marriage from third countries to Europe. Most of the above questions on language and language learning occurred to me only when I was in the middle of the analysis after having already collected all of the narrative data. So, the answers to the above questions provided by these data are restricted to what spontaneously emerged during interviews that addressed the pre-departure language requirement more generally. As the interview with Adil T. demonstrates, there was already a fair amount of evidence to be extracted from

these spontaneously produced narratives on the meanings of language and language learning in this context of state enforcement, particularly in relation to the resulting affects and subjectivities. But these data and methods necessarily remain (interdisciplinary) approximations to a fully linguistic approach to the topic. Here, I do not want to—and cannot—methodologically turn back to a linguistic analysis of data that have been gathered according to a social sciences research design, believing that there is value in the ambiguous and polyvalent. I do believe that the trait of undertaking analytical steps with a certain degree of insecurity or explorativeness may be found in interdisciplinary approaches, rendering visible phenomena that reside on the margins of a research field and that are therefore prone to be overlooked from the central standpoint of a discipline. For one, a close look on the linguistic dimension as one of the defining characteristics of this type of border regime results from taking such an approach in this study. Moreover, a detailed analysis of seemingly peripheral semantic and pragmatic elements of speech can provide cues often hidden beneath normalizing or naturalizing narratives in an analysis of broader power structures.

The notion of ‘force’ appearing in the discourse of learner-applicants and other individuals positioned on the other side of the hegemonic discourse across the European border was such a cue, enabling an attempt at de-constructing the logic of the hegemonic Eurocentric discourse. And so, I argue, is the taken-for-granted notion of language and language learning, which is largely left uncommented on by authorities and within the dominant Western discourse evolving between the terminological triangle of language, (marriage) migration, and integration and generating a particular everyday language ideology.

And here, I will once more take up a thin associative thread of thought, asking what exactly *speaking the language* means in the institutional contexts at hand. The answer that had spontaneously formed as a specific sentence; one that had hauntingly lingered in my thoughts during the time I was working on this part of the thesis was: ‘Say the German words’.

7.2 Language without voice

I find that my project [learning to write in Italian as a US-American author] is so arduous that it seems sadistic. I have to start again from the beginning, as if I had never written anything in my life. But, to be precise, I am not at the starting point: rather, I'm in another dimension, where I have no references, no armour. Where I've never felt so stupid.
. . . In spite of the humiliation I continue. . . . Because buried under all the mistakes, all the rough spots, is something precious. A new voice, crude but alive, to improve, to elaborate.
(Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words*, 2016: 63)

However associatively, for me the statement 'Say the German words . . .' seemed to express what *learning the language* represented in the context of the pre-departure language requirement; more so than could definitions such as that of the A1 proficiency level given by the CEFR. Such definitions remain necessarily devoid of human experience and interpretations of what it means to learn for, reach to, and, most importantly, be tested in that new language.

So the sentence 'Say the German words', that had popped up in my mind, functioned as an intuitive pointer when I was interrogating and interpreting the data. Later I learnt that registering such an impression, which according to Sara Ahmed "can be sharp without it being clear what the point is" (Ahmed 2017:22) in fact describes part of a feminist methodology: It takes such feelings or impressions seriously, for they can lead to making (aspects of) normalized inequalities visible that otherwise tend to remain obscured. Following such an impression, the one evoked by the aforementioned sentence, I could say, even before I had finished analysing Adil T.'s narrative, that it opened up the contrast between language as a physiological/mechanical production of sounds and signs on the one hand, and language as a means used by speaking and writing subjects to express themselves (to others), to act, on the other hand, appears to be central. The latter definition emphasizes some notion of *agency* or *voice* and its withdrawal. The concept of voice, developed through a linguistic anthropological approach by Dell Hymes and taken up by Blommaert, the discourse linguist, allows for the grasping of this agency-void in the hegemonic conceptualization of 'language'. Specifically, Blommaert notes that 'voice is the capacity to make oneself understood in one's

own terms, to produce meanings under conditions of empowerment (Blommaert 2009, 271).

This void or gap becomes apparent during a close reading of the interviewees' narratives, opening up between a reductionist notion of language applied by policy makers and language professionals in the 'pre-departure language testing' regime on the one hand, and the perspective of those governed by means of such a 'language-ized' policy instrument on the other hand. When language and the role of learner-applicant are forced on individuals, leaving them feeling devalued and deprived of their (sense of) agency or voice to varying degrees, what remains of the language they are supposed to learn is a *sham* communicative means, lacking both a genuine communicative intention and a subject-position. What language then becomes is essentially language without voice. Framed in Hymes' terms, this devaluation becomes visible as a result of a lack of linguistic recognition. For '*recognizing one's language, to Hymes, means recognizing one's specific ways of speaking, one's voice*' (Blommaert 2009, 272). In turn, when an individual's language is excluded from the outset of the process of their (attempt at) migrating to a new nation-state, it is apparent that the language policy agenda hidden behind the integration imperative has succeeded in making it clear from the very beginning that not only their language but also their voice is deemed irrelevant by that state.

I draw this conclusion, while keeping in mind—among other things—the silencing effect of the imposed pre-departure language requirement that I described earlier. The negative effects that Adil T. speaks of: *having a hard time*, feeling *insulted, diminished*, and powerless, and the socio-symbolic role of a school child that he has had to assume are not so distant from the language learning experience that the author, Jhumpa Lahiri, writes about in her essayistic memoir, *In Other Words* (2016). Lahiri describes learning to express herself through a new language as an adult as arduous, and observes that she felt defenceless, stupid, and humiliated. One can argue that both perspectives, although arising under very different circumstances, testify to what it means for mature individuals, who have

long established their speaking/writing selves within one language and have settled inside of it, to start again from scratch in another one. But the factor that makes all the difference, I think, is that what Jhumpa, speaking of 'her project' chose to do according to her free will is being imposed on Adil. His degradation, defencelessness, and humiliation, different from hers, are linked to the visa requirements he has to fulfil, in turn making every difficult experience with regard to foreign language learning into an effect of German border enforcement. How could he, under such circumstances of bordering force, approach the German language with the kind of intrinsic motivation and fascination that the American author has for Italian? Therefore, whatever the German language could grow to mean to him one day, in the bordering context in which he encounters it, threatening his future with his wife in Germany, it represents the very opposite of the promise of a new voice. Language in this context does not figure as what is commonly referred to as language within everyday language ideologies. It does not represent a means of communication or self-expression, being removed from any authentic context of interaction. Moreover, in this context, language is assigned the function of a border. Such a language-border, that is language as the exercise of a nation-state's force cannot but effectuate a certain estrangement in the relation between its forced new speaker and the language functionalized in this manner. These conditions make it difficult and unlikely for a new speaker to start appropriating that language and make it 'their own' in the fullest sense by trying to put themselves and the facts, thoughts, and feelings they might want to communicate to others into these new symbolic forms, as legally required.

Thus, language not only represents the border here; the border also represents a boundary between the foreign speaker and that foreign language. The latter is, as we know from Adil's story, to be read rather as 'their' language in the sense of 'the language of the others'. Positioning this perspective in relation to my previous reflections on the assumed integrative function of this linguistic means of a

border regime once more highlights the contradictory effects inherent in this policy instrument.

I argue that such a *language without voice* is bound to produce such paradoxes and contradictions, as it leaves a blank spot where the speaking subject should be; a subject whose voice is suppressed or simply rendered irrelevant by the forcedness of the required speech/-acts. Thus, the speaking subject becomes a mere enactor of those speech acts., As we have seen throughout the chapters of this thesis, these paradoxical and contradictory effects are rendered visible in many ways and forms. They are indeed characteristic of this linguistic border-regime instrument. Evidently, the resulting incompatibilities relate to the functionalization of language as a means of force. This can also be put the other way around; it results in the annihilation of the new speaker's/member's agency, freedom, choice or voice, depending on the particular context.

An example that reveals this process is the website of the Goethe Institute (<https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/wdl.html>), where under the heading 'Why learn German?', ten reasons for choosing German as a foreign language are listed. This brings us to the issue of language ideologies, that have an important part in understanding how '3rd country cross-border spouses' are categorized in terms of racialized and classed hierarchies. Language ideologies shape the particular meanings attributed to language according to particular discursive contexts and groups of speakers. Thus, what a language or language variety represents is not absolute or in any way written into the language; rather, it depends on the particular context, in which it is used and the speakers using it. In the following section, I will provide an example of the particular, non-default language (learning) ideology applied in dominant narratives relating to cross-border spouses. The example shows how the meanings assigned to language learning, when associated with learners constructed as cultural others, are othered as well.

7.3 The absent eleventh reason for learning German

While searching for definitions of language given by official agents of the border regime on the webpages of the Goethe Institute, I came across a promotional photographic slideshow with list of reasons for learning German. Evidently, the reason driving cross-border spouses from third countries to take German lessons cannot be found among the ten arguments aimed at recruiting new language students.

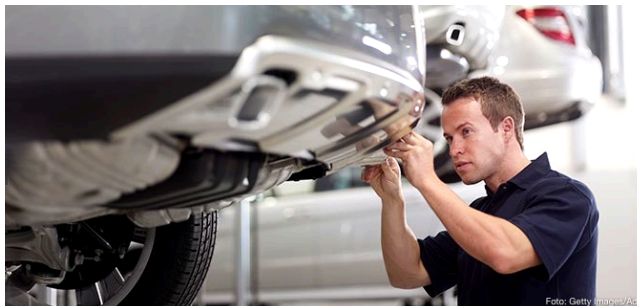
The promotion of the German language on this website would in itself represent an interesting and rich object of analysis with regard to the meanings ascribed to language, but such an analysis would extend well beyond the scope of this thesis. I will, however, point out that the language ideology constructed narratively and visually here, which presents a default case for learning German, enables an understanding of how language is represented (or not) with regard to the pre-departure language requirement. The default language ideology with respect to a (prestigious) language, such as German, is marked through and through by what has been described as the commodification of language within the linguistic literature (Duchêne and Heller 2012), with at least eight out of the ten listed reasons indicating, in one way or another, that *acquiring* German yields an economic benefit: (1) business, (2) a global career, (3) tourism and the hospitality industry, (4) science and research, (5) communication (technology), (6) cultural understanding, (7) travel, (8) enjoyment of literature, music, art and philosophy, (9) opportunities to study/work in Germany, and (10) opportunities to participate in exchange (programs). The same rationale is conveyed in the introductory text appearing above the ten slides:

Whatever plans you may have for the future, knowledge of German will increase your options. When you learn German you acquire a range of skills, which can improve the quality of both your work and private life.

This introduction is followed by the presentation of the ten images and descriptions listed above. To convey the type of advertising language and imagery used here, I will provide three examples.

Example 1: see the image to the right. The following text is provided below the image of the three business women.

Business: Knowing the language of your German business partners improves your relations and therefore your chances for effective communication and success.



The global career: Knowledge of German increases your job opportunities with German and foreign companies in your own country and abroad. Proficiency in German helps you to function productively for an employer with global business connections.



Example 2: see the image to the left. The text below the website states:

A global career: Knowledge of German increases your job opportunities with German and foreign companies in your own country and abroad. Proficiency in German helps you to function productively for an employer with global business connections.

Example 3: see the image to the right.

The following text appears below it:

Tourism and hospitality industry: Tourists from German-speaking countries travel far and wide, and are the world's biggest spenders when vacationing. They appreciate being looked after by German-speaking staff and tour guides.



Tourism and hospitality industry: Tourists from German-speaking countries travel wide and far, and are the world's biggest spenders when on holiday. They appreciate to be looked after by German-speaking staff and tour guides.



Options, business partners, improve, success, global career, increase opportunities, proficiency, function productively, global business connections, world's biggest spenders . . . The above semantics, oriented towards profit and success and conveyed in the language and images of these promotional slides portray a world of (almost exclusively white) women and men who are economically and professionally well positioned. Such individuals are portrayed as having free access to a global financial and job market, or at least they are ambitious and rising towards such

positions, with proficiency in the German language holding the promise of attaining them. However, the situation in which third-country spouses facing the pre-departure language test find themselves, regardless of variations in their backgrounds, which is defined by borders and force instead of neoliberal freedoms, does not figure in this portrayal. The same goes for the situation of those who are generally considered 'migrants' by Western states. Even though learning the official language of their destination country is also linked to a logic of market access, with employability and housing as the core arguments (Extra et al. 2009; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009), a different language ideology applies to such individuals, which is reflected in a different narrative, namely that of language and integration (Flubacher 2014). In this narrative, the people to be integrated do not figure as free (to choose), mobile, and economically independent individuals with money and qualifications, who are worth being courted with advertisements. Instead, they figure as a potential threat to and liability for Western welfare states. The linguistic integration of these *needy newcomers*, according to the Western 'language as key to integration' discourse (Mateos 2009; Plutzar 2010) is not presented as a choice, whereby they can make themselves more competitive in these national markets; rather, it connotes force, selection, and, I argue, cultural-symbolic assimilation. The latter, that is, the concern about the assumed 'cultural otherness' of foreigners participating in globalized European markets only surfaces with regard to those deemed/assumed to be weak in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds; a generalizing categorization made with respect to the so-called third countries according to their nationality. What is apparent here in terms of the differing language ideologies applied is the continuation of the same double standard that can be found in the terminological division of people moving across national borders into 'migrants, refugees etc.' and 'highly mobile individuals, expats etc.' (Berry 2009; Cranston 2017; Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014). Whereas the latter are associated semantically with global connectedness, emphasizing spatial and financial delimitation, the former are discursively associated with the nation, highlighting the

meaning of national identity, cohesion, and the need to defend national borders. The differing logics divide non-native speakers of, in this case, the German language, into two groups. The first group of individuals are seen as an asset to the nation (and especially to its economy) and therefore do not have to legitimize their desire to move to places that are geographically or socio-economically better off. The second group comprises those who are seen as a threat and therefore have to prove that they deserve to be allowed to undertake such a movement by documenting their efforts to linguistically/symbolically become like the nation.

The example of the Goethe Institute's webpage marketing the benefits of speaking German in a world of globalized markets; a world in which Germany is a powerful player, illustrates this separation into another category of language ideology through the very fact of the absence of those who are not free to choose. They do not match the neoliberal tone of this series of persuasive texts and images. And what form could the text of an advertisement relating to the situation of these *l-/earner-applicants* possibly take but that of satire? This absent eleventh reason to learn German would, for instance, read something like this:

L/earn to live with your spouse in Germany: *Cash in your basic human right to family unification by learning German, while profiting from the opportunity to start your Sisyphus journey towards integration. Take this chance to settle in your future role of deficient migrant, before even having arrived in Germany!*

But satire aside, the fact remains that the contrast that is opening up here does indeed convey something comical or cynical because of the simple fact that for this particular—and significant—group of clients of subsidiaries of the Goethe Institute in 'third countries', there is no choice available. Thus, they do not need to be persuaded by means of advertisements; if anything, as the selective effect of the pre-departure language requirement suggests, they need to be warded off.

The ultimate driving power behind their learning efforts, no matter how much interest or self-motivation they might have to become fluent in German, does not come from a place of freedom but rather from a place of force. This 'hard' legal fact

is ever-present, and it cannot but trump over any 'soft' factors of personal affinity and motivation. In other words, when a person has to learn German, it does not matter why they want to learn German. The contrast opening up here points in the same direction as the above-cited description given by Jhumpa Lahiri about her motivation for enduring the arduous, frustrating, and humiliating process of learning to write in a new language when compared to the situation of pre-departure language learners. In the case of the latter, the absence of choice annihilates or neutralizes the presence of a *voice*.

7.4 Grammatical and other subjects: Pre-producing silenced newcomers through externalized language-testing regimes

The case of Yüksel demonstrated how learner-applicants are equalized in the class-collective with respect to the stereotypical gendered and culturalizing external ascriptions such as ‘the Turkish import bride’. Here I would like to bring together that observation with the above-described annihilation/neutralization of voice in a discussion of the subject. The subjectivities of learner-applicants that are produced through the language-related aspects of the visa procedure are not only produced within and by the particular socio-spatial and socio-symbolic structure of the collective within the classroom or examination room but also by means of the particular socio- or psycholinguistic functions at work. The subjectivities produced in this way are those of learner-applicants, who are paradoxically silenced through language. The subject-position offered to this type of foreign language-user in the context of border control hardly allows for more than that of a grammatical subject, when, for instance, candidates practice responding to the examiner’s question about their favourite foods: *‘My favourite breakfast is tea with bread rolls and marmalade’*.

This mechanistic way of understanding language use without a primary vital communicative function at its heart that connects the speaker to the listener by way of speech is what I sought to express with my response to the question about the meaning of language learning in this context. That response was that learning to speak German here is reduced to learning how to ‘say the German words’.

The definite article does not just refer to the necessity for grammatical correctness; it refers mainly to the need for test candidates to comply with very particular, standardized norms and patterns of conversation in the artificial context of instructed language learning and testing. It points to what Salgado (2014) has called ‘normative adjustment’, which I will demonstrate in the following chapter to provide a more concrete impression of what the performance of German/English A1 level language skills in the course of pre-departure language testing looks like. This

demonstration will draw on preparatory videos available online, which are intended to provide prospective test candidates with insights into the concrete proceedings of the language examination.

I chose to base this cursory analysis of the specific type of language and contents practiced in pre-integrative language tests on practice materials. More precisely, I focused on two preparatory videos: one for the German test, *Start Deutsch A1*, and the other for the English equivalent, *IELTS Life Skills*. The triangulation of my data with this additional online material suggests itself, as I have not collected any data within language classrooms, let alone during the examinations of cross-border spouses' pre-departure language skills.

The videos provide insights into the test proceedings, depicting the setting of the oral language examination and leading applicants through the different stages of the test. These model videos, filmed with people who actually took the respective tests, and who therefore at about the level expected from the designated viewers, give learners a very detailed and concrete idea of what awaits them, thus also preparing them psychologically for the test and not just with respect to the type of test content, which, for instance, includes practice test sheets as PDF documents or audio exercises. Hence, these videos are frequently viewed and highly appreciated by individuals preparing for the test, as indicated by the number of counted clicks and the commentary sections of the videos.

I came across the first video on the website of the Goethe Institute, which offers prospective test candidates different kinds of free as well as paid training materials and model exercises. The training video on the oral part of the level A1 test is produced and provided by the official testing institution itself along with respective videos for the subsequent five levels. However, the video about the IELTS test is produced not by the British Council but by a private English teacher based in Sylhet, Bangladesh, offering his teaching services online on his YouTube channel, with different preparatory materials and model test videos for all levels.

As previously mentioned, test candidates generally find these videos to be very useful preparation tools. Evidently, this is because of the high level of standardization of the test format. This standardization, in turn, is indispensable for the test to function as a means of border control, objectifying language skills and thus making them measurable and comparable. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) serves as the basis for designing the specific test forms created by European nation-states and their private professional partner institutions. Notwithstanding the differences in their particular modes of implementation, the European nation-states that have established pre-departure language requirements, whether or not they require testing, refer to this framework, deriving legitimacy from it, and from one another's testing practices, as has been recently shown in the literature on family reunification (Bonjour 2014). This legitimacy is derived from the instituting authority and power entailed in membership of the EU and its supranational institutions. But it also emanates from the underlying language-testing ideology, namely that all varieties of everyday language use by all kinds of people in all possible contexts can be structured into levels, more precisely, six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. This assumption has been accepted and applied since the establishment of the CEFR, adding greatly to its status as self-evidence or a discursive certainty (Schmidt-Brücken 2018).

Standardization, classification, and grading objectifies language skills by making them into a measurable, testable, saleable, and buyable good. This commodification of language has been demonstrated by discourse linguists as being a major trait of language use in the era of late capitalism, with notions of profitability continually replacing discursive relationalities of language as a source of pride (Duchêne and Heller 2012). In the context of migration regimes, this commodification leads to the processing and manipulation of language use in a manner that enables nation-states to employ it as a means of regulating access to the nation's territory and civil rights.

This procedure of assessing potential membership of a European nation-state, legitimized through language assessment, produces *legitimate and illegitimate as well as legal and illegal migrants/citizens*. Along with Shohamy (2001, 2006, 2009), I argue that the power that such a test, examining a very particular type of knowledge of language, has over people's lives is immense. Those who fail the test, fail to establish or strengthen their membership in the respective European nation-state. This fact lies somewhat hidden behind the widespread belief in test instruments, their validity and fairness, but even more so behind the logic of the test itself, assigning responsibility for passing/failing to the tested individual. But the test not only legitimizes the selection of 'members'; it also produces legitimate 'members'. The differing nuances of meaning that I want to make visible here relate to a distinction between the legal effect and its performative effectuation. The legal subjectivities brought about by the certification of the required language level are necessarily actively co-produced by the tested, who have very high stakes in the matter. To understand the subjectivities of the tested applicants thus produced requires an examination of how they are shaped concretely by the test procedures. *Which role, coming with which particular kind of performance, do they assume during the test?* Here, as I will show in my discussion of the two model videos, the standardized test format is crucial, regulating the test procedure, the communicative protocol, and the different tasks to be fulfilled. I will start by looking more closely at the German language test video.

7.5 *Start Deutsch 1*: Embodying standard German/-ness

The test situation and proceedings that were revealed in the account given by Doruntina H. regarding the IELTS test in particular, and especially its written component, referred almost exclusively to the *form* of the examination and how she experienced it. What remains to be considered in this analysis are the linguistic forms and types of content examined and the way test candidates come to relate to these examined contents; the latter being of particular relevance for the performative production of the tested subjectivities. In the following discussion of the audio-visual preparation material provided by the Goethe Institute (the model video titled ‘Goethe Zertifikat A1 Start Deutsch 1 Mündlich’, dated 26 September 2013), I will elaborate on some of the relevant aspects of this production of subjectivities, showing that the roles assumed by test candidates are part of a standardized (re-)enactment of German language use and, I argue, what could be considered standard or stereotypical ‘Germanness’ as well (Hausendorf 2002).

The *Start Deutsch 1* test is structured as three parts that follow a brief introduction by the examiner, laying out the test procedure to the candidates. In part one, the test candidates have to introduce themselves and answer a series of questions posed by the examiner, after the latter has presented—in the case of the model video—*herself* and the second assessor. In parts two and three, test candidates are requested to take turns asking and answering questions among themselves focusing on two themes provided by the examiner, after this dialogical role-play has been briefly demonstrated by the examiner and assessor using exaggeratedly clear pronunciation. In all three parts, cards with keywords are handed out to the test candidates, which serve both as indicators of the topic and as cue-givers for formulating answers.

The detail of the exaggerated pronunciation used by the examiner to facilitate understanding is only one element of many that points to the performance character of language use in the context of the test. This can be considered a common characteristic of tests of any kind (Shohamy 2001) but especially of oral

proficiency tests, which explicitly emphasize this performative act as a previously practiced enactment or staging of knowledge in a very literal sense. In the model video, the enacted character of the A1 German language test is evidently reinforced by the fact that it constitutes a staging for the purposes of serving as a model test using all of the entailed audio-visual means. This can be seen, for instance, in the seating.



The all-female 'cast' in the test video is seated at two tables positioned in an L-shape, with the examiner and the assessor sitting at one table (the shorter side of the L), paper and pens spread out in front of them. The first of the four test candidates—all about twenty to forty years younger than the testers from Goethe Institute—is seated at the side edge of the testers' table, whereas the other three candidates share the second table. The four women on the longer side of the 'L' are positioned close to one another, their elbows touching, as they form a line of examinees. Thus they establish not only the spatial order of the test but also its procedural order, as the examiner picks the candidates one after the other, according to their place in that line.

The testers and the tested are positioned in a way that allows the camera frame to catch all of them, with the tested individuals shown from a slightly more frontal

angle than the testers. This is the framing and perspective that viewers see throughout most of the film. Of course, this particular arrangement of the bodies of examiners and examinees in the room where the test is held is not in any way transferable to the actual contexts, in which these pre-departure tests are conducted. First of all, there is no camera in these actual situations, which would certainly change the spatial arrangement. However, the main elements that constitute the staging of the test, namely the spatial arrangements of bodies and objects remain. The fact of being seated in the test room itself also remains. The particular ways of being positioned in that room vary according to the specific requirements of the test, with the two parties present—the two experts on the one side and (at least two) candidates on the other side—likely to be seated in some way in which their spatial positions are opposite to each other, using tables and chairs. Also these spatial positions also further defined as performative social roles, when different objects such as cards, pens and paper are distributed in a particular way (for instance experts have pen and paper to take notes, while examinees don't). However, this arrangement, set up specifically for the purpose of taking the test, is contingent on widely differing national, local, and other contexts, adding to the framing of all language used in this context as part of the test performance.

Furthermore, although general conclusions cannot be drawn from this video regarding actual test settings for the pre-departure language test or for any other A1 level test conducted by Goethe Institute in Germany or abroad, the particular scenery chosen for the video are too prominent—and revealing—to be ignored here. The testers and the tested are seated in front of wallpaper showing a map of the globe (with Europe at its centre) in grey-blue shades, with the bright green Goethe Institute logo—a stylization of the letters G and I—spread all over it. More precisely, each continent is marked by a huge logo, one of which takes up about the same space as the Arabian Peninsula in the map. Curved white lines cross this image depicting the global presence of the Goethe Institute, evoking an impression of dynamism and global connectedness. A lot more could be said about this symbolic

scenery, which I will briefly return to in the concluding chapter. Here, however, I will discuss only the parts that relate to the enactment of the language test, producing meanings offered to the viewer in collaboration with the other elements of the staging.

I find the main message conveyed by this wallpaper to be one of semantics of the global presence, professionalism, and success of the Goethe Institute and, therefore, of the German language that it promotes. It evokes some notion of a global empire, with which the German language is associated, symbolically depicting the Goethe Institute as a global player. With this deliberately designed, printed, and displayed wallpaper, the institution seeks to display its successful establishment of a *global empire* of sorts. Perhaps a global German language or a global business empire. This symbolism, at least in my reading, *resonates* with some notion of imperialism. The modern, sleek design and the market logic through which transnational business is legitimized as well as the dominant understanding of language as a commodity converge, somehow obscuring the notion of imperialism and its resonances with colonial history. What remains visible is the neoliberal aesthetic and symbolic of globalization.

These meanings are also attributed to the two institutionally affiliated language experts seated at the table to the left (taking up roughly 1/3 of the frame), who wear formal black (and white) clothes and whose facial expressions convey that they are (self-)confident and well-meaning but also earnest and focused. The postures and movements of their bodies, namely their attentive and slightly stiff and upright sitting positions, their hands, equipped with pens, as they take occasional notes are imbued with meaning. So too is their release of eye contact with the candidates, as they direct their gaze to the papers in front of them, jotting down silent written responses to the spoken words uttered by the test candidates, while judging their correctness and adequacy. All of these visual elements co-construct the very particular communicative act of an oral language test; one that is fundamentally different from everyday language use in all of these elements and

one that contrasts sharply with the content discussed, as I will show after discussing these visual elements of the enactment.

The two older (German) women in the video assume the roles of professionals and examiners; roles they were assigned to perform by the Goethe Institute given their expertise. Therefore, in this film, they are the ones associated with the neat, professional logo covering the globe in the background—a logo of power connecting the German language, the experts, and the notes coming from their pens with that same neat, professional power. This, in turn, is also conveyed by the experts' fluent oral language use, and especially by their pronunciation. Their enunciation represents the German standard, serving as a model for the new learners, whose beginner-German and pronunciation is marked by their first languages, thus failing to meet this standard.

The four women on the right side, occupying two-thirds of the frame, play the role of test candidates associated loosely with the 'global-diversity' semantics displayed behind them; an association that the makers of the film with whom I unfortunately did not get the chance to talk might or might not have consciously chosen to strengthen by casting the candidates accordingly. However, the four women not only come from four different countries (Bosnia, Croatia, Kenya, and Mauritius), but, more importantly, they can be seen to represent different 'types' in terms of hair and skin colour, thereby fulfilling the promise of globalism and interconnectedness portrayed by the map, by alluding to racialized imaginaries of diversity.

By contrast, the two examiners are not only distinguished from the latter by their ages, but their looks and names also make them recognizable as (middle-class) 'German' in the sense that they are not marked in any way as being culturally or racially different from the prevailing imaginary of a German women. The two experts in the test setting depicted in the video are in the opposite role to that of the candidates; an opposition of roles that is evidently highly unequal and hierarchized. For the examiners, their role is routine; testing the language proficiency of new

German speakers is their job. By contrast, the position of the test candidates is one of uncertainty, which manifests in their body language (for instance, the first candidate to be tested nervously plays with a finger ring throughout her self-introduction; see the photograph to the right) and facial expressions. It also manifests in the direction



of their gazes, as they stare blankly into nowhere from time to time, in a state of concentration or anxiety, but also as a result of frequently losing eye contact with the examiner opposite them, who takes written account of each examinee's language production. Again, the mode of language interaction particular to the test context becomes visible in its simulated, enacted character.

Before going over the content of these speech acts, I would like to provide one last example of how this ritual enactment of (what is meant to be everyday



situations of) language use is performed para- and non-verbally. Clearly, the fact that the test communication is based on themes given by the examiner is constitutive of its staged character; but this theatricality very much emphasized by the cards used to anchor the produced speech, adding a game element to the interaction (see pictures to the left). In the picture, in which the examiner asks the second assessor a question during the second part of the test, they even play out their speech act with gestures,



during the second part of the test, they even play out their speech act with gestures,

as the second assessor mimics placing a glass of water in front of the examiner as part of her response to her colleague's request. This playing out and playful employment of gestures is taken up by some of the candidates, albeit mostly accompanied by laughter, blushing or (other) signs of unease, revealing ironic self-distancing (see picture below).



The use of these elements of charade makes the enactment character of the language in the test setting explicit, and its comic effect holds the potential to lighten the tense atmosphere of the test as well as create feelings of embarrassment. But the general effect of these explicit performative elements, irrespective of whether test candidates experience them positively or negatively, is the (additional) emphasizing of the fact that they are playing a role, marking the difference between 'normal' language use in vital, authentic communication contexts and this test context.

Here, I may need to clarify that in pointing out these main elements of the test enactment, I am not attempting to argue that it as an especially unfit or 'unnatural' kind of language test; if anything, my argument is that this language-testing regime should be abandoned altogether. The artificial or alienating effects that such a simulated test conversation has on language use is a given, regardless of whether or not it is made explicit through seating arrangements, requisites, such as cue-cards, and role-playing exercises. This is true especially with regard to the pre-departure language-testing regime (and other language-based migration regimes), where the test is not only a language test but also a determinant of residence status. With so

much being at stake for the people who have to take the test, the conversations held in the test situation, no matter how much space they try to provide for genuine questions and answers, can never have the status of a 'normal' conversation. In such a border/test-regime, the test candidate will always remain a visa applicant in the first place. I would argue that the inequality that is structurally inherent in these highly hierarchizing social roles can never be entirely levelled out, even with a better and more examinee-friendly test design. The enactment character of such a language test necessarily persists, given its structural anchoring in a national border-regime apparatus, which makes any speech act performed in this language-testing context into acts associated with the border regime. What is left for test candidates/visa applicants to do in such a situation is to try and master that enactment as best they can, learning by heart, as Yüksel K. calls it, the main elements of this ritual, as they cannot risk leaving anything up to chance. It is the goal of the remaining part of this chapter to demonstrate the very specific conversational protocol that accompanies this ritual/enactment., This protocol includes not only correct linguistic forms, given phrases, and types of answers but also particular (stereo)typical content, which those assigned the role of test candidate/visa applicant are expected to apply in expressing themselves (Salgado 2014).

Here it may be necessary to specify that the candidates seem to be the ones who feel that they are expected to reproduce particular contents. Clearly, such expectations are not made explicit anywhere; they are only suggested through stereotypical and normative content (Salgado 2014; Gutekunst 2018). They are not part of the official test requirements, but, as I will argue, they are implied in the content and topics being inquired about through a set of standard questions, which, in turn, suggests responding in the equivalent standard way.

The fixed conversational protocol consists of a particular courtly conversational style and a set of standard topics and questions, one of the most prominent being a formal self-introduction, which, again, is based on a particular

standard protocol relating to the expected content of such an introduction. In the case of the model test shown in the film, the obligatory or standard elements making up such a formal introduction are name, origin, place of residence, age, profession, languages, and hobbies, all of which, except age, which was brought up by the first test candidate, were introduced by the examiner, who provided an example, which was then adapted accordingly by the examinees.

To provide a concrete idea of this introduction protocol, below I present the first part of the transcript of the model test containing one part of the test conversation that took place between the examiner, Ursula Schmitz (US), the second assessor Evelyne Farkasch (EF), and the first test candidate Besima (B):

US: Guten Tag.

Good day.

B (together with the other test candidates): Guten Tag.

Good day.

US: Herzlich Willkommen zur Prüfung Deutsch Start 1. Das ist meine Kollegin Evelyne Farkasch.

Welcome to the examination German Start 1. This is my colleague, Evelyne Farkasch.

EF: Guten Tag.

Good day.

B: (together with the other candidates): Guten Tag.

Good day.

US: Diese Prüfung hat drei Teile. Wir beginnen mit Teil 1. Wir möchten uns kennenlernen. Erzählen Sie uns ein Bisschen . . . wer sind sie? Hier sind einige Wörter zur Hilfe (Legt einige Kärtchen vor die Testkandidatin). Zuerst stelle ich mich vor. Ich bin Ursula Schmitz. Ich komme aus Deutschland. Ich bin von Beruf Lehrerin und ich wohne jetzt in München. Ich spreche verschiedene Sprachen. Ich spreche . . . Meine Muttersprache ist Deutsch. Ich spreche auch noch Französisch und Spanisch. Meine Hobbies sind ins Theater gehen und lesen. Gut. Und jetzt Sie!

This examination has three parts. We begin with part 1. We would like to get to know each other. Tell us a little bit . . . who are you? Here are some words to help (Puts some cards in front of the first test candidate). First I introduce myself. I am Ursula Schmitz. I come from Germany. I am a teacher by profession and I live in Munich now. I speak several languages. I speak . . . My mother tongue is German. I also speak French and Spanish. My hobbies are going to the theatre and reading. Good. And now you!

B: Ich bin Besima, ich bin 43 Jahre alt. Ich komme aus Bosnien. Mein Beruf ist Schneiderin. Ich lebe jetzt in Deutschland. Ich spreche Serbokroatisch und Deutsch. Und meine Hobbies sind Joggen, Schwimmen, ins Kino gehen.

I am Besima, I am 43 years old. I come from Bosnia. My profession is dressmaker. I live in Germany now. I speak Serbo-Croatian and German. And my hobbies are jogging, swimming and going to the cinema.

US: Ja.

Yes.

B: Das ist (lacht) . . . Es gibt noch etwas, aber das ist wie Mal . . .

This is (laughs) . . . There is more, but this is like . . .

US: Und Ihr Familienname? Wie heißen Sie mit Familienname?

And your family name? What is your family name?

B: Familienname ist Kerschner.

Family name is Kerschner.

US: Mmm. Können Sie das buchstabieren bitte?

Mmm. Can you spell that please?

B: Kerschner. . . K wie Konrad, E wie Emil, R wie Richard, S wie Siegfried, C wie Cäsar, H wie Anna . . . Hanna, N wie . . . N wie Nordpol, E wie Emil, R wie Richard.

Kerschner... K as in Konrad, E as in Emil, R as in Richard, S as in Siegfried, C as in Cesar, H as in Anna . . . Hanna, N as in ... N as in North Pole, E as in Emil, R as in Richard.

US: Dankeschön.

Thank you.

B: (Leise) Bitteschön.

(Quietly) You are welcome.

US: Und haben Sie Telefon?

And do you have telephone?

B: Ja, ich hab Telefonnummer . . .

Yes, I have telephone number...

US: Wie ist Ihre Telefonnummer?

What is your telephone number?

B: Die Vorwahl für München ist 0 . . . Die Telefonnummer ist . . .

The dialling code for Munich is 0 . . . The telephone number is . . .

US: Dankeschön.

Thank you.

B: Bitteschön.

You are welcome.

US: (Sich zur nächsten Testkandidatin hinwendend:) Bittesehr!

(Turning towards the next test candidate:) Please!

L: Ähm . . . mein Name ist Lucia . . .

Ahm . . . my name is Lucia . . .

Lucia, like Besima before her and the two candidates who came after her, reproduces the examiner's example of a brief introduction, addressing predominantly her professional self. This introductory model largely leaves out

personal aspects, such as marital status or children. The topic of hobbies, being an established additional category in professional CVs too, is no exception here. In general, the text is characterized by a formal, polite tone, interspersed with many *utterances of please, thank you, and you are welcome*, indicating a courtliness that is to be read not only as part of the standardized, simulated conversational style of the test but also as an effect of its formal character and the far-reaching consequences of its outcome. This test setting provides highly hierarchized and unequal roles for the examiners and the examinees, significantly more so, of course, than in tests that lack such bordering implications. Even though the video probably and hopefully does not show a real test situation, this hierarchy, perceived as tension by the viewer of the video, makes the candidates' anxiety about the test palpable to varying degrees.

The formal, heavy, and stiff conversational style inherent in this standardized use of speech adds to what I have described above as the staged, enacted character of the test. At certain points, this style appears comical from an external perspective, notwithstanding the high stakes that the candidates have in this experience, or maybe also because of that. A cursory look at humour theory indicates that such a comical effect has been described as resulting from the fact that a human being, who is supposed to be alive and organic, suddenly appears estranged, mechanically re-enacting gestures, sentences, and so forth and thus becoming devoid of their vital human character (Koestler 1964). The comedy of this mechanical, constructed conversation is not lost on the viewers of this video, as the following commentaries demonstrate:

A.B.: Dankeschön bitteschön ja ja alles gut alles klar ☺;-D

Thank you, you are welcome, yes, yes, everything is good, everything is clear ☺

C.: "Guten Tag" - "Guten Tag" Hat was von Lorient :D

"Good day"- "Good day" Has something of Lorient :D (German caricaturist /comedian)

Here, I argue that these examples of the comic effect conveyed by the simulated character of the test conversation are indicators of what I described above

as *language without voice*. The reduction of the speaker from a subject to barely more than an executor of simulated speech acts, pre-defined in terms of form and content, is what induces the mechanistic and therefore comic effect.

And this impression is not only effectuated by the conversational style but also, as noted above, by the standardized content, bringing along the respective implications on the thus constructed subjectivities.

7.6 Mandatory hobbies and preferences: Performing integratedness

In the late eighties, when my mother started working in the nursing home, Aunt Bishe came to Switzerland to stay with us kids. I loved her dearly, for she was young, played Super Mario with us, turned up the radio, and laughed. Plus, she had curls! So, I annexed her immediately and made her write in my little friendship book. I translated the questions for her (like favourite food, colour, singer etc.), and she kept laughing at me for asking her to settle on just one exact thing for each one. But what made her really burst into laughter, embarrassing me, was the hobby question. "What does this mean, huobi"? "Well, what do you like to do when you don't have to do anything else?" She put on a mischievous smile and wrote down: SHLLAFEN (sleeping).

The fact that test-takers are expected to reproduce particular standardized content and adhere to certain cultural norms is nowhere as clear as it is during the self-introduction part of the test with regard to the topic of hobbies. With the late capitalist division of time into work time and free or leisure time, hobbies have achieved the status of highly prominent, productive identity markers within industrialized societies—and not just urban contexts—which cannot necessarily be claimed for the hobby in the same way in other parts of the world, including in many regions in 'third countries' affected by language-based family reunification policies. I do not know anything about the test candidates' social backgrounds apart from what they have divulged in their self-introductions, through their visual appearances, and the fact that they have migrated to Germany. Certainly, I do not have sufficient knowledge to make any judgements about the probability of their mentioned activities actually being 'their hobbies'. Nor do I have any way of knowing whether they would, in their everyday life contexts, refer to any activities they like as 'hobbies'. But what I do have is vast personal experience with the use—or rather uselessness—of the notion of a hobby in the context of the everyday lives of 'migrants', implying a normative adjustment process (Salgado 2014). But while this alone would not suffice to make my argument that test candidates are likely to take over and reproduce not only the conversational style and the categories used by the examiner but also to take up the notion of hobby, simulating the respective contents, this 'subjective' hypothesis steered my attention towards this aspect.

Consequently, I came to realize the light breach of protocol committed by one of the test candidates, which reinforces this hypothesis further.

It is the last candidate, who laughingly adds *sleeping* to her list of hobbies, followed by a laugh and a brief pause. She appears to be the most relaxed candidate, being relatively at ease with the test situation, although she is clearly not among the most proficient in German. She sits there, leaning back in her chair with her legs crossed and with what I would describe as a slightly ironic smile appearing on her face every now and then, using more hand gestures as well as a more lively pronunciation compared with her co-examinees. Her mention of sleep as her hobby could be seen as a playful attempt to subvert the self-evident, generalizing way of using the hobby notion, jokingly challenging the universal claim that it is applicable to anyone's life. The notion of hobby in all its particularity—and randomness—manifests as a form of cultural imposition in the standardized, normalizing way in which it is used here as a discursive certainty within the test protocol. Again, humour appears to function as an indicator of the enactment character of the test. However, this time, it is not just in the form of an involuntary comical effect observed by third parties; rather, it is deliberately and actively applied by the test candidate as a strategy and mode of speaking. Moreover, the community of viewers does not miss this little subversive joke of hers, thus supporting my argument. In fact, this is one of the most commented upon topics in the commentary section, next to stating the usefulness of the video for test preparation and expressing gratitude and debating who is the best candidate (*'the Kenyan woman!'*), and test-related anxiety. The above photograph presents a screen shot of a section of these commentaries, followed by a transcript of some of the comments. I chose only a few of the many reactions to the hobby scene. The English translations of selections of the chat are presented chronologically.

Comment:

Commentator 1: *My hobby is sleeping (a laughing emoji with tears)*

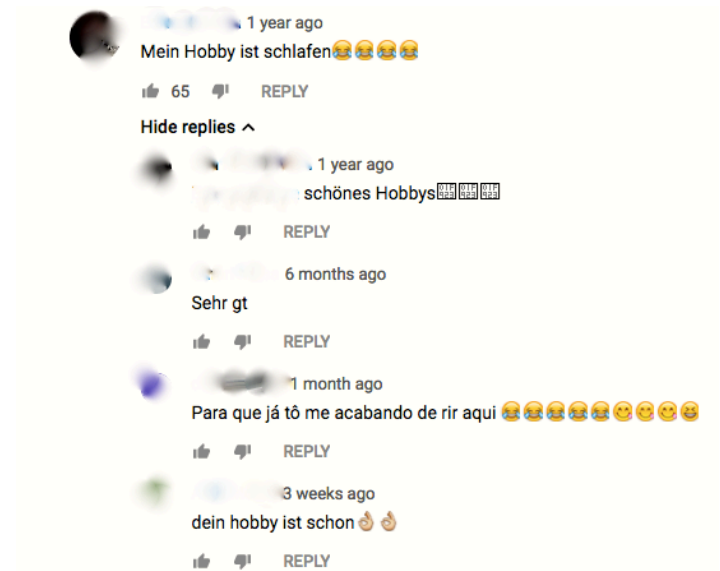
Replies to comment:

Commentator 2: *Nice hobby (incomprehensible emojis)*

Commentator 3: *Very good*

Commentator 4: *This made me laugh here (laughing emojis with tears and smiling)*

Commentator 5: *your hobby is nice (thumbs up emoji)*



Most of the comments on this statement are of this type, citing and commenting ironically on how funny it is, and expressing their laughing approval using a wide range of emojis and by posting likes. However, some of the commentators take a slightly different approach, simply stating, for instance, *Ich habe keine hobbies (I do not have any hobbies)* and adding unintelligible emojis. Opening up an entirely new reading that making an explicit reference to the German context of migration and work, another commentator states, or advises: *Nicht Schlafen in Deutschland wenn du wollen wohne hier (Do not sleep in Germany if you want to live here)*. However, a very small number of the commentators do not read the statement as a joke, thus rejecting it, for example, by correcting it: 'Sleeping is not a hobby. . .'

Notwithstanding these differing interpretations, the predominant reading of the fourth candidates' hobby statement is of it being funny, whether this is considered intentional or not. Certainly, in this context of a mostly shared tension and anxiety among the viewers/commentators, this comical deviation from the standard protocol of the test is a welcome loosening up that offers a way to release some stress. Part of this stress release can be seen as coming from the subversive effect of humour. The candidate/performer playfully and comically challenges not only the imposition of the hobby paradigm on to her life but also, one could argue, the power hierarchies at play within the relationship between examiners and

examinees as well as within the test and bordering situation as a whole. This subversive ‘tickling’ of these power structures shaping the entire migrant language examination procedure—for it is not an act endangering them—comes across to the viewers of the model video, who can relate to it, as they find themselves in a situation similar to that of the model test candidates.

This ‘soft’ form of imposition of habits assumed to be universal or cultural certainties and pre-given by the standardized conversation protocol of the language test in the context of migration or a border regime becomes particularly visible with regard to the comically accentuated hobby paradigm. But it is also present in other elements, though hard to detect; as reliable information about the model test candidates’ view on any of the conversation topics, apart from what they say during the test scenario, is not available.

For instance, the typical question about ‘favourite things’ represents such an element in my view, not only when it comes to the typical, anticipated types of answers but also with regard to the habit of pointing out favourites; a category which, just like the hobby notion, cannot claim universality. Again, as these individuals’ actual preferences are not known, the following deliberations necessarily remain restricted to the formation of a hypothesis, but one that I hope opens up a critical perspective on the nationalizing and normalizing effects of such forms of standardized language use in contexts strongly marked by power.

As an example, let us proceed a little further into the model examination; to the second part, in which candidates are asked to communicate with each other, formulating questions according to a particular topic and the cue cards given to them by the examiner. For the topic of ‘weekend’ and a cue card noting ‘breakfast’, candidate two, Lucia, asks candidate three, Juguna the following question:

L: Was ist deine Lieblingsessen for Frühstück? (Besima hilft: Am Wochenende . . .)

What is your favourite food for breakfast? (Besima helps, adding: on weekends . . .)

J: Mein Lieblingsfrühstück sind Tee . . . Tee und Brötchen (pause) mit (nickt) Marmalade.

My favourite breakfast is tea . . . tea and bread rolls (pause) with (nods) marmalade.

L: Ok, danke.

Ok, thank you.

US: Ja, denken sie nochmal dran: Unser Thema ist jetzt Wochenende. Und probieren sie noch einmal eine Frage. Das Thema ist Wochenende.

Yes, think again: Our topic is now weekend. And try again, another question. The topic is weekend.

L: Entschuldigung, was frühstücken sie am Samstag?

Sorry, what do you have for breakfast on Saturdays?

J: Am Samstag ich frühstücke Kakao und dann ich esse Brötchen mit Marmalade.

On Saturdays I have cacao for breakfast and then I eat bread rolls with marmalade.

I chose to display this play of questions and answers in its entirety, with the repetition because I think it makes the effect of the test context of this conversation even clearer. This is a context in which *what* answer is given is nowhere near as important to success or failure as the *how*, which in this context means the semantic and grammatical coherence of that answer. A candidate can produce this coherence if they are capable of decoding and reconstructing the situational context constructed by means of the topic, the cue card, and, of course, previous experience with test formats of this kind. Only then does the ability to formulate the required sentence come into play. These very particular stringent requirements and their classed selection effect have been pointed out many times by linguists working in this field, who argue that it is more the ability to understand this particular exam format that is tested and less the language proficiency of the candidate (Plutzer 2010; Shohamy 2001). The cited examination scene is another example of this effect.

However, the excerpt shows more than that, as it enables the relevance of understanding the test format to be connected with the effect it has on the relation created, at least momentarily, between the new speaker and their new language. This is yet another factor contributing to the enactment character of language use in the context of language testing as a means of border or more generally migration control. As discussed above, this enactment brings the speaker into an estranged relationship with the speech produced in that foreign language, with the likely effect of making it into a language without voice. Consequently, not only does what a

candidate actually thinks, likes, or prefers become irrelevant, as long as they give a coherent answer, but it also facilitates the candidates' use of standardized answers. With these standardized and simulated conversations performed in the test, particular cultural forms and assumptions are supplied, quasi as a side effect. This side effect may not be very consequential for candidates, but it does co-construct their subjectivities as (migrant) test candidates, with highly enacted subjectivities, leaving little room for them as subjects; room that they feel invited or expected to fill with imaginaries of default/stereotypical Germanness. The foreign language-learning paradigm that becomes visible here is thus clearly one that operates according to a logic of acquisition and not of performance.

We do not know whether Juguna provides her answer according to a default, normalizing idea of what a German breakfast on a Saturday looks like or according to her own preferences when she says that she likes to have tea or cacao with bread rolls (*Brötchen*) and marmalade. Assuming that her actual preferences may be less 'typical German' and more, say, 'Kenyan' – even if relying on any of these generalizing assumptions risks cultural essentialization. Therefore, comprehensively addressing this type of power effect cannot be based on this citation, and thus not accomplished by this thesis; it would, on its own, give rise to a research project, following in the footsteps of Salgado (2014). But as I have already pointed out, in this context it suffices to outline some structural traits of these power effects as an analytical hypothesis in order to advance understanding of what 'language' (a plasticword?) means concretely in the context of this test. To strengthen this hypothesis,, I will allow myself a final glance at the comments section, showing that there are indeed viewers who share my reading that Juguna is putting up an act of Germanness here. One of these (three) commentators expresses his doubt, again jokingly, as follows:

C: anscheinend ist ihr Lieblingsessen Brötchen mit Marmelade ;,D.

Apparently her favorite food is bread rolls with marmalade ;,D (laughing with tears emoji).

7.6.1 Wrapping it up: From macro- to micro-structures and back

By drawing on additional data sourced from the video material produced for test preparation purposes, I have tried to provide an idea of what remains of language (here German and English) when practiced in this particular testing context. I argue that a kind of communicative charade unfolds; a performance with a meaning far removed from whatever semantics the words produced convey. Thus, the analysis of the linguistic form of this manifestation of language use adds to the observation made earlier with regard to the situation of force in which learner-applicants find themselves, namely that this bordering/language-testing regime is based on a notion of language that I described as *language without voice*. This cursory analysis of the communicative style and standardized contents, which in sum make up the immediate experience of speaking the German language in the context of this particular type of test, shows how the macro structures of power shaping this apparatus of the border/migration regime are both manifested and constructed at the micro level of interactions and symbolic representations. It traces how language as part of a border-regime apparatus, like the persons and institutions involved in this apparatus at all of its sites, becomes something mixed; something other than language. The communicative goals of the speech acts, such as introducing oneself, asking about somebody's habits and preferences and so forth are replaced by the primary aim of achieving a successful visa application procedure, which in itself is political aim that is completely unrelated to language. The effects of such language use are paradoxical and dysfunctional, as the communicative function of language gives way under the weight of state power to the function of border control. For the new speakers of such a bordering language there is no room and no necessity for them to voice anything of relevance to them when uttering the standardized sentences they are expected to produce; this is not what the test format is about. When they direct their (staged) speech at their examiner or the candidate they are partnering with during the language test, this is obviously not done with an intention to express something meaningful to either of them. Their speech occurs as the result

of having arrived at the European border checkpoint, where they have to give proof of their enacted language skills, like showing their passports, with the visa seal held up for the border official to see, while holding their breath and maybe lowering the volume of the foreign sounds coming from the car radio. Again, language becomes visible as the symbolic currency of 'integration', with, for instance, German words, that is German signs and sounds—or something close enough—functioning as a seal signifying the right to cross the German border.

Before analysing the IELTS-related model video, and illustrating a different effect of the hybridization of a language examination in the context of border regime, I will open up a side window into the symbolic representation of the German language through the Goethe Institute, which has a global presence. This aspect would not have become visible had the analysis not strayed from its main material; the narrative interviews with the people subject to this border-regime instrument.

7.7 IELTS Life Skills: Checking passports and favourite foods

In the model video on the *Start Deutsch 1* examination, although viewers obtain a very detailed overview of its procedures, one thing is missing: the entire dimension of (border) security. We do not see any of the security measures and identity checks that Doruntina described as being so disturbing and distracting. The video is only concerned with the language-testing dimension, cutting out any allusion to the fact that the test is conditionally linked to the candidates' legal residence status. This omission could be due to the broader approach taken in the production, which accommodates not only the group of test candidates that take the pre-departure A1 exam but also those who are already in Germany and are possibly facing lower-level or different security provisions. Or it could be ascribed to the fact that the video is produced by the Goethe Institute and thus fosters a perspective that may be prone to leaving out those aspects that are not genuinely language-related. This would mean that all issues and management-related tasks associated with the migration regime, which were originally the responsibilities of nation-states, have been outsourced and delegated to private actors, including, partially, to testing centres, such as the Goethe Institute. Therefore, it can be assumed that the security dimension is missing in these videos because it might not be an officially or generally acknowledged fact (yet) that the language-testing centre has taken on certain functions of the migration regime.

However, a different situation arises in the case of the English counterpart; the training video produced on the IELTS Life Skills test. As previously noted, this video was not produced by the official testing centres of the British Council, but by a private English language training provider based in Sylhet, Bangladesh. It represents one among many such training videos, most of which seem to be produced in Asian countries, generally showing the same test procedure and setting; I chose it because of its good audibility, but otherwise the choice was random. Two factors, namely a relationship with clients uncompromised by institutional dependence on the official British bordering intuitions and the video's sole focus on pre-departure language

test preparation could partly account for the visibility of the border control dimension, enabling test candidates to prepare for this part of the test as well.

It is only when this footage is examined does it really become clear how preparation for this part of the test could be of importance to test candidates. This part of the test marks the entire examination explicitly as an act of the border regime. And although this fact does not need to be rendered explicitly for test candidates to become conscious of its presence, it does affect how the test itself is experienced, how candidates feel they are being treated, and how their attention is channelled, as Doruntina described in her account. However, Doruntina, unlike the candidates in this model test, did not take the Life Skills test, in which only speaking and listening are tested; instead, she chose to take the more encompassing IELTS General Training Test for UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), a Home Office-approved secure English language test. Although this test also incorporates CEFR's A1 and A2 levels, it additionally includes reading and writing, and allows for working, training, or studying in the UK without a degree-level qualification. We already know from Doruntina's narrative that the security measures include repeated passport control before and during the test and the taking of a photograph. Moreover, candidates are not allowed to take anything into the test room apart from their passports, a pencil and pen, an eraser, and a transparent bottle of water. Furthermore, they have to stay seated after the test 'until the invigilator gives permission to leave the room' (British Council 2021). All of these procedures are confirmed on the website of the British Council in an article titled 'Understand what happens on your test day - Information and advice about your IELTS test day'. Here, we learn that in addition to the already listed security measures, '[t]he test centres will also take fingerprint scans'. These modalities also apply to the Life Skills test, which like the test format of the IELTS General Training for UKVI, is a Home Office-approved secure English language test and thus has to meet the highest security standards. But, as the test setting is different (the examinees do not sit at desks in a classroom next to many other examinees; instead they are tested together with just one other examinee), the

element of passport control during the test is also slightly different. The examiner/s do/es not walk around the test room silently inspecting candidates ID documents; rather, they ask the candidate to show these documents to them.

The Life Skills test, which usually takes about eighteen minutes to complete (unlike the General Training Test, which takes almost three hours), is structured into four parts. In part 1a, candidates are asked a couple of questions by the examiner, in part 1b, the candidates have to ask each other questions and answer them, in part 2a, candidates listen to two recordings and answer some questions posed by the examiner, and in part 2b they are expected to talk to each other about a given topic. Unlike the German test, they are not given cue cards for these parts, but they are given some time to prepare their questions in part 1b and to take notes in part 2a. For the demonstration of the element of passport control, only part 1a is relevant, so I will restrict the following documentation of this element to the transcript and provide some exemplary screen shots from the first few minutes of the training video :

E: Hello, my name is Tanu. What is your name?

T1: My name is Tamanna.

E: Can you spell it for me, please?

T1: Yes, of course: T-A-M-A -double N-A

E (turning to candidate 2): And what is your name?

T2: My name is Rejaul.

E: Can you spell it for me, please?

T2: Yes. R – E – J – A – U – L.

E (to T1 again): So where do you come from, Tamanna?

T1: I come from *[place indecipherable for me]*.

E: And where do you come from, Rejaul?

T2: I come from Sylhet

E: Can I see your ID, Tamanna?

T1: Yes of course. Here it is.

E: Thank you.

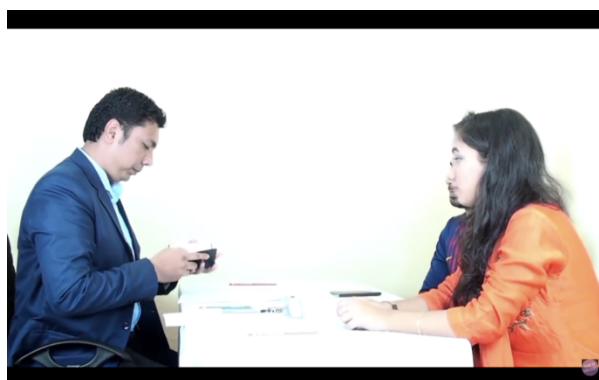
T1: You're welcome.

E: Can I see your ID as well?

T2: Yes sir, here it is.

E: Thank you.

T2: Thank you, sir.



E: So Tamanna, tell me about your favourite food, please?

T1: My favourite food is Chinese. I like Chinese food a lot. I have Chinese food at Chinese restaurants with my family members. Sometimes I have Italian and Indian foods a lot.

E: So do you like English food?

T1: Yes, I like English food.

E: So what English food do you like?

T1: I like fish and chips.

E: And at what time do you have breakfast?

T1: I have breakfast at 8.30 and sometimes at 7.30 as well. . . .



The checking of the official identification documents, which could be considered a symbolic act of border control, contrasts sharply with the language-testing context, in which it is set, with its standardized, simulated conversation about favourite foods and other completely random questions about the culinary preferences and habits of the test candidates. But what exactly is it that produces this sharp contrast, with its estranging, contradictory and, once again, unintentionally comical effect?

It is, I argue, the breach of the action and conversation protocol that the ID-control action effectuates. In border-regime apparatuses, which use language as a means of selecting access to the nation state, two very different contexts and thus action and conversation registers are brought together, resulting in contrasting hybrid forms of institutions, subjectivities, and, as can be seen in this audio-visual example, conversations/test scenarios.

While the context of the border regime is shaped by a very high level of hierarchization, power, and gravity, the context of foreign language learning and testing in formal learning settings is marked by the simulative, enacted character of the respective conversations—a game character—as well as by the banality and randomness of the corpus of culturally normalizing standard topics and questions used in course books and tests. As these contexts are blended together, the heaviness that marks the former is passed on to the latter, but without finding an adaption in terms of their differing action and conversation protocols. The standard

action protocol of ID or passport control entails serious, concentrated, or even tense expressions of bodies and faces, a (however politely uttered) order by the controller to identify oneself ('*Can I see your ID?*') and the act of compliance performed by the controlled ('*Yes sir, here it is*'), as the object in question, the ID, is handed over, checked, compared with the physical traits of the controlled person and returned. This protocol of border control seamlessly passes—or rather crashes into—the standard language-testing protocol, marked by all of the elements of enactment and the disconnection of the speaking subject that has been explored in detail in chapter seven. This 'crash', given the seriousness of the situation for the language examinees, who are actually visa examinees, further highlights the character of enactment of the language-testing protocol, making it appear fake and superimposed, or unintentionally comical. The sense of disconnection, marking the relationship of the tested subject with the tested and reproduced contents, is augmented as well in this context of bordering force. The content of a conversation that is so far away from what really drives the candidates cannot but leave them detached from their role in the test conversation, turning them, at least for the duration of the test, into performers of the language of the nation-state, which is testing their admissibility to a life, in this case, in the UK. Pointedly put, this detachment or estrangement, which has the semiotic character of the language they are being asked to put on display here, rather than its classical effect as symbolic signs, dips starkly into its indexical and iconic functions. This character becomes recognizable when, for instance, the English words and sentences that Tamanna produces in the model test video signify not so much that 'my favourite food is Chinese' or that 'I like fish and chips' as they do compliance with the demands of that nation-state and accepting a role as a *subject to be integrated*. Furthermore, the words function as iconic signs; not only do they make the speaker phonologically recognizable as 'English' but also, thanks to the typical British fried dish, recognizable, content-wise, as English, just as Juguna made herself perceivable as German by stating her fondness of 'Brötchen mit Marmelade'.

It remains to be pointed out that the symbolic content of the words does not, of course, disappear; their script remains readable, and this alone makes the above-described contrast visible. But its visibility is doubled by these indexical and iconic functions, and, moreover, by yet another symbolic function that differs from the semantics inherent in the produced speech itself. A neo-assimilationist integration policy is being executed through language, assuming an 'oath'-like symbolic function: *I linguistically mark myself with the English/German/etc. nation now, renouncing the Bengali/Kenyan/Turkish/Kosovar/etc.* Such language use resulting from a nation-state's exercise of force will not fail to carry out the symbolical function of marking newcomers as being *subjected* to the nation. This function is not mentioned in the official argumenary of the respective nation-states; rather, it is implied in the notion of integration on which the language requirement is founded; the notion from which the language-based migration policies of European nation-states derive their arguments based on a rich and widely acknowledged discursive fundus on the quasi-mythological parallelism of language and integration acquired over two decades.

In essence, it is this double symbolical function of language used or put on display in such border-regime contexts that evokes a contradiction perceived as estranging or comical. And this contradiction is not only inherent in the respective language use but it also affects the speakers, producing silenced subjectivities, as their voices are replaced by the performance of the standardized foreign language and the respective (stereotypical) cultural forms that go with it. I argue that this contradictory character is a fundamental structural trait of such a border regime operating through paternalizing and degrading language technologies. Dealing with the meanings of language in the context of the pre-departure language requirement, however individually varying the effects of this contradiction are, this paradoxical structural trait remains at the core of the relationship thus designed between the imposed language and its forced speaker; a paradoxical structural design that silences newcomers to the nation by forcing its language on them.

8 Interlude: After the test is before the test

In this thesis, I have viewed *borders through the lens of languaging*, as they have been enforced by discursive boundaries comprising not of iron fences or digital technologies but almost *made up by* the governed subjects themselves from the subtle matter of certainties, imaginaries, and emotions. Such bordered boundaries function as the soft, intimate governing technologies of the 'pre-departure language-testing regime', shaping its subjects, the migrant others.

In the second part of the study, I viewed *language through the lens of bordering*, as another racialized and co-naturalized soft governing technology. The hybrid subjectivity of the 'l/earner applicant' that it creates embarks on a path toward integration through language learning in order to receive an appointment at the embassy to apply for family unification in the first place.

All of these processes happen long before the border crossing. But the learning of language and the earning of residence rights does not stop at the border. After the test is before the test; so the rumour goes among 'l/earner applicants'. In Chapter 8, we follow those rumours into a private language school and then into the Goethe Institute in Prishtina, almost up to the embassy counter, where another language test is said to await people.

But this interlude gets even closer to the border. It actually crosses three borders, which historically and contemporarily coincide more or less exactly with each other:

(1) Kosova (third countries = the field)	–	Switzerland (European countries)
(2) The researched	–	the researching
(3) An academic text	–	whatever the hell is starting to happen again here.

(But I will get a grip, keeping the actual academic work clean until I get started with Chapter 8.1, where such textual outbreaks can take place in a safe environment.)

What the interlude does, as do the pre- and interludes before it and the postlude after it, is to cross that border many times from various remote entry points

(growing into rabbit holes) so that these borders between Europe/researchers/academic text and third countries (the field)/researched/personal text almost disintegrate. Almost. But then so would this dissertation along with it, deserting the field, academia; all of it.

You see, these rabbit holes were not *aimed at adding to* . . . existing scholarship in the strict sense; rather they *stem from* . . . something: a sharp, often very obstructive sensation. Recently, I was surprised to find out that other researchers too are familiar with this feeling:

Feminism often begins with intensity: you are aroused by what you come up against. You register something in the sharpness of an impression. Something can be sharp without it being clear what the point is . . . Things don't seem right. (Ahmed 2017, 22)

So apparently, this Chapter is guided by a feminist methodology.

8.1 Tests and 'not-tests': On the blurring of institutional boundaries

I leave behind the traffic noise of Bill Clinton Boulevard to find myself some minutes later enveloped in the liveliness of Zahir Pajaziti Square, searching the cityscape around me. It should be somewhere here. On my way from Prishtina's main bus station to this part of the city, I came across a wide range of signs advertising language classes, mostly for German and English. However, the language school I am looking for now is hidden from sight.

In the course of the past two weeks, I have talked to a handful of women and men in Kosova, who are studying for the A1 language test, with most of them learning German. Since 2007, passing this test has been a requirement for so-called third-country citizens in order to apply for a family reunification visa to Germany. Now, I want to know more about the other side, the institutional side of this admission procedure because in the accounts of my conversation partners, there is quite a bit that remains unclear to me as well as to them. These obscurities, together with feelings of frustration, pressure, and anxiety, seem to accompany visa applicants on their entire procedural pathway from the language course, over to the language test and further on to the counter at the embassy. And they inspire all kinds of rumours. One example is that the test centre of the Goethe Institute is more likely to fail you if you have not taken the German course at the *Sprachlernzentrum*, which is their official partner school, founded in close cooperation with the Goethe Institute as a default substitute for a subsidiary in Kosova. A second is that before the language exam, they subject you to a body search. And then, even if you make it and finally hold the certificate in your hands, you cannot be sure of anything because at the embassy, they test your language skills all over again! I hoped that the visit to this language school as well as to the test centre of the Goethe Institute would shed some light on these issues and open up a perspective on the institutional effects of this particular extraterritorialized and externalized form of border regime.

I am standing in the middle of the square, unconsciously scanning the surroundings for the colours and patterns that have become so conspicuous in the cityscape of Prishtina, tirelessly invoking a European future for more than ten years now: blue and gold stars and the colours of the German flag. . . . Although the colours of some of the omnipresent flags and advertising billboards are now faded, this future is evoked by the contours of the stars and stripes on the façade of the *Bill Clinton Grill*, the sign of the *Deutsch Color* building supply shop, and the slogan of one of the innumerable private colleges: 'European Studies for a European Future'.

Finally, my colour-scanning search is successful. A blue sticker, plastered to the entrance door of an industrialized apartment block is advertising the course offerings of one of the first private foreign language schools in Kosova.

How the school is able to maintain its low-key visibility, while affording its location in the city centre becomes clear during my conversation with the director, a man in his late thirties with an earnest expression that hardly ever seems to leave his face. His father founded the school in 1992, having realized what business potential lay in foreign language teaching, and especially English and German. With Yugoslavia's secession process having begun and (prospective) successor states along with various struggling minorities turning their hopes toward the West, I figured that the foundation of his company must have been part of that general orientation westwards.

Moving from Skopje, Macedonia, to the capital of the freshly proclaimed (but as yet far from being internationally recognized) Republic of Kosova in order to set up his new business, the founder of the language school had secured the premises in the centre of Prishtina at a favourable price and had laid down the first structures of the school. 'Today we are one of the biggest private providers of foreign language classes here, and certainly the most experienced', his son tells me. 'Not only with regard to family reunification'. And in a critical, ironic tone, he adds: 'apparently the only course format that Swiss researchers seem to be interested in'. He stresses that the great majority of young people learning foreign languages at

their schools do this in order to get ahead professionally and not for 'marrying out to Europe'.

The critique hits the bull's eye. It is yet another testimony of the general suspicion with which such marriages are regarded on a daily basis. It is the same images of 'marriage frauds', 'import brides', and the generally stereotyped image of the non-Western other, trying to trick their (or actually his) way into Europe by any means that the school's director is seeking to counter and about which the men and women tell me in the interviews. Each one of the people we met are trying, in their own way, to position themselves against these distorted, dehumanizing depictions of their lives, -loves, and marriage stories. These same images have evidently assumed the dominant tone in the Swiss political and media narratives during the last ten to fifteen years, except that the narratives of the prospective cross-border spouses reflect the other side of that discourse; that of its target.

In a majority of cases, the stereotyped Kosovar keenness for migration is countered by targeted individuals who claim some form of exceptional status: I am from the city and am therefore different, I am a man and am therefore different, I am educated and therefore different, and so forth. Whereas, in principle, this argumentation strategy leaves the general stereotype unchallenged, the director's combative rejection of this Western view is more encompassing. Maybe, I wonder, because he has the freedom to take a more distanced view, he himself is not a prospective cross-border spouse.

Indeed, he tells me that he has been to Europe, and especially to Switzerland many times. His wife, teaching German in this school now, grew up there and still has her Swiss citizenship, aside from her Kosovar one. But, he emphasizes, it would never occur to him to move there. And with pride, and in great detail, he describes to me how once, when he had to accompany his wife to the communal administration office in her home village in Switzerland, public administrators there got up from their seats to catch a look at him, the (one) man who had not joined his wife in Switzerland, even though he could have easily done so. The man who *chose*

to live in Kosova, instead of Switzerland, a county, he adds, that does not seem like paradise to *him*. He laughingly concludes his anecdote noting that to the people there, this was clearly an oddity: 'They looked at me as if an alien had wandered in!'

So, his wife—like several of the teachers whom the school employs—had chosen to leave Europe for a life in Kosova. All three 'returnees' with whom I spoke (and I am putting this between inverted commas because actually none of them ever migrated) were animated with what I found to be a very captivating sense of idealism and enthusiasm to help change things for the better in Europe's youngest country. The director shares this enthusiasm, although with different nuances; there is something else mixed into it; something hard to pin down. Maybe it is what in my parents' place of origin, Kërçova in North Macedonia, they call 'sherr', which is simultaneously a positive and negative quality that defies translation, describing able, smart, and even sly and wary characters, who can fend for themselves and their own, knowing how to pursue their interests. During my upbringing, this quality was sometimes pointed out to me as something, which we children who grew up 'outside' or 'up there' lacked. Often, laughingly, people would tell me that we were so cushioned in comforts out there that we had probably grown to be just a little . . . without 'sherr', by which they meant a little soft, a little unwitting, and a little too trusting.

In this stuffy top-floor office of the Zas Trade School, the director, with his critical, 'sherr'-ful countering of my project's approach, put me back on that other side again. But, as always, I have a hard time taking this dispatch to the other side of this boundary. In a wordy speech, I outline my team's research project to him, trying to make my homespun standard Albanian sound professional, habituated, and as polished as possible in an attempt to fulfil any expectations he might have regarding the language of somebody 'from University'. The fact that during my academic pathway through my university, it was only German (and English) that I had been trained in would not help much to excuse a poor performance of expertness. So, using some long, circuitous, standardized sentences, avoiding the chunks of

dialect—German and Serbian—that seem to fly at me after every three sentence or so, I vigorously make my point. And he lets me to do this, listening from behind his desk, while I am seated on one of the chairs lined up against the wall to his left. This is where, as I will witness later, future course-participants (and their parents) usually take a seat during registration and course-level assessment tests. I make a special effort to describe to him how our project is aimed at capturing the generally missing perspectives and experiences of the ‘affected’ people, with the word affected hanging somewhat loosely and uncomfortably in the air between us once I have finished. He looks at me blankly for a moment, still appearing unconvinced of my argumentation and the importance of this project.

But maybe I am projecting my own discomforts on to him. For, he suddenly praises my fluent Albanian. ‘Most of those from the diaspora’, he states, ‘forget their mother tongue . . .’. We talk for a while about the difficult standing of the Albanian language in ‘Western countries’; a notion that he brings up, associating it with an arrogant demeanour towards the rest of the world. Although he seems to be unconvinced by most of the things I say, *how* I say them appears to have opened him up to me. Quite abruptly, he indicates the end of our conversation and points to the open door. ‘See, there is classroom 2’, he says, pointing to one of the closed doors along the corridor. ‘In fifteen minutes, the German teacher in there will be done with her lesson. You should talk to her; she is the one who really knows the situation of these course-participants’.

I wait in front of the door as the young teacher says goodbye to her class, a small group with most members being somewhere between twenty and thirty years old. She has a relaxed and dignified way of shaking hands and joking with everyone. While she cleans the whiteboard, I take a seat at one of the ‘student’ desks, and a point that will later become clear during the analysis of our interviews, begins to dawn on me. This form of migration regime is not only particularly demanding for visa applicants in terms of money, time, and effort, but over and above that, it seizes them in a very specific way: it turns grown women and men into pupils. They are all

under its grip, whether they are fifty years old, and their last school experience was way back in their childhood, or whether they are twenty years old, at the threshold of independent adulthood, leaving their families of origin to found their own households for the first time. Whatever similarities these individuals may have had in relation to test anxieties that they experienced in former educational contexts, the anxiety they experience in the current context of the 'Prüfung Start Deutsch 1' test is much more heavily loaded, as failing the test could threaten their futures with their partners in Germany.

The teacher, who has taken a seat on the opposite side of the desk, is familiar with these fears of the course-participants whom she teaches. And she too utters the sentence that my colleagues and I have heard over and over again during our interviews in Kosova as well as in Turkey: 'They ask me why Germany is forcing them to learn the language from here, separated from their partners. Also, learning would be much easier in a place where one can hear and speak German every day'.

The teacher herself learned German in Germany, close to Frankfurt, where she was born and where she grew up. For this twenty-five-year-old woman, teaching German is a second career path; previously in Germany, she had been working as a medical assistant. For three years now, she has been living and working in Kosova, her parents' country of origin. Love, as she says, led her across the German border in the exact opposite direction to that of her course-participants, about whom we talk today.

A huge difficulty for them, she tells me, concerns the circulating rumours. Time and again, worried course-participants come to her, made insecure—or in one recent case even brought to tears—saying that people from the 'Sprachlernzentrum' (SLZ; 'language learning centre') or the test centre of the Goethe Institute had warned them that they would have little chances passing the exam if they went through the Zas-Trade course to prepare. The teacher is vexed about the influence of the German embassy's official partners: 'They are doing good business'. She says that after that last drastic case, she even called the SLZ about it, demanding:

'Please, let this have been the last time for you to speak badly about our school and others!'

Her employer seems to be one of the big competitors of the SLZ in Prishtina. But while the SLZ, through its collaboration with the Goethe Institute's test centre, the official partner institution of the German embassy, has a privileged position and (countrywide) access to Kosova's booming language teaching market, the school at Zahir Pajaziti Square attracts its clients through word-of-mouth recommendations and favourable prices. Whereas the cost of the A1 course here is 160 Euros, the costs at the SLZ is 400 Euros; a big difference, which, combined with the latter's institutional connections with the state agency, causes insecurity among clients/visa applicants. And it also breeds rumours.

One of these rumours, which is that the test centre conducts body searches before the test, solidifies during the conversation with the teacher. She mentions it spontaneously in the context of the test anxiety and stress of her course participants:

Before [people enter the test room] there is a passport and a physical control. And during the written examination, people are prohibited from moving the hand with which they are not writing. They are not allowed to touch their hair for instance. So, this means that they have to declare which one is their writing hand and place the other one on the table to lie there until the end of the test.

This procedure is now part of a standard security procedure at these tests, she adds; a consequence of fraud attempts. Her description resonates with what I had heard from my acquaintance, Doruntina, who took the respective English exam at the British Council in Tirana. The high-level security measures that she portrayed made it clear that what people experience before and during the pre-departure language test cannot be understood without closely considering its context, the European family unification regime; a context in which narratives of foreign language testing read like border control.

Such forms of a migration regime not only turn the examination room into a bordering zone but they also have the power to turn visa applicants into pupils. The border control performed there is all-encompassing, with the language testers

checking the identity documents, bodies, and minds of the candidates. And as private (although substantially state-founded) test centres take over governmental tasks here, examiners move into the role of border officials/immigration officers.

Here, I address one last point relating to my conversation with the teacher: the ominous issue of the repeated language test at the embassy. Has she heard anything about this? She waves her hand appeasingly, telling me that they do that mostly in cases where the language exam was done some time ago (meaning a maximum of six months ago, as after that time the certificate expires from the perspective of the embassy) or where it had been passed only by a small margin. When I mention that somebody told me they were asking for things like the birth date of the mother-in-law, she says that this was simply an attempt at sticking with the topic. And yet she confirms my impression of this practice, adding: 'Well, they also want to see if it is a real marriage'. Were these questions not rather asked in Albanian? I want to know. 'No, it can be in either one of the two languages. But when any doubts arise during the German part, they switch to Albanian to pursue the issue'.

I find all of this quite confusing and odd. Is it possible, that in these cases, the embassy (unintentionally) conflates or (consciously) merges the investigation of 'sham marriages' with the repeated oral German exam? The following day, this question leads me to two other directors: the director of the Goethe Institute's test centre and the director of the SLZ, the latter being present as a result of the former's initiative. These partner-institutions are housed under the same roof. But let me just say some words about what it looks like under that roof before I turn to the conversation that we had.

As I approach the building, which is a large and darkish structure made of steel, concrete, and glass, but bringing in light because of the way it is set to envelop an inner yard, which, surprisingly, is filled with plants and has carved-out niches with benches and chairs for students to sit on: a green oasis in this city of concrete. A group of young people stand around a tall ashtray shaped like a giant

hourglass, smoking and talking. I ask them where the SLZ office is, and they send me upstairs, via an outdoor staircase. At the door entrance, I realize that not only are the Goethe Institute's test centre and the SLZ under the same roof but they also share an office space, with the staff of both organizations entering and leaving through this door. But then I do not know how many staff members the Goethe Institute actually has here—testers and teachers. I hear later that the numbers appear to be more or less the same (the people grading the tests are based in Thessaloniki, where the next closest branch of the Goethe Institute is).

As I am let in, the dark grey façade is replaced by luminous white and bright green—the corporate colour of the Goethe Institute. This particular shade of green flares up throughout the corridors and rooms, appearing on a wall here, a poster there, and on all of the chairs. The latter are cast in a synthetic material of that same green colour but in a way that makes them look stylish, not cheap. I wait next to a large map of the world on which countless little stylized Gs, in green are imprinted.

The director of the test centre, a tall lean man with blond and grey hair, maybe around sixty years old, who is officially termed the test commissioner (*Prüfungsbeauftragter*) as I later come to know, warmly welcomes me in German. And I can't help thinking, how truly German he looks to me. But not just him; everything surrounding us seems to be German and of German quality. Things are not broken or faded; nor are they improvised. Instead, they seem to be remarkably expensive and in order: window shutters, chairs, tables, projectors, a little box screwed to the wall for depositing chalk. I realize that this is not just a green oasis in a city of concrete; it is also a German oasis, a piece of Germany in the middle of Kosova, and the director runs this exclave in a friendly, cultured way, wearing a light-yellow sweater over his shirt. It does not feel bad; rather, it feels familiar. I hear German half-sentences float by as we pass the cafeteria and the classrooms, but somehow this puzzles me. I collect myself, preparing for the conversation; preparing my entry question.

We enter an office at the end of the corridor, where the director of the SLZ awaits us, smiling; a neat, equally blond woman, perhaps in her forties. She is originally from a Slavic-speaking country in Eastern Europe and had lived and worked in Germany for a while. Now she lives in Prishtina with her children and her husband, who is an Albanian. This is what she tells me only once the formal part of the interview is over. Like the teacher of the private school, for her, language is a market that allows her be a professional woman in Kosova. But, I guess that the salary is better here.

We glide into the official part of the interview, and as the test commissioner tells me that ninety percent of all tests conducted at the GI's test centre are A1 level, taken by people who are applying for family unification, I switch on my recording device. Here, the SLZ director takes charge. She clarifies that this percentage only applies to the tests, which is his domain, whereas the courses, her domain, are a different matter. Currently, only forty percent of students take A1 level classes (usually all of them do so for the purpose of family unification), whereas sixty percent are aiming to reach levels B2–C1. She describes this as a recent development, for in 2014, the percentages were the other way around. The reason for the change was a new calibration of German migration policies that occurred in January 2016, allowing entry to well-qualified people who are needed in the job market. For this purpose, she points out, people usually need a higher level of German skills.

I get into the main question that I have prepared for them, asking about the second language test at the embassy. And as no one steps in with an answer, I rephrase the question very carefully. Here the SLZ director has an thought: 'Ah, maybe you mean the plausibility test?' But her counterpart calmly interrupts: 'There is no language test *[at the embassy]*. One tries to determine, there, whether knowledge of the language is still present. And then there is what Veronika⁹ says; the plausibility test. There, already from the name, it becomes evident that one wants to 'make plausible' that the person handing in the Goethe certificate is the

⁹ Anonymized.

same person who took the exam'. And the Goethe Institute's test commissioner adds: 'For instance, they are asked what colour were the chairs in the test room, and if they say orange instead of green, for example, then a scam might be exposed'. With this, the confusion of what is tested (language skills? Authenticity of marriage? And now: the identity of test-taker?) is only made bigger.

I venture on, pointing out the particular types of questions that people mentioned to me. The SLZ director confirms that the embassy asks questions exactly like the one about the birth date of the mother-in-law, in German. But in her view, this 'is only in order to determine whether somebody can combine *father-in-law* with *date of birth* and utter a date. It is not like they would go and check whether it is correct'.

Her colleague, who had witnessed her deliberations with what seemed to me a dissatisfied look, advises me that in general, I should consider individual accounts of this kind with scepticism. Again, he wants to provide a clarification: 'There is no such thing as a second language test at the embassy'.

During the conversation that follows, both of them try to avoid the words *test* (German: *Test*) and *exam* (*Prüfung*), skirting around these notions by resorting to expressions such as *feststellen* ('determine'), *nachweisen* ('trace'), or *plausibel machen* ('make plausible'). But, they involuntarily and repeatedly land at the former. For instance, the director of the test centre concedes that an assessment made on the basis of such a questioning at the embassy was 'not always entirely objective', an issue he had tried to raise awareness about among German embassy staff: 'At our oral examination, the test participants are prepared for it, they know they will be tested. At the German embassy, on the other hand, it goes mostly like this; one is invited and one does not know that it is about a language test or . . . umm . . . a conversation [in German]'.

The German language expert tells me that he often functions as a bridge between visa applicants and the embassy, not only by giving the embassy staff information about the test procedures and language proficiency level but also by

inviting them to sit in at oral examinations once in a while, so that they can better estimate the language proficiency level of A1 speakers. In turn, the embassy has started to give the testing staff trainings in passport control (*Passkontroll-Fortbildungen*). For, as he observes, 'it is not always easy to distinguish a good forgery from a real passport'. Thus, it becomes evident how, with the externalization of migration regime procedures, the boundaries between private language institute and state organs relating to areas of responsibility and competence are becoming blurred. Whereas the embassy as a representative of the sovereign state, can evidently outsource the task of testing language proficiency levels to private actors with the respective professional expertise, it can never fully externalize its responsibility. This fact would explain, on the one hand, the emergence of an improvised and repeated 'determination of the presence of language skills' through embassy officials, who lack any linguistic expertise, revealing that for learner-applicants, after the language test is before the test.

On the other hand, language institutes, working closely with the embassy, and also, in part, with local governmental institutions such as the police, are responsible for designing the test setting in such a way as to circumvent any attempts at cheating. According to the director of the test centre in Kosova, these businesses of 'examination-helpers' and the concomitant competition between them and the test centre posed a the major challenge to the establishment of the latter in 2008. 'But', he observes, 'during the last two, three years, the situation has remained quite stable'. Although he does note that it is a balancing act to supervise the examination as strictly as necessary for security purposes, while making it as comfortable as possible for the candidates. This has not always been easy for him personally either, he points out, because, after all, he carries some of the responsibility for whether or not a person is allowed to join their spouse. To do this, he needed to obtain an inurement clause.

And yet, even though by now he has established his place in this world in between language teaching and border control, he does not sound entirely

convinced by the expediency of this pre-integrative language test and the apparatus surrounding it, when he weighs in on its sense and senselessness:

'Well, I do see that there is a reason for having to know the language. On the other hand, one can also ask oneself of course... One can learn this also during the first six weeks in Germany. But this is the law'.

8.2 After the border is before the boundary

8.2.1 You're of Kosovar origin and that's it!

Having reached the end of the stories about what lies 'before' the border crossing, I cannot but wonder what comes after the border. I have no way of

knowing who among the people my colleagues and I talked to passed the language test and after how many attempts, and who went on struggling and for how long. As for those who did pass the test, and then some months later the 'not-a-test' at the embassy as well, and then, again sometime later, held a visa in their hand, finally able to cross that border and join their partner in Europe, how did their stories continue? Were they simply relieved to be able to move on with their lives? Were they proud of their achievement of passing the test? Do they feel like they earned their migration? What turns did these stories, so forcibly marked by the border before their departures, take in Germany, in the UK, in Denmark?

What we do know for a fact (apart from COVID-19 being a part of their lives too) is that the next mandatory integration measure, the next language test, undoubtedly awaited them. Possibly some of them are preparing for the level A2 exam right now. Or, as five years have passed, some may already be looking at the preparatory exercises for the B1 level, or even the B2 level exam. So, with the many things that have changed in their lives, having to 'learn the language' remains a constant in their lives, as long as they remain and want to continue living in that new country, and then again later, if ever they want to 'become a citizen'. Hence, we can assume that 'mandatory integration' and 'mandatory language learning' continue to mark their stories, or at least part of them. But how do their new and their old languages feel on their tongues now that they are finally there? Is this feeling actually one of relief that some of them thought it would be, being able to learn the language *on the spot*? Has the sense of humiliation gone? And if yes, what has it been replaced with? If I were to talk with them again, would I still find their voices to be silenced or covered by that symbolic blanket of 'the German words' now that they are taking the next step within the apparatus of the European migration regime?

These are not questions I can answer on the basis of the data that we have gathered in our project. However, the data that we did gather in our field on the 'pre-departure' side of the European border, even though they were not related to

the matter of language policy as border policy, still allow us to glance at the matter of voice and belonging, long after they have crossed that border.

In concluding the empirical part of this thesis, I would therefore like to take my readers across the European border and into the Swiss context to hear what at least one of those 'second-generation migrants' we interviewed in Switzerland has to say on the matter. In these biographical interviews with 'second-generation migrants', we wanted to learn about their lives and their experiences having entered into marriages with partners from their parents' countries of origin. These are past experiences for the individuals with whom we spoke in Switzerland, who had already passed through the apparatus governing 'cross-border marriages' (though mandatory language learning had not yet been introduced).

In the case of Bardhyl O., who was twenty-four years old at the time when my colleague, Joëlle Moret spoke with him, this parental place of origin is Kosova, where he was born one month before he arrived in Switzerland. He spent his life in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, where he is a citizen, and he used to take pride in the fact that he served in the Swiss military. However, the story of his marriage is also the story of how he learnt about the limitations of this citizenship, resulting in a loss of that pride and his 'patriotism', as he says. This story resonates loudly with the sham- and force-discourse traced from the other side of the respective cross-border procedures.

One of the negative experiences that Bardhyl O. had when dealing with the Swiss authorities regarding his marriage and the immigration of his spouse had to do with the fact that he was asked to write a letter explaining how he met her; something he clearly interprets as an authenticity-test of his marriage intentions:

I had to write a letter explaining how I met her. This, I found very intrusive on behalf of the state, because it's private after all; its very intimate having to . . . well, I didn't know what to say; it's like I had to justify my love that I have for my wife. This was . . . yes, this really irritated me, I found it even hurtful.

. . . it took me practically a week to find what I wanted to say, without having to unveil my [personal] life in public. Because who is it that's going to read it, this letter? It will be a

bureaucrat who works for the visas. So I was as clear [laughs] as possible and as—how to say it—strict as possible. I said: now, I met her at this and this place, we spent so and so much time together and, well, I didn't go into details. But then I told myself however, won't they think its a scam marriage?

Further on in the marriage and migration procedures, Bardhyl is confronted with yet another requirement, which strikes him as offensive; he is asked to sign a confirmation document regarding the voluntariness of their marital union:

I had to sign a document, where I had to confirm that it wasn't a forced marriage, that I wasn't going to violate my wife. Anyway, bullshit like that.

As a result of these and other experiences of being treated in stereotypical and discriminating ways by Swiss border and migration institutions, in his conversation with Joëlle, he concludes that he learnt that in the eyes of these authorities, he would always remain a Kosovar, and hence be treated differently:

You're of Kosovar origin and that's it, mate. You can't do anything else. I felt like that, actually. I really had a kind of anti-patriotism because I told myself: But damn, Switzerland is shit, really [laughs]. [For] one year they pestered me with doing this army [thing], and now. . . But then for me it was really like: But damn, they take me for a . . . well, they don't make a difference whatsoever. What is this?

. . . They don't take me for a Swiss citizen. Actually, they take me for . . . well, for what I am, it's true: for a Kosovar. But one who will, I don't know, who will do human trafficking, who will make people enter the country and not make them leave again. And yeah I don't know, I felt bad. . . Yeah, I really have the impression that my Swiss nationality, well, I can stick it where I thought I could.

Continuing his reflections, Bardhyl looks back at his life, interpreting these experiences with the Swiss regime regulating cross-border of marriage with a '3rd country citizen' within a larger biographical, socio-political, and discursive context:

Kosovars, Albanians, the reputation they have, it's . . . well, I agree. Sometimes, . . . it's a bit , let's say, big cliché of the guys who buy themselves nice cars, who [laughs], who deal with drugs, I don't know, that kind of thing. And me, I have suffered a bit from these clichés . . . a bit like that all my life, you see. I told myself: But damn, it was all that stuff from before that came back to me. Because I have some friends, they are a bit racist, they used to say: "Ah, you're Albanian, but you, you're not like the others". Ah yeah, okay, I'm what then? [laughs].

This question about the identity, the subjectivity of those members of society marked as 'foreign', as 'having a different origin' prompts the conclusion that the process that Bardhyl's wife initiated when she embarked on the visa- and marriage-related bureaucratic procedures at her end of the transnational union is actually one without an endpoint. This implies that after having crossed that border, and even after having gained citizenship, the boundaries upholding that border will remain intact and cannot be crossed by *somebody like her*. At least, this is not possible in the current context of the Swiss national self-imaginary and migration-regime apparatus. Bardhyl's story is one of the many stories of 'second-generation migrants' that we got to hear during our interviews in Switzerland, all of which were marked by the question of belonging, exclusion, and inclusion, notwithstanding differences relating to the intensity of this mark and the wide range of individual responses. In light of these experience, a pessimistic conclusion that however 'integrated' individuals may be considered, or may consider themselves to be, they are bound to remain 'migrants' becomes inevitable (as scholars like Schinkel 2018 and Rytter 2019 have also argued). This is because national membership remains marked by the global hierarchizing boundaries of migration discourses and highly confining and essentializing national self-imaginaries. Through this logic, the border is permanently inscribed in the 'migrant subject', and in the words of Green (2012), so is the 'sense of border' or 'borderness'. This is how boundaries continue to perform the subjectivating work of the border, long after the respective nation-states' official bordering institutions are done with their formal legal procedures. The discrimination becomes apparent when 'real' citizens and 'originally not real' ones are allocated to different legal tracks, demonstrating how the boundary, however 'soft' or 'symbolic' the quality of its power may be considered, is doing a 'solid' job, governing cross-border mobilities and migration in general. So, ultimately, whenever someone, like Bardhyl, has to get back inside the nation-state's border and migration apparatus, *'all that stuff from before'* is likely to come back.

It is this question about the relationship between newcomers' subjectivities and the membership-logic informing European nation-states that I would like to bring into the discussion of the conclusions that I draw from my border analysis. And I will do so by walking down, and to the end of, two paths that have shaped and unshaped this thesis. The one I have followed in what one could call an "official" researcher's voice, and then the sometimes disorienting and disorderly voice, which has continued to interfere with the scientific narrative. It is this voice that carries this interlude to its end. In the following section, I will take over the thread of Bardhyl's reflection that one can never fully become a 'member' of this country, and carry it into academia as a professional sphere marked by the postulation of being mobile. But can somebody with the legal status of a 'migrant' live and work as a 'mobile'? And what happens when one is stuck in the process of climbing the ladder of legal status? I hope to shed some light on these difficulties of being in a long-term relationship with Switzerland, while being a 'third-country'- citizen conducting research.

8.2.2 The difficulty of being a 'third-country researcher' in Switzerland

I have been living, studying, and working in Switzerland as a researcher and lecturer for more than six years. I should renew my residence permit each year as a non-EU citizen. However, without a permanent contract, it is difficult to convince the migration authorities. This process is quite distressing because of the probability of losing the right to stay. Each time, I fear disappearing all of a sudden as if I never existed in this place.

Zeynep Sariaslan, in 'Fragment for two-legged trees' (2019, 107).

My experience with the authorities of the nation-state in which I have spent the most of my life has been profoundly marked by the minority status and predominantly negative image of the category of foreigners within which I have been counted. 'The Swiss state', against my better judgement, often felt like an obscure but inescapable, and possibly all-knowing entity to me. And my relationship with it was, generally speaking, a strained one, shaped by a series of encounters with different state authorities as well as by the political climate that has continuously shifted further right in the course of the last two decades. This shift has foregrounded a series of restrictions in migration and so-called integration law. But the first thing that comes to mind whenever I think of my relationship with the Swiss nation-

state is the fact that even though I have resided on its territory practically my entire life since the age of two, when I and my mother joined my 'guest working' father here, I am still not a citizen of this country. Every now and then, when people learn about this fact, they are incredulous and want to know how this is possible. But there is, I am afraid, no ultimate answer to this question. What I can give those people however, is a chronology of the main hurdles that lead to my long-lasting C-status as a permanent resident without associated political rights.

For a long time, citizenship had not been an issue in my family. And when I started university and moved out of my childhood home in the canton of Schaffhausen, I got registered in the city and canton of Zurich instead of just registering there as a so-called weekly commuter, as a way of keeping my official registration in Schaffhausen. This was a mistake, as I learnt later when I went to apply for citizenship for the first time during my first year of study. What I had had no idea of at the time was that in order to apply for citizenship I would need to have lived in the canton of Zurich for a time span of at least five years without interruption. So, I had to wait and live.

When I reached the point of my minimal Zurich life-span, I happened to be in the middle of writing my master's thesis and, right after that, preparing for my final exams. And, moreover, I was quite broke because I had tried to work as little as possible during that period in order to have as much time as possible to study for the exams. This financial factor weighed in seriously now, as after all of that waiting and living in Zurich, I had crossed the age limit of twenty-five years, and the cost was now well over 1,000 Franks instead of the 300 or so Franks, which one pays before reaching that age. I had other priorities then. After I had finally finished my studies, I started looking for a university job and found a position as a research assistant in Bremen, Germany. This was nice, but it also meant that I would have to postpone my naturalization further, for at least three years, during which time I would receive funding from the German university.

While this further delay in becoming a citizen was not a problem in itself, it became one due to the fact that for somebody with a C-residence permit, this period of three years spent outside of Switzerland could apparently mean not only losing the acknowledgement of having lived in Zurich for the past six years but also of having lived in Switzerland my entire life. Feeling more and more bewildered, I wondered whether I would even be able to get back in at all. . . . Suddenly, there were these obscure fears and insecurities, all of which

were related to my relationship with that country in which I'd grown up, but which did not recognize me as 'its own'. It could, if I left for another country for a while, erase all memory of me. I would be outside and that was that. It was not easy to understand the possible repercussions for my legal status in Switzerland; how precarious it would really be, once I left. Nor was it easy to find out what I needed to do and could do in order to prevent these horror-scenarios from becoming my reality, notwithstanding my university education, the exciting new job, and all of the fancy intellectual and political aspirations I had begun to nurture. I researched online, talked to friends, and even to my new boss in Germany, which was rather unpleasant. He had told me at several occasions how much he loved Swiss designs and that he had liked the aesthetics of my application documents. His enthusiasm about the idea of hiring a Swiss person had been palpable, and now I had to make it unmistakably clear to him that the person whom he had hired was actually a Macedonian-Albanian.

None of these attempts to find a sustainable solution provided a conclusive solution. The only halfway promising option I had heard of was to remain registered in Zurich while claiming to commute weekly for the purpose of education. But this sounded wildly absurd to me, with a twelve-hour train ride between Bremen and Zurich at the minimum. Should I really try and pursue this argument in front of the authorities? Did I stand a chance? There must be some other, more solid option, right? Or was I just being overly dramatic, and it was of course simply ridiculous to have such irrational fears?

Inquiring about these issues at the official cantonal and communal agencies, where I could have retrieved reliable information, was a no-go. I feared that if I opened up to them fully about my situation, I would risk reaching a point of no return. They would tell me that no, it was not possible to make use of this commuting option in my case and that I would have to give up my C-permit, or else the research job in Germany that had taken me over a year to secure.

As long as I did not disclose my situation, at least I had a chance of perhaps finding some other loophole. Eventually I went with the commuting story. And astonishingly enough, it worked. But I had to phrase my story carefully to the migration officer, concealing certain facts and emphasizing others. As I crafted this narrative, something started moving inside of me. It came alive every time I went into these appointments with the respective officials, trying to appear at ease and academic and normal and . . . Swiss.

During that time and the following year when I worked in Germany, I ended up quitting the position before my contract came to an end, for other reasons. I feared that the whole situation might blow up eventually, and then I would be accused of fraudulently representing my residence status to national authorities and consequently be deported from the country. And this was how one of those restrictions of migration law, against which I had rallied and written only about one year earlier, reached me very concretely at that point of my life. As the popular federal initiative, 'For the deportation of criminal foreigners' had been accepted and implemented, this scenario seemed to have become a possibility. There were rumours and insecurities floating about, and nobody seemed to know for certain which level of felony would qualify as a trigger for applying that new regulation. Again, insecurity and lurking fears were starting to swallow up rational consideration, silently eating away at my already very patchy sense of belonging to this place. I had to face the fact that I could no longer take it for granted that I could proceed with my life here after Bremen, while feeling as if I was making myself look ridiculous in front of my (Swiss) friends whenever the issue came up. I came to terms with this entire deportation matter by assuming a habit of joking about it. For instance, I would tell them how, while protesting for political and social rights of migrants at a non-authorized rally, delivering a speech in my unpopular Eastern-Switzerland dialect, I would be arrested and deported to Macedonia, where I would have a blast spending time with my fabulous grandmothers!

However, I still live in this country today. And while it would appear that now, finally, I should run to the naturalization office to get my residence status secured once and for all, I seem to be further away from doing so than ever. It seems like this experience of fearing that I would lose my status had the very opposite effect on me. It is, again, irrational and somewhat ridiculous and certainly not smart. But the fact is since my semi-legal time in Bremen, I cannot seriously bring myself to take up my application process. I have been to that desk in city hall twice since then, receiving a ticket with a number, waiting for it to appear on the screen in the city hall, and for the green light by the door to go on and then step into the room, where a nice gentlemen would hand me the papers with all the 'requirements' written on them. But after I take these papers home, they sit on some shelf until I forget them. Even opening them up and reading about the next steps makes me feel weary and indignant.

I do not want to hear what they need me to prove, so that they can acknowledge my full human existence here. No matter how 'highly skilled' they are, researchers from '3rd countries' remain migrants to be integrated.

8.2.3 Of Disorderly Voices and Scientific Hygiene

I never wanted to build a "body of work", but to preserve these, our bodies, breathing and unaccounted for, inside the work.

Ocean Vuong, in answer to his mother's question what it means to be a writer, in 'On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous' (2019, 175)

For much of the history of "Western" (social) science, emotions were positioned as an "epistemological other" (Somers and Gibson 2007). They were relegated to the losing side of the binary oppositions that structured intellectual life and work, and placed "beyond the pale" of social scientific endeavour. Yet, when we probe a little deeper, it turns out that many of the well-known theorists of power, from Hobbes to Gramsci, from Lukes to Giddens and from Elias to Foucault, let emotions play a significant yet largely unacknowledged "underlabouring" role in their work (Heaney 2013, 355).

So, I figured, when even these 'well-known theorists of power' and, it seems unnecessary for Heaney to mention, these well-settled men 'let emotions [...] play a significant ... role in their work', why shouldn't I? Consequently, I tried to stop worrying about the unseemly personal, at times emotional, voice that has continued to subvert my attempt to write an orderly dissertation.

As has become clear by now, Bardhyl O. is not alone in his feeling of being 'stuck' in his spatial origins; in the never-ending story of integration. And for that matter, neither are the rest of the people we have (and have not) talked to in Kosova, in Turkey, and beyond. And me too, again under very, very different and most importantly, under similar voluntary conditions, perhaps, as Jhumpa Lahiri. I have struggled with the fact that I felt that my voice, whatever that is, is irrelevant or even that it hinders a successful 'scientific endeavour'; an endeavour, the endpoint of which involves a kind of test too, and ultimately an endeavour, which, after passing through many difficult moments, should lead finally to the crossing of a boundary, if not a border; if not even, a border, too . . . ?

I will lay out for you a fragment of my experience of learning to 'write academically', and my realization that it entails crossing what I find to be a bordered boundary drawn around academia, and, in particular, migration studies and social anthropology.

Learning how to write academically does not exactly come easy to me. I find it hard

to gain authority over the text, often feeling blocked and then lost. The grave voices of the thousandsevenhundredandeightytwo brilliant authors who have already written about my topics start weighing down on me from somewhere high above my head, and my own voice falls silent. That particular voice to consider mine seems to bring disorder into things rather than to clarify them. Even more than that, I suspect it may stem from a place of disorder, both incapable and unwilling to be contained by the boundaries of the academic genre.

(I am, of course, well aware that there is no singular academic genre; in truth, a plurality of academic genres exists. However, knowing that did not help me to accelerate my writing process as much as it should have because a lot of time can pass before that plurality is found.)

By now, I have somehow managed to make my peace with this silencing effect, considering it a part and parcel of academic writing. And I try to take it into account in terms of 'time management', calculating in the hours I lose by just being blocked in advance. Although, I suspect that I am far from being the only one to struggle with this kind of thing, I can only speak personally for myself, which is unpleasant.

(And I can already hear some of those voices awaken, objecting from somewhere high up: *Stop it! Science is not about you, personally! It's about the research object—or subject.*)

Anyway, I shrug them off and keep wondering why other types of writing—journalistic, essayistic or literary—have such a different effect on me. The (creative) process of writing a piece for some blog or magazine usually lifts my spirits and empowers me. Clearly, this difference has a lot to do with the specific, highly regulated types of texts that are the norm within academia, especially when it comes to papers; a peer-reviewed norm to be fulfilled in order to be able to publish, publish, and publish some more. (And if you're not maintaining that rhythm, you're likely to be doing it wrong.) An austere, quasi-objective style dominates the genre, following clear-cut, mostly pre-given, hierarchical text structures and an (ideally) hermetic argumentation. All of this is supported by heavy bodies of literature, which barely allow for you, the newcomer, to dip your inexperienced academic toe into one of those miraculous things called *research gaps*. One might say, it's not easy to write at an academic level. And I couldn't agree more!

But, as you may have guessed, there's something else; and it was during a PhD workshop on research positionality, held at a prestigious, old university in Germany, when I

ultimately figured out what that something was. It had to do with the fact that I am what could be considered a migrant (albeit the second, updated generation thereof) entering the field of migration studies.

(And to that point too, some of the voices from above have substantial objections: *Yes, but how do you make sure then that you remain objective in your judgement? And another one: What is it with this recent trend? I see it more and more these days: students, writing papers on topics that they are personally affected by . . . migrants researching migrants. . . . anthropologists studying their own ethnic groups and countries of origin . . . or dealing with local, Western contexts. . . . I doubt it is possible to see things without the necessary distance.*)

(That I can easily challenge, jokingly even: *So, then you should probably turn to women's studies. For how could you, as a man, ever have enough distance to other men to justify doing ethnographies on them?!*)

(But then, from some unexpected direction, a voice comes at me, this time in German and uttered in a dry, matter-of-fact tone, serving me with the following composite words within some casually inserted dependent clause in the way that only the German language can: '*. . . wie diese Art der Betroffenheitsforschung etwa in den Kulturwissenschaften gezeigt hat . . .*')¹⁰

Of course! There can be no claim to objectivity in science, and certainly not in the social sciences. There may be those who allow themselves to disappear more easily inside the choir of default scientific voices, obscuring their particular positionalities, and those for whom this is not so easy. But as to the assumption of objectivity in the production of academic knowledge, of course, this is not so. This topic has long been thoroughly deconstructed and critiqued by many recognized voices within academia. (Does this really need referencing?)

(And despite all of these 'of courses' that annihilate side remark on '*Betroffenheitsforschung*' did just that: annihilate my voice. Forming a secret union with this or that little episode and this or that everyday observation, it managed to negate the possibility of my authority, and hence authorship, in such matters *affecting me*.

¹⁰ ,...as this kind of ,research (conducted) by affected' has shown for instance in social sciences...'

(‘Me’, in this case would be somebody with one of those ‘cultures’ usually studied ‘in den Kulturwissenschaften’, as opposed to those cultures that aren’t cultures in the sense that they are left to the sciences, apparently unneeding of further specification, such as Sociology.)

But where does all of that legitimizing and annihilating power come from? How can it fit into such small sentences, or even fragments of sentences? It’s not like that speaker held me by the throat. At least not physically. I just know that at the moment when I first heard it uttered—and not even directed at me personally but at a whole lecture hall of students—I could not imagine how I could counter that notion’s validity without my voice or face carrying any signs of bitterness, hurt, or anger, and thus ultimately giving away that I was, indeed, *affected*. Delivering myself to that hegemonic Western male—pardon my labelling, but he made sure that no doubt could arise in that respect, applying all of the necessary paraphernalia such as donning a suit and tie, adopting a comfortable leaning position at the lectern, a self-assured tone and volume of voice, and so forth. So, delivering myself to him as the self-fulfilment of his prophecy seemed, at the time, to be an inevitable outcome of raising my hand, and then there was my barely controlled voice. I could only add shame and more anger to the emotions standing in the way of the objectivity of my scientific gaze.

(So consequently, my counterargument that day was as eloquent as this . . .)

And I remained invisible in that crowd, heart pounding, with a storm cloud of bits and pieces of sentences on my notepad, where my clear and respectful but challenging comment to him should have been, while he left the lecture hall, unaffected and consistently self-assured as usual, heading to his next important appointment. (Yes, of course he was carrying a leather briefcase, but not the glossy, black managerial kind; the chique, brown college-kind.)

This is more or less how the fact of my ‘migrancy’ has come to interfere, every now and again, with my role as a ‘migration scholar’ in the course of my academic formation, at times executing an irrational amount of power over my ability to write, think, and be ‘academic.

At the same time, this experience has only strengthened my wish to write, think, and be in that field, with ‘my voice’ going astray, de-centred, and not necessarily in a good way. In this text, you were able to witness one effect of this errantry: the many ‘rabbit holes’ dug

into it. They lead you, my readers, off to all of those 'personal' levels and playful sites of language use, which I had somehow, somewhere, learnt to view as inappropriate in a thesis. These narrative side-tracks, many but not all of which I have deleted, have seriously threatened to bring down the entire writing project, eating away at the structure of its foundations. It was hard to explain, let alone be done with that pointless struggle; one waged against power threads that appeared to be hair-thin and hardly visible to others, made of a subtle, subjective fabric rather than that objective quality of facts. And when I did try to objectify my struggle by holding down the thin, delicate patch of fabric with the weight of scientific argument, the whole thing was sure to rip. So why bother discuss all that personal stuff at all now that the substantial, academic work is finally done?

For one thing because students of mine have told me about how they revise their papers in a way that at least partly deletes their personal voices from the text, just as I used to: ~~'ich zeige auf, dass es zeigt sich, dass . . . ich bin mir nicht sicher, ob die Annahme ist nicht gesichert, dass . . . Which is to say;~~ This is why I think, that we continue to learn these objectifying techniques, even if unconsciously, and therefore we must continue to think about them too and delete, where ~~need be~~ we hold it to be necessary.

To put this more generally, this is why I find that these 'of courses' require continuing attention and scrutiny in scientific everyday practice, notwithstanding their long-established theoretical hold. Or at least that is what I conclude from being haunted by that 'officially bygone' division into binaries: subjective versus objective, emotion versus reason, personal versus scientific/professional, and finally, researched versus researching. The way we think, write, and act as researchers is shaped by much more than just state-of-the-art literature and the power lines that are more or less out on the open. It is just as much held in check by the fine, opaque web of soft power lines that is less graspable. This goes especially, of course, for newcomers, who are still looking for some secure epistemological thread or rope to hold on to. This leads to the second reason for going ahead and putting into words the process of writing this thesis: holding on to the work, imagination, and support (which again is both work) of others enabled me to do so.

That chain of work is endless (see the acknowledgements). But to keep things compact, first of all, there is the work of imagining, initially by a parent, then by a teacher, a mentor, a professor, who were able, where others were not, to *imagine* 'someone like me' in a place such as a 'higher' school, a university, a research job, with which the migrantized

population is rarely associated. (And, most importantly maybe, which we are not used to associating with ourselves.) This simple but liminal fact of 'getting in' is in no way to be taken for granted, and the loopholes that allow it often take the shape of a human being (with a powerful imagination).

And from then on, by being able to hear and hold on to more and more such imaginative voices coming from within academia, albeit often from its somewhat secluded corners. These voices may come from 'corners' such as Feminist and Gender Studies, especially the insights emanating from Standpoint Theory (Sandra Harding 1991) and the discussion of Situated Knowledge (Donna Haraway 1988). Relatedly, they may come from critical intersectional and postcolonial perspectives on being in academia *while being different* (Lila Abu-Lughod 1991; Sara Ahmed 2007; Homi Bhaba 2004; Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson 1992; Audre 2007).

And with regard to writing differently in terms of differing academic positionalities, I was influenced by Ruth Behar's highly reflexive work (1995; 1997). In particular, Behar's innovative writing on border-crossings, in which she not only links epistemology and positionality-related autobiographical reflections to the research topic but she also demonstrates how this approach can be skilfully conveyed in terms of the style of writing (1993). Another important author who includes autobiographic accounts and critical reflection on problems relating to the researcher–researched relation, equally from a feminist anthropologist perspective but also from a de-colonial one, is Halleh Ghorashi. She discusses the importance of sharing the authority of authorship with those about whom one writes, which for her means more than just writing *polyvocally*, that is, the dialogic mode of writing suggested by Clifford and Marcus (1986), which, Ghorashi argues, promote the voice of the author at the expense of those 'others', which is why she strives for *polyphonic* texts with veritable co-authorship, '*providing agency and alternative voices to counter the dominant discourse*' (Ghorashi 2014, 59). I find this writing/researching strategy inspiring, but was not able to adopt it in my project.

Furthermore, I want to point to the guidance provided by the angry voice of Audre Lorde, who demonstrated that emotions are not the useless effects of inequality, piling up into hurdles in front of those on its down side; they can instead be turned into powerful instruments by those same people. She demonstrates how to speak in that angry voice, while remaining dignified (2007). And then there is the voice of Sarah Ahmed, who

managed to point to herself, her own skin, raising questions about the exclusivity of the academic apparatus (at times called 'diversity') from there (2007).

Lastly, from much closer by, there are the voices of friends and colleagues, who have encouraged me to scrutinize this writing issue. Here, I mention just a few: Faten Khazaei, who is unafraid to name what should be put on the agenda of current research on inequality— and how; and Joanna Menet, with her differentiated and engaging way of observing and bringing issues of inequality and positionality in academia to the table; qualities reflected in both their works (Khazaei 2019; Menet 2020). Flurina Peyer, "gave me" Ruth Behar; we have had many great conversations on writing. And then there is Julia Schmid, of course, who gave me, above all, excellent questions.

These were some of the voices that have reassured me that it might be worth trying to explore whether there is some use to be found in 'my' emotions with regard to writing. So, I will open my concluding discussions with an attempt to push my observations on the matter of migrantized research positionalities in the context of migration research just a little bit further, exploring its underlying logic by using the tools of participant observation, poetology, and autoethnography. This will, I hope, bring to the fore some of the implications of this positionality-matter, respectively its relation to the boundary- and border-topic of this thesis: how learning to speak the hegemonic language can threaten to silence marginalized voices.

PART IV

CONCLUDING

9 Concluding Discussion

An Apparatus of Borders and Boundaries: On the 'Soft' Bordering Technologies of Subjectivation

The border has long been deconstructed as being much more than a mere geopolitical line, let alone a fixed physical materiality (Andreas 2000; Balibar 1998, 2009; Cooper and Perkins 2015; De Genova et al. 2015; Fassin 2011; Vaughan-Williams 2008). Rather, it exists literally everywhere (Lyon 2005; Paasi 2020), as a borderscape (Dell'agnese and Amilhat Szary 2015), an imaginary (Brambilla et al. 2015; Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002), and a practice (Andersson 2014; Cooper and Perkins 2015; Heinze et al. 2016) that is effectively inscribed in the im/mobilized migrant body (Hess et al. 2015; Kreichauf 2018; Lyon 2005; Schmoll 2014; Walters 2006) and even as an adjective, a state of being (Green 2012). However, the study and theorization of borders, I would argue, still somehow continues to be predominantly centred on its more materialized manifestations.

Looking back at the development of critical border studies, one finds that a great deal of the innovation and epistemological liveliness that mark the field have been informed by a dominant focus on 'irregular migration' and, as a consequence, also by an emphasis on ('smart') border technologies in the narrower sense of the word, including electronic and, for example, DNA-based, devices, systems, and procedures designed to track, scan, measure, recognize, and catch the bodies of people who seek to cross borders 'illegally' (Broeders 2007; Glouftsiou and Scheel 2020; Hedetoft 2003; Sparke 2004; Topak 2014; Van Houtum 2010; Verstraete 2001; Walters 2006). While in regularized migration the border is just as much at the heart of governing apparatuses, comprising visa procedures, discourses, and mobilities (Bigo and Guild 2016; Block 2014; Bonjour 2014; Infantino 2016 and 2019), it is much less pointed towards the physical, bodily, and territorial act of crossing per se. With regard to 'irregular migration' on the other hand, the physical immediacy of the border, or at least that of the moving, contained, and otherwise controlled body is

more explicit, and the precariousness of the journey is most often at a wholly different level as well.

Generally speaking, one can argue that the *materialities* of space, border technologies, and the body are more pronounced when it comes to bordering apparatuses designed to control 'irregular migration'. And as studies on irregularized migration continue to represent the 'royal road' to the development of border ontologies, this discipline that has so effectively 'dissolved' the material basis of its research topic, continues to be, in its mainstream, shaped by a somewhat tenacious tie to materiality.

As a result, the migrant body, too, has been placed centre stage as a material, biophysical entity; as a bordering space, and not just by national and regional bordering institutions, I argue, but also by border scholarship. But I will get to this point later on. Here I need to stress, more generally, that this fact has, of course, also found its reflection in the way that borders have been theorized, when, for instance, William Walters claims that current borders are best described through the power diagram of control rather than the paradigm of discipline. This is because differing from discipline, '*control expresses little interest in shaping the identity, moulding the subjectivity of its targets. It's got no time for that*' (Walters 2006, 198). This kind of controlling grasp has far-reaching ontological consequences for the subject governed in such a way, which becomes visible not as an individual anymore but, in Deleuzian terms, as a *dividual*. Such a subject is governed '*rather like baggage, mail, or . . . living matter*'—in short like an object, which is very much in accordance with the de-humanizing metaphor of the border as a filter and the everyday portrayal of refugees in media and political discourses. And so, consequently, a further expression of this ongoing heightened attention to the however fluid, digital, and increasingly ephemeral but still material side of border technologies, is the predominant focus on the bordering function of selection (i.e., 'filtering') rather than that of subjectivation.

But 'migrant subjects' are, of course, much more than 'living matter' – this is always the case, notwithstanding the way in which they are grasped by bordering technologies. While they do indeed come to embody borders, they are never 'just' bodies and never just what is rationalizable by bordering institutions. They are *living* in the encompassing sense of the word, experiencing borders and, most importantly, acting in them and through them as beings with full inner lives and perspectives.

In this study, I have examined a part of what this means with regard to a particular type of border regime aimed at governing the regularized form of spousal unification under the condition of mandatory pre-departure language testing. I have done so by closely studying the accounts of people grasped by the respective European nation-states' bordering apparatuses that grasps them not just as bodies but also through their knowledge, minds, feelings, and the resistance with which they meet it. In short, it grasps them *through subjectivation*, a bordering function which, like that of selection, contains an element of objectivation.¹¹ However, it does not exhaust itself in that. And, I argue, this has to do again with the particular nature of regularized bordering processes, which offer an entryway into European countries (an 'opening', as Saskia Bonjour has insightfully noted), and with that, a particular anticipated role for newcomers.

Although there are border scholars working on regularized forms of migration too, they remain sparse in comparison with those within the border literature working on 'irregular migration'. Cross-border issues are prominent in areas such as

¹¹ It may have also been this objectification of the migrant and the implication that migration apparatuses are overwhelmingly powerful regulators of (irregular) migration that led scholars in critical border studies to carve out the Autonomy of Migration approach. And while I share and appreciate the perspective these scholars open up on the contestation and resilience of both migrating subjects and migration logics, I believe that in order to get (to) the agency of the 'migrant subject', it is necessary to focus more explicitly on subjectivation. Furthermore, I am not sure as to how far this brings us with regard to the study of regularized forms of migration, which have rarely been in the focus of the Autonomy of Migration research. And this might be the case for good reasons. Here we deal primarily with what happens inside the tight boundaries of the border apparatus, not with how people find their way around respective regulations that seek to exclude them. Thus, the freedom for migrants to find autonomous pathways is, if not absent, very restricted.

'work migration' (Bigo and Guild 2005; Crowley 2005; Guild 2016; Infantino 2016, 2019), and as feminist scholars have rightfully pointed out (e.g., D'Aoust 2019, 179), they are often dealt with as the opposite of the latter. This trend is especially evident in works on 'family and marriage migration' (Andrikopoulos 2021; Aybek 2015; Block 2014; Bonjour 2014; Bonjour and Kraler 2015; Charsley 2005; Strasser et al. 2009) and also on family politics and citizenship—areas most closely related to my study—which are predominantly studied in relation to the migration paradigm. Interest in examining these forms of legalized cross-border movements through a border and bordering lens has only emerged relatively recently with D'Aoust (2019) or Gutekunst (2015, 2018) being rare examples.

Apart from the above trend, in the past two decades, there has also been a development in the field of border studies that entails approaching irregularized forms of cross-border migration with the help of ethno-methodological tools that enable a grasp of border performativity, the discursive negotiation and contestation of borders, and border imaginaries. The literature grouped under the theme of 'Autonomy of Migration' is a seminal part of this field (Glouftsiou and Scheel 2020; Heinze et al. 2016; Hess 2017; Scheel 2013a, 2013b; Scheel and Gutekunst 2019; Wonders and Jones 2018). Whereas these approaches have strongly pushed the border studies agenda in the direction of the performative enactment and embodiment of borders, they have still not been sufficiently integrated into the general theorization on borders, especially when it comes to scholarly discussions of regularized migration. I suggest that a deeper understanding of how exactly people experience and embody the border, and through what types of social, symbolic, spatial, and political processes and border technologies can be forged by pushing further in the direction of this line of scholarly discussion, including on forms of 'regularized migration'. This has been my approach in this study on spousal unification and the predeparture language requirement.

In this study, by bringing a form of 'regular migration' into the picture, I primarily contribute to the field of critical border studies. But from a family

unification perspective, which traditionally and almost exclusively has looked at this cross-border phenomenon through the lens of migration, often referring to the notion of 'marriage migration', my contribution has been to open up a critical border studies perspective on the issue (the work of Gutekunst [2015 and 2019] has already paved the way for this endeavour).

In short, the main point that I want to make here is as follows. The epistemological predominance of irregular migration, and with it the focus on materiality and the more easily rationalizable elements at work inside the border apparatus as well as on its selecting bordering function, has led to a one-sidedness or imbalance in the development of border ontologies. My study adds to the body of literature on the losing side of that imbalance. In my work, I applying an open, bottom up approach to the bordering apparatus surrounding the 'pre-departure language requirement for third-country incoming spouses' at large, which also considers the more easily graspable, materialized aspects and functions of the border apparatus, such as the socio-spatial setting of the language classroom or the hybridized practices of language testing and border control. However, I also explicitly tackle the finer, less graspable power lines at play, arguing that they are characteristic of and vital to this extraterritorialized form of border regime that needs to function mostly 'from afar'. Here, as I have shown, hard power lines, such as economic and political hierarchies and the concrete materiality of territory and other spatial surroundings, as well as that of the body, while remaining crucial to the functioning of the border apparatus, shift to the background of the bordering process. Within the embassy, the language classroom, and the test centre, it is the mind, emotions, imaginaries and speech that are actively engaged to fulfil a key bordering function.

My work contributes to the above-described literature on critical border studies that has been on the losing side of that border ontological imbalance in three ways. The first is through its thematic focus on 'regular migration' (as opposed to irregularized migration). The second is through its analytical focus on borders as

boundaries, more precisely on the framework of subjectivation as a complex, multi-layered, and dynamic process of bordered boundary making that actively engages (as opposed to selecting) the 'migrant subject'. The third entails its use of an intersectional feminist and race critical/raciolinguistic methodological approach. I have already discussed the first contribution. In this concluding discussion, I will elaborate on the second point, subjectivation, which is at the heart of this thesis, weaving in the third one as I proceed, by flagging the main arguments that I have made in the course of my analysis as my key contributions.

The three thematic aspects along the lines of which I have traced subjectivation processes in this analysis are borders and bordered boundaries as *discursive certainties, as emotions*, both in dynamic interrelation with imaginaries (discussed in part II of the thesis), and as *language practices*, respectively *language learning and testing as border policies* (discussed in mainly in part III of the thesis). I argue that each of these elements, as they respectively become part of visa applicants' (border) knowledge, serve as functional parts of the extraterritorialized and externalized bordering apparatus in which each represents a particular kind of border technology through which that apparatus accesses its subjects, thereby governing and shaping them.

As individuals encounter the various institutions of the border apparatus, they come to embody these experiences and performatively re/enact the role of 'visa-applicant', 'migrant', 'language learner', orientalized 'housewife' and so forth, irrespective of the level of compliance or resistance with which they meet it. In my analysis of border governance, I have shown that this 'embodiment' is a lived experience in the sense that it engages the subject much more deeply than do 'bodies of affect'; but subjectivation is performed through the full inner lives of people by means of their knowledges, emotions, and imaginaries, and often in interrelation with each other as, for instance, imaginaries of the nation-state that are associated with particular emotions towards that state. These forms of knowledge, activated in the bordering process as a language-testing procedure, however

fleeting in nature they may appear, are far from being 'byproducts' of the subject's passage through of the border apparatus. Rather, I argue, they offer the apparatus a highly effective, intimate grasp on the subjects it seeks to govern; and have been incorporated by the border regime as governing technologies. I will briefly summarize each of the arguments that I make in this thesis, sketching out the particularities of these governing technologies and positioning my work within the existing literature.

Discursive Certainties (and Imaginaries)

In the first part of my empirical analysis, I deconstructed the notions of sham, force, and integration that shape the hegemonic discourse on 'cross-border-marriage' as its discursive cornerstones, tracing the key arguments used to legitimize the respective border and migration policies installed by European nation-states. I showed how strongly gendered, classed, culturalizing, and racializing boundaries are drawn to construct stereotypical imaginaries of cross-border wives and husbands. Demonstrating that these constructions are part of collective imaginaries that uphold the macro structures of global power hierarchies by shaping European countries' migration discourses and polling results is not a new undertaking. Moreover, it is one that has recently attracting growing interdisciplinary interest (Block 2014 and 2019; Blommaert and Verschueren 1992; Rheindorf and Wodak 2020; Scheibelhofer 2020; Wodak 2015; Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002; Yuval-Davis et al. 2018). Joining with Miriam Gutekunst (Gutekunst 2015, 2018), what I bring to the discourse analysis of such nationalizing spatial and border imaginaries is to show how they operate at the micro-level of everyday bordering practices. More precisely, I show how such discourses, as part of people's everyday knowledge of the world and its borderiness (Green 2012) feed into the process of subjectivation very concretely. As far I am aware, such an inquiry, done in this way, has not yet been attempted within the field of border studies.

I argue that border knowledge, in the form of discursive certainties (Schmidt-Brücken 2018), affects the people embarking on the visa application procedure, as they are confronted with it in all of the various institutions involved in the bordering process, from the embassy counter to the language classrooms and testing centres. Examining how these notions meet the subject and, more importantly, how people make sense of and reflect on them in their narratives, I have shown that the normalization and naturalization of these assumptions as discursive certainties are central to subjectivation. This entails becoming somebody who migrates across borders via spousal unification; that is, becoming 'a cross-border spouse' and going to Europe.

The certainties relating to (powerful) borders between third countries and Europe as well as the stereotypical assumptions and other boundaries drawn along these borders underlie the subjectivation process. Apart from the fundamental knowledge of the factuality and power of these borders shaping individuals' self-positionings and narrative meaning-making in general, certain discursive statements format the respective discourses, negotiations, and subjectivations with regard to this particular type of border regime: 'People from these countries (third countries), especially men, are likely to enter a cross-border marriage for the wrong reasons (to move to Europe rather than because of "true love")'; 'these people, especially women, are forced into cross-border marriages'; 'mandatory language learning facilitates the integration of these people, especially that of women'.

In the self-positionings and sense-making strategies of the individuals whose data I analysed, I came to witness that they could not but take on these assumptions of sham, force and integration, making a case for themselves and their own relationship and partner choice as being *different*. At times, they even questioned the legitimacy and validity of such othering ascriptions altogether.

When it comes to the sham discourse, it is particularly clear how the related assumptions of false interest and calculation that come to play at the discursive surface rely on a deeply rooted knowledge of the border as a fact. When, for

instance, Florent S. is faced with the assumption of 'obviously' being with his Swiss girlfriend 'for the papers'; an assumption that he challenges on a daily basis, it meets him as subtly and naturally as a change of temperature going through the room. This kind of power line that is particularly fine and hard to grasp indicates how very deeply border knowledge is engraved in our minds, in the knowledge we embody as subjects positioned on this or that side of the border. The incredible strength of these fine power lines made up of mere 'information', of imaginaries of the border as a fact so powerful that it only needs to be alluded to in order to make somebody its subject (a third-country husband who is after papers) is brought to light. It needs no *actual physical presence of an army or navy* to enforce the border on the subject. Thus, I have shown how discursive certainties govern and shape subjectivities at a micro level in everyday bordering practices long before a person begins the actual procedures for family unification.

In addition, with regard to the force assumption, my in-depth reading of people's narratives reveals an entirely different force discourse developing in the shadow of the hegemonic one. When people in 'third countries' who have to pass through the institutions of pre-departure language testing speak of force so frequently, it is not as part of the orientalizing othering discourse on forced marriage, but with regard to the force that is executed over them by European nation-states' (extraterritorialized) border policies. By elucidating this alternative force discourse developed transnationally from the other side of the border, I have contributed to the de-centring of migration and border studies (Dahinden 2016). And, with regard to subjectivation, I have shown how the use of force as a means of 'integration' effectuates the opposite of what it claims to do. Specifically, it creates a negative relationship with the (potential) new country of residence from the onset, even before migration, and with that, the perception of negative ascriptions and degradation as a newcomer whose voice is silenced. This leads me to the discussion of my second contribution to the field of border studies, namely the role of

emotions (partly again in interrelation with imaginaries) in the process of subjectivation.

Emotions (and Imaginaries)

My empirical analysis of border narratives has shown that not only do emotions play a major part in the bordering apparatus but they also vitally contribute to its key governing function, which, according to Agamben (2009), lies in subjectivation as *'a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject'* (Agamben 2009; 11).

I have developed my understanding of how subjectivation relates to boundary-making processes by emphasizing that it is performative. This can be seen in the active engagement of the governed through the compulsion to fulfil the language requirement but also through the very immediate emotional effects that this use of force has on the governed subject. Evidently, being confronted with sharp boundaries, such as being spatially confined, being forced 'to learn the language' and being degraded as a 'third-country citizen' receiving the discriminatory treatment of a 'second-class citizen' evokes negative emotions, which are often quite intense, as I have shown. This is, I argue, how the border apparatus intimately reaches into the subject. Such a socio-symbolic, identificatory, and emotional grasp on the individual effectuates governance of the subject, who is shaped through these experiences of being positioned in particular hierarchized ways vis-à-vis the receiving state's migration policies. The 'message' that such treatment by the border apparatus sends out to the governed individuals, the newcomers to the respective European nation states, is to a large extent conveyed through the emotions associated with that treatment. I have shown in my research that given their subjectivating effects, emotions should be recognized as a highly effective governing technology and a detrimental part of the border apparatus—a recognition that is largely missing in the field of border studies.

The so-called 'affective' or 'emotional turn' (Ahmed 2014; Woodward 1996) has only very recently brought the issue of emotions to the attention of scholars working on migration (Andrikopoulos 2021; Bilgiç 2018; D'Aoust 2014 and 2019) and borders (Scheibelhofer 2020; Schmoll 2014). Before that, the topic of migration and emotions was taken up in work within the field of sociolinguistic discourse analysis, focusing mainly on the ways in which affect and emotion have been used to shape migration discourses and politics in Western countries (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992; Kury 2003; Wodak 2015). Thus, with regard to the above-discussed naturalizing and normalizing function of discursive certainties on the one hand and collective (border) imaginaries on the other, the nexus of emotions and migration appear to have attracted a low degree of scientific attention at the macro level of the discursive construction of political and everyday realities and almost none at the micro level of bordering practices.

A scholar who has profoundly shaped this field of emotions and migration is Sarah Ahmed. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2014), Ahmed analyses right-wing discourses as not only being fed by means of opposition to 'foreigner' figures but also as aligning people within groups through their emotions, resulting in a naturalizing sense of belonging (to a particular nation, group, territory etc.). My perspective on subjectivation through emotions (and other forms of knowledge, such as discursive certainties and imaginaries) is strongly informed by Ahmed's performative approach to the embodied 'doing' of emotions as boundaries that are manifested on/in the body:

The "doing" of emotions, I have suggested, is bound up with the sticky relation between signs and bodies: emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialise the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds. (Ahmed 2014, 191)

Scheibelhofer (2020) very recently applied such an affective perspective to the field of border studies, looking at the way in which emotions, as part of 'doing boundary', have an effect on 'doing border' from an Austrian (non-migrant)

perspective, resulting in both a 'politics of fear' (as encompassingly discussed by sociolinguist Wodak 2015b) and solidarity.

I should also mention the work of Ali Bilgiç (2018), who takes the emotion-migration nexus, in the context of irregular migration into concrete bordering settings, using an approach that is similar to mine. He asks *what it is that emotions do* during the encounter between the representative and protector of the sovereign body politic and the irregular migrant 'stranger' and 'deterritorialized body' (2018, 543), making the following argument:

[E]motions such as fear, disgust, and compassion are performed in the biopolitical security governance of irregular migration by producing a "socially abject" life as its object. This is a life that is to be killed, despised, and saved. Encounters between the irregular migrant and a European border security actor constitute a neo-colonial masculinity. (Bilgiç 2018, 542)

It is during that encounter of the border with the life of the migrant 'other, that sovereignty is produced, namely through the emotional performances of border security actors. Bilgiç is not only one of the rare scholars who takes emotion as part of the border apparatus seriously within his research but he also tackles its effects on the subject, even if he does not apply the terminology of subjectivation.

One effect of this focus on emotions and the othering-work they do with regard to the production and reproduction of subjects in power (which is such an important contribution), is that they exclude the 'migrant subject outside the discussion. Thus, this subject appears solely as a body with the function assigned to it by the bordering interaction, namely the (abject) object of those hegemonic gendered emotions. Like Bilgiç, I too am interested in the way in which emotions, as part of a border apparatus, shape subjectivities, but here I look at them as being situated at the receiving end of the emotional governing process.

Another scholar whose work engages emotions and borders, and probably the one whose approach is closest to mine is Anne-Marie D'Aoust. In her investigation of the role of love in marriage migration management practices (D'Aoust 2014, 2019), she not only focuses on (the regularized migration-form) of

family unification but, referring to Foucault 2007, she also explicitly conceptualizes emotions as a technology of migration governance. D'Aoust demonstrates how *'love becomes both a target and object of governmental calculations in projects of immobility and stability'*, thus shaping peoples mobilities (2014, 320). This is the case, for instance, when intimate partners have to 'prove' the love that binds them together or that binds that couple to the European nation-state for which they are requesting access (for the third-country spouse).

Before I proceed further in my concluding discussion on emotions and affects, pointing out how I understand these terms and how that understanding makes my contribution to border studies a decidedly feminist one, I want to note that while my work resembles that of D'Aoust, it points in a different direction. Like me, she tackles emotion used as a governing technology, and like Bilgiç, she does not focus on what this means for the subject or what it does with the subject targeted in such a way. Instead, she is interested in what this does with sovereignty and governmentality (something that Agamben might find difficult to accept, as governance and subjectivation are one and the same thing to him). The point here is that although D'Aoust works on regularized migration, she does not look at how these legal and bordering regulations come to shape the subjects it allows to pass through. Similar to the majority of works on irregular migration, she looks at the selecting function of emotion as a bordering technology (separating those whose emotional 'proof' succeeds in facilitating their mobility distinct from those who are immobilized).

Furthermore, my perspective on the subject produced by means of emotions, among other bordering technologies, departs from the 'governed subject' in the sense that I do not make the topic of the governing apparatus ('love' in D'Aoust's study) my research topic; rather, I receive it bottom up from the narratives of the people who experience and deal with the bordering apparatus.

D'Aoust's contribution fills an important research gap, showing how something as 'fuzzy' and stereotyped as the emotion of love can be used and

reproduced as a governing technology by border institutions. I argue, however, that we can go even further in that claim, showing that not only do prominently topicalized and politicized emotions that are put centre stage by the hegemonic discourse have a part in border apparatuses but emotions, in general, are also integral technologies of (border) governance. For emotions, especially negative and upsetting emotions associated with 'suffering' the execution of force as a governed subject, live an obscured life, hardly entering into public discourse. And if they do, they often end up portraying the image of migrant victimhood.

But there is another important strand of literature to be mentioned that approaches the border/emotion nexus, albeit from a different angle. Mostly departing from a critical spatiality lens, these works (for instance, Kreichauf 2018; Lyon 2005; Schmoll 2014; Walters 2006) look at the body as a prime bordering space. They are also close to the literature on the performative negotiation of borders (e.g., Hess et al. 2015 and Scheel and Gutekunst 2019), as they too focus on performativity and the border as an embodied experience. These are some of the rare works that include an explicit perspective on emotions and affects. However, I argue that these contributions mostly remain centred on the notion of affect, portraying the migrant body as affected by the border in a rather physical sense. I will demonstrate what I mean by highlighting just one example here.

In her work on the irregularized migration of Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean women examined as a gendered bodily experience, Camille Schmoll (2014, 174) describes the body 'as a place where the border is incarnated'. Whereas she grounds her analysis in a feminist theoretical perspective, claiming, as I do along with her, that '*migration as an emotional, sensitive and bodily experience have been totally overlooked by migration studies*', the scope of the emotions presented in her account of the embodied border experience seems to be confined to the more immediate bodily affects and biophysical responses. And while I fully subscribe to the importance of including a focus on the body as a central bordering and

governing site, I believe that to restrict this focus to its physicality is problematic within critical research.

My concerns are of an epistemological as well as an ethical nature. How can 'migrant subjects' appear as anything else but suffering bodies and objects of the border apparatus' grasp when their voices surface solely in the brief, specific citations in which they give witness to hunger, thirst, physical pain, and fear? In order to acknowledge 'the migrant subject' as a complete human being with agency, methodologies, and epistemologies that release the 'migrant body' from the object-position it continues to be fixated in are required. I am fully aware of the fact that this is not just a matter of choosing the 'right' research focus and narrative tone; it also entails a standpoint dilemma. As such, it cannot be solved by merely shifting the gaze from, say, affect to emotion or even to voice. What is needed is a thorough and critical consideration of what it means for those 'migrants' featuring in migration research—like the 'racial', 'ethnic', 'colonized' others in anthropology—to be part of an order of knowledge production and hierarchization that held them in the position of research objects and largely continues to do. Crossing the border and then the boundary between the researched and the researching is a relatively new experience for them, for us, and finding the voice one needed to speak from such a migrant object-subject position about migration and borders is a challenge in itself. This thesis has been an experiment in finding and tuning such a voice, as it has also been for opening up the most banal and yet fundamental question: What does it mean (to me?) to do migration research? As bell hooks put it: *'It is not just important what we speak about, but how and why we speak'* (hooks 2003, 158)

My intention (at least) is not to make migrants visible as the victims of European border policies. Rather, by adopting a clear stance that departs from the perspective of the subjects that are being 'subjectivated' through bordering apparatuses, I have traced the bordering practices at play with regard to 'pre-departure language testing regimes'. In doing so, I have aligned my analysis as closely as I could along the narrative lines of the voices of those people narrating

their lived experience of becoming 'migrant subjects'. An experience embodied through knowledge, imaginaries, emotions, and (speech) acts makes 'subjectivation' a much more engaging, complex, and ambiguous process than what can be placed inside a material, 'suffering migrant body' as a mere object of emotions.

Such an engagement of the 'migrant subject' through emotions can, no doubt, also be seen as a form or an effect of their being objectified by the bordering process (this becomes particularly evident in the case of the muting of newcomers' voices associated with the imperative to learn the dominant language). However, the interview narratives demonstrate that this emotional engagement does indeed function by activating people. The feeling of being treated in degrading ways induces evokes a lot of questions in 'I/earner applicants' (that they have become by the time these questions have become pertinent) and it stirs up a lively internal discourse and also, to varying degrees, their resistance.

With regard to this problem of the 'objectification' through emotions and of emotions, D'Aoust makes an important point in her work on technologies of love. She shows that for love to be rendered useful by the state as a governing technology, this emotion needs to be rationalized, which means somehow materializing and objectifying it, and making it measurable. This process, D'Aoust argues, can never be fully effectuated because love exceeds the technologies of power and technologies of the self that characterize governmentality:

If love were solely a technology of government, it would then be reduced to an emotional economy of intimacy management or an affective governance, where the movement and impulse of affect get stirred in a specific direction to obtain certain results. (D'Aoust 2014, 325)

D'Aoust points to an important critique here regarding the conceptualization of emotions as 'traceable and steerable bodily affects'; one that I subscribe to in my own work. Like D'Aoust, and the feminists whose approaches she builds on (especially Ahmed 2014), I reject a clear distinction between 'affect', often thought of as being tied to the pre-social, rationalizable, non-conscious, and neurological,

versus 'emotion', considered as (inter)subjectively experienced, socially constructed and personal. I do so not only because I hold such a distinction to be unnecessary and unproductive with regard to my research endeavour but also because, viewed through the prism of feminist literature and history, the binary opposition it suggests is as wide-spread as it is problematic.

In her essay titled 'Affect as Methodology: Feminism and the Politics of Emotion' Åhäll (2018) argues for the use of the term 'emotions' instead of retreating to 'affect', as demonstrated within a growing strand of research on security practices and international conflict in the social sciences (see Adey 2008; Ross 2014; Anderson 2014; Holland and Solomon 2014). This literature often presents '*neurosciences as an exciting, new, and appropriate (read scientific) way into emotion research*' while ignoring '*the much longer history of feminist theorizing about bodies and embodiment, about the personal, emotional, and affective*' (2018, 39). Thus, Åhäll insists on the concept of emotions, as transporting a long tradition of feminist scholarship and a political stance against a Western tradition of (gendered) binary oppositions:

Why? Because "emotion" is a term that has long been associated with the personal, the body, the feminine. As the constitutive other of "reason" (as well as the objective, the mind, the masculine) in Western, binary modes of thinking, "emotion" has been (and still is) a political strategy keeping women and the feminine out of politics and political spheres. As a result, much of feminist scholarship has worked to problematize binaries such as emotion/reason, mind/body, and domestic/international. All this is to say that feminist scholarship has a very long history with "the emotional." (Åhäll 2018, 37)

To the above argument, I need to add two related points that I have demonstrated in my work. First, this binarization of body and mind, emotion and reason and so forth is not only pertinent to gender but also to the culturalization and racialization that are at play within bordering institutions as well as within academia, as the institution holding a monopoly over knowledge production relating to (here migrant) 'others'. They enter academia from different but equally marginalized entry points as women once did. And emotion, affect, and 'being affected' offer points of

resistance to migrantized others, just as they did and continue to do for gendered others.

The second point that I would like to add to Åhäll's argument is that the binarization of body and mind and other divisions is not just pertinent to the bordering experience of the individuals whom I have discussed here, as a full human experience in which emotion is more than 'affect' and holds the potential for resistance. In addition, it is apparent in a tendency to research particular phenomena (such as the 'hard' border technologies of tracking devices or fences) more than others (such as the 'soft' technologies of emotions or imaginaries). Consequently, we can understand the imbalance that I pointed out as marking the dominant stream of literature within border studies. I would argue that not only have emotions been largely absent from this particular field so far, but this absence can be seen as paradigmatic for much of the history of 'Western' social science in which emotions have been positioned as the 'epistemological other' (Somers and Gibson 2007). As Heaney further argues, they '*were relegated to the losing side of the binary oppositions that structured intellectual life and work, and placed "beyond the pale" of social scientific endeavour*' (2013, 355).

Feminist scholars have long taken (negative) emotions seriously, recognizing them as the starting point for research and resistance and investigating them further. Emotions, viewed as both personal and political, have thus come to pave the way for the types of critical research projects that Åhäll has called for, drawing on Hemmings' concept of affective dissonance and the political as '*that which moves us, rather than that which confirms us in what we already know*' (Hemmings 2012, 151). Åhäll argues for making use of this political potential by making use of 'affect as methodology'—not just by feminists but, more broadly, by critical scholars at large:

Feminist knowledge is about imagining how things could be different, and, importantly for the argument here, this imagination is developed affectively. This paper has demonstrated how the policing of gender norms is a subtle process, at times performed through unconscious structures immediately mediated as common sense. It is communicated through a politics of emotion, often in everyday contexts, as affective judgments. If scholars

are serious about analyzing the politics of emotion, feminist knowledge must not be ignored. (Åhäll 2018, 50)

It is not by chance that in her programmatic paper, Åhäll's concluding words bring together emotion and affect with both imaginaries and the subtle and unconscious structures of common-sense knowledge. When dealing with the effects of subtle power lines that tend to appear as 'normal' or 'natural' facts, what we can trace in order to get to their constructedness are just as subtle phenomena as our 'data': emotions, imaginaries, and knowledge that presents itself as banal or certain.

Such a feminist approach to emotion, which is always informed by an interest in power and inequalities, helps in the detection of 'what's off', and subsequently in the development of further questions that are raised. Sara Ahmed describes this use of emotional sensations in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017) as a 'gut feeling', saying that as 'you are left with an impression that is not clear or distinct' (Ahmed 2017: 22), and because in this way you 'sense something is amiss. You have to get closer to the feeling' (Ahmed 2017, 27). Thus, feelings, whether those of us as researchers or those of the people we study, can serve as important pointers within the research process.

In this thesis, I have applied this feminist political and methodological approach to the politics of emotions. Not only do I take emotions seriously, putting them at the heart of the study as a governing technology that fulfils a major political function, but I have also continually pushed my research agenda further throughout the research process, following my own 'gut feeling' regarding both the topic of my research, mandatory language learning as an instrument of border regime, as well as my epistemological meta-reflections on what it means to write migration research as a scholar with a 'migration background'. Such an (intersectional) feminist approach entails more than 'just' a gender perspective, and its application to the field of critical border studies is still the exception.

With this, I come to the last point that I wish to make in this concluding discussion of my contributions, namely what it means when language is used as a border regime instrument.

Language as Border:

In the second empirical part of this thesis (part III), I further investigated the particularities of language that is instrumentalized to fulfil bordering functions. The second major argument that I make in this thesis, and my second contribution to the field of critical border studies, relates to how language functions as a bordering technology. Such a perspective, even if already well developed within interdisciplinary work on citizenship and also residence rights (e.g., Extra et al. 2009; Flubacher 2014; Goodman and Wright 2015; Hogan-Brun et al. 2009; Korteweg 2017; Mezzadra 2009; Shohamy 2006) is new to the field of border studies (with the exception of Gutekunst 2018) and absent in the theorization of borders. I have added *language as border* to the analytical approach that I have used to explore what I have called 'soft power lines' or 'bordered boundaries' shaping subjectivities. Together with discursive certainties, imaginaries, and emotions, language becomes visible as a bordering technology that reaches into and shapes the subject it seeks to govern intimately.

Furthermore, I have demonstrated that this functionalization of language as a bordering technology, selecting and subjectivating 'l/earner applicants' or 'l/earning migrants' relies on nationalist and racist distinctions underlying the notion of integration. The hegemonic call to 'integrate' by learning to speak in the receiving country's official language is not directed at all individuals who seek to join their spouses in Europe; rather, it is directed only at the racialized (and classed) others from the so-called third countries.

The emerging field of raciolinguistics helps to advance understanding on what to make of this interrelation of race and language as part of the European border apparatus. It allows us to see that the imposition of hegemonic European

languages and the degradation and devaluation of the languages of the racial, ethnic, and cultural other is not something new (Alim 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017).

Thus, focusing on subjectivation and the deconstruction or de-naturalization of 'facts', such as the border or 'language as the key to integration', I join scholars of raciolinguistics in their call to linguists to:

shift from privileging individual interactions and speaking practices as the primary sites in which categories of race and language are created and negotiated, toward investigating how institutionalized hierarchies of racial and linguistic legitimacy are central to processes of modern subject formation. (Rosa and Flores 2017, 622)

In my analysis of narrative data on the one hand and audio-visual data on the other hand, I have contributed to efforts to dismantle the claim of current European pre-departure language integration policies to help newcomers position themselves better in their future country of residence. I have shown that such a claim is assimilationist and racist because the other's racialization is naturalized in their subjectivation as 'migrant to be integrated'; they can never become part of the Western 'we', regardless of the level of their linguistic proficiency. In other words, even if they finally succeed in crossing the border to Europe, this does not mean that they will ever be able to cross the boundary between non-Europeans and Europeans. Passing the pre-departure language test and then, once in Europe, fulfilling the further language-based 'integration requirements' tied to residence, and later on maybe to citizenship rights, or even acquiring the language skills of a proficient native speaker—none of this can or will confer full membership status because of the essentialist, racist assumptions of a homogeneous nation undergirding the respective language ideologies and policies.

Raciolinguists theorize such a 'co-naturalization of language and race as part of the project of modernity' in which Europeaness is positioned as superior to non-Europeaness (Rosa and Flores 2017, 623). This hierarchy should be understood as part of a broader process of national/colonial governmentality (Flores 2013). By tracing the historical roots of hegemonic European language policies, their racist

underworking, obscured in discourse, becomes apparent. The parallels between the colonized 'language learning subject' and the migrant subject are striking:

Even when colonized subjects complied with the imposition of European languages, they continued to be positioned as racial Others who would never be fully European—and, by extension, fully human. (Rosa and Flores 2017, 625)

In my work I have shown how contemporary externalized border apparatuses, apart from selecting newcomers, rearticulate the distinction between Europeanness and non-Europeanness by means of subjectivation, while at the same time claiming that the language requirement provides newcomers with a better life standard and quality in Europe. Integration, I argue, is one of those taken for granted categories related to language (and, though invisibilized, to race), that 'have been co-naturalized in particular societal contexts' (Rosa and Flores 2017, 622). This thesis is a contribution towards denaturalizing this concept of 'integration' and demonstrating how, institutionalized as part of the European border apparatus, it is rooted in colonial forms of hegemony.

Similar to raciolinguists, who view race through the lens of language, and vice versa (Alim 2016), in my research, I have viewed bordering through the lens of language and language through the lens of bordering, showing how these two technologies intersect to produce hybridized forms of governance and subjectivities. Using a critical race lens to conceptualize this intersection of language as border allows for an understanding of the recurring contradictions inherent in these hybridizations: Why degrade somebody by putting them in the role of a 'school child' when the idea of 'learning the language' is meant to uplift them into a state of 'integratedness'? Why set newcomers on the path to integration, when the latter can never be reached?

The reason is that it is precisely this racist divide between 'autochthonous', legitimate members of society and migrant others that 'linguistic integration' reproduces and makes newcomers re-enact and embody. This, as I have shown, also means subjectivation and subjection through feeling, imagining, knowing, and

speaking. Approaching dominance and power from a different angle that is primarily focused on the classed position of speakers, Bourdieu points to the same contradiction when he argues that 'the legitimate language' (by which also means language varieties) can be used illegitimately and even illegally, depending on who the user of that language is:

The dominant class can make deliberately or accidentally lax use of language without their discourse ever being invested with the same social value as that of the dominated. What speaks is not the utterance, the language, but the whole social person (Bourdieu 1977, 653)

Building on this recognition of the key role of the social positionality of the speaker, as well as of their essentialist, racist fixation in the subjectivity of the 'other', I would like to make my last point here regarding language as a bordering technology. I argue that the mandatory language requirement has to be understood also as carrying a symbolic function (self-subjection under the dominant rule) and not simply a 'linguistic' one (learning the language). And this symbolic function is not in any way to be deemed 'superficial' or superfluous; rather, it is a very efficient policy tool for conveying a key message to newcomers in the process of their subjectivation: *If you want in, you have to learn where your place is among us.* Or, phrased in terms of the paradoxical language order: *Shut up and speak German!*

I have shown that with language and the role of learner-applicant being forced on people, leaving them degraded and deprived of their (sense of) agency to varying degrees, what remains of the 'language' they are supposed to learn is a *sham* communicative means. This mean of communication lacks both an actual communicative or expressive intention and a veritable subject position. Those ordered to integrate and learn 'the language' are disrespected through paternalistic prescriptions of what is good for them, as if they were incapable of setting their own priorities. But in addition, with that order, and during the entire process of language training and testing, their actual experiences, priorities, and needs have no room or relevance to be voiced. Referring to Hymes and his call to include the social meanings of language use or speech, I have shown that in this notion of 'language',

the crucial element pointing to the speaker's agency, their 'voice' is absent. Detecting this absence and developing a more encompassing, speaker-oriented notion of language was made possible by basing the analysis on the narratives of the people affected by this mixed-up border/language policy. It would not have been possible to access that knowledge by means of observation, for instance. Only a close reading of their narratives, which takes into account the ways in which they build it up in terms of its content as well as its formal traits, and its 'dramaturgy', allows for an understanding of the meanings, evaluations, and emotions that they associate with 'language' and the place it holds in their biographic experience and positionings. I argue that only by departing from the point of view of the people who use that 'language', or rather are forced to use it, can we understand what this concept represents and how exactly it functions as a border technology, shaping speakers' subjectivities. I have shown that critically scrutinizing the language-notion used by state officials and other actors implied in this form of border regime instead of applying a language notion predefined by linguists or the involved institutions themselves is just as crucial to the analysis as the critical attention granted to the 'integration' discourse. Deciphering the particular meanings and functions of language as a border regime instrument, I have shown that with respect to the people governed by it and subjectivated through it, the foreign 'language' becomes something I have termed 'language without voice'.

I argue that such *language without voice* is bound to produce paradoxes and contradictions like these ones, as it leaves a blank spot where the speaking subject should be. Thus, the subject is one whose voice and experience are suppressed or simply rendered irrelevant by the forcedness of the legally required speech/acts and is therefore degraded to being merely an enactor of speech acts, who is little more than 'just' a 'migrant body'. And this is striking.

That individuals are grasped as encompassingly and deeply by the border apparatus as I have shown them to be through the technologies of discursive certainty, imaginary, emotion, and language indicates that these technologies

engage not just their bodies but also their minds and inner lives at large. Ultimately, they end up being treated as 'migrant bodies' just the same.

I find it striking that having arrived at the end of this concluding discussion, we land right back at the initial point of critique from where we departed. That point of departure is that as the study and theorization of borders continues to be predominantly centred on its more material manifestations, it implicitly or explicitly adds to the objectification of 'migrant subjects' by studying them as bodies or bordering practices as 'embodied' experiences.

But bordering practices are more than embodied experiences; they are *lived* experiences. The subject always partakes in those acts of border governance, and not 'just' as a 'body'. However, living through the respective experiences of the bordering procedures also means to become more or less painfully aware of an inequality existing between where one stands before the border crossing and where one will stand after it, as well as, later on, where one will stand vis-à-vis those citizens who do not share that same cross-border trajectory as 'autochthonous' members of that society. There is agency, and not just activation involved in subjectivation processes.

So, no matter if the border apparatus neither has *the time* nor *an interest* in *its targets* as full human beings, we, as researchers, should. For even if the people who have to meet the encompassing demands of the apparatus of pre-departure language testing ultimately find themselves envisioned and treated as *dividuals* rather than as individuals, this does not mean that they actually become or see themselves as such 'dividuals'.

There is always a 'shadow-zone' in theorizations of the human subject and experience that is left out of the picture, and so there is always an excess of meaning and experience remaining outside the scope of both the border apparatus and the academic gaze. And it is precisely this excess of internally stored emotion, imaginaries, and other forms of knowledge and creativity that holds the potential to push further with an investigation of voice and resistance.

Postlude: On Migrants and Research

When Virginia Woolf was invited to speak about 'Women and Fiction' at a very old and prestigious British university almost a century ago, as she describes in her famous essay (Woolf 1945, 5), she reasoned about the possible expectations of her hosts. Did they want her to consider 'women and what they are like'? Or 'women and the fiction that they write'? Or 'women and the fiction that is written about them'? Or, instead, how 'all three are [somehow] inextricably mixed together'?

Woolf discarded these questions altogether, pointing to the impossibility of ever being able to answer them. This response was an elegant and humble way of saying: 'What you all are so interested in is irrelevant to me'. She then steered the audience's/reader's attention towards her perspective on the matter, openly calling it 'an opinion' (if not 'my opinion') on some 'minor point', namely that 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction' (Woolf, 5f)

It should be quite clear what this has got to do with 'migrants' and research. So clear, in fact, that it seems that there is nothing left to discuss. There are inequalities that keep migrants from doing and writing research, just as there were (and are) with regard to women writing fiction—and that's that. Once you have finally and actually arrived in academia, as a migrant migration researcher you should do what all reasonable migration researchers would do: research that migration! At that point, inequality should not really be a topic anymore. (Unless, of course, it is the actual topic of your research project, based on interviews with other migration researchers with *migrant backgrounds*, investigated by you, the migrant researcher, about their experiences of entering academia.)

This is to say that for experience to become knowledge, or to put it differently, for knowledge to become scientific, it needs to be 'purified' or 'uplifted' as a result of its passage through the 'magical frontier' between the researched and researchers (borrowing from Bourdieu's [2000, 169] notion of the magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated). This frontier further coincides with the divide between emic and etic within anthropology, or that between object-language and meta-language in linguistics. The apparatus of knowledge production relies on that division, which of course is also a matter of 'intersubjective reliability' and 'comparability'. All legitimizations of this division are transparent and comprehensible, and yet, being powerful and adamant, they can run

through the migrant migration-researcher's mind, keeping some parts of their knowledge shut out.

This is the reason why, for instance, when making a point at a conference on cross-border marriages, you can cite, for instance, Catherine Charsley's highly insightful work, in which she highlights a situation that has long needed to be acknowledged. This situation concerns the fact that aside the infamous category of the Muslim woman, Muslim (in this case Pakistani) men too, can be incoming cross-border spouses from third countries, who experience discrimination and dependency in their new lives in Europe (Charsley 2005). However, I would not advise you to make the same point citing, your aunt Hamdiye; nor would I recommend pointing out that this observation has been common knowledge to you since the age of around twelve years in such academic contexts. No matter how it might make you feel that all kinds of professional people get to talk about approximations and variations of your experience and knowledge, no matter the sense of loss it leaves behind when they take that knowledge away as 'a nugget of pure truth . . . to keep on the mantelpiece forever' (Woolf 1945, 5) – I do not recommend to you to even start with that type of objection. You will only end up sounding disrespectful, immodest, reproachful, or pitiful. Either way, you will fully land on the pile of 'affected voices' beyond the academic boundary, along with your aunt Hamdiye, whom you dragged into this situation without her consent.

You—and not just a part of you—are very likely to land fully there in that way. This is not because academics are particularly mean, but because once more, there seems to be a binary logic according to which academic knowledge is produced. Its central figure, the deictic gesture referring from one set of information to another, needs two points, A and B, in order to actually point (from A to B, habitually). Can A point at itself or is such deixis condemned to fail from the very outset? But intriguing as geometry might be, researchers remain humans, not points.

(And if they were, one would have to say there are no points if you zoom in on them from close up, you'll find a whole landscape of points. . . .)

This is why for this final stretch of this exploration on positionality, I will, at last, come to tell you about a workshop on research positionality, that I attended a few years ago and that was held at an old and prestigious university in Germany. For it is within that truly

privileged setting where I first started considering my writing trouble in sublime ways. The facilities and decor were particularly helpful in this respect.

The workshop was held in the spacious, awe-inspiring library hall of the anthropology department. Our bodies, arranged on chairs on the ground floor, were surrounded front, left, and right by two (or even three?) floors of books—red, blue, green, grey etc. And, even though I have probably made that up, all of those books had golden embossing on their spines.

During the first day, I watched one contributor after the other take up their spot amidst this dignified scholarly scenery. Their bodies, as if instinctively reaching for the tiny remote control of the projector, seemed to be comfortable with or at least prepared to assume that spot foreseen for them: front-centre, slightly to the right, in between the shiny, dark wooden lectern, with the university banner and department logo in the background. It showed the contours of an old thinker's (or Greek god's?) profile, with the name of the university printed in Greek (or Latin?) lettering, while the department was represented by means of some more contemporary, dynamic graphic insignia. (Later I observed, that the cups from which we got to drink our coffee were imprinted with that same logo.)

While admittedly, I had been a little intimidated by that scenery upon first entry, I had felt positively about the fact that my body, too would be able to withstand its grandeur during the half hour of my presentation on the second day of the workshop.

This, however, started to change as I went on listening to the skilful and honourable accounts of how power hierarchies in the field had been detected and privileged positions had been revealed. And it is not at all that I did not have similar observations to make myself (a particularly vivid image is of me eating alone in the hotel lobby in Prishtina, where I was the only Albanian-speaking guest, with the other Albanians all being part of the hotel staff. And let's not forget the episode when my friend's father became my driver, a horrible trip during which the little red car broke down and economic inequalities were exposed.

But the point is that the entire discussion on positionality seemed to be basically pointing in one direction in terms of power relations, namely 'downwards', revealing the researcher to be in a position of power and privilege. It seemed to reveal the researcher making that symbolic gesture of self-exposure, resembling an act of atonement. This symbolic gesture is, as far as I can tell, paradigmatic for the way in which 'reflections on

research positionality' have come to function as an academic genre. Although, while looking for relevant literature, I would also eventually come across authors making a point about the fact that (mobility) researchers can just as well find themselves in a hierarchically subordinate position vis-à-vis their respondents. The general trend would, however, indicate the reverse direction.

An example:

It follows that this (class, gendered) background thinking unconsciously influences the process of knowledge production. (Allen 2013, 989)

And another one:

. . . the myriad ways in which the researcher's own class history and current class position both advantage and disadvantage the research process, often in unpredictable ways. (Mellor et al. 2014, 135)

Of course, my assessment of power as a researcher is not neutral. I do not consider myself to be 'innocent in the field'. And I had no problem laying that open then, too. But I felt that what I had been struggling with during the years of my academic apprenticeship had not primarily been my feeling bad in the face of the 'less privileged respondents'. What had truly kept me up at night, and what had kept me from writing and opening my mouth at conferences and so forth had been my feeling bad in the face of 'academia'. I wanted to scream into the faces of poor Allen (2005) and Mellor et al.(2014):

You know what else unconsciously influences knowledge production and both advantages and disadvantages the research process?! The fact of not getting into academia in the first place! (Jashari 2021, 367)

Uttering such a statement was, of course, impossible and, most of all, pointless. Who is even addressed in such a larmoyant question? This means world of inequalities?! It would lead nowhere, except to reveal, once again, how I was a 'personal' person instead of a 'professional' one.

So, I just continued to sit on that chair in that German university, pretending to listen and pretending to belong, not knowing what to do with the powerlessness and anger that took turns in distracting me. And inside that cathedral of books, with the voice of somebody unlike me washing over my ears, I was briefly overwhelmed by the sense that buildings like

these had not been constructed to accommodate 'people like me'. Or perhaps 'people like me' might actually not have been constructed to fit comfortably into such grand places.

And as if out of nowhere, the day when I decided not to enrol in Ethnology, but to stick to the German language and literature instead came to mind. I had gone into the city to attend a university event, where this discipline of ethnology would be presented to new students. I had never heard of it before opening up the little information brochure, but it immediately caught my attention stating something like '. . . understanding how culture and normality are constructed' (!) or 'performed' (!). That sounded great!

Already by arriving there, lining up to get into one of the seating rows of that amphitheatre-type auditorium, I recall feeling somewhat awkward. There was an unusual lot of (blond) Rasta and ethno-chique going on in there: wooden pearls, nose rings, bright colours and oriental patterns on scarves, shirts, and skirts. I even detected a pair of wide, dark-red, flowery pantaloons just like the ones my grandmother used to wear, dangling around the legs of a beautiful lanky girl. At least that's how I remember the bodies around me to have been made up. Beautiful maybe, alternatively made up for sure, but strange nonetheless. Soon after I'd taken a seat —the event was very well-attended!—there he was: my first live anthropologist!

He just stood there calmly next to a table with some objects on it, not looking particularly remarkable in any way. I recall lively eyes, a white button-down shirt and beige shorts. But along with the highly practical trekking sandals, the shorts might very well have been part of my malicious, stereotyping retrospective view.

However, he just stood there for quite a while, his eyes wandering across the young audience's faces, waiting for the noisy chatter to quiet down. And he seemed to be collecting himself for the presentation to come, displaying or trying to repress a faint mischievous smile. You felt it right away: he wanted you to be amazed.

When the noise had finally died down, he grabbed a flat wooden object by the string to which it was attached, and skilfully (I'll give him that) started spinning it through the air in wide circles, faster and faster. At some point, it gave off a humming sound, quite a loud one. It remained hovering above our heads, while he addressed us for the first time with this question: 'Does anyone here have any idea what this could be?'

I did not, just like the rest of the provisory class. And while I will never know what the others thought of that introduction to the wonders of the world of Anthropology, of one

thing I am quite sure: the anthropologist in front of us assumed that we would be attracted to, even amazed by such a display of foreign exoticism and mystery. To me, however, it was mainly that gaze, which we were invited to assume, that appeared foreign, strange. I myself was estranged, and a little ashamed of being part of that collective strange gaze, directed at this piece of wood, which had been taken out of its everyday context to be brought here, to the centre of our (white) attention. I thought of how the people who use or used it to do actual stuff would feel. Maybe they'd wrinkle their foreheads, maybe they'd be embarrassed, or maybe they'd just laugh heartily, as my grandmother surely would, finding her old-woman pants worn like this by a random Swiss teenage girl, along with sneakers and a backpack.

It must have been mostly involuntary associations and emotions like these, having to do with my position in the world, that made it comprehensible to me that that place and that discipline were not for me, and that while ethnology was obviously aimed at sparking curiosity about foreign cultures, what I wanted to learn about were the most common of things. Or, in truth, I probably wanted to learn about how it was possible that 'both' of my 'cultures' were considered normal, but by different people. Anyway, I was out of place there.

Feeling similarly displaced in that library auditorium, I took my discomfort outside. And closing the doors to the continuing positionality debate in the luminous hall behind me, I stepped into the dimly lit corridors of the anthropology department.

It was quiet, devoid of people. That is, except for those in the photographs displayed on the walls. I looked at them, one by one, wandering further away from the presentation hall and deeper into some corridor. There were, and it did not really come as a surprise to me, mostly black people on display, many of them in generic rural settings: A priest and some other men attending a funeral ('black'), an older man standing on a boat with a fishing net in his calloused hands ('Asian'), a woman in her forties selling fruit at the city market ('Balkan'), some boys in washed-out shirts playing football ('black'), a sorcerer of sorts ('black'), a group of young women dancing topless (definitely 'black').

It seemed to me that I had already seen every single one of those photographs before. And so, I wanted, at least, to educate my generic gaze and silence my sense of guilt by learning about the exact places and times in which they had been taken. To somebody who has enjoyed a full-fledged anthropological education, this surely is not news, for it

functioned almost like an introductory course on postcolonial critique. There were neither the exact dates, sometimes not even the year, indicated on the labels below, nor the specific places, let alone the names of the individuals displayed at the exhibition. Apparently, I had wandered off into the only ahistorical, dark part of the university building.

In the evening, back at the hotel, I went through the portfolio that the organizers had provided for us. Printed on all of the items inside were the two logos from the banner (the scholarly Greek-ish head etc.) And then, as if inviting me then and there to write about them today, two postcards fell out of the portfolio, showing on their front sides two of the photos I had seen on my wanderings earlier (the funeral-scene and the dancers, I think). The backside of the postcard, unlike the exposition, declared the localities and times of photographing in a small font size (however, not the names). On its right side, there were the faint grey address lines, while on the upper left side, once more, was the old, scholarly head and the Latin or Greek name of the academic institution. It was there that it finally hit me: the researchers and the researched are two sides of the same coin.

I immediately knew to whom I would send that postcard: my friend Julia Schmid. She had accompanied me in my journey of becoming an activist as well as a researcher, and often she had listened to me complain about how I get invited to speak at migration- and social work-related events in order to provide an exemplary insights about 'being Albanian', 'being a Muslim woman' and so on. And all the while, these inviting parties would show little consideration for the fact that I was not only 'affected' by but also a 'professional' in that field. They would ask me, for instance, to 'just go ahead and make my talk a bit personal' or insist on my giving 'concrete examples from my personal experience', or 'taken from real life'. After having felt the growing need for a seat at those tables for some years, once I'd gotten there, I came to realize that the expectations that these (well-meaning) people had towards me were related to my opening up 'about the true nature of migrant', as Woolf might have said. They did not expect me to consider structural dimensions. What they'd booked me for was my personal voice.

I had often discussed such 'privatization' or 'objectivation' of migrantized voices with Julia during our studies (she provided the academic texts, for she was enrolled in anthropology). Then, with my entry into academia as a researcher, our discussion on positionality took another turn.

Now, it was the repression of the personal voice from an arena deemed 'professional' that bothered me. I had discovered this, for instance, at a conference on social networks in Barcelona, where I had the privilege to meet many interesting, highly educated people. Some of them had grown up in places outside 'the West', and some like me, as 'foreigners' in a European country. But when I asked them where they were from, they would tell me, for instance, that they 'were based in London'. And when they, in turn, asked me that same question that I had heard oh so many times in my life, I knew better than to say: 'I am originally Albanian, from Macedonia, but living in Switzerland. To them it was 'my academic affiliation' that mattered, not some vile biographic blueprint. This became particularly clear when during a plenary session on the last day of the conference, a network chart was presented, showing all of the places from where the conference participants had come. You can imagine which spots on the map were highlighted and which ones weren't. I will say this much: I did not find even one spot on the territory of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (now renamed North Macedonia).

And most recently, my friend Julia (who, like me, has two small children and a job) was still there to listen to my complaints about my writing troubles and how I tend to freeze in the face of academia; how I am not comfortable when taking on that generic academic tone; how, from the great majority of the research literature I know, and contrary to all exceptions and encouragements of my friends and supervisor, I conclude that there seems to be a need to restrict personal appearances to certain areas of the academic text only (namely acknowledgements introductory anecdotes, and a chapter on positionality). That is to say not including the research subjects/informants/interview-partners/respondents of course.

Eventually, dear Julia, probably sick of it all, got real with me: 'But what is it that you actually want? Being asked to speak personally makes you uncomfortable, and when you are finally asked to speak as a researcher, that's no good either. . . '.

Now, here was a question.

It has stayed with me for several years, and in that German hotel room, I was suddenly able to write down an answer to her, to me. It fitted on to the back of a postcard:

Dear Julia,

It's one and the same thing! The researcher is not on display, but living off the written word, reassured by the company of elderly Greek men, while 'young women, dancing' in the front need no names, nor say. I cut one of their faces out and glued it to the other side, atop the Greek—bringing great disorder upon both sides ;-)

Hugs and kisses,

Shpresa

Will German postmen even be
ready to send something like this?

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