

# A plea for the 'de-migrantization' of research on migration and integration<sup>1</sup>

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## **ABSTRACT**

Migration and integration research has been institutionalized over the last few decades. However, an increasing number of voices has been calling for more reflexivity, criticizing the nation-state- and ethnicity-centred epistemology that often informs this discipline. Consistently with this line of reasoning, I argue that migration and integration research originates in a historically institutionalized nation-state migration apparatus and is thus entangled with a particular normalization discourse. Therefore, this field of study contributes to reproducing the categories of this particular migration apparatus. This entanglement poses some serious dilemmas for this research tradition, dilemmas that ask for further consideration and possible solutions. My main proposition is to 'de-migrantize' migration and integration research. I outline possible ways of doing so and discuss the consequences of such a strategy for the future of migration and integration studies.

**KEYWORDS** Nation-state-centred epistemology; migration; integration; mobility; ethnicity; social network analysis

## **Introduction**

In Europe, migration studies played a subordinate role within social science for a long time. This situation has changed fundamentally over the past two decades, during which migration research has not only come into vogue, but also been institutionalized. We have witnessed a growing number of degree programmes, specialized journals and new university chairs dedicated to the discipline. At the same time, social scientists from a wide range of disciplines have produced important empirical studies and developed theoretical approaches regarding a variety of migration issues that have contributed considerably to our understanding of international migration and integration.

Lately, however, an increasing number of voices, mainly from within the community of migration scholars, has been calling for more reflexivity on

the part of migration researchers. Their criticism is targeted at the nation-state- and ethnicity-centred epistemology that informs a large share of migration and integration research (Wimmer and Schiller 2002; Pries 2005; Bommes and Thränhardt 2010). Indeed, Nieswand and Drotbohm (2014) have gone so far as to argue that there has been a fundamental intellectual crisis in integration and migration research in the last decade, which has resulted in a revision of basic sociological concepts such as 'migration', 'culture' and 'society'. Migration and integration scholars have contributed considerably to these debates. They have demonstrated how the logic of the nation state informs social scientific research – for instance, by demonstrating how it contributes to particular forms of inequality and discrimination that result from the exclusion of non-citizens and the institutionalization of this discrimination as 'naturally given' (Soysal 1994; Bauböck 2007).

In the following, I look critically at a-priori naturalizing categorizations<sup>2</sup> as they are used by migration and integration scholars. I demonstrate that migration and integration research runs the risk of supporting the view that migration-related difference is naturally given, even while it is trying to be critical of this paradigm. This dilemma arises from the fact that migration and integration research itself originated within a nation-state migration and normalization apparatus. To put it bluntly: without the formation and existence of modern nation states, there would be no migration and integration research in the sense we know it today. How can we understand this tension with which migration research is confronted? How can we overcome it, and what would it mean in terms of the future strategic orientations of migration and integration research if we did so? Such are the questions that are explored here.

The first part of this article briefly considers how migration and integration research is marked by this specific epistemology. It then discusses how this field of study is entangled with a particular migration apparatus and a discourse that normalizes migration- and ethnicity-related difference. As mentioned above, versions of this critique have been raised by some migration scholars, mainly in the European context. However, I endeavour to push the debate a step further and present possible solutions – ways in which migration research could break out of its 'migration container', as it were – and I address the apparent paradox posed by this project. My main proposal is to 'de-migrantize' migration and integration research through a threefold strategy. I argue that it is possible to disembed this field of research from the migration apparatus by clearly distinguishing between common-sense and analytical categories in research, articulating migration theory more closely with other social science theories and re-orienting the focus of investigation away from 'migrant populations' towards 'overall populations'. At the same time, the achievements of migration research should not be neglected; in

the conclusion, I discuss the possible impact of this 'de-migranticization' for the future of this field of study.

### **Migration and integration research as part of the nation-state migration apparatus and its related normalization discourse**

Beck (2002) and Wimmer and Schiller (2002) have demonstrated the extent to which migration researchers transfer the categories, variables and logic of the nation state into social science and thereby naturalize them. This criticism of 'methodological nationalism' has become common sense among migration scholars and can be summarized as follows: migration and integration research is inherently linked to the logic of the modern nation state and its corresponding institutional and categorical effects while being blind to this entanglement. First, the supposedly natural congruence between national, territorial, political, cultural and social boundaries only emerged with the development of modern nationalism and the formation of modern nation states (Gellner 1983; Wimmer 2002). However, this congruence is replicated within migration and integration studies because the 'national container' remains the most important reference system for empirical research and theories. This is for example the case in integration or assimilation theories or in comparative studies about migratory movements (Bommes 2003). Second, the formation of modern nation states went hand in hand with the development of an institutional state migration apparatus, in Foucault's (1978) sense. This migration apparatus, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble of discourses, institutions, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, etc. (119–120), emerged at the same time as the nation state emerged and was entangled with it: the idea of migrants as different from citizens and the perceived need for nation states to manage this difference were institutionalized. I would like to mention just two mechanisms through which such state migration apparatuses emerged, always following the nation-state logic of inclusion and exclusion: although mobility is a structural feature of human history, the control of cross-border movements – via border controls, visa regimes and migration and integration laws – were only institutionalized with the formation of modern nation states (Torpey 2000). Such state infrastructure, however, does not merely regulate mobility in a technical sense; it also creates the label 'migration' and other migration-related categories. The category of 'foreigner', for example, only makes sense within a nation-state logic, namely in dialectic with the term 'citizen'; the label 'migrants' solely acquires significance in relation to 'non-migrants'. And the category 'people with a migration background' can only be thought of in relation to a supposedly natural multi-generational rootedness within a national territory. The latter category also reveals the long-lasting effect of migration-

related labels produced by this migration apparatus: even though 'people with a migration background' are often citizens of the state in which they reside, they are, as a result of this label, still excluded from the national imagined community (Elrick and Schwartzman 2015). Finally, the term 'international migration', defined as a permanent change of residence that cuts across nation-state borders, is also informed by this nation-state logic and is clearly considered politically (and often analytically) distinct from internal migration.

In parallel, a powerful normalization discourse of migration-related differences (Ghorashi and Sabelis 2013) emerged. This normalization discourse permeates the social world in which actors (including researchers) are socialized. I argue that it is this normalization process that renders these categories so very efficient in everyday life. Its main feature is that differences related to migration and ethnicity become essentialized and come to appear natural, and actors incorporate these ideas through their socialization: migrants are, always in contrast to non-migrants and the 'ethnic, cultural self', considered to be fundamentally (culturally) different.

It is therefore not surprising that this migration apparatus and its corresponding normalization 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. It is also understandable why ethnic-related differences seem natural and why an 'ethnic view' (Radtke 1996) has spread in countries of immigration when it comes to the issue of integration. Reflecting this logic, integration research presents ethnically or nationally defined migrant groups or minorities as if their boundaries of culture/identity/community automatically correspond to each other.

The entanglement of this field of research with the state migration apparatus is apparent in two more ways, both of which reflect a proximity to politics and the public. First, an uneasy alliance between the academy and the nation-state logic is secured through national research council funding, which promotes national interests. Second, migration research is often commissioned: state administrative units direct questions shaped by this specific logic of difference at migration researchers (Pennix and Scholten 2009; Castles 2010). Social scientists are required to provide information about immigration and migration, or about specific ethnic or cultural migrant or minority groups, reproducing these categories of difference and thereby

reinforcing the alliance between scientific research and the state migration apparatus.

It follows that migration and integration research is not only the product of the institutionalized migration apparatus, but itself also an important 'producer' of a worldview according to which migration- and ethnicity-related differences are predominant. Ultimately, migration and integration research strengthens the state migration apparatus: statistics about immigration and migration, often compared internationally, the share of the population that consists of migrants or people with a migration background, etc., are part of every migration researcher's basic knowledge, retrievable at all times, and seldom reflected upon. Labour migrants, refugees, family reunion, temporarily admitted persons, 'undocumented' persons and so on – the categorical differentiations created by the state migration apparatus, and taken over and explored by researchers, sometimes critically (Anderson 2013) – are numerous. Additionally, migration researchers often take an ethnic, migrant or minority group of a specific national origin – Turks, Italians, Pakistanis – as a unit of investigation and analysis in order to explore migration-relevant phenomena such as integration, transnationalization processes or social networks, thereby contributing to the reproduction of this specific ethnic semantic of difference (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006; Wimmer 2009).

There is no doubt that migration and ethnicity can be important criteria of difference – whether concerning rights, belonging, policy or social actions, affiliations, discrimination and so on – because, ultimately, the nation-state migration apparatus and this normalization discourse create specific social realities and inequalities. This means that these essentialized and naturalized categories do exist in the world that researchers investigate, be it as empirical facts, as the everyday self-understanding of actors or as strategic tools of political stakeholders (Fox and Jones 2013). A problem of an epistemological nature is created, however, when researchers accept and reproduce them without reflection by enlisting migration or ethnicity as *the* central criterion of difference in research questions, research design, data collection, analysis and theory, even when it may not be empirically relevant. It seems problematic to consider a given social phenomenon – marriage or divorce rates, say – as fundamentally different, depending on whether migrants or non-migrants, or Turks, Pakistanis or Swiss, are concerned. After all, migration and ethnicity are not always the most important criteria for explaining social processes or people's social practices and affiliations. Instead, it is an empirical question whether, and in which contexts and structures, these categories are relevant to understanding given phenomena and how they intersect with other categories of differences, like gender, class, age and so on.

## Ways out?

How can we grasp the self-understanding of migration and integration research when it is confronted with this tension? What positions vis-à-vis this problem are possible, and how can they be taken up?

First, one could simply accept that migration and integration research originates in this migration apparatus and agree to (re)produce the associated and naturalized differences in research and theory. It could be argued – in a Foucauldian vein – that it is impossible to position oneself outside a system of power relationships and outside such a powerful apparatus. It could also be argued that migration researchers overstate the difference between migrants and non-migrants or foreigners and citizens because specialists in other areas of research often ignore the central importance of mobility and migration in our world and fail to include them in their studies and theories. In this sense, migration specialists are an important corrective for general social research and theory.

Second, one could pursue a 'strategic positive essentialism' (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Phillips 2010): researchers could consciously embrace this normalization discourse in order to engage in public debate on familiar terms, and use it, with reflexivity, in order to subvert it. Examples include studies that point to the particular forms of discrimination experienced by specific immigrant groups (Fibbi, Kaya, and Piguet 2003). Even though these studies reproduce the paradigm of difference, they can contribute to a better understanding of certain forms of inequality. Other examples, among many that could be mentioned here, are recent European studies on the integration of second-generation migrants. These studies compare the same migrant groups or ethnic minorities in different countries and show not only that there are significant differences within a given 'group', but also that national contexts – education systems, public discourses, labour-market structures, etc. – influence integration significantly (Schneider and Crul 2010). These types of studies follow the normalization discourse by using particular migrant, minority or ethnic groups as units of analysis, but they simultaneously show the limits of the explanatory power of these particular categories (Crul 2015).

Or, third, a reflexive attitude could be pursued, one that involves a search for new ways to explore these topics, to position oneself outside the normalization discourse and disentangle research from the migration apparatus. Numerous authors have investigated methodological strategies that make it possible to de-naturalize and de-ethnicize migration and integration studies (Kraal 2008; Dahinden and Efonayi 2009; Wimmer 2009; Amelina and Faist 2012; Levitt 2012; Römhild 2014).<sup>3</sup> The following thoughts build from this third approach but extend beyond it. I question the category of 'migration' per se and propose to 'de-migranticize' migration and integration studies and present three strategies that make it possible to be more reflexive in

this regard. The first is to clearly distinguish between analytical and common-sense categories. The second is to align migration research more closely with social theory and hence remove it from its 'migration container'. And the third is to change the object of study from the migration population to segments of the overall population. This final strategy makes it possible to first investigate social processes in general and then evaluate the role of migration and ethnicity in them.

### ***Differentiating between common-sense and analytical categories***

Conceptual sharpness, and therefore also self-reflexivity regarding the researcher's embeddedness in this normalization discourse and the migration apparatus, is made possible by differentiating rigorously between the way given categories are used by, on the one hand, actors in everyday life and in politics and political regimes – which I call *common-sense categories* – and, on the other hand, researchers – *analytical categories*. The former are anchored in the normalization discourse and naturalize migration, whilst the latter are conceptual tools that originate in different traditions in the social sciences that were often developed outside migration theory. Policy or legal labels like migrants, foreigners or refugees arise from the state migration apparatus and are designed to meet the need of policy or law regimes. They are not necessarily meaningful for scientific enquiry or from an analytical point of view (see for a similar argument Scalettaris 2007). Obviously, the strong politicization of migration issues has made it especially difficult to distinguish between these two types of categories. However, conflating them, and in particular using the common-sense categories in social scientific research is a central way in which researchers reproduce normalized migration and ethnic difference and the logic of the migration apparatus.

My argument builds from the analytical differentiation between *etic* and *emic* categories introduced in ethnology at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bodley 1994). Rogers Brubaker called for a similar differentiation between *categories of practice* on the one hand and *categories of social analysis* on the other (2004, 36). The point is that *common-sense* categories belong to the normalization discourse. Both are part of the empirical data and therefore objects of study; they are not themselves analytical tools that can explain or make us understand social processes and phenomena.<sup>4</sup>

But this does not mean that the categories of migration and ethnicity are denied or explained away. Rather, the ways in which ethnicized and 'migran-ticized' worldviews – of individuals, in institutions, in politics, etc. – are created, how they exist, change and interact with other perspectives of difference are themselves objects of investigation. It is important to make it clear that what I am proposing here is by no means intended to deny actors the possibility of arguing in an essentialist way, or to claim that they have a

false conception of ethnicity or migration. In everyday life, naturalized ideas of migration and ethnicity might lead to negative stereotypes, discrimination and exclusion. They might be instrumentalized by right-wing parties, and they are often emotionally charged. But paradoxically, such essentialist ideas can also be important instruments of collective action and political mobilization, for instance when it comes to 'group rights', recognition policies and combatting discrimination. While these categories are, like all categories, constructed, they create particular realities with far-reaching effects for the 'labelled' (Zetter 2007). My argument is that these common-sense categories, and the social realities they help constitute, are part of our object of study and should be investigated by using analytical categories.

The differentiation between common-sense and analytical categories is also important with regard to other elements that facilitate the 'de-migrantization' of research. First, a distinction between these two sorts of categories makes it possible to translate social problems that are formulated in the language of the normalization discourse into social science research questions. Blind faith in everyday language makes it difficult to formulate issues with the rigour of social science. Big social problems – for example, integration, forced marriage,<sup>5</sup> trafficking, refugee crises – have to be translated into sociological terms, and a separation between the social scientific and the political understanding in these issues is needed. A sociological research question can be investigated analytically – which is not the case with social problems (Banton 2005).

Second, sensitivity towards this differentiation makes it possible to check whether research questions are theory-oriented and contribute to our knowledge of social processes or systems, or whether the categories and hypotheses of the normalization discourse and the migration apparatus have been imported into the research.<sup>6</sup> And finally, this distinction between types of categories is a premise through which to articulate migration research more closely to social science theory.

### ***Linking migration research to the analytical categories of social science more broadly***

A further strategy to 'de-migrantize' research on migration and integration is to analyse these issues through concepts and theories that have been developed outside of migration research. The proposition is to link migration research issues more closely with social science and theory in general. With regard to the topic under discussion, this signifies that migration and ethnicity no longer automatically enter into the research question and research design as categories of difference, and that, instead, their relevance to the topic in question is analysed only in a second step.

Researchers have been investigating migration and integration through a large spectrum of theories. A good example is Castles (2010) proposition to link migration studies to social theory by using a social transformation framework. The four approaches I sketch below very briefly are therefore just a small selection of a wide variety of ways in which migration issues could be more closely coupled with social science theory: what is common to them is that they make it possible to gain a certain reflexivity with regard to the normalization discourse.

First, concepts that have been developed within the framework of so-called 'mobility studies' (Urry 2007) make it possible to break with some aspects anchored in the normalization discourse and migration apparatus. As discussed above, the term 'migration' is shaped by the logic of the nation state and is therefore a politically and normatively loaded term. If the same phenomenon is investigated through a 'mobility lens', we can gain distance from some of the inherent normativity and the migration apparatus. While migration studies are almost exclusively interested in movements that involve crossing national borders, the focus of mobility studies is much broader. Mobility<sup>7</sup> is seen as a fundamental aspect of social life, and a wide spectrum of movements are included in the analysis. Mobility scholars are interested in understanding mobility as such, but in addition they also aim to understand the representations, politics and values of mobility within particular contexts. Mobility scholars insist that mobility goes hand in hand with the territorial concentration of resources necessary for the management of mobility, and they therefore pay attention to the material and immaterial infrastructure that limits or promotes mobility. Mobility is perceived as a resource with which not everyone has an equal relationship, a resource that is differentially accessed (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004; Ohnmacht 2009). On this basis, mobility scholars have explicitly criticized the sedentary bias of the social sciences (Sheller and Urry 2006). This marks a rupture with the normalization discourse, which treats place and sedentariness as normal and distance and movement as abnormal, particularly when they involve crossing national borders. By focusing on a wide range of mobility and movement, these studies undercut the ideas of (national, territorial) sedentariness, natural anchorage and rootedness that are part of the normalization apparatus. In other words, what is labelled 'migration' is treated first of all within the context of various forms of movement of people in space – at first independently from nation states. Hence, we might inquire into the relevance of these mobilities for everyday actions and representations, the effects they have and how they may or may not contribute to social differentiation and inequality. The role of nation states and ethnicity in these practices and policies is relevant for the analysis, given these scholars' focus on a politics of mobility (Cresswell 2010), but only as a second step (see also Moret 2014). To illustrate this point, I would briefly like to examine one work that applies

these ideas. Kalir (2013) has studied the mobility of Chinese migrants in a holistic way. He gives the example of one of his interviewees, who experienced several internal migrations within China, as a worker, before he decided to go Israel, from where he afterwards returned to China. Interestingly, in the eyes of this hypermobile individual, Israel was just another place to work, employers there behaved the same as they do everywhere else, and being away from the village was not really different whether he was somewhere else in China or in Israel. Also, he never had the intention to settle down in Israel. Kalir argues that bringing in ideas from mobility studies allowed him to eliminate research questions that were determined by the logic of the nation state and a focus on cross-border movements. He would never have understood the meaning, difficulties or aspirations of his informant had he focused solely on international migration (Kalir 2013).

Second, theories of ethnicity that have been developed within sociology and social anthropology since the 1960s also make it possible to 'de-migran-ticize' migration research. A relational, subjective, interactive and processual understanding of ethnicity in the tradition of Weber (1996 [1922]) and Barth (1969) puts radically into question the normalization discourse according to which migrants/minorities=ethnic/national group=identity=culture=nature. Common-sense migration and ethnicity categories explain boundaries in a quasi-natural way: they simply divide one ethno-cultural system from another. Ethnicity research, in contrast, is interested in understanding ethnic or national boundary processes as such. Such boundaries are the result of internal and external categorization processes, to which a broad range of actors – including nation states, the media, political parties, actors in everyday life – contribute. They can be solely symbolic or institutionalized, and they are fundamental to inclusion and exclusion (Jenkins 1997; Wimmer 2013). National or ethnic belonging, solidarity and groupness are here considered the result of social processes and need to be explained, unlike in the normalization discourse, in which they are considered the starting point for study. The analysis of boundary work gives insight into how 'difference' is socially organized and produced, be it between, for example, nation states or groups within them (Lamont and Molnar 2002; Pachucki, Pendergrass, and Lamont 2007). It has been shown that a nation is a form of institutionalized social closure, given that the criteria for membership and access are clearly defined (Bauböck and Rundell 1998; Bail 2008; Dahinden 2014). Also, it is possible to translate the social problem of integration into a sociological research question by applying this theoretical perspective: unlike in integration or assimilation theory, integration is not treated as a cultural or structural achievement of (ethnically or nationally defined) immigration groups, but as a question of when, how and on behalf of which markers specific boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are established, transgressed or dissolved, and what consequences such boundary processes have (Zolberg and Woon

1999; Alba 2005; Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos 2013; Duemmler 2015). Additionally, these studies contribute to general social theory and are not confined in a theoretically specialized migration container, in contrast to integration and assimilation theory.

Third, the analytical concepts of social network analysis (SNA) can also be a way out of the above-described dilemma. The importance of social networks for migration movements, migration decisions and integration has been investigated within migration research since the 1960s (Boyd 1989; Massey et al. 1993; Nauck, Kohlmann, and Diefenbach 1997). In spite of the great diversity of these studies, and in spite of the popularity of the network paradigm within migration research, most of these studies do not apply the methodology and theories of classical SNA (Schweizer 1988; Scott 1991; Wasserman and Galaskiewicz 1994). Instead, they treat social embeddedness and social networks metaphorically. Migration scholars often limit themselves to investigating kinship and family networks, or they focus on ethnic networks (critically Gurak and Caces 1992; Alisdair and Vertovec 1995), and hence remain embedded in the normalization discourse. However, SNA's real potential lies in its ability to understand social network structures in an encompassing way. Applying the methods and ideas of SNA – investigating whole networks or ego-centred networks or using name generators or other techniques – makes it possible to not only elaborate the structure of networks, but also grasp, in a second step, the role that migration and ethnicity play within these networks, apart from or interacting with other structuring forces like social class, education and gender (Gamper and Reschke 2010; Dahinden 2013; Ryan, Erel, and D'Angelo 2015).

Finally, I would like to refer briefly to scholars who use the established-outsider figuration logic of Elias and Scotson (1965), for instance when investigating the question of integration. These scholars point to differentiated forms of inclusion and exclusion that extend considerably beyond the categories of migration and ethnicity (Kissler and Eckert 1990; Paulle and Kalir 2014).

### ***Re-orienting the unit of analysis: from the migrant population to (parts of) the whole population***

A final strategy to 'de-migranticize' migration research follows from the previously presented thoughts. The proposition is to move away from treating the migrant population as the unit of analysis and investigation and instead direct the focus on parts of the whole population, which obviously includes migrants. This reorientation of the unit of analysis makes it possible to overcome the common distinction between migrant and non-migrant populations – while investigating, in a second step, the significance of migration and ethnicity for the issue in question. In other words, applying this strategy means

that the research question loses its migration-specific focus while remaining sensitive to the role of migration and ethnicity in the phenomenon being investigated. Depending on the research question and the theoretical approach, the 'whole population' to be considered will differ. Migration scholars have employed this approach to investigate, for instance, everyday ethnicity in a given neighbourhood (Wessendorf 2013). Or they have worked in schools, focusing on interactive and relational boundary-making among students, identifying the markers of boundaries from the side of the majority as well as the strategies employed by the minority to deal with exclusionary boundaries (Duemmler, Dahinden, and Moret 2010). Others have done field work in institutions and administrative offices to understand how diversity and hence categories are constituted and inscribed by and within the everyday work of employees, for instance in civil registry offices (Lavanchy 2013). These scholars have defined specific places where the entire population meets, including migrants, as units of research. One of the first scholars to have shown the value of such an approach is Baumann (1996): in his research in a multicultural neighbourhood in London, he did not focus on one of the 'communities' in the neighbourhood, but instead depicted how community and culture were constantly being negotiated among the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, in interaction with local structures.

### **Conclusion: 'de-migrantizing' migration research while 'migrantizing' general social scientific research?**

I have argued that migration and integration research originates in the nation-state migration apparatus and is embedded in a corresponding normalization discourse. On the one hand, this means that migration and integration scholars run the risk of reproducing naturalized categories of difference by inscribing them into their research designs, units of analysis and methodologies and thereby contributing to a worldview where migration- and ethnicity-related differences are predominant and seen as naturally given. On the other hand, migration scholars have criticized the central importance given to categories created by the logic of the nation state, and they have elaborated strategies to overcome this problem. This article has presented some options of dealing with this field of tension. I have proposed a threefold strategy to 'de-migrantize' migration and integration research.

In conclusion, there is a need to discuss the consequences such a strategic reorientation might have on the field of migration and integration studies. Adopting such or similar strategies means that migration and integration theory would be more closely entangled with general social research and theory, and that the focus on migration would disappear. In other words, migration scholars would no longer be specialists in migration and integration issues, but rather social scientists who focus on these issues. Migration and

integration research could run the risk of losing the specificity of its particular field of study, and it might also lose the structural power (in terms of chairs, degree programmes, etc.) it has gained in recent years.

But the story seems even more complicated: most migration scholars probably share the experience that non-migration researchers often ignore migration and ethnicity in their work, and that general social analysis only marginally considers these topics. Many leading social theorists do not consider migration an important area of investigation, and migration scholars sometimes feel marginalized (Castles 2010, 1572). A call to 'migranticize' social sciences in general while 'de-migranticizing' migration studies seems justified. But still, migration and integration research currently seems to be located somewhere between Scylla and Charybdis: on the one hand, migration research has succeeded in defining and institutionalizing its particular field of study, gaining visibility and structural power. There is however a flip side to this institutionalization – that this field of study runs the risk of not only contributing to the perpetuation of a migration apparatus, but also, and above all, of being marginalized within social science theory in general because it has created its own 'migration container field'. Specialized migration conferences, journals and degrees strengthen this field of research and give it a particular shape, but they also enhance its marginalization by cutting it off from social science in general.

At the same time, applying strategies of 'de-migranticization' precisely entails losing this focus, power and visibility. Such strategies, however, might bring migration and integration into the centre of social theory and enable migration scholars to escape the marginalized position they sometimes place themselves in, or in which they are sometimes placed.

How can these positions be reconciled? Is there a third way between them?

I would argue neither for 'more' nor for 'fewer' migration and integration studies, but for different ones. One way to reconcile these contradictions might be to follow a triple strategy.

First, researchers could continue to conduct 'classical' migration and integration research: this research tradition not only has generated important knowledge and theoretical approaches, but is also still needed, given that general social theorists often continue to ignore these issues in their research. However, it is not enough to have become institutionalized; there is also a need to develop concrete strategies that would allow the de-marginalization and hence centring of migration studies within social theory in general.

Second, it is also necessary to 'de-migranticize' this field of study. This allows migration scholars not only to get out of their 'migration container', but also to align themselves more strongly with and within social science. Migration and integration research might lose its clear focus, but the issues it explores would become of interest to the social sciences more generally.

And finally, there is without doubt a need to 'migranticize' general social research by integrating migration and ethnicity into general theory formation as well into disciplinary curricula in universities. In short, my plea is to establish a kind of 'post-migration' social science, social science that deals with migration and integration as a fundamental part of societies, and therefore as a topic that is integrated *transversally* into all disciplines of social science research and theory.

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## Notes

1. I had the opportunity to present earlier versions of this article in different keynote talks, such as at the *3. Jahrestagung Migrations- und Integrationsforschung Österreich* in September 2014, the *Pathways to Success: Social Mobility and Change in Migration Society* Conference in November 2014 and the *NCCR-on the move (National Center of Competence in Research: The Migration-Mobility-Nexus)* meeting in September 2015.
2. In this article, 'social categorization' is understood as a system of orientations and a process of grouping social objects or events that are equivalent with regard to individual actions, intentions and system of beliefs (Tajfel 1981).
3. For instance, by employing multi-sited ethnography, transnational methodologies or strategies to de-ethnicize research design.
4. An example is the concept of culture. For the distinction between the common-sense and scientific understandings of this concept, see, for instance, Baumann (1996) and Grillo (2003).
5. 'Forced marriage' is good example of this point: the term is a political and highly normative one, and common-sense explanations, embedded in the normalization discourse, explain this form of violence via 'tradition', 'culture' or 'Islam'. However, for this 'social problem' to be subject to sociological investigation, it needs to be translated into sociologically meaningful research questions. For example, it could be sociologically meaningful to ask how we can understand the processes that culminate in conflicts between parents and their children such that the

- latter are faced with violence and constraints when it comes to love relationships, marriage or divorce.
6. For example, it is striking that, while religion had been of minor importance for migration scholars in Europe for a long time (in contrast to the USA), in recent years and in the context of the politicization of Islam, many migration scholars have started to work on religion, which usually means 'Islam'. Funds are now available for studies dealing with religion, Islam and migration. This entanglement in political discourse (and the mixing up of analytical and common-sense categories) creates the danger that migration scholars may unwittingly overemphasize the religious dimension of migrants' identities and reify widespread stereotypes about Islam, even when they want to 'prove' the opposite (Brubaker 2013; Permoser 2014).
  7. The term 'mobility' is also used in classical migration studies, although it means something different there. Within migration studies, mobility is often juxtaposed with migration. Mobility (within the EU, of highly skilled individuals) is desired, while migration is undesired and problematic. Hence, migration and mobility are either linked to a new social reality or normatively charged (Chavel 2014). Some scholars have criticized this dichotomization (Faist 2013), but even so the significance of mobility within migration studies most often remains embedded in the normalization discourse.

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