

Paradigms of Migration: From Integration to Transnationalism

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ABSTRACT. *This article provides a critical analysis from the viewpoint of social anthropology of the different theoretic approaches that also set the tone of current debates on immigration in Europe and elsewhere. We begin by retracing the models developed and popularized since the 1960s to discuss the integration theory and Marxist reflections on the rise of class consciousness in immigrants. The article illustrates the paradigm shift that occurred in the 1990s that takes into account the role of the immigrants' culture in their society of origin, whereby immigrants appear to act in conformity with two cultural systems of reference, i.e., of their society of origin and of the society of residence. This theoretical model highlights the transnational aspect of migration phenomena. In this article, we analyze the social organization of transnationalism starting from two fundamental types of aggregation: diasporas and social networks. The centuries-old Chinese immigration in Malaysia provides evidence that diaspora and social networks are not opposite forms of social organization, but rather coexisting and interacting ones. By means of an historical perspective, we will show that the social networks of the Chinese in Malaysia gradually became a national diaspora in which not only economically but also politically powerful clan-like social networks are still in action.*

KEYWORDS: *integration, multiculturalism, transnationalism, diaspora, social networks, ethnicization.*

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: *integracija, multikultūriškumas, transnacionalizmas, diaspora, socialiniai tinklai, etnizacija.*

Introduction: A Brief Overview of Migration Phases in Contemporary Europe

Compared to the United States where the interest of social sciences (sociology, anthropology etc.) in immigration practically started with the Chicago School in the first quarter of the past century, any interest in this phenomenon in Europe appeared much later. Accordingly, while now-classic monumental works such as *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* by William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znaniecki date back to the 1920s (Thomas & Znaniecki 1920), in Europe the first researches on these themes were carried out only in the 1970s. In the Old Continent in fact, the first major migration waves

appeared in the post-World War II years. Until then, Europe had been more of an emigrant rather than an immigrant society. Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, Irish, Greek, Jews from Europe's poorest and most peripheral countries, as well as Germans and Scandinavians from apparently less marginalized countries, had set out to seek jobs and fortune in faraway lands such as North and South America and Australia. Within the European continent however, some migration movements had occurred even before World War II. We need only mention Italians and Poles who immigrated to France, Belgium and Germany to work in the mining and building sectors, and the Polish seasonal workers hired on temporary employment on Prussian Junkers' latifundia, east of the Elbe River. Thus, Max Weber had already brought this issue to the fore in his renowned 1892 research (Weber 1892). However, these population movements remained isolated phenomena until 1945, which in Europe marks the onset of what may be called the *current long century of migrations*.

Researches on migrations in Europe, sociological and socio-psychological at first and only later anthropological, began after this date because this is when an unprecedented phase of expansion first appeared in the Old Continent's western part, thus fostering significant population movements from the *poor south* towards the centers of Europe's *rich north*, i.e., the one that was spared the stifling socioeconomic and political Soviet hegemony. At first, research in social sciences focused on the study of migrations from Euro-Mediterranean rural societies (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal and, following the Titoist opening up, Yugoslavia) to northern Europe's industrial metropolises (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Benelux and Scandinavia). From the late 1960s and especially from the 1970s on, with the massive arrival of immigrants from Turkey, researchers would focus on the analysis of this new migration phenomenon, significant not only in terms of numbers but also of cultural, i.e., religious, differences. From the 1980s on, the arrival of extra-European immigrants, often identifiable by their physiognomy and especially their skin color, would turn social research towards these often clandestine, thus illegal, new actors who came to Europe for economic or political reasons, the former to seek jobs and the latter to find refuge from their homelands' violent conflicts.

Initial Theoretic Approaches: The Early Days of Research on Migration

From the very first stages of south-to-north migration movements in Europe, researchers as well as politics undoubtedly centered around the problem of foreigners' adaptation in the societies of residence, although at first the immigrants' stay was deemed solely temporary. Accordingly, German-speaking countries for example and Germany in particular coined the term *Gastarbeiter*, which at the time was considered politically correct (namely, a *guest worker*,

a term with less of a negative connotation than the outdated and more excluding *Fremdarbeiter*, i.e., a *foreign worker*). When finally the immigrants' stay could no longer be regarded as short-term, the denomination *Gastarbeiter* fell into disuse in favor of *ausländischer Mitbürger*, i.e., foreign fellow citizen. Yet, due to this specific concept about foreign labor's temporary stay, Germany (just like Switzerland and contrary to France) would refuse to regard itself as an immigration country up to the dawn of the 21st century.

The idea of immigrant workers' adaptation takes shape then in two fundamental concepts, i.e., *integration* and *assimilation*. The most distinguished specialists at that time, such as Hartmut Esser and Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny, for example, tried to define these two notions though drawing a distinction (Hoffmann-Nowotny 1973, 172; Esser 1980, 22 ff.). Hoffmann-Nowotny deems that *integration* consists in the immigrant's active participation (for example, via his job) in the life of the host society, whereas *assimilation* must be regarded as the immigrant's active participation (for example, by sharing specific values, norms and behavioral models) in the culture of the society of residence (Hoffmann-Nowotny 1973, 172). According to this author, therefore, integration and assimilation are processes that can be distinguished only analytically, as they are actually concurrent and interdependent. In fact, there can be no integration without some degree of assimilation and assimilation is inconceivable without a specific level of integration. In line with his structural-functionalist approach, Esser, instead, in the 1980s still upheld that the best solution to the migration question was integration in conjunction with assimilation (Esser 1980, 11).

As these first observations already indicate, authors at the time deemed that immigrants' integration always entailed acculturation processes that would eventually lead to the subject's assimilation. This was the case in France especially where the idea of assimilation was a cornerstone of foreigners' integration policy and was regarded as the essential prerequisite to obtain *citizenship*.

Yet, reducing these early theoretic and empiric attempts in Western Europe to a rather monistic view by which integration leads to assimilation would be too simplistic. In fact, there were also some attempts to conceptualize integration as a more complex process in view of the fact that it is not so unilateral. Thus, authors such as Bingemer, Meistermann-Seeger and Neubert upheld, from a political-normative viewpoint as well, the idea of an interactionist integration in which all members of the society of residence, both individual and collective, contribute to the development of a single culture, in itself multihued and multifaceted. In the end, however, this point of view would appear to be modeled on the USA's *melting pot* where it was already regarded as illusory before the 1960s (Bingerer, Meistermann-Seeger & Neubert 1972; Greverus 1972). Compared to other approaches, however, this more pluralist one included a major innovation. In fact, whether deliberate or not, there was a growing awareness that Europe's south-north immigration could no

longer be regarded as a temporary phenomenon, i.e., short-lived and bound to end soon owing also to the undeniable success of development policies in the Old Continent's economically disadvantaged southern regions. Therefore, especially advocates of a vision related to the melting pot implicitly endorsed the idea that immigrants' integration is a long-term process involving various generations. They upheld that each generation of immigrants would in turn reach a higher level of integration owing to successive acculturation processes. This led to conceiving rather abstract, evolutionist-like models of integration by which the gradual sociocultural inclusion of foreigners would be fully achieved within three or four generations at the most. According to this unilinear scheme, moreover, if the first generations continue to be strongly rooted in the values, norms and social practices of their society of origin, the second generations find themselves in an intermediate phase of adaptation characterized by cultural conflicts and cognitive dissonance that often lead to anomic behavior. Finally, this gradual process ends with the third or fourth generations, which by now, again according to this model, are fully integrated in the host society's sociocultural fabric.

This doctrine of an integration in stages, which at first glance may seem quite plausible, also implies the far less tenable idea that the previously mentioned accumulation of individual and groups' acculturation processes lessens ethnocultural differentiation and ultimately results in society's generalized homogenization. With the assimilation model this process of amalgamation occurs via the simple absorption of immigrants in the society of residence, while with the interactionist integration, by analogy with the melting pot's theoretic vision, we should be able to notice a mutual influence and interchange between autochthonous society and immigrant communities. The outcome should be a culturally composite society like the one that essentially never came about in the United States.

At the core of all the different integrationist conceptions lies the idea that a lessening of ethnocultural differentiation, and consequently homogenization processes within immigration societies, are a prerequisite for better social harmony, which in turn ensures immigration societies' internal stability.

Although definitely more prevalent, integration and assimilation theories, with their structural-functionalist and at times even evolutionist tenor, were not the only interpretative tools for migration phenomena in Europe. Along with these paradigms, we need to mention the Marxist one. Quite paradoxically, though its not-too-hidden agenda was a revolutionary project, it may be regarded as a very specific variant of the integrationist concept. In this case, the point is clearly not about analyzing the immigrants' integration circumstances in the society of residence. Rather, the chief concern is the role and consequently the inclusion of immigrants, deemed to be of rural extraction, in the *working class* of industrial and capitalist-oriented host societies (Shanin 1980, 73). In line with the motto *immigrants and local workers, unite!* (Shanin

1980, 73), the Marxist approach at the time dealt chiefly with the emergence of the separation between *foreign* and *autochthonous workers* and how it could be deconstructed (Nikolinakos 1980, 68 ff.).

The methodological premise of class analysis underscores the identical social position of all workers, immigrant or otherwise. Highlighting cultural diversities would be misleading and incorrect because there are no social differences between autochthonous and foreign workers in the class structure of capitalist societies of residence. Immigrants must not be observed in light of their community's specificity, but solely according to categories linked to their current social position. In line with the Marxist vision in fact, in north-central Europe immigrants must be regarded as an integral part of the class structure of the societies of residence since, in accordance with objective criteria, they are members of the working class in every aspect (Castles & Kosack 1973, 5 ff.). Thus, *divide et impera* is capital's cynical and well-tested strategy to challenge, stifle or at least curtail the development of class solidarity. The deliberate accentuation or indeed the intentional fabrication of ethnocultural differences between autochthonous and immigrant workers as well as among the various foreign communities is nothing but a *disengagement strategy* (Aronson 1976, 9 ff.) masterminded by the ruling classes in order to disunite the principal sub-altern class, i.e., the working class (Nikolinakos 1980, 67). In this connection, Nikolinakos also adds that the objective interests of immigrants and autochthonous workers are identical as they are determined by the same mechanisms of exploitation built into the capitalist system (Nikolinakos 1980, 69; Blaschke & Greussing 1980, 14).

According to the Marxist vision, the *ethnologization* in migration theories is flawed and even harmful because ultimately, as they are based on incorrect analyses, they provide an ideological backing to the capitalist owners' interests. For French anthropologist Claude Meillassoux, only concepts such as *exploitation*, *international reserve army*, and *class struggle* are suitable and essential conceptual tools to study migration phenomena (Meillassoux 1980, 59). This author further developed his argument foreseeing a promising near future in which the purported ethnocultural differences will come to an end under the "pressure of the immigrants' class experiences" (Meillassoux 1980, 54 ff.; Blaschke & Greussing 1980, 12). Meillassoux appears to regard immigrants as the *cutting edge* of the workers movement, thus drawing on the Leninist theory about the crucial role of the *external proletariat* not corrupted yet by the lures of capitalism.

These Marxist reflections on migration phenomena, which nowadays seem naïve and rather abstruse, were quite popular at the time and must be viewed in context. They were the outcome of the 1968 intellectual dream shattered by the breakdown of the student movements' revolutionary project in Western Europe. This defeat, however, would also herald the swift and final crisis of such highly radical and ideologically connoted Marxist analyses.

Emphasizing Cultural Difference and Ethnicity: The Permanence of First Immigrants, New Arrivals from Distant Countries and the Multicultural Blunder

Despite the brief economic crisis in the autumn of 1973 caused by the sudden war in the Middle East, the 1970s and 1980s saw the arrival of new migratory waves, chiefly from extra-European countries. For the most part, these were immigrants from Turkey to German-speaking countries, from North Africa to France and from the Indian subcontinent to the United Kingdom. Consequently, the issue of cultural diversity recognition came increasingly to the fore in both academic and political circles. However, the illusion of ethnocultural homogeneity, which was the ideology underpinning the concept of nation as a primordial, natural and organic community, was shattered also in everyday life. Given both the presence of immigrants whose transience could no longer be regarded as the most likely option and the appearance of new ethnic communities whose cultural differences – owing to dietary, musical, attire, religious, etc. customs and social practices – were easily perceived even by the man in the street, in Western Europe the idea of the national State on whose territory lives and works a single nation turned out to be an increasingly untenable illusion.

In view of the above, it stands to reason that concepts such as integration and assimilation, besides being too simplistic, were no longer regarded as suitable tools for a scientific analysis or political-normative interventions. Accordingly, they were cast aside and, at least for the time being, fell into oblivion. Instead, the vision of a multicultural society, and of multiculturalism in particular, gained ground becoming very popular. Probably France alone staunchly continued to hark back to individualistic and culturally neutral values dating back to the Revolution and the birth of the *one and indivisible* Republic. Yet, even this eminently anticulturalist country could no longer turn a blind eye on the patent spread of cultural differences associated with immigration. In this case, however, to avoid betraying the Republican ideals the more inclusive and unitarian concept of interculturality was employed in lieu of multiculturalism.

Ironically, both the idea of ethnicity as a specific form of identity and the concept of multiculturalism as the desirable new social order would be spread by the former standard-bearers of the 1968 protest movements. This may be surprising but not unexpected. The defeat of the student movement spawned an entire generation of *orphans of Marxism* who would seek safety beyond what Italian writer Ignazio Silone called *the god that failed*, clearly alluding to Marxism as a theory and Soviet communism as its practice.

The quest for new ideals and new projects of society led these survivors of the 1968 movements to discover on the one hand the appeal of *Zivilisationkritik*

and the *small is beautiful* of some alternative, usually environmentalist, communities, and on the other the allure of ethnicity. We need to bear in mind that at the time there was a renewed interest in *identity* and *roots* thanks to the claims of people of color in the United States and the United Kingdom. During the 1970s and especially in the early 1980s, a wave of identitary revival, often supported and led by these *orphans of Marxism*, swept over non-communist continental Europe as well. Accordingly, there was a *rediscovery* or, better yet, an *attempt to establish* supposedly vanishing ethnic affiliations, such as those with Occitania, Brittany, Frisia, etc. The escalation of claims and identity conflicts on a religious and ethnic basis in Northern Ireland, Basque Country, Catalonia, etc. was only to be expected. Thus, a vast array of regionalist movements (autonomist or separatist) against the alleged excessive power of the national State emerged as well. Political scientist Dirk Gerdes has aptly defined this identitary revival as the *provincial rebellion* (Gerdes 1980).

This *Zeitgeist*, in which identity and ethnicity take on a quasi-salvific import, would not be limited to the centrifugal momentum of the previously mentioned regionalist movements and social sciences' more or less open empathy, as it would also determine political strategies and the approach of scientific analyses concerning migration phenomena. Clearly, the interest in identity and ethnicity in the context of migration was induced, as mentioned above, by the arrival of immigrants from societies whose values, customs, and social practices were very different from those of Western Europe.

In conclusion, we can reasonably assert that the concepts of identity and ethnicity were ultimately rediscovered by leftist academic and political circles disillusioned with class struggle and its ideological apparatus. It is not so surprising that these *orphans of Marxism* who by now had turned to identity management and the socio-anthropology of ethnicity were also those who more than anyone else strove to make the idea of multiculturalism, which they forcefully reject at present, a focus of attention in relation to the question of migration. Thus, it is symptomatic that in the 1980s, i.e., well before shedding his political skin to become an environmentalist politician, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, May 1968's legendary student leader, headed the office for *multicultural affairs* set up by Frankfurt's social-democrat municipality and its mayor for the purpose of respecting diversities in immigrant communities and promoting coexistence among members of different cultures.

Bearing in mind that to this day the term multiculturalism is rather ill-defined, then what did it imply at the time? Broadly speaking, from a contemporary standing we can easily perceive that the term multiculturalism was linked to an idyllic vision steeped in a very naïve and simplistic voluntarism. In fact, interethnic relations between culturally different groups were believed to be inherently harmonious and consequently that coexistence would have been an effortless, almost natural outcome. Probably in this case, too, the illusion of a European-style *melting pot* played a somewhat implicit role in

the concept of multiculturalism. According to multicultural policies at that time, organizing public events such as interethnic festivals featuring *ethno-food*, *ethnoshops*, *ethnomusic* and *ethnodance* seemed more than enough to bring about *multiculturalism*. It was reckoned that events celebrating cultural diversity would have guaranteed a peaceful coexistence between immigrants and citizens of the host nation. These assumptions were the cornerstone of German *MultiKulti* (Leggewie 1991), by now rightly deemed ludicrous, that would have heralded a joyous and peaceful Babel (*Heimat Babylon*) where, contrary to the original, co-operation, peace and prosperity reigned (Cohn-Bendit 1992).

These representations of effortless interethnic coexistence in immigration societies were the ideological material of what became known as the *multicultural blunder* (Melotti 2000). In fact, no one at the time was aware, or, better still, no one wanted to accept the fact that, by definition, multicultural societies are structurally fragile (Ascherson 1995, 245) and that making them work requires a strong, multileveled political will (national, regional and local) backed by corresponding practices in everyday life. *Multiculturalism* is never spontaneous, deliberate, and solely individual. Therefore, it needs to be conceived chiefly as a political management that promotes the recognition of difference and thus ensures equal respect for all of society's ethno-cultural groups (Modood 2007; Parekh 2000). However, this vision was at odds with both the anti-sociological individualism of circles influenced by liberalism and with the unrealistic voluntarism and superficial grassroots of the orphans of Marxism. Given this unfavorable scenario, multiculturalism in Western Europe's immigration societies was bound to fail, as it did, both as a social theory and as a political strategy. The true cause of the demise of German MultiKulti and other similar experiments, as well as the true reason behind the current bad repute of the various experiments of recognition of immigrants' ethno-cultural difference, were individualism, voluntarism and "grassrootism" rashly applied to multiculturalism.

These multiculturalist conceptions were characterized by a further major methodological contradiction. In fact, besides individualism, voluntarism and grassrootism, they were also marked by an essentialist approach, which tends to reify ethnicity and regard it as an almost natural and unchangeable phenomenon. Accordingly, the immigrant is a prisoner of sorts of his own culture of origin, which he replicates in the host society. This purported cultural rigidity implies the presence of fixed identities and immigrant communities with well-defined and nearly impenetrable boundaries. In some cases, this conception of ethno-cultural difference led to conclude that immigrants form *national colonies* assimilated to the *ethnic minorities* of a given country (Schmalz-Jacobsen & Hansen 1995).

The Discovery of Transnationalism: Immigrants with Multiple and Changeable Identities

Given the above methodological and political reasons, in Europe multiculturalism as it was conceived in the 1970s and 1980s was gradually laid aside soon after the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Actually, the co-occurrence of the downfall of communism and the disaffection with multiculturalism may be linked. In fact, the sudden revival of virulent ethnonationalisms in post-socialist Eastern Europe spotlighted the methodological and political pitfalls inherent to the essentialist notion of ethnicity. Especially but not only in former Yugoslavia, political leaders exploited feelings of belonging and national affiliations by portraying them as something primordial in order to justify and engineer violent ethnic homogenizations bordering on genocide. Accordingly, ethnicity as well as the emphasis on cultural difference inherent to the idea of multiculturalism lost whatever aura of innocence they may have had left. This clearly gave rise to a critical debate on the broader notion of identity as well. As far as migration phenomena in Europe were concerned, social sciences therefore focused increasingly on the immigrants' relations with both the host society and the society of origin. Via this approach, a wide variety of immigrants' systems of reference, both in terms of values and norms and of social practices, were observed. It was discovered that, thanks also to greater mobility options, i.e., opportunities to circulate freely between the country of residence and the society of origin, their lifestyles spanned two or more cultures. The fact of leading a life that extends beyond a single national system of reference represents the methodological rationale to speak of *transnationalism* (Glick Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton 1992).

In essence, transnational behavior and agency also imply that the actors' identity is not set but varies in accordance with their sociocultural context. This would also mean though that identity is not unchangeable as if it were a distinctive marking, but rather is something situational, strategic and thus dynamic. It is reasonable to assume that immigrants are capable of adapting nearly concurrently to different sociocultural environments and to act rationally as regards to systems of values and norms even if very different from their own. They follow the rules governing the different sociocultural aspects that emerge in their transnational life simply because, paraphrasing Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu, it is in their best interest, which is determined by the specific context (Weber 1956; Bourdieu & Wacquant 2006, 147 ff.). A flexible and dynamic identity, as conceived by the transnationalist approach, does not boil down to a cultural characteristic, as it is also a common-sense social practice and probably an economic necessity as well. Therefore, we need to acknowledge transnationalism's positive contribution to the analysis of migration phenomena in Europe. We shall delve into this aspect further on.

We ought to bear in mind, however, that an indiscriminate use of this analytical tool may lead to major methodological pitfalls. One could be sorely

tempted to overestimate individual flexibility and to deem multiple and changeable identities as something universal and decontextualized. As some upholders of postmodern *cultural studies* directly or indirectly propose, identity therefore would be the outcome of free choice, thus a decision made by the individual of his own volition. The much-lauded *creolization* or *hybridization* phenomena as the outcome of immigrant subjectivities are far more an exception than the rule (Hannerz 1992; Appadurai 1993). Indeed, they are probably the upshot of the unshakeable and shortsighted optimism of anti-sociological postmodernism.

Just as with multiculturalism in the 1980s, the dangerous illusion of voluntarism, subjectivism and thus of *methodological individualism* looms large in this case too. The risk inherent to this way of conceiving immigrants' transnationalism lies in blotting out society's role from the process of identity construction, thus reducing the single actors to monads independent from each other. Consequently, the importance and most times even the existence of groups and communities, besides the impact of social control's branding strategies and stigmatization of the *other*, is denied for an excessive fear of arbitrary essentializations. The fact that identities, as George H. Mead had rightly pointed out, are never solely a self-production because they always include a reality built by *others* tends to be overlooked far too often (Mead 1973). Mead's observations are particularly significant in European migration contexts if skin color comes into play too.

Diasporas and Networks: Social Organization of Transnationalism

The advantage of so-to-speak moderate versions of the transnational approach lies precisely in having redefined or revived the concepts of diaspora and network as analytical tools. The term diaspora is well-known for its Greek etymology, which literally means to disperse. It defines the migration of a people who from their homeland disperse in every direction. Strictly speaking, it designates a forced displacement usually under a political threat (conquest, invasion, war, persecution, genocide, etc.). On the surface therefore, this notion would not seem appropriate to characterize migrations in Europe since these were and still are due to economic reasons, thus voluntary, though over the last years an increasing number of political refugees have arrived from war-torn regions. Thanks mainly to sociologist Robin Cohen, the definition of diaspora was broadened to include forms of voluntary migration (Cohen 1997). Under this aspect, Cohen formulated nine criteria determining what may be regarded as a diaspora. This British sociologist's attempt has been vehemently criticized by authors who deemed this wider definition arbitrary and who preferred the so-to-speak more classical definition of the term (Safran 1991, 83 ff.). Cohen's

proposition is certainly the most interesting and innovative in terms of social sciences, though, like several other authors (Clifford 1994, 302 ff.), he insists, possibly too much, on the cultural and psychological traits as well as on the collective representations inherent to diasporic phenomena. In brief, the above-mentioned nine criteria highlight the following aspects in particular (Cohen 1997, 26):

- a) the initial, often traumatic, reason for dispersal or of migration due to economic reasons;
- b) a collective memory, a mythical vision or idealization of the homeland and a consequent project to return at some point;
- c) a strong ethnic group consciousness based on a sense of distinctiveness, on the idea of a shared history and destiny.
- d) a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic immigrants in other countries along with the awareness of not being accepted in the host societies, which leads to troubled relations with the latter's members;
- e) the awareness of prospects for a distinctive creative and enriching life.

This brief outline, however, already shows that Cohen, rather surprisingly, sidesteps the social organization of the diasporas. We believe that the latter, in terms of structure, cannot be reduced to plain network systems, which, instead, are the other essential tool to analyze immigrants' transnational existence. It is common knowledge, but needs to be restated, that the idea of network was developed in the 1950s by the Manchester School headed by Max Gluckman in relation to studies on the urban society in the Copperbelt mining region (in Zambia). These urban settlements were the consequence of migration flows from rural areas towards the city. These researches, moreover rather ambitious, aimed on the one hand to re-examine the strictly institutionalist, thus rather abstract point of view characteristic of structural-functionalism, and on the other to identify the true relations and actual interactions between city-dwellers and rural residents, thus directly or indirectly thematizing the dynamics between tradition and modernity as well (Hannerz 1980, 233 ff.).

Network analysis, which sank into oblivion for nearly two decades after being very popular in anthropology in the 1970s (Boissevain 1974; Boissevain & Mitchell 1973), was rediscovered in the 1990s concomitant with the transnational approach. However, not many studies are available (Dahinden 2005), probably because most of the times gathering field data as well as processing and interpreting it is very complex. Yet, *network analysis* has proven to be a very useful if not indispensable tool for the anthropology and sociology of migration. In fact, reconstructing the network of relations of a single immigrant or group of immigrants (e.g. families) with persons or communities belonging to the society of residence and of origin will definitely provide an accurate and adequate picture of the transnational nature of migration phenomena in Europe. However, network analysis, too, has an intrinsic methodological flaw since it will only map the system of interpersonal relations, leaving out other

forms of social organization such as the ones involving entire groups and communities. Thus, the *methodological individualism* inherent to *network analysis* is rather a drawback in many cases, since it brings to light only part of the complexity, though a significant one, of what Marcel Mauss had keenly called a *phénomène social total* (Mauss 1980).

What should we do then? Opt for the notion of diaspora or network? Should we assume that one of the two concepts is the more appropriate theoretical lens, beyond the sheer ethnographic description, to interpret the transnationalism that permeates the various migrations in Europe and elsewhere as well? In my opinion, these are false questions. With good reason, Mitchell had pointed out that “the opposition of networks and corporate groups (or institutions) must be a false dichotomy” (Mitchell 1973, 34). Thus, it would be a serious mistake to measure the network notion against the one of diaspora, which, as mentioned above, is imagined by its members as a culture-based corporate group that often takes on actual institutional forms in the shape of associations, brotherhoods, clubs, committees, etc. In line with Mitchell’s cogent argument, we can then specify that the two options must be deemed complementary since they do not concern two antithetical abstract notions, but rather two forms of social organization with different levels of complexity (Mitchell 1973, 34). In the end, diaspora and network can both be present in the same social environment. They could also be described as two Weberian ideal types placed at the opposite ends of a continuum wherein, in relation to the predominance of a given social organization, lies what the researcher is studying empirically.

In order to clarify the above, we will analyze the case of Chinese networks and diasporas in Southeast Asia and specifically in the Strait of Malacca. It is common knowledge that the gradual decline of the Chinese empire, worsened by the devastating Opium Wars, led to overwhelming migration movements from the 17th to the early 20th centuries especially from southern China (Guangdong and Hokkien) towards *Nanyang*, namely the *Southern Seas* (in particular the South China Sea, the Gulf of Siam, the Straits of Malacca, the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Bengal) (Khoo 2008, 18). Often encouraged by British and Dutch colonial administrations, immigration was particularly massive in the coastal cities of the eastern areas of the Bay of Bengal and the Strait of Malacca. Accordingly, major Chinese communities, who maintained strong commercial ties with each other, developed in Singapore, Penang, Phuket, Yangon, and along the coast of Sumatra. During the entire 19th century, the social organization of these immigrant communities was widespread and diversified. Yet, the criteria determining the social production of cohesion were never national in the sense of *Chineseness*. Kinship relations and place of origin in the first place, followed by vernacular language (thus not by Mandarin) and line of work were the principles that governed the community’s social organization (Tan 2007, 49). At the time, the Chinese were clustered chiefly around places

of worship, mainly Taoist and/or Buddhist, whose acolytes were connected via kinship relations defined by clan belonging or by a shared region of origin. Clearly, clan relations and region of origin (e.g. a village) could often be strictly correlated. The temple however, wasn't solely a sacred area since nearby there would usually be club-like rooms where business was discussed, gaming (and gambling) went on and celebrations (not only religious) were held. Moreover, since the various clan and regional groups lived around the temples, they were territorially separated from each other within each *Chinatown*. These separations, which only an outsider would call internal, were marked by violent rivalry caused by clashing economic interests. The long-standing rivalry between Hokkien and Cantonese in Penang, which often escalated into violent armed conflicts, is nearly legendary. Always in Penang, in the 19th century there were even a few temporary alliances between Hokkien Chinese merchants and the Malay Muslims from Aceh (Sumatra) against their Cantonese competitors: apparently, Chinese against Chinese. Besides these rivalries based on regional belonging however, there were also economic clashes between the various clans.

The British colonial administration, for example, acknowledged these differences, linguistic and cultural as well, and, thanks to its obsession with classifications, in 1889 further subdivided Penang's Chinese community into four regional categories: Cantonese, Kheh, Teochew, and Hokkien (Tan 2007, 126).

Given such a structurally differentiated and complex picture, as well as such heterogeneous and multiple identities and affiliations, we could hardly speak of a Chinese diaspora as far as nineteenth-century Southeast Asia is concerned, since it would be a typical case of *methodological nationalism* (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002, 301 seq.). In his contribution at the symposium on the *Evolution of Sino-Southeast Asian Communities* (Penang, July 18-20, 2008) Wong Yee Tan was fully aware of this aspect. This young researcher convincingly showed that at the above-mentioned time the social organization of Penang's Chinese was based chiefly on a very efficient system of transnational networks under the control of five clans in particular, the renowned *big five*. During the entire period, via an impressive system of regional networks, the powerful Khoo, Cheah, Yeoh, Lim and Tan clans in Penang controlled most economic activities in nearby States, i.e., southern Burma, the southwestern part of Siam (now Thailand), the northeastern areas of Sumatra and, last but not least, the Malay sultanates on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula.

The term diaspora seems far more applicable to the next period, i.e., from the end of the 19th century on, when a gradual *nationalization* of Chinese communities took place in all of *Nanyang*, though the above-mentioned commercial networks were still operational. Actually, the latter would turn out to be a useful and important means to spread new ideas. In fact, this was the dawn of the Chinese Revolution and the beginning of the end of the centuries-old

empire. With his unflagging rabble-rousing, Sun Yat Sen, undisputed political leader who in 1911 would have radically changed the fortunes of modern China, was one of the main protagonists in the construction of *Chineseness* in *Nanyang* during his stay in Southeast Asia (Khoo 2008, 17 ff.). Therefore, we could speak of the rise of a national, yet also a hybrid and fluid *diasporic identity* by which the Chinese rediscovered *mainland China* as their homeland. However, to this day those living and working on the Malay Peninsula and in the north central areas of the Malay Archipelago (especially Sumatra and Java) will still proudly define themselves as *Peranakan*, *Baba-nyonya*, *Straits Chinese*, i.e., terms that try to highlight their cultural and social difference from the other Chinese. As mentioned before, identity however involves not only self-definition, but also heterodefinition. In British Malaya and in the Straits Settlements the Chinese were designated as such also because the colonial administration and then the Malay nationalism labeled them as such. In fact, moving into the 20th century, the term Chinese, *tout court*, gradually replaced the different Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, etc. in official records and colonial statistics. With the advent of nationalist independence movements, the idea of *ethnicity* became increasingly popular in these two regions of the Malay Peninsula.

Realistically, in order to contrast Malay nationalism, the Chinese, just like the Indians who for the most part have Tamil origins, could only *ethnicize themselves* as well, constituting themselves into a nominally national diaspora, yet *de facto* maintaining a fluid and hybrid identity. Besides, Malay nationalism may be viewed as a response to Chinese and Indian diasporizations. In this region, *ethnicization* is a concurrent and reciprocal dialectic process conducted according to the action/reaction principle, or, better yet, conforming to the rule *if you do it, I'll do it too* and likewise, *if I do it, you'll do it too*. This is an important lesson also for immigration societies in Europe: if nationalism (and eventually racism) becomes more widespread among the members of the titular nation, then chances that the dreaded *parallel societies* will develop increase. Yet, the opposite is true as well: if there is a growing feeling that immigrants' *parallel societies* are becoming a reality, then there will also be a growing nationalism in the population that deems itself *autochthonous*.

Conclusion

In this article, we have shown how over the past fifty years research (and politics as well) regarding the immigration phenomenon from countries of residence has gone through various phases in which different theoretic and conceptual paradigms with a practical-political significance were developed, some of which were eventually dropped. At present, the transnationalist approach seems the more reasonable one, though the dangers of voluntarism and methodological individualism, by which society's role is underestimated if not indeed totally

disregarded, should be taken very seriously. Two conceptual tools linked to the transnationalist approach, instead, i.e., the notions of diaspora and network, proved very useful. Their usefulness however, as we have tried to show with the example of Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, is conditional on a non-dualistic or, better yet, a non-dichotomous approach to avoid contrasting one concept with the other. Finally, a declaredly processual vision is the prerequisite to show, on the one hand, how networks can develop from diasporas (and possibly vice versa), and, on the other hand, how diasporas and networks coexist, influence each other, and strengthen each other.

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Migracijos paradigmos: nuo integracijos iki transnacionalizmo

Santrauka

Straipsnyje iš socialinės antropologijos perspektyvos yra analizuojamos skirtingos teorinės prieigos, būdingos šiuolaikiniams debatams apie imigraciją Europoje ir pasaulyje. Straipsnio pradžioje aptariami modeliai, išplėtoti ir išpopuliarinti XX a. 7-ajame dešimtmetyje, naudoti aptariant integracijos teoriją ir marksistines refleksijas apie klasinę imigrantų sąmonę. Straipsnyje atveriami paradigmos kaita, įvykusi praeito amžiaus paskutiniajame dešimtmetyje: naujos analitinės prieigos ėmė telkti daugiau dėmesio į imigrantų kultūrą jų gimtosiose šalyse, suvokta, kad imigrantai elgiasi atsižvelgdami į dvi kultūrinės nuorodų sistemas: savo gimtąją kultūrą ir tą, kurioje gyvena.

Šiame teoriniame modelyje išryškėja transnacionalinis migracijos reiškinio aspektas. Straipsnyje aptariama socialinė transnacionalizmo sandara, pradedant nuo dviejų asociacijų tipų – diasporų ir socialinių tinklų. Kelių šimtmečių trukmės kinų imigracija į Malaiziją pateikia įrodymų, kad diaspora ir socialiniai tinklai nėra dvi viena kitai priešingos socialinės tvarkos formos; veikiau jos egzistuoja kartu ir veikia viena kita. Naudodamasis istorine perspektyva autorius parodo, kad kinų socialiniai tinklai Malaizijoje laipsniškai tapo nacionaline diaspora, kurioje vis dar veikia ne tik ekonominė, bet ir politinę galią turintys klanų pavidalo socialiniai tinklai.