

3. Discuss immigrant integration using the concepts of 'cultural armature' and 'city scale'.

Immigrants' integration into the receiving society is a double-edged sword, having effects on both the receiving community and immigrants themselves. From the side of the host, there are many factors influencing the integration. Among them, "culture armature" plays an important role in a city's response to the incorporation of new comers. Researchers describe a city's "culture armature" as a combination of its history and cultural geography, urban self-presentation, cultural responses to demography, and prevailing ethos toward immigrants. (Jaworsky, Levitt, Cadge, et al. 2012) In a city with more "advantageous" culture armature, immigrant integration could be easier and smoother than that in a city without it.

In cities with similar situation of immigration, the receptions of immigrants can be quite different based on the historical background of individual cities. Features of the migration, such as origins, causes, identities of the people, etc. resulted in different treatment or level of acceptance from the locals. How migrants were accepted historically in most cases remains a tradition or custom that continues to be carried out the same way in the present. The features of migrants dating back into the course of history have formed the culture of the receiving place in a way as well. Actually, the way how immigrants are accepted has become a way of life, in other words, culture. Therefore, when immigrants are welcomed to integrate like they have always been in history, the culture of the receiving community shares the same hospitality. History forms the culture and the culture allows the history to carry on.

Urban self-presentation contributes to a city's culture armature in a way that when the city poses itself to be multicultural and diverse, it attracts people from everywhere. This also has to do with a city's economic development strategy, which determines the viewpoint of locals toward immigrants whether seeing them as an asset to the development of the city or invaders that destroy their old way of life.

As mentioned above, the origin of the immigrants can lead to a different attitude of the receiving community, or in the researchers words, "moral classification". It is acceptance mixed with a humanitarian sensation. This makes the local residents think of the migrants as "deserving poor", but not invaders plundering resources and services from their society. The response comes along with hearty helps for the immigrants to get used to the new society, so that they can step out of the shadow casted by some tragic trauma back in their homeland, as far as the locals are concerned.

Not only informally constructed culture and customs are part of the culture armature, but the official stance influences it in no lesser way. What the municipal claims to be in terms of immigrant incorporation directly acts upon the ways they are received by residents. Official declaration from the municipal office gives the move a positive reinforcement. When people receive the positive message from officials, they would feel encouraged to perform in the confirmed way. More importantly, when the municipal makes the welcoming stance official, or chooses to prevail the ethos as such, policies and services would be made and offered accordingly.

Thus immigrants enjoy the benefits in everyday environment and also from official regulations, which makes the integration much easier.

Culture armature of a city affects the integration of migrants, while the migrant integration affects the city at the same time, in a sense that it changes or influences the city scale and “serves as scale-makers in multiple ways”. (Schiller and Caglar 2009:189) Nowadays, in the trend of globalization, many cities see migrants as a marketable asset to gain their competitiveness strength in the global market of capital and resources. Along the continuum of city scales, different positioning of different cities indicates different levels of migrant integration in the city. For instance, top-scale cities are societies with migrants highly incorporated through a wide array of pathways. Therefore, culture armature of a city has an impact on the city scale by means of influencing the depth of immigrant integration.

References:

Jaworsky, Bernadette Nadya, Peggy Levitt, Wendy Cadge, et al. 2012. “New Perspectives on Immigrant Contexts of Reception: The Cultural Armature of Cities.” *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 2(1):78-88.

Schiller, Nina Glick and Ayse Caglar. 2009. “Towards a Comparative Theory of Locality in Migration Studies: Migrant Incorporation and City Scale.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(2):177-202.

4. What state is responsible for social protection of the migrants? Answer this question using at least 2 readings from the syllabus.

Due to the nature of their identity, it is a complicated issue to assign the responsibility for social protection of transnational migrants to a specific state. The fact that they are transnational indicates they are being “here” and “there” at the same time. This status, however, does not bring them double protection from both sides. In the receiving society, they are not “one of us” because of their different origin and background. They are seen as “strangers” who may come and leave at any moment, or wanderers on the margin of the society. Therefore, migrants are not fully entitled to the social rights that legitimate citizens or members of the local community are endowed with. Many receiving societies find this situation problematic and try to introduce programs aimed at protecting and serving the migrants’ legitimate rights. This solution, as researchers have found, is to a certain degree helpful, but not absolutely settling. According to Boccagni (2013), the reason behind it, at least partly, comes from the migrants’ side. Unexpectedly, they are reluctant to accept support from the host society. Migrants, usually considered as the breadwinner of a family, are not willing to weaken their image by accepting any kind of help. As “strangers” in the society, they are also distrustful of mainstream services and are fearful of repression and discrimination. Moreover, transnational migrants hold pervasive expectations that they are sooner or later returning home.

In the land where migrants have full rights, their sending society, social protection is pointed to a different direction when the migrants themselves are somehow overlooked for not being physically present. Much work has been done on the support and protection of the non-migrant family members of the migrants, especially the left-behind children, as a result of the attentions researches have drawn on the negative outcomes migration of parents has on the children. It is not any easier task either. It has been noticed that the over-protection and overexposure of the left-behind members brings them advantages, but at the same time discrimination too. (Boccagni 2013; Mazzucato 2013)

When it is difficult to have practical social protection from neither receiving nor sending country, the responsibility falls on the “in-between” of two sides. Just like the transnational characteristic of migrants, the institution which provides social protection for them should be transnational as well, or at least with a view to really work on “transnational welfare” (Boccagni 2013:16) It is a body that has no geographic boundary and is liquid in order to follow the flow of migrants “here and there”. Only when an institution is able to transcend the national barriers, can it carry the full responsibility of providing social protection for transnational migrants.

References:

Boccagni, Paolo. 2013. “Caring about Migrant Care Workers: From Private Obligations to Transnational Social Welfare?” *Critical Social Policy* 0(0). doi:10.1177/0261018313500867.

Mazzucato, Valentina. 2013. “Child Well-Being and Transnational Families.”

6. Design a research project with these keywords: 'transnational families' and 'Central and Eastern Europe'. Formulate research question(s) and justify your methodology.

Research Proposal

Introduction:

Mazzucato (2013:1) defines “transnational families” as “families in which one or more members live in another country or region”. The long-distance separation has changed the relationships between and roles of family members either the migrated or the left-behind. Initial focus of the studies has been placed on the effect of parents’ migration on children. Most of them indicate there are negative influences on the relationship between migrant parents and non-migrant children. (Mazzucato 2013:2), yet there was not much mentioned about the change of the relationship between spouses caused by migration. In the scope of migration within Central and Eastern Europe, the male labor force constitutes a big part, leaving behind wives and children. Engbersen, Leerkes, Grabowska-Lusinka, et al. (2013:959) have identified four migration patterns depending on the strength of attachment to home and destination countries. Of them, the second pattern, which they named “bi-nationals”, “shows a tendency to strong transnationalism” (Ibid). This research aims at finding out the consequences of labor migration on the relationships between married couples with and without children of the “bi-national” pattern. It would serve as a complementary component to the research field on transnational families in order to answer “the emerging concern in both the academic and policy arenas” (Mazzucato 2013:1).

Research Questions:

Based on the researches carried out on the effects of living in transnational families on the relationships between children and their parents, I intend to find the answers likewise the following research questions:

1. How long-distance separation affects the relationship between migrant husbands and left-behind wives in transnational families?
2. Whether having children or not can have any influence on the relationship?

Research Method:

The methodology consists of conceptual analysis, qualitative empirical research, and quantitative methods for a bigger group of respondents. I will use semi-structured interviews as a major empirical data-collecting method in the first phase of the research, as “interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow humans” (Fontana and Frey 2005:697-8). Moreover, in the first phase of the study when there is not abundant knowledge about the addressed questions, semi-structured interviews functions well to gather basic information about the field and to provide guidelines and insights for the second phase of the research when surveys are handed out to a wider range of respondents. I conduct the selection of sample population using the snowball technique. The subjects under study are couples from transnational families in Central and Eastern Europe, in which husbands are “bi-national” and wives stay.

References:

Engbersen, Godfried, Arjen Leerkes, Izabella Grabowska-Lusinka, et al. 2013. "On the Differential Attachments of Migrants from Central and Eastern Europe: A Typology of Labour Migration." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39(6):959-81.

Fontana, Andrea, and James H. Frey. 2005. "The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement." Pp. 695-27 in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. 3rd ed.*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Mazzucato, Valentina. 2013. "Child Well-Being and Transnational Families."