A World in Movement

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, social sciences have studied migrations from the view point of integration within the framework of nation states, with more interest in integration into society than in real people, their culture and subjectivity. They have barely studied the country of origin, or the difficulties involved in transit. Nowadays, the migratory phenomenon is diverse and changes continuously. Identities undergo a constant process of transformation, even when they are connected to migration while social scientists have developed such notions as panethnicity and transnationalism. The time has finally come to put an end to the so-called sociology of integration, and seriously consider the point of view migrants as subjects in a global world. In several societies, however, many people like to speak in terms of integration. But "integration models" are now a failure.

Keywords: 1. migration, 2. identity, 3. subjectivation, 4. integration, 5. transnationalism.

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RESUMEN

Las ciencias sociales clásicas han estudiado las migraciones desde el punto de vista de la integración dentro del marco de los Estados-nación y con un interés más dirigido hacia la integración de la sociedad que hacia la gente real, su cultura y su subjetividad. Se ha estudiado poco, tanto los países de origen como las dificultades en el tránsito. En la actualidad, los fenómenos migratorios son diversos y cambiantes. Las identidades se encuentran en constante proceso de cambio, incluyendo las que se vinculan con la migración, por lo que algunos científicos sociales han desarrollado conceptos tales como el de la panetnicidad y el transnacionalismo. Finalmente, ha llegado el momento de acabar con la llamada sociología de la integración y de tomar seriamente en cuenta el punto de vista de los migrantes como personas en un mundo global. En muchas sociedades, sin embargo, a la gente le gusta hablar en términos de integración. Pero en la actualidad *los modelos de integración* son un fracaso.

Palabras clave: 1. migración, 2. identidad, 3. subjetivación, 4. integración, 5. transnacionalismo.

Introduction

The world is moving, and so are social sciences.

This is why migration has become a main concern in France, a country where this issue has had a relatively secondary role since the end of the Second World War. In other parts of the world, the problem of migration has been important for a long time, particularly in countries built upon the—near—destruction of the "first" peoples and large waves of immigration. The United States, for instance, are proud of being a country of immigrants: visiting Ellis Island, at the entrance of the New York Harbor, is enough to perceive this. The visitor's passion is remarkable and has nothing to do with the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration [National City of the History of Immigration], in Paris. While France discovered its history of immigration during the mid-eighties, with the pioneer work of Yves Lequin or Gérard Noiriel, the United States celebrated the anniversary of the arrival of the Statue of Liberty, symbolizing the construction of their country by immigrants—they nevertheless forgot to mention the less glorious arrival of the Blacks, who came in the holds of slave trade ships, and avoided talking about the annihilation of the Indians. In this paper, I will highlight the qualitative dimensions of migratory phenomena and their implications for social sciences. But is it possible to avoid mentioning their quantitative dimensions? I will settle here for quoting a figure by Catherine Wihtol de Wenden: "the volume of migration has tripled in thirty years and almost every region in the world is currently concerned with the departure, transit or reception of increasingly mobile peoples with increasingly diversified profiles" (Wihtol de Wenden, 2009:15).

The Contribution of Classical Social Sciences

In their classical form, social sciences have studied migratory phenomena by examining them, essentially, from the viewpoint of nation states and the migrant groups who have settled there. After the grand age of the Chicago School, to which we will re-

turn later, social sciences were dominated during the 1940s and 1950s by paradigms of Durkheimian or functionalist inspiration, and they developed a mode of analysis which oversees the essentials of the societies of origin,—nearly—ignores the difficulties of transit, and seeks above all to study the modalities of immigrant integration. Thus, the study of immigration focuses on a society's capacity to receive the newly arrived and seeks above all to examine the ways in which they find their place in it. From this viewpoint, migrants can either become assimilated, namely they abandon their cultural particularities in one or two generations, sometimes even in the spheres of private life, everyday life and home, or they become integrated, namely they maintain certain characteristics peculiar to their culture of origin, like eating or dressing habits, religions, languages, while nevertheless becoming full-fledged citizens.

Whether assimilation or integration predominates depends rather on the receiving society's political culture than on the nature of the involved groups: during the past two centuries, France has developed a republican culture encouraging assimilation more than integration, but this culture is currently being questioned and for around two decades there has been talk of the French model being in crisis. In the so-called "anglosaxon" countries, integration is more traditional: groups or minorities largely maintain their own identity, even if it becomes superficial, not to say artificial, and depends more on the logics of production and invention, than on the logics of reproduction. On a planetary level, the general trend is to abandon assimilationist models in favor of integrative formulas, themselves more or less open to multiculturalism.

These classical approaches to migratory phenomena focus on migrants based on their point of arrival rather than on their society of origin. Ultimately, they focus less on migrants, their history, their trajectory, their hopes and difficulties, than on the way in which the receiving society works and how it eventually becomes disrupted by their arrival. For functionalist- or Durkheimien-inspired social sciences, migrants must either adapt to the values,

norms and social roles of the society they have chosen to live in, or otherwise become part of the dangerous classes, the marginals, social misfits, troublemakers. From this standpoint, certain identity traits, either peculiar to migrants or otherwise originated, are not understood as possible sources of progress or innovation; they are rather seen as signs of archaism, as reminders of a superseded age, remains of certain traditions, conveyed by individuals or groups related to cultures thought of as inferior or exotic. This is why, historically, studying migrants was primarily the work of anthropologists, whether they examined folklore in modern societies or focused on remote societies.

In other, not less classical approaches, particularly embodied by the sociologists of the so-called Chicago School, which precedes the peak of functionalism, two important dimensions deserve to be highlighted. The first one refers to the society of origin, to the reasons why individuals and groups choose to migrate, and to the bonds that eventually linger between both social universes, the receiving society and the society of origin—this is the appeal, for instance, of the famous work of William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki about "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America", which reveals such bonds and was published during the interwar period. The second dimension which escapes functionalist approaches is the interest some works show in relation to the differences that, at least in some societies, still culturally characterize the descedants of migrants in their inscription in space and in their contribution to what the so-called Chicago School called urban ecology during the interwar period (Grafmeyer and Joseph, 1979).

Classical social sciences have not only offered modes of approaching migratory phenomena as essentially reduced to immigration phenomena. They have also shown interest in mobility—an important category. From this viewpoint, mobility is basically studied and reflected on at a local or, above all, national level. Classically, it is studied in social and spatial terms: within a society or nation state, or within a limited territory, like a metropolitan area, for instance, individuals move upwards or downwards,

they pass from one social class or status to another, from one geographical location to another. The study can focus on the trajectory of individuals, or on the generations involved.

Currently, however, the functionalist or Durkheimian model to analyse migratory phenomena, as well as the approaches derived from the inspiration of the American Chicago sociologists, are not enough to explain the diversity and complexity of such phenomena, and the concept of integration is everywhere considered problematic. And if mobility has a sense, it is not only, or even mainly, the sense it adopts within a society or a nation state: primarily, mobility is nowadays the fact or the desire of being able to move around the whole planet; it has ceased to be, or to be only, an internal social issue, now it has gone global.

This must be stated clearly: it is not only the real world which is in movement, it is the theoretical world, the world of analysis and its paradigms, which collapsed since the late 1960s, that is to say, in clearly less than half a century.

Change in migratory phenomena

Migratory phenomena are extremely diversified, and even if this diversity is not entirely new, the fact remains that it is better perceived today. And although the more classical analyses, particularly the funcionalist ones, or inherited from the Chicago School, have evidently not lost their entire relevance, other approaches are now needed.

The first thing deserving analysis is the transit between departure and arrival, for migratory flow is not just any flow, a trip as any other, it can involve a difficult passage. This can include several different stages, both legal and illegal, long stays, both voluntary and involuntary, in transit countries. For example, many of the numerous Iraqi Christians who left their country are in Istanbul, where they have to wait several years, in some cases, before they can move on to Europe, the United States or Australia. Some societies constitute spaces of transit and organize themselves accordingly, providing migrants with lodgings in camps,

when necessary. Immigration societies do not necessarily want to admit that they can sometimes be transit areas for some people, as if there being immigrants who want something other than becoming integrated into this or that country—which they really only want to cross—were inconceivable. In France, for instance, it was not until after the spectacular closing down of the Red Cross Center at Sangatte, ordered by Nicolas Sarkozy, the Minister of the Interior at the time, that the public opinion and the media realized that the thousands of migrants that had arrived in France, often from the Middle East, wanted to cross the English Channel and continue to Great Britain, Scandinavia or North America (Laacher, 2002). This example reveals an important dimension of transit: its modalities depend, to a large extent, on governmental intervention, since it is states who establish the transit framework, pass agreements between them, decide whether to give visas or not, establish asylum policies, build walls and gates, hunt down illegals and "smugglers" or not, etcetera. Migration is not a long, calm river for everyone; we know it can be the child of war or civil war, of massive population displacements, of so-called natural catastrophes, that it can be associated to the worst kind of traffics, including human trafficking, and that these difficulties and dramas are not limited to the point of departure. Thus, what happens in the society of origin is often ignored or subjected to a division of labor, as if it were a field reserved for anthropology, while what happens in the society of arrival seems to fall under the domain of sociology.

The modes of migrant displacement are also still often disregarded by researchers, or in spontaneous discourse. Some migrants, as shown by Michel Péraldi, for instance, are constantly circulating, like the "ants" studied by Alain Tarrius (2003), who buy and sell all kinds of articles around the Mediterranean Basin, and also in Black Africa and the Middle East, but who never establish themselves anywhere, and appoint quasi-institutions to settle their disagreements, for example. Their nomadism is only a variant of a larger phenomenon that some sociologists consider to be at the core of contemporary modernity: the intense circula-

tion and the enormous desire of circulation of individuals who become, in words of Alberto Melucci, "nomads of the present time" (Melucci, 1989). Other migrants function according to the noria model, a principle followed, for instance, by a large number of Indian communities in Central America, who send individuals to the United States for a limited period and replace them immediately when they return to their country. Yet others, following a very ancient model, are seasonal workers, who travel each year to a foreign country, especially to work in the fields or in vineyards —but, can one still speak of migrants when they only remain in the foreign country for some weeks a year?

Not all candidates to emigrate are illegal or clandestine, and the departure is not always an expedition or an adventure. People do not necessarily lack passport and visa. However, a very clear tendency is manifest in the whole world: the important thing is not always traveling to such and such country to earn a living and get established, it is being able to move, to have this possibility, to acquire access to mobility. In the old days, migrants were supposed to become either assimilated or integrated, or else focus on providing for their families in their home countries. The current evolution undermines even more those integration theories positing migrants who do not want to relocate or be able to move permanently, but rather to find a place within either their society of origin or their society of arrival. In other words: in these days, when candidates to migration want to become citizens of a country of immigration, they prefer a passport to an identity card.

Change in Identities

From the Upsurge of Identities to Panethnicity

Within the so-called societies of reception, it has become impossible to reduce migrants to the labels of either assimilation or integration, since they bring with them cultural, linguistic and religious differences that might resist dissolution, or even display vitality. Thus, since the 1990s in the United States, sociologists

abandoned the classical issue of the linguistic assimilation of migrants and acknowledged, above all, the vigour of the Spanish language and of bilingualism (English-Spanish, but not exclusively). Already in 1996, Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut proposed to break with the idea of a unique model and to distinguish three kinds of linguistic acculturation: "consonant" (English becomes the only language from the second generation on—which is the classical model); "dissonant" (which affects the children of poor and uneducated migrants: English is adopted, but acculturation shuts people up in poverty or in urban subcultures); and "selective" (upwards mobility is associated to bilingualism and biculturalism) (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). More recently, a study by April Linton and Tomas R. Jimenez has confirmed that "the forces that could go against bilingualism are counterbalanced by conditions that are favorable to it and establish it permanently in the American linguistic landscape" (Linton and Jimenez, 2009:986).

Moreover, migrants forge differences: alone or with others, they contribute to the general process of invention or production of differences. These can either be confined to the private sphere, remain invisible and discreet within the public space, or on the contrary, be visible or even active, and claim, demand to be recognized. The production of differences within the societies of reception is not entirely due to migrants, it also responds to other, internal logics, it also derives from groups that grow or develop within the observed society. It is often the result of the encounter between internal and external logics, of the shared presence of various elements, some of them brought by immigration, others born within the observed society, and yet others imported by means other than immigration. This can be seen particularly in the arts, for instance in music.

Cultural change does not operate in one direction only. By adopting and adapting the ideas or practices they discover in their society of reception, immigrants might very well act as mediators in the other direction and influence the culture of their society of origin. They not only maintain bonds with it, they also take part in its transformations: certain Indian villages in Mexico, for

instance, change not only because of the economic contribution of the *remesas*, but also because of the intense movement of immigrants which influences the ways of life. Obviously, the digital technologies, the Internet, the "global" media play an important role in these mutual relations. And change does not necessarily imply progress, or modernization: emigration, for instance, can also have devastating effects on those who remain in the country, destroy fragile familial or societal stabilities, influence genre relations heavily in detriment to women, etcetera.

Some differences are heavy with victimhood memories. Descendants of immigrants bring to mind the genocide, massive massacres, slavery, slave trade, the colonization which victimized their ancestors; they demand acknowledgment of their historical suffering, which they occasionally relate to social injustice, racism or the discrimination they endure *hic et nunc*. Sometimes there are attempts at establishing connections. Actors who do not share the same history face the same struggle against racism or discrimination: West Indians, for instance, French descendants of black slaves can get involved in the same actions as immigrants arrived from Sub-Saharan Africa, whose ancestors could have contributed to the slave trade in the West Indies, but with whom they currently face anti-Black racism. In the same way, in the United States, descendants of Black slaves, "involuntary" immigrants according to the expression of John Ogbu (1978), distinguish themselves from recent voluntary Black immigrants arrived from Africa or the West Indies, even if they partly share their mobilization against racism regarding the Blacks.

But not all differences, not all migrations necessarily have a historical relation to the observed society. In France, for instance, the migrations of the 1950s and 1960s came basically from the ex-colonies of North Africa; currently, a significant part comes from the ex-colonies of Sub-Saharan Africa. But many immigrants also come from countries that do not have any relation to the French colonial past, like Turkey or China.

The upsurge of identities is a highly diversified phenomenon which cannot be reduced to just one logic. In some cases, the

religious, cultural, linguistic or other kind of identity is peculiar to one clearly defined group, while in other cases, it moves individuals of different origins. Mixture, interpenetration, mixed races, processes of hybridization and creolization participate as much in this general movement of identity assertion as the movements peculiar to very precise populations who do not mix with each other—American social sciences increasingly talk about "panethnicity", which refers to the idea of a process whereby new identities are invented based on pre-existing ethnic forms. The classical analyses of Fredrik Barth (1969) prefigure this notion of panethnicity.

This phenomenon should also be considered in terms of the territorial spaces where it develops. In certain cases, differences belong in a national space, which constitutes their setting. In other cases, they are situated in a district, for instance, or in a city; it is also possible that they do not carry the burden of national frontiers and belong in regional or planetary spaces. Moreover, a difference often asserts itself locally, while at the same time it maintains close links to other parts of the world, or belongs in a global vision of its existence. The globalization of identities is a significant phenomenon which translates, for instance, in the extension and multiplication of diasporas, or even in the contemporary expansion of certain religions, like Islam or protestant churches which develop in territories where they do not have a historical anchorage or where their upsurge is not associated to an important cultural depth.

The Crisis of Integration

Within the societies of reception, both the idea of assimilation and of integration become problematical. Nowadays, assimilation is not only increasingly abandoned, but also increasingly considered inadmissible and suspected of conveying certain racism: to ask of an individual to get rid entirely of his or her parents' identity is the same as disqualifying this identity, considering it inferior, charging it with a negative judgement, with contempt, with re-

jection. The idea of integration is much more open and flexible. However, it is nowadays in a profound crisis. The main reason for this crisis is the distance separating the possibilities of integration and the reality experienced by those to whom it is proposed or imposed. When political actors or intellectuals establish integration as the desired horizon for everyone, when they summon the newcomers and their children to do everything possible to become integrated, they support a discourse that might become incantatory if society does not offer the possibilities of making it a reality. If society hinders integration with racism, discrimination, social injustice, exclusion, and an extreme precariousness, it is not surprising that those who make promises and ask immigrants to do what is necessary appear increasingly demagogical or irresponsible, and will ultimately be left with repression, the police, and prison as the only forms of "integration".

The political culture of the receiving society does not entirely explain the differences observable in the assimilation or integration of immigrants within a receiving society. Economic factors, together with racism in particular, can play a determining role. When the labor market, for instance, needs a large quantity of unqualified, uneducated workers, the situation could result in an isolation of the migrants who constitute it from the rest of the population, and thus in the weakness or absence of assimilation and even integration logics for them. Ultimately, immigrants are racialized so that their employers can exploit them better, which is very far from any integration goal. This happened in France during the "Glorious Thirties", when "immigrant workers" were essentially single men living in shelters or sordid apartments, who were included for work, but culturally and politically excluded; at the same period, a similar logic applied to the "Gastarbeiter" in Germany, most of them Turks, rather well treated socially, but who did not have any perspectives of cultural or civic integration. The same situation prevails, nowadays, for Moroccans working in El Ejido farms in Spain, or for many Mexicans employed in the United States. Fear might play an important role for those who find themselves in a very precarious situation: workers without

papers feel so excluded, outside work, that they fear a negative reaction from their employers if they ask them for help to legalize their situation.

The crisis of integration[1] is sometimes perceived through the idea of a crisis of integration models. Here are two spectacular instances of this, events which ocurred a couple of weeks away from each other in 2005. In July 2005, the terrorist attacks in London, the first one of which was successful and the other ones frustrated, were carried out by actors who basically lived in the United Kingdom, it was not Islamists from the exterior, as in the case of "9/11". From that moment, the way in which the United Kingdom treats its immigrants or minorities has been strongly criticized, and the British multiculturalism has been accused of having encouraged Islamist radicalization, particularly in London, where the mere evocation of "Londonistan" has worked since as a *repoussoir*. The "British integration model", open to Muslim communities, letting them act as they wish, not worrying about the upsurge of radical Islam in its territory, would be at the roots of terrorism. In France, during three weeks in October and November 2005, nightly riots shook the "suburbs" of all the national territory, with three to four hundred vehicles burnt down each night by young people, most of whom were the descendants of immigrants. The youngsters who burnt down cars in popular districts were expressing above all their rage and anger, they cannot stand speeches of integration being addressed to them any more, while at the same time they are unfairly treated by the police and the justice system, they are excluded, discriminated against. The fine promises of the republican French model, liberty, equality, fraternity, constitute an ideal they are summoned to develop, while at the same time these values remain inaccesible to them, the resources to attain them, for example school, are not available.[2]

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[1] *Cf.* article "L'intégration: un concept en difficulté" (Wieviorka, 2008). *Cf.* also the file "Modèles d'intégration et intégration des modèles? Une étude comparative entre la France et les Pays-Bas" (Wieviorka, 2009).

[2] For a comparison between France and the United Kingdom focused on these issues, *cf.* Danièle Joly (2007).

Thus, from a viewpoint internal to immigration societies, both the upsurge of differences and the lack of integration models question traditional representations and analyses of migratory phenomena.

Changes in Our Categories

Henceforth, we should think in an increasingly "global" way, as the title of a recent work by Catherine Wihtol de Wenden dedicated to migratory phenomena confirms: "Human Globalization" —a title that reminds us we must end with the ethnocentrism that refers everything to our own State, to our own country, while at the same time there are all kinds of migratory flows. Considering the words we use, and therefore the categories that become ours, is enough to become fully aware of the recent evolution. We give a new sense to the world *mobility*, which becomes a value and refers in the first place to the international circulation of individuals.

Some words, some expressions refer to the treatment of immigrants within our society. *Multiculturalism* was invented in Canada during the late 1960s and today the concept is already in crisis. Precisely in this country, the term proved to be unsuitable to settle the issue of Québec, on the one hand, and the problem of the "first nations" on the other, and withouth becoming obsolete, the expression seems to allow treating only some migration cases. *Affirmative Action* was invented in the United States in order to put a stop to the structural injustices suffered by Blacks, and later on other by groups, and although in France it is used to settle purely social issues and frequently according to the territorial mode of ZEPs (French for Priority Education Zones) and city's policies, it is suspected by numerous critics of questioning the republican model only in favor of populations *issued from immigration*—an unfortunate expression. Moreover, there is an important problem here, the fact that in the field that occupies us today, we frequently lack the necessary words and expressions. For instance, what does *Français de souche* ("of French stock") really mean in French?

We have imperceptibly modified our vocabulary. In the old days, we spoke of immigration and immigrant workers, while nowadays we increasingly speak of migratory phenomena, migrants, and work has ceased to be particularly related to this category—migrants are actually the first to be excluded, fired, put in an insecure position. And the mainly unidimentional image of the immigrant worker of yesteryear has been substituted by a quite large diversity of figures: women, and not only men, elites, and not only proletarians, let alone, in France, *Beurs* and *Beurettes* (second-generation North Africans).

We take an increasing interest in the "global" dimensions of migrations, which not only needs new categories, but also opens unto new debates. *Diasporas* and *diasporic phenomena* are multiplying, one also talks of the Chinese and Indian *quasi-diasporas*, and a large number of countries have invented denominations, like in Japan, where *Nikeijins* is used to name Brasilians of Japanese origin having chosen to live in Japan, or hyphenated terms like in the United States—where one can be *Mexican-American*, for instance. The economic vocabulary is also being modified, since there are important economic dimensions specific to migratory phenomena, starting by remittances—*remesas* or *money transfers*.

We increasingly associate migratory issues with human rights, and during the last twenty or thirty years a number of new actors have developed in the form of NGO's and supranational institutions. Ultimately, migrations raise the issue of the tension between human rights, addressed by supranational actors, and the right of individual states. We must say that not even the international law has adapted yet to current realities. The 1951 Geneva Convention, for example, is not perfectly adapted when it comes to certain kinds of refugees or asylum-seekers, for instance for environmental reasons. More generally, migrants raise an issue that summarizes a famous phrase by Hannah Arendt, the "right to have rights"—in the country of departure, in those of transit, and in the country of arrival.

Researchers discuss *transnationalism*, as well as the existence, or importance, of *pan-ethnic* and *pan-religious* actors. There is a great

issue here: should we admit our tendency to form transnational human groups, defined neither by their nation of origin nor by their nation of arrival, but by another identity altogether, to become part of networks and spaces transcending nations? Or should we consider that states continue to have the upper hand regarding migratory phenomena, and that transnationalism is a category that only refers to borderline, marginal and temporary cases?

Finally, another implication for social sciences: migratory phenomena have a paradigmatic value when it comes to say that nowadays the important issues of the contemporary world require multidisciplinary approaches. The old divisions, for instance the one which left the receiving society to sociologists and the society of departure to anthropologists, do not work any more, and economic, demographic, political and other issues combine and overlap in such a way that the joint mobilization of our disciplines has become indispensable.

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