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The volume is dedicated
to professor Antonina Kłoskowska (1919–2001),
to commemorate the 10th anniversary of her death.

EDITORIAL

The articles presented in this volume have been based on the project: Euroidentities – The Evolution of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European Identity (started March 2008 through February 2011 under the first Framework 7 SSH-2007-5.2.1). The project team consisted of scholars coming from seven academic centers: Queens University, Belfast – UK, University of Magdeburg – Germany, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – Bulgaria, Tallinn University of Technology – Estonia, Federico II' University, Naples – Italy, University of Łódź – Poland, Bangor University – Wales. The findings come from biographical narrative interviews collected and analyzed by each team during numerous workshops. The main aim of the project was to gain insights into the lives of European citizens and the significance of 'Europe' in their narratives.

The idea of this volume is to present the results of the project as a 'work--in-progress'. Therefore the nine texts represent different stages of the research, which is also reflected in their very form – at least three of them are not a typical periodical article. The first paper is based upon a genuine application for the European Commission and gives insights into the initial concepts of the Euroidentities team. The second one is an extended memo on one of the workshops devoted to the analysis of biographical narrative interviews. The last article is a so called 'lay-friendly essay' which was written at the end of the project and aimed at non-professional readers, but ones interested in social and cultural aspects of European identity. The other six texts, written by all but one teams taking part in the project (the Estonian team is missing), present different stages of conceptual work on the material, as well as various problems generated from biographical stories. The diversity of topics is related to the categories of narrators chosen for the research.

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THE EVOLUTION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY: USING BIOGRAPHICAL METHODS TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY[1]

Abstract

Based upon the original application to the European Commission, this article gives insights into the thinking of the Euroidentities team at the point that the project began. The question: *Is the European 'identity project' failing?* is posed in the sense that the political and economic attainments of the European Union have not been translated into a sense of identity with or commitment to Europe from the populaces that have benefited from them. The urgency of European 'identity work' is asserted with a number of levels for the construction of European identity being hypothesized.

Euroidentities is intended to break conceptual ground by bringing together on an equal footing two apparently antagonistic views of identity – the collective and institutional and the individual and biographical – to give a more anchored and nuanced view of identity formation and transformation than either can provide on its own. Rather than following the dominant approaches to research on European

[1] The research relating to this paper has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme [FP7/2007–2011] under Grant Agreement No. 213998. – The underlying ideas of the following application text were co-developed by the senior scientists of the Euroidentities project: Andrzej Piotrowski and Kaja Kaźmierska; Howard Davis and Graham Day; Katrin Paadam; Rumiana Jeleva and Marianna Draganova; Antonella Spanó; Robert Miller, Dirk Schubotz and Maruska Svasek; as well as Ulrike Nagel, Bärbel Treichel, Gerhard Riemann, Lena Inowlocki and Fritz Schütze. Especially Anja Schröder-Wildhagen and Katarzyna Waniek assisted in the preparations for the application text.

identity that have been macro-theoretical and 'top-down', retrospective in-depth qualitative biographical interviews are planned since they provide the ideal means of gaining insight into the formation of a European identity or multiple identities from the 'bottom up' perspective of non-elite groups. The reliability of analysis will be buttressed by the use of contrastive comparison between cases, culminating in contrastive comparison across the national project teams between cases drawn from different 'sensitized groups' that provide the fieldwork structure of the project. The paper concludes with a summary of some of the more significant findings.

Key words: Identity, Europe, biographical narrative.

1. FOREWORD

The editors of *Sociological Review* first approached Euroidentities in the spring of 2009 when the project was about a year into its funding about reproducing the part of the original application to the European Commission that had put forward the conceptual and methodological rationales that underlay the submission. As is apparent here, the initial proposal has grown into this special edition of *Sociological Review.* Writing on behalf of all our colleagues in Euroidentities, we are honoured by the invitation extended to us to present so much of the thinking and findings from the project together is a single, prominent venue.

As the editors explain, most of the articles in this volume present ongoing analysis and findings from the project. The piece below is different in that it was completed in April 2007 immediately prior to the Euroidentities application being submitted to the Commission. It itself was the culmination of a long gestation. Many of the persons in the Euroidentities project had been involved in a previous Framework 6 bid on a similar topic that, while positively evaluated, had not been funded (European Identity Work 2008). The British Academy funded a workshop in Belfast in September 2005 at which the conceptual and methodological issues around using biographical methods to study European identity was discussed further and the decision was made to make a further application if a suitable topic appeared in Framework 7. It then transpired that the parameters of Workprogramme Topic SSH-2007-5.2.1: 'Histories and Identities – articulating national and European identities' in the first Call were a very good fit with our interests and the Euroidentities application was developed in late 2066 through early 2007.

While Miller and Schütze are given as the authors, we want to make clear that the following piece was very much the end product of a process that

included at one stage or another all of the 'scientists-in-charge' of each of the Euroidentities national teams, plus many of the other persons who have worked on the project, as well as participants in the British Academy workshop and other meetings where the project took shape. The paper was section B-1, 'Scientific and Technical Methodology', of the application. It is being presented here because the document was the agreed outcome of the cumulative collaborative debates and discussions that had taken place among the project members up to the point of submitting the application. It can be seen as a 'snapshot' of the collective thinking of Euroidentities at a point in time shortly before the actual work of the project began in earnest. As such, when read along with the other papers in this special edition, we hope it will prove of interest by showing both the initial perspectives that drove the project and their continuity and/or evolution through its course.

Since the intention is to convey the thinking of Euroidentities at the time the project commenced, we have resisted the temptation to 'improve' the document and have made very few changes to the original except to remove some notation conventions that only made sense within the application. The use of **Bold** as it was employed in the original application has been retained in order to give the reader a sense of the points that at that time we wished to highlight to reviewers as being unique or special.

2. INTRODUCTION – IS THE EUROPEAN 'IDENTITY PROJECT' FAILING?

The European Community has reached a state that can be seen as a crisis of confidence. The Community has succeeded in attaining what were historically its core goals. While the history of the last decade has shown that Europe is no more immune to regional armed conflict than other global regions, the prospect of a true central European war between major nation states no longer exists.

The economic goals of the Community have been realised at a continental level so that Europe has maintained and strengthened its position as a major global economic block. The ongoing extension of the boundaries of the union to the east and south and the desire of the candidate accession states to join is a reflection of this success.

However, these political and economic attainments have not been translated into a sense of identity or commitment from the populaces that have benefited from them.

The refutation of the draft European constitution marked this widely spread crisis. It is especially poignant in that the blunt refutation came when individual citizens rather than their representatives had the chance to exercise their opinion of a broadening union and that the rejection came from two of the original six signature nations of the treaties of Rome.

While it may be argued that the electorates actually were expressing their dissatisfaction with their respective governments about other economic and political policies rather than the European constitution, **the central question remains why the ideals of the European constitution were not seen as more important than questions of mundane day-to-day politics.**

The refusal of the constitution points to a more fundamental issue than just the thwarting and stagnation of political momentum towards a more unified Europe. The question becomes: How can it be possible that the experience of ordinary citizens of the European Union at a time of unprecedented communication and influence across all parts of the continent is not matched by a parallel shift in personal orientation and a growth in loyalty towards the European entity? **This question about the apparent lack of correspondence between the personal orientation of the individual and the growing European nature of the structure in which the individual finds oneself is a crucial question of identity – both the formation of identity and its apparent lack of change.**

In the view of the Commission, 'Citizenship of the Union is both a source of legitimisation of the process of European integration, by reinforcing the participation of citizens, and a fundamental factor in the creation among citizens of a sense of belonging to the European Union and of having a genuine European identity.' (Commission, 2001) However, as the same report acknowledges, European citizenship is something 'superimposed' on the national and regional or local. The model described aspires to essentially a new type of multiple citizenships on different levels, with the European complimenting other expressions found at national, regional and local levels. This model may express the constitutional and judicial reality but in terms of reflecting the social or political it is perhaps best understood as an ideal type – an aspiration rather than a social reality. Such models are a necessary point of reference but, as elite constructions, they tend to circulate among the elite. **The reality is that there is cause for increasing concern both about the level of Euro-scepticism that has grown among some Europeans and the relative failure to promote a sense of European identity (e.g., Vitorino, 2001), reflected in the decline of political participation.**

The question of European identity is an empirical question, concerning whether and to what extent the European Union can be seen as a 'we' community

at all. The scope and dynamics of the question are basically unknown at present, even to the social sciences. Remarkably, there have been only four European Community framework projects that have had European identity as a significant part of their remit. The IDNET project, *'Europeanization, Collective Identities and Public Discourse'*, concentrated upon the role of the mass media in arenas of public discourse (see Risse and Maier, 2003). The Border Discourses project, *'Border Discourses: Changing identities, changing actions, changing stories in European border communities'*, focussed on the construction of border identities (see Meinhof, Armbruster and Rollo, 2003). The *'Youth and European Identity'* project investigated perceptions of Europe among young people (see Jamison, 2005). The EIWSR project, *'European Identity, Welfare State, Religion'*, also centred on identity, but with a focus on the continuing significance of religion for identity (see Milan, 2002).

Euroidentities will add significantly to the current state of knowledge expressed by these projects. While the IDNET project was centrally concerned with the question of the European identity, it adopted very much a 'top down' perspective of identity formation. The 'Border Discourses' project applied qualitative methods of narrative interviewing, but concentrated upon an intergenerational analysis of cross-border families. **Euroidentities** will also be centrally concerned with European identity but will adopt a 'bottom up' perspective, using a distinctive biography-analytical methodology to focus on the formation and change of European identities from the point of view of the everyday citizen. Furthermore, the findings of this project will be placed directly within the 'crisis of confidence' debate discussed above.

3. 'EUROPEAN IDENTITY WORK'

People in the European nations have to accomplish 'European Identity Work' to an increasing degree. 'Identity work' is a biographical process of identity (re)formulation that leads to the incorporation within the individual of morally binding concerns for all varieties of communities and collectivities. Over the last three centuries of European history these were in particular the collective concerns of the nation. Now, however, with the process of European unification those morally binding aspects of orientation are losing their national exclusivity. In contrast to the national level, differences between cultural and economic regions (such as between European peripheries and centres) and political-legal aspects of identification and creation become more and more crucial for identity work.

Thus, it becomes a central issue how, and by which types of engagements, the individual actor is able, on the one hand, to connect these concerns for collective tasks with concepts and orientations at different levels of abstraction in his or her own biographical construction of identity, and how, on the other hand, she or he will be able to become emotionally and analytically detached from collective concerns, and finally assess and balance divergent or even discrepant emerging collective demands, therewith bearing and handling the paradoxes caused by contradictory collective concerns and loyalties in her or his moral orientation. In this regard, people who live in hybrid and marginal (bi- and/or multicultural) situations, are highly relevant for the study of European identity.

3.1. The urgencies of European 'identity work'

The need to understand how European identities are developing, or failing, is not solely of importance in order to develop a majority for a plebiscite on major issues. The globalised world of the twenty-first century requires effective collectivities that are wider than the nation. Aside from macro-nations such as Russia and the United States, that are almost continents in themselves, nations cannot be anymore the 'perfectly sheltering home' from the dangers of the world economy, war and cultural conflicts. The sense of investment in a collective identity and the forms that sense may take are crucial for the maintenance of a genuine collective political entity.

Within the public sphere and state-regulated institutions there is a need for an underlying non-contractual framework of implicit assumptions and common conventions of behaviour (for instance, trust, a willingness to negotiate and principles of fairness and reciprocity) to underpin formal mechanisms such as labour market regulations, principles for safeguarding the environment and, in a specific European context, safeguarding the human rights of European citizens and the European Social Charter. In a very real sense, the 'micro' reflects the 'macro' and in this instance in turn the 'macro' is dependent upon the 'micro'. **An underlying base of cultural assumptions shared at the level of the individual is required to make 'Europe' a functioning social entity as well as a political and economic entity. These shared assumptions are essential to the development of a sense of socio-biographical identity, the intersection between the individual self and social structure.**

Whether peoples' sense of personal identity are moving towards a shared core of beliefs is a moot point. As well as centripetal forces promoting the development of an inclusive European identity, there are centrifugal forces that can drive people

apart. The sense of personal identity is expressed at the level of the collective. National identity can reassert itself in part since it still seen by the mass media as the central arena for political decisions; or, in contrast, national identity may become fragmented by socio-economic differentiation or by the assertion of ethnic identity within regions or across borders (Kłoskowska, 1996/2001). Perceived, and arguably real, adverse effects upon the economic prospects of individuals and indigenous collectivities due to the movement of economic migrants from east to west within the Union and from the 'south' into the Union, seen in part as resulting from European Union policies, cause reactions against economic 'others' that can grow into an aversion to the cultural 'other'. The resulting right-wing extremism can morph into ultra-nationalism or even xenophobia.

A less extreme manifestation can be seen in the disappointment of the general population with the organisation, management and handling of their political concerns within European institutions that are seen as lacking political legitimacy and serving the ends of elites. 'Distanciation' may be more pronounced in larger states than smaller societies where elites and lay population may not be so separated. This malaise can be compounded by the tendency of politicians to elicit anti-European stereotypes and sentiments within their respective national constituencies. At the level of the popular arts, people can become disenchanted with the superficial, void, ritualised 'scenic' productions of trivial European intercultural exchange.

Finally, the extra-national identification of a person living in Europe can be identification with some other, extra-European, affiliation; such as: a 'trans--Atlantic' identity; identification with others sharing a common tongue with its associated common cultural outlook (e.g., fellow Anglophones); a pan-Islamic world view; or identification with the Chinese or Indian Diaspora.

Hence, the evolution of a European identity or identities can by no means be taken for granted.

3.2. The reflexive context leading to identity (re)construction

The first decade of the twenty-first century can be seen as placed firmly within a new era in terms of identity maintenance and transformation. The old sureties of identity construction – in terms of traditionally understood gender, social class and geographic origin – while important, no longer hold undisputed unchanging sway across the life span. While stability across all these dimensions still remains the norm, the perception of them as the norm has been supplanted by a much more malleable view than previously. Gender identity, that was not seen by the general

population as a matter of debate only a few short decades ago, is now recognised as flexible, if not for oneself, at least for others. Congruent with this are changes towards more flexible views on family structure and sexual morality. While the gross figures of the proportions of the population who experience significant social mobility remain remarkably stable, the perception is that social background no longer plays as an important role as in the past. While rates of geographic mobility have increased appreciably, the norm for the majority is still, at most, short-distance moves. What has changed is the exposure to alternate conceptions of gender, contact with social class lifestyles that were previously only imagined and direct exposure to cultures that previously were geographically beyond reach. The old view of a life course as being an institutionalised progression of set stages has been supplanted by a view of life courses that merge and diverge depending upon individual circumstance and choice.

These changes have implications for the formation of individual identity. Whereas in the past identity was established at the beginning of life and remained anchored in gender, class and location, this no longer applies. Identity has to be seen as an active, ongoing process of construction and reconstruction, set in and reacting to the present. This process is a tension between a current orientation set in the past and a conscious and unconscious need to adapt that is framed by an anticipation of the future. It is this tension between changing structure and agency that drives the biographical construction of identity.

An essential principle of this project is that there is an intimate connection between individual biographical identities and collective identities conceived of as 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983, Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, Macdonald, 1993). Collective concerns are kept alive through individual involvement and imagined communities have symbolic power within personal biographies. Research therefore must engage with the biographical 'bottom-up' processes of identity construction that take place in everyday life. Compared with previous generations of nation-state citizens, today's actors are faced with new, more complicated ways of doing 'European identity work'. The need to interact continuously with members of other groups, nations and cultures partly contributes to the development of more complex identity constructions, although it may also lead to more demarcated and group-centred identifications.

The evolution and development of a European identity or identities needs to be seen within this 'late modern' biographical context. Collective identity is a cross-cutting issue that has implications for citizenship in the formation of civic values, the shaping of new kinds of social understanding through migration and mobility, representations of the past and future of European integration,

the resolution of social conflicts, and cultural dialogue. **Euroidentities** aims to show the **contribution** of identity work to these processes and how it supports (or undermines) the development of European citizenship in settings that typify the construction of a new 'European space'.

4. LEVELS OF CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

'Identities' are not objects *per se* to be isolated and defined. They are the resources which individuals and groups use in contexts of interaction to deal with problems of self-identity and otherness. **The construction of a European identity or identities can be seen as taking place at a number of conceptually different levels, ranging from the collective and institutional to the individual and biographical**.

4.1. Collective consciousness

Acting in concert with others and taking part in group enterprises is a level that can contribute to the formation of a collective European identity. Firstly, the experience of participation in social movements or large-scale shared projects that have a European dimension will affect one's own self-view. This collective involvement implies taking on the perspective of the other co-participants and dwelling on features shared with them. Secondly, this common experience of social networks, organisations or institutional regulations (even unplanned common experience such as being part of a common wave of migration) may lead through action in concert with others to shared frames of reference or arenas of moral discourse at the collective level.

The collectivities with which one may bond may be multiple, opening scope for the possibility of juggling competing sources of identification. The sources of competing identity can be located at different levels – regional, national or international territorial spheres with distinct cultures and with different administrative bodies or institutions. There can be multi-layered incorporations of expectations and obligations with several, perhaps competing, loyalties, impinging upon the same individual, leading to feelings of hybridity or marginality from them all. One can become either engrossed or detached, either engaged or disengaged with any given collectivity.

4.2. Structural conditions and opportunity structures

Many structural factors can affect the generation of collective identity. The structures of opportunity open to individuals may affect their choice of collectivities with which they identify. This identification with a group that offers better chances of success in life can be either an unconscious identification with 'the winners' or conscious and strategic (for example, identification with a given collectivity can open avenues for support through mechanisms such as access to social networks or funding). The instrument can be one of feedback, with identification with a chosen collectivity affecting one's opportunities and choices of life strategies. Opportunity structures can be sited in geography. For example, at a regional level, location in a backward peripheral region with reduced resources and opportunities leads to a different type of regionally-based collective identity than location in a centre with privileged access to opportunities, the latest scientific and technological advantages, and other facilities and amenities. Location in a 'centre', whether regionally or organisationally, can confer advantages of access simply through being 'central', being located at the point where knowledge crosses and access to communication and networks is easy. Organisational frameworks, developments within organisations and their 'culture', both generally and in specific instances such as security measures or institutional regulations, can promote or impede identification.

4.2.1. The public sphere and state-regulated institutions

The construction of a European identity involves the 'shaping and dimensioning' of the individual's relation to the public sphere and to state-related institutions. If positive, there is a biographical process of bonding morally to the precepts of the public sphere that involves engaging with the duties and obligations of that public sphere. If negative, there is detachment.

The development of European identity requires the construction and refinement of communication between the constituent groups within the European Community – processes of standardisation and regulation that can be seen broadly as processes that have the effect of cultural design and mediation. On the one hand, internal communication within language groups in the Community is refined by the development and purification of linguistic codes. On the other, the processes of language translation and interpretation can be seen as processes that weaken exclusionary divisions through acting as means of mediation and liaison between cultures. A true translation involves more than the simple transposition of words. It requires situational and personal re-specification, detachment, and a sharing and

simplification of social categorisation. The true interpreter must take the perspective of 'the other', in which one refers to social situations and defines them in a value-neutral manner. In effect, the translator/interpreter is subjected by the experience to a temporary identity change that may have permanent effects upon the psyche.

4.2.2. Inclusion/Exclusion: boundaries

Collective identity construction can be seen as a process of defining one's 'we' community by seeing oneself in contrast to others. The resulting 'borders' are not necessarily national or geographical. Rather the key is that they are constructed by contrast with the 'other' who has a culture or way of life that is different from one's own. While there is 'otherness', there are areas of contact and overlap due to some common core values and moral obligations. Hence, the relationship between 'others' need not necessarily be antagonistic – the relationship is mutual and is one of 'figuration', the contrast with 'the other' can be one of the features that determines oneself.

There can be grades of social exclusion. Otherness can arise from the contrast between a centre and a peripheral fringe or between urban versus rural and from migration from (and to) the fringe. In this way, migration will impact upon the construction of individual and collective identity.

This is qualitatively different from the relation to 'the alien', where there is no understanding due to there being no overlap of core values and moral obligations. There is no communication, only incomprehension. The development of xenophobia can be seen as a process in which the perception of 'the other' is warped into a perception of 'the incomprehensible alien'.

As well as acting to confirm the exclusivity of identity of the included, there can be a rise of a sense of 'we-ness' among the excluded. To the extent that these parameters of inclusion and exclusion are being actively constructed rather than being inherited or reproduced, their generation can be considered a biographical process of identity formation.

4.2.3. The merging of historical time and biographical time

At times of social change, particularly during times of profound historical change, there can be a merging of historical time with biographical time. Individuals caught up in a collective historical concatenation of events find themselves in a situation that can be perceived as both enabling and disabling. Firstly, there may be a feeling of personally being part of an evolving collective history and contributing to it. Secondly, there can be a feeling (and perhaps an experienced reality) of being swamped by historical events that are beyond one's own control

where one's personal safety may be at jeopardy and in which assets of economic and social capital disappear. This feeling of being caught up in a chaotic or an anomic situation breaks down the security of identity. If the individual can cope, the effect of the trajectory can be positive, leading to a reformulation through processes of 'biographical work' of a revised identity that is more congruent with the changed circumstances and more effective at coping with them. Thirdly, experiencing a common history – a collective trajectory of events – leads to collective identity processes as the common experiences are talked and written about – a 'projection of the recent past' into a shared frame of meaning. As we make sense of the experiential, there is a crossover with the collective social world. Collectively, this latter experiential history can set people apart into one or more age-defined 'cohort generations' – groups socially-defined differently from those who are older or younger than them by unique demographic or historical experiences. The reaction to a common historical experience leads on to the production of a common cultural heritage through mechanisms such as belletrist literature and sharing symbolisms such as using a common language or style of communication, common identity markers or the presence of myths or collective memories held in common.

5. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION – PROGRESS BEYOND STATE-OF-THE-ART

5.1. Conceptual framework

The evolution of identity across one's life course is a biographical process that is on the one hand an unconscious 'seen but unnoticed' unfolding in which repertoires of behaviour that were largely established within the social and structural context of early life express themselves in current circumstances. That is, within a life there is continuity of identity. On the other hand, the unfolding of biographical identity also involves the focussed working through of experiences and the projection of possible ways of acting into the future. That is, there is change in identity. Both the former, a contextualised perspective that can deal with the continuity of identity, and the latter, interactionist perspective that can deal with identity change, are analytically necessary in order to carry out a mature study of the interface of individual identities with collectivities that will be required to examine the evolution of identity within a European context – the interplay of structural and cultural frames within biographical work.

Euroidentities will break conceptual ground by bringing together on an equal footing these two apparently antagonistic views of identity. Their

melding gives a more anchored and nuanced view of identity formation and transformation than either can provide on its own and will provide a conjoint framework that will allow us to investigate the development of European identities in a manner that is both more conceptually-grounded and substantively relevant than that which has come before.

5.1.1. Contextualised perspective

It is a truism that the building blocks of identity are laid down early in life and that the early social context – both the material resources and potentialities available but more importantly the ways of behaving that are absorbed from the context – is crucial. While open to later development and evolution, this early identity framework will remain with the individual throughout his/her life. In order to work effectively with the phenomenon of continuity, this study will take inspiration from a 'Bourdieusian' view of identity that centres upon the concept of habitus and routines for handling one's social environment. Habitus was developed by Pierre Bourdieu as a means of resolving the tension between structure and agency when explaining human behaviour. Located at the nexus between the determinism of structure and the freedom of exercised individual initiative, it is a 'classic' view of identity. The 'structured' aspect of habitus refers in the first instance to the internalisation during childhood of a world view that stems from socialisation into one's stratum of origin. This consists of experience of and knowledge about the social and material world coupled with orientations and volitions towards behaviour – predispositions towards action that will be expressed in concrete behaviour as personal circumstances change throughout life. The 'action' aspect of habitus refers to the malleability of potential behaviour. Thedispositions to action given by habitus do not lead to mechanically-determined behaviour but are better seen as general orientations to action that will be expressed uniquely depending upon the circumstances at any given point. The initial dispositions laid down in early life will take primacy, but they can alter with subsequent experience; hence, continuity but the potential for real change. The classic definition of habitus cited by most commentators is as follows:

> '...Habitus is ... a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor' (Bourdieu, 1999/1972: 72).

Some commentators (e.g., Jenkins, 1992; King, 2000) argue that habitus is fundamentally a structure-bound concept that cannot deal adequately with change; however, this is a misreading. Habitus emphasizes the reproduction and stability of social behaviour since, for the majority most of the time, this is the norm. Most people's social environment does not change fundamentally over life; for most people the initial orientations of habitus towards behaviour will remain substantially intact across the life course, changing more in the manner in which they are expressed rather than in the fundamental dispositions towards behaviour. Furthermore, habitus does limit what people can see as possible avenues of behaviour at any given time – horizons are constrained. Habitus can provide a conceptual device that will allow the project to grasp the mechanisms that drive the phenomenon of the quasi-automatic, almost unconscious, out-of-hand rejection of pan-European ideals.

However, habitus is not stagnant and will change as circumstances change. Rather than a set orientation to behaviour, habitus is better conceived of as an evolving set of dispositions that will follow a course of change as an individual moves through her/his life. If circumstances change radically – which can occur in situations where one's society undergoes a profound social transformation, or when one moves to a radically different social environment, such as with international migration, or even when one's personal life alters in a deep way – this can lead to a significant alteration in one's habitus.

5.1.2. Interactionist perspective

The 'Interactionist' view of identity has its foundations in symbolic interactionism and, in our project especially, the work of Anselm Strauss. It approaches the issue of identity change through the central concept of *biographical work.* Biographical work, or biographical identity (re)formulation, has a humanist view of the individual that incorporates the following features.

The self is seen as a developing entity. This developing is important for the person, and should be focused upon. Initially a person will not understand the quality and dynamics of his/her unfolding and this needs to be understood. If one is developing in benign or positive ways, these should be fomented. If one is developing in detrimental ways, this needs to be realized as a first step towards understanding and changing the negative progression of one's life.

In order to gain an understanding, the task is in some manner or other to tell one's life history by at least a partial autobiographical story telling to important others and/or to oneself in an 'inner conversation'. This telling involves expressing the possible overarching features of one's life in order to understand

that it is important to see the self-historical shape of one's biography. It includes delineating and reflecting on the nature of one's life as reflected in the (assumed) mirror images provided by significant others who act figuratively or literally as 'coaches', 'referees' or critical onlookers. The process of reflection also needs to bring in how one's central value orientation is mediated by collective identities – the connectedness to, and distance from, collectivities significant for the person concerned, the realized or not realized obligations to these collectivities. One's own personal identity features are streamed and structured according to the 'grammar' and the topicality of collective identity features that are relevant to oneself. The relationship to collectivities brings in issues of the individual's cultural 'marginality' or 'hybridity' and discrepancies within and between central social relationships, both individual and collective. The relationship may be one of self-realisation – not only identifying but also in some way distancing oneself from collective identity requirements and insinuations by re-individualising, re-singularising or re-concretising one's own life course and personal identity. Elementary assumptions regarding adopted responsibilities towards collectivities may be questioned as various levels (e.g., sacrificing oneself for one's family, following nationalistic or patriotic percepts as morally legitimate or obligatory, whatever they may be).

The sense making process needs to delineate the self-historical *gestalt*, or overarching principles and structure, of one's basic life orientation and identity development as well as considering alternative ways to interpreting its self--historical shape. What are the social relationships, media, vocabularies, and cultural styles that enable, or at least assist, one to discover the overall shape of the biography? Do generally-accepted professional explanations for one's own personal difficulties and potentials fit or not? What are the self-thematizations of one's life history as a whole; especially its far-reaching plans, attainments, disappointments and personal hurts? Are the self-theories that one has developed up to the present in order to explain difficulties and shortcomings in one's life realistic or delusional?

The study of biographical work has concentrated upon phenomena such as: the sequence of biographical actions schemes; the competition within a single individual between different biographical action schemes; trajectories of suffering and their assault upon identity; biographical metamorphosis when one develops new capacities or rises above a negative trajectory; institutional expectation patterns, such as careers. This study has been applied – addressing questions such as how to follow up (and strengthen or fight positive and negative progressions

respectively) and to realize their actual and potential interconnections in order to perceive and develop a realistic overall positive shape for one's biography.

5.1.3. Cross-fertilization

While both of these approaches can provide a conceptual framework in its own right with which to study the biographical processes of identity formation and change, each has weak points that can be resolved through a combined framework. While it is now recognized generally that the charge of 'structural determinism' leveled against a Bourdieusian view of identity is unfounded (Paadam & Miller in preparation; Crossley, 2001; Fuchs, 2003; Reay, 2004), it is the case that the mechanisms for how identity change occurs within the framework of an identity contained within habitus need to be delineated more clearly. The Interactionist standpoint within biographical research has been concerned centrally with these mechanisms and, in fact, the humanistic orientation of this perspective is grounded upon assumptions that identity change (for the better) is possible, that identity change can be effected as a conscious, deliberate process, and that effecting this change should be a goal within the wider context of the research process.

In turn, while the Interactionist perspective takes structure into account, recognizing the existence of constraints on behaviour such as gender, nationality or ethnicity, class and social ascription generally, it does so in a comparatively uncontextualised ad hoc way. Structure is recognized, but not its great strength for affecting biographical progression. Bourdieusian sociology, with its embedding of the habitus concept within a nuanced theoretical structure of capitals, the overarching field of social class and milieu, and the broad political context of symbolic violence, provides a rigorous contextualized view of society that is weak within the interactionist approach.

The Interactionist perspective also posits that biographical identity formation is partially a conscious process, while one can argue that for most people most of the time, there is continuity of identity, and its formation and change takes place partially unconsciously, as a by-product of experience and coping with life. In contrast, the Bourdieusian view of identity as being located in habitus posits identity formation and transition as being primarily if not wholly unconscious. Again, the two perspectives compliment each other.

What both approaches have in common is a humanistic value system. This is explicit within the Interactionist perspective with its unapologetic advocacy that a core value driving the biographical research enterprise must be the positive self-realisation that can be attained though a process of discovery fomented through the biographical interview process. The same humanity-affirming values

are present within the Bourdieusian perspective, though less obvious. The final goal of Bourdieusian sociology is to reach a level of understanding where the veil is torn from the normally-obscured processes of symbolic violence that work to maintain social exploitation. This goal of subverting entrenched inequities is no less a humanistic goal at the societal level than the goal of self-actualisation that the Interactionist approach seeks at the individual level.

6. METHODOLOGY AND ASSOCIATED WORK PLAN

6.1. Method – the approach

The dominant approaches to research on European identity have been macro-theoretical and 'top-down'. They focus on measures to promote European unity, a common culture and a positive sense of European identity via the public discourses of the EU and member states (Shore, 2000, Chapter 1). Historical images of Europe as a whole, the key documents of European unification, the EU constitution, media discourses about Europe and so on can provide powerful collective images of orientation towards Europe. Concerned with the outcomes of public discourse, however, the dominant approaches underestimate the power of individuals to shape relationships with various collectivities and to define collective situations and public issues. Research is needed to show how these images are put to use by the citizens of European societies – how they are internalized, developed, changed and managed in the everyday life of the ordinary citizens who use them to construct and maintain collective identities. Underestimation of the power of the individual is detrimental to the pursuit of the cultural, social and biographical strengthening of citizenship, especially European citizenship, and to the creativity this requires. Members of the research community acknowledge that 'bottom-up related processes of identity construction are admittedly hard to gauge' (Petersson and Hellström, 2003: 236). **Retrospective in-depth qualitative biographical interviews provides the ideal means of gaining insight into the formation of a European identity or multiple identities from the 'bottom up' perspective of non-elite groups.** Identity maintenance and transformation is a biographical process, with the individual's perspective being formed in part out of the sum of the influence of their past experience and their subjective perception and processing of this past. Former experiences may either support a productive unfolding of one's own identity or – if they encompass heteronomous conditions – undermine the self identity of the person affected. This received past plays into the present as one's identity is being maintained but

also actively constructed. At the same time, the present perspective is also formed by an anticipation of the future – what the individual sees as the likely outcome of the present in the immediate, medium and long terms. Despite Kierkegaard's famous dictum that *'Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward'*, in a real sense, present identity is a lens that focuses darkly upon both the past and the future. Over the last quarter of a century, in-depth qualitative biographical techniques of interviewing and analysis have evolved that always have had a focus upon questions of identity. These techniques allow the analyst to gain insights into how the individual actively constructs their current identity and also are capable of providing reliable insight into the evolution of identity over time.

The partners in Euroidentities all have considerable experience in doing biographical research and have used a variety of biographical techniques which can be utilised in this instance to investigate the evolution of European identity. The approach followed by each partner in this project will share the some basic characteristics. Small numbers of individuals chosen by purposive sampling to represent 'sensitized groups' ('sensitized' by European concerns described in the next section) will be interviewed by non-directive techniques.

The goal of this approach at the interviewing stage is to elicit a narrative of the interviewee's life that is as little affected by the influence of the researchers as possible. Great care is taken in the interviewing process and in the analysis to discriminate between material that arises unsolicited from the interviewee and material that results indirectly or directly from interviewer's questions. The presumption is that, *ceteris paribus*, the unsolicited material provides a purer insight into the interviewee's own *gestalt*, or all-encompassing view of her/his life. Normally, there is a single eliciting question that is designed to get the interviewee to give a biographical narration. During this phase of the interview, the researcher does not intervene, but only provides non-committed, mostly non-verbal, responses. At the conclusion of this first stage, the interview moves to a second, more probing, stage where the researcher asks questions on topics or issues relating to European identity that have not been raised by the interviewee. The questioning part of the narrative interview has three sections: a section for asking questions regarding additional narrative topics just alluded to or faded out in the main story part of the interview that harnesses the communicative scheme of narration; a section for asking questions regarding social frames and routines not explicated in the main story part of the interview that must be described using the communicative scheme of description; as well as a section for asking questions regarding the self-theories of the informant and regarding the potential

for theoretical explanations of enigmatic courses of events and significant or difficult experiences rendered in the main story part of the interview using the communicative scheme of argumentation. It is important to understand, that the descriptive and argumentative passages of the interview, which as sub-dominant strings within the dominant scheme of narration are also interspersed in the course of the narrative rendering of the main story line (e.g., at certain positions in narrative units where social frames or routine procedures must be described or argumentative commentaries given to work through difficult experiences), present all types of social milieus, social worlds, social arenas, social procedures, social institutions and all layers of social knowledge (including theoretical self--understandings, explanations and legitimizations of the informants and their interaction partners) and items of public discourses that became relevant for the informant's orientation.

The precise approach to analysis will vary between partners but in all instances will involve the in-depth consideration of the interview transcripts in which the ultimate goal is to produce a holistic understanding of each interviewees' own perspective on 'Europe' and how their identity has changed or evolved over their lifetimes. One approach that has been developed by Fritz Schütze, Gerhard Riemann and others has had a significant impact on the development of biographical research in Europe (Schütze, 1983, 1995, 2007; Riemann and Schütze, 1991; Riemann, 2006; Czyżewski, Piotrowski and Rokuszewska--Pawełek, 1996; Kaźmierska, 1999; Rokuszewska-Pawełek, 2002).

The nature of the collected life histories is too complex (typically, 30 or more pages of intensive interview transcript) to allow for the material to be analysed through the data reduction or summarizing logics of quantitative analysis and, hence, the goal of qualitative research is not to be statistically representative. In contrast, qualitative analysis emphasis the epistemic nature of its in-depth 'rich' material in which social processes can emerge or be revealed in the analysis of even single texts. In our case, **the reliability of the analyses will be buttressed by the use of contrastive comparison between cases. This comparative dimension will occur at three levels: initially, between cases representative of the same 'sensitized group' within a given partner country; secondly comparison between cases of the same 'sensitized group' but drawn from different partner countries; finally, contrastive comparison across the project between cases of different 'sensitized groups'.**

6.2. 'Sensitized groups'

In contrast to other studies of the development of European identity, this study will not concentrate upon elites whose lives and careers take place within centrally-located European institutions. These groups have been covered well elsewhere and it is not our goal to replicate this work. Secondly, due to their life and work roles the members of European elites almost by definition possess a developed pro-European identity (except populistically or nationalistically minded politicians trying to influence the European decision process in terms of so-called "national interests"). The underlying problem driving this project is not the European identity of elites but the *failure* of the European Union to realise a comprehensive set of European features of identity or identities among the general population that relate enthusiastically to them.

On the other hand, neither will this study concentrate upon a random selection of the general populace. Preliminary interviewing work has established that undirected autobiographical narrative interviews will not elicit lengthy or in-depth considerations of an interviewee's identity in relation to Europe, since the 'European' features of one's life are normally routine (e.g., using the Euro currency, crossing borders without police checks, studying according to the regulations of the Bologna process) and not seen as part of an interesting story. This becomes different when somebody is confronted with European experiences in a non-routine, focussed way; e.g., experiences such as fighting for one's right of biculturalism (Kłoskowska, 1996/2001) or of bilingualism in bilingual areas of Europe (e.g., Wales, Catalonia, South Tyrol (Treichel, 2004)) or carrying out reconciliation work. One could opt for a strategy of semi-structured interviews of random members of the general public that probed explicitly for European identity issues from the outset, but this research design would be flawed. One would not be able to assess whether any 'European' attitudes elicited were more than a situationally direct, and therefore shallow and inauthentic, result of the questioning strategy itself.

Rather than either of these extremes, this study will concentrate on 'sensitized groups', non-elites who, in one way or another, have been intensely exposed to European contexts or drawn into European tasks. These 'sensitized groups' in one sense are 'bridging elites', but they need not be privileged in any sense. The common rationale for inclusion in our study as a 'sensitized group' that all these categories of people possess is, if European identities are evolving at a non-elite level, the locus for their evolution is among those groups who have some regular contact and/or significant experience at the pan-European level. Studying these

aggregates will provide insights into processes that are occurring more widely among the general population, only not in as intense a form.

During our planning meetings, the consortium has decided upon **two 'sensitized groups' that will be studied by all partners:**

• ***Educationally mobile'.*** This group will be people who have had significant experience of study abroad (e.g., as Erasmus exchange students), interviewed *later* in their lives. The rationale behind interviewing former rather than current exchange students is twofold. First, the current attitudes of those experiencing educational exchange already are well-documented and we do not need to duplicate this research. Second, and of more significance for this project, investigating the biographical significance of educational experience in another country for later phases in one's life allows an assessment of the extent to which sponsored educational mobility is realising its greater goals of promoting a permanent change in perspective and a lasting integration across European national borders.

• ***'Trans-national workers'.*** The people who make up this larger aggregate category will be those whose labour market activity has resulted in a significant amount of cross-European experience. A key discriminator for inclusion in this group is 'significant'. A casual labourer or student who works for a short period of time in another country and then returns home would not fall into this category. However, an economic migrant who has spent a significant portion of their life working abroad in another part of Europe, a businessperson for whom cross-border contacts and markets are essential, or a person whose move for work-related reasons has led to their making links in the 'host' country beyond those that are solely job-related (such as bringing their spouse and children to live with them or even forming a partnership with someone in the 'host' country or becoming involved in local politics there) would be included. There could be an overlap with the 'Educationally-mobile' 'sensitized group' among young professionals or scientists with an academic education who are working in multinational companies or as specialist liaison workers within established or emerging trans-national European organisations. Present or formerly undocumented migrants, including women doing domestic and care work, as well as workers in the entertainment and sex industry, could be included. The developing European identity of migrants from outside the borders of the continent could also be legitimately targeted for study. The intention to return eventually to one's country of origin would not exclude a person and 'returned migrants' if their experience of one or more other societies in the European Union had been significant could fall within the category. Since there are partners in the consortium located in nations that either send or receive migrants, we have the potential to study transnational workers at both ends.

It may be that researchers from a 'sending' nation may travel to the 'receiving' nations to conduct interviews with their compatriots. 'Virtual workers' who are not geographically mobile but whose information technology work consists largely of European contacts outside their own borders can be considered to have significant cross-border experience and hence also could be studied.

There also will be **three categories of 'specialized groups' that will be studied by subsets of partners:**

• ***'Farmers'.*** Farmers can be seen as a particular case of small and medium economic enterprises where Europe is critical. Farming within Europe takes place within a structure of regulations and continental markets that forces those in the sector to think within a European context. Farmers have a long tradition of dealing with European legislation and regulations, with the economic movements of the European agrarian market and with lobbying for their political concerns and advantages in Brussels through their associations and political parties which are specifically concerned with their economic welfare. In addition, they must take European environmental requirements into account. Quite often they are in conflict with environmentalists and managers of national parks, who would threaten to take environmental issues played down by the farmers to the European Court of Justice.

A further rationale for including farmers is based on the heterogeneity (heterogeneous in terms of social structure, values and identities) of farmers as a social group. A starting point can be that the construction of biographies of farmers from the 'old' and the 'new' Member states has different grounds and diverse development modes.

In contrast to other 'sensitized groups' who may be more mobile and faster to incorporate European identities, farmers could be defined as a more static group who are strongly affiliated with the nation and the national due to their bonds to a certain territory and land. This applies especially to farmers from the new Member states (NMS). A number of surveys have shown that farmers are still stronger oriented 'inwards', towards the national (and local) rather than 'outwards'; i.e., to the European space. Individualism and personal concerns still dominate the nation (especially for Bulgaria, see Avramov 2001). Farmers' perceptions of EU integration have brought more fears than certainty, preventing them from collective actions when they had to protect their interests. 'Self' and local-bonded identities still predominate in NMS where the drive towards individual prosperity remains stronger than any other collective civil and moral values.

Hence, the development of the identities of farmers from the former socialist states towards the construction of new interconnections and interactions is important for present and future EU integration. How does and how far 'self' identity may change in collective identity is a question of empirical verification.
In contrast, the farmers in the 'old' EU states have internalized the European norms and values. Their biographies have emerged and developed in other value systems, collectivities and morally binding concerns that are historically linked to the European norms. Generally, west-European farmers have more 'associative habits' (Gonzalez and Benito, 2001; Labrianidis, 2004), they tend to be more socially included, and they are organized in associations and movements that express their concerns and demands to the EU Common Agriculture Policy. These identities have been constructed and developed for years through their (past) individual biographical experiences, but in an interactive process and within the common EU market and environment.

• ***Cultural contacts.*** Cultural activities in terms of both 'high' Culture and 'low'/popular culture span Europe with the participants, their audiences and the associated markets crossing borders. Arguably, these types of spontaneous activities may exert more influence towards the development of European-wide perspectives by members of the general public than consciously-imposed 'top down' attempts to promote a European consciousness. Artists and musicians who make their careers across Europe could be seen as overlapping with the 'Transnational worker' 'specialized group'. Examples of the types of activities that will be studied include: Eurovision; the owners of 'second homes' in nations other than their own; tourists and other leisure travellers who have an extensive experience of cross-border travel; soccer and other cross-national sports supporters and participants.

• ***Civil society organisations (CSOs).*** Civil society organisations are an important feature of public arenas within Europe and can be seen as constituting an alternative quasi-official 'shadow government'. Our definition of a civil society organisation is a legal entity that is non-governmental and not-for-profit that does not represent any commercial interest , and pursues a common purpose in the public interest. The activities of these CSOs may span countries and can have a specific European or cross-border context; for example, 'reconciliation'groups and environmental groups. Those of us involved in the CSO 'sensitized group' work package intend to develop and maintain a special relationship with the targeted organisations in which they will receive feedback from the research findings from an early stage. This is both to involve them actively in development

of the research conclusions and to help us help the CSOs concerned work more effectively in the arena of public debate.

The 'sensitized groups' form the core of the empirical work of the project and the investigation of each makes up one of the Work Packages.

7. ANTICIPATED RESULTS AND THEIR USE

As previous studies of European identity have demonstrated convincingly, this study does not expect to find that an overarching European identity is supplanting national or regional identity. Rather, the general finding is likely to be that if European identities are evolving these are developing through national, regional or other types of identity with 'Europe' seen through the lens of nation or locality. **The biographical approach utilised in Euroidentities will provide a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the evolution of collective identities.** The biographical approach of the Euroidentities project will be capable of showing the tacit, 'seen but not noticed' (Garfinkel, 1967: 36) ways in which identity work gets done. **Euroidentities** will provide a more specific, systematic and concrete understanding concerning these paradoxical 'vague processes' of contemporary European identity formation and use it to test claims about collective identities in Europe. These claims concern the changing bases of identification linked with the development of European institutions and social policies. They also concern the ways in which people make sense of themselves as individual actors and the new forms of reflexivity, self-construction and relationships emerging as traditional political and community commitments are being replaced by so-called 'identity politics'.

There may be some who have moved further along the path towards a European or at least multiple national/regional identity than others, but these will have particular aspects to their biographies that explain this. We should be able to provide a description of the common grounds and arenas of communication that lead toward an orientation towards a European identity and add to the knowledge concerning the difficulties that infringe upon this process. We anticipate that the formation of close personal relationships across borders will be important for these people, with those who have married or set up permanent partnerships being the most clear-cut example. An early predisposition, perhaps stemming from parental history or influence in childhood, may appear as significant for current 'cross-border' experience and orientation.

We do not assume that the findings of **Euroidentities** will necessarily point towards an inevitable rise in European identity. **There may be aspects of the extra-national experiences of 'sensitized groups' that make them in some ways *less* disposed towards a pan-European identity.** Migrants may be subject to homesickness or the victim of discrimination in their country of origin. Those attempting to operate economically across borders may have found the experience of bureaucracy to be debilitating. Rather than a new European identity, some of those living between countries may feel they no longer have any clear cut identity. **On the other hand, Europe may offer new opportunities which might be audaciously taken, and, in addition, might involve activists of the five (to seven – see below) Europe-sensitized groups in cooperative European projects.**

8. AFTERWORD

While the following articles drawn from Euroidentities show the findings that have arisen from the project, we would like to preview a major development and a key finding that both came about during the course of the project.

First, preliminary analyses of the first interviews led us to decide to generate two additional 'sensitized group' categories from within the body of interview transcripts that had been collected:

• *External to Europe* – During the first main analysis workshop of the project as a whole, we realized that we were in danger of falling into the trap of seeing 'Europe' in a stereotypical way; to put it bluntly, as 'white' and 'Christian'. By bringing together interviews scattered across the original 'sensitized group' categories and also carrying out some additional interviews, the project developed a new analysis aggregate: persons who either (I) had originated from outside Europe (either through migrating to Europe from outside the continent or being the children of intercontinental migrants) or (II) had been born in Europe but had spent a significant portion of their lives living outside the continent. The former aggregate reported experience of having one's identity as a European being challenged both officially through issues such as citizenship and visas and unofficially through 'othering' reactions from the 'native' population ranging from mild scepticism about a person who does not fit into a stereotype of a 'European' but nevertheless considering themselves to be a European through to xenophobic prejudice.

• *Intimate relations* – Another feature that emerged strongly from the first analyses was the significance of cross-border primary relationships; either being

the child of parents from two different countries and/or, even more significantly, having experience of a close personal relationship with a person from another country. In either case, people have close exposure to at least one other national culture that, because the exposure comes about as a consequence of one's closest personal involvements, almost inevitably must affect one's sense of self and identity.

Second, what answer has Euroidentities been able to generate to its key question – to what extent is a European identity or identities evolving? While very few individuals would consider themselves to be 'Europeans' *over* their national, regional, local identities nor over, other, non-geographic identities, many persons living in present-day Europe have psychological fields of reference or orientation that transcend regional and national boundaries and are afforded the chances to make use of transnational opportunity structures in Europe and to become involved in transnational European comparisons, emulations and sometimes even cooperative projects. These latter phenomena are essential features of a European mental space. As the core overarching finding of the project, European mental space as a complex and nuanced concept is explored in considerable depth in the following articles. The summarizing article by Antonella Spanò, Ulrike Nagel, Pascquale Musella and Elizabetta Perone, 'From Europe to Europeans and Beyond: Meanings of Europe through people's biographical experience' gives generalizing insights into the theoretical advancements of the "Euroidentities" research project.

Finally we would like to remark upon six features of the collaborative working together of the seven national research teams – Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy, Germany, Wales and Northern Ireland – as *in itself* part of the European mental space:

(1) The elementary research practice of our own mental meeting and "symbolic" interaction with the life histories of the informants was very intriguing. We came across phenomena in and with Europe we did not know about at all (e.g., how to decide where to establish your family home after retirement if you have children and grandchildren you left behind or even "relinquished" in several European countries during your work stays in various European countries and how to overcome the difficulties contingent upon collecting your retirement payments from several countries). We learned about unfamiliar experiences and creative sense making practices of life in Europe. For some European policy makers and politicians these might be even more unfamiliar than for us, who had the chance to learn from the lives of many informants.

(2) It was felicitous that we developed a separate "substantive" field of research specific for each of the seven national teams, i.e. the life and the work of the members of the seven (formerly five) Europe-sensitive social aggregates, and that at the same time these substantive fields of research would transcend national borders and limitations by virtue of their general topical import. For example, one general feature of the substantive field of life and work of farmers in Europe is the phenomenon that they are critical regarding the quite different national interpretations and applications of EU regulations and policies concerning agrarian production and marketing as well as those focussed on support of farms. The general analytical focus then became the modes of handling EU regulations by the bureaucracies in the national governmental departments and administrations of agriculture in a comparative perspective. In terms of "research pedagogics" this meant that each national team had its own autonomous field of study and the responsibility of poignant and creative scientific research connected with it. But, this field of topical study had to be discussed with other teams who would share their own interview data on the topic and the respective analytical insights.

(3) Much of the research was done in numerous trans-team research workshops – this was always done in confrontation with the empirical data of the autobiographical narrative interviews. Therefore there was always the necessity: (a) mutually to explicate empirical insights on biographical courses and work developments of the same biographical single cases scrutinized by each of the national teams; (b) to differentiate between the *cultural insider perspective* of the national team that conducted the interview with a compatriot, on the one hand, and the *cultural outsider perspectives* of the other national teams, on the other hand, as well as; (c) to understand and to interpret the insights of the other teams by taking their analytical perspectives and to triangulate the perspectives of the other teams with one's own; (d) The intensity of the epistemic procedures of taking the perspectives of the others and of triangulating them was even more increased by the very fact that each of the national teams brought into the research workshop their own national-cultural background of understanding of life, of biographical development and work as well as of handling collective identities, in the latter respect especially in the form of treating one's own and other national collectivities more or less critically and ironically. That is, on top of the general analytical procedures as harnessed and also put fruitfully to work within national-culturally *homogeneous* research workshops, in our transnational research workshops the permanent "translation" of cultural background understandings into explicit transcultural *comparative or even general* notions was necessary. This prodded the explication of "seen but unnoticed" (Garfinkel, 1967: 36) deeply ingrown national-cultural understandings of one's own

and the research partner's society. Exactly in the course of looking at the *same* single case empirical material and conversationally exchanging analytical insights about it, the following happened: focussing on the differences between culturally *familiar* understandings and culturally *foreign* understandings (and on attempts to explain them) as well as focussing on comparing the national differences of understandings (and on attempts to explain them) it became analytically possible to reach toward and to grasp universal features of biographical work, cooperative project work and practices of dealing with all types of collectivities and mental space phenomena in Europe. – All these epistemic processes of generating social science knowledge happened by virtue of the creative epistemic logic of the multinational research workshops.

(4) In cases in which the interviews were not conducted within the English language medium (interviews in English were usually (with a few exemptions) conducted in Wales and Northern Ireland; this was also the case with interviews with teachers of English in other countries as well as with some of the migrants, especially those going to English speaking countries) we and our transcription specialists did almost line by line translations of the mother-tongue autobiographical narrative interviews into the English language in order to keep the specific logic of the unique autobiographical renderings of the informants. This included the sequential order of presentation, paralinguistic phenomena like smiling and weeping, stylistic features and symptomatic phenomena like hesitation pauses, broken and unfinished syntactic constructions, vague expressions and self-corrective background constructions. We kept in mind that access to the empirical grasping and representative understanding of the informant's biographical work of her- or himself and of her or his world-view (especially on collective identities and on the European mental space) would be through the informant's mother tongue. The translation of the mother-tongue interviews into the lingua franca of English can only partially resemble the logic, style and psycho-dynamic "order of chaos" of the informant's autobiographical rendering in her or his mother tongue. But at least we – including our transcription specialists - tried not to get lost in translation and to keep all the said formal features of the original mother-tongue text of the informant's autobiographical rendering while translating interviews into the English medium.

(5) Not all of the interviews could be translated into the English language due to financial restrictions. But we did manage to represent all interviews of the Euroidentities project in the forms of summary statements or sequential reports in order to have access to all the life histories as complex single cases and to their inner logic as expressed in the medium of the narrative interviews. On

the one hand, guided by the summary statement or even more by the sequential report, it was possible to go deeper into an intriguing (miraculous, contradictory, complex) part of a life-history case, when it seemed to be promising, by adding a thorough English translation of the respective part of the original-language interview, in case the interesting socio-biographical phenomenon expressed in the original-language transcription seemed to be very complicated. On the other hand, by reading many summary reports and sequential statements one could manage to get a quick overview over one or the other of the topically interesting partial corpora of the life histories collected within the project. More than the summary statements would do, sequential reports would even express important features of the logic and style of autobiographical rendering of the informant, they would hint at complex and difficult phenomena that it would be sensible to translate from the original-language transcription, and they would give first analytical approaches to the overall biographical structuring of life histories as expressed by autobiographical narrative interviews.

(6) A European research project is normally characterized by the specific communication feature that some of its members speak English as their mother tongue, whereas others must use the medium of English as a lingua franca with all the associated restrictions of expressing themselves in a differentiated mode. In such mixed teams a danger that could emerge is that native speakers of English could acquire a power position of being the spokespersons, theoretical definers and "arbitres elegantiarum" of the project work and that the members restricted to English just as lingua franca would not feel entitled linguistically to develop their own specific analytical and theoretical perspectives. And in addition – and still generally speaking – the non-native speakers of English could develop an unjustified resentment regarding the easiness and elegance of the linguistic expression of native speakers of English who at the same time – possibly not realized by the non-native speakers – might even try hard to understand the language difficulties of their colleagues who are not native speakers. – None of these detrimental developments could be observed in the Euroidentities research project. Generally speaking: especially for a social and cultural science research project, it is very helpful that some of the team members ensure that the English language is not restricted to simplifying routine fashions of speaking that are characteristic for a lingua franca. By virtue of their role model of language mastery, the medium of English language – like any other possible mother tongue that incorporates belles lettres and social science writings – becomes a powerful instrument for emotionally reaching out and for analytically grasping processes of cultural, social and biographical reality. In case of the team cooperation within the Euroi-

dentities project too, the native speakers' differentiated expression and rendering of phenomena of social, cultural and biographical processes protected the team members not having English as their mother tongue from having at hand shallow presuppositions that would transport phoney cliché patterns of emotional processes presumably underlying the behaviour reported in the interviews and from respective simplifying socio-cultural categorizations that might be enforced by the essentially restricted potential of, or even by the prison for, linguistic expression within the lingua franca. In addition, the non-native speakers of English in the "Euroidentities" project, who, by the way, partially worked in the Welsh and Northern Irish teams, too, were always *allowed* to remind the others of the central differences and, at the same time, the cultural equality of mother tongues as the means of authentic expression of social, cultural and biographical meaning. For example, they drew the attention of the other team members to the difficulties of doing an "authentic" translation of the autobiographical interviews and to the importance of preserving the expressive order of the original interview texts in the process of translation. By this work of reminding, they helped the native speakers of English to understand what was really meant behind the veil of translation of interviews conducted in other languages than English. – During the joint workshop-analysis work, the native speakers of English became thoroughly sensitized to these difficulties. In addition, they were concerned to find out what was really meant by the analytical contributions of the non-native speakers of English. On top of this, the habit and even "virtue" of conceding that lingua franca English, however useful and handy it is as intercultural data presenter, while preserving the interviews by translations, and purveyor of scientific exchange, is not the king's road to reality and truth, was generously extended by the native speakers of English to communicative situations in which *those* participants of the Euroidentities research project who are not native speakers would feel the anguish of being restricted in expressing themselves when analysing the interviews and raising theoretical questions. And in reverse, the team members who do not have English as their mother tongue became aware of how difficult it would be for the native speakers of English permanently to witness the difficulties of the former in expressing their personal views and insights without going the way of a simplifying linguistic rendering.

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Robert Miller, Fritz Schütze

EWOLUCJA TOŻSAMOŚCI EUROPEJSKIEJ: WYKORZYSTANIE METOD BADAŃ BIOGRAFICZNYCH W BADANIU ROZWOJU TOŻSAMOŚCI EUROPEJSKIEJ

(Streszczenie)

Artykuł powstał na podstawie aplikacji złożonej do Komisji Europejskiej przez zespół Euro-identities. Punktem wyjścia było tu pytanie o aktualny status „projektu" tożsamości europejskiej w sytuacji gdy proces integracji obejmujący sfery ekonomiczną i polityczną nie przekładał się na budowanie poczucia tożsamości europejskiej. Propozycja badawcza pokazywała, iż odgórnie zaprojektowane z perspektywy elit (top down) działania, których celem jest tworzenie tożsamości europejskiej nie znajdują odzwierciedlenia w potocznym doświadczeniu zwykłych obywateli budujących poczucie identyfikacji przez biograficzne doświadczanie Europy. Artykuł przedstawia najważniejsze założenia projektu oraz sposób jego realizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość, Europa, narracja biograficzna.

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HOW TO DEAL WITH AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS IN THE EUROIDENTITY RESEARCH PROJECT

Abstract

The article contains a report of the second research workshop of our Euro-Identities project. The workshop took place immediately after collecting first data (pilot interviews). On the base of the digital recording of all sessions, the protocol carefully attempts to reconstruct the proceedings of the research workshop as a social arrangement for the generation of analytical knowledge. Therefore it can be read as a reconstruction of – in the sense of Alfred Schütz' perspective of "Making Music Together" – "how to do together" analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews. The report dwells on the questions of how to get a first impression of the interviews, of how the European phenomenon is addressed in them and, of how to do the research steps of formal text sort analysis, structural description, analytical abstraction including the reconstruction of the overall biographical structuring and contrastive comparison. Although at this stage of analysis it is not dealt with the research step of constructing a theoretical model, phenomena of social worlds and social arenas, of European opportunity structures, of networking and establishing of social relationships, of transnational comparison, of transgressing cultural borders, of new professional initiatives and professional hybridization and of a non-essentialist self-identification with Europe are found.

Key words: Collective identity, European identity, biography analysis, overall biographical structuring, contrastive case comparison, social worlds, professional hybridization, non-essentialist self-identification

The following is the report of the second research workshop on dimensional analysis of the whole Euroidentities research team. It took part quite early in the history of the Euroidentities research project, immediately after collecting our first data (which was five to six month after the start of the project). The workshop dealt with the question how to treat the empirical data in order to get analytical insights (dimensional analysis). Hence, the report dwells on how to get a first impression of the interviews, how the European phenomenon is addressed in them, how to do the research steps of formal text sort analysis, structural description, analytical abstraction including the reconstruction of the overall biographical structuring and contrastive comparison (cf. Schütze, 2008: 25–75). It does not deal with the research step of constructing a theoretical model, since the workshop took part too early in the arc of work of the research project. However, there are the phenomena of social worlds and social arenas, of European opportunity structures, of networking and establishing of social relationships, of transnational comparison, of transgressing cultural borders, of new professional initiatives and professional hybridization and of a non-essential or "situational" self-identification with Europe. All these phenomena, especially in their systematic relationship to each other, later on became features of the European mental space as one of the central theoretical concepts of the research workshop.

On the base of digital recording, the protocol carefully attempts to reconstruct the proceedings of the research workshop as a social arrangement for the generation of analytical knowledge (Riemann and Schütze, 1987; Reim and Riemann 1997, Hoffmann and Pokladek, 2010). Therefore it can be read as a reconstruction of how to do together (in the sense of Alfred Schütz' perspective of "Making Music Together" – Schütz, 1964a) an analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews, especially those one of especially dealing with the relationship between individual biographical identity and collective phenomena (of collective identities and other collective phenomena not fitting within an "identity language"). At the same time, the protocol introduces into the biographical importance of the European entity for persons with lots of circumspectness and initiative as we later especially saw in the field of transcultural civil society activists and creative professionals working within the frameworks of civil societies.

We basically did not change the wording of the protocol as a meticulous report of three days of working together and doing text analysis. We just reworded a few unclear passages. And we eliminated two and half pages at the end of the protocol dealing with the features of the action scheme of autobiographical narrative interviewing, since they do not address issues and tasks of analysis. However, the distributed report quite often referred to a protocol of the German

research team two months earlier (dated June 5, 2008). These text passages of the earlier protocol of the German team were put in (instead of our remarks on interviewing) at the end of the presented report. It seemed legitimate doing so, since the protocol of the German team was part of the knowledge base to which the workshop quite often referred to.

Of course, not all the insights of the workshop started from the scratch. In addition to the mentioned protocol of the German group, there were short introductions into the overall biographical structuring of the interviews with Kate, Caren and Wiard. And there were some other prepared longer commentaries. These some bit pre-arranged contributions were marked for authorship by the initials of the first and second name, e.g.: M.D. = Martin Dreher, Professor of ancient history. However, most of the work of generating analytical knowledge was "emergently" done in the whole research group together, and therefore all the participants are creators of the first steps of analysis done in our early workshop on dimensional analysis in August 2008.

Workshop Participants were:

Johannes Angermüller (Magdeburg) (JA) Sally Baker (Bangor) (SB) Howard Davies (Bangor) (HD) Ivaylo Dimitrov (Sofia, Brussels) (ID) Markieta Domecka (Belfast) (MDO) Mariana Draganova (Sofia) (MDR) Martin Dreher (Magdeburg) (MD) Lena Inowlocki (Frankfurt) (LI) Werner Kallmeyer (Mannheim) (WK) Marta Kowalska (Bangor) (MK) Robert Miller (Belfast) (RM)	Ulrike Nagel (Magdeburg) (UN) Liis Ojamäe (Tallinn) (LO) Dona Pickard (Sofia) (DP) Gerhard Riemann (Nürnberg) (GR) Ronny Scholz (Magdeburg) (RS) Anja Schröder-Wildhagen (Magdeburg) (AS-W) Fritz Schütze (Magdeburg) (FS) Magda Telus (Magdeburg, guest) (MT) Katarzyna Waniek (Lodz) (KW)

1.	**Wednesday, August 20, 9.00-10.30**
	Open dimensional discussion of the Kate interview of the German team regarding European phenomena; experiences from interviews of other national teams regarding European phenomena

FS is chairing the session.

In an open dimensional discussion of the Kate interview with regard to European phenomena the following topics were focussed:

Language

– For Kate, the English language is a cultural capital she can use. The English language is a precondition of her new career since English appears to be the central lingua franca in Europe.

– On the other hand, the use of the English language can become a biographical trap as it may hinder access to the autochthonic national cultures in European countries.

Mentioning of national and European categories/stereotypes; becoming European

– In the case of Kate, there is an explicit mentioning of, and self-identification with, "Europeanness": "*I've become European*" (p. 23: 33). It was discussed that this wouldn't be a traditional form of self-stereotyping since this self-categorization wouldn't be just a shallow mentioning. The context in which Kate mentions this indicates that a European orientation is biographically important to her. It was said that sensitivity for such *contextualization markers of European identity* that are specified in terms of biographical importance would be crucial for analysis.

– The concept of the "*professional stranger*" was discussed: would this be a relevant category to describe the process and maybe even stages of becoming European in the sense of becoming competent in handling cultural contexts that are different to the culture of origin? A comparison of the interviews of Kate (British), Caren (Danish) and Alexandra (Polish) show the following referrals to collective identities: Kate says: When I am in Germany I feel more European than I would feel in Great Britain. There, in the UK, I feel more British. Caren says: Being in Germany I feel much more Danish whereas being in Denmark I would feel much more European. Alexandra is not addressing European topics as such but is trying to undergo a total conversion – going from her Polishness to some sort of Britishness, having in mind the concept of getting a new collective identity.

It was agreed that there are to be found three *different types of attitudes* to national identity and European identity. In the case of Alexandra there is a change from one national identity to another (at least on Alexandra's own conceptual level); she is interchanging one abstract concept of national collectivity for another – a very simplified abstraction process of belonging. In the case of Caren, the condition of being in another country is still a quite new and fresh experience: like the stranger of Alfred Schütz (1964b) she has to find social categories for the new experiences, and there is still the feeling of being under a social constraint

to orient to the country of origin as one's own "real" national collective identity seen in contrast to the country of immigration, and it happens – what is quite normal – that she still has the feeling of being more connected to the country of origin. Caren's abstraction and search-for-identification process indicates that she is doing collective work of abstract social categorization: she is identifying with the country of origin abroad and distancing from it at home. In the case of Kate, this simplifying abstraction process of collective categorization would not work anymore. Being experienced as a professional stranger, she has learnt not to be prone to undergo Alexandra's or Caren's quite simplifying abstraction processes of dealing with collective identities.

Being theoretically sensitized by the concept of the professional stranger, one could say that Alexandra is not a professional stranger, but she is trying to undergo a conversion process involving high biographical costs. Instead, Caren was said to be a step forward as she would be in the course of accomplishing a normal process of going abroad. That means she would start to use the other language and to embark on abstraction processes while categorizing the new experiences and doing stereotyping/hetero-stereotyping (including the production of images of the pictures that others would have on one's nation of origin). By the necessity of a natural development, she would still be very much enmeshed and entangled in these processes of over-generalizing and simplifying abstraction whereas Kate would have overcome these simplifying tendencies and would act cool in dealing with collective identities. (Kate experiences a biographical situation which is being at home in England and feeling more British in England, on the one hand, and which is being in other parts of Europe and feeling more European there abroad, on the other hand; whereas the "fresher" immigrant would feel much more identified with her or his nation of origin when being abroad than when being home). Kate went into the situation of the professional stranger or quasi-ethnographer but this doesn't mean suffering of alienation as the ordinary stranger experiences: "In Europe I'm not a stranger (in the sense of a suffering human being – A.S.-W./F.S.). It's my own tool in a certain sense". This condensed quotation is an expression of professional coolness, and professional coolness is an essential feature of the professional stranger as quasi-ethnographer.

To summarize, as a first conclusion it was said that the process of going abroad can show three stages though this would not be an universal sequential scheme: At a *first stage* migration may start with a process or an attempt to undergo some sort of cultural immersion and to partially put into brackets one's own national culture (or even identity) and getting into another national culture involving high biographical costs. In many cases – but not that often than it was usual in former

days – there can also be witnessed attempts of real immigration that may start with an attempt to accomplish a conversion and leave behind one's former national identity and acquire the new national identity of the country of destination. Very often this cultural immersion or even conversion of national identity doesn't work automatically, and the immigrant then is thrown back into a situation of being an essential stranger with high allegiance to one's country of origin. This is the *second stage* of being intensively emotionally connected with one's nation of origin and using simplifying abstraction processes for understanding the events in the country of immigration. In a *third stage* one would start to deal with these abstraction processes circumspectly and one would learn to act cool with national collectivities, i.e., they would not be skipped totally but be used in a relativistic way and played with, treating them as handy biographical resources as in the case of Kate. This latter attitude would allow place for a European self-identification on top of the national self-identification(s). All agreed that Kate would have a quite developed European attitude.

Discussed then were different *conditions* that would promote development especially of the attitude of undergoing a *conversion*.

- Going from a poor to a (by necessity) affluent country could be one condition for conversion (in Alexandra's case: feeling forced to hide her Polish identity in the U.K. as it could lead to a dramatic loss of social status and could provoke strong socially degrading stereotypes – although other social conditions might be decisive in this case, too).
- As in the case of many Germans having gone to America: the decisive condition for conversion would be to flee the impact of recent German history and to get rid of guilt questions and collective responsibility connected with German national identity – especially regarding the holocaust crimes.

The attitude of conversion might hinder the development of a European identity/orientation, going from one national collectivity to another. At a certain stage the two other attitudes – *firstly, of feeling national in a biographical situation abroad, on the one hand, and of feeling European at home on the other, and, secondly, of feeling national in the home context, on the one hand, and feeling European abroad, on the other*, – would support a European thinking, albeit not by necessity a European identity; however, European orientations such as fitting into the social arrangement of a European arena might be developed.

Remarks on the form of the interview, level of detailization

At the end of the session the format of the interview with Caren that throughout shows quite a strikingly high level of detailization, was discussed. The detailization level rose after the interviewer (AS-W) had stepped in when the informant Caren was about to skip the report of her experience of having been in England during High School. It was discussed whether or not this interruption where the interviewer asked for further detailization established a sort of compulsory situation for the informant. It was discussed that there are indications that this was not the case: Firstly, Caren is not reluctant to follow the request of the interviewer, and secondly, at the end of the interview, she would assess her interview as being a unique and valuable experience because she would have never told her life story before. Finally, the interview proceeded according to the epistemic rules of the autobiographical-narrative interview (Schütze, 2008: 5–25) proved by the fact that Caren was not losing the read thread of rendering in her narration/thematization. However, the informant's usual differentiation between various levels of detailization at different phases of the interview and the informant's elementary biographical work of assessing the life relevancies by selecting and "harnessing" different levels of narrative detailization is somewhat missing. Generally speaking, it might sometimes be necessary to encourage the informant to be quite detailed about what she or he did experience. In any case, it must be avoided to cut the red thread of the informant's narrative presentation which would occur when the interviewer would insert other topics into the narrative rendering of the informant or change the scheme of communication (provoking argumentation through reacting with manifestations of doubt to the informant's narrative rendering). That would produce chaos in the communication process – so to speak a "scheme salad" of a chaotic mix of narration and argumentation, which would be highly difficult to analyse later on.

* * *

2.	**Wednesday, August 20, 11.00–12.30**
	Structural descriptions of parts of the "Kate" interview from the sensitized group of transnational workers (concentrated on a few pivotal segments), especially regarding European identity features and European habitus features

GR is chairing the session.

It was explained that the structural description of the text is the basic analytical work which needs to be done to arrive at such an understanding of the text in which the biographical development of the informant can be grasped. The analytical step

of structural description (Schütze, 2008: 29–37) requires the segmentation of the interview text. This step is about paying attention to formal and content features of the text and of using them as keys to understand the experiential quality and order of the biographical development.

Further remarks on segmentation were as follows: Segments are being introduced with segmental markers such as "and then happened" or the like. In addition, they encompass an event or experience in the course of biography with a specific experiential quality (referring to outer events as well as to a change of inner identity). Segments are introduced, then detailed, and quite often there is to be found a kind of summary statement of the narrator and biography incumbent at the end of the narrative unit which is often connected with an argumentative commentary, before a new narrative unit starts referring to a new (set of) event(s).

It was agreed to have a closer look at three text passages: the first one is about Kate's travelling to Italy; the second one is about her getting married to her first husband and the third one is about the ending or, more precisely, the pre-coda text passage of the main narrative.

First text part, p. 1:46 – 3:12 (topic of travelling with special attention to the text passage up to p. 2, line 38, when it is told that Kate goes to Italy)

Starting with: *"Ehm… and ehm… I can't actually say where my – desire to travel first started..."* until "*Ehm and ehm I really worked hard with these four children and eh teaching them English and helping in the house and whatever*." (/// = marker of beginning and end of the text clipping)

N: Eh yeah - as a secretary yeah young secretary.
I: hm
N: /// Ehm and ehm - I wasn't really turned on - by this job. Ehm ... and ehm ... I can't actually say where my - desire to travel first started because as a child - we never went abroad. I never went abroad with my parents. Again we didn't have the money.
I: hm
N: And in those days in the UK it wasn't so common.
I: Yeah
N: Ehm ... ehm so we // my father in those days only had two weeks holiday - every year we would go off - somewhere nice. Every year of my life - I had a holiday. This was always a big event.
I: Yeah
N: Ehm ehm this is one reason why I am still I still get excited when I go on holiday - even now. I've never lost this#
I: #yeah ((laughing a little bit))
N: feeling. - Ehm but we all used to go to ehm [place] in the southeast of England or Scotland later. - Wales and so on. - We always had a lovely holiday. Sometimes it was camping when I was little girl. - And later on we would stay in bed and breakfast and these sort of things.

I: hm yes
N: My parents never had a lot of money so, you know, it wasn't anything extravagant and never went abroad. - And ehm I was involved in lots of things. - As a child I was a member of the red cross and eh#
I: #hm
N: became one, the sort of leader of this this group and ehm something like ehm - the girl guides. Ehm - but it was called the [name].
I: hm
N: Ehm and it was a similar organization to the girl guides but ehm (you know) something different and eh they did the same sort of things. You know you went once a week and you learned all sorts of - useful and not so useful things
I: ((laughing a little bit))
N: that you needed in life ehm and it was attached to the church and so on. And I was always involved in different things ehm ehm at school and ehm subsequently as I was getting older. +And somewhere along the line+ ((louder)) I - decided quickly I wanted to travel. - I really wanted to travel. And eh so ... without anybody really knowing I am - looked in the paper and I thought 'Well the easiest thing to do would be for me to go - abroad to teach English or something like this.(/)
I: hm
N: And eh I applied for - several jobs in the Times newspaper and ehm - got a job as a - eh sort of Au pair-cum English teacher -
I: hm
N: in an Italian family, in the north of Italy.
I: Aha interesting
N: And they had four children.
I: ((laughing a little bit))
N: Ehm - got the job and off I went. Everybody was shocked, you know, that I was doing this and eh - you know, having never being abroad and ehm on my own. But - you know this is what I wanted to do.
I: Yeah.
N: And I#
I: #Sorry. - How old were you then(?)
N: Eighteen.
I: Eighteen. Sorry.
N: I did one year - work. Yeah eighteen to nineteen, I think. I did one year nearly one year in this job. - Decided it wa wa wasn't anything to me long term and - this was the time to do the travelling.
I: hm
N: And ehm so off I went. And ehm I think it was about eighteen months. And I had a (bort?). - I had a (bort?). I was wonderful. I - love Italy. I still do. - Ehm it was ehm ... easy to get to know the people. It was very warm ehm not not in temperature but the people were very warm.
I: hm
N: And ehm... it was just a very nice experience. - The downside was the fact that eh the family ehm - really worked me hard. They had four kids. Two, four, six and eight. - And this is probably why, one of the reasons why I never had children. - Cause it put me off a life I think
I: hm

N: of having kids. - Ehm and ehm I really worked hard with these four children and eh teaching them English and helping in the house and whatever. /// - And ehm ... then I came back. [...] After eighteen months and ehm ... got started looking for a job ehm and ehm

The following was discussed with regard to content as well as to formal features:

– In the beginning of the interview (p. 1:6–38): The main topics would be going abroad and the connected question of money. Kate would tell about the *narrowness of the conditions of her growing up*. In terms of biographical processes (Schütze, 2008: 190f and 197–202) she would tell about the fact of getting hindered to develop a metamorphosis process (Schütze, 1994) of not being able to go to grammar school, and, regrettably for her, thus becoming just a secretary.

Seeing it in the sequential order of textual rendering (and thereby doing an empirically substantiated text interpretation) and, at the same time, in the sequential order of biographical unfolding Kate feels restrictions in her personal development when working as a secretary. In terms of biographical planning she wants to do a lot of travelling; in many types of autobiographies travelling is connected to changing one's life situation. In between telling about these two items of becoming a secretary and developing the action plan of travelling she puts in two additional segments on the level of the main-story rendering: one is about travelling with her parents, and the other is about her first networking experiences, being attached to the Anglican Church and to the Red Cross. With looking at these inserted segments (however, both being on the level of the rendering of the main story) it becomes clear that Kate is trying to explain in biographical terms her desire to travel as well as her new, her second work position and partial new occupation in a travel agency (about which she tells in the following segment). The in-between segments tell that she learnt to travel and how she started and accomplished networking; and connected with these experiences she found her first biographical central topic: going abroad, travelling, and undergoing different experiences. Kate cannot explain her first central biographical topic with the help of argumentative commentaries in a circumspect way, but at least she reports the life context in which this topic biographically developed. The mentioning of narrowness and scarcity in the life of her family shows that Kate is dealing with the biographical topic of a blocked biographical metamorphosis process that could have developed into a trajectory process.

It was talked about the *methodical importance* of the way how Kate's contextualizing of the narrated events guided the listener or reader to arrive at a complex and circumspect understanding of her biographical development. For

doing contextualization, narrator and listener need some sort of *suprasegmental markers* (Schütze, 2008: 188–191) – the money topic which pops up three times in this segment is functioning as such a suprasegmental marker that indicates that Kate was in a blocked metamorphosis process and how she overcame this difficulty.

Other remarks on the topic of travelling were:

– London as a stimulating experience for forming the new topic of travelling;

– Kate's being a member of social institutions: Red Cross, church, being a girls' scout guide, being involved in social networks with a basic institutional framing structure as a first general capacity and social mode that would develop in Kate's early youth and would be continuously followed up by her in later life;

– It was mentioned that Kate would not address classical cultural interests or trivial scholarly-touristic interests when talking about travelling. Kate's deeper going interest for "countries and people" would also have been a precondition for her forming a European identity in the sense of a cultural identity. On the other hand, Kate's sense of Europeanness might be especially related not to explicitly cultural topics, but to experiencing something new and something different as well as finding personal freedom. As being an au-pair she saw a chance in the mid-60s to get out of her confined structural life context of lower English middle class in order to be personally free; her embarking on learning another language was a resource for becoming free in her limited life situation in the U.K.

Second text part, p. 3:40 – 4:11 (experience of suffering)

Starting: "*Ehm ... during this time ehm I met my first husband*" until "*So hence the fact that I stayed – with the travel agency I liked the job very much, got married, ehm and here we are eight years later*." (/// = marker of beginning and end of the text clipping)

N: All the staff were travelling all over the world on educational tours - to experience ehm the ehm - the travels so they could sell it better to the clients of course. - Ehm and I stayed for eight years. /// Ehm ... during this time ehm I met my first husband.

I: hm

N: Ehm ... who who apart from ehm his job was ehm... actually a drummer in a jazz band.

I: hm

N: And ehm ... we subsequently got married (few/four?) years later. I was still very young. Ehm and ehm (6 seconds) was there something in between this (?) ehm ... oh yes. Sorry I should have said also that I ... when I came back from Italy I had the intention of going back.

I: hm

N: Ehm but I thought I need to get some money ehm and so I needed a job. So I got the job in the travel agency of course not knowing I would stay there for eight years at that particular time.
I: hm
N: Ehm and ehm and then about a year later, after I'd been there about a year and I was sort of thinking well you know if I am gonna go back to Italy I had to go now.
I: hm
N: Ehm I met him - and then really the decision was made that I wasn't gonna go back to Italy. Because you know I met this man - and it was quite serious and so - I wouldn't get back to Italy. So hence the fact that I stayed - with the travel agency I liked the job very much, got married, ehm and here we are eight years later. - /// Ehm by this time I decided ehm - // oh no, I didn't decide to move on. The company the travel agency was relocating its head office to - [city] which was the Midlands. The middle of England.

The text passage appeared confusing, somewhat chaotic in presentation, but was considered to be an interesting formal textual phenomenon:

– The text passage would show the *phenomenon of suffering*. However, the experiences of suffering would not be focused by Kate since she wouldn't dwell on this probably very painful experience of being made redundant and of the breaking up of her first marriage. Would she intentionally avoid telling a narrative of suffering? – It was agreed that it seems to be important for Kate to present herself in an action mode. Therefore, the textual disorder in the narrative presentation would be due to her attempt of avoiding to get too deeply re-involved within the experiences of suffering during this phase of her life by virtue of the lively recollection activated through extempore story telling. (Hence, Kate's underlining of her action mode must be seen as an intentional attempt to avoid detailed recollection of her suffering; but this was accomplished quite automatically or "seen but unnoticed" in the understanding of Harold Garfinkel, 1967: 36.) However, finally Kate did not fade the experiences of suffering out of her awareness; instead she feels obliged to correct her attempt at easygoing presentation as implausible when she tends to present herself as being always in control of what is going on.

– Then the formal feature of two background constructions in the text was addressed and how this feature would be analysed. The first background construction (Schütze, 2008: 42–51) in the text passage was found on p. 3:45 to 4:11, starting with: "*Was there something in between?*"; the second background construction starts on p. 4:12, where Kate corrects herself.

Generally speaking, in a *background construction, which is inserted into the course of a narrative unit,* the narrator interrupts him-/herself in order to make the story told up to here and now more plausible. Since in narrative units

micro phenomena of larger social and biographical processes are dealt with and background constructions are insertions of narrative units that deal with chaotic phenomena of these processes, background constructions are always a special chance to do micro analysis of complicated biographical phenomena. Background constructions are signs of disorder of remembering which stem from one or the other sort of disorder in the biographical development of the narrator.

Undergoing a *metamorphosis process* with its new and creative developments, which carry along essential features of biographical disorder of innovation, might be expressed through a background construction since in the beginning of such processes the affected person/informant cannot understand her or his new inner developments coming along with totally new types of social categorization within the orientation framework of a new social world, the acquisition of which would change her/his identity. In addition, it is quite difficult to remember more elementary or more primitive categories one would have had in one's mind before that change of identity. Thus, generally speaking, the former stages of biographical development before undergoing a metamorphosis change of identity are very difficult to remember.

In addition, background constructions often show up in trajectory (Riemann and Schütze, 1991) sequences. *Trajectories of suffering* are processes in which there are harmful and yet very powerful conditions so that the affected person cannot intentionally act anymore but is forced to just react. One of the trajectory disorders could be severe suffering: what happened to her or him would be very difficult to remember, since a lively recollection would bring the overburdening pain back; in any case it would be a painful and/or guilt-stricken and/or shameful matter for the informant's biographical thematization and biographical development, and therefore it is faded out of one's awareness. The informant would anticipate that she or he could feel burdened with pain/or sorrow; or that she or he would feel ashamed or guilty, and therefore she or he tends to skip it out of her or his focussed memory and awareness.

It was asked why the story of Kate's first marriage is partially put in a background construction? – In her attempt of recollection Kate is dealing with the difficult biographical problem of bringing together, on the one hand, her own occupational development (the biographical line of her occupational success) and, on the other, her life as a life partner of somebody else. Since her private life was not successful and since she is very much success-oriented and would like to control all important aspects of her life and make it successful, she experiences great difficulties in the cause of her autobiographical rendering in bringing the two lines of private and occupational life together. Since it had already happened two

times that Kate got into lots of difficulties in her private life when being married, she cannot easily put these two lines of her life together in her autobiographical presentation. In Kate's case – and this supposedly applies to many women in Western societies in that they are dominated by men – the very fact of getting married is a very infelicitous condition for pursuing her biographical plans for developing a professional career line. In addition, as said already, this happens two times in Kate's biography: The first husband hinders her to go back to Italy; the second husband takes her to Germany when she is living in the UK and is in a well developed career situation. Kate, who likes to be a good housewife and a good marriage partner, follows him. Then the marriage breaks down. Even in her recollection this topic is harmful for Kate – not only because of the divorce as such but because she was not able to harmonically bring together the two divergent lines of her biography. Feelings of shame and even some feelings of guilt are connected with this experience of failure and the remembrance of it. The combination of the tendency of fading out of memory and actual awareness the conflict between her plan to return to Italy and to develop her intimate relationship, on the one hand, and to reconstruct the vanishing memory through a background construction on the other, reflect the following social constellation: Kate, on the one hand, does not like to remember her deep biographical problem of the two life threads in disharmony, but that she, on the other, is a very cooperative and authentic interview partner and would like to look at these experiences in an emotionally distanced and neutral way. That is also the reason why Kate would correct herself in the second background construction where she is renunciating her first attempt to present herself as a very active career person, who follows up her biographical action scheme of becoming a human resource manager via looking for another job (and therefore quitting the old one by her own free will), however informing within the background construction that she had actually gotten fired.

Third text passage, p. 11:21 et seqq.
(features of the extended pre-coda segment)

Dealing with *coda and pre-coda phenomena* is dealing with the overall order of biographical rendering and the overall order of biography. (/// = marker of beginning and end of the text clipping)

I: N: So this is where I pop in. There probably aren't many Kate Wilsons - if any, in Germany - with with my background. So it's and the // I really believed that the the way forward now is to specialize - in the field that I am in. - /// So my long term aim now is to stay in my business - I don't want to become a language school. I am very very ehm passionate about this. - I run a small professional language business but I am not a language school. - But I am

looking to steer my business - in the direction of getting one of my trainers to do a lot more work and take some of my commercial English away from me so that I can take on more and more human resources work - and begin to specialize totally in that. That's that's the route that I want to go in. I am also developing some work in France actually in human resources. Ehm I may be doing one or two workshops in France later in the year. – Ehm and of course I had my qualification still in the UK which I retained. - And ehm my ehm membership of my professional organization is great. It's a fantastic organization. - If I go back (there) ehm I can go to the library. I could spend a day there. They've got a fantastic library with everything you need, and computers and the whole lot. And it's very it's a very supportive organization if I want books or information ehm I can ehm you know either contact them ehm (I actually) can contact them by phone - to get stuff. So it's ehm - you know the whole thing is sort of - it's excellent really.

I: hm

N: Ehm - and it's opened up lots of new doors. - Ehm because there aren't many people specializing in my field.

I: hm

N: Ehm... so businesswise you know things have been very successful. I am very pleased with the decision I made. It was a risk.

I: hm

N: I didn't know whether it was going to work. Ehm but ehm unfortunately women do these stupid things. - They give up their career for their husband or whatever just like I did. And afterwards you'd think this was a mistake perhaps. But anyway, it got me - to Germany. Ehm and ehm ... it was you know when my // when I knew we were heading for a divorce it was a question am I gonna go back to the UK to pursue my human resources career or am I gonna stay and pursue my new business.

I: hm

N: And I always wanted to run my own company. I had long term, even in the UK, I had long term ideas about running my own business. I I wouldn't have wanted to// I couldn't probably stayed a human resources manager for ever cause it's it's very stressful.

I: hm

N: And ehm ... so I decided 'No, I'm gonna stay here'. By this time I was really over the age to go back.(/)

I: hm

N: I I passed - the height of my career age wise. - It would have been very difficult. I knew what was happening because I've got friends at the same sort of age in the UK. - Ehm and they told me how difficult it was to get jobs - ehm over a certain age. - Ehm and ehm several of them had gone into (interim) management in human resources because they - had been made redundant and - they couldn't find // nobody would employ them at 45 or 50 or whatever. - Ehm and so I thought - this is gonna be really tough. - You know how do I (earn) and get a job and what am I gonna do if I don't in human resources. And much // ok I could run an English language training business in the UK. But it wouldn't be the same.

I: hm

N: Here I'm a, I'm a small fish in a big pool. [*Note, this is not a transcription mistake.*]

I: hm

N: In the UK it would be the other way around. And that's because a lot of people are doing it. So - I dug my heels in and - eh said to my husband as he still was then -

I: hm
N: ehm I'm I'm not going. - 'You you do what you like I'm staying here - and I'm gonna develop my business.' This was a bit of a shock to him of course but that was - that was his problem. He was the one he ... actually went off with somebody else, a friend of mine
I: oh
N: ehm in the end and ehm so that was his problem. But ehm ... yeah so, you know, I really sort of started to develop things and it was - sort of in the first year of being in Bremen that ehm - I ehm looked around to see what - networking I could do. Well there was an American women's club here. There still is ehm but this is very much for women who don't work. Most of the things are social and they are during the day. Because ehm most American women can't work because they can't get visas ...
I: American women(?)
N: Yeah they have to have visas. Americans have to have visas. Ehm and unless they come with a job -
I: oh ok
N: if they are transferred to Germany with a job they get a visa. - But if they're here with the husband and the spouse is working.
I: I always thought it's the other way round that it would be problematic to go to go there as a German.(/)
N: It is - also.
I: This is also#
N: They make it as difficult for you as you make it for them#
I: #oh#
N: #it's, but it's tit for tat#
I: #(I thought ... ok)#
N: No, it's tit for tat.
I: ok - ok
N: Absolutely. - And so very few of American women - can work here unless they really pursue the visa which is very difficult to get and so on, a working permit or whatever it's called. Ehm - and so most of these things were during the day and so this wasn't the right medium for me. I was totally bored and uninterested in all these American things they were talking about.
I: Yeah
N: It was always very American somehow and it's // even though Germans say 'Oh well you both speak the same language', the culture is totally different.
I: Of course.
N: Ehm - you know, in some respects I'd say there's more similarities between Germans and Brits than there is between Americans and Brits actually. - The language is the common factor but maybe not a lot else.
I: hm hm
N: Ehm... and ehm - so the American's women club wasn't for me and then I did look around and ehm - none of the - business women's groups in Bremen were international. Again when asked 'How many international members have you got' which is of course one of the first questions I ask. 'One - maybe two'.
I: hm
N: That's not my idea of international.
I: hm

N: Even though some of them say 'Well, course we've got branches in other other countries.'
I: hm
N: But that's not what I am concerned about.
I: Yeah
N: I mean - you know, I am I am concerned with with what's going on an international basis here. Ehm - and I have to tell I didn't find Bremen and I still don't actually find Bremen very international.
I: hm
N: I find it very limited in that respect. - The people of Bremen think they are very international - but I've never found them very international.
I: hm
N: You know this hanseatic ... ehm approach that a lot of people have is not is not international in my view.
I: hm
N: But ehm ... anyway ehm - so then one or two people said 'Well if you've got the concept why don't you start something yourself'. I thought 'Well maybe this is right'. So that's what I did, to cut to cut the story again.
I: Please don't cut ((little bit laughing))
N: Ehm - and I I started it from my own home. - Actually - (????????) originally. And it, when it got to about 15 or 20 women it became too big. - And so I then had to go out and looked for a venue and I realized there is a lot of interest in there. So there was a lot of interest from German women -
I: hm
N: because this was new. Something different. Networking, what's networking(?)
I: Yeah right
N: And it fact you know this was 1993 - I started it and you know there weren't so there wasn't // some of these groups existed but there weren't - so well known amongst women.
I: hm
N: Ehm - and perhaps they had a slightly different concept - and they certainly weren't international. - So German women were interested. They also wanted to speak English. This was also an attraction. - And just mixing with an international group was (what) (appealed) to them. - So we realized we had a niche - a sort of market here. And I then - when it got sort of unmanageable - on my own, I then said - you know, I need some people to help. We must form a small committee and so the first committee I had was myself, Lisa -
I: hm
N: who you may remember who is also British. - Ehm a Dutch eh not a Dutch ehm a Danish - woman who is, I am still in touch with and an American
I: hm
N: who's actually been away for eight years but came back at the beginning of this year ehm to live in Bremen and ehm - and a German. They were five or so. - Very international committee.
I: Yeah
N: And we started to build it up and I pushed it, I pushed and I pushed very hard ehm ran it until 2000, of the early 2000s, probably 2001 or something. I then decided to step down. It was time to someone else to run it. - You know I'd been doing it long enough. Someone else would have new ideas - and anyway I wanted to develop my business.

I: hm
N: Ehm... and so that's what I did. And ehm I didn't really get too involved - for two or three years because I didn't want them to think I was I was poking my nose in.
I: Yeah
N: Ehm - you know and I wanted them sort of get on with it.
I: Yeah yeah
N: Ehm... yeah so I sort of developed my own business. I was also on the committee of an international - ehm commercial English training organization. The mother sort of organization of which is in the UK. - But it's for members worldwide. - Ehm and eh so I used to travel around Europe to these meetings - about four times a year we// I still I am still I'm not on the committee anymore - since ehm 2005 2006. - But ehm - I am - I am still a member of the organization so this this, there are several conferences a year and it's all educational for commercial English presentations and workshops and what (have you) - and I do presentations at these conferences as well.
I: hm
N: So I was on the committee of that. - So I was able to sort of - you know not have do the International Women's Club work but did the other committee work - which was quite considerable. - Ehm - in the meantime I'm - I'd got divorced of course. The divorce was very difficult and we we did it out of the UK - because this was less complicated. Cause we were both from the Britain. - Ehm ... and we didn't want to get involved with German law and what (have you). - So the divorce was through and ehm - you know I am really had to concentrate on building up the business so that I could live decently.
I: hm
N: Ehm - and so really I mean I, you know, I I - had ten hard years of pushing eh and not many holidays and so on ehm you know ehm really working hard. Ehm - and I still am. I am still working eighteen hours a day actually. This is not ideal. Ehm at all. Ehm I have to find a solution.
I: yeah
N: But ehm that's ehm another story ehm and ehm - yes so we sort of come more to the current day. Ehm in 19// in 2005 - I received a notification that the International Business Women's Club was calling a special meeting with the view to closing down.
I: oh
N: I knew that lots of members had left. - Ehm and ... I said 'over my dead body'. - I'm not, you know#
I: #Yeah
N: after all the work#
I: #of course that was your (work)
N: #the life I put into this - over my dead body.
I: Yes
N: So of course I went to the meeting. There were about - 15 people there. One or two of the older - and I actually got one or two of the older members, long term members to come - ehm - as well and ehm - the whole committee (wanted out). Ehm - they felt - lots of people had left. They didn't feel they were getting support at meetings ehm so on and so forth. And so - ehm ... eh - I st// (you) know, we had any suggestions. So I suggested setting up a working party - if three or four people would join me. And we would spend a few months in 2006 discussion what we should do so - ehm in fact this is what happened. And I had think six people who

came - on the working party with me. And we spent about eight months discussing the future and decided there was just as much need for... the same concept - in international business women's networking group ehm as there had been in 1993 when I first set it up. There was still a lot of international women here. - Maybe a few more than there were then in a way. And a lot of German interest and so we decided that we would go for it then and try to reestablish ehm it on the networking scene but of course I realized at this stage that the only person who was gonna take the chair again would be me.

I: hm

N: And to there I promised myself faithfully I wasn't gonna do this. - I said 'Ok, well, you know there is no other alternative; I'll do it for a couple of years.' Well, two years is already gone actually but ... that's not a (here nor there). Ehm I said 'I'll take it on for a couple of years, if at least two or three of you join me on the committee - and that's what happened.'

I: hm

N: So I'm running it at the moment with three committee members - three Brits and a - German.

I: hm

N: Ehm ... and that was Lisa, Joanne and Marie who wasn't at the - meeting so you didn't meet her at our last meeting. ... Ehm yeah and we've been pushing quite hard and since ehm the end of 2006. So it's a year and quarter really and we're really pleased with what we're doing.

I: hm

N: Ehm the the membership is increasing slightly. The guest list we've got is 150 or more. - And a lot of guests are coming along. From these guests you always get your members. They might come three times. They might come 20 times and then they might join or they recommend other people - so this is your life blood, your guest list.

I. hm hm

N: Ehm and so that's ehm going well really. We we're pleased with what's eh what's happening. Ehm we had a lot of interest from - you know international women recently. (She was) Scandinavian and from Finland and Denmark and Sweden. Ehm - so it's good. ... // Ehm yeah it's now up to day really.

I: hm

N: What have I not said what that I should say or(?)

I: Just that was perfect ((little bit laughing)) ///

The pre-coda starts on p. 11:21 "*So my long term aim now is to stay in my business*" and goes up to p. 15:49 "*What have I not said what that I should say or?*" The context presented by Kate in the pre-coda is about developing the idea of connecting teaching business English with her longstanding topic of human resources work, through which she is creating a new field of transdisciplinary work.

It was talked about that in the pre-coda context Kate tells how she would develop her company for teaching business English and secondly how to connect this work of language teaching with some contents of her (former) human resource work, thus creating some sort of hybrid professional endeavour. Kate is very much drawn to the latter human-resource topic when she looks back on her biography and when she is focused on keeping and sustaining the red thread of her

occupational life, and then she asks herself: could her attempt of combining the teaching of business English with human resource work be assessed as a success or not in terms of business, vocational and especially biographical development? From p. 11:40 on she starts to reflect upon this question. She juggles the two options she had at the time when she decided to stay in Germany after the split with her husband. The broader biographical question at this point of time in her life was of course whether or not the development of her career line of teaching business English would be only some sort of accidental and frantic rescue activity (instead of a longstanding systematic biographical action scheme – Schütze, 1981) to get out of her former difficult (trajectory) situation after having been left alone by her former husband. While doing this complex reflection Kate eventually comes to the conclusion that she did a lot of considerable work for developing her language enterprise into the driving force of a very successful business career – and more than that: of a very successful biographical action scheme. Also, she starts to ask herself what other social and biographical developments in her life had been enticed and promoted this successful biographical action scheme. With regard to the latter biographical process one could say that Kate started her new biographical action scheme of founding a new economic existence and a new professional field when learning and successfully doing networking in a British, a German and later on in an international club for business women. There she not only learnt to get access to some sort of basic opportunity structure for acquiring social and occupational contacts, but also to establish and enhance social relationships. Out of this comes her occupational work of language teaching and her founding of an entrepreneurial firm for teaching business English. This and the network activities enforce each other mutually.

As regards *biographical work* it was said that in rehearsing her biographical development Kate came to the conclusion that is was not just a reactive rescue action scheme for getting out of her post-divorce trajectory difficulties to stay in Germany and develop a language enterprise, but that this was a new biographical development with a value in itself. The production of the just discussed pre-coda element in conjunction with the coda evaluation (p. 16:3–16:14) is biographical work that Kate is actually doing at the time of the interview: Kate is dealing with the central question whether or not she made the right decision, and whether or not she actually was able to personally develop as a professional who is accomplishing successful business work or whether she was just being forced to do this pressured by outer conditions and just reacting to overwhelming trajectory situations. When looking at the creative developments in her life, especially at the latter one of developing the business language teaching enterprise in Bremen,

Kate can say 'yes' to herself: that her life indeed had and still has a red thread and reveals an overall positive development. Through this reflection Kate is able to put her life, as Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1988) would call it, into a new biographical shape (and this is what she is actually doing in the pre-coda part and in the commentary connected to the coda; these presentation activities address her various biographical assessment possibilities to the interviewer). Generally speaking, the basic means and incipient activity for doing biographical work is, then, starting to tell to oneself and to others one's own life history.

* * *

3.	**Wednesday, August 20, 14.00–15.30**
	Biographical overall structuring of the Kate interview and other aspects of analytical abstraction; first general features of the sensitized group of transnational workers

AS-W is chairing the session.

Discussed were – however not in this sequential order – features of doing analytical abstraction (1.); the biographical overall structuring in the case of Kate (2.); European phenomena in Kate's biographical action scheme of connecting teaching of business English and human resources work (3.) as well as conditions that, on the one hand, promote the creative biographical development in Kate's life history (4.) and conditions that, on the other hand, would promote the trajectory of suffering in Kate's life (5.).

1. Features of analytical abstraction

It was explained that after having done the segmentation and structural description of the text units of the narrative interview, the biographical development of the informant is to be assessed by identifying the various biographical process structures that emerge in the life history of the informant and to understand their connection and hierarchical order. In addition, for many autobiographical interviews, through analysing the autobiographical self-thematization in the pre-coda passage and coda phase it might become clear what would be the dominant process structure of the biography as a whole – at least as seen from the perspective of the informant, since she or he is juggling with the options of seeing one or the other of these biographical process structures in the pre-coda and/or coda phase of the main narrative in order to get an overall evaluation of her or his life. Generally speaking, research on biographies has shown four general biographical process structures: These are the biographical action scheme, the trajectory of suffering,

the orientation towards institutional expectation patterns and the undergoing of a metamorphosis of one's personal identity (Schütze, 2008: 188–191). Whereas action schemes and metamorphosis processes emanate from the inner sphere of the informant and thereby support self-decided and/or creative identity developments, the process structure of the trajectory of suffering emerges due to the constraint of powerful outer conditions that force the informant to react. In the process of the unfolding of a trajectory of suffering the informant loses more and more the capacity to act, and she or he undergoes a harmful process of self-alienation. E.g., a strict orientation of the informant towards institutional expectation patterns (when following up a career track for example) bears the risk to transform into a trajectory process if expectations of the institution cannot be met by the informant who is restricted through life circumstances (e.g. not having time and/or the corporal health energy to study) or if, for example, organisational/social changes of a career ladder destroy the orientation and promotion patterns that were taken for granted by the informant.

Biographical process structures and how they are established, repeated, related to others, becoming dominant, subordinated or ceasing, are the insight-generating principles that allow to identify conditions that bring either productive or, to the contrary, detrimental biographical developments about. By doing analytical abstraction and identifying the overall biographical structure as well as their social conditions it becomes possible to understand what 'being European' means on an empirical ground. Such differentiated understanding would not be possible by just residing on one's own restricted private experiences or on broad explanatory contexts of collective discourse we can think of or have heard about.

2. Overall biographical structuring of the Kate interview

(Tentative overall biographical structuring, notation of AS-W before the session)

As regards the process structures in Kate's biography: There is the action scheme of travelling by which Kate is to discover new and different life contexts and to develop new activities and biographical perspectives that allow her to be free and creative. Travelling is a biographical theme that forms a red thread in Kate's life: Going to Italy as an au-pair, later on working in a travel agency and being fascinated by the people working there on travel topics and having lots of cultural experiences as well as privately travelling with her second husband on a large scale and finally following her second husband to Germany – all of these action schemes are framed by the topic of travelling.

Another biographical theme in Kate's life is her human resources work. Working in human resources departments and developing this professional work field is followed up by Kate as a biographical action scheme after she had become unexpectedly involved in human resources work while being employed in the travel agency. In the travel agency Kate's boss functions as a "midwife" and "enabler" of biographical metamorphosis as he is letting her do skilled human resources work and thereby allows her to build up an insight-knowledge of personnel work. While gaining that kind of substantial work experience in the travel agency Kate gives up her former action scheme of going back to Italy, since she is getting married at that time and decides to stay in the UK with her first husband.

An action scheme of gaining a responsible position in a human resources department and circumspectly working there is intentionally developed and pursued by Kate after an incisive biographical crisis experience when she has been made occupationally redundant after a relocation of the head office of the travel agency and an extensive rationalization process connected with that. Then Kate self-confidentially applies for a position as a human resources coordinator in an institute of chartered surveyors where she can begin to realize her action scheme of working in the professional field of human resources development (Schröder, 2010). During that period in her life, which lasts for (another) eight years, she gets especially professionalized by her endeavour to pursue the task of acquiring further qualification. This qualification procedure (learning from high ranking human resources managers and learning from the self-reflection of one's own work) apparently helps her to develop a critical-reflective perspective on human resources topics and experiences and also enables her on formal grounds (i.e. through an examination in front of high ranking human resources managers) to legitimately follow up a career in the field of developing and organizing human resources. This action scheme is also imbued with the quality of becoming quite career-oriented. At the time when Kate is getting close with her later second husband (by this time being divorced from her first husband) in the company of chartered surveyors (the British combination of real estate agency and notary) she works at, she feels forced to find a new employer (in order to avoid any type of nepotism). She is successful in finding a position as head of human resources in a renowned law firm.

One aspect of Kate's career and biographical development during that time of her life is that the marriage relationship with her new partner seems to be a supportive social background for her to follow up her intensive interest in travelling. With her new partner Kate shares experiences of hitherto unknown cultural and social settings and activities. Another aspect with regard to her occupational

development at this time is a strong professional orientation: Kate is aware of the specific difficulties of those professionals working in the field of human resources in law firms: There seems to be a systematic lack of information in many law firms so that personnel professionals do not have a broad knowledge base on wages and working conditions of staff in law firms; connected with this seems to be a horrendous over-estimation of firm partners regarding their own abilities in human resources knowledge and work. This makes it difficult for personnel staff to get things done – especially when working next to powerful partners (and owners) in law firms. Kate embarks on the action scheme of initiating, developing, maintaining and chairing a professional network of human resources personnel management in law firms. She develops a sort of a new social sub-world (Strauss, 1979, 1982, 1984; Schütze, 2002) of human resources personnel working in law firms that takes part in the new association from all over England. This social sub-world reveals an expansive dynamics and functions as an arena where work issues in the hybrid field of the intersection of human resources work and law work are debated and reflected upon, where information is gathered and transferred and an up-to-date knowledge base is built.

Now, the great change in Kate's life that drives her into the difficult structural condition of being cut off of this very productive biographical development in her occupational life is connected with her decision to follow her husband to Germany who is to open up an office in Munich. On the one hand, Kate considers coming to Germany to be quite right for her at that very point of time in her life because there is a lot of pressure in the personnel department of her London law firm (and in that firm throughout). On the other hand, she is concerned about going to Germany as she sees herself at the high point of her career and is doubtful whether it would be possible for her to recommence her career in human resources work after a decision to leave the firm. However, Kate finally decides to go to Germany with her husband, relying upon her marital relationship and also seeing it as a new chance for her to travel and to change places.

Going to Germany, then, actually transforms into a trajectory of suffering for Kate as she –additionally to being cut off of her former high ranking and professionally dense British work context – is being exposed to adversative heteronomous conditions of life after arriving in Germany at Munich. Firstly, she is not able to work occupationally because of language problems and because of her not being capable to adapt to a different kind of work arrangement in the field of human-resources management in Germany which doesn't provide for professional autonomy so much as it is the case in the United Kingdom. In effect, in the beginning of her stay in Germany Kate doesn't have a fair chance to

recommence her former career line. Kate is socially isolated in her new German neighbourhood in a rich living quarter of Munich and feels alienated. In addition, in the beginning not being able to speak the German language is a condition that narrows down alternative biographical perspectives for her. Kate becomes heavily irritated by these unexpected social constraints and by being cut off of her successful and creative work in the UK. These trajectory experiences are encroaching upon her private life and leading to a process of alienation in the relationship to her husband. The high point of this trajectory process of suffering is marked by the break-up of her marriage and by the seeming loss of perspective for pursuing a human resources career.

The process of overcoming this alienation trajectory becomes dominant when Kate's husband plans to go back to Munich (after having moved a second time in Germany, i.e. having lived with his wife for a while in Bremen). In her and her husbands new living place Bremen Kate has already started to slowly develop a new vocational perspective of teaching business English for which she can make use of her natural language and teaching capacity. At that point of time, when her husband has left her for Munich and for another female relationship (with a former good friend of her), Kate figures she would experience great difficulties going back to the UK having to find a new job in the field of human-resources management. In addition, to follow up an alternative career as a (specialized) business English teacher in the UK would be much more difficult in the UK than it would be in Germany. So Kate decides to stay in Germany and Bremen.

In addition, Kate is building up a social network with business women from Europe who have a common interest in relating to each other, sharing experiences and finding out about job opportunities in Europe and of course especially in Bremen. Kate sees her chance to use her English language teaching competence in continental Europe where English is becoming the lingua franca and where's a need for English language competencies in different work fields. Kate follows up a new biographical action scheme of developing her business English language enterprise and while doing so she is slowly connecting – or personally reconnecting – human resource topics with it (for example by teaching business English, by counselling for job interviews in the English speaking human resources field in Germany and eslwhere Europe, and by informing by German human resources personnel about conventions of job interviewing in the Anglo-Saxon working sphere). In the course of realizing this occupational-biographical action scheme of interconnecting two different professional social worlds (Strauss, 1984 – that one of language teaching and that one of human resource development) Kate is expanding her highly specialized teaching activities of business English by virtue

of their conjunction with human resources topics in Europe (for example through teaching such a hybrid course in France).

A central text passage as regards formal features of the interview that sheds light on Kate's current biographical situation is the pre-coda segment of her main story line (p. 11: 40– 15: 49). Generally speaking, the pre-coda segment of an autobiographical-narrative interview is a systematic text position for autobiographical self-thematization (Schütze, 2008: 175– 181). Kate's autobiographical self-thematization in which she assesses her current biographical situation (at the time of the interview) is quite ambivalent. The central question that Kate tries to answer in this text passage is whether or not coming to and staying in Germany should be seen as a biographical mistake? In order to find an adequate answer to this question Kate looks back on her biography: On the one hand, she considers that she "couldn't probably stayed a human resource manager forever (be)cause it's it's very stressful" (p. 12, l. 2–3 – also see the background construction on page 8, lines 4–27, especially lines 7–27). On the other hand, she reassesses the options she had at the time when she decided to stay in Germany – that she was over the age to go back to the UK and, in addition, wanted to follow up her own business. While reflecting on her former decision and biographical development from that time on she starts to think about her networking activities (p. 12: 29) that was and apparently still is an important part of her biographical development until the present day. She is then quite extensively talking about her networking work (Latour, 1996, Akriche et al., 2004) and the growth of her personal capacity in this regard (until the coda on p. 15: 49). Networking and the accompanying growth of capacity in doing social relating and building up social arenas can be identified as a very creative biographical development.

The striking formal feature is of course that this important biographical development is not told in the former parts of the main narrative but just in the almost final pre-coda segment. This is a formal indication for the remarkable fact that Kate does not see her social networking work and the related arena competencies as being of central biographical relevance; compared to the development of her language business she does not consider her – just para--occupational – networking activities and the arena of social contacts built up by her as being fully acceptable professional-occupational achievements in her life.

To sum up, there is a severe trajectory experience for Kate after having come to Germany that is a cut in her life which is not totally overcome until the present day. However, the overall biographical structuring, then, is continued by a metamorphosis process becoming more and more dominant. This indeed is the

case, although the highly productive, creative biographical development in Kate's later time in Germany which is essentially connected with her networking work is underestimated by Kate herself. Her networking work is internationally (and de facto European) oriented, and she is also making use of it for the productive pursuit and expansion of her business language enterprise as her long-ranging biographical action scheme. By doing biographical work, as Kate does in the pre-coda segment, she finally becomes able to see and understand that her networking work is part and parcel – and a central metamorphosis condition – of her creative biographical action scheme of business language teaching which she is able to reconnect more and more with human resources topics. And this conjunction is another feature of the underlying metamorphosis process.

3. Overall biographical structuring with special regard to European phenomena in Kate's biographical action scheme of connecting business English and human resource work

Especially with regard to European phenomena and European habitus features in the overall biographical structuring of the Kate interview, the following was said:

On p. 9:7–26 Kate addresses the topic of a new biographical action scheme of staying in Germany and building up a new career line of teaching business English. She is juggling the options of whether or not she should enter a German company for doing human resources work. After some deliberation she decides not to try because she thinks there are lots of differences between German and Anglo-American human resources work (to her, the German one seems to be less socially minded than the British one). She postpones her plan to resume human resources work but does not destroy this topic for her possible further biographical development in that direction. Instead, she is pursuing the new biographical action scheme of developing the field of business English and, step by step, putting in more and more human resources work (p. 9:26 – p.11:22).

As regards how Kate starts up her new biographical action scheme one could say that first of all she collects practical work knowledge when going to, and working for, private language schools in order to learn how to do and how to organize the language teaching business and how to position it in the market of services for managers and entrepreneurs. Then she starts networking and begins to overcome the difficulties of relating to Germans. In the interview Kate talks about the phenomenon of a special aloofness of Germans and how to overcome that hurdle for networking. Having accomplished this successfully, she launches

a new type of professional teaching work: through the hybridization strategy of putting together language courses with human resources work. The identification with this hybrid type of professional work biographically develops into a metamorphosis process where Kate is establishing a new transdisciplinary field (p. 11:26–28). She is unfolding an incipient European social world of human resources work (in France, in Germany, in Great Britain and in other places) which is very much connected with finding and developing felicitous conditions for international encounters. This grand master plan is the deeper sense for her endeavour to do networking, which she must squeeze into the confines of her own small resources of working from her private home.

Becoming able to do this work type of *European social relating* (going to various women's clubs, to conferences in all parts of Europe, doing language courses) is a condition for Kate's European professional work which is to develop into a hybrid arena of putting together teaching of business English and of human resources work. The achievement, that Kate overcame her isolation after getting divorced as well as her suffering related to the divorce and to the biographical assessment of not having had a successful marriage is very much connected with her development of a European stance which could be formulated as follows: 'I will stay here and I have a right to stay here. I will take profit from the very European situation that many persons have to use English as the lingua franca for doing her or his professional work, and I will make something out of this situation of collective necessities'.

Kate is able to find and build up a special type of social relating in order to get and keep all the networks going she founded or worked on and to develop European professional arenas for her work. The *European framework* is a pivotal condition for Kate's getting a distance to that painful experience of divorce and of being unsuccessful as a marital partner and also for her impressive ability to develop such professional arenas. And vice versa: since the European horizon makes so much biographical sense to her, she is very creative regarding the practical development of this important European framework of social networking and social arenas.

As regards Kate's *European dimension of her networking activities*: Kate refers to social situations of relating, contact opportunities, places, arenas (Wiener, 1981; Clarke, 2005), where people from various European nations come together and deal with topics of professional work, especially with topics of human resources work and of teaching business English and with the questions of connecting these two realms of professional work. Such social arrangements are connected with crossing borders and overcoming the confines of the various

national cultures. For the promotion of this kind of social arrangements Kate develops new activities and strategies of doing relationships and organising these social activities in social arenas. The arena structure is defined by a centripetal mental and social orientation of awareness toward rounds or stages "where the focussed action is" as well as by fuzzy fringes, i.e. not having exactly defined membership and no exactly defined borders of who is in and what topic is in, on the one hand, and who is out and what topic is out, on the other (Strauss, 1979, 1982; Schütze, 2002). One could maybe say that the fuzziness of Europe resembles the fuzziness of these social phenomena of doing social relationships and doing arena work.

4. Conditions of the trajectory of suffering when coming to Germany

Discussed were:

– the trajectory condition of losing the occupational path (in the field of human resources) which had been Kate's medium for a creative biographical development, before she came to Germany with her second husband;

– the ambivalence of the English language: it can be capitalized by Kate but can also be the medium for a pull-back: it could crystallize into a trap of not being able to reach out into German and other national cultures and social arenas;

– the problem of not being a fully competent speaker of the German language, at least in the first years of Kate's stay in Germany;

– the problematic impact of the very cumbersome organizational context of Kate's last work position in England, i.e. in the London law firm, that entices, fosters or at least conditions an action scheme of flight or rescue in Kate's biographical planning;

– the danger of a marital social arrangement of total personal dependency when Kate is following her husband to Germany and not being able to work;

– the difficult social situation of living in a big German city where all the expatriates dwell in a rich and quite secluded neighbourhood; this is a very isolating social-ecological arrangement, where Kate doesn't have many chances to get into contact with the neighbours, may they be non-German or German;

– Kate's experience that Germans are not very easy to relate to as a structural hurdle for doing social networking;

– Kate's problem of initially not being able to get occupationally engaged in Germany, which is very much due to the initial lack of having the German language;

– the dynamics of the self-alienating and self-immobilizing trajectory process encroaching on Kate's private life being more and more in emotional distance to her husband, who was unfaithful to her by starting a relationship to one of her best friends, and at the same time materially and socially depending on him;

– the limiting condition that Kate develops her business just on her own, starting just from her own small resources and having extremely long working days with the potential of psychic burn-out, and

– the self-confusing condition of being – so to speak – "fixated" or super-focussed on just business-related aspects of one's social relationships (and therefore "colonizing" the private ones) what makes Kate lonely.

5. Conditions of the creative biographical development in Germany; relevance of a European stance

Discussed were:

– Kate's use of the international and even more European work opportunity structure to make a career line out of her teaching of business English in the context of the economical globalization and Europeanization process with English as lingua franca;

– Kate's European perspective as a biographical frame work of orientation that promotes an open stance for new communicative situations and arenas and for establishing new working opportunities in different cultural contexts, in contrast to being confined to a xenophobic, nationalistic perspective which would be a mechanism of fading out and veiling Kate's capacity of dealing with action difficulties, especially in coping with new social situations and cultural differences. However, just self-identification as being European is not enough in order to develop a European action competence (comparable with Antonina Kłoskowska's cultural valence – Kłoskowska, 2001). In addition, there must be the experience of being successful in transnational networking and arena work as well as building up that professional sub-world of combining teaching business English and (at the same time) dealing with human resources work for actors and clients within the European economical and labour markets. Nevertheless, self-identification as being European is a first step in the direction of building up an action-competent European stance. And, in addition, in the beginning of Kate's stay in Germany it contributes to making up for Kate's early deficit in the process of becoming competent in the German language and culture as well as in German social relationships, since the self-understanding of being European helps to overcome the early social isolation;

– Kate's understanding of the need for having new cultural contexts and new social arrangements of living and working and of becoming socially embedded in her neighbourhood;

– Kate's flexible action scheme of creating a new vocational line and a new incipient social world (the international/European women's club) and her capacity of having the resources for pursuing an international/European career by cultivating the appropriate use of the English language in Germany and by teaching business English;

– the relevance for Kate of a European social network and social arena of English speaking business women as a solidarity platform, i.e. as a base of social support and vocational help, which is internationally oriented but de facto European-oriented, since American women cannot work in Germany; the self-identification as *international* would be important in order to encourage possible participants to make individual use of such a social support platform without feelings of obligation regarding defined transnational bodies and polity institutions (as brought into play by the term "European"); Kate's further acquisition and her final perfection of such a social networking competence;

– the relevance for Kate of learning the German language in order to have the chance to follow up at least certain aspects of the former career path in human resources work and to consider possibilities for related biographical action schemes (which might be then re-embarked in a somewhat different, probably more creative way);

– EU occupational work registration devices and labour market procedures that enable members of the European union to find and enter the opportunity structure of finding work in other European countries and to pursue relevant biographical topics such as – with regard to Kate's case and to other cases – travelling, personal freedom as well as occupational and professional development;

– Kate's competence of being able to control the dangerous mechanism of doing simplifying abstractions of individual and singular experiences (some from the hearsay) towards categories of collective identities (national collectivities and smaller ones); when Kate is drawing generalizations towards collectivities she conceptualizes these in a very circumspect way based on her very own experiences; there is the urgency to realize – and Kate accomplishes it – that these collective, especially national, abstraction phenomena and abstraction activities can be very powerful in simplifying or even utterly misleading orientation towards collective phenomena; Kate is able to deal with them in terms of situational contextualizations; and

– the relevance of doing biographical work: When looking back on her biography Kate can finally understand that her networking work is a creative supporting condition for the commencement and realization of her new biographical action scheme of bringing together the teaching of business English and the pursuing of human resources topics; Kate's biographical work task of re-looking at and reappraising her former and present networking endeavour is thus highly relevant for her future creative biographical development of establishing the new hybrid profession of teaching and counselling how to accomplish human resource work in European frameworks using the language medium of English as the European lingua franca.

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4.	**Wednesday, August 20, 16.00-17.30**
	Contrastive comparison, minimal and maximal strategy: looking at an interview with a person from the intersection of two different sensitized groups, i.e. the migrant workers group and (more than that) the sensitized group of educationally mobile persons: the "Caren" interview of the German team; first ideas regarding general features of the sensitized group of educationally mobile persons, especially regarding European identity features and European habitus features

LI is chairing the session.

Discussed was the Caren interview which is from the sensitized group of the educationally mobile persons, but also allows a minimal comparison with the Kate interview, since the young Danish lady Caren has also become a transnational worker. In the first part of the session the striking trajectory experience of Caren having been raped during a stay with her family in the US and its impact on her biographical development as well as productive features in her biography – especially with regard to "Europeanness" – were reflected upon.

The case of Caren

As regards the trajectory experience of being attacked and raped and its biographical impact:

– The tragic happening in the US has an impact on Caren's life style which is the contrary to her normal type of attitude that is being outgoing, open, interested, crossing all types of borders and thresholds. After being intimidated and victimized by rape Caren builds up a self-protective rigid time structure so that her mundane expectation patterns of daily life affairs would already break down when it just comes to a minor deviation from that normal expectation pattern for a short while,

especially in terms of time delays (for example if she misses the shuttle train from Copenhagen to her home place after the university lecture – p. 35, line 13–22). In addition, for a while she is quite demanding in permanently asking for the support of her significant others; in this sense she is self-centered. But the biographical development of Caren is of that sort that although it is quite a long way from this schematic handling of minor mundane affairs immediately after the rape attack up to her later going abroad again, this time to Germany, and then being open again in her mundane expectation patterns, she finally overcomes this severe biographical problem by her basic change in attitude towards life. She becomes modest and circumspect again and is able to undergo and handle many difficult situations when being in the new cultural context of Germany.

– As already alluded to, for a certain while the atrocious experience of the rape has the biographical impact that Caren is becoming the "ill child" that is somewhat spoiled. For a certain while she develops and fosters the tendency to put some pressure on her parents and friends, and feels the right to expect and even to demand certain things from the other family members and friends. But after some while she overcomes this almost unavoidable phase of a misleading reaction in the aftermath of the rape.

– One felicitous condition for Caren's starting and pursuing biographical work with regard to the atrocious rape experience is the relationship to her new boy-friend who is always able to listen to her.

– Caren herself is fighting against the tendency of being defined in terms of the tragic rape experience happening by her significant others and starts to focus on other (new) topics in her life and takes chances to experience something new (in her study courses, in her practicum within the Danish parliament as well as in her stays abroad later on).

As regards the creative biographical developments and their impact on becoming European:

– It was seen as striking how early in her life and fostered by her parents the topic of going to school in England or going abroad with an educational intention in general and meeting people from other European countries turned up in Caren's life story. It started when she was ten years old. (Caren says it was an "of course" in Danish families to entice their children to go abroad for a year and learn another language.) Her parents started early in Caren's primary socialization to address this topic of letting their child having international experiences and practicing the English language, and for consequently following up their educational plan they used their established social network abroad, i.e. English

friends. The parents selected the type of school, a European one, too, and cared for the establishment of an incipient social network of her daughter in England. To put it short: they created an encouraging social arrangement as a support base for Caren to find an individual way for her further life in England and to enable her to make new cultural experiences.

– Caren has the social capacity to make use of the European framework offered by the European school and its students: she is doing social networking and finding special places where to meet people from other nations: for example, when she is riding the bike to Oxford or visiting the cinema. Caren and the other students start to relate to each other; in addition, Caren's working together for school during the nights with a Polish student who lives in the same guest family is characteristic in this regard.

– In order to acquire transcultural competence, which is very important for working and living together in Europe, it is pivotal to create intense experiences of being in culturally strange situations, i.e. to be exposed to culturally different social contexts in "flesh and blood" through living abroad for a while; it would not be sufficient just to attend an international school or European school in one's home county, where just foreign languages and related cultural contents are to be learned: instead, the concept of Europeanness must be filled in and concretized by the truly European experience of living in culturally different contexts, exploring cultural strangeness and nevertheless – and exactly through this – experiencing felicitous cooperation.

– Just having come back from her school year in England Caren develops a very individualized life style which is some sort of natural outcome of the specific also has to do with European living option of pursuing one's individual life as a permanent traveller. This highly individualized life style is causing some difficulties for Caren's parents and probably for some of her friends, too. Caren must get tuned in again into the Danish home culture with its everyday family shores and social expectations.

– The interview reveals that the teachings in school turn out to be successful in regard of promoting a European orientation in Caren's life. Caren follows up some European topics in school and builds up a vague, but nevertheless powerful orientation regarding working for Europe and combining this with politics. Already in High School she develops a vague but driving biographical action scheme of working for Europe; step by step it is becoming more and more concrete and precise. She pursues this vague biographical action scheme during her stay in the US, too (after being at first resistant to going to America at all), since she is taking math courses and courses in political science with a European outlook

and economics in order to meet requirements for studying political science in Denmark later on. Hence, in this American school context she indirectly addresses European topics, too.

– Caren develops attitudes that make it easier for her to go abroad again (e.g. to Germany). She has realized the necessity that when undergoing different cultural experiences, openness to new situations and social relationships would be crucial; one would have to be a humble learner of the culturally new, and, in addition, in the country of immigration, one would have to build up a professional and social status anew. In addition, one would have to know that the new life situation in the country of migration would be different from the life situation in one's home country. In this regard Caren is comparing herself with her mother, and she is quite critical with the latter, since in her opinion her mother would have had developed wrong conceptions of living in a foreign society (when going to the US). Unlike her mother's lack of preparation for the stay with her husband and children in the US, Caren already starts networking before migrating to Germany: to some extent she is dealing in advance with the requirements of getting work and of having to relate to other persons in Germany. And in advance she deals with the intricate question, how all of this could be accomplished.

– Although Caren is much younger than Kate she has similar competencies regarding networking, openness for learning, and of being interested and sensitive in undergoing strange cultural experiences. She also puts into relationship and compares features of life at home and in Germany and in the other countries she has visited and/or lived in. However, Caren is much more prone to the tendency of producing simplifying collective abstraction in drawing these comparisons. For Caren, dealing with the bureaucracy in Germany is an almost devastating experience at first (e.g., regarding the difficulties with her attempt to collect her Danish unemployment money through German authorities), and this leads her to the classical stereotypes of German strictness. But step by step she learns to overcome the tendencies and difficulties of abstract and simplifying social categorization and starts to learn to control shallow abstraction processes towards other national collectivities.

– By way of networking (e.g., at sports places) and through following up invitations (in her German neighbourhood) Caren learns very quickly local categorization devices (Sacks, 1972) of her German environment. That is impressive for her neighbours who see Caren as being competent in local German culture and as someone who should be integrated in the neighbourhood.

For a general assessment of the Caren interview:

Remarks were made that, although the trajectory experience of being raped is becoming quite dominant in her autobiographical rendering, Caren would put a lot of other topics into her narrative (e. g., those with reference to Europe) and that the interview reveals the power of Caren's biographical work that is to contextualize and to downgrade the importance of the rape as the one central topic in her life. As regards foreign cultural and European experiences Caren has taken chances to have international and European experiences. It is clearly detectable how she developed her competencies of going abroad in her adolescence already (e.g., in her school year in England). Even the rape is connected to this overall biographical topic of crossing national and cultural borders and of going to other countries and undergoing related difficult experiences. It is one central feature in the chain of events that lead to the rape that other family members including the former boy-friend of Caren, Rasmus, would not carefully make out and understand the risk profile of the foreign society of urban California. With regard to Alfred Schütz one could say that "the stranger" Rasmus would use the Copenhagen type of expectation pattern of relating to others in one's own former everyday world. Therefore he reacts and relates with a general trust attitude to unknown young people coming into the house during the night; he doesn't notice the different type of foreign risk profile when he naively opens the door of the Californian house of Caren's family to an unknown man, when her parents and her sister are out of the house on a visit to Europe. Looking at this event in a contextualized way, the atrocious event constellation of the rape is a devastating experience of too naively going into another country and making mistakes caused by inadequate everyday expectations brought from one's home country into a different cultural context.

As regards educational experiences:

Caren's educational experiences are in-built into her very international and very individualized educational career. She experiences a biographical moratorium in order to undergo culturally new and strange experiences, and her parents support the hidden curriculum that Caren should see something really new, and be deeply influenced by it, when going abroad. Caren has relevant social contacts: learning from autochthonous peers, learning from peers of other countries with their different cultures, learning from her English teacher who is counselling her, learning first activities of social connecting and networking which she practices when coming back from England, becoming sensitized for the importance of further new cultural experiences (e.g., being back in Denmark in choosing a new

school that offers travels). And all of this is a good preparation for working in an European context of English language teaching.

Comparison with the case of Kate

In order to compare the educational experiences of Kate and Caren of going abroad: In the case of Caren, the first experience of going abroad to England is a very rich and dense experience of coming across new types of social categorizations, learning to do contacts and elementary forms of arena work as well as undergoing a biographical process of change of inner status. Kate in comparison is almost in prison in her Italian family; she is being exploited as an au-pair and not finding a supportive educational arrangement, although in later life she still loves the Italian culture and language to the utmost. Compared with the Caren interview, this is a different biographical situation: not only in terms of the severe suffering, but, in addition, in her case the educational experience of living abroad is not in-built into her formal educational career. It is more or less chaotically interspersed within the sequence of having jobs. – But in both cases the experience *of going abroad has a strong biographical impact*. It becomes some sort of a mystical aim for both informants to return to the experiences of being abroad (especially in the case of Kate), and both are learning a lot through undergoing culturally different experiences by their everyday live abroad.

As regards the structure of the life course: When comparing the two cases of Kate and Caren the following was said: Both women open themselves up again for new influences after having had severe trajectory experiences. Their own analysis and working through of these experiences of misassessment, disappointment and suffering is in later life a central condition for coping with the biographical impact of living within culturally strange collectivities new to them. In both cases the *dominant process structure is metamorphosis*, interspersed with severe trajectory experiences. In order to be biographically sustained, the metamorphosis process has to be organized by specific biographical action schemes. In the case of Caren there is the problem of the paradox of the "organisation" of a creative education by significant others: that significant others cannot force a metamorphosis process but can just construct biographical conditions and social arrangements in which such a creative learning process may happen. The parents help to promote metamorphosis experiences by sending her daughter abroad into a culturally strange life situation and, at the same time, by providing a "shelter" of emotional support, interpretation and counselling through their English friends. Instead, Kate has to organize such an action scheme just by herself – an action scheme of establishing a social arrangement for having new experiences and undergoing

a metamorphosis process, since her parents have not made the experience and do not have the sensitivity for preparing such a condition for creative education through cultural strangeness. To organize the social arrangement for one's own metamorphosis might organizationally be much more difficult, but in terms of biographical preparation it might be less paradoxical than the learning arrangement prepared by significant others.

The metamorphosis processes reveal the involvement in, and inticement through, all different sorts of social connections, social relating, using platforms for getting into encounters, constructing arenas, acquiring and supporting new orientations in social worlds. Both interviews show how *social categorizations* are used, especially local categorizations as in the case of Caren: playing around with them and impressing the locals through this capacity. Something similar is to be found in the case of Kate's bringing her father as a former member of the British forces in World War II every year to Dresden partially in order to do private reconciliation work (regarding the bombing of Dresden by the British Airforce at the end of World War II). During these periods, Kate and her father are drawing comparisons between the West and the East Germans and impress both sorts of Germans by the insights stemming from them.

Both interviews make risks and dangers of going abroad and experiencing difficulties in the new country observable and understandable: Kate is being exploited by the heavy work load as an au pair in her Italian family. She also is totally dependent on her partner after having accompanied him into his German work situation. In the case of Caren, parts of her family did not understand the risk profile of the foreign society, which they would live in for a while, or of the special social surroundings in the other society. Other topics of difficulties are: dealing with bureaucracy, especially with social security and tax requirements, and having difficulties with medical doctors as well as with insurance companies. These are restrictions and difficulties when going abroad. Astonishingly, almost all of this bureaucratic work is still imposed on the citizens of the EU by the administration of the other member states, as if there would not be the common EU frame of orientations and institutional provisions at all. The national bureaucracies of Europe can be very atrocious regarding people coming from the other member states.

With regard to the text structure: There are unclear and puzzling text parts in the Caren interview in comparison to the Kate interview which is quite clear in terms of text structure: For example, the text passage about Caren's grandfather first being a farmer and teaching his granddaughter about animals and nature and later on about the people's view on politics (41, 43–42, 15) might be an

indication of a metamorphosis potential in her early socialisation process that is re-addressed in her later biographical work that supports her reflection on her own deeply ingrown, i.e. biographically early crystallized, proneness and competence potential for developing a biographical action scheme of teaching. The sequential contextualization of the Caren interview indirectly or formally refers to a connection between the biographical topics of becoming a teacher, of dealing with mergers (in private companies and in the public sector, e.g. Europe), of collecting new experiences through a biographical moratorium and so finding out about the question what could be the creative potential of oneself as well as of travelling abroad (1, 18; 41, 36–48; 38, 37; 41, 29/30; 42, 1–5; 42, 16–21; 44, 11–25). There might be hidden "sense-making"– relations of these biographical topics revealed by their sequential contextual connections hinting at an extended metamorphosis process in Caren's identity development. This metamorphosis process is nurtured by dealing with the cultural strange, connecting diverse cultural features in orientational frameworks like Europe, and teaching about their fitting together and about the cooperation potential involved in it.

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7.	**Thursday, August 21, 9.00-10.30**
	How to analyse sequential reports of interviews ("shortened versions" of interviews): the analysis of the interview with the North Frisian farmer Wiard of the German team - as well as additional contrastive comparisons between the two interviews ("Kate" and "Caren") from the sensitized groups of the transnational workers and the educationally mobile persons, on the one hand, and an interview ("Wiard") from still another sensitized group, i.e. the farmers group, on the other hand; maximal strategy of contrastive comparison; first ideas regarding different and common features of "Europeanness" among the three compared sensitized groups[1]

FS is chairing the session.

General introduction of the research steps of contrastive comparison and of the writing of sequential reports.

The following qualificatory remark on the research step of contrastive comparison was made: that between the Kate and Caren interview a minimal comparison would be possible whereas the comparison with the interview of the North Frisian farmer Wiard would allow a maximum comparison, since there would be differences in terms of the occupational field, the structural frame of work,

[1] The protocol of this session had to be shortened due to page limits of the article. Thus we can only present the introduction to doing analysis of sequential reports.

the opportunity structures and the outlook of the biographical developments of the informants. In both cases dealt with first (Kate and Caren) social contacting, networking activities as well as building up and support for organizing social arenas are extremely important; in addition, the topic of crossing borders and experiencing other cultures are pivotal. In contrast, these features are not to be found in the life history of Wiard. However, Wiard's work and life is very much formed under the conditions and the opportunity structures of Europe, too.

Remarks on the format of the sequential report

– If done in indirect speech it would probably not exceed four to five pages. (F. S., the author of the Wiard report, decided to use direct speech, since he felt, that he would not be perfect in selecting the right verbal forms for English reported speech.)

– An important requirement would be that the sequential report shows how the interview developed in terms of the unfolding of the communicative interaction work between the interview partners as well as in terms of the actually ongoing presentation work of the informant, i.e.: there should be no change of sequential order between the activities of verbal presentation in the interview and the steps of textual presentation in the sequential report. The sequential order in the use of the communicative schemes of narration and argumentation as well as the occurrence of obvious pauses and their sequential position should be reported. Perspectives of the various interaction partners told about in the narrative rendering and of the various biographical phases of the informant (and biography incumbent at the same time) should be differentiated. Argumentative commentaries of the informant should be formally marked, for example by putting them into brackets. In addition, background constructions should be marked. They can be even easily detected when listening just to the tape and thereby observing the following empirical phenomena: the voice would change, there would be a pause, and the text passage would be introduced with formulations for self-correcting devices like: "*Oh, I forgot to tell that...*".

– It was discussed that doing transcriptions would sensitize for the formal markers of the interview (a long pause or a changing voice that indicates that the informant is about to do something else as he did before in his narrative rendering: starting to argue, giving a commentary or inserting a background construction.) If there is something missing in the course of the unfolding of social and biographical processes when rereading the sequential report, it might be necessary to listen more closely and to start the transcription of such unclear and "incomplete" sections of the interview. Usually one would have to listen

more carefully to the tape again if a passage in the sequential report appears to be a riddle. Then one or two pages of transcription should be done and inserted into the sequential report.

– It was emphasised that the sequential report is not analysis. The sequential report would be a device to show how the interview and its communicative activities of rendering developed (including obvious formal features as background constructions) and what the content of the interview is. The sequential report would be approached in the same attitude as a transcription: to find out the sequential order in the unfolding of the biographical process structures as well as the sequential order in the follow-up of the biographical process structures and/or their simultaneous competition within the overall biographical development of the informant, i.e. within the overall biographical structuring, through the sequential structure, obvious formal features of the interview text (like long pauses and background constructions), and the content of the text of the sequential report.

– In the sequential report, there would be the absolute necessity of clearly stating the communicative interventions of the interviewer: When the interviewer would ask questions or insert interruptions that would set powerful conditions or give new options for the informant's answers, it would be extremely important to make this interviewer's intervention clear within the sequential report.

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8.	**Thursday, August 21, 11.00–13.00**
	Experiences with difficulties of analysis in other national teams, especially regarding European phenomena (protocol partially shortened and some other pieces added)

UN is chairing the session.

In this last session the following questions were thoroughly discussed, although the discussion of them will not be reproduced here:

– Questions and remarks on how to collect/analyse autobiographical-narrative interviews and how to elicit narrations.

– Questions and remarks on the interactional situation in which autobiographical-narrative interviews take place.

But there were two discussed issues that are of special interest for the analysis of the text data of autobiographical narrative interviews and of with generating theoretical categories form empirical data:

– The issue of the reliability and the "truth" of the told experiences and event constellation (a); as well as

– The issue of a specific sociolinguistic perspective on the analysis of autobiographical-narrative interviews (b)

The discussion of these tow topics shall be reported at the end of this contribution. The considerations mentioned there transcend some bit the usual sequential analysis of Grounded theory in dealing with autobiographical texts. The remarks to the second point allude to, what will be possible to look at when one also takes into regard the formal linguistic structures of the text. One class of phenomena is the communication of social style, the other is hidden (or seen, but unnoticed) features of biographical work.

a) The issue of the reliability and the "truth" of the told experiences and event constellation

MD raised the question of how to assess the realistic quality of the informant's construction of the overall "story *gestalt*" and of the reconstructed event constellations connected with it in the narrative presentation from a historical point of view: Would it be true what an informant says? (The same question would also apply to Herodot's story telling.) What would be criteria to check the informant's construction; are there text-internal criteria of truth or trustworthiness? Would there be a need for an objective "historical" knowledge in the form of empirical evidence coming from the outside world of the narrative rendering as it unfolds in the ongoing interview situation, (e.g. financial data of the success or failure of the farm business in the case of the North-Frisian farm of Wiard) or a network of approved historical facts based on written empirical sources or archaeological specimens – objective knowledge that could be used as a realistic point of reference for assessing the empirical validity of the narrative construction? – Reacting to this series of questions, the methodological relevance to distinguish between argumentative and narrative parts of the informant's textual rendering was emphasized. The most basic and elementary textual reference to empirical data in the interview analysis itself would be what people are telling in the interview within the narrative scheme of communication. Usually objective context data are freely and even automatically inserted in the narrative rendering by the informant when she or he realizes or assumes that the interviewer would not know about them. In reading the transcription of the narrative rendering they can then scrutinised in terms of their text-internal plausibility, and in addition, they can be used as first hindsight for the collection, checking and analysis of historical and social data. In addition, the narrative scheme of communication accomplishes the reconstruction of a life-historical context and the related biographical experiences.

Thus, experiential data are brought into a context of sequential and co-occurrent, competing "historical" line and interface of events, that can be analyzed regarding their logic (and plausibility) of unfolding. In addition, some experiential events are expressed that are "seen but unnoticed" by the informant. Towards these phenomena, the epistemic procedure of pragmatic refraction of a sociolinguistic analysis taking into account the formal phenomena of the text can be harnessed (Schütze, 2005:217f., 2008: 170–172). Instead of just focussing the content of autobiographical linguistic presentation activities and taking them at face value, they should be pragmatically refracted (the first term stemming from the Greek word "to pragma" = "action", "activity", which is here generally understood as all sorts of human activities of any kind – so, for example biographical work the latter term metaphorically understood in analogy to the refraction of light through a prism), in order to use a general methodological term of qualitative research. "Pragmatic refraction" means that naturally occurring verbal formulations should be analytically related to their contexts of experiential background, their contexts of production and use as well as to their contexts of later application, social function and meaningful overall (biographical or actional) structurization. By consideration of their several types of embedding, i.e. pragmatic refraction, a more circumspect understanding of life-historical unfolding and biographical work is possible. Even the understanding of experiences, which the autobiographical informant her- or himself recollect only dimly, does not understand correctly or doesn't understand at all, becomes possible.

b) The issue of a specific sociolinguistic perspective on the analysis of autobiographical-narrative interviews

First observation (WK): The question of a sociolinguistic perspective on the analysis of autobiographical-narrative interviews

How is 'Doing Europeanness' reflected in the interviews, not only with regard to the content of the story told but *in the way* the story is told? Are there markers of a specific style of narrating and self-presentation which could be methodically linked with each other in order to show that the informant is a European person? How are phenomena of the style and kind of speech production linked to the demarcations and possibilities of social categorization of doing and for doing Europeaness? And how can we see the incipient change of a dominant (self-) categorization to be somebody (British, European, traveller, language teacher, cultural liaison worker, human resource worker, inventor of a new type of transdisciplinary hybrid work field in putting together several professional disciplines, e.g., language teaching and human resource work, creatively successful business

women, less successful manager and protector of a marriage relationship, female person with small chances to successfully follow up the occupational and the marital course of life at the same time, etc.)?

WK explained that in the more recent development of linguistics as well as in sociolinguistics the focus has been on the vagueness and the flexibility of social categorization within the course of social interaction. A fruitful concept in this respect would be the *communication of social style*. Style is to be conceived by all of us, the members of the everyday world, as a combination of means of expression on various levels, going from pragmatic patterns, specific semantic constructions and lexical meaning shifts down to phonetic features. Are there systematic combinations of such speech elements that show stylistic patterns of the communicative behaviour of the informant and to what extent do these combinations of speech behaviour seem to be stable and to be repeated beyond the confines of the interview presentation? Might it be possible to link an explicit scientific-analytical categorization of sociolinguistics to such speech elements?

With regard to the Kate interview, the analysis, insofar as developed yet, brought about features in her narrative rendering that would provide meaning for the category or label of becoming European. However, further elements, especially small elements of speech production, had not been focused in the sequential analysis as accomplished up to now. An additional linguistic perspective additionally doing this can detect expressions of Europeanness as communicative style. The following example shows a meaning shift in Kate's usage of certain words:

> "*I can't actually say when my desire to travel started because as a child we never went abroad.*" (p. 1:45–47)

For Kate "to travel" would mean – but what she does not explain that – "to travel *abroad*". From the autobiographical narrative's beginning onwards 'to travel' is put by Kate into a contrast to going on holiday with her parents. This contrast frame is a constant phenomenon throughout Kate's interview. Travelling abroad becomes more and more dominant in Kate's autobiographical rendering, although there is always kept and recollected the basic joy of travelling that was firstly experienced in the holiday trips with her parents (in the UK) and later on with her second husband (Kate's interview page 2, line 6. f; page 7, line 25 to 47). Thus, in the Kate interview, on the one hand, we can observe a change of meaning of the relationship between the two topics of travelling for a holiday trip and travelling abroad (as the "real travelling") and, on the other, a deeply underlying *shared basic* meaning of the two categories of Kate's travelling experience. The *sociostylistic effect* of Kate's putting emphasis on the 'real' travelling (in

her perspective: going abroad) could be that this term would serve as a means of self- and hetero-identification: people in the same group or social category (of professional transnational workers especially addressed to "European matters") could present themselves and recognize each other by this term and communicative style.

WK further explained that the present day occurrences of such small elements of meaning shifts, incipient activities of formulation or formula-like expressions or patterns of lexical use which are not explicitly and intentionally presented as European in their meaning but are just happening (and then contextually or indirectly meant and understood to be European), could mean that there is a newly *developing style of being this type of European person*. This style makes a communicative behaviour of being European accountable for other people.

A second point of a sociolinguistic analysis would be the study of textual vagueness. – What to make out of certain vague elements in the texts? WK emphasized it would be necessary to look closely at leitmotivs such as Kate's motive of travelling (Kate's interview page 1, line 47; page 2, line 27/28; and passim). The other leitmotiv would be variability and difference of engagements as presented in the following text passage "*I was involved in different things*" (page 2, line 25/26). There is a characteristic vagueness, but at the same time deep relatedness, in the connection between the text parts of these different leitmotivs. The question coming up regarding such a vague, loose connection of leitmotives would be how to *assess the meaning and relevance* of it in terms of biography and social framing (e.g., as regards an incipient world of specifically European minded professional transnational workers). For following up the methodical question of how to analytically reduce the fuzziness of the connection of leitmotivs, one instrument of the most recent linguistic theory developments that could be analytically exploited would be semantic frame theory. This theoretical approach might help the sociolinguistic researcher to analyze, and to decide on, the quality of the mentioned vague text connections. It helps to find out about the question to what experiential qualities such fuzzy, vague, statements and their relationship refers to. There could be semantic frames imbued with, e.g., more positive or more negative evaluation. As regards Kate's case: would the vague connection between the leitmotivs of travelling and of involvement within "different things" refer to the positive side (travelling) or would it indicate an involvement within maybe less useful things or even the danger to lose topical or biographical focus? A linguistically sensitized analysis would also scrutinize whether or not such a vague connection structure of two separate leitmotivs would be a prefiguration of an open and active pattern of outlook and attitude to the world and one's biography

(i.e., a first – still vague – imprint of a metamorphosis process of biography or biographical action scheme – A.S.-W./F.S.).

Second observation (A. S.-W. and F.S.): Formal features of the Kate interview, especially dealing with suffering, metamorphosis and biographical work

The following aspects where brought into the workshop throughout all of the sessions and focussed at the end of it again. They had been developed in a meeting of the German research team (June 11, 2008) for preparing the workshop, and they were distributed to all the national research teams before the start of the workshop.

The following distinctive formal features in the interview were discussed:

– *Biographical work in the pre-coda segment*:

It is peculiar that a large part of Kate's current occupational activities, her initiative and engaged work in the women's network, is not told in the main narrative line but is embedded *in the pre-coda segment as a supplementing narration* (11, 22–15, 48). This formal feature indicates that Kate sees her network work and her involvement in the network as a biographical development that is not totally acceptable for her as it is not what she originally intended to do. In the precoda-segment she is "juggling options" (Anselm Strauss, 1958) as regarding her former far-reaching decision to come to Germany and to stay there after her marriage broke down and what alternatives there had been for her at this time. In this argumentative passage it becomes clear that Kate feels an inner force to legitimize this earlier biographical decision. The explanation why this biographical development is not presented before the pre-coda-segment is that this development is deeply connected with Kate's severe trajectory experience of disappointment with her former husband and the undergoing of a process of alienation. This experience of heteronomy is the reason why Kate at first avoids recollection of this painful episode in her life. However, while she is balancing reasons that would legitimize her former decision to stay in Germany she is trying to figure out whether her new career path as a business language teacher can be considered as a productive biographical development or whether it must be seen as being nothing but a long-lasting unwanted contingency solution. In this reflective process during the interview Kate begins to realize that there was a creative development for her, especially regarding her network work, that she then starts to present. This biographical development shows that Kate has not only been driven by heteronomous conditions but developed and pursued own impulses of a biographical metamorphosis process after coming to Germany.

– *Background construction of dealing with trajectory suffering:*

It is noticeable that Kate handles her recollections in a very cautious way. It can be seen *that she corrects her biographical presentation in background constructions* several times. For example:

N: [...], ehm and here we are eight years later.- *Ehm by this time I decided ehm - // oh no, I didn't decide to move on.* The company the travel agency was relocating its head office to – [city] which was the Midlands. The middle of England.
I: hm
N: And I had no intention of moving to the Midlands.
I: hm
N: I wanted to stay in London and pursue my human resources career
I: hm
N: by this time. Ehm - and so I ehm - was the last person in the human resources department actually to leave -
I: hm
N: I I saw everybody out - of London, up to [city]. Lots of people were made redundant -
I: yes
N: because there weren't jobs for them or - they didn't want to move. - Ehm - I went up to [city] I think for two months and commuted every day. Ehm ... and ehm by this time I was living in East Sussex which is also south of London but it's sort of a different area to where I was brought up ehm with my husband. Ehm and I was I commuted to [city] for a couple of months and then there was the cut. *I was I was also - redundant*
I: hm
N: And was looking for another job. (transcript, p. 4, line 11–30)

In this text passage Kate is talking about a life situation where she was working as a personnel assistant in a travel agency and was then discharged and forced to look for another job. Kate starts out her narration by framing this event as being an intentional decision (to look for another job). She then interrupts herself (first text passage in italic) and self-corrects herself in that she explains that the step of looking for another job had actually followed her dismissal. Thus it becomes clear that Kate wasn't following up an intentionally formed action scheme but was being forced to find a new occupational orientation. This example shows that Kate is very carefully handling her recollection of biographical processes. She is in a way observing her own presentation from a, so to speak, lateral perspective that systematically supports this kind of self-correcting interventions which then break up her tendency to harmonize and embellish biographical developments. After that self-correction she is then able to go on with her straight-forward narrative rendering (second text passage in italic).

– *Hidden National and European topics connected with biography:*

Without being specifically asked about European topics and initiated just by herself Kate mentions that during her more than fifteen years of life in Germany she has become European (page 23, line 33). At the same time she feels very British, too, which in her perspective is no contradiction (page 33, lines 28–40). However, the context of life abroad (i.e. in Germany) is more connected with Europeanness than is the context of life during her visits in England. Being back in England, Kate has to be circumspect or even cautious not to get into troubles with her native friends, when she would openly show pro-European attitudes and would naively or routinely take and treat as an "of course" European trivial topics like the Euro currency.

At first, Kate's statement of having become European seems not to be very much semantically filled. Locally seen, it is rather a vague "biography-deictic" utterance just expressing a change of biographical identity (and the partial and passing changes of identity in traveling from Germany to England and back again: the alternation between the feeling of being less European in England and more European in Germany – page 23, lines 45/46). The confession of being European on page 23 could be misunderstood as a quite shallow remark of political correctness without any real biographical import. But the contrary is the case: First of all, on page 23 Europe is freely mentioned by the informant herself and not elicited by the interviewer. Secondly, the remark becomes indirectly semantically filled through the impact of the wider textual and biographical context: Europe is connected with traveling (p. 23, 45); with living in culturally different countries (p. 33, 36); with the realization of work opportunities one could not realize in one's country of origin (often one even would not find out about these opportunities at all – p. 33, 1–27); with the English language as the European lingua franca or even standard idiom (p. 10f, 19f); with feeling the much greater cultural differences to Americans than to Germans (p. 13, 7/8); with the suffering connected to being alienated, isolated and losing one's status of a professional (p. 20, 45f; p. 21, 32), but making new creative experiences in the course of the suffering and engaging on the European project of teaching business English as the European lingua franca (p. 33, 1–27); with winning new understandings of the complex characters of social relationships in having social encounters in clubs of European business women (e.g., of friendship or of the demarcation line between the private and the occupational sphere – page 21, 28f); with being the friendly stranger and understanding outsider regarding problematic topics in Europe and Germany, e.g. regarding the tensions between East and West Germans (page 34f);

and especially with the historical reconciliation work (e.g., Kate's and her father's compassion with the fate of Dresden – page 36ff).

End of Workshop: Conclusion - Expressions of European identity

At the end of the workshop it was generally agreed that the expression of European identity would be observable in autobiographical-narrative interviews on the levels of

- *identity development*,
- *frames of social organisation like arenas*,
- *habitus formation and work practice as well as*,
- *communicative style*.

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Fritz Schütze

PRACA NAD AUTOBIOGRAFICZNYMI WYWIADAMI NARRACYJNYMI W PROJEKCIE EUROIDENTITY

(Streszczenie)

W artykule przedstawiony został drugi warsztat badawczy poświęcony analizie materiałów w projekcie Euroidentities. Spotkanie, które miało miejsce zaraz po ukończeniu zbierania wywiadów pilotażowych zostało nagrane i dzięki temu możliwe było sporządzenie dokładnego protokołu. Zapis warsztatu jest przykładem rekonstrukcji – w rozumieniu Alfreda Schütza – 'jak robić razem' analizę wywiadów biograficzno-narracyjnych. W artykule została zwrócona uwaga na następujące kwestie: znaczenia pierwszego wrażenia z lektury wywiadu, odpowiedzi na pytanie badawcze w jaki sposób pojawia się w nim temat Europy, jak realizować procedurę badawczą – strukturalny opis tekstu, analityczną abstrakcję, porównania kontrastowe. Chociaż na tym etapie pracy nie tworzy się modeli teoretycznych zwrócono uwagę na takie zjawiska jak: światy i areny społeczne, europejskie struktury możliwości, tworzenie sieci relacji społecznych, specyficzny typ identyfikacji europejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość zbiorowa, tożsamość europejska, analiza biograficzna, porównanie przypadków kontrastowych, światy społeczne.

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INTERNATIONAL PATHFINDERS: THE BIOGRAPHICAL DIMENTIONS OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract

International Pathfinders is a systematic study of the biographical significance of educational mobility within a European context. It builds upon autobiographical narrative material gathered through the EuroIdentities project. The study aims to combine the elements of social theory and the most recent research in the area of internationalisation of higher education with biographical material in order to understand and push the academic debate even further. This article employs a three-stage sequence of educational mobility – leaving home, the experience itself, and the return – as a core structure for discussing and presenting the cases. Within that framework, issues such as influence of cultural and symbolic capitals and specific characteristics of the educational structures of opportunities are explored. Biographical consequences of educational mobility take the form of an international frame of reference, allowing international students to navigate in complex international relations, and can be considered the source of social status both in an international and a national context.

Key words: educational mobility, international framework of reference, autobiographical narrative research, internationalisation of higher education.

1. GLOBALISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS STUDENTS

In the 21st century, the importance of higher education has become a somewhat unquestioned mantra of modern society. Increasing demands for highly qualified workers and professionals reflect a focus on highly specialized and technology-

-orientated areas within the economy, and the growing importance of research and development units adds to those demands. Consequently, higher education systems are adjusting to global trends by entering into a competitive market in order to demonstrate the quality of the professionals they qualify. Within that context the definition of a 'good' university degree becomes wider: it no longer consist merely of solid knowledge about a given subject but must also contain abilities such as proficiency in languages, competencies of working within an international environment, team-working, good organisational and management skills.

The global economy means that higher education institutions find themselves in worldwide competition with each other. Where funding is following individual students, universities aim to attract not only home students but also international students. On the other side of the equation, international students themselves are following global trends, searching for academic opportunities, international degrees and language courses. It is commonly assumed that international experience will provide them with a head start for future employment opportunities and a chance for a bright career. Within that global economy context, international trends within higher education seem a natural way of market differentiation in a capitalist-driven educational market.

It can be argued that knowledge and therefore 'knowledge-based institutions' have always transcended national borders. In medieval times, most of the students were at some point encouraged to spend some time in an academic institution other than their native one; the greatest scientific achievements were shared with international colleagues and fuelled the industrial development all over the world (Delanty, 2001). However, while knowledge can be transferred internationally, universities and other higher education institutions across the globe have, for the past centuries, been enclosed within their own national and, more importantly, linguistic 'bubbles'.

This dual – national and international – character of universities makes it possible for them to exist and operate within both contexts (Delanty, 2001, Varghese, 2008). Universities combine innovative ideas with academic research as well as young, ambitious individuals. This is one of the reasons why higher education institutions are often associated with upward social mobility as well as with revolutionary social movements. Within that context, individual students experience, learn and make their very first important life choices.

While educational experiences offer an insight into the international state of affairs, every individual student is anchored in their national and local socio--economic context. Individual aspirations, ambitions as well as future employability

are influenced by national economic supply-and-demand mechanisms, which reflect both national and global trends. The aim of this paper is to explore the biographical dimensions of the internationalisation of higher education by relating them to the concept of an international framework of reference. The paper focuses on international mobility as a part of the educational path and distinguishes three stages of educational mobility – leaving home, the mobility experience and the return.

2. THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Within this simplistic model of globalisation in higher education, two major terminological issues should be addressed. The available literature concerning cross-border student mobility shows a clear conceptual distinction between globalisation and internationalisation. Globalisation of higher education relates to the organisational aspect of higher education as an institution. It emphasises changes at global scale, which influence the structure of universities, programmes and degrees. Globalisation trends address the complex issues of global competition and market-steering (Teichler, 2004, 2006; Valimaa & Hoffman, 2007; Varghese, 2008), which play a major role in attracting international students. Internationalisation, on the other hand, is 'signalling that border-crossing activities grow whereby national contexts continue to play a significant role for higher education' (Rivza & Teichler, 2007:62). While globalisation is usually discussed in the context of diminishing national boundaries, internationalisation focuses on cross-border activity and the relations between international and national contexts. Within the relevant scope of research, internationalisation reflects the current state of affairs concerning student mobility more accurately.

In the European context, which is at the centre of this paper, the internationalisation of higher education can be considered a quite specific case. This is due to educational mobility programmes provided by the European Union as well as the historical tradition of bilateral cross-country student exchanges. Teichler (2004, 2007) uses the term 'Europeisation' in order to highlight specific regional processes, which differ from the rest of the world in terms of socio-economic and cultural background as well as in terms of sheer numbers. According to ongoing research of the International Centre of Higher Education Research in Kassel, since the start of the ERASMUS programme in the 1980's the number of international students had reached 2.5 million by 2004 and the proportion of international students within the overall student community is approximately 2%. Yet the exact

numbers as well as details about underlying causes and consequences of student mobility are relatively unexplored.

Both at European and global level, student mobility – and indeed the entire educational system – can seem relatively easy to research. Students and international academics are easily accessible and generally eager to participate in academic inquiries. Survey data on ERASMUS and international students are gathered by most academic institutions, with some additionally questioning their former students after some time. Especially the employment trajectory has attracted interest amongst social researchers. However, there is no coherent set of data that would support a precise estimation of the correct number of the educationally mobile population, and the research tools used by centres of national statistics as well as by individual academics and research projects across Europe vary significantly. Methodological problems start at the level of operationally defining what 'educational mobility', 'student mobility' and 'foreign student' actually refer to, up to the level of national statistics that struggle to capture 'mobile targets' within their own population.

When considering universities as part of the system by tracking national and international policy changes, quantitative indicators of students' mobility and the amount of international collaborative research projects shed light on the scope of internationalisation in higher education. At the same time, this quantitative logic of research is not a sensitive enough tool to research the individual impact of international education. The mechanisms and logic behind decisions to become an international student, the structure of opportunities and resources available for students and the consequences for an individual as well as for their family and community require more qualitative considerations. In the era of global mass-media, where the story of one individual can influence hundreds or even thousands of others, it is possible to assume that every international student carries with them the potential for social change. New values, lifestyles, and consumer tastes, but also new individual philosophies regarding the purpose of family, work, belonging and citizenship, are shaping a new social reality. This reality forms and influences a new way of life, and social researchers can gain access to it by using a narrative, biographical approach.

3. METHODS AND DATA

Biographical research is based on two main assumptions. Firstly, a single life story represents the fragile balance between an individual's life with his or her everyday practices, choices and plans as well as his or her social environment. The macro-structures of society impinge on the lives of individuals, influence and

shape them; however, being anchored in their micro-reality, individual people have the power to negotiate and challenge them. Biographical research focuses on information captured by narratives which disclose the interaction between those two elements. Secondly, the way life stories are told, the way in which narrators choose to tell about themselves in relation to the outside world, provides researchers with valuable insights into their cognitive and emotional structures. Those reflect the way in which individuals navigate within a complex historical and socio-cultural context, their structures of relevance and meaning-making. In order to investigate both elements of a biography – what is said and how it is said – the research process requires a flexible, multidisciplinary analytical framework.

For the purpose of this paper the autobiographical narrative method of Fritz Schütze is used. This particular approach is rooted in the multidisciplinary traditions of the Chicago School, pragmatism, sociolinguistics, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and the French tradition of phenomenology (Apitzsch, 2007). The method of biographical interview consists of two main parts. First, the undisturbed flow of narration, which is a response to the request to tell one's life story, is awoken, and then the question part builds on those biographical experiences in search for details and clarifications. The open structure of the interview itself assures that the structure of narration reflects the individual's inner world and sense of their biography, neither of which are influenced by direct or indirect questions or suggestions. The analytical part of the method requires a detailed transcript and thorough step-by-step procedures, such as a sequential structural description, analytical abstraction, contrastive comparison of the cases and development of a theoretical model (Schütze, 2008). The method is time-consuming and the number of cases is limited; however, the tools and software used within Grounded Theory-based research can be used in order to speed up the process of data analysis.

The main strength of the biographical method lies in its interest not in a simple recapturing of events from the past, but in the structure of how a life story is told. This approach helps to capture events and social phenomena from a bottom-up perspective, which is the main advantage over the standard, quantitative top--down approach. It explores causality, how things came to be, but also anchors them in the time-space, socio-cultural matrix (Kohli, 2005). At the same time, due to theoretical sampling procedures and relatively small numbers of cases, findings cannot easily be generalized to the wider public. As a result, in order to give readers an overview of the relatively wide scope of available data, this paper presents the findings of biographical research in the ongoing discussion with other studies which can be considered representative due to their use of more quantitative methods.

The findings presented in this paper come from the autobiographical, narrative material collected within the EuroIdentities project (FP 7 Collaborative Project), which deals with the possible emergence of European identity in a transnational context. Within the complex design of the project, biographical material of the educationally mobile group has some distinct patterns and characteristics. The sample consists of 30 autobiographical interviews, with respondents belonging to the age group between 20–35 years and coming from seven European countries which include: Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Estonia and Bulgaria.

4. EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY AND ITS PLACE IN THE BIOGRAPHY

Social sciences tend to perceive educational mobility as an individual object of study. It is considered in quantitative terms as a cross-border flow of people naturally following the centre-periphery pattern, as short- or long-term, group or individual, within ERASMUS or outside of it, a bilateral or international experience. But little consideration is given to the fact that education is a process taking the shape of a biographical trajectory (Riemann, Schütze, 1995). Education is an important part of biography, starting very early in life and accompanying the individual until adulthood, in the case of academics even throughout the entire life. The concept of educational trajectory, in the sense presented by Strauss (1995), is important because it takes place in an institutionally organised environment. Opportunity structures as well as patterns of responsibilities and success are embedded in the school everyday life and have an impact on how individuals make sense of their educational as well as social experiences. Within that educational trajectory, educational mobility is only one element of an entire chain of events which are structurally and emotionally connected.

In the autobiographical narrative material three stages of international experience can be distinguished within the educational trajectory – before, during and after international mobility. All three of them are subjects of individual research concentrated on social class, national education systems, international quality assurance, gender and age balance as well as employability. Biographical research, however, requires seeing all of them as linked into the complex matrix of individual and social elements. Within that process of social becoming international students attach biographical meanings to their international experience and build a biographical framework of reference. Within that framework individuals

establish a new value system, life plans and goals as well as a new understanding of the world around.

5. LEAVING HOME – STAGE ONE OF EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

In the first stage, narrators often directly address their motivations and ambitions, but also indicate (often within the structure of the narration) the cultural, social and economic backgrounds. At that stage of the research, academic investigation often focuses on issues such as social class or symbolic and cultural capital. It is commonly assumed that the primary recipients of international higher education are people who can simply afford it and/or those who can find a way around financial restrictions. In that context the overall growth of financial status in European societies as well as the emergence of new opportunity structures, such as the ERASMUS scheme and bilateral exchange programmes, are assumed to have caused an increase in the number of international students. However, according to Rivza and Teichler (2007) this number remains on the constant level of 2% of the overall student population, indicating that other than strictly economic elements are playing a more important role in the educational mobility decision-making.

Although financial resources help to open up opportunities for educational mobility, they do not guarantee them. Instead, in terms of motivators for educational mobility, the notion of social and cultural capital of students seems more relevant. Within the EuroIdentities project the majority of students were encouraged from an early age to challenge themselves and were supported in setting goals. Their closest environment supported school education as well as additional skills such as private language lessons and artistic, creative interests. The motive of family support appears to be very strong in the educationally mobile group, especially when contrasted with other groups addressed by the EuroIdentities project, such as transnational workers or farmers.

> *I can only remember a nice childhood. It was really nice, I had really nice experiences. I had a good time at school. OK, I can remember, let's say -ehm- on the different educational perspectives we had, I was going to a German school and that means we had everything in German. And we had one lesson in Romanian language and that was kind of a very high literature lesson (Daniela 28 – Romania – ERASMUS/ International Degree)*
> *[When talking about private English lessons] My English, yeah, I have been learning English for many, many years. My parents have always , from the beginning, said to me: English is a basic thing, you have to know languages. (Majka 26 – Poland – ERASMUS/ International Degree).*

My parents were really good about -ehm- sending us to the different things like music lessons and things like that. So I learned to play the piano and violin. I mean I started that in primary school but continued on when I was in grammar school – there was like orchestra and choir and tons of different stuff and I really enjoyed that. (Lisa 28 – Northern Ireland – Language Degree)

Where social and cultural investments as well as family support are creating a conducive environment and where intellectual effort is rewarded and encouraged, social and cultural capital is accumulated, thus developing a set of individual predispositions that could be channelled within the educational trajectory. This can take on various forms, the most obvious being a continuation of education to the higher levels, the other being a search for new, more diverse experiences as well as academic and cultural challenges. Educational mobility writes itself into both trends. In the majority of cases of the educationally mobile, mobility is available at the level of higher education and is commonly considered a personal and academic challenge. However, accumulation of cultural and social capital does not cause educational mobility – as in the case of financial resources, it only facilitates it.

The other important element encouraging educational mobility comes not from the individual's cultural capital but from the external context indicating to the individual possible ways of using it in practice. Whilst cultural and social capital can be seen as a collection of energy for future biographical action, no less important are the elements that show the direction in which the possible biographical plan can be pursued. In that respect, all narratives of the educationally mobile feature the figure of the significant other. Be it following the dreams of parents, standing in competition with siblings or having an inspiring and influential teacher, within the different biographical settings the biographical plan for educational mobility begins to form. This example helps illustrate that point:

It was a big dream of my Dad's, to study in a foreign country. ... to go abroad. And he said that he almost did // he had an opportunity to go to Sweden but he never did // he has never been a member of the Communist Party, and they told him that if he did not sign himself up to the party he would not go ... And I know that for him it was quite a painful experience, he did not sign up, he did not go and deep down in his heart he always wanted, to so when I did get into this ERASMUS programme my Dad was all crazy for me. (Majka 26 – Poland – ERASMUS / International Degree)

This simple mechanism of accumulating the relevant social and cultural means, such as languages and cultural competences, as well as finding the right direction to channel it in the shape of a biographical action scheme may not seem very new. The fact that most educationally mobile individuals who gave an autobiographic interview chose to tell their story in a way which follows the

same pattern raises an interesting question, however. Narrators, whose stories were researched within this particular study differ with regards to gender, subject of study, nationality and languages; yet they chose to tell and structure their story in a fairly similar fashion, which would indicate some cultural pattern of understanding what educational mobility is, how it can be achieved and what role it plays in an individual's overall biography. This cultural and social pattern is referred to by Anselm Strauss (1995) as biographical 'framework of reference'.

Within the framework of reference used by the educationally mobile, yet another significant element can be found activating the international part of trajectory. Assuming that Rivza and Teichler's (2007) research reflects the overall socio-economic background of students across Europe, the 2% threshold illustrates the point that having the financial opportunities as well as internationally orientated forms of capital and role models is not enough to understand what motivates individuals to take part in international mobility. It also works against the thesis of Findley et al. (2006) that international mobility can be seen as one more way in which the middle-class system and its values reproduce themselves. The fact is that throughout Europe opportunities for international education are often ignored by young people and places for ERASMUS programmes at universities all over Europe remain unused.

Biographical research with the educationally mobile indicates that the activation of the mobility trajectory is linked to access to a specific biographical framework of reference. This framework sets the social patterns of success in the professional career – having an interesting, international job, as well as an individual life, having access to an international network of friends. It places added value on to the international aspect of being a student, which is reinforced by the discourse of globalisation in almost every aspect of everyday life and becomes a source of status. Being an international student carries the message to the world that an individual life can also be global, can be cosmopolitan. Finding and reproducing this framework depends on the structure of opportunities, social and cultural capital as well as on more qualitative biographical factors, such as involvement of significant 'others' – teachers, friends and mentors – but tapping into the framework is an expression of individual aims and ambitions.

6. BEING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT – STAGE TWO OF EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

Within biographical research settings, educational mobility can be seen as an opportunity structure varying according to duration, destination and institutional patterns. There is a significant 'quality' difference between simple, already organised ERASMUS exchanges, institutionally organised language degrees and international degrees. Those different patterns of educational mobility reflect different levels of cultural and social capital accumulated by the individual as well as differences in economic status. They build on a range of varying pull-and-push factors such as proficiency in a foreign language, personal confidence and family ties, which, depending on the circumstances can aid or hinder the activation and realisation of an internationally orientated biographical plan (Davis et al., 2009). Based on all these factors as well as the scope of available research a simple typology of educational mobility experience can be created.

7. ERASMUS

ERASMUS students usually have the lowest level of foreign language proficiency and are rarely able to advance in terms of their academic knowledge. For them ERASMUS is mostly a cultural experience, a chance to enjoy their first adult independence.

> *You know Holland means weed, you know I have never before thought of trying it, but if you are already there, so I said to myself – OK I am here and everyone else – so if I want to party I should party right. Yeah – it really was that time – you could really meet people, get to know how other people see things in life. Besides – for me it was terribly stressful, going abroad, how am I going to handle that, the studies; I was sitting 3 to 5 hours // during the first month I was sitting and reading this one article ... but I managed, I can say it out loud here ... which I think was one of my greatest achievements. (Majka 26 – Poland – ERASMUS / International Degree)*

From that perspective ERASMUS is the adventure of a lifetime. The duration of the experience – between 3 and 10 months – offers the chance to get to know a new place, build a network of friends and gain confidence in dealing with unknown circumstances, which is reflected in almost all ERASMUS stories as a positive and character-building experience, which could easily be associated with the rite of passage.

> *[One year in Holland] was something extremely important, it really changed my behaviour about the world in an impressive way. I was very much a child despite being twenty one*

years old ... and I had an awakening – my family was no longer around me, my beloved ones were all far away. The world there was – ehm- welcoming, but was anyway still a world which was not mine ... which you have to understand. (Igor 25 – Italy – International Degree)

At the same time the intensity of the experience is limited. Students tend to cluster in their own international, often English-speaking groups, which reduces interactions with native students and limits exposure to the native language (where different from English). With those limitations in mind, ERASMUS can be marked as a relatively shallow experience within a life story. If not enforced by further international education its biographical consequences open some new perspectives for individuals, yet their impact on the overall biography is rather limited. This is especially visible when discussing other forms of educational mobility such as language degrees and international degrees.

8. LANGUAGE DEGREE

A language degree is the most natural way of exposure to an international education. Where language proficiency is an aim of the studies, a semester or year abroad is a formal requirement. Language programmes generally facilitate exchanges with countries where this language is spoken and provide students with opportunities to acquire more practical linguistic aspects.

Because I studied German I got to come abroad. I think if I had just studied something like history I would never have come abroad ... I suppose the year abroad, at least that makes you confident enough that you can live in a foreign country. ... I think it's easier – once you – yeah once you've really done it – when you have to do it cause you are forced to. (Joanna 24 – UK – Language Degree)

At the same time, from a biographical point of view, language degrees build sentiments and attachments to one particular country or language-culture for the entire life. Those young adults attempting to make a living out of languages exist between two different, linguistically distinct contexts. They build and multiply their cultural capital in order to be able to provide highly specialised services and translate between two or more social and cultural contexts. They are taking the role of interpreters not only of the language but also the culture, and that becomes the base for their bilateral, multilateral life action scheme.

Language degree students tend to be more academically orientated than ERASMUS students, and their commitment towards an international framework of reference is much stronger. This is due to the fact that proficiency in a language,

which is expected from the beginning of the degree, needs to be realised early on and requires an active effort. If persistent and ambitious enough, language students can make their international aspirations to travel, meet new people and cultures and to understand others their life's goal. Their professional status is rooted in international expertise which, from a biographical perspective, becomes the main structural element of their personal as well as professional life.

9. INTERNATIONAL DEGREE

Out of all three types of educational mobility, undertaking an entire degree abroad is probably the most challenging, due to financial restraints, cultural differences and difficulties in organising it. The preliminary conditions require very high foreign language proficiency as well as confidence in the new cultural context. According to Murphy-Lejeune (2001), this pattern of educational mobility carries some elements of elite migration, whereby the most privileged individuals get the chance to study abroad. Whilst this is undeniably true, it is also important to realise that other international programmes, including ERASMUS, often turn out to be an introduction for an international degree.

Within the biography, an international degree takes on a special role; it is not an adventure as ERASMUS is, it is also not the role of cultural and linguistic interpreter between two cultures. An international degree entails deciding to put oneself outside of one's national and cultural context for a significant amount of time in order to acquire professional skills that cannot be learned in the individual's national educational system or are at a higher level than available in their country of origin. This puts the individual into the position of contextual discontinuity (Archer, 2007), where living beyond the national context serves to fragment one's biographical continuity, with different life episodes and lines being spread into a wide geographical context. An international degree provides an individual not only with practical and professional skills but also the cultural competences of working in a multinational environment and language proficiency at an academic level in at least two languages (the native and degree language). In many respects this is one of the most specialised orientations towards global trends of mobility and multiculturalism.

These three mobility patterns build on and reshape individual biographies and reflect a specific level of attachment to and involvement in an 'international framework of reference'. All three patterns are underpinned by different goals and meant to lead to different outcomes. ERASMUS exchange programmes

were set up in order to widen Europeans' cultural horizons, whereas international degrees are aiming to educate national and international elites. Within that mosaic of elements, language programmes are meant to prepare a certain group of individuals towards bridging cultural and national differences between the countries. All of them, however, aim to open students' cultural and emotional perspectives towards a different, global view and challenge their understanding of the world and people around them. Within that process, individuals re-build their biography – new aspirations, priorities as well as new values are taken on board. They reflect a new understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic relations, a new international framework of reference that can be traced within individual biographies by the sudden change of one's world view and bold, unexpected life choices.

The three types of mobility discussed above also introduce a particular hierarchy within the international student group themselves. The international framework of reference delivers not only a new set of goals and perspectives but can also be used in order to evaluate and differentiate status within the international student group. For people outside of the international mobility, every international educational experience carries similar values, whereas within the educationally mobile group the status is often connected with the type of degree.

> *Compared to ERASMUS students who came to Trento at the same time ... after almost a year of our stay and it turned out that -mmh- that in my opinion they were still acting like tourists. I mean they were going to Venice for carnival, they were going somewhere to Bologna, as a tourist all the time, in this international group they couldn't manage to learn the language, they didn't learn Italian, actually for them it was -mmh- never-ending fun. (Magda 24 – Poland – Voluntary Service Abroad)*

It is within this particular international framework of reference that some of the ERASMUS students decide to continue their international educational experience on international courses. When the structure of educational opportunity opens and they are able to gain a sense of the inner hierarchy within international education they are able to risk their already settled life and follow the patterns which are difficult to understand for many people from their local environment. In biographical terms they risk contextual discontinuity when removing themselves from the social, cultural as well as economic context and pursuing goals and values that do not belong to their natural environment. Consequently, they cease to belong to the place they have always called home.

10. RETURNS – STAGE THREE OF EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

What adds flavour to the international educational experience, however, is the element of a possible return. International students' experiences of 'contextual discontinuity' – of existing beyond the national system for some time, depending on the duration of the programme – make it difficult to come back. This moment of return can be particularly difficult because students often do not realise the extent to which they have changed themselves. The first culture shock involves the realisation that in terms of opinions, world-view, life-style and values they are in a different place than their home environment, the second is the frustration when they realise that their experience cannot be simply told and explained to others without similar educational experiences.

> *I think that's where – one of the points when the relationship between me and my mum went a bit out of sync. ... Because /ehm/ I'd got, she felt I think a bit offended, you know, that I had ... that I loved this other - life so much that it was like an insult to /ehm/ the life I'd had at home. And maybe I didn't – at that point – get my message across so diplomatically. That like now in hindsight I think I do appreciate life at home – but I think that was a starting point of a few years when I /ehm/ didn't really like home that much and that ... was a problem for her and it was a problem for me as well. (Pauline 31 – Northern Ireland – ERASMUS / International Degree)*

This out-of-sync experience is a source of great biographical frustration. It is expressed within the biography as the difficulty to re-assimilate and a lack of understanding from peers and family but also academic staff and future employers. A new, international perspective on the issues surrounding the educationally mobile does not fit in easily with the settled world-view of the native environment. Both academic and employment structures are not prepared to accept and use innovative, internationally driven individuals. According to Schomburg and Teichler (2006), available statistics on employability of ERASMUS students suggest that a higher percentage of international students seek employment at international level; however, the system is already too saturated to take them in. Where this is the case, international students can employ two different strategies. They can either put their international aspirations aside and try to rediscover the place they used to belong to, which shines through in some interviewees' expressions of unfulfilled dreams and aspirations. Alternatively, they can actively face the difficulties and try to find an economic, social or cultural niche which would take advantage of their newly acquired ambitions.

> *I decided to start a family and the only thing that perhaps I would change is the place where I live, which is the only thing which makes me suffer. If I didn't have any family ties I'd go abroad – outside Italy, really abroad, I would go away. But if I hadn't had this*

link and if I hadn't met my husband I wouldn't have tied myself down. I'd have left – gone abroad and I'd have worked ... because my life's dream is – is to work for an airline. (Maria 28 – Italy - ERASMUS)
/Ehm/ I'm struggling a little bit, I like both. I have travelled a lot in my life, I like doing it, I like being mobile, I like the changes, as you see my career path is very torn, very discontinued, a little bit here and a little bit there. After a year, I get bored quickly with different things. And this influences my life, not only personally but also professionally. -Ehm- I had this idea that I could fill some market niche on the Polish market [about building the travel company for international tourists to Poland]. (Kostek 30 – Poland – International Degree)

11. PERSONAL LIFE

A brief moment of international education at a crucial time in a young adult's life widens the perception of young Europeans of new 'paths' of life, through which the individual – instead of following common patterns of success within given gender roles, family history and national class patterns – can independently search and follow their own biographical path. Just to illustrate the point:

After the ERASMUS project I came back only for the summer ... ((10 sec)) OK, being gay was one of the reasons that I wanted to live in England. The fact is that I was really OK in London, but naturally when I decided to stay in England I wasn't out to anyone – not with my friends or with my family ... the problem is that ... it took time for me – to accept the fact of being gay and to want other people to know ... it has never been a thing I thought I would have talked about with my family. (Marco 33 – Italy – ERASMUS)

International mobility is also relevant in terms of relationships and settling into family life. An interesting element of biographical research on the educationally mobile is cross-cultural intimate relationships, especially those which have lasted beyond the educational episode. From a biographical point of view being in an international relationship keeps international patterns going within the biography. It prompts the individual to operate within an international framework in their everyday life and also introduces other members of the closest family to an international life-style.

[About living in Denmark] and my younger sister, Silvia, lives there ... she met Kai's [husband] best friend Olaf /ehm/ four years ago. ... It was so funny, we didn't try to match anything but they got together. But that's one of the good things, that at least I have my sister there. (Pauline 31 – Northern Ireland – ERASMUS/International Degree)

12. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AS STATUS

The third stage of the educational trajectory, which is about returning, does not necessarily symbolise the end of an international experience. Having tapped into the international framework of reference, individual students use it in order to reshape their individual life plan within the given external circumstances. Changes include a different career path as well as family life but also involve reproducing new elements of international status. Within biographies of educationally mobile people new thematic elements are expressed and emphasized. Those elements are simple ways of expressing a sense of belonging to an 'international community' and are code for mutual recognition of belonging to this particular group.

The first element of international status within the biography can be associated with the privileged status of being mobile. The history of mobility as well as one's openness towards future international possibilities regarding the career as well as personal life is the statement of belonging to the cosmopolitan, global or international community. This usually quite naive confidence of being able to deal with the outside world in any place and not being afraid of international challenges is often verified by real life situations.

N: [After finishing her degree at Cambridge] I could have gone anywhere. I feel no nostalgia, I have no attachment to Bulgaria ... coming to Bulgaria was one of the options.
I: Neither a better one, nor worse.
N: It could have been in the United States. It could have been in //just anywhere (Reni 40 – Bulgaria – International Degree)

Along with increasing confidence through the mobility experience, with regards to status a second element of the international framework of reference is the issue of re-defining the symbolic framework of belonging. Whilst national and local identities remain constant and international experiences add some international elements of appreciating other cultures and peoples in the case of ERASMUS students, at the more advanced stages of biographical internationalisation the ties with national and local communities become blurred and replaced by international status. This can take the form of abstract identities of being a citizen of the world, cosmopolitan, European; it can also steer the focus back to the individual by defining one's self in terms of profession, social function or individual achievements.

Well I think I would say I am rather a citizen of the world. I, you know, I have a Polish passport, but I couldn't, not that I wouldn't mind, but I couldn't represent Poland because I haven't lived there for so many years. ...I can't represent the culture anymore because

I have lived in Germany, I have lived in the US and UK and I'm already influenced by those, so I am rather a mix than belonging to a particular nationality. Couldn't say I belong to one of them. (Gosia 25 – Poland/Germany – International Degree)

The third element of an international framework of reference would involve the association with others who belong to the same category of international individuals and face the same challenges. Within the individual biography these associations are often addressed by referring to a network of international friendships. This is particularly interesting when considering that friends from all over the world rarely have a chance to be part of a person's everyday life, yet they are present in all educationally mobile interviews as one of the most positive aspects of international mobility. Those are people who, whilst not around, share a common international framework of reference, which brings them together.

Our wedding was amazing because it was – like, the one time in my life when everyone was in the same room, you know, that was – I looked down and I could see the French ones there, the Dublin ones there, the ones from home, the ones from Denmark, the ones from Ireland. There were 11 nationalities in a room. And that was so nice ... like that day it just felt like – you know – you pick up those wee gems of people from everywhere you've gone. (Pauline 31 – Northern Ireland – ERASMUS /International Degree)

13. CONCLUSION

The internationalisation of education is associated with the economic processes of globalisation. It focuses on cross-border student mobility. Within this paper the specific case of European student mobility was discussed based on the biographical material gathered by the EuroIdentities project. Within the available scope of research concerning student mobility, quantitative methods are dominant; however, for the purpose of this paper a qualitative biographical research method was employed in order to understand the bottom-up processes of educational mobility. The use of this particular method allowed exploring in detail the mechanisms of student mobility as well as their place and consequences within the overall biography of individuals.

From a biographical perspective educational mobility is seen as part of a larger educational trajectory. It builds on the social and cultural capital which individuals acquire within their family and school setting. Their social as well as cultural capital – in particular their foreign language proficiency – can then be used in the international educational experience. The type of educational mobility is strongly associated with the form and strength of the individual's social and cultural capital. This paper focussed on three different forms of educational

mobility: ERASMUS exchange, language degrees and international degrees. Those were discussed with regards to the quality of international experience as well as personal and social consequences.

The paper introduced the term of international framework of references, which is an analytic tool attempting to holistically understand the biographical importance and impact of educational mobility. The international framework of reference becomes an important social pattern of an individual as well as social orientation within an international context. It consists of the patterns of both individual and social success, a sense of hierarchy within the international student community as well as elements of social status. The international framework of reference helps individuals to navigate within complex global social realities, but at the same time it puts them 'out of sync' with their local context. This becomes an important biographical experience bringing the global economic, cultural, political and social forces directly into individuals' lives and their environment.

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MIĘDZYNARODOWI TROPICIELE: BIOGRAFICZNE WYMIARY UMIĘDZYNARODOWIENIA EDUKACJI UNIWERSYTECKIEJ

(Streszczenie)

Artykuł ten jest szkicem biograficznych wymiarów internacjonalizacji kształcenia na poziomie wyższym w kontekście europejskim. Materiały autobiograficzne wykorzystane w artykule pochodzą ze zbioru projektu 'EuroIdentities'. Szkic ma na celu systematyczną analizę materiału empirycznego w świetle istniejących teorii socjologicznych i najnowszych badań. Artykuł rozpatruje mobilność edukacyjną z punku widzenia jej sekwencyjnych stadiów – wyjazd, pobyt i powrót – co daje możliwość systematyzacji i prezentacji materiału biograficznego. W ramach tego trzy-stopniowego procesu szkic rozpatruje kwestie kapitałów kulturowego i symbolicznego oraz zróżnicowanej możliwości realizacji planów działania z punktu widzenia trzech odmian jej instytucjonalnego uwzorowania. Biograficzne konsekwencje mobilności edukacyjnej są rozpatrywane w ramach obecności 'międzynarodowego układu odniesienia', który pomaga studentom zorientować się w skomplikowanej międzynarodowej rzeczywistości i może być rozpatrywany jako źródło statusu społecznego na poziomie zarówno narodowym jak i międzynarodowym.

Słowa kluczowe: mobilność edukacyjna, międzynarodowy schemat odniesienia, badania autobiograficzne, internacjonalizacja szkolnictwa wyższego

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A BIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON YOUTH EXCHANGE AND RELATED PROCESSES[1]

Abstract

After focusing on the experience of a woman of French origin who "paved" her way to Germany and "Europe" in her youth and all by herself, we turn to the biographies of young people who spent a year in another European country by making use of a foreign exchange program. This involves an institutional pattern with distinct phases: applying, being selected, being prepared, being sent away, staying abroad (in a foreign family and school) and coming home. We also look for the biographical conditions which create a special receptivity for such a project of going abroad, for the significance of such experiences in the biographical phase of adolescence, and for the consequences, especially with regard to "getting involved", committing oneself to transnational and European projects and (sometimes) developing a self-identification as European. At the end we discuss some more general (theoretical and practical) implications of this research, which is based on the analysis of narrative interviews with former foreign exchange students which were conducted within the EUROIDENTITIES project.

Keywords: youth exchange, adolescence, potential space, being exposed to the unfamiliar, collective history, self-identification as European.

1. INTRODUCTION

Amélie Métraux[2], a 60 year old woman of French origin, lives together with her German husband, a retired professor and legal scholar, in a big German city

[1] We wish to thank Catherine Delcroix, Lyudmila Nurse and Dirk Schubotz for helpful comments.

[2] She was interviewed by Anja Schröder-Wildhagen in 2009.

– a city in which she has been living for almost four decades now. She teaches at the languages department of the local university and is working on a doctoral dissertation on new procedures of the early acquisition of foreign languages (a topic of theoretical and practical concern which has interested her for a long time). Amélie Métraux has an adult daughter from her first marriage.

When discussing her biography we discovered that she has qualities of a pioneer – a pioneer of establishing cultural contacts between members of European nations: France and Germany – and has developed a very strong self-identification as "one-hundred percent European". This can be seen, e.g., in her creative long-term professional and academic action scheme of creating conditions for "intergenerational learning" in the context of the early acquisition of other languages. What she finds fascinating and would like to promote are free and non-prescriptive settings of language learning in which members of the grandparents' and grandchildren's generations participate in order to learn the languages of European neighbours, preferably the neglected languages of small nations, e.g., a Slavonic language (instead of English as lingua franca which everybody learns anyhow). She strongly favours the notion of a "Begegnungssprache": a "language for meeting the other".

The intensity and style of Amélie Métraux's academic and professional project are closely tied to biographical experiences which can be discovered in her narrative. When she was still a baby in the late 1940s, her family had migrated to Canada and – a few years later – to the United States, but they returned to France when she was a teenager. Her younger siblings, who had grown up in an English speaking environment, experienced major problems when returning to France from the United States: difficulties which had to do with a loss of their language and an extreme communicative isolation. This is one of the biographical sources for her constant concern of how to learn languages at a young age. She was also quite eager – and also successful in doing so – to create conditions for her daughter to learn French as a child in a predominantly German speaking environment. And she has good memories of her daughter getting deeper into the French language when spending her summer vacations with her maternal grandparents in France.

But Amélie Métraux can be regarded as a pioneer in a different sense, too, and that is why we have decided to start our discussion by turning to her: She paved her way to Germany and to the German city in which she has taken root already during her youth, and all by herself, i.e. after her family's return from the United States – a time when she found it difficult to feel at home in the small French town

in which her family had settled. We would like to illustrate this phase of her life by quoting from our sequential report on the narrative interview with her:

> A big turning point in Amélie Métraux's educational career – but beyond that: a decisive point in her life – is the acquisition of the German language (as a second foreign language) in seventh grade. Since she is able to speak English (as a bridge to German) like her mother tongue and because of her family's favourable disposition to things German[3] she learns the German language quite easily and is very interested in it. During this phase of her life she likes to watch a TV program (run by Albert Raisner, a French entertainer and harmonica-player) called "Rendez-vous sur le Rhin" in which French and German pop singers participate – a program which she *"really absorbed, (...) I never had the opportunity to hear or read German."* When the moderator tells the audience that the program might be helpful to arrange contacts with pen-friends in Germany, Amélie Métraux writes right away and gets into contact with a girl from a big German city – the city where she, Amélie Métraux, has been living at the time of the interview for many decades. (Her former pen-friend is still her best friend in this city at the time of the interview.)
>
> Amélie Métraux and the German girl become close friends, a process which the interviewee recollects vividly and in a detailed way, e.g., when she remembers how her grandfather, the son of her German great-grandmother, had hosted her shy and clumsy friend in Paris on her first visit to France without speaking any German himself. (She tells about this episode in a humorous way and gives the impression as if she had participated in this encounter herself.) The narrator is still enthusiastic when looking back at how both of them had helped each other to get into the other's language and culture. *("We got along very well right from the beginning. She had an immense interest in France and I had an immense interest in Germany.")* When she and her friend (who became a teacher of French and Spanish) look back at this time together they enjoy telling each other that they had somehow antedated sophisticated pedagogic concepts (of *"tandem teaching"* etc.) in an intuitive way *("we were really born language teachers")*. During this time in the sixties they visit each other in Germany and France several times and only speak the language of the country where they just happen to be, etc. They also help each other with their preparations for their final exams in high school and seem quite successful in tutoring each other, since both of them get very good marks in the respective language exams. – In looking back she celebrates something like a special affinity between her and her friend and a European enthusiasm: *"And for us Europe was always/ that was somehow always/ well, as I said, this positive idea which I had about Germany was still intensified, since I was hosted very warmly."*

We will not go deeper into her biography at this point, but would just like to mention that her close relationship with her German friend developed into a deep link with this particular city[4]. There are different aspects which we found

[3] Her paternal great-grandmother had come from Germany "as a young girl"– a fact which is being kept alive in family narratives: "So she had been the first one who had gone to Europe."

[4] She spent a year in the German city ("her" city as she emphasises) as a teaching assistant during her time as a university student and decided to return for good because of her German boyfriend

intriguing: the fact that Amélie Métraux developed her own biographical action scheme of exploring something new (in a situation which she found unsatisfying and which involved the risk of her marginalisation); that she did it so early – during her early adolescence – and without any supporting structures of an organisation; that this process was marked by mutual intense curiosity and shared creativity in learning about the other's culture and acquiring linguistic competencies; and that all of this had manifold consequences, opened up new options and is still visible in her current projects, orientations and self-identification as a "European".

We would like to build on the case of Amélie Métraux to search for similar biographical processes which was marked by mutual intense curiosity in another European culture and language might take shape during adolescence, that this implies developing close relationships with members of another society and that all of this might have manifold and long-lasting consequences, also with regard to one's identity and civic engagements. When studying interviews with some activists of civil society organisations from Poland and England we discovered the relevance of cross-cultural encounters during their high school days which left a lasting imprint on them. We also found instances of the biographical significance of extended involvements during the "European Volunteer Service".

But the biographical processes which especially remind us of Amélie Métraux's experiences are those which can be found in narrative interviews with former exchange students who spent a long time (usually a year) in another European country: they lived in a host family, went to school and made friends in their host country. There is one important difference though: While Amélie Métraux *paved her way* to another European country all by herself, exchange students become part of a "program" and can rely on the supportive structures of an organisation.

Becoming and being a foreign exchange student means entering a sequential institutional pattern which involves applying, being selected, being prepared,

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and future husband, but also because this city provided an escape route from a unattractive life as teacher in the French public sector that had been pre-arranged for her by her parents without her real consent. Her life was not easy – she had to study again at the local university and take her final exam there (but she nevertheless enjoyed this time at the new reform minded university in a period of the aftermath of the student movement); she lost a lot of time with a doctoral dissertation project which was not well supervised and then discouraged by her supervisor when she became pregnant; she had a hard time combining her life as a mother and in the academic world; she went through a divorce (and remarried after some time), started teaching and finally attained a permanent lectureship at the university; the latter also gave her the foundation to pursue her new and current dissertation project, which she is enthusiastic about.

being sent away, staying abroad (i.e., living in a family of strangers and attending a new school in a foreign language) and coming home. While sequential institutional patterns can certainly facilitate one's orientation in a strange new situation and environment, it might also be the case – but this is an empirical question – that it sometimes interferes with one's own action scheme and that it might even supplant one's own motivation and initiative which, as Amélie's experience shows, are necessary conditions for generating a sense of discovery of what is new, different and even strange, as well as developing a "methodology" of learning together.

In the following, we will therefore attempt to reconstruct and analyze the processes of *becoming familiar* with other European socio-cultural settings and belongings in the course of one's participation in youth exchange programs. "*Becoming familiar"* also refers to the experience and learning that take place in an *intimate setting of strangers*, that is, somebody else's family. This setting is characteristic as well as unique for high school students' exchange. The exchange furthermore takes place during *adolescence, a time of intensified questioning, reflection and shifting belongings*. We will attempt to consider these dimensions that are relevant to such intensive and extensive experiences of participating in youth exchange programs in our discussion[5].

We will follow how – sometimes – very interesting things develop at home again after returning from abroad and look at – changing – national and European self-identifications, as well as at a possible development of meaning resources and civic participation and involvement. Also, while becoming an exchange student is an institutional pattern which becomes increasingly common among European high school students, it is important to keep in mind the variety of the structural processes which can be found in young people's life courses.

[5] Birte Egloff (2011) describes a currently ongoing project on doing autobiographical interviews among the participants of several generations in a German-French youth exchange program. Interestingly, also in this study many interviewees trace back their adult involvement in different kinds of intercultural activities and partnerships to their high school exchange experience (Egloff 2011:129). Karin Reindlmeier's study (2010) on diversity awareness is based on participant observation in youth encounters; however, these are short-term encounters between young people from different countries and do not involve an extended stay in another country. Among the – few – quantitative studies we could locate on the experience of youth exchange we found those of Alexander Thomas, a Regensburg psychologist, interesting (Thomas 2008–2010). Very helpful for us in understanding the history, praxis and concepts of international youth exchange have been the study of Andreas Thimmel (2001), of Rudolf Leiprecht (2001) and the writings of Manuela du Bois-Reymond (1999 with S. Hübner-Funk, 2007, and undated).

Anja Schröder-Wildhagen and we conducted seven narrative interviews with former exchange students from Germany – alumni of one of the big non-commercial youth exchange organisations – who spent one year in another European country (mostly Scandinavian countries, but also France) and one interview with a young man who had spent a year in England as a member of the European Volunteer Service. Of course this is a specific sample: Since we got to know our interviewees through an exchange organisation most of them happen to be quite active in the organisation and in some related endeavours. We will also make use of five interviews which were given to us from our colleagues from Poland and Wales[6]. These interviews sometimes contain interesting contrasts with our German materials which we will refer to in between.

Most of our interviewees were still university students; the memory of their year abroad during high school was still quite fresh. Our special focus is on what has been happening around this year abroad when they were between sixteen and eighteen years old.

2. BIOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS

When thinking of the collective, familial, and biographical conditions which contribute to Amélie Métraux's early action scheme of trying to make new friends in another European country several things come to mind: especially her family's history of emigrating (a few years after the end of the Second World War) and re-migrating, the favourable image of Germany as part their own family heritage – an ancestor had come from Germany – which is kept alive in family story-telling[7], and Amélie's difficult situation as an adolescent in a French environment which appears alien to her[8]. She constructs Germany as an interesting and attractive

[6] We would like to thank Kaja Kaźmierska and Marta Kowalska for bringing these interviews to our attention.

[7] Her remarks reveal the importance of family story-telling in constructing and discovering "where we are from and what's special about us". Even though she does not comment on it explicitly, her great-grandmother had left Germany for France when the two countries still regarded each other as arch-enemies. As the narrator comments, her family's positive image of "Germany and the Germans" had not been a matter-of-course among members of the older generation, especially in the North of France where the family had been at home.

[8] At this point we would also like to mention that Lyudmila Nurse pointed out to us "that Amélie was already an inter-cultural communicator by the time she established her interest in Germany. She grew up in the U.S.A. and Canada, with the latter having a long tradition of bi-lingualism. Therefore, I do not think that 'paving' her way to another country was a biographical 'accident'

place, e.g., by watching a TV program which features French and German pop singers together[9].

The analysis of our sample of former foreign exchange students who had gone abroad during their adolescence thirty or more years after Amélie Métraux' paving her way to Germany for the first time also reveals different collective, familial and biographical conditions which one has to take into account when trying to understand how a special receptivity for and interest in the idea of spending a year in another European country emerged in the first place. For most young people who consider spending a year abroad as exchange students the United States of America is still the No. 1 place to go, kids who want to go to another European country are still a minority. But it would be mistaken to assume that they are a distinct subgroup right from the start. There are many contingencies which come into play when applicants mark countries (in Europe or outside of Europe) in their application papers and state their priorities. In any case some of our narrators mention (in looking back at this phase of their lives) that they found it attractive to spend a year in a country which was not too far away from Germany but seemed sufficiently different at the same time.

But we are running ahead of our story. At this point we are just focusing on the biographical conditions for the emergence of a disposition for such a project in general[10]. In comparing our interviews the following conditions could be discovered (conditions which sometimes overlap and interact with each other):

• An early exposure to and friendly interest in people who seem to be different: Narrators talk about experiences in nursery and elementary school with other chil-

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for a person like her, taking into consideration the time line of her biographical experience, of emigration and exposure to a multi-lingual environment in her childhood."

[9] Lyudmila Nurse who has done extensive research on the role of music in identity making suggested that it might be worthwhile to analyse the TV program which Amélie had watched in order to shed light on her biographical decision. As she remarked, "music unites people more than anything because it is extremely emotional and because your heart is open and susceptible to influence."

[10] Of course there are ambitious parents who impose such an action scheme of becoming a foreign exchange student at high school age on their children (for different reasons). One interviewee who became active in her organisation as a volunteer mentioned that it is important to discover such things during the selection process since such kids would run into trouble if they had not identified with such a project themselves. None of our interviewees had experienced such an action scheme as imposed by their parents, but some also mentioned that they were reluctant and had doubts in between about the wisdom of going abroad – especially when there were delays in finding a family for them, when the first contact with the future family did not appear so promising or when they had the impression that they would end up being placed not in a major city but "in the middle of nowhere".

dren who look different, talk and act differently and whose mothers prepare strange and interesting meals. They remember their fascination and amazement with the diversity of ways of living. Hanne, who grew up in the inner-city district of a big German city, remembers that the pupils in her elementary school class who (like herself) did not have a "migration background" were a small minority. When she started to go to a grammar school (Gymnasium) in her fifth grade she found her new school environment much more weird and boring and missed the multicultural setting which she had been used to: "not as colourful and mixed as I knew it from elementary school". In contrast to such experiences of becoming familiar with "diversity" which are commonplace in many German schools[11] – especially in lower class districts of cities where a lot of migrant families are living – one narrator (Matylda from Poland) mentioned that her well-to-do parents had taken a special effort to expose her to an elite educational milieu which contained "diversity" as a program: a bilingual (Polish-French) school which tried to create favourable conditions for developing students' interest in another language and culture[12].

• An experience of marginalization in childhood and youth and the estrangement from a narrow environment. While Hanne, who had just been mentioned, found her elementary school environment exciting, she suffered from the milieu, the homogeneity and elitism of her secondary school and looked for a way to escape. Karsten suffered from the cold climate in his family when his parents became estranged from each other and at the same time he felt awkward, self-conscious and lonely among his peers. Frederic ran into trouble when he found out that he was gay and did not have many people whom he could turn to. He was looking for an escape outside of his familiar environment in order to avoid running across another boy whom he had fallen in love with but who did not return his feelings. In all these cases going abroad appears attractive as a response to a difficult life situation. Sometimes (as in Karsten's and Frederic's case) one could even identify a trajectory of suffering (Schütze, 1992, 1995), and then going abroad serves as an action scheme of escape.

[11] The fact that it has become commonplace does not mean that this development does not meet with fierce resistance. Recently a referendum was successful in the city of Hamburg which was dominated by upper class parents who were eager to overthrow the policy of the city government to provide for an extension of the time of joint schooling during the elementary school phase. Such an extension would have meant that children of migrant families and children without "migration background" would have spent more time together as pupils – and that exactly was a red rag to the promoters of the referendum.

[12] In Matylda's case this seems to have been successful. She spent some time in a French boarding-school afterwards.

• Different ways in which the family history and family milieu might become relevant: Some narrators mention that family story telling became important in creating images of certain countries and keeping them alive – also against the backdrop of the collective history (when, e.g., the father of one former exchange student vividly remembers stories which create a very positive image of the Danish resistance against German occupation during the Second World War). Memories of family travelling contribute to impressions of certain countries – this is the source of Hanne's fascination with Northern Europe – just as the lack of such experiences leaves its imprint, too: Zula, whose parents had come to the GDR as students from an Asian socialist country and who had moved to West Germany after the fall of the Berlin wall, remembers that her family had been exposed to heavy travel restrictions in Europe because they did not have German citizenship. Overcoming borders and moving freely in Europe became important biographical topics to her. – The case of immigrants shows that family history can be part of a collective history in different ways, or different altogether from the collective history of the country of residence. As qualitative-interpretive studies have shown, such a difference bears on belongings as well as political socialization (Georgi 2003, Mecheril/Hoffarth 2009, Inowlocki 2006).

• The importance of the collective history (as already revealed in the last example): This topic figured quite prominently in interviews with three former exchange students who had grown up in the GDR – e.g., with regard to the abolition of travel restrictions and the deeply felt need of families to explore new territories, but also in the context of sensing resentments against "the other Germans". Sven remembers that going to France as an exchange student also had the meaning of avoiding West Germany. Now – much later – he finds it is about time to get to know West Germany. It appears that similarly to the younger generation in families of immigrants "going to a third place" is seen as a solution of feeling like a stranger in what seems more "close to home". For young people like Sven who had been socialised in the former GDR, it seems that going abroad presented a way out of going to West Germany. (While this is different, of course, from growing up in an immigrant family, there might be a similar motive during adolescence in going to a third country rather than staying in the country where your ways or belongings are constantly questioned and publicly debated.)

3. GETTING READY

The idea of going abroad is sometimes introduced by parents, older siblings or friends who had themselves spent a year in another country and then provided encouragement to do the same. Young people learn about the availability of exchange schemes and think about countries where they would like to go. In imagining these countries and comparing them, their symbolical representations play an important role, e.g., of a "far away" versus "closer" country; of "north, cold and snowy" versus "south and warm"; of what seems a highly individualised choice rather than "where everybody else goes"; and of what the country's language signifies. When applying, they then also calculate their chances of being placed in a country of their choice: "Which countries do I have to mark so that I have a chance to go to a country where I would really like to go?"

As an example of developing fantasies about favourite countries, we quote from our sequential report on the interview with Zula, a young Asian German woman[13]:

> "When she was very young, the U.S.A. 'had always been a kind of dream land' for her, during her 'rebellious phase' (as a part-time member of a Punk scene) it had lost this appeal ('the capitalist America' had the 'image of the enemy'). She developed a special liking for Finland, especially because she did not know much about it. Even though it was still Europe it felt quite different. She recounts that she was active in constructing a positive image of this country: by using stories of her aunt who had shortly visited Finland; by selecting Finnish sportsmen as her favourite athletes; by interviewing a Finnish exchange student (when she was a member of the staff of her school newspaper) who compared Finnish people with coconuts ('hard outside and soft inside') – an image which she liked; and by being attracted to snow and the cold climate."

She is thus actively involved in turning Finland into an attractive place for herself. It is also important that this should be a place which she does not know much about, i.e., a space which is left to the imaginary, which she can fill in with her own images. (This relates to the key importance of "potential space" during adolescence, which we will come back to in our discussion.)

Here comes another excerpt from a sequential report – this time on the interview with Aneta, a young woman who grew up in East Germany. The following sequence also refers to her choice of a country:

> "By coincidence, her girl-friend showed her an information leaflet for an exchange year. Aneta renders their conversation in direct speech: Her girl-friend wanted to go to the

[13] Terms, phrases and sentences which are put in quotation marks within the following excerpts from sequential reports are taken from the respective narrative interviews.

> U.S.A., Aneta 'not at all'. She took the leaflet home, however, and from the 25 or 30 other countries marked Russia and Finland (she would have marked Iceland, but it was not listed). She says that she still cannot reconstruct her choice, she simply decided: 'I thought to myself, I do not need to go far away.' Without knowing anything about Finland, she thought the idea was just great."

The initial scene which introduced the student exchange to Aneta seems to be rendered in direct speech because of its ongoing dramatic content of decision, action, agency and change and also because of the epistemic potential of an intuition that was confirmed in consequence (she spent her year in Finland and regards it as a good experience). It seems that Finland represents to her a place as far away as she can go within Europe: a country she knows "nothing" about, thus representing a new potential space, but close to home.

The application process takes a long time; specific modalities differ among the organizations[14]. Sometimes applicants have to go to a hearing (this was the case in our interviews), sometimes they are invited to a leisure-time meeting, where they are also being observed by alumni and members of the organization at the same time: They have fun, play together, are encouraged to be open about themselves, but at the same time they are being observed – and are chosen or not chosen or put on a waiting list. (We have learned about these experiences from alumni of another big non-commercial organization.) This experience can be very hard, very disappointing and can also be burdensome or disruptive for peer-relationships, and close friendships might break up: Why did they get selected right away, whereas I was put on a waiting list? Do they present themselves more attractively than I do? Do they have a more attractive personality than me? Young people are especially vulnerable and unsure about themselves. The mixture of having leisure-time fun together and then being selected or not (on the basis of "my" behaviour during such a weekend) is a weird arrangement and can lead to lasting irritations among those who are not so lucky as the ones chosen right away.

After being accepted, the young people still have to wait for a placement. Sometimes their place is allocated very late before their intended departure (depending on the availability of families which have volunteered for the organization). During this time, the program participants have to go to preparatory meetings. We quote again from the sequential report on the interview with Zula:

> "Zula enjoys the memory of her preparatory meeting lasting for a week where she was together with about thirty to forty other (future) foreign exchange students. The narrative still reveals how much she enjoyed the special atmosphere: the many conversations with

[14] As mentioned before, most of the interviews were done with alumni of one international non-commercial organisation.

other students about their chosen country, for example. She was surprised when she learned that many of them had also chosen Finland. Zula was impressed about a lecture on democracy and the meaning of being a kind of 'ambassador' to another country, but the lecture which impressed her most and moved her to tears was the speech of the president of the organisation who talked about his meeting with Polish exchange students and the special task of German exchange students to build bridges during their stay in Eastern Europe (and to show that something has changed in Germany). She remembers (and is somewhat amused about it in retrospect) that she and other students who had chosen Western European countries almost felt somewhat guilty for not going to Eastern Europe. She remembers that she 'admired' the others (who sometimes stuck to their destination despite the objections of their parents) and felt 'egotistic' for choosing the easy road."

Going to Finland in fact was not exactly "the easy road", as it is very difficult to learn the Finnish language, but Zula was successful in this regard.

4. AN EXCURSUS: SOME NOTES ON ADOLESCENCE THEORY

At this point we would like to refer to some aspects of adolescence theory to shed light on some of the phenomena which we encountered in our interviews. While the concept of "youth" denotes a phase between childhood and adulthood that takes place in or between rather institutionalized settings during a specific number of years, such as between 14 and 18 years, "adolescence" is not defined in terms of an age period but characterised by the reflexive processes brought about in the individual's reaction to her or his bio-psycho-social transformations experienced from the onset of puberty. (In fact, some researchers consider any intensive reflexive period in response to a personal crisis throughout adulthood as a form of "adolescence", as undergoing tranformations with all the self-questioning this might involve [Mecheril/Hoffarth, 2009].

Experiencing oneself in "crisis" because of suddenly markedly different desires, needs, capacities, and relations with others was first seen by Erik H. Erikson (Erikson, 1968) as characteristic of the changes encountered during each developmental phase in life, from early childhood to late adulthood. Adolescence, however, constitutes specific challenges because one's parents are no longer in the centre of one's emotional attachments, but these rather shift towards other objects of love and desire, towards (future) partners in intimate relationships. At the same time, it becomes necessary to make plans for ending school and/or continuing studies that should lead to one's own professional choice and qualification. Importantly, shifting belongings also refer to one's relationship to shared, collective and intersecting notions of gender, social class, nation, and

ethnicity. Orientations and involvements change, access to and participation in public (media) spheres become of imminent importance.

As Erikson recognised, a "moratorium", or time-out period from fixed obligations and institutionalized settings is a necessary condition for encountering these challenges, thus a time when young people are given time and space to work out what went wrong and hurt them when they were younger and in order to imagine, find and create their own solutions. The concept of "potential space" (Erdheim, 1982, Bosse, 2000, King, 2002) implies such a "second chance" and, at the same time, offers possibilities of transition that can be explored. But the conditions for experiencing a "potential space" are unequally distributed, globally and also in different European societies, depending on forms of modernization and on class, gender, educational and political systems (Leccardi, 2006).

Adolescents characteristically experience things as though they were the first to ever feel and think this way, as nobody ever did before. Expressions of their experience, their perception and reflection can indeed create sources of "generativity", of shared innovation.

Beyond our very specific middle class sample, we can think about cases which we do not find in our sample, of young people who have restricted possibilities for experiencing "potential space". We think youth exchange programs should give more support for such possibilities especially also to young people in less privileged situations, because this constitutes an important moment of innovation in people's lives and in society.

5. BEING EXPOSED TO THE UNFAMILIAR

When we consider in which ways the time of youth exchange can be conducive towards experiencing "potential space", we have to take into account what it can imply to accommodate oneself to encountering and living with strangers. Living in a foreign country and in a family of strangers is certainly a period of hard work, because young people have to find their place in a new and strange environment, observing relationships and building their own in their host families. As strangers, they have to work hard to find their place.

There are moving examples of finding new possibilities of communication and a shared community[15] – and also in discovering a new spontaneity in oneself.

[15] One can find an impressive sequence about such experiences in the interview with Kalina, a Polish woman, who had been interviewed as a "transnational worker" by Agnieszka Gurdala. Kalina had spent her year as an exchange student in the United States. It is remarkable that she

Karsten, a young man from East Germany, had felt very lonely in his German home environment. He had a very unhappy family situation, he always felt awkward and like an outsider in his class. An important and recurring topic in his interview – and something which he still marvels at – is that he felt quite different when he went to other countries in Europe. When he first went on a stay abroad as a member of the European Volunteer Service[16] doing ecological work he still preferred to live on an isolated farm. While his need for retreat and privacy had turned him into an outsider among his peers at home, he felt accepted by his new peers when he said that he enjoyed living on the farm: They found this interesting and did not stigmatize him.

Of course there are prolonged experiences of awkwardness, irritations and crises, sometimes young people change their host family if they cannot overcome the experience of not feeling at home. In such critical situations it is extremely important to have trustworthy local representatives of the exchange organisation around: counsellors who might help the young person to see things in a new light, who encourage, mediate and sometimes are helpful in arranging a change of the host family[17].

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talks about the very satisfying and personally liberating experience of informality and spontaneity in her relationship with her American host family in a background construction (Schütze, 1987, pp. 207–235; 1992). The narrative context gives the impression that it seems to be something difficult to talk about due to her loyalty to her Polish family of origin.

[16] We mention him here even though his experience of a one year stay abroad differs in some respects from the experience of foreign exchange students who lived in families and went to high school. Similar experiences of a surprising new quality of relationships and a new relationship with oneself in a foreign environment in which one can start anew can also be found among exchange students.

[17] Marta Kowalska gave us the interesting interview with a young woman from Rumania, Daniela, who had come to Germany at the age of 14 on a "sports scholarship" because she had been identified as an especially gifted and promising basketball player who was attractive to a German basketball club. After her arrival in Germany she lived with a German family that was also involved in the social world of basketball. Living in this family was marked by extreme alienation and isolation, since the whole family arrangement was part of an exploitative project which can actually be regarded as a kind of child labour even though this was concealed ("sports scholarship"): As far as we can see, the overriding interest of those who had arranged her stay in Germany was to make use of her qualities as an athlete. – We mention this case here since it sheds light on the structural differences with a responsible youth exchange arrangement which is organised and supervised by a non-commercial organisation. In Daniela's case there was no one around whom she could turn to when life in this family became unbearable. Of course we do not claim that counsellors of youth exchange organisations are always sufficiently sensible and responsible. They might make wrong decisions which create turmoil and prolong an unbearable situation.

Changing the family sometimes occurs after they have had the chance to compare their experiences with the experiences of other exchange students. Starting to compare might happen already right at the beginning of the exchange year when young people have the feeling that the other host families who pick up their new (temporary) member are much more easy going and cordial than the tense strangers who pick "me" up. (Inge, who had been in Finland, tells about such an experience in a detailed way in her interview.) Changing the family is the most radical way of dealing with disappointments, but there are also ways of establishing rapport after initial difficulties. Narrators described their strategies of, e.g., acquiring the right to use the kitchen. There are different divisions of labour in one's own family of origin and in the host family, different systems of rights and privileges, different gender patterns. To give one example: Hanne, a young woman who had grown up in a feminist commune in a big West German city, was kept out of the kitchen in her host family where only the mother took care of cooking. She described how she devised a plan how to earn her way into the kitchen by negotiating with her host mother to cook something German.

In another case, a young woman felt some awkwardness in her relationship with her host mother. She then became very reflexive in establishing rapport, by her use of what she herself termed "rituals", e.g., by looking at photographs together with her host mother. In this way, she could do something together with her. Young people develop communicative skills even though it is not a happy experience all the time to be in a strange family.

When asking how such experiences become formative for young people we sometimes found that they develop a quasi-ethnographic glance, including an interest in small things. Inge who had also gone to Finland gives elaborate and very detailed accounts of Finnish cooking or regional diets. In our interpretation session of this interview, some of the researchers reacted nervously when reading such detailed descriptions; others were full of admiration of her interest in very, very small things which represent the other culture in her eyes.

And of course there is also an interest in learning about other national narratives, which is very important in the interviews with the former German exchange students, especially learning about the place of the Germans in these other national narratives through stories about the 2nd World War.

One might call this "the burden of the collective history", but of course young people going abroad might also experience that their country is something like a white spot on the mental map of members of their host country – something which is irritating as well (as our colleague Marta Kowalska mentioned with regard to the experience of Gosia, a young Polish exchange student in the U.S.).

The topic of the burden comes up in the interview with Hanne who had gone to Northern Norway, a region totally devastated by the German army. But there is also the surprising experience of being able to cope with it in unexpected encounters and of creating a bridge. We quote from the sequential report of the interview with her:

> "Hanne remembers that people enjoyed talking about tricks which the local population had played on the German soldiers. – A girl friend of hers told her they could be good friends, but she couldn't take her home because of her grandmother who had painful memories of the German occupation. (Hanne accepted this position of her friend, especially because of her memories of her own great-grandfather who had had Alzheimer's disease and had had difficulties in realizing the time in which he lived, e.g., expressing fear of black people.) When the same grandmother reacted very friendly and even enthusiastically when they met by accident, the girl-friend was quite astonished. Hanne was moved by the reaction of her friend's grandmother and her interest in Germany.

However, the inadequate analogy that Hanne creates between the stereotypical and racialized perception of her great-grandfather and the actual painful experience of the Nazi occupation is not clear to her at this point.

There are many instances of the burden of the collective history (as in other European countries) in the interviews with the narrators who all belong to the generation of the grandchildren. Even Zula (whose parents had come to the GDR as students from a socialist Asian country) cannot avoid the particular sense of humour of Finnish kids when they greet her as a German by doing the Nazi salute.

Another excerpt from the sequential report of the interview with Hanne:

> "The narrator talks about the stigmatisation and social exclusion of children of German soldiers in Norway until the seventies (in order to provide some background on the general atmosphere). People's reactions to her were marked by an open and friendly curiosity against the backdrop of the collective history. Many people talked about Haider's success in Austria. Hanne remembers her conversations with her host mother who was a teacher of German: Her host mother did not understand the critical stance of many Germans to their own nation. She said that she 'couldn't understand at all that it is not possible to say that one is proud of one's nation.' Hanne says this made her think. (The organization had prepared the German exchange students in stressing the Nazi past as something which was unavoidably 'theirs'.) Hanne said that during her stay in Norway she emphasized her pride in her local identity as a citizen of a particular German city, but that there would be nothing which she could be proud of as a German. Experiencing the Norwegians' pride in their own country had made her think a lot about why this was not possible among Germans".

This excerpt also illustrates in which ways political socialisation processes can take place during adolescence, namely through being confronted with the

perspective of the other and through comparing stances and positionalities that differ from those one is habitually used to.

Other exchange students – friends from other countries – become really important during this time. They develop some solidarity, some kind of humour by talking behind the back of members of their host society. They also become important by providing a chance to compare their respective life circumstances and thereby finding out what is particular for "my" case and what "we" share. Sometimes this is an important condition for finally deciding to develop an action scheme of leaving the host family for another family (if the organisation consents).

The relationships with host parents and siblings can become and remain highly significant after returning to the home country; sometimes young people lose contact or just stay in touch with only one family member. Sven who had spent his year as an exchange student in France developed an especially close relationship with his host parents. But his case also reveals which misunderstandings and disappointments can emerge in such a situation. When Sven returned to France for a two year apprenticeship as a carpenter (not too far away from where his host family lived) his host father, who had been ill for a long time, died. Sven sensed some disappointment of his host mother that he did not show the commitment and sensibility in this phase which could be expected from a "real" son – a problem which is still painful for the narrator at the time of the interview. He is happy that his host mother communicated that they still feel close to him and appreciate his attachment to their family.

The exchange participants sometimes encounter a problem abroad which workers and volunteers of the organization refer to as the phenomenon of a "virtual umbilical cord": Because of the availability of mobile phone, e-mail communication, facebook and skype they sometimes continue – and feel obliged – to participate in an (almost) everyday communication with their families and friends and therefore find it difficult to really familiarize themselves with the new and strange environment. The process of becoming familiar is being slowed down, if it happens at all. Their free time is being absorbed by moving and "being stuck" in already familiar networks which are being kept alive electronically. This kind of difficulty is a rather recent phenomenon which was unknown in the times of slow mail correspondence.

6. COMING HOME, LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD AND GETTING INVOLVED

Coming home might be a complicated process for the young people, their families and their friends who had stayed "behind": They need time to adjust to each other and to respect that they had gone in different directions and gathered experiences which are difficult to share. Narrators also mention some disappointment about a lack of interest in their experiences among those who had stayed at home. Some of them try to find a refuge in their everyday life which reminds them of their experience abroad and provides a contrast to a German environment which appears inhospitable. For two returnees from France and England who lived close to the Polish border, crossing the border once in a while and spending some time in a Polish environment and atmosphere provided such an escape route. For one of them Poland turned into a fascinating place in its own right: He feels much more at home there than in his German town, has learned the language, has found a Polish girlfriend and wants to live there in the future.

For most of the interviewees in our sample it remains important or becomes important after some time to get together with other former exchange students again; sometimes they get involved in coaching younger kids who go abroad. Coming together with other former exchange students gives them a chance to learn that they are not alone in feeling awkward in their old environment. The organisation provides opportunities for making sense of the year abroad, for developing skills for getting involved as volunteers (as team leaders, leading group discussions etc.), for time-outs (e.g., a "gap year" after graduating from high school in order to do voluntary work in the social sector when they are still reluctant to commit themselves to a certain course at university and feel they need time to find out where they want to go), for developing action schemes of experiencing something new and for discovering new biographical topics. For example, Inge who had gone to Finland as an exchange student went on a practice placement to Russia and lived in a Russian family for half a year.

The exchange organisation which figures most prominently in our interviews has developed an annual seminar which all returnees have to attend before going home to their families again: a seminar in which the participants are strongly invited to identify themselves as "Europeans". (The seminar which takes place in a European country is attended by all the exchange students who had spent a year in another European country.) We have the impression (based on our interviews) that this "bridging" event has become biographically significant for many of the former exchange students: something which sticks out in their memories as

something exceptional and something shared with others and gives some sense of direction to their future life. This is an excerpt from the sequential report on the interview with Hanne when she talks about this experience at the end of her year as exchange student:

> "Before returning home the European exchange students who had spent their year in other European countries had a Europe wide meeting for a couple of days (in Denmark) which she experienced as extremely exciting. 'That was the biggest festival of my life.' 300 European exchange students. 'And we did not sleep for four days.' About half of them were speaking German. The languages of communication were German and English. – Very exciting. They also had an official topic but she forgot what it was about. Very exciting that so many nations could have fun together. Every exchange student wore a tag with two flags, in her case: the German and the Norwegian flag. She says it was a common experience that students (like herself) felt closer to the country where they had just spent a year. 'It was something strange. And you could start feeling close to something which was not your own.' And it was totally irrelevant where you were from. According to her something like that only functions in such an environment and for a short time. Hanne says that it functions among members of nations which have traditionally not been friendly to each other. Exciting: the strange view on one's own country. How foreign exchange students told about their experiences in Germany and were enthusiastic. You as German could not be enthusiastic about Germany but about Hungary or Norway. – Hanne says that it would have been possible for her to return to such a meeting as a volunteer later on, but she never did that again because she wanted to preserve her memories of his special event. The seminar was 'such a sacred thing' for her that she did not want to attend a later seminar and have negative experiences."

The experience keeps on "working" throughout later life. – Zula sounds very similar even though she focuses more on (what you might call) the "non--Woodstock" elements[18]:

> "A week-long seminar in Czechia after her stay in Finland which Zula talks about enthusiastically. 350 European foreign exchange students who had just spent a year in another country plus volunteers. The impressive diversity of languages. 'Diversity of thoughts'. Extremely interesting. Overriding theme: human rights. Talking about it with so many different people. All young people about the same age. E.g., Finnish students who had been in France who spoke to French students who had been in Germany. Many people from former Soviet states. – Zula mentions that she developed a special interest in these seminars as a volunteer later on. She also took part in the preparatory seminars (for German exchange students). Developing skills in leading groups. Enthusiasm for the seminar and 'Europe'. Learning about different approaches and values, but common European project. Learning to make compromises. – Before the year in Finland Zula had no interest in Eastern Europe. This changed after the seminar in Czechia when she got to

[18] When reading the description Fritz Schütze felt reminded of the atmosphere of „evangelische Kirchentage", big public events of the protestant church in Germany, which oscillate between mega parties, political rallies, conferences, bible classes and meditations.

> know kids from Eastern Europe personally. Enthusiam when getting to know kids who went to Croatia and other Eastern countries. Her hope to 'incite a European identity'. – Later on she went to Estonia and Lithuania in this context.''

Subsequently Zula becomes very active in "recruiting" foreign exchange students in a "European group" (many of whom had not been in another European country but overseas and had become used to identify themselves as "Europeans" during this time), similar to the "Latino group" (returnees from Latin America who share and celebrate their memories).

Another excerpt from the sequential report on the interview with Zula:

> "In contrast to Hanne, Zula also talks about specific procedures in which kids had to take over perspectives which were strange to them (something which she experienced later on when she participated in these seminars as a volunteer). That's what she says right at the end of her narrative: Parliament simulation at the seminar for young Europeans of her youth exchange organisation. Students had to represent their host countries in a 'parliament'. They were really good at it. (E.g., topic of homosexual marriages. Kids taking over a 'hard core' official Polish perspective, even though they were much more liberal personally). Impressive. A representative of the European Commission who was present said that he was thankful for having had the chance to see this. In Brussels he would see the 'Europe of words', here he could see the 'lived Europe'. Europe in its diversity. No one asks for consensus. She talks about a 'Streitkultur' (an atmosphere of constructive debate), but also fairness. Seeing the young people as European citizens. What is handed down to them today will carry fruits tomorrow. As she says, 'That's great for me.'"

The performative quality is noticeable here: They talk about Europe, reconciliation etc., but use procedures of a European arena at the same time.

These and other sequences of the sequential report on Zula's interview led one reader to the critical assessment that she is merely a "mouthpiece" of the organisation (selling its ideology), but we are convinced that she is not. Her enthusiasm about these experiences is deeply rooted in her own biography as a member of a migrant family from a distant country which could not take free travelling in Europe for granted. Among our interviewees she is the one who is most committed to and outspoken about a European project (values, procedures of a free debate etc.) that also includes a deep concern about the discrimination of minorities and about a "fortress of Europe" which tries to erect walls at its borders.

Some of the former exchange students develop a "recreational career" within the organisation (cf. the interviews with Zula, Hanne, Aneta and Inge), but of course there are manifold consequences of the year abroad beyond their volunteering work for the organisation – consequences which are visible in decisions, activities and commitments: e.g., the choice of their course of studies, biographical projects, further stays abroad (Erasmus etc.) and a strong European orientation,

e.g., a fascination with the particularities and the language of a neighbour country that reminds us of Amélie Métraux's professional project, which we mentioned in the beginning. Some of our interviewees, especially Zula, Hanne and Aneta, developed a strong European self-identification and a non-intrusive and undogmatic "mission" to promote a European collective identity and to engage in what one might call *"European neighbourhood work"*. Their year abroad, but also cross cultural experiences afterwards (especially in the context of counselling and accompanying (future) exchange students and returnees), serve as resources for keeping such projects alive and for giving meaning to them.

7. MORE GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

In concluding, we would like to raise some theoretical as well as practical considerations with regard to youth exchange programs and related conditions of developing European orientations and belongings. First of all, we would like to emphasize the significance of going and staying abroad in terms of a "potential space" during adolescence. As we have tried to show, having such a possibility can enable biographical "repair work" of what was difficult and remained unresolved in one's own family and regular place of residence. It can also literally open up new horizons and put young people into a position of finding themselves in a strange place and developing meaningful ways of communication. When things go well, especially with the members of their host family and the school they attend – many passages in our sample of interviews relate to the school experience abroad, mostly very positively, something we could not go into here – this encourages young people to attempt an understanding from within the country they have come to. This can include learning difficult and unfamiliar languages (such as Finnish), noticing local customs and ways, and understanding historical narratives based on very different experiences than those known from home. (Since our sample mostly consisted of program participants from Germany, the history of the 2nd World War came up in countries that had been occupied by Nazi Germany.)

Such learning processes take time. Our interviewees critically comment on certain short term arrangements, or arrangements which don't really "pull" young people into the local environment and culture. In this regard there are a lot of similarities between extended youth exchanges in family settings and placements in the context of the European Volunteer Service (as in the interviews with Karsten and Magda), which entail serious (ecological, social) work projects and commitments within the local community abroad. These would present favourable

conditions and processes for fostering new belongings and generate orientations and self-identifications with more than one European country. To work this out, it is also important to provide spaces for making sense of the year abroad and to engage in biographical work (in the interview with Inge it was mentioned that after her return her organisation did not provide enough opportunities for such self-reflection and that she had to turn to another organisation).

In the cases we discussed here we found sometimes emphatic self-identifications as Europeans. We understand this as an experience based "grounding" for participating in the arena discourses and debates of what we have termed "European mental space" in our EUROIDENTITIES research project. Young people develop different kinds of images of Europe, as very elaborately expressed by Zula and Amélie. In Inge's narrative we find a deep appreciation of the European Union as a place where the rule of law exists and minorities are protected (something which comes up for her when travelling with other young people through parts of the former Soviet Union).

With regard to policy implications for youth exchange we strongly suggest to make use of the ideas and suggestions of former participants. There is a lot of practice wisdom of volunteers and workers of such organisations which should be taken into account (cf. the organization of the bridging seminar at the end of the exchange students' year abroad, which often becomes a biographically significant event and serves to strengthen a personal and collective self-identification as European). Then, we see a bias favouring young people from middle class backgrounds in exchange programs (Thomas, 2008–2010), while especially such an experience abroad could provide remedies for the original biographical situation and as a possibility for a "second chance". We would thus want to emphasize the need for critical self-reflexion of the middle-class bias in supporting stays abroad and of possible traps in selecting procedures.

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EDUKACYJNA WYMIANA MŁODZIEŻY I ZWIĄZANE Z NIĄ PROCESY W PERSPEKTYWIE BIOGRAFICZNEJ

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiamy analizę przypadku Francuzki, która "wydeptała" swoją drogę od niemieckości ku europejskości a następnie przechodzimy do analizy biografii współczesnych młodych ludzi, którzy spędzili rok w jednym z krajów europejskich w ramach wymiany edukacyjnej. Wiąże się to z koniecznością wejścia w określony wzorzec instytucjonalny obejmujący: aplikację, wybór, przygotowania do wyjazdu, wysłanie do innego kraju, przebywanie za granicą (u obcej rodziny i w obcym środowisku szkolnym), powrót do domu. Wskazujemy na specyficzne uwarunkowania biograficzne wpływające na znaczenie wyjazdu, który przypada na czas adolescencji, co wiąże się z określonymi konsekwencjami biograficznymi zwłaszcza w wymiarze zaangażowania w międzynarodowe projekty, pracę nad tożsamością i budowanie identyfikacji europejskiej. W części końcowej analizujemy bardziej ogólne (praktyczne i teoretyczne) rezultaty badań w oparciu o inne materiały zebrane w ramach projektu Euroidentieties.

Słowa kluczowe: wymiana młodzieży, adolescencja, potencjalna przestrzeń, historia kolektywna, bycie Europejczykiem

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BIOGRAPHICAL CONSEQUENCES OF WORKING ABROAD IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN MENTAL SPACE CONSTRUCTION

Abstract

Bringing to the fore the "bottom-up" perspective, i.e., the view of experiencing individuals, this article differentiates between types of work-related migration and mobility and discusses their biographical consequences in the context of the creation of European mental space. The findings based on a detailed analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews with transnational workers prove that a considerable number of people leave their country of origin for other than economic reasons. Among issues covered particular attention is given to two motives behind migration: "escape from" overwhelmingly unbearable life circumstances and "escape to" Europe in search for space of individual expression and development. Moreover, the paper considers the phenomenon of reconciliation with one's country of origin as an aftermath of experiencing cultural otherness. It is, however, pointed out that migration or mobility reduced to work practices only is not a sufficient condition for the development of "European" identifications.

Key words: transnational work, migration, mobility, biography, European mental space, reconciliation.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with questions of how, and to what extent, *working abroad* (or *transnational work*) and being this way exposed to non-native (in the sense of national, or – generally – culturally specific) forms of life is likely to

be a vehicle of Europeanization understood in terms of a process through which a European mental space and European identifications may emerge[1].

In the 90's decade of the last century, as well as in the first decade of the new millennium, various concepts and theories of transnationalism have emerged in the field of migration studies as one of the most influential perspectives on cross-border networks and connections that link migrants with the countries of their origin [cf., e.g. Portes, Guarnizo, Landolt, 1999, Faist, 2000; Vertovec, 2009]. On the one hand, the phenomena of transnational ties relate to labour migration and mobility and, on the other hand, to identity work (identity formation and change). The perspective of transnationalism has proven useful for the purpose of our study, the more so as the gathered data allow, at least in part, for a reconstruction of such networks.

Yet, although we use the term "transnational workers" to refer to one of the basic aggregate categories delineated for the project, it does not necessarily mean that the term "transnational" is applied here with an intention of looking for an affinity of our approach to particular theories developed within that perspective. Thus, in the most general and theoretically non-specific sense, we define "transnational workers" as people whose work activities abroad are, have been or were considerably long lasting to result in biographically relevant experiences. In our analysis we also refer to the cases in which transnational work is interrelated with other categories – "Educationally Mobile", "Cultural Contacts" and "Civil Society Workers"[2]. We have found these cases particularly analytically and theoretically rich what enables us to formulate the conviction that social and cultural meaning of work may successfully develop when the world of work interacts with other dimensions of individuals' social activity.

In this paper we intend to present general overlook based on the analysis of all the interviews which is undertaken in frames of work as the narrator's biographical experience. We especially focus our attention on motives of mobility and consequences of these biographical situations in which work is not a primary reason for going abroad. Furthermore, we examine the phenomenon of reconciliation with one's country of origin appearing in life histories in the context of educational and work experiences.

[1] The data base consists of 67 autobiographical narrative interviews carried out mostly with educated persons of the European stem, which may rightly be seen as a shortage of the sample. Among the interviews there are 27 cases, in which category of transnational workers has been found interrelated with other categories, i.e., Educationally Mobile, Cultural Contacts and Civil Society Organizations in a significant way.

[2] Among the interviews there are 27 cases, in which category of transnational workers has been found interrelated with other categories.

2. MOTIVES OF MOBILITY

Seen from the biographical perspective, mobility should be analysed in terms of specific biographical choices (and thus meanings given by individuals to their actions and experiences), as well as cultural, economic and political circumstances that constitute frames for the individuals' activities.

Since the core category of our analysis is 'work abroad', it has been important to find out in what contexts the theme of transnational work occurs and what meaning the experience of working abroad gains in an individual biography. Our collection of data allows for distinguishing two types of motives. One of them relates to the situation in which work as such is a primary reason for mobility. Another type is connected with the situation in which narrators look for a job abroad as a result of biographical plans other than those orientated to work. In such cases we treat work as a secondary motive. It should be stressed that these reasons are distinguished as the result of analytical procedure. This means that the narrators often do not literally name these experiences as motives for mobility, but the structural text analysis enables identifying specific meanings given by the narrators to their experiences, plans and expectations. Accordingly, each decision of going abroad made in a specific moment in one's life constitutes a turning point [Strauss, 1959] implying various biographical consequences. In both cases European mental space plays an important role for designing biography and interpretation of personal experiences. According to Fritz Schütze, European mental space is conceived of as: "an overarching stock of knowledge and shared mindset that enables European citizens to transgress all types of borders between the national realms. A European mental space provides horizons of competitive or emulative comparison between achievements in terms of the standard of living in different European nations and in terms of chances for biographical plans and undertakings [...]." [Schütze, Schröder, Nagel, no publishing date].

2.1 Work as a primary motive

2.1.1 Traditional *for bread*

Working abroad in order to make living has been one of the most common reasons for emigration related to differences between countries defined in terms of economic prosperity. Thus, this kind of motive has usually involved a sort of a push mechanism [Ravenstein, 1889; Lee, 1966] connected with collective macro-structural conditions which are experienced by individuals as unbearable. In such cases people try to move beyond desperate circumstances in which they

feel to be forced into a tight corner (being in urgent needs, lacking financial or other means of subsistence). We call this motive *traditional* because it describes a classic model of economic migration. Although differences between economic potential of Western and Eastern Europe, though gradually decreasing, remain significant[3], people rarely go abroad being forced by extreme poverty.[4] A classical example of "traditional for bread" migration may be found in the life history of Monika – a young Polish woman and a mother of three little children. She experienced a critical situation of poverty and hopelessness receiving no help and support from her family. Because of pathological and emotionally draining relationship with her mother she was left alone with her problems. Therefore, going abroad seemed to be the only solution:

> *And again I would have to stay alone and again to start everything from the beginning. And just the best thing would be to slash my wrists, or to murder the children and work then myself. Or to get asphyxiated or to. I don't know, or to leave them at an orphanage and then to cut my throat. Different thoughts were coming because when you have no possibilities then. then it's horrible. And my mummy called then. But when she heard that.. I didn't really want to talk to her but when she heard that Jacek[5] had gone to.. here exactly, to Ireland, she decided that we must have had so much. so much money that we didn't need anything. And I'm explaining her – "Listen, maybe you could send me some money, I've got nothing to eat".*

The quotation shows a tragic plight of Monika's biography. Her autobiographical rendering proves, however, that she fortunately managed to overcome her predicament. Monika's case seems to confirm that leaving one's country of origin in order to flee or overcome personal problems and experienced defeats may result in a positive and active biographical orientation. For her life in Europe has become a mental space broadening biographical opportunities. However, in other similar biographical experiences this may lead to a situation which we call "limbo", i.e., a process in which settling in another country does not alleviate one's difficulties and, quite the opposite, results in loosing social standing, shrinking professional opportunities and a consequent accumulation of constraints. For these

[3] It should be mentioned that in the European context this motive is still common in relation to migrants recruiting from really poor, mostly overseas environments. Here we concentrate mostly on East-West context where in our opinion most people go abroad because of 'bread with butter' motive.

[4] These cases are crucial for our analysis because at the same time they show biographical meaning of trajectory caused by dramatic economic conditions and specific biographical circumstances which got the narrators into a tangle.

[5] Jacek is Monika's husband who went to Ireland to support his family, but disappeared for a couple of months. He left Monika without substance.

individuals Europe rather blocks their biographical careers by means of illusory possibilities. What follows, is a systematic atrophy of interaction networks and spiritual sensitiveness as well as a systematic loss of life orientation.

2.1.2 Contemporary *for bread with butter*

Contrary to the traditional model which describes migration as movement from poverty-stricken areas to more affluent countries in order to fulfil basic human needs, recently transnational labour market is rather developed by individuals' need to become well off. In other words, contemporary mobility in Europe is not linked with the necessity to look for survival, but with the choice anchored in economic and social expectations towards the affluent societies[6]. The deterministic push mechanism has been replaced by the voluntary pull mechanism. Therefore, the analysis of material enabled us to distinguish another group of motives that after Ewa Morawska [1985] we call *for bread with butter*. As Grzegorz Babiński points out "During the last five years, this type of migration is becoming a global phenomenon and is extended not only to high gratification specialists, but also to less qualified workers" [Babiński, 2008: 25]. This social phenomenon can be analyzed from two perspectives: first, as a collective cultural trend based on a materialistic value orientation, and second, in terms of individualistic plans based on a post-materialistic value orientation.

2.1.2.1 Collective cultural trend based on a materialistic value orientation

It is widely claimed that economic conditions generate essential motives of leaving one's country of origin and it is taken for granted that people are rational when it comes to decision to go abroad in order to work. Moreover, it is believed that they carefully consider multiple and complex economic factors like: market opportunities, wage differentials across markets or possibilities of development before going to a foreign country. However, according to our findings economic motivations for transnational work are also rooted in haphazard, not always systematically calculated, decisions supported by collective images of successful work and life abroad.

The narratives show that such orientations are built on the very desire to improve one's living conditions, very often regardless of the type of work being done. We consciously use the term "desire", since while in some cases a well developed biographical action scheme may occur and be grounded in rational

[6] Still, in the European context the flow of migration wave continues to take East-West (e.g. the huge Polish immigration to the UK and Ireland) or North-South direction.

expectations, in many other cases that desire is based on a sort of the myth of wealthy and rich West (a "Promised Land"), created through the means of public and private discourses. Stories about successful and easy life abroad make future transnational workers think about the possibility of leaving their country. Therefore we call this phenomenon "cultural trend" based on, quite often illusory, collective images of the West[7]. Consequently, people are not prepared for many contingencies which they might be confronted with when reality of living abroad does not correspond to their optimistic or even idyllic images. Under specific circumstances biographical plan of having better life may be gradually replaced by the experience of trajectory [Cf. Riemann, Schütze, 1991].

Nevertheless, this motive and mechanism is strongly related with a so-called materialistic value orientation in the sense of Inglehart [1977]. A better standard of living is measured with the ability of consuming everyday goods. In narratives this experience has been presented as one of crucial advantages. Thus in many cases the motive of better income prevails over status and prestige and results in consent to downward social mobility while compared to one's social status in one's country of origin. The example of Maciej illustrates this situation very well. After a few years stay in the UK together with his wife, they decided to return to Poland. The experience of different life standards contributed to their decision to come back to London, though, having university degree, they still continue to work beneath their qualifications.

> *We knew that if we come back we can sustain our financial status and that it may be only better. Whereas in Poland everything appeared in an unfavourable light and an- and first of all that, as I've mentioned living on a shoestring doesn't suite us ehm and-and then we could see no possibility to be kicked upstairs and to have decent incomes, to* ***maintain our standard of living*** *here and 1000 zlotys wasn't really much enough ehm.*

2.1.2.2 Individualistic trends based on a post-materialistic value orientation

This concerns people who go abroad to broaden their education, professional experiences and competences, to build new personal and professional networks, with the intention of self-development [Cf. Inglehart, 1977]. Their choice of destination country is usually based on careful and realistic calculation of chances and long-term biographical planning. Going abroad is associated with biographical strategy of accumulating social capital. This motive is particularly visible in those

[7] It could be well observed in Poland, especially between 2004–2008 when whole social milieus e.g. friends, family members, members of small villages or towns, were going abroad to taste better life.

narratives in which transnational work is intertwined with educational activities abroad. The narrative of Maja is a good example of it.

> *So I had waited until we jointed the EU. And it was like that ehm…// I went there with a plan of improving my English [...] of finding a job in any office and when I come here (to Poland) I could apply for a better position, and that I would not have to start with this secretary position. Ehm… So it was the plan.*

In many cases this strategy of biographical self-development appears successful, especially when narrators have the ability of comparing different perspectives and implementing their knowledge in varied social contexts. Very often, when returning home, they become mediators or animators of contacts within the cultural space of European societies. At the same time this strategy may turn out to be misleading when one's orientation to Europe as a mental space, acquired and appropriated during one's living abroad, can not be successfully used after coming back to one's country of origin, at least in accord with the homecomer's expectations, like it was in the case of Maja, who expected that as a very resourceful and active person in the UK she would be able to use her cultural capital accumulated there, after returning to Poland, to find better chances in the Polish labour market. She did not take into account that her absence at home country would hold up the development of her Polish line of professional career and that she would have to invest much time and energy to take care of her professional position in Poland. This led her to a feeling of deep biographical disappointment.

Another aspect of misfortune in this respect is related to the situation in which individuals want to implement cultural patterns acquired abroad as much more effective than their original ones. They usually present themselves as emissaries of other, e.g. Western European cultural patterns, with no respect for home culture. Reni, a young Bulgarian woman studying in England, is a very good example here. After completing her education abroad she came back to the home university and had great difficulties in establishing her position as a knowledgeable and well educated person. To the contrary, she was treated as a homecomer who lost her loyalty to local environment[8].

2.2 Work as a secondary motive

People, who move across Europe looking for opportunities to develop their future career or to experience something new in the first place, represent those motives when working abroad is not defined as a dominant biographical goal.

[8] The same phenomenon is described in a written autobiographical story of Ukrainian scholar Natalia Pohorila "Touched by Transformation. My Life and Sociology" (Kenn, Mucha 2006).

In this respect, our findings extend the social and biographical profile of transnational workers to educationally mobile and in some respect to interviews of cultural contacts persons and CSO activists. Thus, among motives where work plays the secondary role in terms of biographical plans we enumerate: embarking on a journey, intimate relationships, escape from and escape to.

2.2.1 Embarking on a journey[9]

Embarking on a journey means one's willingness to undertake adventure and refers to "I always wanted to travel" motive and the feeling that "my home is not enough". Driving force behind one's mobility is here eagerness to travel and the need to learn, discover and explore new realms. This involves risk-taking, a readiness to test one's abilities and being open to and curious of other cultures. It is well illustrated in the interview of Filip – a young Polish man:

> *I didn't stick to anything for a longer period of time. I remember I earned money, I don't know, I put aside somewhere around one thousand dollar and I decided to travel the world.*
>
> *I: Uh-huh.*
>
> *N: Err… «sighing» Well my father since he had been travelling a lot too he also helped me somehow. And my first travel destination was Morocco, I was hitchhiking. Err and I decided that during this journey wherever I was I would just visit all the places. I mean to visit, well not exactly like a tourist does but to see what I'm interested in.*

Although the above quotation refers to just a small biographical episode, Filip's whole narrative is presented in the mode of adventure. Interestingly enough, the same narrative communicative scheme is used when he introduces the topic of work in his biography. In the story about establishing his own business on Cyprus he presents himself as a wager, *a humorous man* – using the notion put forward by Florian Znaniecki [2001] – who treats work as fun. For him it is the challenge to face obstacles what constitutes the sense of work not the economic profits.

Embarking on a journey may be related either to a *liminal* period [van Gennep 2004, Turner 1995], or with a Bohemian personality type as described by Thomas and Znaniecki [1976]. In either case narrators are looking for jobs abroad in order to gain financial means for their travels in the first place.

In the case of *liminality* we deal with the suspension of the routine of everyday life, detaching from normal course of things. This usually entails putting oneself

[9] The very notion of "embarking on a journey" as well as a sharp distinction between this cause of mobility and the "escape to" motive we owe to Ulrike Nagel.

to the test in order to prove to oneself and significant others one's independence, ability to organize one's life and ability to face challenges. This also involves the need to abandon home to see and learn other ways of experiencing the world in order to reach a new position in social structure [Turner, 1995, Cohen, 1979]. This motive had been well known in the history of European culture since the MiddleAges when students travelled to university towns in the frame of so called *Ausbilndungsreise*[10]. In the XVIIth century it was replaced by the *Grand Tour* undertaken by noblemen's sons as an obligatory element of good education (*Bildungsreise*) [Mączak, 2003]. In most cases it is still related to a specific stage of life course: being young, having no family, looking for education and/or some possibilities to work in the cultural convention of adventure which constitutes different biographical meanings to this kind of experiences.

The case of Bohemian personality type concerns all these individuals whose openness for new experiences is permanent and may be seen as enduring feature of one's personality in the sense of Thomas and Znaniecki [1976]. They are usually ready to experiment with different ways of life and do not fear otherness. Let us refer to the life story of Kostek – a young well-educated Polish man with a very good command of English who quits his lucrative bank marketing position and goes to Scotland in order to try his hand at working there and to take advantage of new opportunities. His case proves that random frame of biographical plans goes together with the willingness to "taste" different types of experiences also related to work:

> *They transferred me to London. I lived there for 6 months at a hotel, which to a large extent influenced my decision to give up this job. Mmm ... In the meantime I met a girl, I fell in love and I knew that I'd like to escape from the place slowly because a) working in this environment doesn't suit me, I'm stuck in London, I am living at a hotel, I am eating out all the time// This is London: cool parties, alcohol everyday, or every weekend ehm so I didn't find it amusing anymore, anyway you know how it is if you do the same all the time#*
> *I: #Well, yes#*
> *N: #at some point you're sick of it.*

This passage shows the complexity of the biographical situation in which easygoing and Bohemian attitude towards life is gradually transforming into more reflective biographical project. From the context of Kostek's whole narrative we learn that initially he was charmed by the metropolitan atmosphere of London.

[10] It is worth mentioning that the contemporary idea of students' Erasmus exchange supported by the European Commission is based on the Middle Ages phenomenon of open Europe universities education.

This feeling can be explained by the demonstrated in his life story openness for new cultural "tastes". Later, however, he finds out that this adventurous style of life may limit the possibility of building stable relationships.

Paradoxically, embarking on a journey motive though apparently not connected with work may appear significant for interpretation of biographical experiences of transnational work.

2.2.2 "Escape from…" and "Escape to…" motives

The "escape" motive is one of the most interesting findings in our empirical data. Its analysis shows that the perspective of open Europe and the concept of European mental space also appear in biographical situations which initially are associated with the experience of trajectory or at least deep biographical dissatisfaction. Going abroad is expected to be the solution. In other words, for most of the narrators the idea to go to Europe is connected with negative rather than positive experiences as a starting point for leaving one's country of origin. What is particularly intriguing is the inner dynamics of biographical experiences leading by means of biographical work from the situation defined as difficult or even unbearable to successful biographical solutions. In order to describe those processes we allude to Erich Fromm's [1994] expressions "freedom from" and "freedom to". Whereas the "escape from..." motive refers to oppression and trajectory the "escape to..." motive is related mainly to the opportunity to take distance to one's original culture, family and to separate oneself at least temporarily from one's old world and its *suffocating living* conditions. At the same time Europe seems to be a space that enables to cope with multiplying difficulties, suffering and disorientation in one's life.

We cannot fail to note, however, that "escape from..." and "escape to..." are a sort of a model situation creating a very diverse spectrum of biographical arrangements and solutions of each narrator. It happens that in the same biography the need to "escape from" may be transferred into "escape to" motive. Constant changing of meanings being the result of biographical work gives the field for constructing European mental space of reference and may initiate the process of repatriotization which will be discussed later on.

Escape from

The "escape from..." motive refers to an oppression and trajectory which is not related to economic factors, but to an individual's predicaments at home and local milieu (e.g. abuse and violence in family settings, experience of victimization). Here again we may refer to push mechanism which works as follows: an

individual being in serious trouble, distress and affliction (chaos and disorder) at home blindly fleets unless he or she finds a shelter. Leaving unbearable conditions behind one simultaneously faces empty space. Although there are not many cases of this kind in our collection, they are analytically significant because they exemplify a multilevel and intensive process of biographical identity work. The case of Monika, mentioned above, is the striking example of this phenomenon. Economic conditions and other biographical circumstances meet in her life course in an unfavourable combination that creates a deep trajectory potential. Her migration career development seems to confirm Eric Cohen's suggestion that individuals abandoning their homes in discontent, tension and often disagreement in search for "elective" centre may remain alienated from both (their home and "elective" centre) until they reconcile with their place of origin [Cf. Cohen, 1971:193]. At the time of the interview Monika is still overwhelmed by the experience of suffering and is unable to start the process of reconciliation. For her, going abroad is connected with biographical choice of permanent migration – it is the only example when the narrator calls her homeland (Poland) as a foreign country.

Escape to

The "escape to..." motive is related mainly with intentional plans of one's biography (biographical action scheme in Schütze's terms), which may differ, however, in their scope intensity and complexity. In this case, Europe as the pull mechanism providing a set of tempting opportunities, is most often conceived of as a space for individual expression and development, extricating oneself from subjectively defined emotional insufficiency and constraining suffocating conditions at home or local milieu.

A comparison of two contrastive life histories will illustrate this point: Matthias – the 27 year-old Swiss who leaves for Estonia, and Pauline – the 31 year-old woman who comes from a small village in Northern Ireland and goes on Erasmus exchange to France, later marries a Dutch man and works in Denmark. What differentiates these two cases is the narrators' definition of situation at home which makes their life discontent.

Paradoxically enough, for Matthiasthe ordered, predictable, sterile and lacking in spontaneity Swiss environment is a stimulus to go abroad. In his view Switzerland is boring and people (including his family members and friends) are too concentrated on their identity and faked emotions. His diagnosis of the condition of Swiss society seems to be compliant with the concept of "too much reflexive-self" as described by Giddens and Beck [Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992]. According to Matthias *the modern European society* is *polished and cleaned up*

and then put up on some kind of a shelf. The result is a loss of long-term emotional commitment, a receding sense of authenticity and disillusionment usually implying high biographical costs.

> *I still think that – it was mainly the interest for other staff that made me leave. I could go back there, I'd have a handful of very good friends. I'd have a caring and very, very good family of nowadays reasonable and nice people and I will have a regular, – average life in Switzerland. It would be more comfortable there, but I'm, I would just be bored to death. That's rather the reason why I left, I think. I was bored, bored of the opinion of my friends, bored of with ... yeah, boredom ... Yeah, that's that, about the problems I had ...*

As we can see in the passage cited above the interpretation of one's life situation as suffocating is always relative. For Matthias well-arranged welfare state is experienced as a sort of biographical trap. Thus, Matthias intends to get out of boredom and meaningless of routine and searches for new experiences, exciting places and interesting people. It happens quite by chance that he goes to Estonia where his penpal friend lives and is very much attracted by the country. He gets married there. His description of people in Estonia may be explained in relation to Ralph H. Turner's concept of task-directed and identity-directed self [Turner, 1968: 100–102]. Matthias himself is an "amused spectator" who derives enjoyment and reassurance from the fact that others live authentically" [Cohen: 189]. Moreover, he endeavours to take the perspective of the Other (the Estonian society) and becomes more committed to his new community. His life takes on meaning in Estonia.

Now, it is interesting to see how Pauline defines her place of origin. She was born to a traditional, Catholic family living in a *wee* and *boring village*. She describes her mother as a servant with barely any thought for herself trapped within traditional gender roles and modes of authority. For Pauline her family is as an external force imposing symbolic violence and tight control on her. While going abroad she attempts to free herself from influence of "suffocating" traditional values and cultural patterns of her Catholic community. Encountering alternative cultural patterns of life there results in her case in the rejection of closed role family system and the traditional working-class culture. She starts re-examining, re-evaluating and questioning her old values, taken-for-granted background assumptions, commonly shared knowledge and patterns of conducts (including religion and her mother's position within family). This is how her first encounter with Europe initiates critical and, according to her, more objective point of view. She is the first in her family to go to university, *trying through education to get better or easier life*. For Pauline education is a way of getting out of her modest family.

And it was also like a very /ehm/ small town... Catholic village ((laughing)) which was /ehm/ more and more /eh/ something that felt ... made me feel a bit suffocated./ /Eh/ Because, I don't know if it was necessarily because it was Catholic (and because) Catholicism brought its own sort of strict rules about it and (everything?) but it was also maybe partly a small town or a small, it wasn't even a small town, it was like ... I don't know, 700 inhabitants, so a tiny village so it was this sort of small town mentality and ... And I always /ehm/ remember like /eh/ growing up with people ... people tended to be very similar or, or have certain ... /ehm/ social scripts.

After some years of living, studying and working in different countries (France, USA, Denmark, Sweden and Finland) Pauline has come to realize that what seemed to be emancipating, fascinating and alluring at her first encounters with Europe, should be (re)interpreted and revised. Accordingly, the nagging sense of strangeness and the feeling of being uprooted became dominant in her biography. This made her aware that she had "lost a sense of centre" and consequently stimulated her capacity for doing biographical identity work. It must be emphasized, however, that it is only after the experience of liberating European space when it becomes apparent for Pauline how much she owes to her home.

The cases examined above reveal that this is not only a traditional (usually religious) way of living of one's family and local environment but also an ambivalent, person-oriented egalitarian family milieu, tidy and affluent surrounding what encourages individuals to escape (to Europe). To make this point clear: we state that "escape to..." may result both from the insufficiency of civilization and also from suffering from the surfeit of civilization. What appears to emerge from the analysis of such cases as an additional significant topic is a biographical process of reconciliation with most issues lying behind escapes.

3. RECONCILIATION

As it has been already said, the motive of *escape from* life circumstances that a person finds hardly bearable or annoying, as well as one's wish to *escape to* a place that seems to promise new and more satisfying life chances (which we see in many cases as dialectically bounded to each other and which we tend to distinguish in the data by pointing to the narrators' own perspectives, i.e., whether they put a dominant stress on the trajectory character of their experiences *or* on the orientation to the intentional action schemes), is quite frequent in our data collection.

Now, it is worth noting, from the point of view of the concept of European mental space that in most of analyzed cases the initial frames of mind which were

triggering the process of escaping (feelings of oppression caused by personal conflicts with one's social milieus, but also a generalized feeling of dissatisfaction because of life conditions and culture of the country of origin), tend to undergo, in an intensive biographical identity work, a significant transformation which we propose to call, to put it generally, a *reconciliation* with one's place of origin. On the microsocial level of one's collective affiliations this usually means an improvement or reestablishing of family bounds which were spoiled or broken. On the level of one's orientation towards larger social collectivities such a reconciliation may occur as a process of a *(re)discovery* of one's own place of origin, its society and culture, as a valuable frame of reference and identification regardless many of the country's limitations and shortcomings which were previously speaking to escape. In cases, when such coming to terms with one's own heritage refers to the level of nation-state and national culture, we could call it *(re)patriotization*, having in mind its non-conflicting modality which does not imply differential we-feelings based on ideologies and meaning contexts of nationalist character.

A good example of repatriotization in the sense sketched above is the case of Dorota, whose experiences in Germany, during her studies in a German Studies faculty, have eventually led her both to reconciliation with her family and to (re)patriotization of her overall orientation towards Poland and Polishness.

I: and then you need to go back and you have this dilemma#
N: oh right#
I: to come back or not...
N: Yes/ and because of the people, because I really met fantastic people and ... and really, I became mmm ... mc ... torn, emotionally too, because er ... I started mmm ... to feel that ... I// I belonged partially ... in Germany and in Poland// I mean, <u>for sure</u>, my stay in Germany made me realize that// that I belonged in Poland, that it's my home ... hh ... While studying here [in X], I kept thinking that sometime ... after I graduate, I'd escape abroad ...
I: uh-huh
N: because there were no perspectives here, no future, somehow I had this feelings ((deep breath)) But while in Germany, I realized that Poland actually is my home that I can't imagine ... mc ... spending my life somewhere ... outside of Poland ... I ... yes ... I can leave for a year, two or three, to see what life looks like elsewhere, but I will come back for sure, because, quite simply, it was <u>such a joy</u>, I remember, when I came back for Christmas, when I crossed the border and I saw those ugly, blister// blistered blocks of flats and basically ((laughing)) such a joy (+) to be home, well ... I was surprised myself err ... to feel this way ...
I: uh-huh
N: ((deep breath)) however, when it was time to return to Poland/ I realized that// that after all ... <u>despite those neo-Nazis</u>, despite all those stories ... errr (3) perhaps not so cool, despite the fact that I had to go those 5 stops to buy bread in Kaufland ((laughing)) and and all those different things that were not perfect in my daily life ...

I: uh-huh
N: or even that mentality of the Germans sometimes, or ... mmm ... the things to arr// when you had to arrange something at an office some// sometimes it annoyed me ... I could come five till eleven, and the lady would point to her watch to// that she worked till eleven. Anyhow, who works till eleven? ((laughing)) so, those things annoyed me, but when it was time to leave ((quieter)) I felt that (+) Poland is my home, but Germany is my... summer house ((laughing)) ... This is this summer house I've got, somehow, my second home...
I: uh-huh
N: ((deep breath)) and I felt torn inside err I had a huge dilemma, but ... mm ... as I said, I figured that, after all, I could learn more in Poland.

What should be stressed in Dorota's narration is that her looking back on the country of origin from the perspective of her living and studying in Germany results not only in her reconciliation work on the level of her individual and collective identifications, but also in her discovery of a particular place in Germany (her interests in the German culture and literature have been established earlier) as a *second home*, much kept in heart *summer home* of a kind, regardless reservations concerning conditions of living there and some initially experienced fears embedded in the traces of Polish-German collective / historical memory, known to her only through the channels of cultural transmission, yet still recognizable and alive.

Second home in this sense does not need to be a place of permanent residence. It means rather, as we understand the context of use of this category in Dorota's narration, a *domesticated space* in which, just through developing cognitively and emotionally relevant biographical knowledge of a range of contexts that once organized our daily practices, one may get a sense that a space, sometimes distant from the place one is permanently or most of the time living in, is basically within one's reach and can be used in a competent way, without a feeling of being estranged or alienated, whenever is visited. In this sense a second home could be conceivable as something that can partially prevent from the effect of homecomer described by Alfred Schütz [1990b].

Another version of such a domestication, expressed in terms of *feeling as if at home* in another country can be find in the interview with Brigitta, an Estonian young woman who spent in Germany a considerable part of her educational career. She is a 32 year old woman who studied in Germany within the frame of the European Erasmus programme for a year. Then she was working on her PhD thesis there for another two years sharing her time between the university and her husband and small daughter.

But in the background of this, did you feel that you shared something more with Germans now than with any other European nationality?

N: Yes, when there is a German movie on, then it is our, so to speak, home movie ((laughing)), for example, quite recently, just a couple of days ago, there was a German headline in one of our Estonian daily newspapers, wow, I spotted it immediately, and as the German language has not been integrated that well into our society as the English language, you will come across it more rarely. Well, of course, when in Germany I was a stranger, then in Estonia, Estonia, in a way, I am like a link to Germany for my colleague [...]
So, a kind of invisible network does definitely, definitely exist. And, and well, let`s say it without any doubt that German society is the closest to me. I know all about it besides our own, well, our home, homelike society. So the countries which are located physically closer to us seem to be much more unfamiliar to me [...]
Well but, in a sense of the environment... somehow, mmm, those differences, when I am still thinking about Germany, those differences in communication between people, well, they definitely are there, but they are very typical of, let´s say, their life style is very typical of that in Estonia. So that I didn't have the feeling that I was abroad at all. And I think, I was, I was really melting. Well, in the opinion of Germans, not at all, maybe they could understand it immediately in the street that oh yes, that`s a foreigner, but, but I felt as if at home there.

For both narrators the initial motivational frame of these experiences is connected with educational mobility. Yet, exploring these two cases with relation to work seems to be justified here. In the case of Dorota, her educational career in Germany, and *adopting* one of the places there as a second home, in a conscious and much worked-through, biographically grounded and symbolically relevant way, is eventually leading her to a choice of mediation/liaison work as a long-term perspective for *professionalized* biographical action scheme. Starting, in the time of her studies, from a loose metaphor of "building bridges", she is engaged now, as a translator and tourist guide, in developing a frame for such work not only in the context of Polish-German historical splits and cleavages, but also in a larger scale of the East-European relationships, looking for her own way to establish a frame for, so to say, mediation from within.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Our concluding remarks should begin with phenomenon of democratization which constitutes the frame of the described above processes. The narrators are aware that there are an increasing number of modes of life and experiences accessible previously to elites only which get more and more available and open to mass society of late modernity in Europe. The material shows that transnational work together with educational processes is becoming a main vehicle of this process.

The situation of transnational work shaped by economic and civilization inferiority often makes people from higher social strata (e.g having higher education) take up simple jobs. Whereas in biographical perspective this situation may be experienced as a brain waste and regression, at the collective level it results in: lack of orientation towards group solidarity (vs. diasporas) and empathy, successful stories hiding biographical costs, weakening attachment and diminishing loyalty to "we"– community (entailing systematic atrophy of interaction networks, social bonds and spiritual sensitiveness) / disengagement.

Furthermore, the findings of the research seem to show that transnational work, if not associated with any other "sensitized area of contact", implies also a weak involvement in public and civil society sphere. This usually involves the lack of interest in civil activities in one's country of origin, host society as well as in European matters in general. The very situation of transnational work, though inherently implying a contact with otherness, may not be a sufficient condition for the initiation of identity and biographical work. Consequently, in terms of individual biographical perspective, such situation impedes any reflection on one's collective belonging and Europe. To the contrary, when transnational work is accompanied by social involvement and participation usually entails very effective identity and biographical work very much focused on European issues. In the macro-social context we may assume that work, when reduced to the matters of labour influx, weakens the experience of integration and narrows the European mental space. The reduction of the idea of social integration to economic level appears to be a false image. Even if mobility always activates some identity work (by the very nature of experiences in new cultural and interactional frames), this work becomes much more intensive and productive in the biographical sense (also with reference to the European mental space) when it is related to participation in social milieus larger than the 'place of job' itself, thus, when it is not reduced to the sphere of labor market and consumption.

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KONSEKWENCJE BIOGRAFICZNE PRACY ZA GRANICĄ W KONTEKŚCIE EUROPEJSKIEJ PRZESTRZENI MENTALNEJ

(Streszczenie)

Wysuwając na pierwszy plan „oddolną" perspektywę, a zatem punkt widzenia doświadczających jednostek, artykuł ten rozróżnia typy migracji i mobilności związanej z pracą i omawia ich biograficzne konsekwencje w kontekście tworzenia europejskiej przestrzeni mentalnej. Wnioski wyprowadzone ze szczegółowej analizy autobiograficznych wywiadów narracyjnych z transnarodowymi pracownikami pokazują, że istnieje znacząca liczba osób, które opuszczają swój kraj pochodzenia z innych powodów niż ekonomiczne. Wśród omawianych kwestii szczególna uwaga poświęcona jest dwóm motywom migracji: „ucieczce od" przytłaczająco nieznośnych warunków życia i „ucieczki do" Europy w poszukiwaniu przestrzeni ekspresji siebie i możliwości osobistego rozwoju. Co więcej, omówione zostaje zjawisko rekoncyliacji z krajem pochodzenia

będące zazwyczaj następstwem spotkania z kulturową odmiennością. Podkreślony zostaje jednak fakt, że migracja czy mobilność zredukowana do samej pracy nie jest wystarczającym warunkiem dla rozwoju „europejskich" identyfikacji.

Słowa kluczowe: praca transnarodowa, migracja, mobilność, biografia, europejska przestrzeń mentalna, rekoncyliacja

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GENDER AND MOBILITY IN EUROPE: SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THREE ITALIAN CASES

Abstract

Gender is one of the dimensions where social and cultural differences between various national contexts are notably evident. In particular, non-egalitarian relationships, based on a patriarchal model, are still more present in less modernized contexts, such as Southern Europe. The increasing mobility within Europe coming along the process of unification, and the emergence of a European Collective Mental Space of Reference, through an intensification of material and symbolic exchange among the various countries and cultures, can stimulate reflexive processes of comparison and learning which can lead to significant transformations of identity. Mobility can represent a resource also for the (de-) re-construction of gender identity, activating a process of redefining traditional gender roles. In fact, encountering a context different from one's own encourages deep processes of reflective questioning about "who" one is or wishes to be. The specific aim of this contribution is to ascertain under which conditions biographical experiences lived through in contexts and relationships more sensitive to gender equality, may actually activate a process of reshaping gender identity. This contribution addresses the issue through the analysis of three biographical-narrative interviews collected in Italy as part of the *Euroidentities Project*.

Key words: mobility, Europe, gender, identity

1. INTRODUCTION

The literature on transnationalism has shown how gender constitutes a crucial factor in migratory phenomena. After a long period of obscuring the dimension of gender, which meant that migration was treated as an essentially male phenomenon, reflection – as a result of the increasing feminisation of the migratory flow – has concentrated on migrant women, or – more precisely – on the differences between men and women, to all intents and purposes reducing gender to the sex variable. Only recently has it been asserted that migration is at the same time a *gendered* and *gendering* phenomenon, as gender, in its wider meaning, influences not only the possibility of migrating and settling, but also, right from the beginning, the reasons for migrating[1].

The role of gender in mobility choices can be regarded as equally central in the case of intra-European mobility, if one considers that the diversity of gender relationships is still today a crucial element in the gap that separates countries where there is typically a greater institutional commitment to gender equality (the Scandinavian countries and Northern Europe) from those (like Italy, and in particular the South) where the patriarchal system (whose primary consequence is the persistence of inequality of opportunity based on gender, and a rigid division of the productive/reproductive roles according to sex) is barely being eroded. In the relationship between gender and mobility, in fact, an essential role is played by the *social imaginary* regarding gender roles, and this should stimulate us, on the one hand, to investigate more systematically "the ways in which men and women imagine that the gendered lives of their peers located within transnational migrants' social fields influence their agency, highlighting in particular their future acts of migration" [Pessar, Mahler, 2003: 828]; and on the other, to give greater consideration to the fact that "the growing importance of the Internet, sex tourism, and other global cultural flows showcases the influence on people's imagination about the rest of the world beyond their immediate locality, thus expanding the terms of their longings and desires" [Manalansan, 2006: 244]. In the case of intra-European mobility, the existence of a "European Collective Mental

[1] In this perspective gender means much more than being born male or female; in fact, it is conceptualized as a social process. "People do 'gender work'; through gender practises and discourses they reproduce and/or contest hierarchies of powers and privilege" [Pessar, Mahler 2003: 813]. As for social institutions and arrangements, they are seen as organized according to gender principles and reflecting different interests and hierarchies of power.

Space of Reference" [Schütze, 2011][2], which favours "making a comparison" across physical borders between nations, milieus, cultures, social atmospheres, and routines, as well as a critique of unequal life-opportunities and chances for "agency" in relation to multiple European others, certainly plays a crucial role in supporting the way people imagine gender roles, which differ from those experienced personally.

Also in the Southern European countries, and in Italy too, impressive changes have characterised the condition of women since the late sixties, thanks to several interwoven phenomena, such as the technologizing of domestic activities, mass media, a new youth culture, the political and cultural atmosphere in the years around 1968, the feminist struggles that brought to the fore for the first time the debate on abortion, contraception, divorce, and mass schooling. As a consequence of these phenomena, women born in '40, who were in their twenties in 1968, were the first to question the housewife models of their mothers. They were the first to include work as a crucial dimension in their lives, following initially the so-called 'communicating vessels' principle – where paid work is reduced, increased or left according to family needs at various stages of the family life cycle – [Saraceno, 1986], and then the 'double presence' model [Balbo, 1978], where family and work become parallel paths, and working becomes a right/duty connected with being an adult woman, independently of the needs of one's family[3]. Starting from this historical phase, the processes of transformation of the female identity and the aspiration to greater parity in the relationship between the sexes are ongoing. Also with regard to homosexuals, starting from the '70s – first in America and later in Europe, and in Italy as well – an increasing and still ongoing request for social recognition and acceptance got under way, addressing both legislation (e.g. the regulation of gay couples and marriage) and cultural policies (tolerance and acceptance of diversity).

[2] One of the main findings of the Euroidentities project is the emergence of a particular collective phenomenon categorized as the "European Collective Mental Space of Reference". Thanks to the increasing mobility and experiences of encountering other countries and cultures, a commonly shared sphere of orientation emerges, which not only affects individual and collective forms of learning and mutual understanding, but also enlarges people's horizons for comparison, stimulating a process of reconsidering their practices and expectations. The European collective mental space of reference, therefore, turns out to be very important for the orientation of individuals, and for the development of their biography and identity.

[3] The concept of *double presence* should not be confused with the concept of *double burden* that stresses the additional work burdening employed women who have also to carry out household work. The former concept emphasizes the new spaces that are opened, both in terms of life structure and self-definition, by the working experience as a 'normal' element in one's biography.

Unfortunately these new demands and claims met with great resistance in Italy, which remains a country where gender inequality is still strong and the recognition of gay people rights is still weak (if not totally absent[4]). This study aims to show how the tension that arises on one side between aspirations of parity and the acknowledgement of one's rights, and the persistence of an institutional system disinclined to support such a need for change on the other, represents one of the reasons of the centrality of gender in mobility processes. We shall argue, in other words, that European mobility can be seen as an instrument for (de-) reconstructing gender identity. But our analysis will also illustrate how the passage from traditional to more modernized contexts does not necessarily imply the possibility for a woman to become emancipated and for a homosexual to get rid of the stigma of deviance. From different biographical experiences and various resources available, unexpected consequences can arise, with heavy biographical costs to be paid.

2. GENDER AND MOBILITY THROUGH THREE BIOGRAPHIES

The relation between gender and mobility will be addressed by analysing three cases[5]: two young women, Maria and Nora, and a young gay man, Marco, all of them from Naples.

2.1. Maria – The homecomer: mobility as a missed chance

Maria is a 28-year-old woman born and living in the province of Naples. She has been married for about three years and has a child of 9 months. Maria comes from a lower-middle class family: her father works on the railways and is retired. Her mother is a housewife. Maria is the third and youngest daughter. She has a brother and a sister who is almost two years older than her. Although hers is a family of humble origins, education is valued in her home as a means of social upward mobility, fully reflecting a characteristic trend in Italy in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

[4] Although a long process of change in the social representation of Lgbt people, weakening the idea of "deviation" and gradually accepting their social visibility [Rossi Barilli 1999] has begun, Italy is still almost at a legislative level, due to the powerful influence of the Vatican [Saraceno, Naldini 2007].

[5] Maria has been interviewed as an Educational Mobile, Marco and Nora as persons involved in a cross-cultural Intimate relation. The cases have been analyzed using the "biographical narrative interpretive method" (BNIM) [see Wengraft 2001, 2008].

Maria's childhood and adolescence were fairly quiet, those years being marked by the regular progress of the school calendar. Nevertheless, there is an element which seems to have had a great effect on her life, i.e., the presence of an older sister, some 20 months older than her, whom Maria has always compared herself with. The arena for competition is represented by school, since the two sisters were influenced by their parents' expectations of educational achievements. In order to understand the relevance of the meaning of education, we have to take into account that in Italy, during the '80s and the '90s, also daughters were vested with high expectations particularly by mothers, dreaming of a destiny of modern women for them (able to be at the same time professionals, wives and mothers) as continuously proposed by public discourse on gender equality.

Maria's narration of her childhood is focussed on two elements: the school and her sister. From nursery school to grammar school, the sisters attended the same schools, and as Maria is the younger, she felt right from the start the need to overtake her sister rather than to *follow in her footsteps* as she says in the opening of the main story part: "*Then Giorgia was in elementary school and I was in the second year of nursery and for me this was so stressful ((quickly)). Then I moved up and she was in the third year of elementary school and I was in the first year. Then she finished and went to middle school and I was anxious to finish to go to the middle school. I was in the first year and she was in the third year and then she left the year after for high school"*.

In the years of adolescence, Maria starts a phase of distancing from her sister, giving rise to a form of incipient individualisation that will continue later with the choice of the Faculty: Maria indeed enrols at Modern Languages and Literature, opting for a University course different from her sister's. During her third year at university, she meets a colleague doing her Erasmus at R****, a university town in the UK, and decides to visit her. When she returns to Naples, she discovers she has finally won an Erasmus scholarship for R**** (in fact the truth, Erasmus is an almost obligatory step for those who study languages like Maria). Her stay there lasts around 10 months and Erasmus is a golden opportunity for her, because she can finally do something that nobody – not even her sister who in the meantime had already graduated – has ever done before her. Besides, staying abroad has a very strong symbolic value, since it represents the chance to gain a sort of status symbol [Bagnoli, 2009] in Maria's but also in her parents' and friends' eyes: moving abroad in fact constitutes a sign of belonging to the globalised society [Bauman, 1998].

The interviewee's experience abroad consists in study, work and life. In R**** she passes four exams with good marks, and works as a reception hostess

and cleaner, making new and important friendships. Thanks to the hospitality of a Hungarian girl, who has been living in England for many years, Maria is able to leave the university residence. At this friend's house, Maria can finally enlarge her cultural horizon: "*from that moment I lived a life not like an Erasmus student but like a typical English girl, i.e. we did English dinners*, *English barbecues*". The emphasis she lays on her experiences in that typically English cottage is strong, since they trigger mechanisms of learning deriving from the comparison with the otherness, nurturing that complex process of individualization that started in adolescence: "*it's as if -ehm- I had left behind the child always looked after by mummy always what time will you be back? and made way for the woman*".

The analysis of the overall biographical development of Maria shows how Erasmus actually represents a main ingredient in her attempt to beat the successes of her sister in the professional field, rather than marking a moment of discontinuity and transformation of her identity. The emphasis she places on the metamorphic value of this experience, often recalled in epic tones, gives her the possibility of cloaking her self-image in almost heroic terms. And even her love of foreign things, which is actually more apparent than real, fully corresponds to her desire to present herself as a woman, who, compared with her family, and in particular her sister, and her milieu, has taken on something new, a certain something called internationalisation: "*through this study and perhaps also through the study of the different cultures of different countries these things led me to be – led to this internationalisation of my personality*". The Erasmus experience takes on, in other words, the aspect of a strategy meant to overcome the inadequacy Maria feels in the family environment (she herself speaks of redemption). In this perspective, Maria confirms that "travelling can be a way to define alternative gender identities opposing the social expectations which spatially confine women within the restricted spaces of the home" [McDowell, 1999 in Bagnoli, 2009: 332].

In R****, Maria encounters a lifestyle really different from her own, but she remains firmly tied to her own network of family ties, and in fact all the people who populated her pre-Erasmus life are present even when she is there; the sister, the boyfriend, her best friend in Naples, her parents, all go often to visit her. Maria herself often returns to Italy, for the national holidays and her sister's wedding. Remaining stably anchored to her context of origin, she actually keeps her distance from those who have a freer lifestyle: the friends on campus who have *you know the love that blooms in the morning and dies in the night*; the crazy English boy who is interested in her, and even though he fascinates her, comes from a world where people *even if you get a boyfriend or you get married they are not things*

you take too seriously; and even the cousin who has lived in London for years and who is *in some way the person that I would have liked to be if I hadn't had this relationship with my boyfriend*. Nevertheless, the experience lived abroad constitutes an opportunity to begin an intense activity of comparison between the persons populating her pre-Erasmus life and the persons accompanying Maria during this experience of opening up her horizons.

The experience abroad finishes as planned and her return to Naples certainly is no source of pain for Maria, who even came back from England victorious, with four exams with good marks and a lot of international experiences under her belt which finally put her above her family. Her intention is clearly to capitalise to the full on the symbolic value of her stay abroad. Problems begin almost straight away at university, because the interviewee meets some difficulties in validating an exam passed abroad, signalling how the process of homogenisation of university curricula is still far from being realised. Maria suffers not only because she feels she has suffered an injustice, but also because her low mark for the degree – as a consequence of the difficulties mentioned above – cancels out all the previous efforts to gain credit with her family. In this situation the significance of the Erasmus experience is completely overturned, because Maria, instead of being victorious, now becomes a loser again: "*then also the fact that my brother has a certain type of job – my sister has a certain type of job … I'm the only one so perhaps I am the black sheep but what can I say? Then also this – my brother graduated with 110 cum laude – my sister with 108 and I with 98. I am the black sheep of the family in the end*".

The experience of failure occurred after her coming back leads Maria to flow back into the tradition, and the gender roles that tradition assigns to a young woman, as she is: she gets married, has a baby, aspires to professional ambitions more easily reconcilable with her domestic role (e.g. teacher) and continues to do "under the table" work, and completely unrelated to her education (she does promotions in supermarkets). Once again, the comparison with the sister makes Maria be a loser: her sister got married and had a child before her and she is doing very well with her job. The defeat is made even worse by the judgment of her relatives: *"also my father – an ignorant person – says OK, but these people are right because in the end you graduated to end up behind a table to stop people and say Madame take our card. But what can I do about it if I can't find anything else?"*.

Maria thus starts off an intense biographical work aimed at laying the reasons for the defeat outside herself (the Southern environment which offers little in the way of work opportunities, nepotism and special favours, the necessity

of looking after a child, etc.), and on the other hand a reassessment of a wholly traditional gender role where looking after a child and family values become fundamental pillars.

And also more recent episodes regarding jobs that Maria has rejected since they would take her far from home show how this woman has staked everything on the traditional gender role centred on the primacy of the family. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that Maria lives in a difficult context – such as Southern Italy – structurally characterised by high rates of female unemployment, lack of social services for children, uneven distribution of domestic tasks between husband and wife. Maria's claims of individualisation and redemption are abandoned and Erasmus is something of the past (*I did it for the experience but it finished there*). The reflux into tradition can be seen as an attempt to change not supported by the context: when Maria returns from the UK she is changed, but her *milieu* has remained the same.

2.2. Marco – The exiled: mobility as "conversion"

Marco is a man of 32 from a middle class family. He comes from a suburb to the North of Naples. He has only one sister, a bit older than him. After finishing grammar school, Marco enrolls at University. During his studies, Marco wins an Erasmus scholarship to London, where he later decides to go and live. In London Marco encounters his first male partner with whom he still lives, despite their relationship being over.

During adolescence, following a route rather typical of homosexuals in general [Barbagli, Colombo, 2007; Saraceno, 2003], Marco lives the first phase of his life, trying to ignore his condition: "*during the senior school years /Ehm / it wasn't really a major part of my life let's say. I had my friends and I didn't think much about the fact that maybe yes – yes I liked some of the boys ((quickly)) at school but not – I didn't think about it much because maybe yes you start to think bit by bit and you grow up being gay but I had decided that – it wasn't a part of my life that I wanted to go into more or that I wanted to follow up anyway. I wanted a family you know – a wife and children so I put this part of my life to one side at senior school*". In this phase he therefore dedicates himself exclusively to study, doing well at school and enrolling at the Faculty of Economics. From his narration, it appears that his life goes on quietly, without many friends, without hobbies, without particular interests. In a situation quite poor in terms of social relations, Marco's few friends, at least in those years, were all female, as often the case of gay boys.

During the university years, Marco continues his strategy of denying his homosexuality, a condition which leads him to embark upon a sentimental relationship with a girl. Despite this, over those years, Marco begins to realize the need to free himself of those institutionalized gender models that ended up trapping him in an existence that *sic et simpliciter* is not his. A signal of this incipient widening of his interior space is represented by the change of faculty: Marco in fact moves from the conservative faculty of Economics to the innovative International Studies, a faculty which had just been set up, promising a vibrant atmosphere and much wider scenarios.

The next step in this "expansion process" is represented by the decision to move to London as an Erasmus Student. This is a new phase in Marco's life, in the sense that the interviewee starts to feel the potential which the anonymous megapolis could offer in terms of expressing one's identity. In London, then, far from his family and the narrow social environment having surrounded him, Marco reveals his homosexuality for the first time to a female friend. The Erasmus experience has a biographical meaning that completely oversteps the educational aspect, since it has an essential function in the adoption of a strategy, widely used by homosexuals in Southern Italy, that consists in distancing themselves from the context of origin [Barbagli, Colombo, 2007]. London indeed is far enough in order not to force him to come out into the open with his relatives: "*I thought I'd have the chance at last to have – to follow up what I wanted from life – you know, finding a partner but also getting experience. Obviously when I decided to move to England my idea was to do it in secret*". Moreover, London seems to provide greater opportunities to live the homosexual condition more easily.

After finishing the Erasmus period, in one summer, Marco thus takes a series of definitive steps: he tells his parents that he wants to move permanently to London, in effect abandoning his university studies; he leaves his girlfriend; he tells another girl about his homosexuality. Once in London, Marco starts to frequent the gay scene, albeit with some difficulties: *"I remember the first time I went in a gay bar. It was a very... not traumatic experience but you know? The first time you go in a gay bar you don't know what to expect. You have all these preconceptions that perhaps they drum into you when you are growing up and so I remember that I was really nervous and so I went backwards and forwards in front of the bar until I finally decided to go in"*.

After some time, his new life in London begins to take shape and indeed he finds work, he attends a two-year course in Marketing, and joins a gay sport group, where he meets the man who will be his partner for eight years. In those years Marco can finally have a lifestyle where to be gay and live with another man is

considered as completely "normal": "*I get on very well with the neighbors who – you know? are very kind… are very… Yeah the fact that when we moved there and were – were a gay couple …I mean we were very well accepted as if we were a normal family I mean… a traditional family*". The process of Marco's identity metamorphosis goes one step further with his conversion to the Anglican church that, recognizing the autonomy of the believer in the interpretation of the Scriptures, matches well with his need of individualization: "*The Anglican religion is very much based on the individual so the fact of not having anyone telling you what to think or how to read a certain thing but the fact that you read the scriptures directly you know… and in a way also to interpret the religion in the most appropriate way or at least I think it is the way you can interpret it yourself*".

If it is reasonable to say that in London Marco succeeded in completing his biographical transformation, arriving among other things at a reinterpretation of homosexuality as a condition "no different" from all the others, it should be anyway noted how a lot of questions remain unresolved at home. At least until circumstances force his hand (when his mother and his sister announce they are going to visit him), Marco carefully avoids telling his family he is gay. Moreover, acceptance by the family is only partial, so much so that Marco never speaks explicitly about this situation with his father, even though he knows that he was informed about it by his mother: "*I told my mother but I've never told my father … she told my father and he asked her not to tell me that she had – that she had told him. So my father knew I knew that he knew but it is something we never spoke about. We have always pretended*".

Substantially, Marco experiences a typically Southern model of conceiving homosexuality defined as "repressive tolerance" or in simpler words "it happens, but we don't talk about it" [Rossi Barilli, 1999]; a model which he didn't have the strength to contest openly. Marco has never had the will to challenge the tradition. Rather than challenging his father, Marco decided to substitute the father figure: his partner, who is indeed a very well-off man and many years older than him, beyond playing the role of a "ferryman" in Marco's path of self-acceptance, takes on a role of protection of a paternal type. On the other hand, rather than changing himself – giving up the chance to express his gay identity – Marco has chosen to change the context where he lives.

Marco's story is an emblematic case of a journey of identity metamorphosis, played out between two culturally very distant contexts: the South of Italy and the United Kingdom. His story however is not without costs: the interviewee, in fact, had to cut ties with his past, making a clean break between the person

he was and the person who has become, thereby losing the opportunity to feel accepted in the context of his most significant relationships.

2.3. Nora – The mender: mobility as renewed continuity

Nora, who is 34, was born in a small provincial town in Southern Italy. Hers is a lower-middle class family: her mother is a nurse, and her father is a workman. She has three sisters, one three years younger than her, the others are ten and even twenty years younger. Her three sisters have never left their home town, and – except for the youngest one – they are both married with children.

Nora's childhood was marked by two significant elements: the constant moving around of her family from one town to another and the distance from her mother in the first three years of her life: she worked far from home, and only came home at weekends. Nora was brought up by her grandmother whom she originally called mamma. The absence of the maternal figure is an experience that still nowadays affects Nora, as her attempts to justify her mother show: "*This is something I didn't tell you, in reality -mm- the first… three years of my life were at my grandmother's, I grew up with my grandmother because my mother had got a job and was assigned to a remote village in the mountains, some absurd place with those roads we had in the South, in the '70s to get there and back was practically impossible, so my mother stayed there from Monday to Saturday -eh- in that town, and then she came back on Saturday afternoon and stayed with us on Saturday and Sunday, so -mm- I grew up with -mmh- in fact … my mother tells me that the first time I said "mamma" it was to grandma, not to her*".

Generally speaking, the girl has a tranquil childhood, as a small-town girl, even though, because of the constant moving, she barely manages to integrate into her peer group: "*I didn't really feel like frequenting people of my own age -mmh- it was no fun, I spent the whole day reading – and for my mum it was an aspect … the crazy daughter, the strange child*". Reading represents an important element in the unfolding identity of Nora, nurturing the feeling of being different from her peers.

Adolescence marks a changing point in her life. Nora begins a sort of distinction strategy, that is different from the typical pathway of girls like her (and her sisters). It's a process of individualisation, the first step becomes the choice of school, in fact – going against the wishes of her mother and unlike the typical choices of young people of her social background who normally choose technical education – she enrols at the grammar school (a type of school that leads to university studies) even though this means having to go to a school in a town far

from home: "*We are 4 sisters, I am the eldest … and well I'm the only one of the sisters to … who went away to study and who stayed away to live so the other three sisters live, all of them … in the town … or in a town nearby*".

Her detachment/distinction route continues, and even gets stronger, after her high school diploma. Girls like her don't usually go on with their studies, but she had made up her mind to go to university and, what is more, she chooses – again against the wishes of her mother – a faculty which exists only in Naples even further from home: "*I have always wanted to go away, to do something else, to move – and ... especially to study, I mean, to go to university. I really remember this … but since I was a child, since I can remember that I had to go to*". She enrols at the faculty of Oriental languages, and also the choice of "exotic" languages not only comes from her genuine interest in Asia, but also has a symbolic meaning: taking her far from the narrow world in which she lived.

Nora seemed very determined to pursue her objective distancing (both physically and socially) from the family. Despite having a block during her studies (she can't manage an exam for three years), she stays in Naples, and keeps herself doing all sorts of jobs (including menial work). During this period, Nora's difficulties, which will take her to the verge of depression, are not only about the university degree but also her sentimental life, as she has a complicated love affair, which will leave behind it painful after-effects. All the difficulties seem to be offset by the effervescence of the metropolitan context, which makes her feel at the centre of the world. In those years, Nora enlarges her cultural horizons enormously, participating intensely in the youth life of her university. In other words, she undertakes a process of learning and redefining the relationships with others: "*you could spend the day chatting with anyone, practically, from ladies on the buses to your friend from university – really … it was very nice – and in those years a deep change took place in me, a softening of… comprehension -mmh- learning to see the other point of view, to understand, you know, how certain arguments are foolish, to accept differences, not to take anything for granted, you know even your own truths or limits, you know … it helped me to grow up*".

Her distinction strategy found its main support in Mike, a Dutch boy in Naples doing his Erasmus, whom she began to date, and whom a year later she was living with. The fact that Mike is foreign, that she lived a sort of Bohemian existence with him, and that he already has a daughter (whom he had never wanted to meet, and did so only upon Nora's insistence) adds to her distinction. Her sisters are housewives, victims of routine; she is free and leads an alternative and interesting life: "*They envy me a bit and a bit … they think that I'm not quite right because I think … obviously, the fact that I don't have children -mmh - this*

naturally … -mmh- gets me out of a lot of responsibilities, doesn't it ? And also makes some choices easier, the things that I really want to do – they, naturally, are heavily restricted. In fact, I get the … I mean, I think that here, my home is a bit of a safety valve for them, you know … When they want a complete break they come two or three days here and have – quite another lifestyle, another timetable, other eating habits. It's all different for them, isn't it(?) and so … you know, I think they like – it's a kind of oasis here where they come to hide when they've had enough – of everyday life".

Furthermore, Mike also has a mediating function. On the one hand, the relationship with him allows her to follow the "distinction" path; on the other, it gives her the chance to have, for the first time in her life, a lasting relationship (the other important relationship was so complicated to have to remain secret), which makes it possible to restore the relations with her family: "*my pathway to growth was undoubtedly marked by my leaving my family, because … because it … a separation that … at a specific time I wanted very much, because … and this, strangely, happened … no strangely, happened at a time when I let's say, got together with my boyfriend Mike … the moment when it got serious between us – then there was a better relationship with my family*".

Even if the stability of the relationship gets Nora back on the track of a more traditional life, through Mike she can have access to a more egalitarian model of gender relation, based on a fair distribution of domestic tasks, the freedom of managing one's own time, choice rather than obligation: *"firstly, -mmh- with Mike I've seen for the first time true parity between the sexes, but in everything, really in everything, for good and ill* [...] *Mike never expects never expects me to do things for him, I mean -mmh- a lot of Italian men expect you to look after the house, to do the shopping , iron the shirts* [...] *Mike has never been like that with me, not even from the first day, absolutely nothing – he's never // I don't mean asked, but he's never expected me to do something or imagined that I was expected to do something, that's never happened. I definitely think that's the most important difference. Another factor, which is still connected to this, is his respect ... for my time, I mean the time that I spend outside the home is not a matter for the inquisition"*.

After the encounter with Mike, Nora went back to studying again, succeeded in graduating and got a job at university which she has been doing till now. Even though it is not a permanent position, which has been going on for several years on fixed term contracts, Nora is wholly satisfied. It is, in fact, a job which allows her to have contacts with other European countries: one more window on the world which allows her to be distant, and therefore different from the traditional

route (marriage, maternity and work which provides little satisfaction) followed by her sisters.

Only recently has Nora's distinction-orientated phase entered a period of crisis. Nora is now 34 years old and has to weigh up what she has achieved: a pleasing but precarious job, a fluctuating and uncertain income. Furthermore, the passing of time could limit the possibility to become a mother: "*What frightens me is to see time going by possibilities getting limited – the choice you have – this is what frightens me – growing up and – while ever there is choice it's ok it's afterwards that it starts to get complicated*".

If we consider the biography of Nora in the light of the relationship between mobility and gender, we can affirm that, although Nora has not gone to Europe, in some ways she has brought Europe home. Her relationship with Mike, indeed, has allowed her to live a new way of being a female partner and to feel an emancipated woman, without giving up what, in her culture of origin, is considered constitutive of femininity. The affirmation of her autonomy, for instance, is not based on the rejection of housework, but on the assertion of the principle of choice and parity: "*Even if sometimes I do it [ironing] like yoga, you know, for meditation ((miming a gesture with the iron in hand as a tool for concentration practice)) and nothing, no, we really have a very – balanced division of the home, of tasks ... whatever, cooking, dishes, washing machine, shopping, household management – these are things we share absolutely equally*".

If it is possible to sustain that Nora has been quite successful in "sewing up" the past and the present, what she was and what she has become, we cannot ignore that the conciliation of tradition and modernity implied giving up an important aspect of every woman's life, i.e., motherhood. Nora does not have a stable job yet, and living far from her family, could not rely on her mother and sisters, a crucial kind of help in Italy where the welfare system offers little support of caring services, mainly delegated to women. Furthermore, the choice of not marrying – an essential ingredient of defining herself as a "liberated" woman – clashes with the Italian institutional constraints notoriously reluctant to recognise forms of cohabitation outside marriage [Saraceno, Naldini 2007]: "*Mike and I have been living together for 5 years but not – I mean for 7 years, and we've had a contract for the same house for 5 years – both our names are on the contract but it has the same value as if we were two friends from university. This is a very big limitation for people who make this kind of life choice, it's not easy*".

3. COMPARING CASES

The three cases presented in this study, as always happens when biographies are concerned, bring to light remarkable differences but also evident similarities. They show, in fact, how the same experience of mobility in Europe derives from both different personal conditions and social circumstances. Another difference regards the biographical meaning that the experience of mobility has taken on in the identity construction of the three interviewees, as well as the consequences of the event and its costs. The three biographies however have in common the interconnection between the experience of mobility and a change in identity and/or gender roles, and this constitutes the focus of this contribution. The biographies will be compared taking into consideration the most meaningful dimensions in order to grasp their overall construct. These dimensions are: 1) social and personal background, 2) openness towards mobility, 3) meaning of the experience of mobility, 4) effects of the experience in (or of) another country, 5) consequences on identity, and 6) biographical costs.

The social and personal background

The first point to remark, in making the comparison, is that the three interviewees have different backgrounds both in terms of social status and geographical origin, these factors having proved to have deeply influenced the development of each biography. With regard to social background, Maria and Nora, coming from traditional lower middle-class families, are from a milieu that still sees in children's education a means of social promotion – especially for females, who, in Italy as in other European countries, for some decades have been systematically achieving better academic results than males [Ocse, 2010]. Marco, on the other hand, shows how sometimes middle-class children – who are not supported by strong aspirations for social mobility – do not find sufficient motivation to reach high levels of education in a context where unemployment – even intellectual – is very widespread. Marco is in fact the only one of the three interviewees not to have concluded his university studies.

As for their geographical origins, they come from completely different contexts. Maria was born and still lives, along with all her family, in a small town in the province of Naples, where she can benefit from a social capital enriched by both physical proximity and the communitarian nature of relationships, while Marco comes from a central area of a metropolis (Naples), which reflects the *topos* of city life, where affective and meaningful relationships are scarce. Nora,

instead, is from a small semi-rural communitarian context, even if the continual transfers which marked her childhood prevented her from becoming rooted in her community as in the case of Maria.

Besides their different territorial origin, and partially influenced by it, we find a different kind of family. If Maria seems to be surrounded by a dense network of kinship ties, in Marco's case we find few strong ties and a lack of communication even within the family. Nora lies between these two extremes. Like Maria, she comes from a close-knit family structure, in her case characterized by a prevalently female presence, but she seems to hold a rather marginal position with respect to the core formed by her mother and sisters, because of the age gap among the four daughters.

To these background elements, some others need to be added, of a more personal nature, which seem to weigh significantly on the biographical development and, consequently, also on the experience of mobility. In Maria's case, it was the situation of rivalry with her sister that was very relevant, while for Marco, his homosexuality definitely represented the element that led him to choose to live in another country. For Nora, at least two factors dating back to her early childhood need to be taken into consideration. The first is the abandonment she experienced as a young child because of her mother going to work far from home, while the second can be traced back to a feeling of being uprooted due to the frequent moving from one village to another.

Openness towards mobility

The origin of the three interviewees' willingness to move may be understood in the light of the complex interlacing of the social and personal factors described above. In Maria's case, for example, competition with her sister and the desire for individual affirmation, along with an ambition to social mobility through education, facilitated the development of a strong spirit of resourcefulness and a tendency to adopt active action schemes. In fact, in spite of the lack of previous experience of mobility in her family, her strong emotional family ties, and a long-standing boyfriend, Maria – also driven by her studying foreign languages – decided to apply to do an Erasmus, taking an unexpected path for a girl of her milieu. In Nora's case, instead, the readiness to move is nothing but the final outcome of a biographical trajectory that, in response to her uprooting and abandonment experience, had led her to construct a "world apart" through lengthy and solitary reading. The first experience of strangeness indeed can be seen in her "immersion" in oriental novels and the fascination the story of distant

and different worlds exerted on her. As Pessar and Mahler state, discussing the conditions behind the migratory process: "There are cases where people may not take any transnational actions that can be objectively measured, yet live their lives in a transnational cognitive space that does have measurable effects" [Pessar, Mahler, 2003: 818]. In Nora's case the disposition to otherness is accompanied also by the development of another specific inclination, closely bound to it: the rejection of social conventions, conformity, and supposed "normality". For Marco, lastly, openness to mobility finds its origin in the tension between his aspiration to an ordinary life and his sexual orientation[6]. In other words, having lived in a context – both family and social – disinclined to accept homosexuality as a normal condition, Marco in moving to a less stigmatising country catches a glimpse of the possibility to conciliate his identity requirements and social and family expectations. Research on homosexuals in Italy seems to confirm that they are geographically more mobile than others; moving from small towns to big cities is more frequent, but there is no shortage of cases, like that of Marco, of moving to another European country [Barbagli, Colombo, 2007].

The meaning of the experience of mobility

The mobility experience, as stated above, assumes different meanings in the biography of our interviewees. For Maria the experience in the UK as an Erasmus student essentially meant starting a process of individualisation and a broadening of her cultural horizons; in short, mobility meant all the experiences that led her to no longer feel "the child that I was before", but a woman with an "international" perspective. In the UK, Maria had her first experiences of work; she kept herself at university, she learned to manage friendly relations with the other sex, and for the first time had some "transgressive" experience. All this allowed her to open towards a gender model very different from the traditional model of her environment, focussed on the accessory function of women's work. In fact her story seems to confirm the results of a recent research in Italy, in which it is observed that for Italian students, the Erasmus experience takes on the meaning of

[6] Sexual identity is only one of the dimensions making up gender. In sociological literature on gender and in Sexology, sexual identity tends to be considered today as a multidimensional construct within which four components can be distinguished: sex, meaning the biological being male or female determined by the sex chromosomes; gender identity, i.e., the identification of a person as man or woman as a permanent trait of the personality; the gender role, i.e., the set of expectations concerning behaviour considered suitable for men and women in a given culture or period of time; and lastly, sexual orientation, meaning erotic and emotional attraction for members of the opposite, the same, or both sexes [Abbatecola 2008].

a "temporary subversion of status" open to the experimentation of new identities [Bettin Lattes, Bontempi, 2008].

Also for Marco and Nora, the meaning of mobility is strictly connected to gender issues. In the first case, it is a real "liberation" from a family and social context which threatened the expression of his authentic gender identity, pushing him to conform to the "hegemonic model of one-way masculinity" [Ruspini, 2009]. In Nora's case, mobility – in the form of a relationship with a foreign partner – reinforces her strategy of distinction, allowing her to include the "different", no longer merely through reading and imagination but in her real daily life. Similarly to what Munt [1994] observed regarding new forms of tourism, it could be stated that even having a foreign partner can represent in these globalised times "a practice through which the new middle classes construct themselves as 'alternative' and define their class distinction" [Munt, 1994 in Bagnoli, 2009].

The effects of the experience in (or of) another country

Looking at the effects of the experience of mobility in Europe, beyond some common aspects in the three biographies (such as the broadening of the horizons of reference due to the encountering with other cultures, the processes of "hybridisation" of behaviours and models of orientation, the greater sensitivity towards "otherness"), we find relevant differences which appear particularly interesting. These differences on one hand have their origin in the diversity of social and personal backgrounds and in the different disposition towards mobility. On the other, they can be interpreted in the light of the structural conditions of the contexts in which the interviewees have continued their life trajectories after the experience of mobility.

Maria, upon her return to Italy, did not find a favourable context either at university, where her experience abroad was not rewarded as she expected, or in the more general social milieu where, after graduation, she did not get the chance of a job consistent with the studies she had undertaken. In the end, coming up against a labour market unfavourable to women, Maria was not able to put into practice that ability to aspire to a more modern gender model, cultivated attending university and strengthened in the course of her stay abroad, i.e., in a context better disposed to promoting the participation of women. Her choice to marry and to have a child very early, and the acceptance of intermittent *bad-jobs* represents what could be interpreted as a return to the past, which, in her case should mostly be read as a return to the traditional model of woman as a person mainly devoted to family care work and dependent on her husband. Marco's situation is different, because for

him the mobility experience did not represent a brief interlude, but a definitive life choice. In London, the city he has chosen as his "second home", his life seems to be completely redefined and reorganized thanks to the opportunity to freely express his homosexuality. Finally, in Nora's case we do not find *a before and after*, since through mobility she can manage to realize the continuity of her *Self*, which now appears to be enriched by the added value of the relationship with a foreigner. This added value is also crucial in reinforcing family ties. Having a foreign partner, in the eyes of her family, is at the same time a mark of "exceptionality" but also of "ordinariness" since the "crazy" and non-conformist girl she was supposed to be, has finally settled down into a normal partnership relationship. What Nora found, in the end, is a way of "staying different without deviation from the normative cultural expectations" [Paadam et al., 2011].

Consequences in terms of identity

As we have tried to show so far, gender represents a structuring principle in all the biographies analysed, even if in completely different ways. In Marco's case his sexual orientation is concerned, while in the cases of Maria and Nora it is rather a matter of searching for emancipation. Moreover, if Marco moving abroad succeeds in finding the right conditions to live his gay identity as "normality", Maria doesn't succeed in her intent. Her falling back into tradition brings to mind the figure of Alfred Schutz's *home-comer*. Maria, in fact, really seems to experience a kind of cognitive dissonance between the transformation of her identity – the change of her way of thinking of herself as a woman – and the environment she finds coming back, that has not changed at all, continuing to offer her only the traditional "wife and mother" model. As for Nora, instead, it is another aspect of gender that comes to the fore, i.e., the issue of parity between men and women. Through her relationship with her Dutch partner, more sensitive towards gender equality than Italian men, Nora can overcome the limits of the traditional female role, so redefining herself as a real "modern" woman.

The biographical costs

The analysis of the three cases has shown how even in the case of trajectories that seem to have led to the realisation of one's expectations, there are some costs to be paid. These are particularly heavy for Maria. Her story shows, in fact, how the mobility experience represents for her a *missed chance of emancipation,* with the consequent frustration of her expectations, only partially mitigated by the awareness that she had lived a meaningful experience, with important

consequences for herself: the "internationalisation of her person" due to her stay abroad, in fact, became an essential part of her way of seeing life and the world. Less obvious, but no less important, are the biographical costs for Nora and Marco. For Nora, as for Maria, the structural conditions and in particular the occupational difficulties hindered her achieving a condition of full self-realization (as a matter of fact, at the age of 34, she doesn't have a stable occupation and she has renounced motherhood). As for Marco's biographical costs, though less visible, they can be traced between the lines of his interview, especially when, revealing that he never spoke about his homosexuality with his father, now dead, he appears to be deeply touched and emotionally moved. In his case, it can therefore be said that the full realisation of his gender identity through mobility has implied a total and painful renunciation to be accepted by the most beloved and significant persons of his life.

4. SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE RELEVANCE OF MOBILITY IN GENDER ISSUES

Even in intra-European mobility, as generally in migration phenomena, gender seems to play a primary role. The choice of doing a European experience, in fact, often appears to be inspired by issues connected to gender, since the diversity among the various European countries with regard to the cultural and symbolic structures (that in the various contexts dictate the gender roles and the relationships between the genders) can favour phenomena of mobility and/or have an influence on their course.

Sometimes mobility is intentionally connected to issues related to sexuality. The case of Marco, for example, shows how "sexuality and sexual identities, practices, and desires may be pivotal factors for migration" and how "sexuality, broadly conceived, can be the indirect or direct motivation for international relocation and movement" [Manalansan, 2006: 225][7]. The case in question also suggests heeding the recommendation to "go beyond a working gendered agent and highlight a desiring and pleasure-seeking migrant subject" [*ibidem*: 243]. In other cases, such as Nora's, the intention is not to address questions relating to sexuality issues, but rather to women's search for more equal relationships, in response to a need for emancipation, overcoming the traditional gender roles.

Mobility is not only influenced by reasons connected to gender and sexuality, but in turn, exerts a remarkable influence on gender identity. The experience

[7] Manalansan [2006] takes up Carrillo's concept of "*sexual migration*" [2004].

of mobility, seen here as an encounter with another culture, and therefore also with a different structure of gender relationships, in fact stimulates biographical work[8], and activates a process of self-reflection that has relevant consequences for identity, including gender identity. Travelling, as Bagnoli affirms, referring to many scholars "is a way of becoming someone, an experience which helps to construct new identities. From ancient myth and literature, the dimension of the journey has long been associated with a process of inner search, self-discovery, and renewal" [Bagnoli, 2009: 325–326][9].

Mobility and the processes of comparison, learning and self-reflection it activates, produces a more or less gradual process of metamorphosis that, as shown in the cases illustrated, finds its origin in previous experiences and circumstances. The experience of mobility can in fact intervene in different phases of biography and identity development. Sometimes it serves as a search for a more suitable context for expressing an identity which is already defined (e.g., the case of Marco, who can find a more open-minded mentality in London, where homosexuals are accepted and where practical benefits and institutional resources are available to them). Sometimes, especially for women, mobility serves as a search for a context which powerfully supports the development of identification processes already started at home (through trajectories of emancipation from the family of origin, or attempts to interpret more egalitarian and modern gender roles, as in Maria and Nora's case)[10].

These cases show how the process of reshaping identity manifests itself in different ways and directions, which appear differently combined from case to case. However, crucial elements seem to be:

– an individualisation pathway ("liberation" from binding family contexts) and an emancipation trajectory,

[8] Biographical work is an inner activity of mind, involving emotions, which mainly consists in a conversation with oneself and with significant others. It is done by narrative recollection and by a critical reflection about one's own life course. It includes an analytical comparison of alternative understandings of the past, in a reflective decision-making in the present, in imagining a personal future that harmoniously or contrastively has to be connected to the overall gestalt of one's own biography [Corbin and Strauss, 1988].

[9] This happens because, as Giddens notes [Giddens, 1991], the decision to move is often associated with particular biographical moments which put a question mark on the life and identity of the person and so require specific and intense self-reflection.

[10] Sometimes, especially for youth, mobility represents the means for one's own search for identity, the possibility to take a pause for reflection (a moratorium period) in order to decide who one wants to be, the opportunity to freely experiment in preparation for an adult role.

– in the case of the two women, the inception or the strengthening of aspirations to more symmetrical and egalitarian partnership relationships and to a model of womanhood which provides for the fulfilment of the right to realise oneself professionally and to reconcile family and work

– an increase in self-esteem linked to the symbolic value of internationalisation in all fields (e.g. in Maria's case, Erasmus meant having the possibility to improve her position in the family)

– a widening of horizons and borders within which identity can be built by overcoming social stigmatisation or social disapproval and the enlargement of one's structure of choices

– the acquisition of social recognition through the acknowledgement of rights (more chances to access rights and benefits, for example for gay couples in the case of Marco and *de facto* partnerships in Nora's).

In any case, the process of transformation of gender identity is part of a broader process of metamorphosis, that involves each aspect of life.

Another element that should be emphasised is that mobility does not always or necessarily imply geographical displacement. The case of Nora, for example, illustrates how the relationship with a foreign partner and the occasions for comparison with various models of family (for example through her relationship with her in-laws) has greatly contributed to remodelling her gender identity, although she continues to live in her country of origin. As Easthope observes, concerning the relationship between stability (the place, and the sense of belonging that accompanies it) and mobility (and the changes that this involves) in the identity-building processes "it is possible to understand one's identity in terms of both place and mobility simultaneously and it is important not to prioritise one at the expense of the other becomes" [Easthope, 2009: 75]. Equating place with stability and mobility with change, in fact, would be a mistake because places are not stable in the sense of being static, and mobility does not necessarily imply change. In Easthope's words, "Places... are constantly re-negotiated and understood in new ways by different people, or by the same people at different times". In any case, in society "mobility itself has become normalized" so that "some people may feel 'at home in movement'" [*ibidem*: 77].

Nora's case allows us also to notice, among other things, that involvement in an intimate relationship with a foreign partner can have a drastic effect on the identity, considering the fact that loving relationships *per se* are endowed with the potential to transform. In the words of Person [Person, 1991: 22 in Thorsell, 2001: 131] "Romantic love offers not only momentary excitement but possibilities for a dramatic change of the I. Hence it is a powerful force for change".

Drawing towards a conclusion, we turn our attention to one last aspect. Although at least two of the cases examined (Marco and Nora) can be considered "successful" pathways in terms of gender, the relationship between mobility and gender should in no way be conceptualised from a deterministic standpoint, whereby the experience of mobility brings with it the realisation of goals such as emancipation, modernisation and the recognition of rights. On the contrary, the cases analyzed in this study suggest that mobility should in no way be reified, assuming it to be a positive experience in itself.

First of all, behind the positive character of some tendencies (the ability to aspire, liberation from the social control of stigmatising contexts, the creation of symmetrical relationships) there is a passage from societies more subject to the limitations of tradition towards more modernised societies (South to North, East to West). There could be different results for movement in the opposite direction; without considering that, in the case of couples, one cannot exclude the possibility that the outcome of the relationship may be the traditionalisation of the male partner rather than the emancipation of the female partner. Therefore, the creation of equal relationships is not to be taken for granted in the least.

Secondly, it is not enough to move to countries where laws and institutions pursue gender equality and support emancipation in order to become emancipated. As Thorsell writes, "personal emancipation is in any case only meaningful in the fuller context of an individual project or biography" and "achieving equality between women and men, or facilitating independence from men, needs to be 'rounded out' with more cultural developments" [Thorsell, 2002: 145]. In the same way, not even changes of a cultural nature are enough in themselves to support authentic processes of emancipation. The case of Maria, for example, not only, as we have said, highlights the importance of cultural capital in the identification process, but it also demonstrates how the opening of a new perspective on life or a new vision of oneself as a result of a mobility experience may be only temporary when the original context does not support the work that has been carried out on one's own identity.

Lastly, it should not be forgotten that, as our cases have shown, mobility, also when it constitutes a may of self-realisation and the remodelling of gender identity in line with one's own desires, always involves biographical costs that are sometimes very painful.

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PŁEĆ KULTUROWA I MOBILNOŚĆ W EUROPIE: ANALIZA TRZECH NARRACJI Z WŁOCH

(Streszczenie)

Płeć kulturowa jest szczególnie ważnym czynnikiem w kontekście kształtowania społeczno kulturowych aspektów tożsamości narodowej. Jest to kwestia widoczna zwłaszcza w społeczeństwach o modelu patriarchalnym, gdzie dominują relacje nieegalitarne, tak jak ma to miejsce w Europie Południowej. Problem ten coraz częściej poddawany jest refleksji, co prowadzi do znaczących transformacji tożsamości dzięki zintensyfikowaniu mobilności oraz dzięki procesom integracji i poszerzania europejskiej przestrzeni mentalnej. Mobilność może też inicjować proces (de) – (re) – konstrukcji tożsamości genderowej, redefinicję ról społecznych tradycyjnie przypisanych płci. Konfrontacja z odmiennymi wzorami może zmusić do stawiania pytania o własną tożsamość i konieczność jej przepracowania w wymiarze gender. W artykule na podstawie trzech narracji analizowane są takie okoliczności biograficzne, które mogą sprzyjać podjęciu wysiłku przepracowania własnej tożsamości.

Słowa kluczowe: mobilność, Europa, gender, tożsamość

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DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPE: AMBIGUITIES AROUND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE 'INTERNAL' AND THE 'EXTERNAL'[1]

Abstract

Trying to reconstruct and understand different perspectives on Europe and European identities, initially we made a distinction between the 'internal' and the 'external'. In the course of the research process, however, this distinction proved to bring more ambiguities than it was supposed to resolve. Analysing the autobiographical narrative interviews with people born, raised and living in Europe, on the one hand, and those born on different continents and now living in Europe, on the other, we realised how complex the process of identification with Europe can be. The diversity of perspectives on Europe cannot be brought down to rough distinctions between the 'internal' and the 'external' as much as European identities cannot be brought down only to people, or to all the people, living on the European continent.

Key words: Europe, European identities, autobiographical narrative interviews, 'internal' and 'external' perspectives

1. INTRODUCTION

Diversity is a fundamental feature of Europe. Is has been difficult at all times to decide what Europe is, where Europe begins and where it ends [Davies, 1996], who belongs to Europe and who has the right to European identity claims. Also

[1] Many of the ideas presented in the paper were developed during the analytical workshops, meetings and conferences organized within the Euroidentities project. It is very much a result of collective work. Some parts were developed together with my Belfast team (Robert Miller, Dirk Schubotz and Maruška Svašek) in particular during our work on the chapter for the project final book.

people living in Europe emphasise the value of their diversity [cf. Warleigh, 2003] and stress that one of the main duties of Europeans is to maintain this wide cultural and linguistic range. The same principle of diversity applies when we try to reconstruct some perspectives on Europe. Our initial distinction on 'internal' and 'external' in the course of the research turned out to be problematic. Analytically useful, as we supposed at the beginning, it brought more ambiguities than it was meant to resolve.

At the start of the Euroidentities[2] project we asked the question to which extent ordinary[3] people possess a sense of being European and identify with European culture and history as well as European political and social institutions. In the project we used the method of autobiographical narrative interviews [Schütze, 1992; 2003; 2005 (1984); 2008] in which our informants were asked to tell us their life story, which was then followed by a questioning phase. First we asked about the issues concerning their particular biographical experiences and then we asked the questions coming from the scope of our research. The analysis of the interviews has been centred essentially upon the extent to which people choose 'Europe' as a frame of reference for their life orientations. At the beginning of the project, after some discussions, a decision was made to focus on five 'sensitized groups' of people who have been more exposed to different sorts of 'European experiences'. We conducted autobiographical narrative interviews with (1) people who earlier in their lives had had some experience of a cross-national educational exchange at the European level, such as Erasmus programme, language exchange programmes, etc.; (2) 'transnational workers', including different levels of professional hierarchies, who either were working in a country other than that of their origin or who had done so earlier in their lives; (3) individuals who were involved with civil society organisations with a significant orientation across European borders, with a special focus on environmental and 'peace and reconciliation' organisations; (4) farmers, who are subject to Europe-wide markets and European Union systems of regulation and subsidy;

[2] The Euroidentities project, *The Evolution of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European identity* received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) under grant agreement n°213998. The research was conducted in the years 2008–2011 by seven teams based in Belfast (Northern Ireland), Magdeburg (Germany), Łódź (Poland), Tallinn (Estonia), Sofia (Bulgaria), Naples (Italy) and Bangor (Wales).

[3] By 'ordinary' we mean 'non-elite' people; in the Euroidentities we have adopted a 'bottom up' perspective, focusing on the formation and change of European identities from the point of view of the everyday citizens.

and (5) individuals involved in cultural contacts across European borders. The idea of 'sensitized groups' turned out to be very helpful, directing the process of sampling and data gathering and providing very rich material about the implicit and explicit identifications or orientations towards Europe (and their lack) from 'the bottom up' perspective. Still at the initial stage of the research a sensitized group of cross-cultural intimate relationships was added and later, during the process of data collection and analysis, we realized that we needed to extend the scope of our research to two more categories previously not taken into account, namely: (1) people living in Europe whose origins lie outside the continent and (2) people who were born and raised in Europe and who have lived a significant portion of their lives in other continents. The former are, for example, people who come from the previous colonial empires of Europe; economic migrants to Europe; political refugees and asylum seekers. The latter are Europeans who have lived outside the continent of their origin for a significant portion of their lives and have returned, or think about returning, to their countries of birth. Both categories also include transnationals, people having the experience of living in many European and non-European countries, where they maintain their networks of family, friends, colleagues and business partners. A number of persons interviewed for the original sensitized groups (CSO activists, transnational workers and others) fall into these categories. At the time of the interview these informants lived in different European countries (Estonia, Poland, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom) and had experiences of living in East and South Asia, Southern Africa, North and Latin America and New Zealand.

2. THE AMBIGUITIES ABOUT THE 'EXTERNAL'

The autobiographical narrative interviews with people who come from other continents bring a view of Europe that is much more homogenous than the picture commonly presented by individuals born and living their whole lives in Europe. Those coming from 'outside' bring some stereotypical views of what it is to be 'European' and consider themselves in the light of those images. What Europe is, economically, culturally and socially soon becomes directly experienced in daily practices, which then leads to the verification and critical assessment of the initial views on Europe. What initially was taken for granted, becomes problematic, therefore needs to be reflexively reconsidered. The second important aspect of the European image brought by individuals born in other parts of the world is the view of Europe as reaching far beyond the European continent. Arriving in

Europe for the first time, many of our interviewees had a strong feeling of familiarity. Especially those coming from the post-colonial countries were immediately familiar with one of the European languages, architecture, fashion and products available in the supermarkets. Analysing their autobiographical narratives it becomes problematic to call those individuals 'external to Europe' as they have always lived in Europe but transported to other continents. Their perspective on Europe takes into account that European politics and policy making itself has not been confined to European borders, but rather historically has been an interaction between Europe and the rest of the globe during the period of European imperialism and colonial empire. It would be misleading, though, to call it an 'external' perspective. For our interviewees born and raised in South Africa, India, Hong Kong or Argentina, Europe remains biographically significant. It is the symbolic entity they feel a part of and want to belong to. Europe is the symbolic universe, idealised and criticised, and it is a concrete point is space, easily recognisable on the surface and strangely distant when explored more in depth. It is common of our interviewees whose origins lie outside the continent to perceive Europe as a place that is familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. Two of our informants, Adriano, coming from Argentina and at the time of the interview living and working in Estonia, and Andrew, originally from South Africa and now based in the UK, express particularly vividly their first experiences after arriving in Europe with their mixed sensations of familiarity and strangeness.

> Adriano: *"There was this place [in Barcelona] that when I saw it - I had been there for the first time in 2001- I felt it so mine, it was so familiar, as if I had been living there for my whole life, everything there was super. (...) – Aa – the buildings, the people on the street, the way they would walk, the way they would dress, the buildings and the things, it was a strange sensation, more, more sensation that actually something like that remind me, it was just - it felt very familiar, it felt very mine, as if you are coming home right, it was absolutely super strange feeling, very strange feeling and I only felt it in Barcelona and then in Rome, although in Rome was kind of different, because Rome is a very messy place, very loud and so on, it was just like Buenos Aires with some Roman monuments and ruins, but the same shouting, same people greeting each other on the street, the same ice cream parlours, the same stuff, it was just so similar and that was also like the people, but not so much the buildings but more like the vibrant."* (p. 18: 35 – p. 19: 3)

The familiarity with Europe, comparable to the experience of homecoming [Schutz, 1945] is described as 'a strange sensation'. It is surprising and overwhelming. The similarities between one's place of origin, be it South America or South Africa, and different places in Europe are explainable, given the colonial history, however the first reactions after arriving to the European continent are more emotional. These are the feelings of familiarity, engagement, belonging and

appropriation. Later on, however, as Andrew's story demonstrates, this 'weird' feeling of familiarity is replaced by the conscious or semi-conscious effort to familiarize and countless ambiguities about one's status in Europe.

> *"I remember the first time I came to England what was really weird was that because South Africa had been colonised by England there was so much, the language, the food. The products that you get in the supermarkets. All sorts of things there was, there was something, which was similar. But at the same time there was so much, which was unfamiliar. So your brain wanted to make it all familiar. Because you'd seen it, so it's like (...) you know the place. But actually the longer you're there you realise you don't. And I had that experience when I first went to England and I also felt, and maybe that's why I ended up here [other part of the UK], -ehm- but ... I particularly felt like, I remember telling a friend that it felt like a sort of ... not a prodigal son, it was more like a bastard son. Like where you sort of, you come back to where you came from but emotionally ((slowly)) you – there's nothing that connects you"*. (p. 12: 17–42)

The sensation of familiarity in case of Adriano and Andrew again directs our attention towards European diversity, as it concerns different parts of Europe, having distinct characteristics (like language, food, architecture, life style, etc.) and representing different types of colonial legacy in Latin America and South Africa. Coming to Europe gives Adriano a sensation of homecoming, returning to the place that is *his*; whereas for Andrew Europe, and England in particular, brings a load of more ambiguous feelings. First, there is familiarity, then strangeness, followed by the effort to make it familiar in order to maintain the sense of belonging and a final conclusion that his belonging is very problematic, comparable to the experience of a 'bastard son'.

Already at the very beginning of the interview Andrew identifies himself as a South African and as a 'descendant of Europeans'. Saying that he then describes his roots going back to his maternal and paternal grandparents and great-grandparents, who were mainly of Greek origin on the one hand, and English and German, on the other. By doing it he also reconstructs the hierarchies existing in South Africa, with different social strata parallel, which is very significant, to different degrees of Europeaness.

> *"I know they [maternal grandparents] would have come from a much more sort of humble poorer type of background to South Africa. -Ehm- and in those early days -eh- would have – within the white hierarchy of Africanadom would have experienced a fair amount of discrimination because they would have been seen as the sort of lower - Europeans. (...) I grew up with a sense of -eh- that part of my European identity, that sort of Greek part, was -ehm- negative. It was sort of, and because there was sort of stereotyping within the white hierarchy in South Africa, you know. Like, so at my school the kids who were like Italian or Greek were sort of teased for being that."* (p. 3: 1–5, 29–33)

The picture reconstructed by Andrew is also an excellent example of Europe existing out of Europe, with its hierarchies and racial prejudices. The way Andrew's family were placed within the existing hierarchies brought loads of ambiguities, which strongly affected his identity work. Belonging to the privileged class of European descendants they were still among the 'lower Europeans', located below the British, Dutch and Germans. This story represents also a deeply European phenomena connected with the need to deal with 'colonial mess'. In case of Andrew's biography it took a very interesting turn. Through his integrated school, one of the first ones in South Africa, through interactions with his black colleagues and through other biographical experiences, he became aware of the existence of the apartheid system and became sensitized about the injustice it involved. Later, during his university years he became politically active and got involved in the reconciliation work. After getting some experience in this field, he managed to bring his skills into the peace and reconciliation work in Europe. This process through which people coming from other parts of the world are given the opportunity to become involved in different types of CSO work in Europe dealing with peace and reconciliation, human rights, ethnic minorities, environment protection and others, is also a very interesting European phenomenon[4].

The picture of Europe as a historical sphere of influence stretching far beyond the boundaries of the continent is the immediate outcome of our analysis. The colonial legacy is strongly imprinted in the childhood narratives especially of those of our interviewees who belonged to unprivileged classes of the indigenous population. The presence of white men in their home countries is associated with violence of physical and symbolic kind. The narrative of Luke, a young, black Zimbabwean artist living in the UK, demonstrates the physical and symbolic violence he experienced as a child.

> *"One particular memory I have is we were sleeping and we got awoken by a banging door and there were soldiers who had come looking for ((deep voice till +)) the boys (+) the guerrillas, the freedom fighters as we called them. And they came with the white soldiers who told everybody to get out, get up and -eh- we were going to get a roll call to find out who was who and who had children and where the other children were. If -eh- and I remember my aunt, we had been prepped a few weeks before that, we were told that they would be coming. So we were told, you don't say that you have a big brother, because our big brother was out in the border areas -eh- training. And we were told, you don't say you have a big brother just say, you know, this is us, and, because most of the boys would have been recruited in to be freedom fighters. So anyway I remember an old man getting beat up and we stand -eh- we were standing in a queue and an old*

[4] It is an observation of Fritz Schütze discussed during the Euroidentities meeting in November 2010 in Nuremberg.

man was being, getting beat up and something about his son who had been a guerrilla." (p. 1: 50 – p. 2: 16)

"And then –ehm- then '82 I went to a boarding school –eh- we'd just, this is just a year after, two years after independence. And the schools were opened up for, there used to apartheid in Zimbabwe. So schools were opened up for all people to go to schools that were originally all white only, so we could now go to European only schools. So I went to one called [the name of school] (...) So I went there and didn't know how to speak English -eh- and just found out that my mum was my mum and then my grandmother left me. Went shopping with my mum a couple of weeks later, a couple of weeks later and then next thing I'm wearing all this uniform and all of a sudden we're in a bus, school bus, we're going to boarding school. And there were all these white kids, I never grew up with white kids before, so all of a sudden I learnt English that year and told -ehm-. So – we were encouraged to speak English and not speak native languages. So we could learn English. All the teachers were white and the only black people there were the ground staff and the kitchen staff. And, yeah, so that was a learning curve, learnt cricket, rugby, learnt to assimilate at that stage. That was my first experience of assimilation." (p. 3: 45 – p. 4: 21)

Luke calls this early experience 'assimilation' but the analysis of his autobiographical narrative showed that he developed a much more active and inventive strategy of dealing with *the other* than simply to assimilate. He is pragmatic about his multiple identities and he can use them strategically, depending on the actual context of action. Speaking Zulu, English and Gaelic, being married to an Irish woman and living in the UK, Luke has many potential identities at his disposal. Dealing with the ambiguities in relation to Europe Luke says that being European is '*more than about pigment: it's about a state of mind* (p. 31: 45–46). He continues: *'I made a conscious decision through my experiences that I belong to this place.'* (p. 32: 7–8), *'I am as European as the next European'* (p. 31: 36). Such explicit identity statements are very rare among our interviewees. In case of Luke, they are the reaction of a person whose identity is constantly challenged. Due to his skin colour and origin, in various interactive situations Luke's belonging to Europe gets questioned. This is a biographical problem and the way Luke decides to deal with it is the strategy of strengthening his own and his children self-confidence as well as strengthening the attributes of his identity choices.

The ambiguities about European belonging and non-belonging also for many others of our interviewees having their roots in Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and Columbia remain a biographical problem, which needs to be worked through reflexivity and biographical work. On the one hand, there is a desire to belong, accompanied by certain identity claims and the effort made in order to 'fit in', and on the other hand, there is resistance of European societies and policy makers to treat individuals coming from 'outside' as fellow European citizens deserving

equal treatment. Coming from 'outside', as noticed before, is only apparent here. Living previously in the parts of the world marked by the colonial legacy, our interviewees had multiple experiences with Europe even prior to their arrival on the European continent. They would go to 'European' schools, learning one of the European languages, usually different from their mother tongues, have contact with European popular culture and maintain connections with relatives, friends and acquaintances already living in Europe. Those transnational links via family, religious communities and other organizations played then an important role in facilitating the process of transition to Europe. In some cases, through holidays and regular visits of family members living in different parts of Europe, experienced from early childhood on, Europe became easily incorporated into one's life world. When we take into account the process of biographical development of our informants, then their decision to move to Europe and their sense of familiarity upon arrival becomes perfectly understandable.

As mentioned before, what initially is familiar or even taken for granted, soon becomes a source of ambiguities. Experiencing at the same time familiarity and strangeness is problematic and requires some effort of biographical work in order to come to terms with oneself and to work out one's own stance towards Europe. Some strategies may be tried out, like the one of appropriation of 'European culture', according to one's understanding of it, as it is believed, it could safeguard one's right to belong. This strategy would consist of learning languages, even as narrowly spread as Gaelic, taking up certain life style, including eating and dressing habits, and cultivating relationships at the work places and local communities. Some individuals try to win their right to belong through active involvement in civil society organisations and in many other ways only to see that their Europeaness can be questioned any time. The first and most common reason for challenging one's right to belong to Europe is the skin colour. We have numerous narratives of people of non-white origin being verbally abused, questioned, or unwaveringly stared at in many places across Europe. Even after taking a conscious decision to make Europe their home and after living for decades on the continent they may realize that they are still perceived as 'strangers' or 'guests', who are treated differently than their fellow European citizens. Their status is marked by ambiguities. Living in Europe, experiencing contradictory sensations of familiarity and strangeness, together with the feelings of belonging and non-belonging, they express a great desire to belong followed by the effort made in order to make Europe one's home.

Europe viewed from 'outside', be it by people coming from other continents or by those leaving Europe and moving to other parts of the world, tends to lose

much of its diversity. Used as a reference point for constant comparisons, Europe becomes more homogenous. It simply gets opposed to non-Europe. Viewed more from 'within', by people born in Europe, who never travelled to other continents, on the other hand, Europe may not be even perceived as a whole. Some of our interviews with transnational workers demonstrate that Europe does not have to function as a relevant reference point. Even when moving in the European space and making use of the European opportunity structure, people may not make any explicit reference to Europe. Their perspective can be more focused on the local level, the place they come from, and their nationality, as this is the feature they are mainly identified with while encountering the other. The two main reference points used for constant comparisons may be the place of origin and the place of migration without any explicit orientation towards larger social, economic and political entities. In most cases, to be thematized, Europe needs to become problematic. One's belonging to Europe may be questioned, as it is the case of the individuals coming to Europe from other continents. In some other cases, there may be conscious effort made in order to distance oneself from Europe as it will be discussed in the following section.

3. THE AMBIGUITIES ABOUT THE 'INTERNAL'

Analysing the autobiographical narratives of people born, raised and living in Europe (and not having the experience of living on other continents), those who as we initially assumed, would have a more 'inner' perspective, we realized that some of them have developed a view on Europe, which is quite 'external', objectified, cold and critical. These are the people who have made conscious effort to distance themselves from Europe as they find it difficult to identify with Europe as a whole or some of its aspects. Those individuals, born and living on the continent are Europeans as it were by definition, but at the same time, they do not necessarily feel they belong to Europe. Neither they feel to be a part of the European project and are very critical towards the EU institutions and the idea of European Union as a whole. The distanced and critical perspective on Europe in most cases have been developed as a result of biographical experiences marked by certain disappointments with European foreign policy, economic decisions and labour market situation, as well as the discrepancy between the promoted ideals and the actual praxis. In other cases Europe is perceived as the 'unknown', 'strange' or even 'hostile' exactly because of the lack of certain 'European exposure'. Being deeply rooted in their local communities, some of our informants

thought of Europe as being 'somewhere else'. The narrators living in the UK and in Ireland often referred to Europe as something 'out there'; the entity they would not necessarily be a part of. Leaving the Isles they would say they 'go to Europe' as they associate it more with the continent than the place they live in.

The biographical analysis demonstrated, however, that this type of view is only one dimension of a much more complex attitude. It was also possible to grasp the change of perspective, as in the case of Richard, a head (the Worshipful Master) of an Orange Hall living in Northern Ireland, who initially perceived Europe as an external entity potentially dangerous for his and his community's local identity. Therefore, when an idea appeared to apply for some funding at the European Peace Programme in order to support the Hall, Richard felt a bit apprehensive. When asked about it directly, he explained that nowadays *"the Hall, the Lodge would be more progressive in their thinking"* (p. 11: 43) and *"very appreciative of the money that's come from EU, I, -ehm- we're all members of the, we're all Europeans"* (p. 11: 45–46). Those statements, however, are not a part of his main narrative. They could be a result of Richard's feeling that he is expected to say something of this kind and his response to a directly asked question. He admitted that initially they thought in the Lodge that European funding was 'not for them' but the concern about the Hall, which required substantial refurbishing, was decided to be more important than their reservations. The great significance of the Orange Hall in Richard's life is undeniable. His life story, in fact, is the history of the Hall and its members. Being Richard's main concern the Hall is believed to be worth the compromise.

As the analysis of some other of our interviews demonstrated, on one level Europe may be fiercely criticised for its foreign policies, its all-pervasive red tape and the discrepancies between the discourse and the praxis in respect to many issues like undocumented migrants and others. On the other level, however, Europe may be treated as a platform for mobilizing activists contesting the decisions taken by the European governing bodies. Some of our interviewees' life stories have demonstrated that Europe can provide an opportunity for discovering new we-groups (cf. Spanò et al, unpubl.) and by these means going beyond the local context and local divisions and participating in broader social worlds. Suzanne, an animal rights activist born and raised in Northern Ireland provides a good example of this process. Growing up in a divided community, by birth and residence being ascribed to one of the conflicting sides, Suzanne felt out of place. Neither her immediate neighbourhood nor school could provide her with a we-group. Having a working class background and a strong accent, she felt isolated

in her middle-class school environment. She also did not see her Republican and Catholic community giving her many options:

> *"It seems - like - the big picture is, it seemed to me growing up that you either become a hoodlum/ so you stole cars, you sniffed glue\, you drank - eh - booze on street corners. Or else you joined - an organisation."* (p. 9: 22–27)

Trying to go beyond the restricted spectrum of choice provided by her community, Suzanne started searching for an alternative way of living. She knew which paths she did not want to follow but still was uncertain about the direction she would like to choose. A chance for new identification appeared together with joining a group of animal rights activists in her home city. Already before, being sensitized about animal suffering, Suzanne became vegetarian. The experience of joining the group Suzanne describes as 'eye-opening'. She started 'educating herself' and became politically active participating in numerous demonstrations and regular actions against fox hunt. Soon, however, Suzanne felt it was not enough. Together with her female friend, she embarked on a journey[5] across Europe, practically and symbolically, going first to France and the Netherlands, then to England and the Netherlands again. Through many adventures and coincidences, they met like-minded people, vegans, animal rights activists, anarchists and squatters. Living in an alternative community Suzanne first becomes an observer and then an active participant in the protests organized against the EU governing bodies.

> *"But anyway /ehm/ - the first weekend that I was there (...) I was told that there was an action - camp being set up, and would I be interested in taking part. The - /ehm/ Dutch government at the time were the Presidents of the European Union/ and they were European Finance Ministers. -Ehm- they were meeting in a small town called Noordwijk which is on the coast. -Eh- they were meeting in a huge hotel called the (Huis ter Duin), -ehm- I think it's got ten stars, never mind/ five stars, it's/ humungous and we, like (there, there wasn't a lot of) people could afford to stay there. So the finance ministers were all meeting there. ((sniffing)) And I didn't really know too much about the European Union at the time - but what I did know was that I was really against big business and - government being sleeping partners. And that - to me/, and to us, to those people that were involved in setting up that weekend, that's the way we do things, that big business has far too much influence in the decisions that governments make. And that's what we were going to protest against.(...) we marched through the town, we had banners, we handed out leaflets explaining why - people should not accept that these people are - coming to their town at the taxpayer's expense as well/ staying in a very expensive hotel, loads of security to discuss - the finances of the European Union - when people are living in poverty/ people are starving, people have been living this every day - people have been stopped from settling in, in the European Union, they've been booted out\."* (p. 21: 34–50; p. 23: 25–32)

[5] The category of 'embarking on a journey' comes from Ulrike Nagel.

The experience of fighting for the good cause gave Suzanne a feeling of belonging and sharing some goals with a 'great bunch of people' coming 'from everywhere'. Participating in Euro Marches Suzanne experienced a great mobilization of activists coming from different parts of Europe. Going into the streets together, protesting and fighting with the police forces, taking care of the arrested ones, participating in the workshops, gatherings and discussion groups all this led to a feeling of community, solidarity and togetherness. Interestingly, Europe, highly contested as the political entity, provided Suzanne with the opportunity to participate in a broader social context (cf. Spanò et al, unpubl.), discovering the common goals of international or even global importance and by these means giving her the possibilities for new identifications. Europe as a platform for people's mobilization, with the facilitating role played by internet and other media, commonly appears also in the interviews with CSO activists, be it in the field of environmental or human rights protection. European space is frequently used for building networks, which may have at the same time a global range and very tangible local impact.

The European legislation may play a twofold role. In some cases it is strongly criticised, contested and fought against, and on the other, it is used instrumentally against the decisions of the local and national governments. Depending on the context, Europe and European Union may be treated in significantly different ways. It is a sign of pragmatism, or even instrumentalism, which is possible only because of the critical distance is worked out towards the EU. The critical distance may also be a consequence of disappointment with the decisions taken by European institutions. As demonstrated in the analysis of an interview with a young UK-based Serbian man, who as a teenager experienced the Balkan war, the EU may be viewed with great resentment, due to its questionable role played in the war, and at the same time with great hope in regard to the opportunity structure it provides.

The stance towards Europe both in case of individuals coming from other continents and in case of 'Europeans by birth' who distance themselves from various aspects of Europeaness is marked by ambiguities. To call the former 'external' and the latter 'internal' to Europe could not lead too far. On the contrary, in order to deal with those complex phenomena it is necessary to go beyond the distinction between the 'internal' and 'external' perspectives on Europe.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Europe as an ideal cannot be denied to the 'other', since it incorporates the phenomenon of 'otherness': in the practice of Europeanism (Europe as an ideal), the perpetual effort to separate, expel and externalize is constantly thwarted by the drawing in, admission, accommodation and assimilation of the 'external' (Bauman, 2004b: 7). The same process takes place the other way round, what is considered 'internal', inherent of Europe becomes exported and internalised by the 'outside' world. The division between the 'internal' and 'external' perspectives on Europe never can take a shape of a clear-cut distinction. Europe is an intrinsically expansive culture, an exporting entity, always busy with 'remaking the world', encouraging and forcing the rest to replicate its own model. 'Europocentrism' expressed in the misuse of European military and economic dominance, the atrocities committed under the cover of the 'civilizing mission', and broadly understood 'colonial mess' are the sharpest examples of global influences of Europe and blurring divisions between the 'inner' and the 'outer'.

Analysing the life stories of our interviewees born in other continents forced us to conceptualise Europe as a historical sphere of influence that has stretched far beyond the boundaries of the continent. This view acknowledges the significance of the establishment of historically specific networks that have connected Europe to other parts of the world. Geographical Europe never had fixed borders and 'whenever the states of Europe try to put their common "continental" borders in place and hire heavily armed border guards and immigration and customs officers to keep them there, they can never manage to seal them, make them tight and impermeable. Any line circumscribing Europe will remain a challenge for the rest of the planet and a standing invitation to transgression.' (Bauman, 2004b: 6).

Different perspectives on Europe are formed and re-formed processually, simultaneously to people's movements in and out of the continent. Multiple and constant interconnections across borders result in numerous attachments, which need to be reflexively and practically negotiated. For both groups of our interviewees, those who were born and raised on other continents and now living in Europe and those living their whole lives in Europe, the issues of Europeaness and European belonging are very complex and often loaded with ambiguities. Their perspectives on Europe are marked by ambivalence. The encounters with Europe bring the sense of familiarity and strangeness at the same time. On the one hand Europe may be perceived as a potential danger for their local identities, but on the other hand, European funding can be used in order to serve their communities. As the positive outcomes of European subsidies become evident, also Europe as

a ‘practical arrangement’ becomes a bit ‘tamed’, at least in an indirect way. The EU may be pictured as a very distant or even hostile entity. Many of the decisions and actions taken by the European legislative and executive bodies are contested and during the process of contestation, as a side effect, Europe is re-discovered as a platform for the mobilization of activists of different kinds.

In the autobiographical narratives Europe becomes thematized usually when it is connected to some unresolved biographical issues, be it the problem of belonging, exclusion, identity, or other. It equally applied to both groups of out interviewees, initially categorized as ‘internal’ and ‘external’ to Europe. The results of our analysis go hand in hand with Bauman’s statement that ‘[y]ou are not necessarily a European just because you happen to be born or to live in a city marked on the political map of Europe. But you may be European even if you’ve never been to any of those cities’ (Bauman, 2004b: 5). Frequently taken for granted as an opportunity structure Europe is thematized in people’s life stories when it becomes biographically significant. Being caught up in the difficult position of an ‘in-between man’, which often is a consequence of movements in space and time as well as the result of social misrecognition, one needs broader entities playing a role of a potential source of identification. Europe can play this role very well. As our analysis has demonstrated, the in-between position, if approached reflexively, can be successfully transformed into resources necessary for mediation work in different European and non-European conflict zones. As a result of biographical work done on the disappointments connected with one’s misidentifications Europe may be also thematized as a ‘state of mind’ potentially open to all having the Jamesian will to believe in Europe as a space for sense-making practices and the source of identification. People’s various practices and meanings attached to them can tell us more about Europeaness than any declarations about the shared canon of European values and ideals. There is no single perspective on Europe, be it ‘internal’, ‘external’ or any other, as there is no single European identity. It is impossible to define precisely what Europe is, where it begins and ends, but the ability to recognise, cultivate and protect diversity may be one of its core features.

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RÓŻNORODNOŚĆ PERSPEKTYW ZORIENTOWANIA NA EUROPĘ: NIEJASNOŚCI ZWIĄZANE Z PODZIAŁEM NA PERSPEKTYWĘ "WEWNĘTRZNĄ" I "ZEWNĘTRZNĄ"

(Streszczenie)

Starając się zrekonstruować różne perspektywy, z których formułowana jest idea Europy i tożsamości europejskiej początkowo wyróżniliśmy 'wewnętrzny' i 'zewnętrzny' punkt widzenia. W czasie pracy badawczej okazało się, że rozróżnienie to jest niejasne i ambiwalentne. Analiza narracji biograficznych osób urodzonych i wychowanych w Europie oraz z mieszkańcami Europy, którzy urodzili się na innych kontynentach pokazuje jak złożony i wielowymiarowy może być proces budowania identyfikacji z Europą. Różnorodność perspektyw nie może być w tym przypadku redukowana do dystynkcji pomiędzy perspektywą „wewnętrzną" i „zewnętrzną", podobnie jak tożsamości europejskie nie mogą ograniczać się wyłącznie do ludzi (lub do wszystkich ludzi) mieszkających na kontynencie europejskim.

Słowa kluczowe: Europa, tożsamości europejskie, wywiady biograficzno-narracyjne, perspektywa 'wewnętrzna' i 'zewnętrzna'

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IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN SMALL ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN BULGARIA

Abstract

This paper deals with the issue of identity development of Bulgarian Muslims – one of the minorities in Bulgaria. The basic assumption is that their ethnic (collective) identity has been developed as multiple identities under the primordial, modern, and postmodern features, circumstances and phenomena originated in the historical, political, cultural and socioeconomic environment and relations of power and dominance. Presenting the stories of three representatives of the Bulgarian Muslims minority the paper focuses on how European integration challenges their identity: their limited experiences in Europe were collected as a result of an attempt to escape the economic situation in the country, to get out of the traumas they feel with respect to the Bulgarian majority. Their stories present an interesting mixture of imagination and personal impressions of Europe. The paper explores the use of the qualitative method of autobiographical interview as a method for studding identity construction and development.

Key words: identity, ethnicity, Bulgarian Muslims, narrative analysis, perceptions of Europe.

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper deals with the issue of identity development of the Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks)[1], one of the minorities in Bulgaria. The authors show how the

[1] Bulgarian Muslims [labeled also as "Pomaks") are an ethnic minority inhabiting the country; their most distinctive feature is that they profess Islam but do not speak Turkish, and many of them bear Christian names. This is also the main characteristic that distinguishes Bulgarian Muslims from Bulgarian Turks. In the twentieth century Bulgarian Muslims were repeatedly subjected by the state authorities to attempted assimilation - conversions, change of names, forced migrations. From the 1950s and especially during the so-called "revival process" in the 1970s and 1980s, the names of all

political changes that began in Eastern Europe in the late 1980's and the resulting "openness" to Europe could stimulate the integration of representatives of small ethnic group; how European experience and European mental space[2] breaks open/overcomes the narrow ethnic identity and helps for the development of a wider integrative identity within the European multicultural space. The analysis focuses on those changes in their personal life paths and in the social context of their perceptions that might change their self-identification.

Identities have a particular meaning in the multi-ethnic Balkans, where different ethnic groups have lived together for centuries and in different state structures (nation states, federations, and even empires), where they have, in turn, enjoyed favoritism or been subjected to neglect, and where policies and attitudes toward them have been inconsistent. The Balkans is the region where different identities, images and emotions still articulate [Todorova, 1997]. This particularly holds true for the Pomaks, who reside across half the territory of the Balkans[3]. Bulgarian history is full of dramatic events and testimonies to the vicissitudes of Bulgarian Muslim identity, and this history has generated various views and theoretical generalizations regarding the origin of Bulgarian Muslims, their self-identification and internal cohesion; these views cannot be reproduced here in their historical order, nor is this the aim of the present article. We will only mention that there are three main approaches to the theory of the origin and nature of ethnicity and nationalities: the primordialist, the circumstantialist, and the constructionist approach. The *primordialist* view [Geertz, Smith] focuses on the pre-existing common history, origins of, and bonds within, the ethnic group, as

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the Pomaks in Bulgaria were coercively changed. Therefore they are not a homogeneous community and their identity is not uniform but varies in different regions of the country. Some Bulgarian Muslims living in the Central Rhodopes identify themselves as ethnic Bulgarians and Muslims by religion, and others, as "Pomaks". A small portion of those living in the Central Rhodopes, are mostly secularized and have Bulgarian Christian names, following the "revival process". A small number of them converted to Christianity since 1990. Those who live in the southwestern part of Bulgaria are mostly practicing Muslims and have kept their Turkish-Arabic names, traditional dress, and customs. Part of them identify as Turks who have forgotten their mother tongue [Census 2001, Georgieva 2009], although they indicate the Bulgarian language as their present mother tongue. Still others have a confused identity but tend to identify as Bulgarians. Some individuals and groups among the Pomaks have tried to achieve greater social, cultural, national and even religious integration [Bulgarian Helsinki Committee 2003]. Bulgarian Mohammedans is the other name by which this community is differentiated from the community of Muslims whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.

[2] The concept of European mental space was developed within the EUROIDENTITIES research project thanks to the theory building work of Professor Fritz Schutze and the German team.

[3] Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and others.

well as on features such as language and culture (myths, symbols, rituals, clothes, etc.); it has been criticized for its subjectivism. The *circumstantialist* account of ethnicity [Gellner, Anderson etc.] focuses on the ethnic group as the product of specific social, political, and historical circumstances.

Cornell and Hartmann [2007] have tried to combine the first two approaches and further develop them into a *constructionis*t approach, stressing the opposition of the **forced identity** assigned from above by the dominant ethnic group to the minority ethnic group(s) and the **asserted identity** chosen by a given ethnic group. This dominance refers to political, economic and cultural power that allows the dominant group to force other groups to submit to its ideology and to the policies stemming thereof. This situation creates dichotomies such as "us" and "them" in in-group/out-group interactions [cited by Williamson, 2008:16–21].

In our study of this ethnic group, we have mostly followed the *constructionist* approach, according to which this ethno-cultural group is not homogeneous from the point of view of consciousness, and is not essentially unchanging.

Any identity, "traditional" or not, is situational, charged with tensions and developing in specific conjunctures [Clifford, 1988, cited by Gruev and Kalionski, 2008].

In studying the self-consciousness of Pomaks in Bulgaria, Karagiannis finds different identities among them: a "secular Bulgarian", a "secular Pomak", a "Turkish", a "Muslim Pomak", and a "Bulgarian Muslim" identity; he concludes that these people create for themselves "situative patterns of behaviour", whereby they "accommodate" the self-identification displayed according to circumstances [Karagiannis, 1997, ibid]. That is why it is assumed Bulgarian Muslims have multiple identities, which are precisely transient and situative [Smith, 2000]. Other scholars define such identity as a "nested identity" [Calhoun, Brewer etc.]; according to them different identities may co-exist at an individual or group level.

In the context of our analysis we will try to show whether, and to what extent, different identities have been transformed and can be compatibly nested in the Pomak ethnic community. In other words – could ethnic and national identities potentially be compatible with the European identity?

The existing divergence of views regarding the origin of the Bulgarian Muslims [Balikci, 1997, Lozanova, 1998, Byuksenshyutts, 2000, Raichevski, 2004, Radushev, 2005, Krasteva-Blagoeva, 2006 etc.], as well as the interventions in their identity coming from outside the group, have in the course of history, accreted this multiple self-identity. As a result, there is enhanced ambivalence regarding their own identity, where religion is mixed with ethnicity. Such a mixture

of identification codes can be observed in Christians' attitude towards them as "others", as different from Christian Bulgarians. In the attitude of the Bulgarian Christian majority towards Bulgarian Muslims there is a prevalent identifying of faith/religion with the ethnic group [Gruev and Kalionski, 2008].

If we are to generalize as to the approach to be taken regarding the Bulgarian Muslims, we should say that despite the various subgroups differentiated within it, it is just as closed a community as any other minority: most of them live in compact communities and settlements in rural areas, within their own social and economic networks, and they follow their own cultural traits and inherited traditions. It could be said that Bulgarian Muslims thus respond through self-isolation, creating their own legends about the hardships they suffered [Georgieva, 2009].

The "quiet" stigmatization of this ethnic group was effectuated above all through the official policy and propaganda of the communist regime, defining Islamic way of life and culture as "conservatism in way of life and religion", "religious prejudices and superstitions", "holding on to the past", etc. [Pashova, Vodenicharov, 2010]; the change of their names was the next step in this aggressive and repressive attitude.

It was within this duality – the ideologically defined socio-cultural and political environment on one side, and the "other" aspect, the concealed mono-culturality experienced within the ethnic community – that several generations of this group grew up and were reared.

This article purposes to show the ways in which the ethnic identity of the generation of people now in their 40s and 50s was formed, experienced, and developed; to do this we have used the articulated narrations produced by three representatives of a Bulgarian Muslim background. Their sufferings during the dramatic periods of social relegation [Bourdieu, 1999], repressions, and name changes during the different stages of the so-called "revival process"[4], has put an intensely traumatic imprint on their memories and on the development of their personal biographies, identities and fate.

The analysis is focused on the biographical stories of three informants – Bulgarian Muslims born in the same village, which is predominantly inhabited by this ethnic group.

[4] The forced assimilation and repression of religious consciousness of the Bulgarian Mohammedans and Bulgarian Turks were euphemistically represented by the ruling Communist Party as a "revival process". The process of surveillance and control of Muslims began in 1944, goes through various stages and forms and continues to 1989 [Pashova, Vodenicharov, 2010].

The paper will draw on the research of the EUROIDENTITIES project[5], using as a methodological tool F. Schütze's qualitative method of the autobiographical interview.

2. IDENTITY FORMATION IN LOCAL ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

The three informants, whom we have decided to call Murat (44), Mert (40) and Mustafa (45), were born and raised in extended families in a village predominantly inhabited by this ethnic group[6]. They are permanent residents of the village, although they commuted and/or migrated in certain stages of their life. Their life path has been marked by the "revival process" that took place in the region where they live[7]. Their social roots and horizons were, and still are, the social frames shaped within this closed ethnic community, with its strong interpersonal bonds, relationships and networks of ethnic culture, occupational traditions (tobacco-growing), rural space and natural environment[8].

They live within small and familiar groups (family, relatives and friends) and keep "the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" [Putnam, 2000: 19] which creates strong ties and bonding social capital [ibid.].

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[5] "EUROIDENTITIES. The Evolution of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European identity" is a collaborative project of the Seventh Framework Programme of the EC [Contract No. 213998], conducted jointly by academic institutions from seven countries.

[6] The village Z. we conducted the interviews is a large mountain village located in Southwest Bulgaria. By the end of the 19th century, this was a Muslim village. Nowadays, the majority of the people registered in the village are Bulgarian Muslims. A small Bulgarian community also lives there. The main occupation of the population is tobacco growing and stock-breeding. For at last 10–15 years, there were several textile and clothing workshops operating there.

[7] The name-changing campaign in the region began in the early 1960s, when the Arabic-Turkish names of the local population were changed with Bulgarian Christian names. This coercive act met with serious resistance in several villages of the region, among which was the village of Z. The local Communist Party activists who implemented the 'scenario' of name-changing used police force to subdue the local population. In 1972–1974 the name-changing in the region was renewed and various forms of coercion were used by the authorities, while the local population responded with strong opposition. According to official documents, there were 49 103 Bulgarian Muslims in the region in 1973. By the end of that year, the names of 38 818 people had been changed, while 10 101 people in the region did not apply for name change [Pashova and Vodenicharov, 2010]. Most of those who refused to accept new Christian names were interned to other regions of the country.

[8] In this paper we have also used primary analysis of farmers' interviews done by Dona Pickard and Slavka Karakusheva, researcher assistants within the Bulgarian team for the EUROIDENTITIES research project.

Their biographies, actions and identities have been developed within visible local boundaries and in the closed mutual interaction and networking.

In the analysis we follow the concept of identity according to which the unique individual identity and the collectively shared identity can be viewed as „similar and ...routinely entangled with each other"; the individual and collective identification "come into being within interaction"; and "the processes by which each is produced and reproduced are analogous" [Jenkins, 2004: 15–16].

For the three cases **ethnic identity** is central to self-identification, which to these individuals coincides with religious identity, inasmuch as religious confession alone, not the language, distinguishes them from "others", the Bulgarians.

All three informants identify themselves as Pomaks[9] "by default", since they did not explicitly articulate this name at all. They are identified as such, because in the perspectives of the "others" – of Bulgarians as "generalized others" [by Mead, 1967] – they are recognized and labeled as such. Certainly there are additional reasons for this identification: probably one reason is that for a long time this ethnic group experienced its ethnic and religious identity as a cryptoidentity [Pashova and Vodenicharov, 2010], especially during periods of name change[10]. Another specific reason may be said to be the impact coming forcibly 'from the outside', from the Bulgarian majority, which, after imposing the "revival process", had dealt with Bulgarian Muslims and Bulgarian Turks as one and the same group.

The identity of all three informants was formed in approximately the same temporal, ethno-cultural, social, and political context – the 1960s, in a homogeneous ethnic environment (a separate village). The life cycle passed through childhood, school, adolescence, service in the army, search for work, and integration in society despite the feeling of being ethnically different. All three showed persistence and proved good workers at their different jobs. Part of their identity, specific to this ethnic group, is, of course, their occupation "in tobacco": they began to help their parents in this since childhood; at least as a part-time occupation, this work is even now part of their life and livelihood. As one of them said:

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[9] In their narrations they never used the designation 'Bulgarian Muslims' at all. Nor did they say whether they considered themselves to be of Turkish-Arabic origin as many Bulgarian Muslims from the region do. [see also Baliksi, 2007].

[10] For example, one of the informants recalled, smiling, how his father had confused his official Christian name upon a visit to school, as he had never addressed his son by it. The other one acknowledges that the folklore presented in schools has "nothing to do with the singing in our home" (Mustafa, 13: 46/48).

"*Tobacco has been ever since I can remember to tell you the truth. Tobacco, like I told you since [I was] a little baby. ...We've always had our tobacco, only when there was a crisis [we hadn't]*" (Murat, 12: 23–24, 26).

The ethnic identity construction of the informants and its resistance, however, has gone through a strong **trajectory of suffering;** since they all suffered together, this is the sign of, and the "destiny effect" resulting from, belonging to this stigmatized group [Bourdieu, 1999: 64]. The trauma from the "revival process" appeared in their biographical memories: recollections of those events, testimonies, were expressed by all of them[11]:

"...life was passing by ... in children's games/ came//-the revival process ... appeared to us town.. which was stamped in our minds ... with fear- ((speaks slowly, distinctly, but with pauses)) that's how we remember our parents - afraid, frightened always ... told us to be quiet/... to that sort of thing/.../and ((sighing)) and/ we went to the plots tobacco// ... there were different events (3 sec) in life - everyone has some events, experiences ... ((very quietly)) stop it, stop it. ((the clatter of the microphone is heard - end of first recording))" (Murat, 1:12–18)

The other informant recollected:

"*M: # **but this I remember that my mother would weep in the fields and** she sang- so these two things// **this's what comes to me// (memories)#***
I: #and why did she weep in your opinion?
*M: **we-ell how should I know- well** her life **perhaps,-** or some depression, **-mm I don't know** - w ... # **but now the other thing waas// the stress that parents//** my parents lived through in that period from '64 ti-ill '73, that w's the revival process\. **Well it's true that my child-**hood years were spent in that kind of environment, where my parents were subjected to humiliation, that sort of that's what's remained in my mind ... **((slowly)). It's not my fault** and right ... **I remember – aah ((he sighs))***". (Mustafa, 1: 34–37/42–46)

In the third case, our informant Mert describes an even more painful life experience connected with the 'revival process". In the beginning of the 1970s, when the Communist regime undertook a course of assimilation of the ethnic minorities through a series of repressive measures, his father refused to change the names of the family members to new, Bulgarian names. As a result, he and his family were 'interned' – as a punishment, they were forced to move to other towns or villages. Because the family was interned to several different places,

[11] One of the respondent recounts that in his village the name change process dates from the early 20th century: "*have in mind that they changed our names other times as well... In '12 we were converted [to Christianity]... the-en 1912... I don't know if you know about the Balkan War what was going on here*" (Mustafa, 13: 41–43).

Mert describes how he was taken like a bag from school to school and his brutal experience of interactions with his classmates.

> „*/Well, the fact that my father was interned, right, they moved him from place to place, and because of that thing. But the whole family has [to move. when they move the father s/ooo// what would you do - your father, if they moved him to the city of A.*[12]*,wouldn't you join him? (...) You'd join him.// if after that they moved him to the city of B., wouldn't you go there? - You'd /go there ... Am, so there – in the middle of the school term you leave for B. ((nervous laughter)) Or for V., so – there are... other schoolchildren, other//a different attitude, a different /some ... are ... put themselves in./. sympathy, some ... it's that – they just wait for the recess and they start on you ... Uu, today it's /different, today it's/different. All is informed, everybody is familiar with it, but.. so we're talking about many years ago, the crowd was not informed and had a kind of, sort o-of attitude. (...) Mm, I don't /feel like talking about this ... 'cause.. they're not/ interesting these sort of. (...) U, ... so, ... in the town of G.*[13] *when// in K.*[14] *to be exact, I started first grade ((he stirs his coffee hastily)). I wasn't afraid of school so much as of the recess ((laughing nervously)), 'cause I knew what to expect.(...) The whole class there ... Um ... hm, ts ... it's one thing to be a Turk, it's quite a different thing to be a Pomak, and it's an entirely different thing still when you know what to expect ... /Well, it.. this guy will hit you, that guy will hit you, you writhe always alone, so, /it's hard to ... it's hard to tell you about school*". (Mert 2:21–41)

For Mert and his family, their personal experience with all the repressive measures taken against their own group – which, whether in religion or ethnicity, is in all cases different from the (Bulgarian) majority – is 'at the root of everything' that happened subsequently. Mert explains that he and his younger brother and older sister, though not very educated, were not stupid. As proof of this, Mert indicates that his brother even runs an important business – 'so he can't be stupid'. But all these moves from school to school made Mert feel "like a hare being shot at". He was scared not of the classes in school, but of the recess periods between classes: while some of his classmates were sympathetic, others were just waiting for the recess to "get him". Those of his classmates who finished school or went to University do not amount to more than him, apart from their having "a decent job".

The "revival process" became a borderline for the in-group collective identity and **collective memory** built in the individual biographical experience of all three informants.

In view of the empirical data, we could say their collective ethnic identity is "thick" (to use the term of Cornell and Hartmann, 2007) and strongly connected

[12] A, B and V – cities in Southwest Bulgaria.

[13] A city near Sofia

[14] A village in the municipality of G.

with the emotional capital drawn from their social suffering during the assimilation process [Mihaylova, Svasek, 2008]. For the three cases studied, we could also assert that their collective ethnic identity has been formed as a mix based on primordial, modern, and postmodern features, circumstances and phenomena. It combines origin and culture with the historical, political and socioeconomic environment and relations of power and dominance they have experienced in the past and until now. All these elements firmly maintain their identity upon the principles of (common) affiliation, solidarity and trust.

Murat and Mustafa began their narratives with a recollection of the name-changing campaign. To erase the memory of this trauma, Murat tries to recount in a picturesque, humorous way the daily fears the community experienced at that time.

> "*And so, with the revival process what I remember is that, our parents were very frightened. We took advantage of that moment ... in the evening – before going to bed I and other kids would fill our pockets with beans and throw them at the windows. ((laughs)) ... in order to frighten them even more/ and in the morning we would listen to their stories how they would tell one another "last night they came and threw at the windows in order to frighten us/ ... I don't know what ... What should we do, should we change our names*/?" (Murat 1: 21–27).

Ethnicity is a demarcation line for identification of Bulgarian Muslims in their relations with the "others" – the Bulgarians, even in post-socialist times, continue to "own" the Bulgarian identity. Negative connotations still exist in references to them as a minority of a different, inferior status [Mihaylova, 2008]. In the narrations, hidden tensions were indicated between Pomaks and Bulgarian Christians: some of the latter would nag at Bulgarian Muslims and did not acknowledge the Bulgarian identity of some of them, for instance in Murat's case:

> "*And some (nagged at us) you know, that we're Pomaks*" *... say Pomaks or Muslims or whatever, we live in the same country, you understand ... I don't know why these people don't accept us ... I was born right here, right here, right in this house, for some it might mean nothing, for me this house, this village, for me mean a lot. Now we were born such, what can we do, kill ourselves? ((speaks jestingly)) That's it. We were born such, and we will die such. There's no way. And I don't understand – how is it that they spread these, ... morons*[15]*, tension between people, I don't know.* " (Murat, 4: 26; 11: 14–26)

Mert's life path is particularly interesting in the varied and ambivalent experiences he has undergone, though he himself says he sees nothing interesting in his life. After leaving the village to look for a better job in the capital city and spending many years as a doorkeeper at a disco club, Mert made the ambitious

[15] This explanation relates to local politicians and activists.

decision to go to Greece. Why did he choose this country? Greece is comparatively a latecomer to the EU, not counting Bulgaria, but "for us it is America", for him and people like him, Mert explains. When he is in Greece, even though he does not possess identity documents, he feels more at ease than in Bulgaria. He continues to travel to Greece without documents. It has been 14 years since he started working there. It was his own idea: he personally found a trafficker to get him there. Mert recounts that he went many times to Greece after spending his savings: he wanted to have money to enjoy himself, because in his childhood 'he couldn't even buy himself an ice-cream'. Even after spending time in prison for illegal entry and residence in Greece, Mert continues to admire this country and its people, and at many places in his narratives makes harsh comparisons with Bulgaria.

The biographic stories of our informants did not explicitly lead to the expression or argumentation of their **national collective identity.** They rather tried to present themselves as "normal" people, "just like the others", who were unfairly suppressed and isolated in society. Comparing the stories of the three informants, it appears they all display their nationality only outside the country, when abroad. There they really feel Bulgarian and equal to the "others" (Bulgarians).

Murat recognizes himself as a Bulgarian when he relates his identity to citizenship. The national identity appears in terms of citizenship (born in Bulgaria, a citizen of Bulgaria) and when Bulgarians compete in sports:

> "*we live in the same country, you understand. When I sit to watch a* ***game in the evening,*** *say Bulgaria is playing against Greece or Bulgaria against Turkey* ***or Bulgaria against*** *Spain or Germany, I root for Bulgaria, I don't root fo-or the others. I* ***don't know why*** *these people don't accept us.*" (Murat, 11: 14–18)

In his narration Mert does not mention or explicitly explain whether he feels Bulgarian or not. Only once, when relating his experiences in Greece, did he indirectly self-define as a Bulgarian. The town of N. in Greece is Mert's 'haunt'. People there are very warm and hospitable, very homely, that is why he stayed there for a long time. The mayor was something like a bank for Mert, he spoke fluent Bulgarian, as he had had a teacher of Bulgarian nationality, with whom he still kept in touch. He is a very generous man, he bought a small tractor for the monastery in Mert's village. Every time Mert was paid, he didn't want to keep the money in his house, because he didn't want "some Albanian to break in and steal it", he couldn't open a bank account because he was "illegal", so he gave the money to the mayor. According to Mert 'the mayor loves everyone who is Bulgarian' and once even told a policeman if the latter wanted to arrest Mert,

he would have to arrest him first. Telling us the story about this generous Greek man Mert indirectly identifies himself as a Bulgarian.

> "*Now I, sort of a long time // how /lo-ong – **a, two-three months since I had made his** acquaintance, he respects Bulgarians very much. He'd die **for a Bulgarian. /As soon as** he finds out you're from Bulgaria, **try to understand – he'll smother you in kindness. Pfo!** Just ask my wife, you'll soon do it, ask her about, e ... **he// she'll tell you. /As long as** you're from Bulgaria – **he'd give his soul. The chief of police calls him – "Come here!". ((he draws his breath)) "Do you see this man?", "Well /I see him". "Do you know he** doesn't have any documents?" ... **and he says "So what?" – ((loudly and quickly)) "To** put handcuffs on that man, first you'll have to put handcuffs on me*". (Mert 16:4–12).

Mustafa feels more Bulgarian mainly when communicating with people of other nationalities, and outside Bulgaria he talks to people there on various topics; even though people there did not seem to specially appreciate the fact that he, though a foreigner, was knowledgable about the history of their country, he is nevertheless proud of this knowledge.

They all displayed a feeling of national belonging when they assessed the quality of Bulgarian agricultural products, especially compared with the fruits and vegetables imported from neighbouring countries like Greece, Turkey, and Republic of Macedonia.

3. EUROPE AS A FRAME: "SOME PEOPLE ARE IN THE EU, BUT OTHERS AREN'T".

When asking ourselves how our informants – people from a small ethnic community in the Bulgarian mountains, at the external boarder of the EU – construct their mental and practical dealings with Europe in their life histories, we came upon Mert's admission that "*Some people are in the EU, but other aren't*".

This somewhat simplified conclusion of our informant confirms some important findings of the **EUROIDENTITIES** project. One of these is that there is an inequality separating *insiders* and *outsiders*[16] coming to EU. In using another conclusion of the project, regarding differences between new and old member states in practical dealings with, and mental perceptions of, Europe, we may assert that for people of 'newcomer countries' like Bulgaria, the European Union remains unclear as a field for their activity and as a structure of meanings and goals. This feeling of being 'outsiders' is especially widespread among members

[16] A. SPANÒ, U. NAGEL, P. MUSELLA, E. PERONE *FROM EUROPE TO EUROPEANS AND BEYOND: MEANINGS OF EUROPE TROUGH PEOPLE'S BIOGRAPHICAL EXPERIENCE*. CONCEPTUAL ESSAY. EUROIDENTITIES' PROJECT, WORKING PAPER. February, 2011.

of small, ethnically closed and locally isolated communities. Mert, for example, claims he is "a light year away" from the EU, but there are some people who have already "made a nest" inside there.

> "*I: What is the difference between those who are "in" and those who are not?*
> *M: The difference is that one has capabilities and another one doesn't.*
> *I: Why?*
> *M: We are not informed. We don't know what we can do and what we cannot do. What we can ask for and what we can't ask for. Also, we are scared to ask for anything*".
>
> (Mert:19–20).

The reason indicated for this feeling of being excluded from Europe, is lack of information for the 'ordinary' citizens of the EU member states.

Along with this perception of Europe as not quite 'accessible for all', there is the option of escaping from one's difficult life situation by migrating to another European country. Such is the case of all three informants. To some extent this escape was made possible because of the existing framework of United Europe (which provides freedom of movement, a single market, standardisation, professionalization, etc). At the same time their experience is strictly limited by dimensions linked to, or provoked by, that same 'European Union' frame (for example the national regulations of the labour markets in the member states, which allots to Bulgaria a 'second rate' position with regard to the free movement of labour force). Because of this, all three informants' experiences in various European countries present an interesting mixture of imagination and personal impressions. An important element is the 'ability to compare', which informants from these small locally isolated communities have been able to acquire since the end of the communist regime, and especially after Bulgaria's accession to the EU. Having been put into a new modernisation process after the changes in the former East European bloc, and now being able to watch Western TV channels, travel abroad, get an open, non-ideological education, and access Internet, etc., they can make comparisons between their own situation and life and work in other European countries. That is why, in their narratives, the informants sometimes mix what they have actually experienced with images derived from official discourse on Europe and EU; at times they tend to exaggerate.

> *"// '95 was for me, so to say in a Western state/. ... We were in western Germany to be precise, with a first cousin of mine/. ... That was when I saw order, culture, discipline. The place where we were working - I was simply in ... I was simply (2s) dazed. Meaning that the people have discipline, culture*" (Murat, 8:29–32).

Having had contacts and communicated with foreigners first in Bulgaria and then as a worker in Europe, Mustafa expressed his satisfaction that his images of

the world, acquired from the books he had read, were confirmed by the reality he saw there; he outlined in his mind, a rather idealized general image of Europe:

> *M: **I-I- well- I discovered a world that// about which I had read- that I mostly know-** from books- you know when you go there and you check it out personally and you say to yourself **it's true after all**# ... **I'm very impressed by the multi-multiculturedness**... I saw there ... all sorts of people.. ranging from Negroes from Togo, from Senegal, from Turkey, Arabs, ... Moroccans... // how they treat them//... «**in a loud voice» I'm happy we're in the** European Union- we travel in Europe everywhe-ere-# ... **in Belgium I've been in France,** Holland ...**there things are predictable ... The security that exists there**, is gone **here**"...* (Mustafa, 21: 13–14, 33, 35, 38; 19: 36–37, 39; 20: 28, 31).

Since childhood, two of the informants dreamed of seeing "*what the world is like// that world outside Bulgaria*" (Mustafa, 12: 34); one wanted to become a guitar player and thus to "be able to see the world" (Murat). They managed to make their dreams come true, visiting and working in 'old' EU countries. However, this experience did not produce in their minds any overall feeling of belonging to this 'common home – Europe'. On the contrary, for them working abroad in Europe is just a temporary means for obtaining security, and a source of income that will provide them with some money so they can return to their real home and environment – the village and the ethnic community. At the end of the interview Murat said he did not believe in the existence of the phenomenon of 'Europeanness' – he rather believed there are different nations and different national affiliations.

Moreover, none of them would want to be an immigrant somewhere "outside" if he had the opportunity and option to work in Bulgaria.

> "*if society had developed, if there had been other people, people like me or the political parties, who have constantly been promising prosperity to people, had achieved their aims, the way I have/, **I should not be going to Belgium now and to Sofia, but just now I'd for instance look for work - (how) am I to find work in Sofia, 'cause it can't be done** here // **I want to live and develop in Bulgaria, but, there isn't any**, do you understand what I'm trying to say to you*". (Mustafa, 15: 49–50; 16: 1–4)

None of the interviewees feel they are Europeans in their own country: "***I would feel like a European here/- me, I don't feel like a European here***," confessed Mustafa. He said European citizen should be someone who has projects –"*... And I do not have long term project that I can work here, should a European to have no such problem, and I have exactly this problem #*" (22:17–19). Mert is even more extreme in his view rejecting that Bulgaria realy has joined the EU: "*This is a lie, an absolute lie, ... **This is just somebody's whim, it is not for us, we** are far from the European Union*". (19: 36–40)

The survival strategy and self-preservation of their identity, which had been features of their life paths in the time of the communist regime, did not become less important for them during the transition period after the end of that regime. They still perceive a deadlock in their personal development and feel socially isolated because of the lack of sustainable economic development, of an institutionally stable democracy, and due to the existing insecurity. The failure of the transition to a functioning competitive market economy, the failure to build successful institutions and achieve authentic rule of law, have resulted in mistrust and lack of solidarity among people of the local ethnic community; and this reflects on their feelings about belonging to the European community. In going to EU countries to escape from economic difficulties, our informants dream of a partially imaginary 'West', yet feel themselves doubly excluded – from the ethnic majority in Bulgaria and from the EU.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Political changes in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s made it possible for the representatives of this small ethnic community to get a "taste" of the freedom of travel and communication, to "see the world". Two of the informants had had a strong desire for this; to some extent, they have achieved it. However, for all three of them, their limited experiences in Europe were an attempt to escape the economic situation in the country, to get out of the traumas of their social sufferings and overcome the alienation they feel with respect to the Bulgarian majority. As members of their ethnic minority, Bulgarian Muslims are labeled as 'Pomaks' by Christian Bulgarians, who perceive them as different and, in a masked or open way, display this perception to them in everyday life and at all levels of policy and the decision making process.

Being abroad, "out there", our informants feel and present themselves as Bulgarians and are treated as such, rather than as an ethnic minority, as they are in Bulgaria. Abroad they have more self-confidence, because they work and earn more money there than in Bulgaria.

Despite their social exclusion in Bulgaria and their biographical escapes to Europe, in their minds Europe is still mostly a set of imagined picture, an idealized image, rather than a trustworthy project, a real social space in which they can be equally treated and integrated as European citizens.

In concluding, we should stress the need for the EU, as a political, economic and social project, to reconsider the situation and attitudes of representatives of

small religious and locally isolated communities in Europe, especially those in the poorest member states, such as Bulgaria, towards their integration in Europe. These people must be helped to overcome the feeling of being 'doubly excluded' and of being European 'outsiders'. From our point of view, and based on the 'bottom up' approach used in the EUROIDENTITIES project, this could be achieved in two ways. Firstly, by enhancing the debate on multiculturalism in Europe, and secondly, and in parallel, by developing a unified and shared 'image' of what a "United Europe" is, of what the EU is about.

Both developments should find their base and argumentation not in the European history but in the contemporary challenges ahead of European citizens.

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ROZWÓJ TOŻSAMOŚCI W MAŁYCH SPOŁECZNOŚCIACH ETNICZNYCH W BUŁGARII

(Streszczenie)

Tematem artykułu jest kwestia budowania tożsamości wśród bułgarskich muzułmanów – jednej z mniejszości w Bułgarii. Przyjmujemy założenie, iż ich tożsamość etniczna (zbiorowa) została ukształtowana wielowymiarowo, pod wpływem takich czynników jak: primordialność, nowoczesne i ponowoczesne cechy, zjawiska i zależności zakorzenione w środowisku ukształtowanym przez czynniki historyczne, kulturowe, polityczne i socjoekonomiczne tworzące relacje władzy i dominacji. W artykule prezentujemy narracje trzech przedstawicieli mniejszości bułgarskich muzułmanów i pokazujemy jak integracja europejska staje się wyzwaniem dla ich tożsamości. Ich narracje pokazują interesujące zestawienie wyobrażeń z biograficznym doświadczeniem Europy.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość, etniczność, bułgarscy muzułmanie, analiza narracji, percepcja Europy

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FROM EUROPE TO EUROPEANS AND BEYOND. MEANINGS OF EUROPE THROUGH PEOPLE'S BIOGRAPHICAL EXPERIENCES

Abstract

This paper outlines results from the EU-research project "Euroidentities – The Evolution of European identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European identity" (www.euroidentities.org). Based on narrative interviews collected in seven EU Member States the study can show processes of Europeanization in everyday life and everyday practices emanating for those who in one way or other are taking up the opportunities offered by an integrated Europe. Against the observation of the phase of erosion of loyalties the institutional European Union is undergoing, the bottom up study points to a "European Collective Mental Space of Reference" [Schütze, 2011] as created in cross-border and cross-cultural communication and cooperation. The paper delineates this collective phenomenon of mental space as defined through structures of opportunity for mobility and encountering diversity of cultures and ways of life, through frames of reference orienting and affecting processes of learning and mutual understanding across borders and boundaries, through occasions for comparison between differences, and new collective identification and changing feelings of belonging. The last chapter deals with unequal risks and chances for encountering the European mental space and beyond.

Key words: European collective mental space, sensitivity towards otherness, biographical cost and risks, biographical learning, sense of belonging to Europe, old and new inequalities.

1. INTRODUCTION

While the institutional European Union is undergoing a crucial phase of erosion of loyalties and solidarities among its Member States, as well as a partial re-nationalization, these same institutionalized supranational structures have extended individual room considerably to manoeuvre beyond 'home' for many citizens and social groups. European policies of unification can be said to have been creating biographical output – almost unseen and unnoticed.

Looking at people's concrete daily life experience from a bottom-up perspective, we discover that Europe is becoming significant to an increasing number of individuals, for many reasons and in many ways. When analysing autobiographical narrative interviews with European citizens, we observe processes of Europeanization in everyday life and everyday practices emanating for those who in one way or other are taking up the opportunities offered by an integrated Europe, be it for reasons of a professional, vocational, educational, touristic, adventurous, or private relational nature.

In the EU-research project "Euroidentities – The Evolution of European identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European identity" (www.euroidentities.org), researchers have interviewed citizens in seven Member States using the narrative interview and analysis method [Schütze 1992]. Interviewees were chosen according to how much they were in touch "with Europe", through transnational work and cultural contact, through regulations concerning farming, cross-border communities, conflict and reconciliation projects, educational mobility, intimate cross-national relationships, and migration from outside Europe. The project was funded by the EU for 3 years, 2008–2011[1].

The overall findings of the research point to the fact that Europe has emerged as a *sui generis* collective phenomenon beyond and below the nation; it is categorized as the "European Collective Mental Space of Reference" [Schütze, 2011] indicating practices of relating individual life experience to cross-cultural collective commitments and horizons in the light of which the national or local

[1] The paper is based on the collective outcomes of the national research teams. The central concept of the European mental space was discovered and formulated by Fritz Schütze [2011].

sense of belonging and identification adopt a different meaning. The European mental space is less than an imagined community as it applies to the nation, and it is not necessarily a "we-community" with a mutual sense of loyalty among its members. The European mental space should not be confused with a stock of essential beliefs, but reflects on a stock of empirical practices and procedures emerging from actually getting involved in encounters with the stranger and the strange, and dealing with otherness and diversity. In the course of becoming involved in cross-border and cross-cultural activities, the European collective mental space of reference becomes very important for the orientation of European citizens, for the unfolding of their individual biographies, their biographical decision-making and the shaping of biographical work.

The notion of biographical work points to those narrative activities in which the individual's past, present and future are bound together; the individual reviews his or her present life situation in the context of former developments and past experiences, reflecting upon their impact on future options, and working through the doubts, ambivalences and difficulties they entail.

In what follows, we describe the European mental space of orientation as created 'bottom up' in cross-border and cross-cultural communication and cooperation: through structures of opportunity, frames of reference, occasions for comparison, and new collective identification.

1.1. Structure of opportunities

One of the more evident consequences of European unification and its emerging collective mental space is the implementation of a multiplicity of opportunities for moving across countries and encountering the diversity of European cultures, traditions and ways of life. Among them are educational exchange programmes such as Erasmus, Leonardo and others, subsidies for European farmers, and various forms of funding addressed to civil society organisations. The European Institutions have gradually facilitated the mobility of people within the EU Member States making it possible to leave and enter other countries without showing a passport, a common currency, etc. The structure of opportunities has also had the effect of encouraging people to look for better job offers in other EU Member States, and for more favourable milieus. It has made intimate contacts across borders more viable, and encouraged communication and cooperation regarding shared interests and activities.

1.2. Sphere of reference, learning and mutual understanding

A second biographical consequence of European unification and its collective mental space is the emergence of a commonly shared sphere of orientation affecting individual and collective forms of learning and mutual understanding. Derived from everyday experience with cultural otherness, it is constituted through comparison and practices of sensitizing to foster an understanding of diversity, opening up a new range of biographical options: professional, work-related, private and political. In fact, seen from the point of view of the biographical process of the individual, increasing knowledge of other cultures, milieus, lifestyles, and experiences of creating a shared frame of reference in interaction processes all add up to a process of biographical learning. The individual gains a sensitivity towards otherness which ideally stands for a progressive overcoming of the generalized abstractions and stereotypes passed on through time and space by national narratives. At the same time, the discovery of the European mental space may bring about feelings of loneliness, disappointment and anxiety; it may be accompanied by biographical costs and risks. In whatever form the challenges of the European experience present themselves, they will anyway require biographical work and inner questioning.

1.3. New collective identification

The third biographical consequence of European unification and its collective mental space concerns the discovery of new we-groups and ways of relating to issues and goals of cross-national and cross-cultural relevance, often organized in social worlds and arenas which transcend the European space and go beyond its borders and boundaries. Participating both pragmatically and symbolically in wider social contexts and meeting with otherness has an important effect on the individual's identification and sense of belonging, taking a wider shape than mere national and local identification. Indeed, although identification with Europe in the strict sense of being explicitly named as such is still weak, as various research shows, it is similarly true, and becomes evident in biographical interviews, that for citizens of EU Member States, identities and feelings of belonging are changing. The central feature of this change concerns the ways citizens conceive their own life world. These conceptions of identity emerge as a consequence of European opportunity structures, of a shared sphere of reference, and of the individual's commitment to experiences which go beyond national and European borders and cultural boundaries.

1.4. Old risks of inequalities

Looking at the remarkable biographical impact of the European collective mental space on individuals and social groups, we understand how much it has widened the room to manoeuvre in the sense of overcoming biographical difficulties and traps, and of pursuing projects of self-realization and wider social commitment. We also realize how the European collective frame of reference when experienced by the individual draws attention to differences of national and cultural phenomena, thus allowing for comparison and a critique of unequal life opportunities and chances for "agency" in relation to multiple European others. We further recognize the adventurous character inherent in transnational encounters and the options for new identification. While considering all these elements as positive signs of the ongoing integration process, other and less positive aspects must also be taken into consideration. At the end of this paper, we shall stress that in fact, access to the European collective mental space, to opportunities and chances for biographical change cannot be taken for granted. We shall argue that not only do they require certain kinds of resources and favourable conditions that are not equally distributed among individuals, but that differences and inequalities between Member States are still present.

2. EUROPE AS A STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITIES

The range of opportunities the European Institutions provide for citizens has become wider and more significant as the process of European unification has gone ahead. The influence of the European Institutions is visible not only in the geographical mobility of individuals, but also, for instance, with regard to the economic means provided for the agricultural sector, subsidising farmers whose activities are not at all characterised by mobility. In more general terms, we can state that it is reasonable to view Europe as a structure of opportunities, which operates in different ways for different categories of citizens.

The European Institutions exert a powerful influence on the individual, who actively interprets and makes use of the opportunities provided by them. The Euroidentities project, investigating the process of integration through biographical methods, has the merit of shedding light on the enormous variety of life-paths and the wide *spectrum* of reasons for which people come into contact with Europe. Focusing on the actors allows us to observe that: a) the possibility of successfully enjoying this larger space for the unfolding of individual action depends on previous experience; b) the set of resources, both material and

immaterial, available can influence the final outcome of the biographies. However, we can say that Europe represents an opportunity for both personal and collective growth, promoting – through various forms of support – improvements in people's lives and societal organisation, although we cannot ignore the fact that some biographical paths have been marked by suffering and disillusion.

2.1. Escaping from troubles

Many people access the European structure of opportunities as a way of looking for an alternative to the narrowness and the constraints of their social background and milieu. Transferring from one's own country to another can be seen as a response related to problems experienced in various social spheres encountered during the individual's growth, such as the family, school, and surrounding social context [Bagnoli, 2009].

With regard to problematic situations experienced in the family, it must be pointed out that we are in the presence of *multiple forms of intra-familial conflicts* which have marked the childhood and the adolescence of some of the interviewees. There are stories of sibling rivalry and stories of authoritarian parents who imposed strict regimes on their kids. There are people whose home life was characterised by excessive expectations and there are people who grew up in the presence of charismatic and idolised figures, who affected the further development of their personalities. Moreover, there have emerged a series of latent conflicts particularly in those who could not communicate with their parents, because of an upbringing based on the passive acceptance of adults' decisions and points of view or because of a condition of diversity – as in the cases of homosexuals – haunted by shame and silence within and outside the family. Finally, there are stories of individuals – particularly young women with a high level of education – whose biographical development unfolds as a progressive attempt to "dis-embed" from a patriarchal familial milieu towards a more modern context.

Concerning the school context, we notice that the main problem emerging from the narratives was *isolation from the dynamics of friendship and love among the other school-mates*. Sometimes because of negative self-perception of the body (e.g., girls who felt ugly or fat in comparison with other girls), sometimes because of previous family problems (e.g., the feeling of being different when coming from a non-conventional family), sometimes because of a diversity of one's own accepted neither in the family nor at school (e.g., homosexuals growing up in homophobic environments), some interviewees were, or felt, cut off from their school peer groups. There are also cases where the problem was

mainly a strict teacher or a conservative atmosphere in the school. For instance, the research has highlighted the existence of stories of unexpressed talents, i.e. people with particular skills – like the arts or music – who felt their inclinations frustrated by the school curriculum.

As for the social context, it has emerged from the research that there are *a wide range of reasons why people wish to leave the places where they come from*. The problems experienced in the surrounding context vary according to the age of the individuals. For young people of school age, these problems mainly overlap with those discussed above, since their social circles coincide with the family, relations, school and peer-groups. For young adults, however, the enlargement of the social environment combined with the drive to develop an adult lifestyle - getting a job and a flat, establishing a love relationship, etc. – can constitute the right biographical "cocktail" to reach the decision to leave.

Moving to another country can moreover occur when painful events induce periods of changes: "a decision to travel may also correspond with periods of transitions, when people are going through some change in their lives" [Bagnoli, 2009: 341]. However, the richness of the narratives teaches us that the trajectories of suffering are almost never related to one single problematic context, since they often intersect or flow into each other in different phases of life. For example, some people move in order to find a job abroad, but their mobility can be due to other causes, such as the will to free oneself from negative influences coming from the social circles closer to them.

2.2. Pursuing new opportunities

Reasons for moving are not necessarily negative. We collected biographies of people who moved in search of a more suitable self-definition somewhere else: for instance women aspiring to more egalitarian contexts in terms of gender; or people satisfying their curiosity by exploring other cultures; or people trying to rebalance their own status in the family, in particular individuals threatened by the successes of a sibling; or persons trying to sharpen their professional profile in pursuit of a specific career or taking advantage of new market segments abroad.

The search for identity as a mainspring of mobility mainly involves young people. The time spent abroad indeed is a sort of "extra time" meant for learning about oneself and one's own talents and abilities. In Bagnoli's words [2007], in the case of youths: "migration experiences [...] allow some degree of experimentation of different possibilities, before any commitment is taken" [*ibidem*: 28]. Living in another country can lead young women coming from traditional contexts

to reflect upon the taken-for-granted gender assumptions acquired during the socialisation process. The outcome of such an attitude, questioning profoundly what the concepts of masculinity and femininity are, seems to be an attempt to build egalitarian relationships and a renewed self-image in terms of gender expectations, and equal rights both in the private and public spheres. Living far away from home can also take on the symbolic value of protecting one's own status in the family context, particularly if: a) the person comes from a middle-class family characterised by an *ethos* which values international experience or b) there is another successful person in the family network whose image can threaten the positive results previously obtained.

The search for adventure again is mainly a driver for young people. As citizens of a globalized world, some young people feel that "my home is not enough", and the desire to travel corresponds to the wish to discover, learn about and explore other cultures. The search for adventure – like the search for identity discussed above – cannot be limited to the EU Member States, but it is a fact that the EU facilitates a "trial and error" attitude and promotes reversible decisions. These youthful kinds of mobility take the form of temporary migrations, totally different from the classic pattern of the long lasting migrations of the past, although they can turn into a permanent stay in another country, as can happen in the case of some Erasmus students who decide not to come back at the end of their time spent abroad. We have also to take into account the cases of people, not necessarily young, who feel attracted by the idea of handling diversity and subsequently transforming this inclination into professional activities as Civil Society Organization workers.

The search for career opportunities generally implies the active exploration of new professional worlds. There are cases of people in search of contexts where they can make use of their professional aptitudes, and these can be suitably brought out by new significant others, such as teachers, colleagues and superiors in the same professional arena. There are other cases where people look for openings in new market segments, such as Western entrepreneurs doing business in Eastern Europe, or Eastern experts selling their expertise in Western Europe and vice versa. Yet in the professional sphere, it is worth remarking how some combatants for specific issues such as environmental matters or organic farmers actively look for other combatants abroad in order to create coalitions in opposition to national regulations or powerful pressure groups.

2.3. Life paths not always with a happy ending

As we have already seen, the encounter with Europe – as a structure of opportunity – represents a chance for the actors to manoeuvre the direction of their biographical development in a twofold manner: on one hand, some can try to overcome the most painful experiences of the past, while others seek an opening up of opportunities to design new life-paths.

In both cases, the biographical outcome of this manoeuvring is in no way to be taken for granted. The interviews clearly show that the encounter with Europe does not necessarily imply a positive impact on the individual's biography. We cannot ignore the biographies of those who, on the other hand, have not seen their life projects develop favourably. When we look at these narratives without a happy ending as it were, we need to consider that some interviewees failed in their pursuit of improvement, due to the various obstacles they encountered on the way. Also in Bagnoli's research, we can observe important differences in terms of biographical consequences of mobility, where the author distinguishes between "the outcasts", i.e. people who "live their existential condition as foreigners in terms of duality 'in between' home and the host country" and the "cosmopolitan outsiders", for whom "migration becomes the key opening a different level of experience and knowledge of the world" [Bagnoli, 2007: 40]. The experience of encountering new worlds requires, among other things, the ability to reflect upon one's own choices and to design one's own future, what we call *biographical work*. As we shall see, when experiences are not worked through and reflected upon, the individual may be exposed to several forms of risk. At least four profiles of risk can be observed, signalling how important it is to look into people's biographies in order to discover the unexpected effects of social processes.

The first risk is the possibility of becoming *an eternal wanderer*: an individual moving from one country to another without any sense of direction. This kind of risk appears to be more concrete where there is an insufficient capacity for self-reflection, where moving takes on the meaning of a sort of compulsion to leave. In these cases, Europe can end up becoming an escape route without exit. In particular, the younger generation might find itself caught up in the European abundance of temptations to move (e.g. for quick and better earning opportunities) without any clear plan for long-term self-realization.

The second risk is *the condition of marginality*, i.e., being caught up in a suspended situation between different senses of belonging. Some interviewees appeared to be destined to a situation of ongoing strangeness. These stories narrate the lives of those people who, at the same time, feel that they cannot return to

their origins and cannot go any further into the new worlds where they live. In these cases, the condition of marginality seems to depend on a subjective and paradoxical situation of a sort of "double bond", where both a return or a fruitful stay (or even a new departure) are no longer conceived as an option and a subtle paralysis pervades their daily lives.

The third risk is represented by *the loosening of the emotional bonds* with significant others and the feeling of *estrangement* from the family of origin. This specific profile of biographical risk particularly involves those people who decided (or were forced) to cut social ties with their family and friends. Their narratives show that these drastic cuts with their primary social relationships and their past often contain an implicit regret for those phases of life definitively left behind, but not yet resolved. In this sense, biographical research demonstrates that transferring to another context allows people to distance themselves from painful situations, but it does not allow – *per se* – an escape from the memories of painful experiences themselves.

The fourth risk is represented by *a condition of professional cul-de-sac*. This regards people who, through mobility, have tried to improve their work situation, but lost the previous professional networks. Clearly, the attempt to make a career abroad is never guaranteed to be a success for anyone, but these biographies highlight how the most optimistic forecasts (i.e., earning more money, acquiring experience abroad, enriching one's own curriculum) are not enough either to enter new work environments successfully or to convert the experience gained abroad in one's own country. This last risk profile is worrying also in terms of professional identity, which can be seriously damaged by the frustrating failure to secure recognition from significant others of the efforts made abroad. Actually, not only in the field of work but also in other spheres (e.g. education), this research shows that those individuals who underwent a deep process of metamorphosis while abroad had the unpleasant feeling of being misunderstood at home, in the sense that the changes to their lives were not evaluated (sometimes not even noticed) by a context which had remained immobile.

Summary

Europe represents an important space to gain both material and symbolic resources. Indeed, behind most journeys undertaken by the interviewees it is possible to see a mixture of push and pull factors, ranging from the aim of pursuing better job opportunities to the desire for self-realisation in various areas of life. Nevertheless, it is important to reaffirm that Europeanization is a multi-faceted

process - involving mobility but also sedentariness – and that the EU operates both in a direct and indirect manner: directly stimulating educational mobility or indirectly facilitating economic opportunities in a number of countries, where it is possible to move without a passport and using a single currency.

Research shows moreover that Europe represents a sort of new "canopy", which can exert an important influence on the biographical development of individuals. Ease in moving and communicating within Europe seems in fact to contribute to the enlargement and reinforcement of a set of knowledge and practises shared at a much wider level than the national and local ones. The experience of being abroad (or of crossing cultural borders) allows the most disparate categories of people to discover and deal with new social worlds, although we noticed the existence of some risk profiles (particularly for young people) where there is the danger of getting caught up in this structure of multiple opportunities. However, as an effect of these circumstances of encountering and facing up to diversity, we can observe the emergence of a European mental space, which enables people to communicate and make comparisons with each other, albeit with a multitude of cultural and linguistic codes.

3. EUROPE AS A COLLECTIVE FRAME OF REFERENCE

The emergence of the European collective mental space of reference is to be conceived not as a shared umbrella of beliefs, but as practices relating to the challenges of mutual understanding in situations of communication and cooperation across national borders and cultural boundaries. These practices which develop "bottom up" in everyday situations are Europeanizing the Europeans, though not everywhere and across all strata of society. It is through educational, vocational and cultural exchange that these practices are generated and adopted, through activities in international institutions, new social worlds, and private relations. In a theoretical view these practices refer to some of the basic methods of constructing reality. They constitute Europe as a collective frame of reference for "doing comparison" across physical borders and symbolic thresholds, allowing and inviting critical differentiation between nations, ethnicities, and milieus, administrative and institutional procedures, political cultures, social atmospheres, public spheres, and routines of problem solving. While developing these practices, the individual not only increases his/her body of knowledge but, in the name of cooperation, is challenged to understand and respect diversity and to become sensitive to other people's sensitivities and loyalties. Along the way,

the individual will reconsider his/her practices and expectations and by and large adapt to communication and cooperation demands under conditions of diversity and cultural otherness. We could call this a biographical process of learning in which the ability to take the perspective of the cultural other and de-construct stereotypes is strengthened.

3.1. A space for comparisons

The most relevant learning processes for developing a European collective mental space of reference become particularly evident if we look at individuals who are creating and joining social arenas and networks which centripetally focus on supranational problems and aims, developing their own intercultural styles of communication and negotiation (including the use of English as a Europe-specific lingua franca). Among many others, a significant role is played by those social arenas, organizations and social movements specializing in bridging gaps between cultures, nations, or religions with a history of aggression and conflict, as in the case of the two Irelands, Germany and Poland, France, and the Czech Republic as a result of World War II, or in the case of bridging gaps between different standards of modernization regarding the protection of the environment and human rights. All of these, by definition, are actively networking across national borders and cultural, religious, and ethnic boundaries. Members of these groups move within different we-communities and develop new belongings while working on peace-building and reconciliation, on Europeanization and globalization. At the same time, processes of learning may also be observed in the case of individuals in situations of work migration and educational exchange as in situations of cross-national intimate relationships or when accessing Europe from non-EU countries. Wherever they take place, they are bound to initiate identity transformations in terms of a growing universalistic ability to take on the culturally different perspective of the other, but, at one point or another, they may also be hampered. If and when the discovery of the European collective mental space takes place, it is not focused on shared cultural values and norms. Quite the opposite, the making of European identities is constructed in a non-essentialist way by means of a collectively shared space of reciprocal and sensitive communicative practices. In this line of empirically based thinking, a critical view is adopted towards definitions of the European Union as a community of values and beliefs. As Stråth argues "it is important not to essentialize Europe but to emphasize the openness of concept much more than 'European identity' does" [Stråth, 2002: 398].

In a microscopic view, the practices emerging from the discovery of the European sphere of reference and comparison and constituting the individual learning process concern a wide range of activities. One group of activities is connected to the mere fact that in order to make contact at all, the individual has to make use of his/her foreign language skills (and/or English as lingua franca). The motivation for improving one's language capacities usually springs from a fascination with international meetings or from work needs. In the course of time the individual gets involved in different activities and milieus, even becomes an insider, gaining self-awareness and self-esteem, learning to defend a position and cope with defeat. During the battles to be fought and negotiations to be processed, the individual identifies with new collective orientations and role models, meeting alternative outlooks as a basis for making comparisons in a well informed and trans-nationally relevant manner, as well as a basis for criticising positions and contextualizing them in multiple discourses resembling a "universe of discourse".

In this sense, the European frame of reference with its ongoing practices of comparison can be considered a mental platform for creating mutual cultural, political and social understanding and recognition. It serves as a mental space of orientation in the sense of a third position to be adopted in order to overcome *cul-de-sac*-interactions structured by mechanisms of imposition, colonization, and domination [Schütze, 2011].

3.2. A space for developing sensitivity for social and cultural otherness

When inquiring into the biographical processes of experiencing the European space as a commonly shared space of reference, we observe a sequence of steps and turns during the learning process. When crossing national borders and cultural boundaries and becoming an insider in the European arenas, social worlds and networks, the individual is doomed to encounter diversity on very many layers of everyday experience. The most striking appears to be the comparison of one's own and other people's national, ethnic, religious or other stereotypes and the attribution of collective identity. While having to deal with an ascribed and not always favourable collective identity, the individual starts to question the prejudices and stereotypes held by his/her own we-community, and undergoes a process of understanding the ambivalent nature of things. What seemed to be beyond doubt, the tacit knowledge of the in-group, is shaken, the world as it is there and taken for granted is questioned, and biographical work is needed in order

to allow for ambivalence and otherness. In processes like these, Europe provides the third position needed for reconciling ambivalent feelings of belonging.

In a microscopic view, this experience comes along as a chain of steps of understanding and recognition at the end of which the individual will have undergone an identity transformation, concerning the body of knowledge, action schemes, orientation system and images of self and others. Ideally it will bring about a growing sensitivity to the limitations of stereotypes, an understanding of the two-sidedness and polyvalence [Kłoskowska, 2001] of things, events and situations. In order to continue communicating and working with the culturally other, the individual will learn to recognize abstractions of belonging and ascribed collective identities as ambivalent and deeply dependent on the position in the social field, and the perspectives of the respective in-group. In the process, the individual learns to differentiate between ascribed collective identities and the actual social identity of the singular individual. As a side-effect, the individual understands the importance of the individual actor, the personal commitment to the common goal and readiness to take over responsibilities. This sensitivity towards the other and its diverging perspective allows the individual gradually to develop knowledge and practices for reconciling seemingly incompatible perspectives, and for bridging contradictory positions, perspectives, action schemes and orientations.

Outstanding favourable examples of the emergence of a "Europeanized" sensitivity and "hybrid" learning are found in community, conflict and reconciliation projects (for instance on the border of the two Irelands), as well as in cross-national intimate relationships, and in social relations established between non--EU citizens and citizens of the EU. The identity processes of outer Europeans in the EU as well as those of cross-national intimate relationships and the capacity for collectively creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect deeply depend upon biographical work on the difficulties, pitfalls and traps of multicultural understanding and misunderstanding, and on disappointment, discouragement and potential alienation. A closer look at the work of conflict and reconciliation groups can add more micro-processes of becoming sensitized towards otherness and cultural diversity. These groups are tackling the problem of overcoming national and ethnic myths and facilitating non-aggressive, even empathetic recognition of each other. They are dealing with relationships which have become widespread through collective historical processes of aggression and warfare. Here the obstacles to mutual understanding are potentially even higher than in the contexts mentioned above, since the preconditions of reciprocity are at risk. The pillars of identification most taken for granted, such as national

and ethical stereotypes, over-generalizations and stigmatization, need to be deconstructed in order to create an atmosphere in which the limits and partiality of those presupposed judgements can be admitted. In overcoming inherited judgements passed down over generations, the individual cannot but undergo a process of biographical work in the manner of self-discourse and critical assessment of attitudes and convictions thus far held to be unquestionable, thus creating an inner condition for better understanding the prejudiced other, accepting the difference in experience and views as group-specific constructions of reality, and recognizing the mutual perspectives and their embeddedness in different histories and narratives.

Up to this point we have focused on processes of Europeanizing Europeans as a process of identity transformation towards becoming more understanding, sensitive human beings in command of practices of collectively creating and establishing a non-essentialist mental space of orientation. Apart from this, the database of the Euroidentities project very clearly conveys that there is yet another side of the coin to experiencing Europe. Sensitivity towards otherness cannot be seen as an automatic outcome of crossing borders and boundaries. What is more, in order to bring this about, a number of 'good chances' and favourable circumstances are needed. This does not happen like a flash of lightning but emerges gradually through exposure to otherness and biographical work. It implies openness to face up to what is unfavourable and irksome to the self, and requires courage to recognize failure and mistakes, be they at work, in private relationships or in other contexts.

The process of cultivating awareness of diversity and sensitivity for otherness can be hampered in many ways. As can be seen in some transnational workers, mobility does not necessarily activate processes of openly reflecting on cultural difference, and identity work does not come into play without effort. Moreover, recognition and growing sensitivity are bound up with active participation in life worlds beyond the sphere of labour and consumption. Conditions tending to hamper sensitivity towards otherness appear not only to be a restricted amount of time spent abroad limiting the chance of establishing significant links with the autochthonous society, as we will see later, but also an instrumental attitude toward Europe as a source for career chances. Managers, corporate executives, and students on exchange programs as well as migrant workers will not necessarily develop a genuine interest in the foreign country and build a second home there, but may stay put in their national circles or international "bubble".

What is evident in the biographical study of identities are the risks and biographical costs of experiencing Europe, the European collective mental space

and beyond. For instance, the foreigner, stranger, or newcomer may meet with stigmatization when looking for a flat, he/she may be denied acknowledgement of educational and vocational grades acquired at home, job chances may seem to be reduced to low paid jobs, insiders may avoid contact and exclude the newcomer from informal contacts. Administrations may not be cooperative, and locals may use a dialect difficult for the outsider to follow etc.

Meeting the stranger and the strange may imply misunderstanding and difficulties from the start. Whatever might initiate the process of leaving behind the familiar life world and discovering the collective mental space of Europe will upset routines and expectations, and is often connected with experiences of loneliness, alienation, disappointment and defeat, of misunderstanding and being misunderstood, of being exposed to injustice, disadvantage and even hostility. At the same time, if these experiences are worked through by the individual, they bear the potential for a universalized understanding of difference and a practice of solving difficulties and obstacles of communication and cooperation by way of assuming the perspective of others.

Summary

For most of its citizens the institutional structure of the EU and the activities of the Commission and the Councils seem to live a life quite apart from the life worlds, contingencies and concerns of individuals and their daily struggles. Nevertheless, these structures, remote as they may seem, in a fuzzy way have led to yet another biographical consequence "beneath" the political structure of the EU. Almost unseen and unnoticed, and hardly consciously reflected, this quality has arisen bottom up from everyday experience of cultural otherness and diversity, from discovering new social worlds, and relating to new milieus and reference groups cross physical borders and traditional boundaries.

On the way from Europe to Europeans and beyond, the individual discovers Europe as a collective mental space of reference establishing a body of knowledge and a communicative competence matching the challenges of cross-border and cross-boundary communication and cooperation. The European mental space is not to be confused with a canonical horizon of values and norms, but quite the contrary, it is a set of orientations of a non-essentialist nature, directing the individual toward taking perspectives in a universe of discourse. In the context of daily routines of comparison, Europe resembles a "third position" in the light of which the limits of perspectives are likely to be understood and handled in a more sensitized way.

This process is accompanied by biographical cost which, if not taken seriously and becoming an object of biographical work, will lead to paradoxical constellations and pitfalls in the development of identity. Regarding the process from Europe to Europeans, there are favourable conditions such as the existence of relevant others showing the way to Europe and preparing for its potential biographical cost, and unfavourable conditions such as a limited period of time spent abroad or spent with a premeditated corporate focus not allowing time for socializing with the local context. In this sense, the discovery of a European collective mental space of reference is a risky endeavour which may or may not lead to identity change and a happy ending.

4. EUROPE AS THE SPACE WHERE NEW COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES ARE EMERGING

For an increasing number of people, Europe represents a space where they can experience new opportunities in various spheres of life: educational, professional, and cultural. Participation in a wider social context has important consequences for the identification of individuals and for their sense of belonging, which assumes a characteristic wider than mere national identification. Europeanization, like globalization, enlarges the exposure to cultural models coming from differentiated contexts and this "contributes to the enlargement of the 'repertories of possible selves'" [Markus and Nurius, 1986, in Bagnoli, 2007: 24]. Indeed, as several researches show, although European identification is still weak, it is impossible to neglect that something is changing in the way European citizens conceive their own location and life worlds as a consequence of their commitment to experiences which go well beyond the national borders.

In other words, sharing a material and cultural space facilitates practices of comparison and mirroring which lead to a considerably enlarged repertory of references around which identification is structured. From this point of view, Europe takes the shape of a scenario where new educational patterns, new opportunities in the field of work, new social arenas and new collective movements promoting new social stances (e.g., environmentalists) can develop. But looking at our results, we have good reasons to state that for European citizens Europe also represents the place where important processes of exchange, cultural comparison, and mutual learning occur, and where a collective frame of reference is emerging as the effect of the increasing sharing of cross-cultural experiences.

4.1. From daily life practices to the sense of belonging

Between the *practices* of everyday life and the public views of Europe there is a dynamic of mutual strengthening. While the opportunities to participate in European experiences increase for citizens, the knowledge that nowadays people's lives can unfold in a wider dimension is simultaneously growing in public opinion. Similarly, we can say that when in public debate the awareness that people can develop their lives in a broader context grows, then one can feel much more stimulated to experience living outside the home country. And their broader experiences have significant effects on individuals' senses of belonging.

Staying abroad and relating to people from other nations triggers changes in lifestyles, consumption, and people's habits, that are sometimes limited to a particular mix of the two countries, sometimes giving rise to forms of *métissage* [Laplantine, 2004], which refer to a wider level of abstraction, putting themselves in a supranational space – the European space. Food habits, management of life times, cultural and leisure practices, and religious festivals are only some of the fields for experimenting with new routines and cultural mixing highlighted by the narratives of the Euroidentities Project interviewees. These combinations of *old* and *new*, of habits, of experiences lived at home and abroad are mirrored in new loyalties, which become more permeable, more flexible [Giddens, 1991, Bhabha, 1994, Bauman, 2001], also when the actors are not completely aware of them.

Our research shows, for instance, that even the mere Erasmus experience can make people develop a wider sense of belonging than they used to have previously, with important spin-offs both on the structuring of identities and on the forms of planning of their daily lives. Constant comparison with a different university system and social organization has been useful, in some cases, to enlarge the range of the affiliation system which, as a consequence of the experience abroad, has taken on an international connotation. Such enlargement of the horizons of identification (*I'm Polish but I'm a European student too*) has a stronger impact in terms of identities for those students coming from closed societies like Italy (blocked by a strong Catholic tradition) and countries of the former communist bloc like Estonia (for a long time suffocated by the Communistic regime) for which the openness to other worlds of life seems to have brought about a profound rethinking of institutional structures and values. This observation can be extended to other categories of interviewees, since we can observe similar phenomena in several cases.

Yet it must be pointed out that these profound changes in identity seen in the interviews – the collective identification, i.e. self-recognition as a member of

a group is part of the construction of individual identity and its transformation – only in a few cases correspond to a clear identification with a European *we-group*, since examples of informants who have declared themselves only European are wholly lacking. There are, however, emerging forms of more complex multiple and multi-stranded identification which, though recognizing the international dimension, do not imply a wish to renounce the local dimension of identity. In other words, "the nation still comes across as a source of identification but is no longer unique or commanding, far from its familiar self" [Soysal, 2002: 281].

So it happens that local forms of identification coexist with regional, national and supranational ones, becoming predominant only under particular circumstances when ethnicity or the attachment to one's own region or city respond to fortuitous and instrumental circumstances (e.g. the "Neapolitan appeal" as emblematic of sociableness and a social *passe-partout*): a kind of *daily multiculturalism* [Colombo, Semi, 2007].

Though neither exclusive nor predominant, identification with an alleged European identity is not totally absent. In fact, a sense of awareness of one's own Europeaness emerges clearly if we look at testimonies by people who have had a lengthy experience in a non-European country. In other words, it seems that one becomes more aware of one's own Europeaness when far away from Europe, therefore from an external perspective. Being on another continent and feeling a sort of cultural stranger has the effect of producing a stronger identification with the home continent. Similarly, we see a more solid sense of belonging to Europe among those cases of individuals who came to Europe after living for a long time (or for all their lives) in a non-European country, but being socialized into European values and traditions – the case of people coming from former colonies. In the experience of these people, the impact with Europe resembles an encounter with something familiar, already known, but also desired. It is for this reason that under these particular circumstances, overloaded with the symbolic value of a myth, identification with Europe assumes a stronger depth and centrality than in other narratives.

However, apart from the variety of the reshaping of belonging as the effect of peoples' experiences beyond national borders, what visibly emerges from most interviews is an enlargement of horizons of identification, even when this does not appear so clear at first glance. For instance, in cases where mobility has been driven by an escape strategy (*escape from*), experience abroad can lead to a sort of *(re)patriotization,* that is a re-discovery of one's own country of origin and of its culture and heritage, as an effect of the intense biographical work needed in the circumstance of living cut off from one's own homeland. Moreover, staying

abroad and experiencing the host country's daily life – with both its advantages and difficulties – can reinforce (re)conciliation with the milieu of one's birth as an important frame of reference and identification, at the same time assigning to the destination the role of *second home*. From this perspective we can see again an extension of belonging rather then a restricted way of self-conception in the social space, or a mere step backwards. Indeed, we observe people setting themselves in a space of comparison between cultures and different *we-groups* instead of accepting fixed and unquestionable collective identities confined within national boundaries.

In other cases, people can fall back on their origins, making them the bulwark of a sort of uncontaminated world in order to cope with the sense of inferiority deriving from the comparison with countries more advanced on the road of modernity. But if we consider that these people are dealing with the complex task of making connections between social, economic, and cultural worlds all distant from each other, this attitude should not be interpreted either as the rejection of the different, the new, or a mistaken recognition of the European Union. On the contrary, it signals the desire to take part without renouncing one's own origin. In this sense, this sort of glorification of one's own roots has to be seen as a demand for national specificities as an inalienable part of the European project. A European project which therefore incorporates differences without abolishing them. This latter point recalls Beck's idea of a "cosmopolitan Europe" [Beck, 2009]. As he underlines, while the concepts of multiculturalism, relativism and tolerance – which permeate the public discourse on Europe from the beginning – refer to difference as an inevitable "burden" to face, the cosmopolitan attitude assumes the idea that differences are in any case something able to enrich people's lives. This attitude can be seen as the passage from an "either/or" perspective to the more positive "both/and" perspective.

4.2. Time and range of the exposure to a European context

There are another two interwoven elements emerging from our analysis which appear to be important for the processes of collective identification: a) the period of time of exposure to a different socio-cultural context; b) the range of such an exposure.

With regard to the first element, related to time of exposure, it emerges clearly from biographical materials that the longer the time spent abroad and/or the longer the relationship with people from another country, the more profound are the transformations in terms of collective identification. A prolonged stay in

another life context necessarily implies the individual's participation in multiple relational networks: colleagues, university companions, neighborhood, friends, compatriots, and so on. Forms of mutual understanding develop among people involved in these networks that compound to enlarge their circles of belonging and consequently their systems of loyalty. Just to give an example, an Italian interviewee now working in Germany shows that he can feel that he is a member of his German work group, sharing professional habits with colleagues, at the same time spending free time with compatriots, whose professional ethic he does not appreciate at all. And yet the elements of affiliation between the "home country" and the "home abroad" can be numerous and varied: the football team of the place of birth and at the same time the football club of the town where one lives and works, the group of friends from childhood and/or those friends made in the host country, an NGO with activists from all over the world, etc. As argued by Giddens, "an identity does not automatically subvert the other ones" [Giddens, 2007: 256].

With regard to the second element, which refers to the range of exposure, we see that the biographical work, which leads to a re-allocation of collective identities, is as profound and full of consequences as the dimensions of life involved in the experience abroad are numerous. It is for this reason that the life-stories of people whose experience of Europe is linked to involvement in an intimate relationship with a foreign partner emerged as the most totalizing and those which highlighted the more significant transformations of the system of collective identification. Living in the country of a foreign partner and bringing up children means, indeed, having to take part in a whole set of new institutional arrangements (school, health system, etc.) and new relational networks (partner's family, neighborhood, etc.), as well as facing up every day to lifestyles, habits and customs different from those at home. It is easy to understand that in such circumstances there are more chances of transforming one's own collective references, mixing several systems of normative and ethic orientation if faced with an experience circumscribed to a specific sphere like education or work. For instance, in the case of farmers, since their participation in the European space is limited to the field of work and to the management of European funds and subsidies, this experience only partially enlarges their system of belonging, while on the contrary, it has been possible to observe the existence of a return to a shared image of a national we-community as a sign of protection of their agricultural traditions in opposition to the centralized management operated by the EU Institutions. Nevertheless, also in this case one cannot argue that we are in the presence of a complete lack of significance of Europe but it is reasonable to

assert that Europe assumes here the form of a shared image that – though remaining external to individuals' identities – constitutes a crucial point of reference which contributes to delimit and re-define the boundaries of the group.

These results of research do not lead us in a univocal direction and so it is legitimate to wonder if there really exists a kind of collective identification that we can call European identity. Finding an answer to this question is not simple. If European identity means a common background of language, norms, values, habits, and so on, allowing people to recognise themselves as a we-community with an inherent continuity, our research (as many others, see Stråth 2002, Rossi 2007, Jenkins, 2008) confirms that such a strong form of identification is not present among EU citizens.

However, if we look at the concept of collective identity (the feeling of membership in a group) from a non-essentialist perspective, i.e. without taking for granted that an essence – based for instance on religion or common roots – exists, our analysis allows us to assert that a sense of belonging to Europe is surely emerging. It is more about a new way of conceiving oneself in the social space, which does not imply either the abandonment or the weakening of past forms of identification in people's lives, such as the national or the local. On the contrary, these new forms of identification are not monolithic but multiple and, as they change, incorporate various levels of identification following the biographical experiences: local, national, supranational, and global [García Canclini, 1995, Appadurai, 1996]. From this perspective a European identity can be seen as one of the diverse possibilities of identification that people can utilize on the basis of the contingency of time, the developing of life trajectories, specific life-circumstances and so on [Sen 2006]. It can be conceived as something that constitutes one of the numerous pieces of an individual's identity.

It appears clear from these considerations that such an enlargement of the range of identification available to the individual nowadays constitutes an important tool for coping with the speedy and continuous transformations of our societies, characterized by an increasing social complexity which requires the adoption of a sort of *flexible thinking*. From this point of view, in order to improve people's skills in handling their changing and fluid lives, it becomes crucial that more and more chances to broaden one's frame of reference be given to everybody, avoiding any inequality in terms of national backgrounds, familial milieu, upbringing, age and gender. Moreover, we have to take into account that "transnational experience thus expresses itself as a 'form of capital' which meshes with other forms of capital, especially social and cultural capital, but which nevertheless stands apart as 'mobility capital' which can be deployed over the

subsequent lifecourse for personal, social or career enhancement" [Li, Findlay and Jones, 1998, in Findlay et al., 2006: 293]. So, promoting for many more people the opportunities of coming into contact with *otherness* and *differences* is of fundamental importance in order to avoid the risk that the possibility of both enlarging and enriching one's sense of belonging be the privilege of a few.

Summary

As a consequence of increasing participation in a European environment, people are involved in a more extensive system of loyalties. Studying abroad for a while, working abroad, or simply having relationships with individuals coming from another European country (in the field of farming as well as in a European arena focused on Educational projects) represents much more frequent an experience for citizens than in the past. This experience implies measuring up to otherness, to other cultures, to other groups, and this encounter can lead to adopting from others what is considered better, more useful, more worthwhile. So, together with forms of identification gained in the context of origin, new kinds of identification are available, which go beyond the borders of nations. In such a perspective Europe represents the space in which the range of individuals' choices seems to increase because nowadays they can choose and modify their system of beliefs or values more easily than in the past.

5. LIMITS AND RISKS OF EUROPEAN UNIFICATION?

European unification has had a remarkable impact on people's daily life, significantly enriching the opportunities at their disposal both to overcome difficulties and to pursue personal projects of self-realization. Moreover, as we have seen, the growing process of inter-European mobility and the increasing tendency to internationalise life courses come hand in hand with cultural processes of great importance: the contrast between different cultures, in fact, seems to produce the activation of learning processes, as well as reciprocal recognition, which has significant effects on collective identification, the latter being now more prone to multiplicity, fluidity and hybridization.

If all these elements show the "winning" side of the ongoing unification process, we should not undervalue other aspects, which seem to constitute potential limits to the realization of an authentically unified Europe. As we shall argue, there is more than one reason to believe that a risk exists that the benefits coming from a United Europe are not fully and equally distributed: firstly, because

the possibility of taking advantage of them requires resources not available to everyone; secondly, because – at least according to the perception of the citizens interviewed– differences between Member States are still evident. In fact, while powerful processes of integration are occurring, it seems that parallel processes of division can start up, which appear most clearly in the case of non-European countries but to some extent seem to concern the European Union itself.

5.1. Europe for whom?

European unification has increased opportunities for an increasing number of people; nevertheless it should not be overlooked that the possibility of taking advantage of these additional opportunities is not as generally widespread as it might seem at first sight. Our research in fact shows very clearly that not only moving abroad but even thinking of moving becomes a feasible option only if there are different types of *resources and capital*. On the individual level, the decision to move abroad – even within Europe, i.e., in a geographical space perceived as neither too far nor too different – necessitates considerable personal resources, such as the disposition to take the risks connected with mobility that, as we have seen, are numerous both on an emotional and a material level. Living abroad requires on the one hand an ability to cope, at least temporarily, with the isolation or the feeling of not being accepted, and on the other, a particular ability to network and socialize with others who are different.

If these resources and skills, as related to personal feelings and experiences, are of a merely individual nature, there are other kinds of resources necessary to support mobility which are on the other hand deeply linked to structural elements, in particular to social stratification. Our research illustrates that the predisposition towards mobility has a clear social character since it is closely connected to the family of origin. Indeed, being open to travel, changing and exploring new possibilities in another country, seems to result from the family culture, i.e. from the so-called *cultural capital*. To some extent, the latter represents the *humus* where the motivation for internationalization matures, and which is typical of upper middle class and upper class families. In fact, they are often families whose friendships and acquaintances extend beyond national boundaries (where the parents have travelled for study or work, for example), or where travelling abroad for holidays is a normal part of the family's lifestyle, or where investing in the children's internationalization (through learning foreign languages or travelling for study from adolescence) is considered an essential element of the educational process.

Of course this does not mean that the phenomenon of European mobility is rigidly marked by social boundaries. Actually, in the case of the middle classes, the trend towards mobility can arise from previous experiences within the family, such as the migration of a relative or thanks to significant teacher figures or specific courses which include periods abroad. These can play a crucial role in opening people's minds up to an international perspective. It also has to be said that even in lower middle-class families it is possible to find an *ethos* of internationalisation, which in this case seems to be linked to expectations of social mobility and status promotion. On the other hand, as far as less privileged groups are concerned, the need to find a job, or a better job, can constitute a sufficient reason to move, even in the absence of cultural reasons. Therefore, we may conclude that the real difference concerning cultural capital is that while the world-view of the privileged social strata (open, mobile and internationalised), internalized since primary socialization, completely coincides with the EU value system, opening up to Europe is not immediate and spontaneous for less privileged social groups. So, if the aim is to produce equality, these findings should receive particular attention, especially in educational policies that play a major role in equalizing gaps in the field of cultural resources.

If cultural capital turns out to be crucial in producing the predisposition to move within the European space, *economic capital* seems to be as relevant in influencing the quality of the European experience when this involves (as in the case of educationally mobile or transnational workers) a move abroad. Money, in fact, not only directly affects the possibility of appropriately resolving practical problems (finding accommodation, coming back home from time to time, enduring possible periods of unemployment), but also considerably widens the chances of participating in all the social activities (on the cultural, leisure, and community level) that make the cross-cultural experience really meaningful, and which are not open to those who lack adequate financial resources and are forced to limit their experience abroad only to the working sphere. Also in the case of economic capital therefore opportunities to enjoy fully the European cross-cultural experience are not symmetrically distributed.

Finally, with reference to the so-called "*social capital*", i.e., the set of social relations people can rely on, we can assess that – according to research results – it plays a major role both in stimulating mobility and in affecting the experience of living abroad. Indeed, for many of our interviewees the idea of moving, or at least the choice of the destination, was influenced by the presence of relatives, friends, or people they already knew in the host country. In addition, the ability to adapt to the new country, to find solutions for their needs and to be emotionally

supported, are deeply influenced by the number and the strength of the ties, both at home and abroad, which constitute the social capital at their disposal.

In consideration of the role played by the various types of capital, and above all by their combination (since often a good supply of one type of capital is accompanied by a good supply of the other types), we can affirm that neither the possibility of having access to the European opportunity structure nor the ability to make good use of it are evenly distributed today.

5.2. The Europe of Inequalities

If the mix of resources that people can rely on, be they personal, cultural, economic and relational, which in the main is connected to their social position, seems to prefigure a risk of an unequal distribution of the chances for Europeanization, also inequalities between different countries, and the risks connected with them, should not be neglected.

The first and perhaps most important inequality that has to be mentioned is the one which separates *insiders* and *outsiders*. As said before, and as appeared from interviews with non-Europeans now living in Europe, the emergence of the European space – as a space based on the recognition of negotiation as a principal tool for the resolution of conflicts as an alternative to war, and belief in the rule of law, in democratic procedures, the freedom of religion and rights - as a matter of fact cannot but deepen the divide between those who are part of it and those excluded from it. Any kind of identity always implies the assertion of a difference. So, the idea of a "European identity necessarily contains a demarcation from the non-European. This is inherent to all distinctions, they are both inclusive and exclusive" [Stråth, 2002: 397]. With Kolhi's words "there may be a new 'European nationalism' turning outwards, or inwards against those who represent the outer world" [Kolhi, 2000: 128]; immigrants, "the intruders", can be used to take the role of "them" in a context where inter-state nationalism is no longer the rule among Western Europeans and where "immigrants from outside western Europe import the identity conflicts into the European countries instead of externalizing them as conflicts among states" [ibibem: 129].

Although the most important differences are those between countries inside or outside the EU, we must not neglect the fact that also within the EU space persistent signs of inequality emerge. One important distinction concerns *Western and Eastern* EU countries. It is true that the European process of integration has undoubtedly produced homogenization between the two areas. The pattern of migration from East to West, for example, seems to have changed considerably

nowadays, becoming increasingly similar to the West to West one, which is tending towards temporariness and reversibility, with aims to improve quality of life rather than to satisfy a basic need. Especially for the younger generations, mobility towards Western Europe often originates from a demand for self-realisation and search for identity as happens among young people in the West. Nor should we ignore that – as confirmed by our research – we are now witnessing a process in the opposite direction (West to East) due to the professional and entrepreneurial opportunities offered to Western European citizens by the economies of the Eastern countries. There is no doubt then that, as a result of the unification process, the distance between the two areas is diminishing. However, despite this, there is clearly a persistent stereotyped view that associates Eastern Europe with an image of inferiority and backwardness. Such views, present in a significant number of interviews, partially derive from people's perceptions and even self-perception, since often our Eastern European interviewees seem to be afflicted by a sense of inferiority. On the other hand, they have a very concrete basis: it is a fact that the citizens who move from East to West to get a job, generally find occupations well below their qualifications. In relation to this aspect one should not overlook the risk that the existence of a shared European framework could increase comparison between countries, and therefore amplify the feelings of inferiority not only of the East towards the West, but also – as we will see – of the South towards the North.

Also, along the *North-South* axis Europe is showing signs of persistent inequality. The big difference in job opportunities linked to different levels of economic development, as for Eastern EU countries, means that many people do not move because of a real choice, as generally happens in the case of mobility from West to East or North to South. In addition, with regard to the cultural sphere, the different level of modernization which is still separating the North and South of Europe (e.g., better gender equality, greater acceptance of diversity, the greater rights that the legislation of the countries of Northern Europe gives gay or unmarried couples, or in the field of bioethics) also contributes to reinforcing the image of backwardness of the South held by the citizens of Southern Europe who are more inclined to attribute negative characteristics to their country (scarce meritocracy, widespread corruption, institutional inefficiency, and so on). This promotes, among other things, the allocation of a symbolic value to their international experience (opening up to Europe as a kind of "antidote" to cultural backwardness) that unfortunately tends to devalue the image of the home country and to determine a kind of "obligation" to move to countries deemed to be more advanced. In this sense, both in the case of North-South and East-West

differences, a risk can be seen of a persistent disparity between those who move by choice and those who do so as a sort of "defensive strategy" (i.e., not to be left behind rather than to go ahead).

A final clear inequality evidently emerging from the research is that concerning the *Old and New Member States*. Especially in the case of farmers, it has been highlighted by the respondents from countries which have recently entered the United Europe, that they perceive that they have a lower influence on EU agricultural policies, and that there is a disparity in the amount of subsidies received under the CAP. They see themselves at a disadvantage, as well as having a weaker position in competition on the common European market. Regarding the farmers, and regardless of their country of origin, interviews show a further risk, concerning the great difficulties of small and medium-sized farms, which do not appear adequately equipped to face the challenge of modernization and professionalization (the introduction of new standards and new rules, intensification of competition) stemming from the unification process.

Summary

In conclusion, we could affirm that for many European citizens the United Europe is undoubtedly an open space, configured as a structure of opportunity, as a place of mutual understanding and recognition, where new forms of belonging are taking shape, where universalistic views are being established and where stereotypical visions of difference are being overcome. For many others, however, access to these new opportunities seems to be hampered, made difficult, or even prevented by the existence of unequal opportunities for participation in the "wealth of the united nations of Europe" and in its opportunity structures. In other words, the risk arises that "differences in mobility and access can create, or reinforce, social inequalities" [Gustafson, 2009: 26]. These inequalities arise not only from individual factors and characteristics, but also from the differences between Member States. From the people's perspective, the E.U. appears as a structured space along the East-West and South-North geographical axes, and along the Old – New temporal axis.

The existing constraints on gaining access to Europe and its opportunities, while not jeopardising the essentially positive and successful nature of the unification process, can lead to a growing perception of difference and division between the more and less privileged groups and countries. From this perspective, the risk that the process of unification could generate new or reinforce old inequalities should represent a constant concern for European Institutions and policy makers.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The European unification process which has long been criticized for its political focus on economic regulations and neglect of the social and cultural spheres, seems to have activated a fuzzy logic of Europeanizing Europeans where least expected.

Beyond the truth about Euro-scepticism as represented in statistical findings and political elections, processed through a macro-sociological approach – a truth which recounts an ongoing crisis of European unification and scarce interest in Europe – another facet of the truth has been discovered in our findings, which is that of the people and their lives. It is a kind of truth that can be found only from data voicing people's own experience and perspectives, and analysed using non-standardized open interviews and interpretative methods.

This truth concerns the widening of geographical and symbolic room to manoeuvre through the use of the European opportunity structure which makes biographical trajectories less and less confined to national borders and cultural boundaries. Activities initiated by this opportunity structure involve learning how to communicate and negotiate in cross-cultural and cross-national social arenas and networks. They further involve practices of comparing different outlooks on life, recognizing and being attentive to varying sensitivities. In the long run, the individual may develop a routine of taking the perspectives of multiple others and explaining them to each other, ascertaining equal chances for participation in discourse, avoiding being patronizing, developing strategies for translating difference and a common code of ethics. In an ideal typical construction we could speak of activities securing a "democracy of perspectives" [Schütze, 2011]. From this point of view, one of the main results which emerge giving voice to the experiential world of individuals is the non- essentialist orientation system. Crossing different cultures, people seem to compare and reflect upon cultural differences and peculiarities, thus giving rise to a process – often unintentional – of overcoming the stereotypical views of "the stranger". Furthermore, their involvement in cross-cultural and cross-national arenas appears to promote a willingness to listen and a predisposition to accept others' views and practices which lead to overcoming preconceived positions and dogmatism.

In this sense, the European frame of reference could function as a third position, providing the individual with a "third (universalistic) position", of peace making, protecting the environment etc., the third position being the (imagined) position of a "third party" (or 'generalized other') overarching the difference between the positions of the ego and alter ego, and forming a synthesis of them

both. In other words, Europe would represent a universalistic superstructure in whose name the resolution of particularistic religious, ethnic or national conflicts and aggressions would adopt the meaning of a contribution to the greater task of establishing peace in Europe and to building Europe as a place where the belief in the rule of law and in the democratic procedures and rules holds sway [Habermas, 2006].

When we look at the concrete experiences of people moving in the European space, we discover that the differences in traditions, habits, and customs which characterize Europe do not seem to hamper the emergence of feelings of commonality [Brubaker and Cooper, 2000]. The sharing of some common features come true in the sense of "all being in the same boat" [Kantner, 2006] and/or in the sense of sharing a common *destiny* rather than a common *history*. In the light of these findings, the thesis of a monolithic European identity is unsustainable. Local, regional, national and supranational identification (European, or even global) seems to coexist, simultaneously rather than sequentially and without a hierarchy of significance [Jenkins 2008: 170], enriching people's experiences and daily routines. In other words, rather than the space where "fixed identities" consolidate themselves, Europe takes shape as a space where people experience hybrid, fluid, "hyphened" identification, and where "conflicting attachments are the rule rather than the exception" [Kolhi, 2000: 126]. And hybridity is a powerful antidote on the one hand to the risk that the process of European unification results in a conservative and prescriptive idea of Europe: an idea based on shared myths, memories and values [Ayhan, 2008: 176] according to a model that "encourages a conception of 'Fortress Europe' hostile to and defended against all those who do not share these ideals" [Bettin Lattes, 2005: 59]. On the other hand hybridity prevents the risk that Europeanization translates into a hegemonic homogenization process, where the affirmation of universalism can mean destroying all European differences [*ibidem*].

These new forms of identification, therefore, represent a crucial resource, particularly with reference to contemporary society, where the processes of globalization require the ability to adopt divergent points of view, the ability to combine more semantic repertories, and the possibility of handling diverse universes of meaning and discourse [Bauman, 2000]. Indeed, because of its plasticity, this mode of collective identification might turn out to be more suitable for meeting the challenges of post-modernity – more suitable than the more consolidated modes of identification, which, while capable of promoting a sense of belonging, are also however more focused and therefore unfit for

contemporary society, where the push to mobility and the rhythm of social change make adaptability a crucial resource.

From a micro perspective, centered on the concrete lives of real people, we can therefore assert that European citizens are increasingly becoming "the Europeans", building Europe and nurturing a European culture, centered on new types of belonging. On the other hand, the emergence of both new identities and collectivities, inclined to transnationalism and fluidity, should not lead us to think that we are in the presence of a linear process. In fact, more than one element suggests abandoning any kind of evolutionary or deterministic vision. Firstly, as clearly emerges from our data, identification is neither an easy nor a conscious process; it is rather a kind of biographical work which implies an internal discourse where individuals must call into question their knowledge and must be ready to review their cognitive certainties; it is a process which, as we have seen, entails considerable costs, and at each point can turn back, change direction or also be blocked as a result of both negative experiences and the lack of resources. Encountering with the other can be very painful, so "foreclosing identities in terms of boundaries and borders may be far easier than opening the self to include the other or facing those uncertainties that the other may stand for" [Bagnoli, 2009: 40]. Secondly, persisting inequalities, both at micro and macro level, can play a contrasting role, generating differences and divisions which can weaken emerging transnational/ multinational/supranational belonging: we could even say that top-down processes could counter the bottom-up Europeanization process visible in people's daily lives.

Confidence in the rise of a shared European culture, in other words, should not blind us to the eventuality that the *resurgence of nationalism or localism* could occur at any moment. Indeed universalism, a crucial principle of European unification, "affirms the right to one's own culture, in other words the right to be particularistic" [Kolhi, 2000: 129]. Moreover culture is not – as in an essentialist view – something external to the individuals, existing apart from them. It is, rather, the combined outcome of actions and interactions among individuals – who interpret, reproduce and transform it – and of institutional arrangements which constitute the framework (of both opportunities and constraints) of these actions and interactions. "Identities are not attributes that people 'have' or 'are', but resources that people 'use', something that they 'do'" [Jamieson, 2003: 509, in Fuss and Grosser, 2006: 215]. Therefore, whether and to what extent giving life to Europeans as well as Europe will be possible, will also depend on what the institutions and policies will be able to do to support the process of "Europeanization from below" which is underway today.

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OD EUROPY DO EUROPEJCZYKÓW I DALEJ. ZNACZENIA EUROPY W DOŚWIADCZENIACH BIOGRAFICZNYCH

(Streszczenie)

Artykuł przedstawia rezultaty projektu badawczego „Euroidentities – Tożsamości europejskie. Zastosowanie metod badań biograficznych w badaniach nad rozwojem tożsamości europejskiej" (www.euroidentities.org). Na podstawie wywiadów biograficzno narracyjnych zebranych w siedmiu krajach opisany został proces europeizacji w codziennych praktykach tych, którzy w różny sposób wykorzystują oferowane przez UE struktury możliwości w zintegrowanej Europie. Chociaż obecnie zaobserwować można kryzys lojalności w instytucjonalnym wymiarze aktywności UE, badania nad perspektywą „oddolną" (*bottom up*) pokazują istnienie „europejskiej mentalnej przestrzeni odniesienia" [Schütze 2011] jako wytworzonej ponad granicami i kulturami sfery komunikacji i kooperacji. Fenomen przestrzeni mentalnej zdefiniowany jest tu jako struktury możliwości dla mobilności, konfrontacji z różnorodnością kulturową, możliwości porównywania odmienności, budowania nowych identyfikacji kolektywnych i zmian poczucia przynależności.

Słowa kluczowe: europejska kolektywna przestrzeń mentalna, wrażliwość wobec innych, koszty i ryzyka biograficzne, poczucie przynależności do Europy w perspektywie biograficznej.

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