Citizens at Heart?

Perspectives on integration of refugees in

the EU after the Yugoslav wars of succession
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Preface

The idea for this book was conceived at a time when the images and stories of refugees arriving from former Yugoslavia had long been replaced with stories of their individual integration and achievements in many parts of Western Europe. As we completed our respective research projects and sat to discuss the organisation of an international conference about former refugees’ experiences of integration in Western Europe and the transnational activities aimed at their homelands, there were very few signs of the pending humanitarian crisis that would eventually touch hearts and divide political sensibilities within the European Union. As waves of war-generated migrants currently trudge through the muddy fields and vineyards of the Balkans on their way to Western Europe in search of safety and shelter in order to rebuild their shattered lives, fears and phobias – once believed to be confined to the realm of history – again threaten to turn the hearts of Europe cold. Resembling the sentiments of early 1990s, narratives of foreign elements disturbing the quiet safety of our neighbourhoods, dismantling our welfare systems and bringing ethnic and religious warfare to our homes, rekindle the fears and anxieties of ordinary people in many European societies. As far right parties take advantage of uncertainty and deliver narratives warning of coming anarchy, the building of razor-sharp fences and bureaucratic roadblocks are increasingly seen by large segments of the political establishment and ordinary citizens alike as unwanted but necessary responses to the interminable invasions of those from war-affected countries and regions.

Thus, at this moment, twenty years after the end of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the midst of a mounting humanitarian and refugee crisis in Europe, the findings presented in this book have gained an additional level of relevance and meaning. On the one hand, they tell the stories of integration by ex-Yugoslav refugees in different countries within the European Union, of the existing structural possibilities and obstacles, personal strategies to overcome obstacles, and also how war-generated immigrants’ transnational activities have assisted in building peace in their homelands. On the other hand, this book offers practical insights and alternatives to the narratives of fear, hopelessness and apologetic exclusionism. The contributions in this book tell a story of the often-successful though thorny process of refugee integration, and offer insight and hope regarding the prospects of integration for today’s refu-
gees in Western Europe. In this regard, the experiences of integration by ex-Yugoslav refugees in the European Union context are highly relevant and deserve scholarly attention, both as sources of inspiration for future policies but also as stories of individual and societal determination, resourcefulness, resilience, and the eventual triumph of hope over despair.

This publication is a collection of chapters, most based on and inspired by presentations made at the international research conference Citizens at Heart- Immigrant Integration in a European Perspective at Uppsala University, 1-2 March, 2013. The idea for the conference was born from discussions and synergies between Li Bennich-Björkman, Roland Kostić and Branka Likić-Brborić that began in late August 2012. Li and Branka had just completed their project Citizens at Heart? Political Integration in Comparative Perspective sponsored by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet). Roland on the other hand, was part of a project Diasporas and Armed Conflicts in their Homelands: Identifying Opportunity, Building Capacity and Harnessing Peacebuilding Resources of Diasporas in Sweden which was sponsored by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim of the collaboration was to bring together some of the most renowned Swedish and international scholars working on the subject of integration by ex-Yugoslav refugees in the European Union in order to further support the cross-fertilisation of ideas and knowledge on the integration of refugees and a the transnational activities aimed towards their homelands.

While our own ambitions were high, the conference would not have been possible without the generous involvement and support of many people. In particular, we would like to thank the Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies (UCRS), the Hugo Valentin Centre (HVC), the Department of Government, and the Uppsala Forum for Democracy, Peace and Justice at Uppsala University for providing the support and funding that made it possible for everyone to meet in Uppsala. In addition we are grateful to the Royal Society of Arts and Science in Uppsala, which were perfect dinner hosts the first evening of the conference and made the dinner memorable for all the participants. We are also grateful to REMESO (the Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society), the Department for Social and Welfare Studies at Linköping University for supporting Branka Likić Brborić’s work in this project and the REMESO scholars for contributing to the conference and this volume. Among those that also played an important role in making the conference a reality, we thank our assistant Enujin Jeong who helped us in the early planning stages and extend special gratitude to Åsa Viksten Strömbom who perfectly controlled and executed the practical aspects of the conference, making everyone feel at home during their visit in Uppsala.
The process of preparing the publication presented its own set of challenges, which would have been difficult to overcome if it were not for support of the Hugo Valentin Centre and the Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies. In particular, we are grateful to the director of the HVC, Tomislav Dulić, and the director of the UCRS, Claes Levinsson, who offered their moral and practical encouragement and provided much appreciated financial backing during the final stages of the work on the book. Without their support, this book would not have been possible. Our gratitude is also extended to the editors of the journals Race & Class, Revija za narodnostna vprašanja/ Journal of Ethnic Studies, and Dve domovini/Two Homelands who kindly allowed us to re-publish their papers as chapters in our book. In addition, we would like to thank Christin Mays for carefully reading and making suggestions on how to improve the language in a number of chapters in the book, especially in the introduction. For all her imagination, creativity and constructive advice in designing a cover photo for the book we are forever indebted to Đenana Čamo. Finally, we extend our gratitude to Fredrik Brandberg who was irreplaceable in the process of finalising the layout of the book, and without whom this book would not look the same.

The friends, colleagues, and relatives who supported this project are too many to thank by name. We are deeply grateful to all of them for their ideas, support and encouragement. They gave us the energy and strength to carry through some of the challenging parts of the process and see this book project to its end. Lastly, a final thank you for the time, effort, and patience of all the authors who contributed to the book, and who despite some delays, never lost faith in this exciting project.
Introduction

Li Bennich-Björkman, Roland Kostić, Branka Likić-Brborić

The Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s shocked the world. Once again, war had broken out on European soil, turning compatriots and neighbours against each other and exposing a brutality that has left scars difficult to heal. The War shocked the many inhabitants of Yugoslavia who had experienced a less repressive Socialist rule than the Soviet under Josip Broz Tito but who now found themselves trapped in the midst of religious and ethnic hatred that destroyed their hometowns, villages and neighbourhoods. Large groups of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina where some of the worst fighting took place, fled from their homes during 1992 and 1993, as did others from former Yugoslavia. Hence, Europe in beginning of the 1990s experienced heavy flows of ex-Yugoslavs who sought refuge, one of the ways the tragedy of the Yugoslav Wars has come to affect many countries, both neighbouring and more distant, over the long term. Now, when more than twenty years have passed and 2015 constitutes the year of the commemoration of the 1995 Dayton agreement, the former refugees have become immigrants, often well-settled and rooted anew, though always seemingly with one foot in the old homeland. This book is a contribution to the growing literature on this huge, and internal, European disaster and the processes of re-settling and integrating that the ex-Yugoslav migrants have experienced.

Eventually, many refugees came to settle in new environments in Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK), Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and elsewhere outside of Europe. Many have also continued to live in their new home countries even after the war ended and after the attempts to re-build war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina and former Yugoslavia began. Transnational networks were established quickly, tying together Bosnians living outside of Bosnia with those who live inside, and remittances have become part of the economy of individuals and the society at large. Many also continue to follow the politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina and vote in elections, which further speaks to how strong the emotional bonds remain even though the former refugees chose not to return. For many, such a choice is rooted in the painful experiences of violence and destruction, but also in the fact that the country has profoundly changed. The old world is gone, and many of the former inhabitants no longer feel at home in the new world. Bosnia-Herzegovina has also been internally divided into two parts: the distinct Serbian territory, Republika Srpska, and
the Bosniak-Croat Federation (Federation BiH). The previously multicultural and cosmopolitan city of Sarajevo, often described as unique because of the co-existence of mosques, Jewish synagogues, Christian Catholic and Serbian Orthodox churches, has also been ethnically divided. Downtown Sarajevo has become more religiously homogenous, with a dominate Bosniak /Muslim population and is currently undergoing Islamization, best illustrated by the mushrooming of new mosques and Islamic centres, financed by Islamic states, which only adds to the one hundred mosques that existed previously (Perica 2002). At the same time Serbian Orthodoxy and Croat Catholicism have become dominant in the territories politically controlled by Bosnian Serbs and Croats respectively.

So even though many of the immigrants from the former Yugoslavia have encountered problems of different kinds in their new countries of residence, including outright hostility and hatred, they have stayed. Bosnians and Herzegovinians in particular have become a successful group in comparison to immigrants from many other places. In this book the focus is on former Yugoslavs, the European refugees and immigrants, and their often thorny experiences of becoming part of new societies around Europe, in establishing new lives of work and education, citizenship, and subjective belonging. Processes of integration stand at the forefront and are explained with examples from two European countries: Sweden and Slovenia. Both countries are most likely cases for the successful integration of ex-Yugoslav immigrants; Sweden has had experience in welcoming labour migrants from Yugoslavia since the 1960s, and Slovenia witnessed similar labour migration from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia in the 1970s. In addition, Slovenia – the part of the Yugoslav Federation that at least in principle escaped the war and entered the EU in 2004 – shares common ground culturally and historically with other Yugoslav nations while at the same time having its own, strong national identity. Yet in both Sweden and Slovenia, not least their relative ethnic homogeneity have created preconditions that affect how cultural diversity is perceived. Slovenia seems to be relatively passive when it comes to issues of health, education and political participation of migrants as reflected by its relatively poor Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) ranking in 2015. On the other hand, Sweden’s ambition in terms of legislation dealing with immigrants’ rights on the labour market, education, health care, family reunions and citizenship (as measured by MIPEX 2015) is the highest in Europe.1 Practice of integration is, however, something different.

The European scene from 1990s and onwards

The ex-Yugoslav refugees began their lives anew in the midst of dramatic demographic transformations that took place in many countries in Europe from the early 1990s onwards. War, large-scale conflict, poverty and labour migration have resulted in increasing levels of immigration from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the former Soviet Union. The consequence is a rapidly growing social, cultural, and religious diversity, bringing to the surface tensions that interact with class and geographical marginalisation to create a Europe where issues of migration and integration have caused major political divides. While the United States and Canada – at least partially – have formed their national identities around being immigration countries and emphasized a tradition of civic nationalism, many European states are instead built on the idea that dominant nation-building communities exist which constitute the core of the country, making integrating diversity more complicated. Although all Western democracies including old EU member states embrace “unitary” citizenship that entitles all members of political community to equal socio-economic, political and legal rights (Kymlicka 2012), they have adopted different versions of this citizenship model and different ways to manage immigrant and minority groups, also contingent upon their national welfare regimes. Between Germany’s aim for social integration in accordance with the corporate conservative welfare model and Great Britain’s liberally influenced focus on the provision of legal rights to immigrants there is, for example, a wide gap although both constitute integration policies (Angenendt 1999; Koopmans & Statham 2000; Borevi 2002). The British majoritarian election system with its emphasis on personal votes and the Swedish proportional counterpart with party-controlled lists are miles apart although they are both democratic. This institutional variation between European states that are all now major host societies to large immigrant communities, suggests that institutional contexts may prove to be more important factors in integration processes than has thus far been assumed.

In 2008, financial crisis and rising unemployment intensified the “liberal paradox” (Hollifield 2004), a conflict between business demands for free labour migration and xenophobic responses to increasing immigration. The contrarieties between the dynamics of transnational economic openings and national political closures have impelled states to identify models for the successful integration of immigrants and initiate the search for a balanced model of citizenship that pursues common civic identity and attentive universalism, disconnected from majority culture,
while actively promoting multiculturalism, equality and the rights of migrant communities to participate in public deliberations (Habermas 1995; Bauböck, Heller and Zolberg 1996). In this vein, the EU has, as a part of the pursuit of a European identity and social model and as a response to migration related emergencies and populist responses, initiated a common EU-level integration policy (Collett 2006). Across many liberal democracies, including the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France and Great Britain, we have also witnessed strongly-worded political statements proclaiming the failure of multiculturalism and diversity policy and calling for a reaffirmation of assimilationist policies that focus on national identity, common values and unitary citizenship. These statements underline a shift from state responsibility in providing supportive integration policies, towards citizenship assessment and the obligation of immigrants to meet given requirements. These political narratives seem to support the research of influential scholars who have long declared a crisis of multiculturalism (Brubaker 2001; Joppke 2004). In most, if not all, European countries, facing these transformations has evoked responses at various levels that have affected the processes of integration experienced by the immigrants portrayed in this book.

Institutional responses

There are, firstly, institutional responses in terms of re-shaped integration policies. These policies aim at dealing with and even mitigating the consequences of immigration, at the same time as they also aim to facilitate integration in host societies. Historically, one of the major political conflict dimensions in Europe which shapes party politics has been the left-right dimension, paralleled in some countries by a religiously-oriented dimension, and a cleavage concerned with the centre versus the periphery (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). However, today, issues of nationalism and cosmopolitanism have undeniably come to the fore, changing the political landscape of Europe and the groupings in the European parliament. Long established Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Liberals of Europe find themselves in constant negotiations with political forces on the radical right over policies of nationalism, integration, and welfare systems. The legitimate claims of both the majority population and minorities who want to feel that they belong and can participate are real and pressing contemporary issues.

The attractive ideas of multi-culturalism have proved difficult to turn into practice when the cultural values and practices of communities and individuals are perceived as too divergent and the common values too few. This, in turn, has given rise to a new type of “integration” policies
that appear bifurcated. On the one hand the policies attempt to prevent cultural expression believed to be too visibly disparate from the majority – bans on burqa, niqab and veils in public spaces are good examples – while at the same time attempting to strengthen that which is considered unifying through introductory testing of language and country-specific knowledge and the defining of values such as freedom, equality, gender equality, sexual rights, and children’s rights. Often it is required to pass a civics test to be eligible for citizenship. Recent examples where such civic integration policies are practiced include, to varying degrees, France, the Netherlands, and Germany. Belgium also created legislation for the wearing of veils, while Switzerland in 2009 forbid minarets through a referendum.

This policies of civic integration have spread throughout Europe since 2000, in a process of policy transfer which today has made Sweden – one of the major host societies for Bosnians – one of the few, if not the only, countries that do not use such tests as a requirement for citizenship. In contrast, other Scandinavian countries, including Finland, have adopted such civic integration policies. Whether or not one believe that emphasizing community within a diverse society is a good policy direction, it is important to be aware that for example the multicultural policies of Canada have always included such tests as part of the entire citizenship “package”. In Europe, however, multiculturalism as an idea became popular in the 1980s but was only adopted half-heartedly. During the last decade, civics tests have therefore been launched in addition to the existing multiculturalism, creating an impression of being a problem-solving measure rather than an integrative part of the policy parcel.

However, what on the surface seem to be similar policies may nevertheless be introduced for various reasons and implemented differently. The UK, for a long time belonging to the “liberal” camp concerning diversity and citizenship, experienced violence and uprisings in the 2000s in immigration-dense cities and areas which has led to the introduction of requirements for citizenship as a way to strengthen Britishness and foster a sense of belonging. The UK, however, actively encourages newcomers to apply for citizenship and facilitates the study process before tests. The Netherlands is the state that has moved furthest in a restrictive direction as a reaction to growing diversity, and has instead implemented the civics test in a way that may make it more difficult to become a citizen. There is no study support before the test, and failing the test three times means that immigrants lose eligibility for citizenship. Therefore, the reaction at the institutional level is a combination of efforts toward restriction and toward creating stronger community.
The party-level

A second reaction is the growth of radical right parties in many, if not virtually all, European countries. Since the victory of Jörg Haider’s “Freedom Party” in the Austrian elections in 1999, the establishment of typical radical right parties with immigration as a main concern has spread rapidly, both to many countries in “old” Europe as well as to some in “new” Europe – that is the former Communist states. There is, however, no easily identifiable pattern by which to assess the electoral success of these parties, like using, for example, the number of incoming refugees. Instead, it seems to be a process of imitation. As a result, immigration has led to a new type of ethnic party in many of Europe’s states, ethnic in the sense that these parties promote the majority’s rights to a (constructed) culture and the necessary defence of distinct traditions, while often combining these messages with social-conservatism and EU-scepticism. Many of these parties have seats in the national parliaments, although fewer have been part of governments. Their electorate are mobilized not only through xenophobia (which is only one element) but on grounds of reactions to economic change and post-modernization. The situation is best described in terms of a feeling that something has been lost which needs to be regained.

Attitudes

Finally, there are responses at the individual level in terms of attitudes and values – not only in attitudes on immigration but also on how welfare expenditures should be handled. Studies have investigated whether growing migration erodes or in any way negatively affects the support for welfare state and welfare expenditure. However, the results have been inconclusive. While some studies conclude that no such effects could be observed, others find negative attitudinal changes over time in, for example, Swedish municipalities where time-series data do exist. In one such study, it has been shown that ethnic heterogeneity negatively affects attitudes toward social spending (Dahlberg et al. 2012).

So, the migration within and to Europe also interacts with profoundly anchored issues of how to manage post-modernity, in terms of the transition from an industrial to a knowledge-based society where immigration is, however important, just one component. The topic touches upon the difficulties of diversity and how to be different but still be able to co-exist. What we as researchers can continue to contribute is more knowledge, not least with the comparative perspective in this book, on which “models”
or examples for co-existence and integration seem to function well, whether initiated by the state or by the society at large.

Within this broader trajectory, the Swedish model of immigrant integration seems to, until recently, have resisted growing restriction. According to various comparative measures of integration policy such as MIPEX (the Migrant Integration Policy Index) and MPI (the Multiculturalism Policy Index), and various value surveys, Sweden scores highest in terms of legislation that promotes inclusion. Moreover, today, Sweden is the country within the EU that has promoted the most liberal citizenship policies, combining the possibility for double citizenship with low thresholds for naturalization and generous criteria for family reunions (Howard 2009). However, there is a considerable gap between the high scores on labour market policies, which support the integration of immigrants and the reality of higher unemployment rates among immigrants, particularly among young people with immigrant backgrounds. Recent riots in the Stockholm suburb of Husby have seriously challenged the common perception of “Swedish exceptionalism” and sparked political and scholarly debates on citizenship, multiculturalism, inequality, discrimination, and racism, including the related issues of the rights and duties of immigrants in the Swedish welfare state. The debate was fuelled in particular after Jasenko Selimović, the State Secretary to the Swedish Ministry for Integration in the Conservative-led Alliance government in 2010–2014, used the “integration success” of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to garner support for using Swedish immigrant integration policies as a role model for other countries.

Citizens at Heart

In the context of globalization, EU integration, the changing geography and complexity of international migrations as well as the demographic challenges of aging workforces and population decline, it is not surprising that the issues of migration, settlement and integration of immigrants have received both political and scholarly attention. The current migration has led to new challenges for many states in Europe, states that have not historically identified themselves as immigrant states – the United Kingdom, Germany and Sweden instead experienced high emigration to North America – and hence have not developed identities as immigration countries until recently. Furthermore, this identity shift has been difficult and has not, as we pointed out earlier, been sufficiently informed by the policies of the more immigration-experienced countries, the United States and Canada.
Integration is however a contested concept that has been used in literature covering everything from “objective” indicators focusing on the labour market, formal citizenship or housing patterns, to subjective feelings of empowerment and belonging (Marshall 1964; Brubaker 1992). The British social philosopher Thomas Marshall characterized the process of moving towards inclusive citizenship (based on the historical developments of the United Kingdom) using a model which relied on the successive deepening of civil, political and social rights – in that order – over time and coincided with the expansion of the welfare state. In this model, Marshall describes a lengthy process of class integration, within a given territory, wherein marginalized groups are empowered by the state through the expansion of rights, and thus become full-fledged citizens. Through the expansion of citizenship, equality develops and individuals gain more agency. In his model, the state plays a crucial role in promoting and expanding rights: civil rights, and equality before the law; political rights understood as equal voting rights; and, in addition, social and economic rights. Marshall focused on providing a model for how the state should expand its responsibilities in respect to how citizenship should be defined and realized. His investigation is an analysis of how at least parts of Europe moved from societies shaped by sharp class distinctions with privileges for a few, to more equal societies. In a similar way, it is possible to think about how immigrants integrate as a series of steps.

But while Thomas Marshall concentrates on the state – or an institutional perspective – the integration of immigrants is deeply affected by at least five interrelated factors not confined to the only institutional level: the performance of the state, the labour market, and educational institutions as well as the openness of the majority society and the acceptance of each individual on his/her own terms. The state can help promote inclusion through, for example, legislation on citizenship – dual or not – and through the choice of whether or not to require a minimum level of language skills and historical knowledge. The provision of voting rights also varies, as can financial support for housing and social security, and job search counselling. Access to the labour market and the operation and quality of the educational institutions are the two arenas that affect most immigrants directly and where processes of integration could be determined.

The vast array of academic literature that exists on integration and integration policies, on citizenship, identity and belonging is sometimes locked into jargon and a way of thinking that divide “the process of integration” into neat compartments: economic, social, political, and cultural. Such a view is, however, driven by policy thinking and the various areas
towards which policies can be focused. It is driven by a tendency towards social engineering that reduces the visibility of individual experiences. In Habermas’ terminology, this is a “system-world” analysis, regarding lives from the outside (1984). However, the existential challenges that are embedded in refugee-ship transcend these neat compartments. These challenges go beyond the policy labels of assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration, which attempt to describe the fundamentals of how the state sees its relationship with immigrants (Scott 1998). Since these are political labels, they rest on a concealed presumption of immigrants as a category. The “life-world” is instead where the processes of living, experiencing and remembering take place. From this point of view, the individual refugee thus resists categorization and struggles to resurrect and assert their individuality in the eyes of the state and the environment. The situation of refugee-ship could therefore be understood as a personal journey where one go from having established oneself and ones individuality during adolescence and early adulthood, and then re-settling in a new place where that person is unknown in the eyes of the others and in the eyes of the state and its institutions. One has become a category – the category of immigrant or refugee – and a significant part of the process of integration is to feel that one’s individuality is once again recognized. In this process, one’s compatriots are important since for them the person’s individuality is not lost, one may even have known them personally before one became a refugee. Such a network – that may or may not transcend class and gender barriers – provides an alternative world where personal history and your individuality are remembered and understood.

In this book, our ambition is to come closer to the life-world of immigrants, and how the system-world and life-world sometimes clash and coincide.

Contextualizing immigrant integration: Slovenia and Sweden

The purpose of the chapters in this book is to make a timely theoretical and empirical contribution to a deeper understanding of various aspects of immigrant integration from institutional and migrant perspectives. The special focus is on the integration of war refugees and immigrants from former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, analyzing not only institutional systems and integration policies, but also individual attitudes and strategies for integration. By looking particularly into the Slovenian and Swedish models of integration and taking into account the different experiences of Bosnian migrants themselves, the “subjective” side of political integration is further explored by focusing on how per-
ceptions and feelings of identity, acceptance, belonging, and alienation affect first and second generation immigrants. Hence, the chapters contribute to the improved understanding of such processes as economic and labour market integration; political, social and cultural integration; multiculturalism; civic integration; citizenship and transnationalism.

In the chapter Citizenship and Emplacement: Processes and practices of inclusion of newcomers Maja Korac-Sanderson presents a conceptual approach to the integration of newcomers based on her research on Bosnian and Yugoslav refugees in Rome and Amsterdam. In this chapter, she makes a contribution to studies of integration conceptualized as “emplacement”, which denotes “the processes that shape how newcomers become actively engaged citizens and how they develop a sense of belonging to their new society and become ‘of place’”. This understanding emphasizes migrants’ individual and group strategies of “place” and “home-making” as contextualized in space and time and the importance of informal politics, such as daily negotiations with local institutions, neighbourhoods, communities, social networks and connections. Contrary to the conventionally narrow conceptualization of “community” in terms of bonding social capital, i.e. interethnic networks, this approach underscores the vital role of bridging social capital, i.e. minority-majority connections for the realization of immigrants’ formal citizenship rights and engendering their sense of belonging. Furthermore, the chapter challenges narrow, ‘binary’ understandings of citizenship as bounded by realms of receiving society by pointing to the shifting and multiple sense of belonging experienced by immigrants which is engendered by transnationalism facilitating “emplacement” practices traversing national social spaces. Indeed, these broader conceptualizations of immigrant integration, citizenship, and transnationalism allow for an unbiased production of knowledge through the analyses of “emplacement” processes in the specific contexts of different receiving societies, which we exemplify using Slovenia and Sweden.

The chapter Narrating Belonging in the Post-Yugoslav Context questions the validity of the notion of the multiple or shifting identity of migrants in the context of Slovenia. Mojca Pajnik argues that such usages of identity in some transnationalism and migration regimes studies and in policy making may serve to demarcate migrants as different from the host country population. What is ignored by such accounts is that a sense of belonging is not free-floating but situated and contextually bounded and applying “positive” identity claims may mask actual structural inequalities. Alternative conceptualizations are explored whereby the author uses the concept of narration and story-telling that may more accurately capture migrants’ contextualized realities. As the biographical interviews with
migrants who live in Slovenia show, experiencing war, leaving their country of birth for studying, fleeing in order to support their families, leaving normatively strict environments that do not allow expressions of difference are particular circumstances that need to be considered when analyzing migrant transnationalism and transnational belonging.

In his chapter Bosanci, Čefurji, Čapei and other Burekalised creatures Jernej Mlekuž discusses how the formal restrictive citizenship framework and inherited prejudices of the “near other” in host societies creates obstacles for Bosnian integration in Slovenian society in spite of, and maybe because of, geographical proximity, the common history of connections, internal labour migrations and settlements. The chapter examines tendencies in Slovenian media and popular culture which discourage immigrants and their descendants from integrating into Slovenian society. Owing to the wide scope of the research topic and given the size and complexity of media and popular culture in Slovenia, the chapter focuses only on the places in media and popular culture which have proved to be problematic and therefore worthy of consideration and critical analysis. In particular, the chapter examines burekelisam, the regimes of representation formulated by the symbolic use of the Balkan dish burek in contemporary Slovenia as an identity marker of the non-Slovenian population in the country. The chapter by Mlekuž emphasizes the problematic nature of using burek to represent immigrants and their descendants, and its relevance for the broader understanding of the integration of migrants and their descendants in Slovenian society today.

The chapter Swedish ‘Exceptionalism’ and the Integration of Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s: Acceptance and Strategies of Citizenship shifts the focus to the more distant context of Sweden. Branka Likić-Brborić and Li Bennich-Björkman address the socioeconomic and political integration of 1990s war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Sweden, the context distinguished by an exceptionally generous formal framework for immigrant integration and citizenship. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of biographically-oriented interviews with a selected number of well-educated informants characterized by successful economic and political integration, Likić-Brborić and Bennich-Björkman explore the combined impact of institutional conditions, integration policies, and individual strategies for integration into the economic and political life in Sweden. Starting from the Swedish integration policy framework and citizenship model in a historical perspective, the authors contextualize the Bosnian refugees’ experiences of their realizations of socio-economic, occupational and political citizenship rights. They find that successful integration implies generous formal citizenship rights, personal networks, both ethnic
and Swedish, favourable labour market conditions and the flexible implementation of integration policy tools attuned to the immigrants’ individual occupational profiles and ambitions. Furthermore, the immigrant’s own “acceptance” of the situation also seems to be important. The authors differentiate between groups of individuals integrated economically on the one hand and groups of individuals actively integrated in Swedish party politics on the other. While economically integrated immigrants stress the importance of their occupational identity and “inclusive transnationalism” which connects host- and home countries, politically active Bosnians stress their Swedishness. The integration of immigrants in these different social fields supports Maja Korac-Sandersen’s broad conceptualization of immigrant’s inclusion and citizenship in terms of a variety of “emplacement” strategies, employing varying mixture of bonding and bridging social capital and engendering manifold sense of identity and belonging.

Roland Kostić in his chapter *Ambivalent Peacemakers? Exploring Trends and Motives in Transnational Practices of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Sweden* also supports the above finding. In this chapter Kostić examines the transnational behaviour and motives of conflict-generated Bosnian migrants in Sweden. Unlike claims in the literature on the causes of civil wars, which views transnational activities of conflict-generated migrants as a challenge to peace and development in their homelands, the empirical findings in this chapter show that transnational practices of conflict-generated migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina living in Sweden are conducive to peacebuilding and development in their homeland. Though, the choice of engagement strategies varies. While few engage transnationally in political activities, some report investing in business and communal projects in Bosnia. However, most respondents engaged in sending remittances to relatives back home on an individual basis and in this way also contribute to economic development in their home countries. As the chapter shows, this is motivated by a personal feeling of duty and obligation, as well as personal convictions conditioned by a high tempo of life in Sweden due to the successful socio-economic integration of Bosnians.

Whereas the two previous chapters illuminate the generous institutional framework for immigrant integration in Sweden, the chapter *In the Shadow of Uncertainty. Refugee protection, short-sighted pragmatism and the problem of mixed ‘ethnic’ identities* by Zoran Slavnić demonstrates the devastating impact restrictive immigration policy and practices of ‘temporary protection’ (TUT) for war refugees has on human suffering. This chapter presents the life story of Jasna. She was one of the refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who travelled to Sweden with Croatian passports; such refugees could not obtain asylum and residence permits on humanitarian
grounds like other war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, she received a temporary residence permit for a period of six months and eventually a final negative decision. Her life story unfolds in time and space through three phases: the war and her flight, refugee life in Croatia, and refuge in Sweden. It demonstrates a refugee’s perspective on refugee-ship, the impact of various levels of actors on her life as well as her own strategies in coping with failed expectations and uncertainty in an asylum seeking situation, marked by rightlessness and pragmatic political decisions. Furthermore, the author links Jasna’s story to the strategies of European states dealing with the contemporary refugee crisis and the schism between the humanitarian discourse and pragmatic politics. Zoran Slavnić also traces how the restrictive changes in asylum and immigration policy shape and influence other national policies, such as citizenship-, integration-, labour market-, and social policies, both in Sweden and in many other Western countries.

This critical perspective on the landscapes of contemporary EU migration as well as Swedish migration- and integration policies is shared by the last two chapters in the book. The chapter When Hospitality Ends. Asylum Seekers from Serbia to Sweden takes a broader view on the ex-Yugoslav immigration by addressing the recent migration of Roma asylum seekers from Serbia to Sweden, covering their situation both in the sending and receiving countries. By painting an inclusive picture that encompasses the entire migration cycle in the country of origin and the country of destination and includes macro, mezzo, and micro perspectives, the author Tanja Pavlov recommends the development of a comprehensive and efficient policy response to this challenge. The study combines on the one hand the analysis of the existing statistics on migration flows and socio-economic development indicators and the migration policies in the two countries, and the analysis of semi-structured interviews with Roma asylum seekers returned from Sweden, on the other. The results show that Roma asylum seekers from Serbia in Sweden feel more accepted in the asylum protection procedure in Sweden than in Serbia, their home setting. Inferring from this result the author emphasizes that the main problem is the lack of Roma integration in Serbia, which indicates the need to develop policies to address the causes of migration, such as economic crisis, poverty and discrimination of Roma people and to advance the integration of Roma into Serbian society.

With these types of migrants exemplifying the downsides of optimistically advocating migration as a solution to the manifold of contemporary challenges and protracted crises, there is a need to critically examine the Swedish model of integration beyond the ambitions inscribed in the
“formal” framework of integration and the alleged successful integration of Bosnians and ex-Yugoslavs as a most likely group to integrate, in terms of their educational background and cultural similarities to native Swedish people. This is accomplished by Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund in the final chapter *The End of Swedish Exceptionalism. Citizenship, Neoliberalism and the Politics of Exclusion*, which takes us beyond the integration policies devised for the inclusion of newcomers into host societies. Their assessment is a pessimistic one, founded in the overall growing power of international capital in contrast to the political ambitions of inclusion, a power that forces people, foremost immigrants, into undignified and dangerous informal labour markets far from the regulated formality that officially exists. Whereas other observers hold a more optimistic view of the potential of political ambitions to challenge this market, it is undisputable that globalization, EU membership and the consequent de-regulation of large sectors have profoundly changed the reality that immigrants encounter in Sweden compared to before the 1990s.

The present refugee crisis and the tens of thousands of war refugees arriving from war tormented EU neighbourhoods to Slovenia, Sweden and other EU member states call for the development of a broad policy approach on migration that involves both development policies that ensure the right not to migrate as well as asylum and immigration and integration policies that guarantee human and citizenship rights. The economic crisis in the EU and its devastating impact on EU member states in the south of Europe is prompting exit strategies and mobility as the only solution for the army of unemployed EU citizens, who leave only to meet rising xenophobic attitudes and the increasing popularity of anti-immigration parties in their countries of destination. In these paradoxical circumstances, we hope that this book offers a broader understanding of migration and integration processes, which includes both institutional and migrant perspectives and enables a balanced discussion on migration, inclusion, citizenship and multiculturalism.
References


Citizenship and emplacement:

Processes and practices of inclusion of newcomers

Maja Korac-Sanderson

‘To what state I belong now [after the experience of displacement] is a purely practical matter. I don’t feel that I belong to any state but I have to have someone’s passport.’

[Mirsad, fled Bosnia. At the time of interview he was 25 years old and living in Rome seven years]

In this chapter I examine the relationship between the right to establish home in the receiving society and the series of practices of “nesting”, “home-making” and becoming “of place”. Understanding of this relationship is important because integration and active participation of newcomers in receiving societies is not only about legally established, formal citizenship rights. Within this state constructed discourse being a member is linked to the notion of a “right baring citizen” who “belongs” to “a national society of citizens” (Holston & Appadurai 1996), which is linked to a territorial nation state. However, how people integrate in the receiving society is also centrally linked to informal practices of social inclusion or strategies “from below”, which link diverse people, as individuals and groups in different local settings, predominantly cities, in which they struggle to regain control over and reconstruct their lives.

Consequently, citizenship viewed as a marker of belonging and entitlement linked to institutional, political and economic realms of the receiving society has become too narrowly defined concept to enable understanding of contemporary formations and meanings of citizenship (Neveu et al. 2011). In this sense, the grassroots strategies of inclusion may be better appreciated at the level of the city (Varsanyi 2006) and at the level of neighbourhood. The latter is important for conceptualising the local community as based on the common space characterised by pro-
pinquity of a neighbour (Bulmer 1986) and the potential for social reproduction and change (Appadurai 1996, p. 179). In other words, approaching citizenship as a social process (Flores & Benmayor 1997; Isin 2000; Dagnino 2003) enables us to examine and understand how people experience citizenship in their everyday lives (Coll 2010, p. 5). In conceptualizing citizenship, therefore, it is important to broaden it to include human relationships, subjectivity, and feelings (Coll 2004, p. 188). By doing so, we acknowledge it as multilayered and multifaceted, involving mutually constituted and also often overlapping realms of experience (Coll 2010, p. 114).

The discussion of the processes and practices of inclusion of newcomers is in this paper set within this conceptual framework. I argue that central to any consideration of citizenship as social process involving immigrants is the concept of emplacement. It refers to the multifaceted processes by which newcomers develop a sense of belonging and become “of place”. The following discussion are reflections based on an earlier ethnographic work about integration practices articulated by refugees from Bosnia as well as other Yugoslav successor states, who by stroke of luck or choice found themselves living in Rome and Amsterdam since the early to mid 1990s (Korac 2009).

Formal citizenship as non-belonging

Research and studies demonstrate that formal citizenship is primarily relevant to refugees and other migrants as the right to remain indefinitely in the receiving society, that is: as the right to return (de Haas 2005; Korac 2009). The lack of this right profoundly affects life options for all migrants, particularly refugees. In this sense, the right to return is fundamental indeed. The lack of formal citizenship rights is also experienced as a “humiliating” and “degrading” experience, as studies demonstrate, because it is linked to the state imposed notion of “not belonging”, linked to the “conquest of the state by the nation” (Isin & Turner 2007). These state imposed notions of belonging increasingly do not reflect experiences and aspirations of immigrants themselves. As indicated by Mirsad’s words quoted at the beginning of this article, the meaning of membership in a (new) society is no longer perceived by immigrants and refugees in particular, as being linked to nationality and territories of nation-states. Rather, it is primarily viewed as the access to freedom of travel and movement (Korac 2009).

Citizenship is indeed about more than the legal rights that newcomers hope to acquire. As the rapidly growing literature demonstrates (Walby 1994; Yuval-Davis & Anthias 1989; Lister 1997; Hall & Held 1990; Ro-
saldo 1994; Ong 1996; De Genova & Ramos-Zayas 2003; Bell & Binnie 2000; Soysal 1994; Bhabha 1998; Goldring 2001), a growing number of historically excluded groups, such as women, people of colour and diasporic communities, lesbians and gays, as well as transnational migrants no longer perceives formal expressions of citizenship as defined by states as a means of fostering active participation in society and its legal and political structures. Hence, it is not surprising that more recently arrived immigrants, including refugees, have similar experiences and views.

For example, among the Bosnian and other refugees who fled war-torn Yugoslavia and who were involved in my study about their “home-making” practices and experiences in Rome and Amsterdam, participation in the political arena and democratic processes by voting in Italy and Netherlands was not perceived as an important indicator of being included, even after almost ten years in both countries/cities (Korac 2009). Reasons for this are threefold. Participants in my research overwhelmingly belonged to the generation of people brought up in an undemocratic political system, which shaped their perception of mainstream politics and political participation as a “dirty business.” This conviction, shared by all, was only strengthened by their experiences of the first so-called “democratic”, multi-party political elections in Yugoslavia, in 1990, which they found deeply disappointing. Their subsequent experiences of the limitations of representative forms of democracy in capturing heterogeneity of interests and identities in the receiving societies were not conducive to changing their attitudes. The fact that, “not many people vote here”, as many of the people involved in my research remarked in relation to the situation in Italy and the Netherlands, has also contributed to the perception that the right to participate in mainstream politics is not a highly important and valued mechanism of inclusion.

In addition to this lack of interest to become an integral part of the mainstream politics, many immigrants also may not see a niche for themselves within the context of ethnic minority group politics in the receiving society. This was certainly the case with many of Bosnian and other refugees involved in my study (Korac 2009). Because of growing diversity, particularly in cities, it is becoming increasingly important to understand practices of inclusion “from below” and acknowledge them by developing policies that enhance both formal as well as diverse informal “acts of citizenship” (Isin & Nielsen 2008). Narrow legal approach obscures the multiplicity of ways in which many people of diverse nationalities and immigration statuses act to claim their rights as entitled political subjects (Coll 2004). Indeed, for disadvantaged and marginalised groups such as refugees, active political participation can also be defined in terms of participation in informal poli-
tics. Negotiation with welfare state institutions, for example, may be a much more pertinent practice of political engagement to these groups than participation in mainstream politics (Anthias 2002).

If citizenship rights are perceived as status, signifying formal rather than active participation and inclusion, how the people who are “managed” and “guided” by the policies of receiving states actually “nest” themselves in the new socio-cultural settings?

Diversity requires new forms of public interaction, dialogue, and civic, non-ethnic, participation that are tied through new forms of informal citizenship practices. This implies the growing importance of place, as locales, such as cities in which newcomers mostly settle, for defining and enacting membership in (new) society, rather than nation-states. Culturally diverse communities can find the basis of commonality in place-based attachments and civil integration at the local level. The local level and the city in particular, increasingly assume new centrality in the current European setting.

Emplacement: The centrality of agency and context

Central to any considerations of citizenship as a social process linked to the issues of immigration and immigrant integration is the concept of emplacement. Originally coined within the field of refugee studies as “a flipside of displacement” (Malkki 1995) and further developed within the integration debate by Korac (2009) and Brettell and Reed-Danahay (2012), emplacement refers to the processes that shape how newcomers become actively engaged citizens and how they develop a sense of belonging to the new society and become “of place”. Hence, it refers to the intersection of a range of “place” and “home-making” strategies of differently situated individuals and groups of newcomers in specific contexts and points in time.

Processes of emplacement are embedded in different types of connection, emerging forms of interaction, and networks of social relations through which newcomers forge a place for themselves in a new society, create meaning and form attachments (Korac 2009). Thus, integral to the emplacement processes are newcomers, immigrants and refugees, understood as agents who are actively engaged in the processes of regaining control over and reconstructing their lives in the receiving societies.1 As a

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1 The notion of im/migrants as social actors who have the ‘capacity to process social experience and devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion’ (Long 1992, p. 22) has been introduced into the field of (forced) migration with the application of Giddens’ (1984) concept of structuration to migration (e.g., Richmond 1993; Morawska 2001).
sense of place is developed through various forms of social relations, it is tied through the interaction of structure and agency. This process is influenced by the intersection of micro and macro structures of power.

States dominate and dictate both immigration and integration rules. However, the patterns, logic, forms, and practices of “travelling towards home” and home-making of newcomers increasingly do not fit them. Scholarly literature, policy documents as well as public debate on immigration and integration overwhelmingly emphasise the agency of the structural and institutional domains of the receiving states. There is no doubt that immigrants, particularly refugees, and receiving states are unequal partners, because the state is critical in determining their opportunities. However, primary focus on the agency of the receiving state and its institutional mechanisms leaves us without much insight into the kinds of meaning newcomers attach to citizenship of the receiving state and how they strategies their inclusion and participation in the receiving society.

Putting im/migrants as social actors centre stage and the acknowledgement of the power of context is the recognition that macro is not the only site of power. The centrality of context puts emphasis on the importance of micro, everyday relations of power. Foucault’s (1980, p. 98) notion of power as something that circulates, that is never localised here or there, but employed and exercised through a net-like organization is useful for understanding of these micro nods of power. He recognizes that individuals are not only inert or consenting targets of power, its points of application. They are always also the elements of its articulation or the vehicles of power (ibid.). Therefore, Foucault’s notion of power is particularly relevant for understanding im/migrants as social actors.

In specific contexts of emplacement, therefore, individual and group social positioning and local dynamics intersect with structural and global dynamics in different ways. This process is critically shaped by im/migrants themselves through their vision, human capital and aspirations. These are negotiated at different levels and scale of organization through networks of relations with a range of actors, including various level institutional and non-institutional structures. Agency is hence “embodied in social relations” (Long 2001, p. 15).

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2 McNay (McNay 1994, p. 3, in Kothari 2001, p. 143–144) emphasises the importance of analysing power in its most diverse and specific manifestations, what Foucault calls a microphysics of power.

3 Foucault’s insights into the workings of power are valuable for grasping the concept of im/migrant agency and the power of context. As already mentioned, however, there is no doubt that im/migrants and refugees in particular, the nation-state systems and associated institutional mechanisms are unequal partners.
Consequently, the centrality of context in approaching immigrants as social actors enables understanding of how specific contexts, viewed as a nexus of global and local structures, shape their everyday practices. Put differently, as ground level social reality contains important dimensions of global processes (Burawoy et al. 2000), the context here is understood as a complex system of intersecting structures and conditions. Emplacement, hence, always occurs in specific locations and is characterised by shifting identities and the changing character of belonging. Rather than being fixed, claims and attributes of group belonging are situated and produced in complex and shifting locales, that is, in a “translocational” sphere characterised by the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to ethnicity, national belonging, gender, class and race (Anthias 2001, p. 634).

Putting newcomers and their agency centre stage in discussing the relationship between citizenship and emplacement is enabling our understanding of how they, as people with individual histories, in particular contexts, locales and in specific points in time, strategise and negotiate between continuity and change, existential needs and longer-term life plans, old loyalties and new identities. The intersection of all these processes and practices constitutes integration and shapes experiences as well as meanings attached to citizenship. Central to this process, which is not linear or stage-sequential, are social networks through which they rub along, bond and bridge in places in which they (are allowed to) settle.

The role of social networks in emplacement

Negotiating entry in the new society, as well as the process of becoming “of place”, are shaped by different forms of contact established by refugees and other newcomers. Through various forms of social interaction they struggle to create a meaningful life and place for themselves in the receiving societies. Many of the contacts they establish and networks they create are initiated and tied through the institutional structures of particular local settings (e.g. church organisations, community groups, NGOs, municipality). Increasingly, as studies demonstrate, links are also established in

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4 Anthias (2001) introduced the concept of translocational positionality, and argued for focusing on location/dislocation and positionality to emphasise the importance of spatial and contextual dimensions of identity. Focus on location and positionality, she argues, “acknowledges that identification is an enactment that does not imply fixity or permanence” (Anthias 2001, p. 633). Rather, narratives of belonging or location, as Anthias prefers to call them, “are emergent, produced interactionally and contain elements of contradiction and struggle” (ibid., p. 633).

5 Xenos (1996) defines “home” as a complex set of relationships that make acting possible and meaningful through shared understandings and shared interpretations of action (p. 243).
cyberspace, as new social media are not only new communication channels in migration networks, but they actively transform the nature of these networks (Dekker & Engbersen 2012). Hence, internet and social media connections and opportunities are contributing to multiple configurations of social networks involving different agents (van Meeteren & Pereira 2013). Forms of social interaction can also be established through semi-invisible micro-links of sociability linked to more informal contacts between diverse groups of people in urban areas in which they “rub along together” and in some contexts and circumstances develop a positive web of support. Although some argue that “avoidance is part of modern city living” (Scheffer 2011, p. 47), cities are also places of encounter. Jane Jacobs (1961), quite a few decades ago, pointed to the importance of social networks developed through seemingly “unpurposeful” and “random” contacts of neighbours in cities through which they form social networks and relationships of trust.

Some of these informal networks of support are embedded in bonding social networks, established among co-ethnics thus within the (ethnic) group boundaries. The importance of social networks among co-ethnics for the process of adaptation of newly arrived has long been established (e.g. Gurak & Caces 1992; Lamba & Krahn 2003; Williams 2006; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006; Beaman 2012). They can be indeed instrumental for getting by and getting on with life. Some authors argue that this type of connecting represents a protective strategy, because ethnic networks can represent safe havens for socially and culturally excluded immigrant groups (e.g. Barnes 2001; Reinsch 2001).

My research, in which I explored lived-in worlds of refugees by focusing on different types of connection and networks of social relations, points out to the important role of these emerging forms of interaction, particularly to the value of so-called bridging social networks between newcomers and the majority local populations (Korac 2009). Through these networks of social relations they create meaning and form attachments. In doing so, they forge a place for themselves in the new society. I argue that examination of the importance and the role of social ties should go beyond consideration of co-ethnic links. It requires recognition of greater differentiation of networks among migrants, those established along horizontal (i.e. co-ethnic) and vertical (i.e. minority-majority) lines, as well as spatially and temporarily. Moreover, studies indicate that co-ethnic networks are often loosely conceptualised, as well as that there is a lack of attention and research about how migrants establish ties with the receiving community and what is the role of this type of networks (Korac 2009; Ryan et al. 2008).
Indeed, a positive web of support that is created through bridging social networks can be and often is a critical resource for re-establishing lives of refugees and other immigrants. However, minority-majority bridging social networks have most often been regarded within the migration and integration literature as a by-product of so-called successful integration of individuals who, as some argue, “normally cluster together and develop their own infrastructure” (Castles 2000, p. 199), but in time, so-called “successful immigrants” make links with mainstream “social frameworks”.

It is important to challenge the notion that it is somehow natural for newcomers to cluster together. This notion implies that ethnic and cultural boundaries are fixed, embedded in shared and unchanging norms, values, as well as a sense of belonging to community, defined in the singular. It also suggests that newcomers themselves first and foremost aim to “nest” themselves within a co-ethnic milieu. These interpretations within academic and public discourses are linked to the notion of “community” to which somehow all people coming from the same country naturally belong, or for which they strive. Such notion can straightjacket our understanding of the processes of nesting of refugees and other immigrants who may have, and often do, different ideas about connecting and belonging.

Moreover, within the refugee context, the understanding of community often has specific connotations. Such is the case of people coming from Bosnia and other Yugoslav successor states, for example. The character of conflicts they were fleeing brought to the attention of the international media, public, political, and academic realms the issue of ethnic difference, the grievances, and animosities within the region. As a consequence, interpreting and understanding these differences and constructing the “identity” and the “community” of those labelled by their ethnicity became central to approaching people from the war-torn country as well as to creating knowledge and policies. They become embedded in neatly structured categories linked to an ethno-national, territorial mode of thinking within which there is no space for in-between categories and blurred boundaries of a very real human experiences. And yet, this territorial type of knowledge continues to inform academic and public debates as well as a range of policies that affect lives of people who are forcibly displaced.

My research shows, however, that refugees from war-torn Yugoslavia were involved in active cross-ethnic networking which was both desired and also often necessary (Korac 2009). Moreover, they themselves often identified bridging social links with local populations as highly desirable and often preferable to co-ethnic ties. This was not necessarily linked to attempts to assimilate and lose one’s own distinct sense of identity and culture. Rather, bridging networks were perceived as a two-way commu-
unication that is central to the process of mutual adjustment and change that is paramount to social cohesion understood as people-to-people relations in (urban) places enabling them to live together differently. Acknowledgement and recognition of such aims and attempts to access close-knit local communities in places in which newcomers settle, is by no means to underestimate difficulties they confront in doing so (Korac 2009).

The lack of bridging social networks between newcomers and local populations is to a great extent constructed by and is a consequence of the fact that the organising principles for incorporating newcomers (including refugees) in most of the European receiving societies are conceptualised and based upon their identity and incorporation as ethnic groups or communities. This emphasis on the groups understood as “ethnic communities” and on their (group) cultural rights is often seen as a way of mobilising their resources from within for integration purposes (Penninx 2003, 2004). This approach has been at the core of multicultu-

ral policies of integration. Ethnicity is, however, only one dimension of diversity. It always intersects with other axes of difference, such as gender, age, class, occupation, physical ability etc. This emphasis on co-ethnic clustering in receiving societies and “ethnic group incorporation” makes it difficult to recognise that the process of nesting is a multi-sided practice characterised by dialectic relationship between different types of connections that shape ways of incorporation of newcomers, including refugees.

Indeed, bridging links with majority groups can be established and in particular circumstances quite early on, as it was the case in my Roman study (Korac 2009, 2003). In such cases, these networks help refugees to get by and ahead with their lives by providing vital information, contacts, and by enhancing the use of the considerable human capital they bring to new urban settings. Very importantly, bridging contacts are also central to the process of getting inside and feeling “of place”. This is because bridging links and networks not only channel information and provide access to resources, they also interpret information and articulate meaning and in this sense they serve as a dictionary to local urban settings as well as wider society and culture. This process is particularly important for the acquisition of substantive citizenship rights, which are acquired through social practice, rather than through law (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2008). Indeed, formal citizenship is linked to equality of social rights, but this is not automatically translated into social acceptance. The role of bridging social networks is an important part of the process of conversion of formal rights into substantive rights, because they are embedded in types of social practice that engender social acceptance, and challenge social isolation. In this
sense, bridging social networks contribute to the creation of “communities of practice” through which immigrants develop sense of belonging to the receiving society, as pointed out by Brettell and Reed-Danahay (2012).

The lack of bridging links to the receiving society and the resulting social isolation engender a sense of non-belonging. A telling example of the importance of “bridging social networks” with the local, “host” populations and the consequences of feeling socially isolated and therefore detached from the receiving society comes from my study of the place-making strategies of refugees from war-torn Yugoslavia in Amsterdam (Korac 2009). The lack of bridging social links with the Dutch caused a sense of insecurity concerning their legal status and newly acquired citizenship rights. Although the vast majority of those involved in my research had Dutch citizenship, quite a few of them expressed a degree of uneasiness or even fear of a possibility of their citizenship being revoked if the political situation in the Netherlands was to change and somehow was to turn all non-native Dutch into undesired aliens.

Wallman’s (1979) argument that a social boundary has two kinds of meaning, structural or organizational, and subjective, based on the experience of participants, helps explain this seemingly paradoxical situation. She suggests that: “Because a social boundary is about the organization of society no more and no less than it is about the organization of experience, neither element has more or less reality than the other. Both the difference and the sense of difference count” (Wallman 1979, p. 7). Among the people in my Amsterdam study, the social distance from the Dutch was translated into doubts concerning equality of citizenship rights between the two groups. In the context of the Dutch “integration model” to which they have been subjected, citizenship was perceived as yet another way of state control rather than a guarantee of equality and full participation. Therefore, if the acquisition of formal citizenship rights to inclusion and equality are not accompanied by bridging social networks in the receiving society, the organization of experience of refugees will remain strongly shaped by their feelings of “otherness”, perceptions of inequality and exclusion. Such experiences of exclusion

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6 An additional factor in shaping their insecurity was also a heated political debate, initiated by several political parties in the Netherlands, about the right of Convention refugees from Bosnia to remain in the Netherlands and eventually become Dutch citizens. During 2001, many political parties in the Dutch parliament were challenging this status granted to Bosnian refugees, because, as they claimed, Bosnia had become a safe place to return to. The debate received significant press coverage and triggered a wide public debate, causing Bosnian refugees, with or without Dutch citizenship, to feel unsettled.
cannot be overcome or changed by acquisition of formal citizenship rights.

The discussion so far focused on the processes of becoming “of place” linked to the creation and role of social networks and related systems of social relations that are situated locally. Social networks of newcomers, however, create systems of social relations composed of networks of networks, also referred to as “social fields”, which are themselves embedded in power asymmetries (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009, p. 179). These networks may be locally situated as well as extended nationally or transnationally (ibid).

Emplacement within transnational social fields

Transnationalism and the possibilities of transnational life strategies, as studies show (Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1995; Levitt 2001, 2003; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller 2003; Goldring 2002), challenge the dominant conception of membership, integration and belonging linked to a single unitary realm of nation-state. Transnationalism increasingly allows for emplacement that entails multi-layered forms of membership and incorporation that reach across the borders of multiple states, placing different dimensions of home in “transnational social spaces” (Faist 2000). Transnational links that cross the borders of states are emerging from the process of globalisation and increased migration. As the result of these processes, refugee (immigrant) communities are becoming importantly transnational in character. They are embedded in ties and networks crisscrossing national borders, which affect their daily lives in the receiving states and increasingly shape the meanings of belonging and orientation to place.

Experiences of transnationalism affect the ways in which newcomers conceptualise place; it often becomes conceptualised through different but complementary dimensions of home, associated with the different material, sociocultural and symbolic resources of each place. In this process of emplacement, it is the receiving society that is usually perceived as the “practical” home (Graham & Khosravi 1997) associated with the material and legal “security dimension” of place (Eastmond 2006). Conversely, the country of origin is perceived as the “cultural-spiritual home” (Graham & Khosravi 1997) linked to the ‘emotional dimension’ and fulfilment it offers (Eastmond 2006).

When missing dimensions of home, such as a specific form of sociability extending beyond family and kinship ties, cannot be re-created in physical reality, through regular reunions for example, immigrants often create
them in the virtual reality of cyberspace. Moving across borders in cyberspace allows them to piece in virtual spaces into the “place” in which they feel at home (Eastmond 2006; Graham & Khosravi 2002). In this sense, “cyberspace can be an alternative “territory,” where a transnational community or a virtual neighbourhood can be constructed” (Graham & Khosravi 2002, p. 228).

Transnational cyberspace practices generate richness and diversity of ideas and social relations. Therefore, cyberspace territories, like real territories, provide a site where the meaning of ethnic or national identity is re-shaped. Cyberspace connections and networks of compatriots across borders encompass national and transnational processes (Graham & Khosravi 2002). Consequently, depending on specific circumstances and contexts, as in real space, cyberspace activities may either deterritorialise identities or intensify them as well as produce “a passion for locality” in the form of “cyberspace nostalgia”.

The discussion so far demonstrated that newcomers link and engage with their new and old homes through various types of transnational practices. Through these processes they negotiate a way of being and a way of belonging, to borrow from Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), and combine them into one experience and social field. The acknowledgement of the processes of emplacement in transnational social fields, requires moving beyond “container theory of society” (Beck 2000; Faist 2000; Urry 2000), and focusing on “transnational social fields”, as defined by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004). This provides the opportunity to trace concrete movement and connection of people within social fields, which are multidimensional and their boundaries are not contiguous with those of nation-states (ibid). By the same token, as Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) point out, the concept of social field challenges the notion of neat divisions of connection into local, national, transnational, and global.

Emplacement in transnational social fields also means that newcomers “settle” in-between, often both as a way of being as well as the way of belonging. This state of “betwixt and between” (Turner 1967, p. 93) is a consequence of the separation that is inherent in (forced) migration and therefore is part and parcel of the very nature of the experiences of (forced) migrants. In this sense, they as social agents embody processes of a radical social change characterised by a set of continuously intersecting processes linking local and global structures and settings, past and present, victimisation and resilience, here and there. Their experiences

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7 While liminal existence of refugees in the contemporary world cannot be ethically justified in any way, and consequently, should be systematically and radically challenged, their in-bet-
are characterised by dynamism as well as ambiguity, anxiety and often also fear. This in-between space they inhabit is radically different from the world of binaries characterising conventional knowledge as well as the public discourse on (forced) migrants, such as: bogus/genuine, legal/illegal, integrated/segregated. Because their lifeworlds inhabit spaces between borders and boundaries defined by territorial, cultural, cognitive and emotional codes, much of their experiences are about blurred boundaries and in-between categories.

Scholars have been pointing to the shortcomings of the binary construction of knowledge (e.g. Said 1978) and recognising the between as a space from which to challenge it. Stoller (2009), following Bhabha’s (1994) concept of “interstices” emphasises how “dwelling in the between” can also be “illuminating”. In this sense, in-betweenness is a place of “provocative linkages” (Stoller 2009). These “imaginative interstices” (Stoller 2009) linked to transnational practices of emplacement within social fields also challenge the conventional understanding of citizenship, which links rights and loyalties exclusively to a single (nation) state.8

Transnationalism and the meaning of citizenship

Meanings of state membership are changing, as evident from the provision of dual-state membership by an increasing number of (northern) states. Moreover, the endorsement of human rights principles governed by universal discourses embedded in international agreements and nation-states’ constitutions, rather than the principle of sovereignty, are also affecting meanings of citizenship. Refugees and other migrants, as Faist (2000, p. 207) points out, are taking advantage of this growing tendency and the opportunities it creates to move around and make a place for themselves.

Through these transnational practices, some authors have argued, nation-states have become “deterritorialized” (Basch et al. 1994). Others claim, more convincingly, that the very concept of citizenship is changing. The international human rights regimes that transcend the jurisdiction of individual nation-states, political practices associated with so-called global civil society, as well as solidarity and identity shaped by transnational practices have all been indicators of the process of denationalising of citizenship (Bosniak 2001, pp. 242–43; 2007).

8 Heater (1990, pp. 211-19) reminds us, however, that citizenship has not always been regarded as a project of the modern nation state. The concept originates from the classical Greek city state.
However sound these and other arguments about postnational citizenship are, one has to remember that the potential of human rights discourse for refugees and other migrants is still limited. For them, to create a space and a possibility of having a home outside their homelands or to locate it in transnational social space is undermined by the fact that human rights discourse is still interpreted and enforced by nation-states (Xenos 1996, pp. 243–44). In this sense, states still dictate migration rules, although the logic and forms of transnational mobility may increasingly not fit them. Moreover, over the past years, some (European) states have been attempting to counteract the transnational orientation of migrants by proposing the abolishment of dual nationality for third-generation migrants, and by discouraging dual nationality in general (de Haas 2005). For all these reasons, it would be obviously premature to claim that the logic of transnationalism has completely superseded national logic (Castles 2004, p. 212). Also, as the discussions in this paper and other studies demonstrate, transnationalism and transnational networks are always importantly connected to specific localities within nation-states.

With these points of caution in mind, studies including my own, strongly indicate that for many immigrants, and refugees in particular, it is actually the possibility of moving and not that of becoming “rooted” in a particular place that is central to their place-making strategies and the complex process of emplacement in the receiving societies. In this sense, and in spite of the continuous importance of the nation-state, transnationalism, transnational links and strategies have deconstructed its notion in some important ways, making formal citizenship no longer the main locus of identity for many newcomers. Formal citizenship rights, specifically the right to indefinite residence, that is, to unconditional return, are making such place-making strategies possible, and are enhancing the process of emplacement of newcomers.

In lieu of conclusion

The discussion in this paper explored the relationship between formal citizenship rights and the processes by which newcomers develop feelings of attachment to the receiving state and society. Understanding of this relationship is important because integration is not only about legally established citizenship rights. I argued that how people integrate in the receiving society is centrally linked to informal practices of social inclusion or strategies “from below”, which link diverse people as individuals and groups

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9 De Haas refers specifically to the Dutch and Danish governments (2005, pp. 8–9).
in different local, translocal and transnational settings. The discussion pointed out that while the acquisition of formal citizenship rights is *sine qua non* for the establishment of transnational place-making strategies, citizenship as a status appears to be less central to the complex realm of belonging, and matters associated with becoming and being “of place”. I argued that if newcomers are not successful in establishing bridging social networks and ties in the receiving societies, citizenship will have very little meaning and consequence for their experiences of inclusion and the sense of belonging. It remains a goal to be desired for its practical aspects, such as freedom of movement/travel and the formal right to establish a ‘home’. The meaning and nature of “home”, however, is to be negotiated within the various specific contexts – those pertaining to individual immigrants, to localities and societies they come from as well as in which they struggle to settle.
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Narrating belonging in post-Yugoslav context

Mojca Pajnik

Basing my argument on critical analyses of identity as a concept, mainly coming from social theory literature (esp. Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Anthias 2002, 2001; cf. Yuval-Davis 2006; Delanty et al. 2008), I’m raising my scepticism towards the value of various kinds of post-modernist or post-structuralist “fluid” conceptualizations of identity that have been flourishing in the last two, three decades. While, on the one hand, attempts to make the concept more fluid by arguing for “constructed”, “multiple” or “negotiated” identities allow various identities to proliferate and produce the intermeshing of various forms of subjectivity, they, on the other hand, make us question the very analytical value of the concept. In particular, it is questionable whether the notion of fluid identities allows us to see that migrants’ living experiences are contextually bounded and often dependant on external categorization. As sociological analyses (Ibid.) has shown hybrid identities might appear as “too bright” identities migrants connoting the belief that migrants can always negotiate their identities, and this bypasses situations when migrants’ lives are shaped by unequal power relations, ethnic bias and racial exclusion. These relations are contextually bounded and the above-mentioned literature has rightly criticized that hybridity might obscure real-life alienation marginalized groups are faced with. It is thus an important unwanted consequence of the use of fluid or hybrid identities that such conceptualizations may mask structural inequalities that are produced by social power relations. For example, pursuing the notion of bright identities can excuse political institutions from being truly active in the field of preventing inequality.\(^1\) Also, they may downplay the problematical character of imposed identities or of processes of external identifications, such as labelling migrants as “third country nationals”, “Muslims”, “Bosniaks” etc. that reproduces “otherness” and can also serve the goals of the populist and racist rhetoric.

\(^1\) One example are recently adopted integration programs in some EU member states when migrants who fail to pass integrations tests are denied social benefits or a visa (see Kontos 2011 for the example of Germany). The analyses has shown how migrants are expected to manoeuvre, be fluid and adjustable to various integration tests. Migrants can’t question the tests but only fulfil the obligations which points to unequal power relations and lack of shared responsibility in the relation between the migrant and the state (policies).
It would be too presumptuous, in disregard of numerous theoretical debates and historical developments to simply argue against the concept of identity and its usability. This is not the intention of this article. After all, identity claims had an important role in mobilizing the civil society movements of the 1960s, 70s and the 80s that helped to bring to the public agenda issues of the oppression of minorities and marginalized groups. At the same time, it’s nothing new to argue that the concept of identity has been overused, that it has become a cliché and that it is “in crisis” (Erikson 1968). The profusion of identity claims can make us question the theoretical and analytical validity of the concept when this is applied to understandings of contemporary globalization and transnationalization processes engaging migrant populations.

Some studies of migration and transnationalism (cf. Ong 1999; Bauböck 1994; Levitt 2001; Pries 2001) or of EU migration regimes (O’Neill 2006) have been using the notions of multiple, hybrid or fragmented identities where it appears that these categories are naturalized in their use, i.e. the studies use but don’t really deal with potential problems with notions of identity. When “flexible citizenship” is promoted in transnationality studies (Ong 1999) one questions whether it really points to the “nonessentialized nature of culture” (Ibid.) The opposite could also be true, i.e. that arguing for multiple identities might obscure the situations when migrant cultures are stigmatized for being essentialist. This is certainly not the only way to use identity, but it is a used way of dealing with it when understanding migrants’ transnationalisms. A notable exception is Transnationalism and identity by Vertovec (2001) who focuses on theorizing links between transnationalism and identity (see also Benton and Gomez 2008). My purpose here is to look critically at transpositions of the notion of hybrid or multiple identities to migration studies, particularly in studies on migrants’ transnational and migration regimes. I’m therefore concerned with one of the ways of use of identity in literature on migration that has been inspired by constructivist, poststructuralist or postmodernist attempts, including cultural studies (particularly influenced by Foucault 1972; Butler 1990; Hall 1990; 1996) that aim at rescuing identity from the traps of universalism and essentialism. The inspiration for

2 Brubaker and Cooper (2000, pp. 6–7) distinguish five uses of identity: 1. identity used to understand that action might be governed by self-understandings rather than self-interest; 2. identity denoting sameness among group members; 3. identity understood as a vital aspect of selfhood, a foundational dimension contrary to superficial attributes to the self; 4. identity stimulating developments of collective self-understanding, specifically in social movement literature where identity generates solidarity that makes collective action possible; and 5. identity understood as a fragmented and hybrid self. For an analysis of various uses of identity in theory but also in empirical research, see Fearon (1999).
this article comes not only from interesting theoretical debates over identity, but from migrant’s own narrations as well. The empirical argument of the article stems from the research that used biographical narrative interviews to capture stories of migrants in Slovenia.3

Exploring alternative conceptualizations

If we accept that identities are constructed and in constant flux, how can we explain the situated, not abstract, belongings of migrants? Or, how are multiple migrants’ identities congruent with the unitary migration politics that still has the effect of demarcating migrants as a group of non-integrated outsiders (cf. Balibar 2004)? I’m therefore expressing my scepticism towards the usefulness of the notion of multiple or shifting migrants’ identity whereby I argue that such usages of identity may serve to demarcate migrants as different. What is ignored by such accounts is, first, that narrations of belonging are not free-floating but are situated and bounded up in and by particular contexts. Second, notions of multiple identities connote “bright” identities, always capable of adjusting to circumstances. Such identities promoted, for example, in the studies on cosmopolitanism (cf. Hannerz 1996) are well captured by the notion of “plastic citizenship” (Lazaridis and Konsta 2011), where identities are believed to be adjustable to any circumstances. As such they apparently result in empowerment. But, speaking in the context of migration, they might appear as concepts that tend to underplay real life exclusion, alienation and ghettoization of migrant populations that is produced by unequal power relations. Having a fragmented identity doesn’t stop marginalization, and “plastic identities” should be critically scrutinized for their potential to obscure exclusion. Bright conceptualizations of identity can best serve the migrating elite, the contemporary cosmopolitans who are the holders of right passports, and whose jobs are classified as being of national or global importance (cf. Hannerz 1996).

Uses of the notion of multiple identity (fluxual, negotiated, multi-layered, fragmented, shifting, hybrid etc.)4 when this is not critically scrutinized but, for example, just transposed into policies, don’t give away with

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3 Biographical narrative interviews were conducted in Slovenia as part of the 6FP project FeMiPol, Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society: Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations, 2006–2008, and within project PRIMTS, Prospects for Integration of Migrants from “Third Countries” and their Labour Market Situation: Towards Policies and Action. For more on this, see project websites available at http://www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de/, http://www.primts-mirovninstitut.si.

4 Cf. Anthias (2001) for an inspiring critique of the notion of “hybridity”.

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essentialism but actually reproduce the essentialism problem in identity. The reason that this is so is that the mere semantic additions to identity can’t restore the analytical value of the concept as they don’t recognize the seriousness of the problem of essentialism (cf. Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Anthias 2002). Lack of recognition results in the notion of multiple identity actually reproducing the essentialist stratum “through the back door” (Anthias 2002, p. 494) and it shifts attention away from the context. It is also too simplistic to label migrant identities as fragmented or multiple since this would make us believe that certain identities, that is migrant identities, are more prone to be multiple than others. Also, such labelling of migrants’ multiple identities in the above mentioned transnationalism and migration regime studies and in policy making without proper reflection neglects the many migrants’ narrations that are “hard” and “highly situated”, and not “soft” and “free-floating”. Such understanding of identity can thus be critically viewed as shifting the focus of analyses away from “hard” social context, not to mention specifically “hard” policies migrants are subjected to.

I acknowledge that various attempts to “rescue” identity have not been ill-intentioned. Conceptualizations of hybrid identities in poststructuralism, cultural studies or studies on globalization in particular had the intention of reformulating identity with the purpose to discharge it from objections of essentialism. These reformulations, however, start from the point that recognizes identity as an indispensable concept. Interestingly, Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 9) are of different opinion and, in contrast to Judith Butler, Stuart Hall, Alberto Melucci and others who have been using and reconceptualizing identity in its fluidity, argue against the concept being indispensable, and urge us to “go beyond identities” particularly “in the name of the conceptual clarity” (ibid., p. 36). “If one wants to examine the meanings and significance people give to constructs such as “race”, “ethnicity”, and “nationality” ... it is not clear what one gains by aggregating them under the flattening rubric of identity” (ibid., p. 9).

It’s not my intention here to argue for or against identity but to challenge the ascription of the notion of hybrid identities to migrants. Treating migrant identities as de facto multiple can have the effect that is precisely the opposite to what hybrid identities want to do, that is, the avoidance of essentialism. Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 11) remind us that “weak or soft conceptions of identity are routinely packaged with standard qualifiers indicating that identity is multiple, unstable, in flux, contingent, fragmented, constructed, negotiated, and so on. These qualifiers have become so familiar – indeed obligatory – in recent years that one reads (and writes) them virtually automatically. They risk becoming mere place-
holders, gestures signalling a stance rather than words conveying a meaning” (ibid., p. 11).

Along these lines it seems that mere labelling of migrant identity as a fluid one has become nearly a meaningless phrase, an oxymoron, particularly when such labelling is just adopted and not analysed or evaluated. The result might be the poor treatment of migrants’ narrations and self-perceptions of belongings or their reduction to the “one-dimensionality” of meaningless multiplicity. The various prefixes to identity don’t really solve the “problem of identity”. Adding prefixes we preserve identity and, unless the concepts of hybrid and multiple migrants’ identities are thoroughly reflected in their transpositions to migration studies, these studies simply add to further mystifications around migrants’ identity.

Are we to preserve the concept, to denounce it, or to propose a new one? Although all seem tempting options they offer too linear solutions which is the reason that I don’t find it too productive to choose between them. Despite this fact, or maybe because of it, I want to explore some alternative conceptualizations to postmodernist identity claims that might offer a more valid theoretical approach to understanding migrants’ belongings. In their claims against the indispensability of identity supported by the belief that it is “fruitless to look for a single substitute,” Brubaker and Cooper (ibid., p. 14–21) propose alternative analytical idioms as “three clusters of terms” that I also find useful for grasping migrants’ belongings.

First, they define identification and categorization as concepts that invite us to specify the agents that do the identifying. The terms refer to a number of different situations in everyday life (to characterize oneself, to place oneself in a category, to locate oneself in relation to others etc.). Relational identification refers to positioning oneself in a relational web while categorical identification means identifying by claiming membership (class, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, etc.). They also distinguish self-identification from identification and characterization of oneself by others. Secondly, they propose self-understanding and social location as an alternative to identity that point to a notion of “situated subjectivity”, i.e. the question of one’s sense of oneself, of social placing and of one’s action. Since identity implies “sameness across time or persons”, self-understanding, to the contrary, may vary across time and space but may also be stable. Thirdly, commonality, connectedness, groupness are proposed by the authors as more differentiated terms that better capture belongings to specific groups where commonality denotes the sharing of connectedness, the relational ties among people, and groupness the sense of belonging to a specific bounded group. Rather than celebrating fluidity these notions are used to
grasp the multiple forms of commonality and the different ways in which actors make meaning out of them (ibid.). The three sets of terms provide interesting alternative to identity, a concept that, according to the authors, has lost its analytical value to its ambiguity, contradictory meanings and reifying connotations (ibid., p. 34). Let us add here that we find interesting this combination of the clusters as a response to claims of identity. At the same time it needs to be mentioned that the issues addressed by the clusters are nothing new, and that notions of ethnicity, issues of collective identity and debates over groups have a long and contested history (cf. Barth 1969; Cohen 1974; Anderson 1983; Jenkins 1991).

The argument of this article is on the one hand inspired by interesting theoretical debates about identity that have recently emerged in social theory literature and gender studies (cf. Anthias 2001, 2002; Yuval-Davis 2006; Somers 1994; Fearon 1999; Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Delanty et al. 2008; in Slovenian context see Lukšič-Hacin 1999; Milharčič Hladnik 2007; Milharčič Hladnik & Lukšič-Hacin 2011) and it is based, on the other hand, on the research that used biographical narrative interviews to capture stories of migrants in Slovenia. I limit my empirical material to the interviews that were conducted with migrants who have been coming to Slovenia since 2000 from the former Yugoslav republics, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia and Croatia with the purpose to be able to explore the mosaic of belongings and of “post-Yugoslav belongings”. In her research on British-born youngsters of Asian and Cypriot background, Floya Anthias (2002) claimed that the “narrated sense of belonging and not belonging could not be captured by the notion of identity” (ibid., p. 492). The analysis of the interviews with migrants from the former Yugoslavia has also shown that the notion of identity is a too contested term to capture meanings of migrants’ narrations. While Brubaker and Cooper (2000) propose commonality, connectedness and groupness as analytical categories, Anthias replaces the notion of identity used in addressing issues that are usually linked to “collective identity” with notions of location and positionality (or translocal positionality). She further argues that identity is of limited “heuristic value” since it does not capture the situational character of narration, its non-fixity, its revisions and changes. Its conceptual disability lies in the fact that it “moves the analysis away from context, meaning and practice” (ibid., p. 492).

Anthias claims that translocal positionality, unlike identity, captures “spatial and contextual dimensions, treating the issues involved in terms of processes rather than possessive properties of individuals (as in “who are you?” being replaced by “what and how have you?”)” (ibid., p. 494). The concept involves identification but it also values “lived practices”
that shape identification. It is particularly useful in migration studies because it refers to belongings that are clearly shaped around the constructions of ethnicity, gender and class (cf. Yuval-Davis 2006, 2007). This is an interesting concept that helps us to dismiss personal circumstances, such as ethnicity, as a possessive property of individuals (migrants as holders of ethnicity) or an inherent characteristic of a person. The value of the concept should specifically be looked in its capacity to treat identity as a process and to centralize the analysis around context. Particularly for migration studies it is important, as stressed by Anthias (2002, p. 499), that locations are also “dislocations and alterity” that refer to various physical and symbolic belongings that are not fixed in time and space.

Narrative: Capturing contextualised identification by story-telling

This section is devoted to the exploration of the notion of narration that is put forward as a more appropriate concept that affords a more accurate study of migrant's belongings and identifications. While staying with identity, Margaret Somers proposes the inclusion of the concept of narrative with the purpose to destabilize dimensions of time, space and relationality. She proposes the notion of “narrative identity” (Somers 1994). I find the concept of narrative of great value particularly for understanding migrants' belongings. A narrative is positioned and it clarifies senses of belongings that cut across territorial and cultural bonds. Narrations don't represent but rather take as a starting point individual’s activity in the world. Some authors (for example Milharčič Hladnik 2007) claim that narrator's identity is positioned and constructed through narration that is as such not an attribute of identity as claimed by Somers but in a Bourdieudian sense an expression per se of one’s belonging or affiliation. Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 12) make an interesting point when they question why Somers links narrative to identity; “what does this soft, flexible notion of identity add to the argument about narrative” and “why it is identities that are constituted through narratives” are the questions they ask.

Considering this reproach brings us to a proposition to treat narrative, or, “story-telling” to use a formulation by Hannah Arendt (1967) as an account of more or less situated belonging to the world, to society, to people etc. (cf. Pajnik 2008). I propose that it suffices to speak of a narrative in itself without linking it to identity. The concept of narrative identity implies that identity is constructed through a narrative. Somers argues
that people construct identities by locating themselves in stories. Such an approach tends to obscure the great potential of the narrative that actually goes beyond making identity claims.

My proposition is to conceptualize narrative in itself, not linking it to identity which shifts some of the arguments proposed by Somers: if a narrative or story-telling is conceptualized as a process of positioning and expressing various belongings in time and space, then it seems that the concept doesn’t need identity as some omnipotent, far-reaching goal. I argue that the full accounts of stories are better used and explained by the concept of “narration” and not “narrative identity”. Unlike identity, the concept of narrative urges us to always view the told stories in relation to the context in which they were told. The “way” in which a story is told is as important as the “what” of the story. On another occasion, it would be a different story with a different meaning and told in a different manner, which is to say that stories are told in time and space. They’re composed of situated fragments that address various practices and actions, accounts of the world, the nation, the state, the family, the economic and social life etc.

Read with Arendt, it is narration, not identity, that should be seen as a performance, as a citizens’ activity that is of a public value. Story-telling both as a concept and also as a method of analysis (i.e. the biographical narrative interview, cf. Pajnik & Bajt 2009) actually leaves more room than the concept of identity to express and define belongings, and as such appears broader and more useful than identity. It embraces the process of “telling”, it is about telling a story in one’s own terms in time and space. It is a process that produces meaning to specificities in context. “The narrative is also both a story about who and what we identify with (a story about identification) and is also a story about our practices and the practices of others, including wider social practices and how we experience them” (Anthias 2002, pp. 498–499).

The narration of belonging places the actor in the world and within social structures that also shape narrator’s life in reality. Stories as they are told usually don’t have a structure of a text that has its beginning, plot and end, but are fragmented accounts about various aspects of living in the world. Stories are positioned in time and locations, they provide differing accounts of the self and relations of the self to various others, and they also are about social structures or constraints in society (Mishler 1986). Actually, what is of particular value in the concept of narration is that it not only refers to the personhood, to the individual, but it invites us to explore the personal accounts that are also of a systemic nature. The method is suggestive of ways in which individuals experience and cope
with social realities. Its emphasis is on personal history, knowledge, experiences, constraints, assumptions and decisions of individuals that structure their lives. The narrative suggests that social order is not just transmitted, but it is experienced and explored. The system is played out in a narrative, in interaction with personal experiences and practices; notions of the system reappear through the lives and strategies of individuals. As such, the method explores the intertwining of the system and the lifeworld (Habermas 1998), thus exploring interaction and communication between social structures and the subjectivity of the individual agency (cf. Mitchell 1980).

Narration as it is proposed here can be conceptualized as offering room to accommodate all three analythical idioms proposed by Brubaker and Cooper. Given that, let me stress that I’m not simply advocating the changing of identity into a narrative. This would not solve any “identitary” dilemma. The narrative, or, “the narrative of belonging”, I propose, might be used both as complementary to other expressed concepts (such as those of Brubaker & Cooper or of Anthias) or as a substitute to those since the concept is vast enough to offer various concretizations, but I particularly advocate its use in migration studies. For the purpose of understanding migrants’ belonging in a transnational world, I thus propose to substitute the notions of migrants’ hybrid identities with the conceptualizations of migrants’ affinities, experiences of commonality and division, and their belongings through narration.

Situated belongings of migrants from former Yugoslavia

I here explore empirically migrants’ narratives of belongings as they appear in the narratives. Narrations that are discussed below with the purpose to provide grounds for the proposition to use the concept of narrative in studying migrants’ belongings, are taken from biographical narrative interviews that were conducted in 2006–2010 with migrants coming to Slovenia since 2000 from the former Yugoslav states. These demonstrate how migrants negotiate various identifications that stem from the narratives including referencing to their ethnic belonging, gender, sexual orientation etc. All of these accounts are expressed in a context so the story is not suspended in time and space. To the contrary, using narration enables us to analyse migrants’ belonging while considering the peculiarities of time and space.
In the excerpt below we can see how irritated Ada was by a proposition to change her surname to disguise the Bosnian origin of her name. We can clearly see in her narrative her readiness to fight racism and her determination not to disguise herself, but rather stress her particular ethnic belonging. She felt offended, vowing never to do such a thing:

So at the Employment Service they also told me, because I went there I don’t know how many times (…) I mean, I’m glad if I get any answer. And I realized why. And then she said: “Why doesn’t anyone take you?” I’d like to know it, too. Because nobody tells you, like, “you were not selected.” I understand this too. She said: “But why, how?” She said: “You know what! Why don’t you change your family name? You’ll never get a job with the family name like this!” (…) So I said, “No, I won’t” (…). And even if I did. If my family name was, I don’t know, some Slovenian family name, they’d know from my accent, so there’s no point. I lie myself, not others. (Ada)

Similar is her reaction when she speaks to her daughter about the school environment where Ada often fights against discrimination. When the daughter, doing her homework, asks Ada what she likes to eat, Ada responds by purposely stressing her liking for a typically Bosnian dish:

And [daughter] was very happy: “Mom, mom, I’ll speak about you for two minutes [for homework]!” I said: “Go on.” “What do you like to eat most?” I said, burečki. Burečki, do you know what it is? A kind of burek [filled pastry, a typical Bosnian dish], with meat filling, prepared a bit differently, you pour yogurt over it and then garlic. (...) And it’s wholly Bosnian. Nowhere else except in Bosnia. “I can’t tell that!” “Then you can tell that I most like to eat blood sausages with sour cabbage.” [a typical Slovenian dish] And she said: “But you don’t eat it.” (…) Or, for example, if we go somewhere, she always sends a postcard, like, to her schoolmates, a teacher, from Rimini, from Paris, but never from Sarajevo, to anyone. “Ana, let’s buy a postcard!” “Oh, well, don’t feel like it.” (Ada)

We can see from the narrative how specific contexts shape Ada’s positioning. When being offended in Slovenia, she would stress her Bosnian belonging. On another occasion, when she explains how she was told by her Bosnian fellows that her child only needs to speak good Bosnian, and that Slovene is not important, she explains how such situations make her say that she would never go back to Bosnia again. “And if I go down there [to Bosnia] I’m always in disputes and then I say: “I’ll never come back again!” And of course, I can’t wait to return.” These situations make Ada narrate her

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5 Pseudonyms are used for ethical purposes.
“in-between” feelings (for conceptualization of such narrations see Milharčič Hladnik 2007, Cukut Krilić & Mlekuž 2009):

So, it’s slightly, I mean, this feeling, you don’t feel at home here, because it’s not it and you’ll never feel at home. Down there you also don’t feel at home, because for them you’re a Slovene, and for them here you’re a Bosnian. So you aren’t at home anywhere. (Ada)

When her daughter speaks about being a Slovene, she says:

Ana said that she was a Slovene. I said: “Ana, you aren’t a real Slovene. Your mother is a Bosnian, your father is a Bosnian, your surname ends in –ić, born to the Bosnian parents, probably you too are a Bosnian.”

“No, I was born in Ljubljana, I’m a Slovene.” I said: “Darling, you are and you are not. You’re somewhere in between. You are neither one nor the other.” And this bothers her a lot. She is in search of herself. (Ada)

What could be coined “survival strategies” clearly emerges from narratives when interviewees express their distancing from a particular identity that they coin in ethnic terms based on their real life situations (for heterogeneity of ethnic identities see Lukšič Hacin 1999). Being faced with discrimination in the process of searching for work, Ada tends to reinforce her Bosnian belonging, while on other occasions she would clearly distance herself from her place of birth. The “in-between” narrations, which in some interviews tend to have an ethnic context and are associated with family or work contexts in others, have, in Ada’s narration, a positive connotation when she is expressing “what and how” she is. Alternatively, similar narrations might be expressed by a story about “what and how” one is not, like in the case of Rudina.

You know how I feel now, I’m no one here and no one there, because coming here change me a lot, I’m not at all the one that I used to be, even one percent, I changed my thinking, I changed everything, I am not the one that I used to be there, even though I said I was not 100% in that culture, but now? I am not at all, but still I can’t say that I’m 100% Slovenian, I belong here but, but I’m not like 100% belonging here, when I’m here I don’t feel I’m at home in one way, but when I go there I don’t feel at home either. It’s very bad, because now I don’t know from where I am, where I belong to, you know when I go there it’s about two, three weeks and I have a problem that I can’t stay with my friends there, because they are just talking things, not that I couldn’t stand, but I just felt that they are losing the time (…), but here is one thing, it’s too much business oriented, not just time in the business school [Rudina is enrolled in a busi-
ness school], but all the people talk and do is business, how to get money. There they are more family oriented. So that’s why I’m telling you that I don’t know where I belong, because I could never live without my parents, of course I couldn’t live without them, but for example talking with them, we talk every day, maybe twice or three times a day and I still can’t understand people that are not talking for a week, or once in a week. I just don’t do any decision without talking with them, so I still have that connection with my parents. But one the other hand I can not be only like family oriented, a woman that works at home, even now the things have changed and women are working there, but still when they go home they are closed, they are family. I am pro-working and pro-family but still you have to have some time for your own, which I’m missing there, or here I’m missing the family, so that way I’m still kind of in the middle. (Rudina)

Rudina’s narration shows how she negotiates her belongings through her current and past experiences. She has come to Slovenia for her business studies and she relates her belonging to her studies saying that her life is not “only about business and making money” but also about “friends and family”. Being confined to her business-school environment in Slovenia her narration about Slovenia being all about business is clearly an expression of her particular schooling-related experience (the issue of context in clearly important here). She ascribes values of friendship and family to her encounters in Kosovo and explains how both work and family are of equal importance to her. Her words are a clear example of how she negotiates her experiences and values that she perceives as “being in the middle” (Ibid.).

In general, her story expresses positive aspects of being able to share different cultural worlds. Still, her “in-between” positioning is not just fun for her. Her account also tells us that she has the problem of not belonging anywhere “a 100 percent” that seems to cause stress for her. Discomfort is a result of the inability to fit “100%” to either cultural environment. “It’s very bad, because now I don’t know from where I am, where I belong to ...”. Constantly negotiating her belongings Melanija has a strong positioning of home that for her is strongly associated with her past life:

Once you leave behind your home and your birthplace, where your roots are, it doesn’t matter if you’re in Vojvodina, Slovenia, Italy, England or America. You don’t feel at home any more. We like it here because we used to visit my husband in the summer and the children are, like, delighted with Slovenia. I think that many things are in a better shape, many, many things. You know what! In Croatia we had a good life, when we came to Vojvodina we were, like, picked on, refugees and such things, and so on, like “Where do you come from?” and
“Who are you?” and “Why are you here?” I don’t know, perhaps other people’s experiences are different, this is how I felt. (Melanija)

Rudina’s experience of Slovenia being all about business is also related to her sense of loneliness after she first arrived for her studies. Her story is about feeling detached from Slovenes who seemed much better off and she chooses to socialize at first with Romanians:

When I came in Slovenia, the first week, actually it was an introduction week, so we were not doing many things, I was the only one from Kosovo, there were two from Romania and others from Slovenia and Slovenians were staying together. Romanians were staying together, so I was like feeling that I’m not part of this place. I mean for that one week, I was not accepted, of course, I mean its like that everywhere, they knew each other. And then I started to hang around with Romanians. When the lectures started the Slovenians were much better in English, they had a lot of experiences and they were travelling all around the world, for me coming to Slovenia was the first, not a first, I was in Turkey for a holiday, but I came here all of my own, because my father wanted me to get independence, to go on my own and find my way around. And I felt really alone all the time, really. And then I started to hang around with Romanians, as I said, Slovenians were travelling, they had experiences, I was just feeling like I’m not part of this world, I should go back. (Rudina)

Capturing Slovenia and the Slovenes in frames of business changes when Rudina’s narrative switches to her “fitting in” the new environment. When she mentions that her best friend is Slovenian she denounces viewpoints that the Slovenes are cold and all just about business, adding that this was her impression as a student at the business school which doesn’t apply in general. Here we can see a very located sense of the expressed belonging where the identification is about specific social locations that are embedded in particular environments.

In narrating their stories, the interviewees stress both positive and negative attitudes towards their belonging, demonstrating in this way both their difference from and closeness to the environment in question. A moment of distancing is either related to culture or specifically to lack of opportunities for study and work. In expressions of cultural difference we can sense in Rudina’s story, in contrast to, for example, Ada’s story, her wish to hide from “Albanian culture”, where she at the one hand identifies herself as Albanian and at the same time distances herself from being “a real” Albanian – here she seems to internalize the imposed categorization over what being an Albanian means. The second part of the narrative shows distancing as a result of lack of opportunities:
I don’t socialize, I don’t socialize with people because of their sexual orientation, ethnicity or anything like that, I’m not interested in it at all anymore. I was interested when I was twenty, going to a lesbian club. I was interested. But now I’d never go again to a lesbian club. Because there, a generation of women who have the same problems as I had when I was twenty comes there. They need women’s support, lesbians like themselves, so they need to ... socialize there a bit, dance, and meet people and fall in love and all that. And once you go through it, I mean, I think there is no need, like, to keep yourself arrested in
one position, remain there all your life and become entangled and unable to escape, like that. Be a lesbian, a foreigner, be this or that. So it’s how it was (…) but what I think is very important is that these possibilities do exist. Because people need it. That’s why I’ve again mentioned Metelkova, it played such an important role at a certain point in my life. In that way, too. Now I don’t need it anymore, but I support it. Because I know how important it was for me, you know. And how important it is now for some other people, you know, who are in a similar situation, like that. (Ana)

It is terrible if you are hemmed in by these borders, states, so you cannot go anywhere else, and not because they’d not let you go, but because you’re from this fucking country. It is a really, really terrible feeling. (…) I mean, yes, I knew, one thing I knew when I was growing up, that is, that I didn’t want to grow up, didn’t want to live in Dalmatia. I was sure about it. So even then, when I was 19, I wanted to leave, you know. I don’t know, it’s not important where. It was Zagreb, but I think that in a way I wanted to stay away from that, from that Dalmatian distress. I mean, I didn’t like it. Of course I like all that, I mean, the region as such, it’s really beautiful and I adore the sea, but that strange patriarchal Christian atmosphere always, always oppressed me in a way. I didn’t feel well. And I lived in what you could call the survival mode. So I didn’t speak much because I knew that if I told something about myself, some truth about myself, that it wouldn’t be good for me. So I always had to, like, I always had to make decisions, compromises, to be able to survive. And, I don’t know, perhaps it was one of the, perhaps one of the reasons for coming here. I feel better here. Even though I had bad experience and difficulties with getting those papers. But I finally feel that I’m no longer, that I don’t have, don’t have that obligation any more to justify my moves and my life. (Ana)

Ivana who left Croatia with her family for Slovenia fleeing the war tends to deal with her discomfort by reasoning that a person is still a person regardless of any attributions of identity. Her war-related experiences are much more meaningful than any attributions of identity and they also are specifically bounded by time and space. Ivana seems to deal with her experiences of war by shifting attention from difference to “human sameness” what might be coined as her “survival strategy”.

For me nationalism, or religion, or skin colour, nothing has influence on us and we don’t want, and with such people you simply want to show them that it’s not important. If you can speak with them at all, with some there is no chance of speaking about it. And naturally, the war was just another experience [demonstrating] that nationalism, ethnicity, or other, is unimportant. Because that war in Croatia, when it happened, it was, I don’t know why it happened. People still LIVE.
Croats and Serbs, who were the greatest enemies, in the SAME villages where they lived until now – only many Serbs went away – they AGAIN live together. And I don’t understand WHY the war broke out. I cannot understand that.

If you are a refugee, but you’re a human, like them. And like that. Like that, yes, many things. I think many people are good and I want to absorb from others only positive things, and I want to give only good things to others. Now, what others think about us, I don’t know that. I say that many people are really good. Really many people are good. (...) For me, money is not a value, for me the value is in a human being (...) I say, all that’s needed is a healthy attitude of one man towards another. To some degree, it doesn’t need to be much. Only a healthy attitude of one man towards another. That someone understands you, that he’s okay. (Ivana)

Many stories of migrants in Slovenia have a strong labour market related component that shows how they are continuously dismissed as a replaceable workforce that is only needed in terms of economic profits, and that should disappear when profits are no longer high enough. Migrants performing 3D jobs talk about working long hours, having low salaries or not receiving any. The narratives also express the fear experienced by migrant workers when their employers threaten them that their salary will be reduced or withheld entirely. For migrants, a significant burden is the constraint imposed by their immigrant status, whether the one of contractual worker or seasonal worker, whose short-term duration and correspondingly limited residence permit put them in an even more precarious position. Deprived of any other alternatives since their work contracts tie them to one specific employer, who is usually also the one who arranged their work permit, the migrant workers need to endure harsh working conditions in order not to risk losing their job and consequently their work permits. Most of our interview partners have been tied to short-term work contracts, which further augments hardship in work relations, and nearly all have had some experience with undocumented work. They mention work accidents, experiences with bad attitudes on the part of their bosses or co-workers, unfair treatment, indecent living conditions and lacking social contacts. Many faced insurmountable obstacles when trying to arrange their legal and administrative affairs, which often caused anxiety in them. Not earning much and being under stress to earn enough money to send home, many migrants eat poorly and reside in inappropriate housing that does not allow them to have a decent rest. When combined with hard physical labour and long working hours, this results in health problems which only accumulate due to lack of health care options.

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6 Particularly interviews conducted within Primts project.
Analyses of interviews show that precarious labour market positions of migrants strongly determine their narration. When interpreting the accounts of belonging of migrants who endure harsh living and working conditions, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that some of the migrants hardly survive through the month. Interviews point to the fact that precarious positions need to be considered as a strong context in which narrations occur. Particularly the bad economic position resulting in some cases in a total absence of any kind of social life for migrants or contacts outside work, remind us that narrations cannot be understood fully if context is ignored. Also, there were cases where by far the largest part of the interview was devoted to reflecting on work-related experiences.

And when we came, all that, he registered us, the same day, everything that was needed, like that. But I saw that it was not what he promised to us, he didn’t have a company nor, we didn’t have a clue. And there was this apartment, it was a sort of, like, primitive, it wasn’t an apartment at all. But ok, we can [endure it] for some time, to see what’s going on. “No work today, no work tomorrow, there’ll be some tomorrow, there’ll be some today” and so on for three days. I could see the things were not getting anywhere, and on the fourth day he said he had work for us, but in fact he had a company that rented out workers. And then you have to work five days for one company, and then for another, and then … you know. And the money he promised to us, that we will have, nothing like that, nothing close to it. (Tomislav)

At my job I do the dirtiest part of work, I wash dishes. I make salads, sweets, and I do all of that in the same day (...). But I work three, three things in 8 hours, and this boss is not thankful for that. (...) When everybody goes to party, I work, I mean, I am, I have no time for myself, I have no time for a friend, I cannot go out because I don’t know weekends. I work 8 hours, and after 8 hours I always stay another hour, you know, and all that … (Tamara)

Say, a business owner earns 10 euros per an ordinary worker and pays him 2.5 euros, and when you calculate all that it’s, er, for nothing. And the average salary in Slovenia is 500, 520 euros, but how to live on that … I cannot understand it. I have a wife and two children, and my salary is around 550 euros. I have an apartment here, I pay 100 euros for it, I need 250 euros for food, how then can I feed my wife and children. It’s not that I complain about Slovenia, but I know that it can be better. As I said, I worked in Slovenia before, before the war, in 87, 88, I worked for the railways and at that time I earned much more, and it was much better. (Fikret)
Family is the most pronounced common feature of belonging in all interviews and it is more pronounced when families are far away. Here, the accounts of longing to be joined with a girlfriend, children or parents are strong. A strong wish to be joined with a family member is in some cases accompanied by a narration about the economic situation that prevents families from living together. Conditions at work often prevent our interviewees from visiting their relatives in Bosnia, Croatia or Serbia which causes additional distress.

Well, I'd like (...) to stay here and to have my girlfriend here. My girlfriend to be here. But this is a bit more difficult. You have to try hard for it. So we'll see. I mean, nothing binds me to Serbia. Nothing binds me to Serbia. Only, only the apartment. But here too I can arrange it, see. I could rent it out and it'd be even better for me (...) Well, the plans are, I don't know what the plans are. Either to stay here, if I get an opportunity here, or to return to Belgrade. I have no other plans, see. Perhaps I could stay here, and in a few years bring my girlfriend here, when she completes her studies, at least here she could find something, some job. (Marko)

As regards life in Slovenia, one could live here and I came to Slovenia for work, it's normal. I had a wish, say, I had a wish, I'm married, I have two children, I had a wish to bring my wife to Slovenia, it's normal, and children. It's difficult with papers, to obtain those papers, say, for them to come here. As regards papers and all that it could be worked out somehow, but you cannot support them, say, I couldn't support my wife and two children with my salary, it's normal. So for example I cannot bring them to Slovenia. I wouldn't like to bring them in this way, because I cannot support them so it's better if they are not here. (...) And it's not, I mean, I'm not fulfilled, I mean, I'm not satisfied. I'm not satisfied with my salary. I'm not. And I'm not satisfied because I stay apart from my family. I'd like, say, I'd like to be with my wife, with children, say, but I'm not. (Fikret)

I came here, I got a tourist visa, to come, my husband was here; he came in May, so we were not used to it that one is here and one there, or to be separated ... we were always together, so it was difficult for us, so I came here on a visit, and I was here two weeks, then we looked if there is or there is no work, if I can find some job or not. (...) Now it's difficult for me, because the children are not here, but I hope it will work. The children, coming here, I enrolled them in school, the international school, because they said that's okay, that all foreigners are there. Foreigners, nobody said this to me before, that I was a foreigner, but it's how they talk, so... I learnt to speak Slovenian a bit, they say I try hard and I learn. I've been here for six months so every month I go there, to Macedonia for one week,
and then back. So it’s all very difficult, but when you have a goal, you must succeed, must (...) And children, whoever can pull children, it’s not good for children to live alone at this time, so it’s not really the best of the best... I hope that children will be here and that everything will be alright and all that. It’s our goal, to be here. If the children don’t come, I’ll go there, the victims are I and my husband, and the children, but if they don’t come here I’ll go back. No matter how it is there I must go back. That’s it. It’s not Macedonia, it’s Slovenia, the family and the children, what is most. (Filipa)

Conclusions

The article has reflected on the notion of identity, particularly the conceptualizations of hybrid and shifting identities that are believed to capture well multifarious belongings of contemporary subjects and their ties to various social, cultural and political contexts. The critical appraisal of postmodernist interpretations of identity used in some research on transnationalism and migration regimes (cf. Ong 1999; Levitt 2001) as well as in policy making (i.e. current debates on integration, cf. Kontos 2011), it was argued, doesn’t apply well to the situation of migrant populations. The notion of hybrid identity is too loose to reflect the contextualized and often highly situated life experiences of migrants (Anthias 2002).

Empirical evidence presented in this article points to complex interrelationships that shape migrant belongings in a post-Yugoslav context. We’ve explored alternative conceptualizations and have argued that these, in particular the notion of narration, are analytically more appropriate to capture migrants’ belongings (see Milharčič Hladnik 2007 for a Slovenian context). In contrast to a positive notion of hybridity and of hybrid identities that are supposed to allow us to adjust to any circumstances and choose freely our identities as we feel best fits our ideas, migrants’ narratives have revealed how belonging is not freely floating and waiting for us to choose and adjust, but how it is shaped by very specific circumstances that determine life of migrants (Pajnik & Campani 2011). Experience of war, leaving the country of birth for studying, fleeing for economic reasons to be able to sustain the family, leaving strict environment that doesn’t allow the expression of difference – all these are very specific circumstances that need to be considered when analysing migrant transnationalism and transnational belonging. Precisely because contexts are so particular, general identity labels used to describe migrants’ experiences can’t fully assess the complexity of their realities.

Let us stress again that this article is not a plea for abandoning the concept of identity. To the contrary, the argument presented aims at contributing to the
debates about the usefulness of identity in explaining complex interrelationships of migrating individuals; it should help us understand better the concept and encourage us to elaborate on its particular applications. Too often identity is simply assumed. Consequently, we have witnessed the naturalization of the concept with its side effect being the decline in endeavours to grasp the concept analytically. Migrants’ storytelling presented in this article is as much the story about identity as it is the story against it. We have used the concept of narrative and of story-telling to explore migrants’ belongings but, perhaps most importantly, identification in all its complexity was made by the actors themselves.
References


Bosanci, Čefurji, Čapci and other Burekalised creatures.

Images of immigrants and their descendants in Slovenian media and popular culture

Jernej Mlekuž

What bites, who gets bitten, or, Introductory bites

In the self-flattering book Burek.si?! Concepts/Recipes among other things I discussed burekalism – of course with the inestimable assistance of Edward Said (Mlekuž 2015). Burekalism? Burekalism is, in Said’s words (1978, p. 2), “a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between” a population and place defined by the burek and a population and place not defined by the burek.

And what is a burek? The burek – probably the most popular fast food in Slovenia – is nowadays the most convenient and commonly used signifier in Slovene popular culture, media, vernacular, etc. for immigrants from the former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and their culture, the Balkans and the phenomena associated with them. It is the most thoroughly scrutinised immigrant in Slovenia. But let us return to burekalism – the central concept and the subject of analysis of this text. Burekalism is, again in Said’s words (1978, p. 14) a “style” of the non-burek-defined population “for dominating, reconstructing and

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1 This is an amended and partially adapted version of a paper titled Čapac.si, or “On Burekalism and its Bites. An analysis of selected images of immigrants and their descendants in Slovenian media and popular culture,” which was published in Volume 28 of the journal Dve domovini /Two homelands.

2 Burek – a pie with various fillings, “came” to Slovenia with immigrants from the republics of former Yugoslavia. In the beginning it was confined to the family cuisine of immigrants, but in the 1960s it emerged mainly in urban environments as the dish of choice at some fast food shops. At first, burek consumption was primarily linked to immigrants. Later, it became popular with a segment of the young population in urban environments. At the end of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s the burek began to take on explicit political meanings that were mainly linked to nationalist discourse.
having authority over” the burek-defined population. In order not to lose our place in these long passages, the definitions of burek-defined and non-burek-defined populations will be translated, contracted to conceptually not completely equivalent categories adapted to the needs of this paper: “immigrants” and “Slovenes”.

Burekalism can of course bite into many very different things. It is particularly fond of anything redolent of bureks, anything which more strictly, seriously, studiously put, belongs to the imaginary, symbolic space of the burek, i.e. the Balkans, the “South”. In this paper we will experimentally set before the hungry maw of burekalism a population group which is unavoidably associated with burekalism, burekalism’s *sine qua non*: immigrants and their descendants. They are most often marked in burekalistic language as *bosanci* [Bosnians], *južnjaki* [southerners], *jugovići* [a play on the “ći” suffix common in Yugoslav surnames], *jugosi* [“southers”], *balkanci* [people from the Balkans], *čapci* [another pejorative], *bureki* [bureks], or perhaps most commonly nowadays *čefurji* or *čefurčine*.

Čefurčine should all be killed
they all impose their habits [on us]
their spitting and cursing
and another thing their craze for bureks when they hear it they start to
sniff like dogs… and that’s what they are!!!

and those shiptars [Albanians] who are all violent
they always want to beat somebody up …and they’re useless even shit
can be used as manure on a field

they should all be exterminated
italy even boasts about their growing popu...because of immigrantsw...pfff come on

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1. In his introduction, Said gives not one but three definitions of orientalism, which were shown in detail by Aijaz Ahmad (1992), to be conflicting definitions. In addition to the two stated above, which we can understand as (1) a mentality or even an epistemology and (2) as a “Western style of dominating /.../ the Orient” (Said 1978, p. 14), thus in the Foucaultian sense as a system of representations, Said also understands orientalism as (3) an interdisciplinary field of academic knowledge.

2. As this sentence suggests, we shall understand burekalism as a discourse – in the words of Michel Foucault (2002, p. 54), as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. Or, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001, p. 108) state more didactically: “What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.” Things thus acquire meaning and become objects of knowledge only within discourse – they then do not reflect any “natural” essence of things, but only *constitute* them.
if it goes on like this SLO will soon be called Slovenska and Herzegovina
not to mention mosques oh yeah
we should build one
round them up from all over Slo

and then douse their heads with napalm until they melt

poor us in 10 years you go into a restaurant it’ll be like mcdonalds in america burek burek big burek bureks horseburek cheeseburek salatsburekk and so on
WE’VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM THERE ISNT ANYONE WHO
HASN’T HAD BAD EXPERIENCES WITH THEM
I SEE THEM WHEN THEY GO THROUGH THE JUNKYARDS TO COLLECT
THINGS AND NEXT TO THEM THE KIDS ARE PULLING ON CABLES
YEAH WELL THEYRE GOOD FOR ONE THING THEY ONLY KNOW HOW TO BUILD

and one day ALL THE HOUSES will be MADE BY BOSNA

This particularly bloodthirsty burekalistic bite into an online debate titled “ČEFURJI” speaks not only about the role played by the burek within burekalism, but also about the central, targeted role of Bosnians within this orientalist and nationalist discourse. Before the appearance of the word čefur, the word bosanac [Bosnian], which continues to appear frequently in burekalist language, was probably the most common term of abuse and insult and a general signifier for all immigrants from the former republics, as indicated by the following (in this case, antiburekalist) title of an online debate: “if anyone else uses the expression bosanac or bosanka [fem.] or bosanci [pl.] or bosanke [fem. pl.] in an a priori contemptuous way and as a general label for all the people of the Balkans... I’m going to have a fucking nervous breakdown. Goddamn bitter evil sons of bitches.” (Halucinacijavoha 2013) The reasons why Bosnians
– immigrants from BiH – are the sacrificial lamb, the most susceptible, victimised object of burekalism are numerous and there is no room to dissect the issue here. We shall mention only one of them, which speaks to the distinctive character of burekalism: owing to their faith, Bosnian Muslims are the most different, distinctive Other in Slovenia (at least among the numerous immigrant groups), which suggests that burekalism cannot be simply reduced to nationalism and/or xenophobia.⁵

The subject of the analysis is therefore burekalism’s bites into immigrants and their descendants, these acts of dominance in the panoply of culture and orientalism and nationalism⁶ which indicate or at least intend to show who is the master and who is the foreigner, the servant in the house. But to speak about the bites of burekalism without a precise understanding of burekalism is like commenting on a chess match without understanding the rules of chess. If we therefore want to understand the acts of burekalism we have to understand the concept of burekalism. So: what is burekalism? And then: what does it do and what does it have to do with the immigrants and the descendants of immigrants?

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⁵ Let us state just one hypothesis about this debate or historical fact. Since the mid-seventies, immigrants from BiH together with immigrants from Croatia (which to a great extent was the result of shorter local or regional migrations) were the largest immigrant group in Slovenia, while from the eighties onward immigration from BiH surpassed the migration from all of the other republics (Jospiović 2006, pp. 238–245). Furthermore, migration from BiH was distinctive in many ways in comparison with migration from the other republics (see Mežnarič 1986).

⁶ Burekalism is in many ways coloured by a type of “cultural nationalism”. Why then are we not speaking about the more generic cultural nationalism? Firstly because the concept of cultural nationalism is most often used in distinction to the concept of political nationalism, and thus refers mainly to the process of nation-building. Cultural or the frequently synonymic ethnic nationalism is based on the principle of blood ties (*jus sanguinis* or the nation-state model as we know it from the formation of central and eastern European nations), while political nationalism is based on the territorial principle (*jus soli* or the nation-state model used in the formation of western European nations) (Bielefeld 1998, p. 257). Therefore, if in the case of burekalism we are already speaking about nationalism, then that nationalism does not refer to the most general use of nationalism, as a process of the formation or growth of nations, but more to other, narrower senses of the term: a feeling or consciousness of belonging to a nation, national language and symbolism, social and political national movements, and particularly ideology (nationalism), which is the final and chief use of the term (see Smith 2001, pp. 15–20 and elsewhere). Secondly, burekalism cannot be simply limited to nationalism. It is also closely, inseparably tied to orientalism. In the same way I believe that it is inappropriate to equate burekalism with xenophobia or xenophobic language, which has among other places been critically analysed in Slovenia in numerous papers, probably most vocally in the publications of the Peace Institute (e.g. Kuzmanić 1999; Petković 2000; Pajnik 2002).
What is it that bites?

The concept of burekalism does not deal with the correlation between burekalism and the burek – the burek in this place is of course just a signifier of foreigners (from the Balkans), immigrants or in this particular case the children of immigrants – but with the internal congruity of burekalism and its ideas about the burek, in spite of or notwithstanding any congruity or incongruity with a “real” burek (Said 1978, p. 5). What kinds of ideas then does burekalism spread about the children of immigrants? On the website “cefurji.net” under the title “Razstava o čefurjih” (Exhibition on Čefurs), jalidi writes:

Okay, I’m setting up an exhibition about čefurs [at the Slovenian Museum of Ethnography!] – actually its official name is The Second Generation of Immigrants in Ljubljana - Čefurs? / The point of the exhibition is first of all to present the attitude of Slovenes to so-called čefurs, and then to present the stereotypes of how čefurs are supposed to be seen and what they do. Finally, the purpose is to present the actual cultural identity of the second generation of immigrants. / Right now I’m in the process of collecting things to display at the exhibition, and I need some help. The idea is to get things like old jellow cab (sic) shoes (the ones with the rubber toe caps), wide big star trousers, track suits that make loud swishy noises, some kind of butterfly knife, a pistol (rubber of course), some kind of gold chains (it will probably be difficult to find someone willing to lend a real gold chain, so I’ll have to find a knock-off), then shawls and t-shirts for the FK Delije football club, flags (BIH, Serbia) which people have used at various celebrations, orthodox crosses on neck chains etc. / the exhibition will of course also feature music and films: A few selected songs (national folk songs, originals) which the second generation (so-called čefurs) listens to (Dragana Mirković, Halid Beshić, Ceca, Braca Begić for the originals), hit films (e.g. Rane [Wounds])... (Jalidi 2005).

Hajduk informs jalidi that her project is about “a description of a čapec [čefur], a narrow subculture”. But that’s exactly what burekalism does: it generalises and simplifies. We find a similar case of generalising and simplifying, as well as essentialising and naturalising of identities, on a Siol blog entitled “The Adventures and Trials of Martin Dušak – where the readers are first” under the heading “All fake čefurs are going to get it sooner or later!”:

A lot has been said in the last few days about čefurs in general. And a lot of it has been focused on track suits. Today at our school we had a day for them – Track Suit Day. So I also dressed up as a joke. The point of the day was that we would all be dressed in the same way and nobody would look at us
crosswise. But when we think about track suits, we immediately associate them with čefurs. And so around nine of us class larkers dress up as čefurs. We dressed in shiny track suits, found ourselves neck chains and of course a toothpick. Hey, why not? Let’s be fake čefurs for a day! But I was soon punished for this act. I was unlucky, and on the first day of faking I was hit for around 200 euros, of course because of čefur aggression. While I was taking a picture of three people talking, one of them got mad, came up to me and accidentally slapped my digital camera out of my hand, and it fell on the floor. So the photos below are the last ones I took with that camera, since the lens is totally kaput. DON’T PRETEND YOU’RE A ČEFUR IF YOU’RE NOT! (Dušak 2007)

What kinds of ideas and images does burekalism then spread about the immigrants and their children? Undoubtedly stereotypical ones, which force a reduction of complicated, complex and varied phenomena into simplified, solid and essentialistic characteristics. This reduction is masterfully illustrated by one descendant of immigrants, the “čefur” Ahmed Pašić:

It’s a problem of identity. In Slovenia we are (and always were) Bosnians. Or something of the sort. When we went to Bosnia, we were Janezes [Janez is a common Slovenian name, used as a stereotype by other Yugoslav nations], Slovenes, Slovenijales [a Slovenian furniture company], diaspora, Fructal [a Slovenian juice company]. A paradox.

Of course this in-between, no-man’s position of “not of the earth, not of the sky” does not provide any protection against burekalism for the children of immigrants. For burekalism the descendants of immigrants, like their parents, are the ontological other, immigrants, non-Slovenes, people from the Balkans, southerners, čefurs, bureks, as we are told among others by the burekalised Pašić: “In Slovenia we are (and always were) Bosnians.” And as a secondary school student, mad at his schoolmates who “for a lark” dressed “in track suits and other čefur gear”, states in a blog: “For me it comes down to this: You’re either a čefur or you aren’t! There’re no in-between stages!” (Laž 2007)

7 We have said nearly nothing about how the immigrants feel about these bites of burekalism. In her study of points of view about integration, Mojca Medvešek showed that a full seven-tenths of first- and second-generation immigrants believe that there are prejudices towards them in Slovenia. She also obtained quite surprising data regarding the concealment of origins. Four-tenths of respondents to a questionnaire sometimes or often do not say where they are from, five per cent have changed their last or first name, 15 per cent have thought about doing so, and some four-tenths of respondents know someone who has (Utenkar 2005, p. 2).
In the case of burekalism we therefore have to deal with stereotypical utterances – utterances which emphasise, constitute and essentialise differentiation, and which are a forceful place of the exercising of power in processes of signification. In other words, it is about the power of signifying, the power of imposing concepts, classification, typifying, a sort of symbolic power, a conceptual violence.

Furthermore, through stereotyping (probably the most commonly used weapon in perpetrating symbolic violence, as Stuart Hall (2002, p. 258) points out), authors of varying disciplinary provenances maintain the social and symbolic order. Or in other words, stereotyping is used to maintain and consolidate power relations. Therefore, to believe that immigrants and their children are burekalised only for the needs of the imagination is in my opinion injudicious, naive and wrong. The relations between Slovenes (non-burek) and Balkan people (burek) “is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (Said 1978, p. 17), about which the well-known commentator Boris Jež speaks in an article entitled “The Dictatorship of the Carniolan Sausage” [Carniolan Sausage, or kranjska klobasa, is a Slovenian national symbol, an object of pride and reverence] in which we read:

Slovenes fortunately eat Carniolan sausage, at least that is what we hear, and these days some antinational fanatics have even prepared some kind of public protest against the ‘dictatorship of the Carniolan sausage’. This is nice to hear, as the conventional wisdom would indicate a dictatorship of the burek and čevapčiči. (Jež 2004, p. 4)

The immigrants and their children have been burekalised not just because they figured out that they were foreigners, Balkan, southerners, in short bureks, but because it was possible – that is, they were forced into a position where it was possible – to make them foreigners, Balkan, southerners, bureks. When they speak with burek-defined people, i.e. immigrants and their children, in the language and name of burekalism, they speak in a way that suits non-burek defined people, Slovenes. Let’s look at just the

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8 Without differentiation, at least from the perspective of (post)structuralism, there is no meaning; difference is essential to meaning. Burekalism, like all other discourses, therefore does nothing else but continually producing differences. The apparently stable identities which burekalism enshrines are therefore from the perspective of (post)structuralism above all relational, defined and constituted (simply) in relation to others. In order for an identity to exist there must always be a difference with respect to an Other, and as the vulgar radical constructivists (with whom I do not share the same thoughts) would say, it doesn’t matter at all what you fill it with.
three most popular “Slovenian” sitcoms in independent Slovenia: *Teater paradižnik* [Tomato Theatre], *TV Dober dan* [Good Day TV] and *Naša Mala klinika* [Our Little Clinic]. In all three we find immigrants represented as lower class: as cleaners (Fata in *Dober Dan*) and doormen (Veso in *Teater paradižnik* and Veso Lolar Ribar in *Naša Mala klinika*). It should be noted that, according to their accents, all of these characters are immigrants from BiH. And through the work and business that they do in such sitcoms they are not only socially stigmatised, but with their frequent, to put it kindly exotic, strange, feebleminded behaviour they are also represented as culturally inferior. Why do we never find immigrants in burekalised TV products in serious business suits, white doctors’ gowns, the relaxed and extravagant garb of artists? Why do immigrants never speak eloquently, do intelligent and chic things, fascinate? The answer is simple. Burekalism is a mindset which is measured according to the judgement of non-bureks; it is a way of thinking which operates in the orbits of burekalism, it is a joke which in burekalist society always hits its mark. And lest we forget, it feeds on, draws from, relies on the powerlessness of the self-representation, self-articulation, self-assertions of bureks. Or in the words of Karl Marx (1967, p. 106): “They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.”

This brings us to the next qualification. I should add that Said’s Orientalism (1978, p. 6) is still of invaluable help to us here. One ought never to assume that the structure of burekalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. We must to try to grasp the sheer knitted-together strength of burekalised discourse, and its redoubtable durability. Burekalism is much more formidable than a collection of falsifications and lies, it is not just an airy Slovenian fantasy about the burek, but a created body of theory and practice in which there has also been consid-

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9 The adjective “Slovenian” should have at least two sets of quotation marks here, since the director of two of the mentioned sitcoms is a Bosnian immigrant to Slovenia (Branko Đurić). The director of *TV Dober dan* is Vojko Anzeljc.

10 The sitcom *Teater paradižnik* was originally broadcast on the first national television program (*TV Slovenija 1*) from 1994 to 1997, while *TV Dober dan* was aired from 1999 to 2002 and *Naša mala klinika* from 2004 to 2007 (both on POP TV, a commercial station with the highest ratings in Slovenia). All three of these sitcoms were extremely popular and had very high ratings. To mention just the letter: In 2004, 2005 and 2006, *Naša mala klinika* won the Viktor (the Slovenian equivalent of an Emmy or a BAFTA) for most popular acted TV broadcast, had the highest ratings of any show on Slovenian television and was one of the most watched TV shows in Slovenia. The episode with the highest ratings was viewed by as many as half a million people (in a country with a population of around 2 million).

11 For the images see the website http://www.cirovic-lucija.com/tv_dober_dan.htm (12. 3. 2008), where you can see other photos of Fata from filming, appearances and magazines.
erable material investment. An example of this material investment? The “Exhibition on Čefurs” at the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, which I believe has remained in the world of ideas. So let’s look for another – it won’t be difficult, we find the next one in the text after the “Exhibition on Čefurs”: the “class larkers” dressing up as čefurs. Continued investment has therefore made burekalism, as a system of self-evidence, knowledge, and signification, an accepted grid for filtering through the burek into Slovenian consciousness, just as that same investment has multiplied the statements proliferating out from burekalism into the general culture.

Burekalism, still following Said’s (1978, p. 7) thought, therefore depends for its strategy on a flexible positional superiority, which puts the non-burek defined person (Slovenian) in a whole series of possible relationships with the immigrants without his ever losing the relative upper hand. Within the umbrella of the domination, hegemony, and superiority of Slovenes over immigrants there has emerged a complex imaginative corpus, suitable more or less for the entertainment and metaphorical needs of popular culture, the media, colloquial language, publicists, literature, and so on. To return again to Said (1978, p. 12), burekalism is therefore not a mere political subject matter or a field which is reflected passively by culture, language, or place. It is also not a large and diffuse collection of texts about the immigrants and their descendants, nor is it representative of some nefarious Slovenian plot to keep down Southerners, Balkan people, bosanci, čefurji, čapci and other burekalised creatures. It is rather a dissemination of superiority, dominance, geopolitical and politico-cultural awareness into popular culture, colloquial, and other language, entertainment, the media, literature, art, and more.

Let’s take a look at two examples of this kind of dissemination of superiority in the field of culture. Probably the simpler, more transparent example, which we can also view as an example of a unique Slovenian advertising multiculturalism, is the ad for the WC duck Anitra, featuring the already mentioned popular media icon from the television sitcom TV Dober dan, Fata the Cleaner.12 Fata the Cleaner, who also became a sort of general cipher for all cleaning women from the former SFRY, who in the television ad grins foolishly through missing teeth and says: “Okay, I’m going to clean up”, with her coded work equipment (her cleaner’s shoes, gown and broom), provides a clear example of stereotyping. The image with its stereotyping imposes upon the viewer ethical and class (as well as sexual) categorization. Immigrants are therefore people who perform poorly paid, less (intellectually) demanding work, associated with mankind’s dirtiest aspects. This kind of stereotypical representation spreads and

12 The ad has been critically analysed by Ksenija H. Vidmar (2003, pp. 853–854).
consolidates ideas about the superiority of Slovenes and can thus be read as an authoritarian instrument of subordination.

The second, more complicated example appears to be more innocent and can even be viewed as an example which makes fun of Slovenian male sexuality (sexual dysfunction). It is a song called “Lepi Dasa” [Handsome Dasa] or “Lepi Dasa iz Vrbasa” [Handsome Dasa from Bosnian Vrbas], the first song by an artist using the pseudonym Lepi Dasa, first premiered in 2006 at one of Slovenia’s main festivals of popular music, Melodije morja in sonca (Melodies of Sea and Sun). Although the song, sung in an (excessively) rich “southern accent”, did not make the final, it did, as we can read in Wikipedia, “become a hit throughout Slovenia”:

Once upon a time in a parking lot daddy’s tyre [rubber] blew out
When a black-haired puma got it in its claws
Nine months later they both sensed
That they had given birth to a future star in Pampers

And when I became a part of the estrada scene
Tomaž and Zoki both said I’d amount to nothing
I just whistle at all the parameters
and extend only to my own centimetres.

(Chorus)

When I play polkas I wake up all the sub-Alpine men
And shake the tits from the coast to Koroška [the border region to the north-east]
No matter if they’re pear shaped or skinny
As long as all the Slovene arses start to shimmy

For the young babes I’m like Tito’s relay
Sometimes I also get hit on by older aunties
If the girls are too hot I drink whisky and pills
If the line is too long I do some carpet glue too

My fame has spread among the hungry lasses
With Dasa they can always get Gavrilović [nowadays Croatian, in SFRY probably the most popular] salami
If you, baby, would just take your foot off the gas
You’ll know how feels when Dasa does the driving

(Chorus)
And though I am I admit an emigrant from the south
In fact I’m a really nice guy
And though I was once even erased
Look at me, aren’t I straight out of a fairy tale

(Chorus) (Lepi Dasa)

But the frisky Lepi Dasa, who shook “the tits from the coast to Koroška”, also offers a different reading, or to put it another way implicitly thrusts a different image on us. Lepi Dasa with his fixation of his meaning and his essence at the level of sexuality naturalises the essence of immigrants at the level of primary needs, i.e. biology. As Frantz Fanon (2002) showed with his study of (stereotypical) representations of black people, the concentration of meaning around their genitalia consolidates the essence of black people at the level of the physical, in contrast to representations of white people, which mainly refer to the mind.

With burekalism, still following Said’s (1978, p. 8) thought and words, one must repeatedly ask oneself whether what matters is the general group of ideas overriding the mass of material – about which who could deny that they were shot through with doctrines of Slovenian superiority, various kinds of racism, nationalism, and the like, dogmatic views of burekalism as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction? – or the much more varied work produced by almost uncountable individual writers, whom one would take up as individual instances of authors dealing with, tripping over, touching on immigrants and their descendants.

I think that with burekalism it is both. It is conditioned both by a certain dogmatic group of ideas and the creativity and originality of individual contributors, as all orientalist statements are. This includes the fictional tale or declaration entitled “Why Do Bosnians Get On Your Nerves” on the “parents’ chat” on one of the online forums, which has received considerable praise for its originality and which is also the title of a protracted online debate:

Why Do Bosnians Get On Your Nerves

I mean, they’re cool:
Declaration of a Štajerskan

I don’t know what you have against Bosnians. Sometimes they really bothered me too. But they don’t anymore. This is how it happened:

I have a daughter, who drank my blood as a joke. I was everything: old, sick, stupid, a hundred years on a wooden spoon, I had nothing. I have a woman, who smacked me in the head like a monkey. Nothing was good enough. The
harder I worked, the more she complained. I have neighbours who gave me nonstop @#$%&. I didn’t do anything right that they wouldn’t have a comment on. But then my daughter met this Bosnian, got pregnant and married him. At first I thought that I was gonna lose it. A couple of months later she came back with a black eye. Dad, Mum, look what he did to me. No more Neanderthal and so on. Two days later she went back to him just like that. Every now and then he smacks her around and she comes back to her golden daddy. The son-in-law’s fear is an old one and she made the most of it. Every once in a while I invite the Bosnian to the pub for a drink and we’re the best of friends.

And why not. He took care of my family like he should. Those guys have no mercy on women. Washing the feet every night, self-service or full service, none of that Spanish shit on TV, just football, etc. You could learn a lot from them. Sometimes we have picnics and my son-in-law brings his family (they have three sons) and his relatives.

Every once in a while he brings his friends over. Even the rats run for cover when those kids smoke up the village. My neighbours don’t dare come out for two days. I even got used to their music. It’s not so bad. Especially Šaban Šaulič and that Kuje Mujo konja po mjesecu, although it’s apparently pretty old. Now when one of my neighbours wants to bother me I just say we’re going to have a picnic and I have peace. Sometimes in the store as a joke I reach for the packaged čevapčiči. The nation’s eyes widen in fear; we’re going to have another picnic. In short, now I’m the king of the village.

Therefore:

Long live Bosnians! (wd 40 2013)

But nevertheless I believe that between dogmatism and productivity at least on some manifest level there is an important difference, which is also reflected in the methodological limitations, namely that they cannot be addressed using entirely the same tools. Burekalism poses as something relaxed, productive and open, but on the other hand it conceals a strict, closed orthodoxy. It claims to be insignificant, but the limitations that it invisibly constructs are themselves an indication of its power. A power that should not be underestimated. In the first place, these limitations concern the fact that burekalism determines, as we have seen, which things should be noticed and stated, and which should be silenced and ignored. This analysis of silence is however problematic and slippery, and is never a completely convincing and consistent task. It is difficult to say how much of a factor burekalism is to a particular silence, or whether it contributed anything at all. For example? In the book Slovenia gre naprej (Slovenia Moves On, i.e. Slovenia Qualifies), probably the most noteworthy book written during the time of the “Slovenia football fairytale” (after the Slovenian national football team’s “unbelievable” qualification for the
European Championships in 2000 in Belgium and the Netherlands and their “even more unbelievable” qualification for the World Cup in 2002 in Korea and Japan), the role of immigrants and their descendants is nearly completely ignored.

In 130 pages, in which the then-current members of the national side are presented, together with every conceivable bit of personal data, detail and points of interest, we find nearly nothing that would even hint at the fact that the fabulous “Slovenian” football team was composed in a large majority by the children of immigrants. Just one rather dull remark by Senad Tiganj, which appears to have been included in the text in order to present the footballer’s culinary tastes. We read: “/.../ among national cuisines he adores Montenegrin specialities. “My parents come from Montenegro, and I go back there every year and enjoy my grandmother’s cooking” (Splichal 2001, p. 111).

The silence resounds even louder in the ears in the following characterisation of Zinedine Zidane: “the French football magician of Algerian extraction” (Splichal 2001, p. 27). This example of course opens the floor to a series of other questions, which relate to the “nature” of the book, the (mega)event and other things. And these questions require a specific and precise treatment, for which there is neither time nor space here. However, we can ask one question: Is it possible that burekalism also had a hand in this silence about the descendants of immigrants?

Let’s stay on the football pitch for a while. Burekalism can also be accused of an apparently insignificant, minor distortion of spelling. As Peter Stankovič (2002) noted, the last names of footballers from immigrant families are as a rule spelled with a hard č [“ch”]. (Many last names in the Serbo-Croatian speaking area of former Yugoslavia end in “ić”, with a soft “ch”.) From a practical aspect this is understandable, since the letter č is not part of the Slovenian alphabet. But in view of the fact that the names of other athletes from the west who play on teams in Slovenia are spelled correctly in the original – i.e. (in some cases) with letters that are not in the Slovenian alphabet – something else is at work here, as Stankovič points out.

Now let’s move for a moment from football to language, the Slovene language, arguably the central element of Slovene nationalism, the central element of the exclusion and constitution of the Other, and a frequent tool of burekalism – a concept which was not named lightly after the most scrutinised immigrant in Slovenia (although to a great degree is already assimilated). In the “Free [online] Dictionary of Living Slovene” (Razvezani Jezik), burek is among other ways defined as follows:
In the vernacular burek also means an idiot or an incompetent. Example: “You really are a bunch of bureks!” Of course this offensive use of the word includes more or less concealed chauvinist or racist content; burek in this sense implies a stupid and incompetent southerner, a person from the Balkans or an Oriental (Anon.).

The great majority of users of this phraseme are probably unaware of this “concealed chauvinist or racist content”. In some cases, for instance among certain (secondary school) peer groups, the phraseme can even be a term of endearment (see Mlekuž 2013, 2015). However, there is no doubt that the phraseme is not a term of endearment in the song “Ti si burek” [You’re a Burek], by the polka-pop group Trio Genialci. In the group’s most popular video (and most popular song judging by the number of views), which first appeared on YouTube in 2008, a well-dressed professional Slovene businesswoman comes home and finds her immigrant husband, a “čifur”, a “Bosanc”, according to his accent probably a Bosnian, on the couch, in a wife-beater and tracksuit pants, with a beer and the remote in his hand, feet on the table, football on the telly, a child needing a change of nappies in the corner and her husband’s brother also on the couch, also with a beer in his hand. As she kicks him out of the house, she sings the refrain:

You’re a burek, a burek squared
and instead of me, put a rope around your neck.
You’re a burek, a burek cubed
but why did you put me on the spot this time / take all your junk and screw off.
(Trio Genialci 2008)

Bite after bite ... Will burekalism ever be satisfied?

Through burekalism – Slovenian orientalist and nationalist discourse – Slovenes emphasise, constitute, and essentialise differentiation and produce complacence. However, the objects of this differentiation and complacence are immigrants and their descendants. Burekalism is therefore a place where power encroaches into processes of typification and signification, it is a discourse, a style with a will to power, which speaks of Slovenes as lords and of immigrants as serfs.

And why in fact do Slovenes require the constitution, or as Said would say “production”, of immigrants as others; why are burekalised immigrants and their descendants most likely the most profound and most frequently appearing Slovenian expression of the other; why are these social marginals so symbolically central? Because, to put it roughly, they want to increase
the “strength and identity of [their] European [Slovenian] culture, by setting it off against the Orient [the Balkans, the South, the burek] as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 1978, p. 15).

Finally, after this coarse response, we shall attempt to answer the question posed in the subheading: will burekalism ever be satisfied? It will be satisfied, or it will cease to exist, when the epigram – one of the best-known “Slovenian” graffiti – “Burek? Nein danke”\(^{13}\) is replaced by something else. Something else? How about “Europe? Nein danke”. Or even better, “Burek? Ja bitte!”

(Translated by Peter Altshul.)

\(^{13}\) It was first seen in the second half of 1980s in the old town core of Ljubljana and since then has been copied repeatedly in various forms (graffiti, media, scientific etc. articles, advertisements etc.).
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Swedish “exceptionalism” and the integration of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s: Acceptance and strategies of citizenship

Branka Likić-Brborić and Li Bennich-Björkman

This chapter addresses the socioeconomic and political integration of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who came to Sweden in the 1990s and have shown a strong capacity for integration. Against the background of this integration “success”, the study presents the Swedish policy model for the integration of immigrants in comparison with the results of wider research, which sets out to identify institutional and individual factors influencing the socioeconomic integration and political acculturation of now well-integrated migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina who came to Sweden from war-torn former Yugoslavia in 1990s. The chapter draws on a qualitative analysis of biographically-oriented interviews with a selected number of well-educated informants characterized by successful economic and political integration. We differentiate between groups of economically integrated individuals on the one hand and groups of individuals actively integrated in the Swedish party politics on the other. Consequently, we explore the impact of institutional conditions, integration policies, and individual strategies for integration in economic and political life, and the respective extent and quality of political and socio-economic integration.

In the first section of the chapter we address various understandings of the concept of integration in general and as a policy field in particular, as well as its relation to wider institutional frameworks that shape citizenship and frame migrants’ identities and integration strategies. In the next section, following the short presentation of the Swedish integration model and its development, we provide a brief background of the refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and the path of their asylum-seeking in Sweden.

1 The Chapter is a part of a larger comparative project ‘Citizens at Heart’ that investigates the impact of variations in welfare regimes and political institutions on the processes of migrant integration in Sweden, Germany, and Great Britain. The research project is financed by the Swedish Research Council.
den. While these sections are based on previous studies (Lemaitre 2007; Bevelander 2011; Povrzanović Frykman 2012) the subsequent two sections present our research results on the socioeconomic and political integration of the selected interviewees and their respective sense of belonging. In the final discussion we summarize the findings and assess the Swedish integration model in relation to the institutional framework for citizenship and its subjective dimension.

**Immigrants’ integration: citizenship, multiculturalism and belonging**

Integration is a contested concept that has been used in the literature to cover everything from “objective” indicators focusing on the labour market, formal citizenship or housing patterns, to subjective feelings of empowerment and belonging (Marshall 1964; Brubaker 1992). According to Adrian Favell (2003, 2013) the term “integration” has been widely used by European policy makers and in comparative research in spite of being criticized for its functionalism, narrow focus on the nation state and implicit goal of immigrants’ acculturation into host country national values. He differentiates between policy measures aimed at immigrants’ integration ranging from elementary legal and social protection to citizenship rights and the promotion of anti-discrimination and multiculturalism, on the one hand, and the wider concept of integration that encompasses social change, on the other. Depending on the nationally embedded or ideologically envisioned understanding of “integration” and its endpoint, other concepts have been used to denote the process, such as assimilation, acculturation, inclusion etc. Critical scholars have coined the concept of “incorporation” in order to avoid an understanding of the process in terms of a normative end-state (Bader 1997). Without doubt, these terms have proved to have different meanings according to related and shifting understandings of citizenship cum multiculturalism.

Although Western democracies embrace “unitary” citizenship that entitles all members of a political community to equal socio-economic, political and legal rights (Kymlicka 2012) they adopt different versions of this model of citizenship and different ways to manage immigrant and minority groups, sometimes depending on their national welfare regimes. On one side of the spectrum we have France that has, in line with her constitutional secularism and civic individualism, pursued assimilation policies of migrant groups disregarding race and ethnicity. On the other side we have the UK liberal model of citizenship, which has been characterised by an integration policy based on multiculturalism and comprehensive race
legislation. There is also a gap between Germany’s citizenship law that has been, until recent reforms, predominantly based on German descent (*jus sanguinis*) and rather restrictive naturalisation *cum* dual citizenship rules, coupled with striving for social integration in accordance with the corporate conservative welfare model and Great Britain’s liberally influenced model that focuses on economic integration and the provision of legal rights and basic social rights to immigrants (Angenent 1999; Koopmans & Statham 2000; Borevi 2002). We have also the Swedish “consensual social democratic welfare model” that has early institutionalised active integration policies, multiculturalism and simplified naturalization. In terms of political systems the British majoritarian election system with its great emphasis on personal votes and the Swedish proportional counterpart with its practically party-controlled list are miles apart, although they are both democratic. Regardless of these nationally mediated differences, all these models have recently been challenged both by the pressures of economic globalization, economic crisis and new migrations that require state retrenchment, bringing forth demands for the curtailing of social citizenship and multiculturalism. The related crisis of national integration models has been met by the recent turn to the Right, nationalism and anti-immigration political discourses. Furthermore, the issue of the appropriateness of the integration paradigm has been raised, not only for non-European migrants, but also for globalized “native” citizens and EU “free movers” embracing transnational identities (Favell 2013). At the same time, the EU has, as a part of the pursuit of a European identity and social model, and a response to migration-related emergencies and populist responses, initiated a common EU-level integration policy combined with a participative model of citizenship (Collett 2006).

Regardless of these conceptual and political inconsistencies, integration still remains an important concept, as both an academic and a policy issue. In this chapter we see integration as complex processes of social transformation and cultural adaptation that are set in a broader framework of migration. These processes of mutual ethnic and identity transformation involve migrants’ interaction with both host and home communities, which simultaneously generates interdependence with new societies, patterns of disadvantage and insight into cultural difference and “otherness” (Schierup & Ålund 1987). This broader understanding of integration emphasises migrants’ interaction with different historically and culturally framed institutional contexts of host societies, specifically

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2 The 1999/2000 Citizenship Law enabled German citizenship based on the principle of birthplace and the 2014 Law on Dual Citizenship has somewhat relaxed the rules for dual citizenship even for non EU/Swiss citizens.
mediated by national welfare states and related concepts of citizenship. Previous studies (Penninx & Martiniello 2004, p. 142; POLITIS 2008, p. 34) have underlined that the interaction of immigrants with the host society and its institutions is fundamentally asymmetric, and that the host society and its policy play a more important role for the integration outcome than the immigrants themselves. However, the recent policy trend across EU member states tends to shift responsibility for immigrant integration from the state to migrants themselves (Joppke 2004).

From the policy perspective several dimensions of integration have been identified, such as: socio-economic, legal and political, as well as cultural; and a number of respective integration indicators have been created as objective measures of integration (Castles et al. 2003; Entzinger & Biezeveld 2003). In this, the subjective side of immigrant integration has received less consideration. From a subjective perspective it is important to study migrants’ own resettlement experiences, expectations, individual strategies and interaction with host and home societies, together with their articulation of individual and collective identities. These experiences, according to Maja Korac (2001, p. ii), need to be studied in order to contribute to the development of integration policies that recognize migrants as social actors and provide “space for agency and the functional adjustment of their attitudes and skills necessary for entering the receiving society”. These experiences are provided through migrants’ participation in various everyday social practices. Analytically, these can be understood and organized in both spatial and time dimensions. Concerning the former, spatial dimension, we employ, in line with Bourdieu-inspired analyses (Schierup and Ålund 1987; Bader 1997) the concept of “social fields”.

The “social fields” are different spaces of social interaction characterized by distinct common practices. Various synonyms such as “arenas”, “sectors”, and “spheres” have been used to denote the differentiated fields of horizontal integration/incorporation that migrant individuals and groups are strategically and simultaneously involved in, such as sports, education, work and occupations, politics, family etc. For example, Schierup and Ålund (1987, p. 29) identify several social sub-fields of ethnic transformation such as: work, community relationships, local politics, and internal domestic relationships. In this study we identify three: economic and occupational; legal and political; and socio-cultural fields and discuss migrants’ own understandings of respective sub-fields, social and individual practices and integration strategies, including their transformative impacts.

Bringing forth the subjective perspective on integration processes implies taking into consideration the type of migrants, categorized in terms
of migration details, such as exit and entrance, specific socio-demographic profile, as well as education, skills and occupational background. In this study of war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who arrived to Sweden in 1990s, we focus on their integration strategies, experiences and related understanding of “successful integration”. Our perspective on refugee-ship is what we call existential and inner-oriented, and we suggest here that using the insights of the well-known Austrian psychologist Viktor Frankl, who established logo-therapy (meaning-making therapy), in analysing the process of “integration” is a fruitful way of proceeding. Arriving as a refugee in a new country, in this case Sweden, throws the individual into a state of “existential vacuum”. Integrating is a process by which existential meaning is re-found and re-covered, opening the mind to more of a present- and future-orientation and thereby opening to the new country and the challenges of a life there. In this life trajectory, an important turning point involves a decision which shifts mental orientation towards the host society. Sometimes, as we will see, this orientation co-existed with a wish to live in two realities, the home and the host society. Sometimes it meant, at least temporarily, to close the door to the world left behind and in that way to start anew and try to encapsulate the memories. The decision we are referring to, this turning point, we call acceptance. Acceptance is existential in nature, it provides the key to integration at a more psychological level, and is probably intimately related to what Frankl calls the “will to meaning” (Frankl 1996/1959). Kugelberg (2005) has studied Chilean and Kurdish refugees who became politically active in Sweden where they continued their struggle directed towards the homeland through the channels of Swedish politics. In Kugelberg’s study, a similar decision point is also identified.

However, globalization, EU enlargement, multiculturalism and transnational trends have the potential for closing the physical and even the cultural distances between home and host countries. These trends affect the processes of integration and related acculturation and their transformative impacts both on host societies and migrants’ values, identities and sense of belonging. Korać-Sanderson (in this volume) argues that the concept of “emplacement” may adequately denote “the processes that shape how newcomers become actively engaged citizens and how they develop a sense of belonging to the new society and become “of place””. She emphasizes migrants’ individual and group strategies of ‘place’ and ‘home-making’ as contextualized in space and time. In the following section we present the Swedish integration policy framework and citizenship model in a historical perspective, in order to contextualize Bosnian refugees’ experiences of their realization. In the
following section we present the Swedish integration policy framework and citizenship model in a historical perspective, in order to contextualize Bosnian refugees’ experiences of their realization.

Swedish integration model

The Swedish “consensual social democratic welfare model” institutionalised active integration policies early on. According to this model, the immigrants are entitled to generous universal welfare benefits and access to citizenship rights. These entitlements enable the so-called de-commodification of the labour market (Esping-Andersen 1990), as well as a high level of political integration. It is not surprising that Sweden scores extremely well in various rankings that use indices to assess the advance of multiculturalism and integration policies across countries. The MIPEX III ranking (Migrant Integration Policy Index) (Huddleston et al. 2011) and the Multiculturalism Policy Index - MPI (Banting & Kymlicka 2013) are two examples. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), a composite measure of integration in seven different policy areas, ranging from labour market and family reunion, to political participation, ranks Sweden top because of its commitment to multiculturalist policies, equal treatment, and voluntary rights-based forms of civic integration.

Sweden has come a long way since the guest workers’ model of immigration, which was put in place in the 1950s and 1960s in order to meet high labour market demands related to the high pace of industrialization in the country. In the 1970s, it became obvious that guest workers, mostly coming from Finland and Southern Europe, particularly from the former Yugoslavia, had chosen to settle. When labour immigration decreased following the manufacturing crisis of the 1970s, it was replaced by a persistently increasing refugee immigration that peaked at the beginning of the 1990s; 84,000 asylum seekers from war-stricken Iraq, former Yugoslavia and several African countries were received during 1992 (Lemaitre 2007). Since 1985, the Swedish Immigration Board had responsibility for the reception of refugees, the processing of asylum applications, and the integrating of those who have obtained the residence permit. The integration model required the relocation of refugees to municipalities in line with dispersal and housing policy, and a two-year long introduction program financed by the state and administered by the municipalities. The standard introduction program included Swedish language education (Swedish for Immigrants - SFI), preparing the immigrants for labour market integration through recognition of qualifications and vocational training, facilitated by local employment offices. After three years in Sweden,
immigrants obtain the right to vote on local and regional elections, and after five years, they are entitled to Swedish citizenship according to the liberal and voluntary model of civic integration. In 2001, by the Act of Citizenship, Sweden affirmed the informal acceptance of dual citizenship.

While immigrants with a residence permit or citizenship are awarded generous universal welfare benefits and/or citizenship rights, the administrative integration model has not been able to counter discriminatory bureaucratic practices, nor labour market and housing segmentation and discrimination, aggravated by the economic crisis in the 1990s. A huge inflow of refugees and asylum seekers in the 1990s, in the context of the most severe economic downturn since the Second World War and rocketing unemployment, particularly among foreign-born people, challenged almost all components of the integration model. Persistent unemployment of immigrants, ethnic discrimination in the labour market, and populist responses to migration-related emergencies caused a shift in public attitudes to the issues of migration, multiculturalism, and labour market integration. In 1997, the Swedish government issued the bill *Sverige, framtiden och mångfalden – från invandrarpolitik till integrationspolitik* [Sweden, the Future and Diversity: from Immigration Policy to Integration Policy] (Proposition 1997/98:16) that formulated policy goals in terms of integration and multiculturalism. The shift from immigration towards integration was also reinforced by the establishment of the Swedish Integration Board, an agency responsible for pursuing the stated goals of integration and multiculturalism.

The post-1997 integration policy has had some results, such as the inclusion of immigrants in political life and state institutions, creating new immigrant elites, as well as keeping the rise of xenophobia and populism in check. However, critical studies maintain that this policy has not been able to offset a discriminatory labour market and ethnic patterns of exclusion (Schierup, Hansen & Castles 2006). In 2003, the unemployment rates of the foreign-born people in Sweden remained at 11 per cent, among the highest in the OECD countries. Employers have consistently disregarded foreign education and work experience, while the recruitment practices relied on social networks and connections, especially in the private sector (Lemaitre 2007).

Without doubt, “Swedish exceptionalism” i.e. Swedish formal integration policy as the most immigrant-friendly model in all the assessments of integration and multiculturalism policies in place, as well as positive public attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Eurobarometer 2009), needs to be scrutinized. There is a considerable gap between high scores in labour market policies for integration and the reality of higher unemployment
rates among immigrants, particularly young people. The rise of the Swedish Democrats, a populist and anti-immigration party, in the 2014 elections together with recent riots in the Stockholm suburb of Husby have seriously challenged the common perception of “Swedish exceptionalism” and sparked political and academic debates on citizenship, multiculturalism, inequalities, discrimination, and racism, including related rights and duties of immigrants in the Swedish welfare state (Schierup & Ålund in this volume). The debate was fuelled especially after Jasenko Selimović, the former State Secretary in the previous Swedish Ministry for Integration, used the “integration success” of the refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in support of an argument for Swedish immigrant integration policies as a role model.

Without doubt, war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina are the group most likely to integrate, in view of their educational background, and cultural similarities with native Swedish people. However, there is a need to engage with this discussion and examine critically the alleged success. By exploring their personal experiences with integration it is possible to scrutinize the Swedish model of integration beyond the “formal” framework of integration.

Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s

Between 1990 and 1995, almost 60,000 resettled refugees and asylum seekers received permanent residence permits in Sweden. By 2008, 80,000 people of Bosnian origin lived in Sweden, and some 50,000 obtained citizenship. According to STATIV (2007) Bosnians have been relatively more successful in labour market integration. A recent study maintains that “(i)ndividuals from Bosnia–Herzegovina, both males and females, have the highest odds of employment, compared to the other place of birth groups or admission status” (Bevelander 2011, p. 43). Close to a quarter of the immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina were university educated and almost half of the population had a secondary education. This lends support to earlier research on immigrant integration, which found that higher education enhances the probability of employment (Ekberg & Ohlson 2000).

However, this positive integration outcome has been questioned. Drawing on interviews with refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Maja Povranović Frykman (2012) claims that this rosy picture does not account for their “struggles for recognition” and insurmountable obstacles on the path of searching for a job. She points to deficiencies in
the implementation of the formal integration model and the significant role of “chance” and “connections”, which may both enable and hinder the possibilities of finding adequate employment. This especially applies in the case of individuals with university degrees in social sciences, law, and humanities, many of whom have lost hope of finding a job comparable to that in their homeland. Nevertheless, she also emphasizes how these people share the subjective satisfaction of life in Sweden, in spite of the lack of occupational recognition and the downward mobility. This feeling is nurtured by a reliance on the family, pride in one’s children’s achievements, and a comforting socialization, primarily amongst people with a shared exile experience, regardless of ethnic origin and new professional standing (Povrzanović Frykman 2012). However, these findings also need to be compared with the experiences of those individuals from Bosnia-Herzegovina who actually “made it”, that is, the individuals who attained occupational recognition and found their way into the Swedish economic and political life, in spite of the institutional and structural obstacles.

“Successful” economic integration and beyond

In order to acquire deeper insights into the process of and factors enabling integration we have used biographically oriented interviews with a selected number of well-educated informants characterized by “successful” economic and political integration. By “successful” we mean people who have been able to obtain a job comparable to their original educational profile and professional experience. We selected persons from Bosnia-Herzegovina who arrived in Sweden in the 1990s and were between twenty and forty years old on arrival, because their formative period of socialization was behind them. In selecting them we used personal contacts and snowball sampling. Fully aware of the need for representativeness, we have tried to cover a range of occupational profiles and several municipalities in a wide geographic area. Thus far we have interviewed twelve professionally successful individuals, four women (a dentist specialist, a construction engineer, a social worker, a biomedical engineer/agricultural studies) and eight men (a construction engineer/IT specialist, a high school teacher, an economist/warehouse supervisor, an economist/accountant, a chemical engineer/communal environment quality coordinator, an associate professor/researcher in chemistry, a doctoral student/writer, veterinarian/agriculture/chief of sales for the department of agricultural products). We also formed a focus group consisting of seven individuals (a lawyer, two university teachers, an MD, a psychologist, an architect, and
an economist) in order to brainstorm their experiences and understanding of the integration process. The themes addressed in the interviews included: background, perspectives on life, work and politics in former Yugoslavia, the experience of the war and journey to Sweden, understanding and experience of the Swedish asylum and integration model, economic and labour market integration, and political and socio-cultural integration. Our interviewees had different social, educational, and ethnic backgrounds, and were initially dispersed in municipalities ranging from the far north to the south of Sweden. They also pursued various paths of integration beyond those set by the functional, one-way integration measures provided by the state that were variably implemented across regions.

Challenging the integration system and the struggle for professional recognition

While all our informants appreciate that they were given the opportunity to apply for asylum in Sweden and eventually obtained it, they share frustration with the process that stripped them of identity and rights. After they had obtained a residence permit and regained their formal identity in the form of a personal number and identity card, they valued all the basic support received for housing, living expenses and language courses. However, they found that the administrative practices in the subsequent integration process were characterized by the lack of adequate information about their rights as well as discrimination which limited their professional aspirations towards integration in the labour market. Nevertheless, thanks to better language skills, as well as contacts and social networks, they were able to find the information and exercise the universal rights to health and child-care, education etc. guaranteed by the Swedish welfare state.

For example, a female dentist, S, who came to Sweden in her early thirties with two children, to be joined by her husband a couple of months later, has, years after completing her university diploma, succeeded in her professional ambition of obtaining a licence. Accordingly, she managed to get an adequate job and highly competitive specialist training. However, she reports she had to challenge many officially given directives concerning placement, kindergarten and education, as she found them discriminatory and stigmatizing. She also told us about her disappointment at the lack of support in her pursuit of professional recognition. When she arrived in Sweden the labour market was characterized by an excess of dentists. Hence her professional skills were not appreciated in the
beginning and she realized that her expectations that “you would be treated based on the kind of education you have” would not be realized. Hence she decided to repeat her university education from the beginning. In this pursuit both serendipity and planning played important roles. Meeting the right persons, professional peers within the university and profession who supported and guided her about how to cut corners, get some previous courses recognised and thus shorten her studies, made a great difference and facilitated her progress. Following Sweden’s EU accession in 1994 and an outflow of Swedish dentists to more lucrative jobs in Great Britain, demand for dentists dramatically changed, and it was quite easy to get a job.

Another even more downright de-qualifying case of stigmatizing and discriminatory formal integration practices is provided by a highly qualified construction engineer, who arrived in Sweden in his early thirties. M is today a highly respected business systems specialist working for an international IT company. When his social welfare administrator channelled him into what she claimed was an “appropriate course”, he was horrified to find that he had to study basic mathematics for a year in order to qualify for welfare support. Accordingly he continued coming to the school without attending classes. Instead he was given the chance to use a computer. When finally, through personal contacts with other Bosnians, he found, applied and qualified for an adequate course in programming, the same welfare officer still did not support him. By that time, he was armed with language skills and information on his rights, and was able to fight the bureaucracy and make a powerful case. He contacted the Head of the Migration Board Office and told him about his background, education and the mathematics course. He threatened that he would go directly to the Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet [daily newspapers] and assured him that I would fight to publish the story of the way they treat people who are educated.

He emphasized his “readiness” and determination to fight for professional recognition, which finally led to formal support for taking the course. After doing so he was given a job as a business systems consultant, which opened the door to a successful career and a “normal life”.

While these two cases illustrate apparently discriminatory aspects of the integration policy implementation, other stories bear witness to inventive choices and strategies individuals engaged in to deal with the exclusionary immigrant identity, on the one hand, and to restate their occupational identity on the other.
Some of our informants were lucky enough to gain access to specially tailored educational/training/re-qualifying programs for highly educated migrants. Such programs were created for economists, teachers, social workers, psychologists and medical staff. For example, U and his wife T were able to access the program for economists by chance and through connections. Thanks to his wife’s engagement as an interpreter for the commune, they obtained the necessary information about the recognition of education, courses and programs. A Swedish communal representative, Swedish language teacher and job centre officer together provided a personal support network that stretched far beyond their official responsibility. Although U had not obtained his bachelor’s degree in Economics in Bosnia-Herzegovina because of the war, he told us that he was not ready to repeat his study in Economics and opted for a shorter qualifying program. This involved a well-organized move from the north of Sweden 700 kilometres southward to Örebro, a municipality where they finally settled and started a new life. Following the completion of the course, he got a traineeship and finally employment at an auditing company. Later he moved to work for one of his clients and there advanced to the position of chief accountant. He told us, that his wife also “got her traineeship, but it did not lead her anywhere”.

Alternative paths to jobs for newcomers with degrees in Economics and Law were created by state programs that included both education for and trainee positions at Skatteverket (the Swedish Tax Authority). Our informant MA, who was a chief economist in Bosnia-Herzegovina, found out about this programme via Swedish contacts he had made through music and sport associations. Both he and his wife, also an economist, applied, but only one of them could be admitted. Since he was about to get another, less demanding job as a warehouse supervisor, they decided that his wife would go on the programme. While she has had a highly qualified job at Skatteverket since then, he is still working at the warehouse and feels rather frustrated by inadequate career advancement due to the lack of recognition of his Bosnian university education and work experience. Yet he is actively involved in trade union organization, music and sport associations.

Another model for recognizing foreign education was developed in collaboration with universities in the second half of the 1990s. For example, Uppsala and Stockholm Universities offered various exclusively tailored university courses for medical staff, psychologists, biomedical engineers and teachers. One of our informants, a graduate social worker B, tells a story about contacts, luck and individual persistence in finding adequate education and training. A friend who as a trainee at an Employment
Office found out about the university courses for social workers of immigrant background in Uppsala, alerted her to this opportunity. She was able to convince the Employment Office that the course was what I needed and I had the profile of a social worker. They sent me to the examination in Uppsala which was the prerequisite for admission to the course. There were five of us from Bosnia taking the course and the others were immigrants from all over the world, from five continents, and generally we all got a job after the course. And it was a very good way to enter the labor market and in Sweden there was a demand for that profile.

Taking the course required B and her husband to move to Uppsala. Later on via her new contacts even her husband LJ got his first job.

Of our other informants and focus group participants, a female psychologist, a female biomedical engineer, a medical doctor and a high school teacher also used this path to occupational recognition and adequate jobs. Finally, several of our informants decided to repeat their university education.

After taking several low skilled jobs in agriculture, Z decided to retake his agricultural degree in Uppsala, followed by a Master's degree, which led him to a senior position in a Swedish agricultural organization. ZS, a male lawyer enrolled in a Law Studies programme at Stockholm University, which led to a prestigious job. SR, a female construction engineer who decided to repeat her studies at the Royal Institute of Technology, is today one of the few female Group Leaders in the Swedish construction sector. FD, a chemical engineer, after unsuccessfully searching for jobs via the job centre in a little municipality, was about to return to Bosnia together with his brother and parents. But after his diploma was recognized he was admitted to a Master's degree programme, followed by a doctoral programme and became an Associate Professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Studies. All these cases confirm that foreign university education, while usually recognized formally, is seldom recognized by employers; our informants understood and acted on this.

In sum, regardless of the above mentioned differences, all our informants shared several characteristics. First, they made the decision to learn Swedish and integrate early on. Secondly, they were ambitious and determined to pursue professional recognition and, in that quest, they strongly challenged the integration measures whenever they felt discriminated against. Thirdly, they did not take at face value the officially provided information on the rights, responsibilities, and supporting structures.
Actually, most of our interviewees point to the weak support and misleading information received from Employment Service officers. According to their testimonies they had been advised not to pursue the path of professional recognition and further education. Instead, they were told, or compelled, to give up their quest and take low-skilled jobs or inadequate vocational education, which they thought of as time-wasting. Fourthly, they used social networks, both ethnic and Swedish, to gather all relevant information about available jobs, vocational training, and especially tailored high quality educational programs and internships. In this networking process, “chance” or “luck” seems important, for example, meeting the right kind of Swedish person or their already well-established countrymen, who provided information, advice, support, and job references when needed. They joined various Swedish associations, music, and sports clubs early, which were shown to be important means of integration through socializing with Swedish people. Fifthly, once they recognized an opportunity, they had the capacity to persuade employment and/or social service officers - and even make strong demands, if necessary - to help them towards their chosen goal. Last, but not least, for fear of being disqualified by the administrators of the introduction program, or at a job centre (Arbetsförmedling), our interviewees also decided to take advantage of the Swedish universal system of high school and university education, including educational and housing support and to use the welfare system and citizenship rights towards obtaining professional recognition and the realization of “occupational citizenship”. We find “occupational citizenship”, understood as the pursuit of “work rights” based on identity and solidarity and informed by professional status and educational background (Standing 2009), as the essential “emplacement” strategy.

Political and social integration: citizenship and belonging

In spite of the institutional obstacles to finding a job, successful individuals feel economically integrated and this leads to political integration but the initial trust of the political system declines with time as knowledge of the system increases (Cf. Strömblad & Adman 2010). Overall, all our informants appreciate the Swedish welfare and corporatist labour market regime and emphasize the need to “start working as soon as possible, to pay taxes, and to engage in this society”. They are well informed and vote for parties, without regard for the ethnicity of the party representatives, many of whom are active members of trade unions. Most of our informants pragmatically applied for Swedish citizenship as soon as possible, even if that initially involved renouncing citizenship of Bosnia-Herzegovina.
Only two of them, claiming a strong Bosniak identity, waited until Sweden formally accepted dual citizenship. This brings us to the issue of belonging and social integration.

When asked if they felt socially integrated, our informants gave varied answers. At one end, individuals such as M, the above quoted IT specialist claimed that for him integration meant being able to live a normal family life while respecting the laws of the state. He actively engaged in the Association of Bosnia-Herzegovina and feels empowered, but not socially integrated. In spite of his initial struggle to get professional recognition, he is most positive about the Swedish integration model and thinks Swedish society is “super”.

At the other extreme we have a peculiar example of U, an economist who, through Swedish acquaintances, attended the “right” course, and proceeded to the “right” traineeship and the “right” job. He was our “luckiest” informant yet he feels he is “missing something”. He was especially disappointed by his co-workers’ comments when they found out his Bosniak background. An auditor said that had he known this he would not have hired him.

Not being fully professionally recognized hurt several of our interviewees. The lack of recognition of “occupational citizenship” also undermines their sense of belonging in Sweden. For example, S., the female dentist, has now experienced the “glass ceiling” in career advancement, defined by feminist researchers as a level above which you cannot rise without great difficulty, strife, and struggle. She states how this undermines her sense of belonging:

I thought when I started working in the general clinic, I had that feeling. But when I’ve moved to the new level, as a specialist, there is already a class society. […] That is what I began to feel after the progress in my career, career advancement in a way leading to, according to my feeling, to a decline in the social integration. If you think that the integration process is to hang out privately, then I am not integrated, because I do not hang out with Swedes.

Similar sentiments concerning career advancement were expressed in the focus group interviews.

Another seemingly crucial issue was the way informants’ children are treated by the system, especially in school, where children with foreign names are taught a “lighter” version of Swedish language in the name of equality, without notifying parents. Informant F, who is an associate professor and researcher and achieved this position by taking up university education and PhD studies in Sweden, makes this point:
Well, it bothers me now when I have kids, just because the two of them do not have Swedish names, but they go to the Swedish kindergarten, go to the Swedish school, and when they play they talk Swedish. Even so they are called immigrants. It can affect me if they experience these problems.

Last but not least, there are cases where being Swedish is understood as a platform for multiculturalism, Europeanism, and internationalism. One of our youngest informants, a writer and a doctoral student, stated that he was initially “totally in love with Sweden”, but has come to appreciate international contacts and multiculturalism, stating that “living between two cultures (or more than two) can be very positive”. When asked about his understanding of integration, he responded:

It needs to be connected with some kind of, what I would call emotional integration, which means that a man finds his place in this new society, and that this new society, for example, brings about nearly the same amount of emotion as the old society; I think that most of us are struggling with that, but, in political terms, I feel as an equal citizen of this country.

Our informants confirm the results of the study by Povrzanović Frykman (2012) with regard to socialization with predominantly fellow countrymen with whom they share similar experiences of asylum seeking, and common cultural frames originating in popular music, films, jokes, and culture from the former Yugoslavia. They all use the Internet and follow politics both in Sweden and the Balkans, and all help their families in the homeland. However, their sense of identity and belonging has developed beyond the duality between the host and home countries, towards some kind of transnationalism (see Roland Kostić in this volume). So many of our informants expect to spend some time in Bosnia-Herzegovina after retirement, but returning to Bosnia permanently seems not to be an option. By choice, this group seems less socially integrated than the group of interviewees who are political activists. This issue, which demonstrates that different integration fields call for and engender different identities, is addressed in the next section.

Politically integrated refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina

Our study pays specific attention to individuals from Bosnia-Herzegovina who had “made it” into the official Swedish political system. Were they different in any sense from the otherwise successfully integrated who constitute our general population, those who had established themselves professionally but were not politically active in Sweden? In the following
section, we do not focus on this comparison, however, but instead try to portray this sub-group through a lens that regards life as a balance between past-present-future-orientation. Our sample was Bosnians who arrived as refugees and at the time of the interview held various positions at the national, regional, or municipal level. They have either been elected to political bodies by appearing high enough on the party lists, or by being selected as party members to sit on particular boards and councils at the local level. They are a mix of professional politicians. One is a member of parliament but others are “leisure time” politicians; they are politically active but also hold down an ordinary job. The respondents were five men and five women living in the south, west, and central part of Sweden. All but one arrived as adult refugees from war-ridden Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 90s. One respondent, B. was born in Sweden of Bosnian parents and therefore has different experiences and motivations. Six were social-democrats, two belong to the “Moderates” (the largest centre/liberal party that started out as conservative in the early 20th century), and two are “Centrists” (for a long time, this party was called the “Rural” or “Farmers” party, but changed its name in the 1970s). The refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina arrived in Sweden in 1992 and 1993 at a time when the growing multi-ethnic character of Swedish society was beginning to show more distinctly. This paved the way for the populist and immigration-negative party “New Democracy” to enter parliament in 1991. A liberal-centrist government held power from 1991-1994 but the long-time ruling Social-Democrat party was voted back in, in the 1994 elections, following one of the worst economic crises Sweden has experienced. During the 1990s, the established political parties grew more actively aware of the need to attract immigrant voters and to include as activists people with non-Swedish backgrounds. It is thus interesting to investigate further the recruitment processes, expectations, and issues and thoughts on representation that immigrant politicians entertain. These people would top the scale for being politically integrated; the decision to engage in politics in Sweden in our view signals both a rootedness in the Swedish society that is translated into a will to work for the development of the country as well as indirectly pointing to perceptions of Swedish-ness as being at least partly-politically defined. While this certainly used to be the case; studies have shown that party identification in Sweden used to be high and membership frequent (Pettersson et al. 2000), but in the 2000s this pattern rapidly withered. The perception of Sweden as a political society however seems to linger and affects the behaviour of individuals who try to understand the codes of the new society.
Acceptance and turning towards the present

The people we interviewed had all, more or less made a distinct decision which shifted their mental orientation towards the Swedish society. Sometimes, as we will see, this orientation co-existed with a wish to live in two realities, the Bosnian and the Swedish. Sometimes it meant, at least temporarily, closing the door on the world left behind and in that way starting anew while trying to encapsulate the memories. We have called this decision, this turning point, “acceptance”. Fleeing and leaving everything behind seems to create at first a state of denial, of believing that this is just a short interlude, and soon everything will return to normal. To accept the situation and what has happened to you, to accept the fate of staying on in Sweden, and to accept or at least find a strategy that helps you cope with the losses, is a process that almost all of our respondents can recall. This tells us that they have transcended denial. Such acceptance is evidently not restricted to these politically engaged Bosnians, but to embrace Swedish politics suggests an orientation towards the future in this country, which makes their acceptance more accentuated and important to understand. An initial belief recalled by many was that the war would be over quickly and that people would then be able to return:

We thought we should stay a year or so and then be able to go back. I kept thinking, in 15 days we are going home. When I arrived in Sweden I thought that this will be solved in some weeks, but it took 15 years (Interview V).

G remembers how the turning point, the point when she started to accept her situation started with a journey back to her beloved Sarajevo. She was shocked. Where once there had been her children’s kindergarten there was now a mosque at a time when people had nothing. “After that week I knew that I would not be going back. It was not my city anymore”.

Acceptance could be quite an incremental process. V describes how acceptance “creeps up” on her through her children’s life and their getting rooted in Sweden. Acceptance is a change of orientation, of attitude which gives living a direction again. That change of orientation is facilitated and provoked by certain circumstances. In these recollections it is often the arrival of children which creates the motivating circumstance. Kugelberg’s (2005) informants also testify to how children actively affect future-orientation. Why is acceptance so crucial? First of all, it releases mental energy which can focus on tackling the demands of living in a new and unknown society: to learning a new language, getting a job, becoming acquainted with unfamiliar social codes and norms, finding a place of one’s own in the new setting.
Interviewee A said,

I have thought now I am here; now I will make the best of my life here. Many refugees find it hard to accept this. Many live a decade, or even twenty years, in the hope that they will return (to their native country) before they realize that they will not be going back. And then maybe, after a decade, they will start to integrate (Interview A).

All humans live simultaneously in the past, the future, and the present but the balance between these “orientations” shifts over life. As a young person a larger part of life is oriented towards the future, but for the older person the past commands increasing attention while the future is shrinking in size. Having children which usually happens in mid-life (30-50) is probably the most present-oriented period in the life trajectory for the majority. Not only chronological aspects however affect life orientation and the balance. Certain situations probably affect this as well. Living as a refugee (or an immigrant more generally) is a highly demanding situation. It requires a certain present-mindedness maybe even more than usual, while the temptation to live with the past overshadowing the present is constantly there. Acceptance may thus be the key by which the present can be accepted more actively, since it reduces the focus on the past (and the obvious and painful loss of it) to more manageable proportions.

Several respondents mentioned that getting a job was the crucial turning point in their new lives in Sweden. Acceptance can actively be promoted by getting work in the new country. A job brings other things, not only belonging to the host society much more visibly, and obtaining a structure and colleagues, but also working actually makes one contribute to the common good by paying taxes. “When you have a job or a business, you are integrated. I pay taxes and so I am Swedish”, emphasized a male Bosniak politician, who also is a successful entrepreneur. For one respondent, citizenship is even equal to paying taxes. It is noticeable that a job, as a major road to integration, not only has a psychological and affective side, in that the immigrants meet people of the host society and feel themselves worthy, but also embodies a distinctly concrete aspect. Through taxes they move from having rights, to also having the right to demands for themselves and for others. This is an important transition.

Getting involved in politics frequently happens through the workplace or through an association. The literature on recruitment often mentions being invited to a party meeting as a common path to recruitment (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995). This is also a quite common way for our respondents to become involved. Thus, the work-place exposes people to contacts.
I got a job at the school as a teaching assistant, and there I met a person who was active in the party. She was a social-democrat and I talked to her about my opinions, and about how I believed that the society should be, and she thought that my opinions suited their ideology really well. She invited me to attend a meeting with the social-democratic association where I, for the first time, felt at home (Interview V).

One of our respondents, R, described how he became drawn into political work by the activities of the Center party because it was heavily engaged in attracting the votes of immigrants. But again, to be able to be recruited at all, there must be existential acceptance in the first place. The respondents themselves come back to this mental turning point as so crucial, and also suggest that this is what made them “succeed” and move forward.

Political engagement as future-orientation

We have pointed to acceptance as a key to a transition into present-orientation from what could be a combination of past and future orientation directed towards the home country. For many, the process stops there. Acceptance is a fact, whether or not the past and the losses play a part in current orientation. If the future is included in the picture as well, it is indirectly and usually through the children. Their lives, and the conditions that they encounter, represent the future. In our overall study, we found many respondents who testified to such a pattern. However, in this sub-group, we would claim that the future is not only indirectly but directly incorporated into life orientations through active political engagement. Political engagement at a level where you take on the responsibility to represent a party and indirectly the voters, manifests a willingness to take on the future of the new country, to try to influence and change.

V reflects on her way into political activity in Sweden as a counter-reaction to her life in Bosnia where she had been societally concerned but not actively engaged.

And I thought, afterwards when I came here, that if we who had a university education had been active in Bosnia, maybe the war could have been avoided (Interview V).

The “lone wolf” E registered himself into the party of choice without needing the personal push that a contact at work or in an association
provides but out of an urge to counteract the social-democratic dominance that surprised and disappointed him in the new country:

I was so disappointed; it was absolutely not my dream. It did not match with my expectations about Sweden. I had completely different expectations.

Asked why he joined the Moderates he said it was a simple choice, “It was the opposite of the social democrats” (Interview E). Respondent D proved herself to be very active and visible within the municipality in the town where she lives. She started a company and built up connections with Bosnia. She arranged a visit to Sarajevo and Banja Luka for politicians and journalists. By the 2002 elections she had been asked to be on the party lists for both the municipality and the national parliament.

The “hostage” theory states that parties legitimize themselves in the eyes of the multi-cultural voters by recruiting a certain number of persons of “minority background” for symbolic reasons (Rickne & Folke 2011). Does this seem to be true in the case of political activists coming from Bosnia-Herzegovina? Except for the Swedish-born Bosniak, and, again, notably so, almost all respondents describe the issues they work with as freely chosen out of interest and, in several cases, clearly related to occupational competence, not ethnic background. Engagement in helping Bosnia is not self-evident either:

I have only recently started to work to benefit Bosnia. I want and feel that I have become active in the Social-democrats not because I want to do something for Bosnia but because I want to do something for Sweden. I want Sweden to remain a country built on solidarity where everyone gets a chance (Interview J.).

Some are also clearly opposed to having specific immigrant-sections within the parties. However, the second-generation of immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina again provides a different perspective which, to a much greater extent, supports the “hostage” theory. Being of a different ethnic background definitely puts one in an integration-and-immigration box, which

is the most important draw-back of all. It is a structural perception - not racism - but nevertheless a structural perception that people with a certain background should be preoccupied with those issues

the Swedish-born Bosniak claims. It might be that the glass ceiling still exists in the sense that one can move high if, as an immigrant, one accepts
and embraces the party’s need for “hostages” or mascots – otherwise they encounter mechanisms of resistance as they start to climb. That the future, or the present rather than the past, is predominant in the political engagement is demonstrated by the fact that identity as an immigrant is not a major focus; it is not who you are but what you have and can become – professional identity – that the Bosnians themselves chose to discuss.

Whom do the Bosnian activists regard as those they primarily represent? The picture is ambiguous, although most of the respondents rejected the idea of being the representatives of Bosnians, or of immigrants in general. “I do not represent the immigrants”, one respondent emphasizes,

I represent those who want cultural issues high up on the agenda – I cannot just represent Bosnians in Sweden, nor pursue just the issues regarding the Bosnian culture in Sweden.

There are, however, those who do think of themselves in terms of immigrant representatives:

I am representing immigrant women. I do think I represent immigrants and in some places you are allowed to say that.

A single respondent who has secured a seat in the national parliament explains that


to be nominated to the parliamentary list for an “electable” seat is not an easy thing, not everybody likes you… but I am not the sort of person who wants to see difficulties or obstacles.

This self-description may stand as a common denominator for the personalities in this sub-group. With few exceptions, they embrace their political environment and consider it supportive. This contrasts starkly with Kugelberg’s study, where she finds that the immigrant politicians encounter various forms of exclusion at the every-day level (2005). “I never encountered difficulties – people have pushed me, elected me, and have not had anyone hindered me”, one female interviewee states.

Respondent D echoes this when she exclaims that she

never has met any resistance from the comrades in the party, they instead helped me. I had expected … they would think “what is that immigrant girl doing here” (Interview D).
G states that at times she has felt tensions within the party but

that has been because of the faction I belonged to, not because I am an immigrant. I have never encountered difficulties because I have Bosnian origins and I have not expected that either. I have fought that among others, the attitude which I would call a “victim mentality” (Interview G).

J recalls:

Many may have wondered what that strange bird is doing here but they have never been unkind, I think that attitude was mostly in the “old guard” of the social-democracy (Interview J).

This bright picture of the problem-free character of ethnic background is, however, tainted by recollections of difficulties of another kind. One male interviewee, A, who is a secular Bosniak, stated that, within the refugee group, Serbs do not accept him. “They called the party and asked: why have you proposed a terrorist for the municipal council?” D has experienced similar situations, some resistance among her compatriots, the refugees from Bosnia that seem to think; “what the f-k is she up to”.

Interestingly, the one respondent born in Sweden definitely testifies to an immigrant “glass ceiling” within his party, the “Moderates”. He laments a party culture which fosters conformity and ethnic homogeneity. Indirectly, he confirms that the difficulties in obtaining influential posts and high-positioned assignments are fully compatible with the welcoming of persons of different ethnic background into the parties. “But then, you must look at which positions they get”. They become mascots, and are not allowed to climb to top positions. His perceptions coincide with the one’s expressed in Kugelberg’s study, where she specifically single out women as experiencing being mascots.

And what about Bosnia?

And this is really very important for when people succeed; the life that you once had, had being the right word, forget it. It does not exist anymore. I used to have two houses, car, restaurant, constructing firm, but after that I was suddenly on a bus with a suitcase. And then you cannot just sit and cry over what is lost. You must kick start all over again. I worked all the time, Saturdays, Sundays (Interview E).

Acceptance of a permanent, as opposed to temporary, change in life’s trajectory, the subsequent re-orientation towards the challenges of the
present and the further step of embracing a future in Sweden manifested by the choice to become or become recruited into political assignments is the process of integration experienced by this sub-group. Still, we all – refugees or not – partly live in and with the past.

How is the loss of one’s homeland and familiar circumstances embedded in a life that has once again become present- and future-oriented? For some the present-mindedness that comes with acceptance makes it possible to remain strong yet simultaneously harbour sentiments towards the homeland through maintaining contacts, returning often, and through promoting political work aimed at improving the situation in Bosnia. Others have clearly distanced themselves from the homeland. Having fled from a war that did not start with a foreign invasion but from tension between ethnic and religious communities within the Yugoslav federation where people had lived practically side by side in, for example, the multicultural city of Sarajevo, has made the past and the relation to Bosnia more complicated, even painful: “How could you destroy it - the Yugoslavia that was such a fine country” AK exclaims. Woven into the life stories that the Bosnians tell us are sentiments that articulate shame, shock, and disbelief:

I was determined not to return to my home-town Banja-Luka. They had done such immature and horrible things. I could not imagine this. Never to return to Bosnia- even my son said that he would not return to Bosnia. This affected a lot of refugees. Even now my countrymen are still being devastated (interview AK).

We went back in 1998, just to visit, but never again. You do not want to wake those memories. I had put a lot of work into it, and you have to understand that those who live in my house now they are refugees, they have fled from somewhere else (interview E).

To close the door so definitely is, however, unusual. J who for long actively chose not to work on behalf of Bosnia, started to open up after almost fifteen years in Sweden;

But I feel now, when I see people, that you have to do more for them down there: above all you have to work with educative aspirations (Interview J).

AB who is now 60 years old is thinking about retirement and is torn between two places:
For a long time I said, let us move back, but I like it here now, I have adapted socially. When I retire I might want to go back, but I not sure about that any longer. What would I do there? (Interview AB)

In Conclusion

Although the Swedish model of immigrant integration professes universal rights and equal treatment, our interviewees testify to a discrepancy between the policy of integration and multiculturalism and its practices of implementation that often treat migrants as policy objects. Our study supports the arguments that adequate formal integration policies have to be in place, but their impact is contingent on the implementation mode that recognizes immigrants’ agency, individual goals of integration and professional recognition. Equipped with language skills, information on their rights, social capital, and strong belief in their own skills and professional capacity, economically integrated respondents have strongly challenged the policies whenever they felt discrimination. They used citizenship and universal rights and forged transethnic social networks as an instrument to pursue professional recognition and open up possibilities for themselves and their children. They feel politically integrated, value the Swedish welfare model and political system, and feel obliged to contribute to the society by paying taxes. However, they do not feel socially integrated and they socialize less with Swedish colleagues and more with fellow countrymen with whom they share similar experiences of asylum seeking, common cultural frames such as popular music, films, jokes and culture from the former Yugoslavia. They all use Internet and follow politics both in Sweden and in the Balkans, and all help their families in the homeland. Nevertheless, their sense of identity and belonging has developed beyond the duality between the host and home countries, towards some kind of transnationalism.

But, the politically active ones we interviewed feel socially integrated; their political work in itself is an indicator of a strong attachment to the Swedish society. What seems to unite these activists in their process of integration is an early acceptance of the permanence of staying in Sweden, and coming to terms with the loss of Bosnia, which leads to devoting energy and orientation towards the existence in Sweden. Their way into political work came mostly through the workplace and recruitment there. Overall, the experience with political work in the parties they represent has clearly been positive, which reinforces their ties with the Swedish society. They do not confess to being treated as hostages or mascots, but
instead work with political issues that relate to their specific competence. There does not seem to be any feelings of enforced representation of immigrants or Bosnians in particular. However, many of our respondents are not top-politicians; they are street-level politicians instead. There are some indications that a different and less inclusive logic may be at work as aspirations for influence and political power increase. The “honeymoon” that is described to us here by political activists and professionally successful immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina may thus be replaced by the “glass-ceiling” as they try to climb higher, the experience which is shared both by political activists and professionally successful immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Therefore, while economically integrated immigrants stress their occupational identity and solidarity, as well as “inclusive transnationalism” connecting host- and homelands, politically active Bosnians rather stress their Swedishness and social connections with party colleagues. In conclusion, we find that integration in these different social fields supports Maja Korac-Sandersen’s broad conceptualization of immigrant’s inclusion and citizenship in terms of a variety of “emplacement” strategies, employing a varying mixture of bonding and bridging social capital and engendering a manifold sense of identity and belonging.
References


Ambivalent peacebuilders? Exploring trends and motives in transnational practices of Bosnians-Herzegovinians in Sweden

Roland Kostić

Until recently a dominant view in academia and among policy makers postulated that conflict-generated migrants are uncompromising, extreme, and through their activities challenge peacebuilding efforts in their homelands (Andersson 1999, p. 18; Bigombe 2000, pp. 333-334; Collier, 2000, p. 851; Collier 2003, pp. 85-86; Collier 2007, p. 797; Golan 2009, p. 127; Kaldor 2001, p. 85; Kaldor-Robinson 2002, p. 181; Lyons 2006, p. 128; Lyons 2007, p. 530; Newman 2006, p. 96; Nyberg-Sörensen 2002, p. 58). However, a growing body of findings from different parts of the world challenges civil wars literature on conflict-generated migrants. We know now that conflict-generated migrants are heterogeneous population who can engage in both “peace-making” and “peace-wrecking” transnational activities (Smith and Stares 2007; Horst 2008; Cochrane, Baser & Swain 2009; Koinova 2011; Orjuela 2008). Yet, until recently relatively little systematic research has been devoted to the transnational activities of conflict-generated migrants, the very populations whose activities, as it has been argued, have the potential to incite violent conflict or promote peace in their homelands.

By studying the transnational activities and motives of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Sweden, this chapter makes two contributions to the existing body of literature. It descriptively analyses survey data from 2010 on transnationalism among conflict-generated migrants from Bosnia-

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1 This is an amended and partially adapted version of a paper titled “Exploring Trends in Transnational Practices of Conflict-Generated Migrants. Bosnians in Sweden and their activities towards Bosnia and Herzegovina” published in Migrations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, 2013.

2 A partial exception to this is Snel et al. (2006), which explores a wide variety of transnational activities among a snowball sample of six diaspora populations, two of which would be considered conflict-generated: 50 respondents from Iraq and 50 respondents from the entire former Yugoslavia.
Herzegovina (BiH) residing in Sweden and combines this data with a set of nine in-depth exploratory interviews conducted between 2011 and 2014. In terms of key findings, transnational activities, particularly economic remittances to relatives in BiH seem to be particularly common. Another interesting finding relates to the evidence that it is not the Bosnians and Herzegovinians who are engaged formal national associations that seem to be most active but rather it is well-informed individual Bosnians who seem to be true transnationals. The trends are explained by personal motives such as the duty and obligation to help disadvantaged relatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and personal opportunity structures according to which economic remittances in relation to trips back home appear to be the most convenient and efficient way to engage and help relatives, particularly for those migrants who are well integrated in their host society. However, transnational activities are marked by ambivalence due to the seemingly heightened personal expectations of relatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is reportedly due to their idealised views of life in the West, and by the broader misperception of migrants by the homeland society at large. The rest of this chapter is organised as follows. The theoretical framework is presented in the next section. It is followed by an overview of Bosnian integration in Sweden since early 1990s. Afterwards, the survey data and in-depth interviews are presented, followed by the conclusions.

**Analytical framework**

The literature on transnationalism has expanded immensely since early 1990s and has become increasingly diverse in approach and scope. As noted, the examination of transnational social, economic and political practices has emerged as a feature in the study of migrants across different continents (Faist 2007; Al-Ali et al. 2001; Levitt 2001; Østergaard-Nielsen 2006). Transnationalism received attention in the literature on civil wars after the realisation that the activities of war-generated migrants can have a huge impact on the dynamics and outcome of violent conflicts. Inspired by the studies focusing on links between war-generated migrants and political movement for an independent Kosovo, Kurdistan and Tamil Eelam (see Adamson 2005; Byman et al. 2001; Fair 2005; Wayland 2004), a dominant view held that conflict-generated migrants, particularly those organised in diaspora organisations3, are uncompromising, extreme, and

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3 In this paper I differentiate between conflict-generated migrants and diaspora. Conflict-generated migrants are defined as migrants who were forced to flee in order to escape violence and persecution (Lischer 2007). On the other hand, members of diaspora those migrants who are
through their transnational activities undermine peacebuilding efforts in their homelands (Andersson 1999, p. 18; Bigombe 2000, pp. 333-334; Collier 2000, p. 851; Collier 2003, pp. 85-86; Collier 2007, p. 797; Golan 2009, p. 127; Kaldor 2001, p. 85; Kaldor-Robinson 2002, p. 181; Lyons 2006, p. 128; Lyons 2007, p. 530; Newman 2006, p. 96; Nyberg-Sörensen 2002, p. 58). The extremism of a war-generated diaspora is explained either as a response to assimilatory pressure in the host society (Collier & Hoeffler 2004), or as a result of traumatization and experiences of violence during conflict in the homeland (Collier & Hoffler 2000; Byman at al. 2001; Fair 2005; Lyons 2006, 2007; Lischer 2005). In recent years, a growing body of case study evidence from different parts of the world has challenged this one-sided view in civil wars literature on conflict-generated migrants. New findings tell stories of conflict-generated migrants as heterogeneous population who can engage in both “peace-making” and “peace-wrecking” transnational activities (Smith & Stares, 2007; Horst 2008; Cochrane, Baser & Swain 2009; Koinova 2011; Orjuela 2008).

In order to explain what may influence how conflict-generated migrants engage the conflict and peacemaking processes at home, number of influential explanations emerged in recent times. Koinova argues that the reason for moderation of conflict-generated migrants in post-war peace building period lies in two structural explanations. Moderate behaviour —operationalized by Koinova as non-violent actions such as lobbying, petitions, and non-violent demonstrations— is explained by ability of conflict-generated migrants to link own pursuit of sovereignty to a global political opportunity structure of international liberalism. She also argues that an increased responsiveness of their hostland towards conflict-generated migrant initiatives helps sustain the moderate mobilization and expand it transnationally (Koinova 2011, p. 461). In her view, two variables act together to explain differences in mobilization patterns: the host-state’s foreign policy stance towards the homeland’s sovereignty goal; and diaspora positionality, the relative power diaspora entrepreneurs perceive as deriving from their social positions in a transnational space between host-state and homeland. According to Koinova if a host-state’s foreign policy stance is closed towards the sovereignty goal, but diaspora entrepreneurs experience their positionality as relatively strong vis-a-vis the host-state, they are more likely to mobilize through host-state channels, as in the Armenian case. If the foreign policy stance is closed towards the

active in organizations through which they maintain collective memory of their homeland, and preserve a distinct identity vis-a-vis the hostland (Brubaker 2005, p.5).
sovereignty goal, but the diaspora positionality is weak, activists are more likely to pursue transnational channels, as in the Palestinian case. If the foreign policy stance is open towards the sovereignty goal, but the diaspora positionality is weak, entrepreneurs are likely to engage with both channels, as in the Albanian case.

In his attempt to explain moderation, Hall compared the reconciliatory attitudes of BiH migrants in Sweden and local population in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This systematic micro-level study with focus on attitudes shows that conflict-generated migrants indeed tend to be more moderate than those homeland populations in the peace building phase (Hall 2015). Hall explains this by presence of economic and socio-psychological resources in the host-land that enable conflict-generated migrants to make sense of their lives and cope positively with traumatic homeland experience of violence and expulsion (Hall 2015). Considering all arguments, moderation of conflict-generated migrants seem to lies in combination of host-land capacity to formally promote moderate behaviour and practices in combination with presence of resources that migrants can access on their own to deal with their own predicament.

However, generally we have relatively little systematic knowledge about transnational practices and motives behind these practices of conflict-generated migrants toward homeland politics and economics. In order to engage in the subject, in this paper, I define transnational practices as various forms of direct participation in the politics, social and cultural activities, and economic activities aimed towards homeland. In general, there are some empirical studies examining causes of transnationalism among contemporary migrant communities, such as economic remittance behaviour, expatriate voting, or cultural activities aimed towards homeland. Yet, very little systematic research is devoted to the transnational activities of conflict-generated migrants, the very populations whose activities, as it is argued, have the potential to incite conflict or promote peace in their homelands.4 In addition, the motives behind the transnational activates remain often inadequately explored and deserve more attention. With this in mind, this paper makes two main contributions to the existing body of literature. It discusses a survey data on transnationalism among conflict-generated migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina residing in Sweden and combines it with a set of in-depth interviews. Also, the paper highlights areas for future study by focusing on the motives behind the transnational

4 A partial exception to this is Snel et al. (2006), which explores a wide variety of transnational activities among a snowball sample of six diaspora populations, two of which would be considered conflict-generated: 50 respondents from Iraq and 50 respondents from the entire former Yugoslavia.
activities of individual conflict-generated migrants, how these motives and activities are shaped by integration in host societies, and what this process means for homeland peacebuilding and development.

Overview BiH conflict-generated migrants in Sweden

The paper investigates transnational activities of conflict-generated migrants from BiH residing in Sweden and impacts these have on peacebuilding in post-Dayton BiH. Most of BiH migrants came to Sweden between 1992 and 1995 (Medić et al. 1996). In a blanket decision by the Swedish government in June 1993, most of Bosnian asylum-seekers in Sweden were granted permanent residence on humanitarian grounds. The figure in 1996 approached 70,000, making it the single largest refugee group in Sweden at the time (Eastmond 1998, p. 164). In the survey of 865 Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Sweden conducted by the Bosnian national association in 1995, 85 percent reported to be expelled from their homes (Medić et al. 1996, p. 82).

Implosion of the national association of Yugoslavs in 1990 as well as the arrival of refugees from BiH after early 1992 resulted in creation of the national association of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sweden. The association was established in June 1992 in Örebro (Gustavsson & Svanberg 1995, p. 154). Although formally opened to all citizens of BiH, and with the idea of catering for the needs of all BiH citizens in Sweden, in practice, the national association of BiH became ethnically homogenous including primarily Bosniak members (Gustavsson & Svanberg 1995, p. 148). Many Serbs and Croats from Bosnia-Herzegovina apparently chose to join the already established Croatian and Serbian associations of political and labour migrants who arrived to Sweden during 1960s (Eastmond 1998, p. 164). This division seems to have persisted twenty years later. According to interviews conducted in 2010 with the leading members of the national association of BiH, as well as with the members of local BiH associations, the network members are primarily Bosniak migrants in Sweden. Reportedly most Bosnian Croats and Serbs who are active in diasporic networks chose to do so within the existing Croatian and Serbian national associations.5

The official funding and support policy of the Swedish state has had a significant impact on the activities of various national associations in

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5 The leading members of Croatian and Serbian national association have described this situation during the round table talk among the leaders of BiH, Croatian, and Serbian national associations in Uppsala. The discussion, sponsored by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was organised by the author, Jonathan Halla and Ashok Swain in December 2008 in Uppsala.
Sweden, including the work of the national association of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, leadership of Bosnian national associations in Sweden state that they all work in the association on semi-professional basis, primary funding for their activities provided by the Swedish state. However, although the Bosnian national association would like to focus its activities more towards Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is required by the Swedish state that the specific projects have to be based and oriented towards Sweden, rather than towards Bosnia-Herzegovina. Most of the activities take place in the areas of language and educational promotion, organization of sport and cultural events, and smaller scale humanitarian projects. In essence, the national association perform a role of preserving of homeland identity in a broader Swedish hostland context, and performing certain social services on the behalf of Swedish state. Conditioned by Swedish domestic developmental priorities, transnational activities of the national association of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain limited to raising awareness about voting in the homeland elections and organisation of smaller humanitarian actions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Considering that a majority of conflict-generated migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina are not actively involved in the Bosnian national associations, in order to explore more systematically the scope and dynamics of Bosnian transnational practices, the following part of the paper discusses trends among individual members of Bosnian migrant community in Sweden.

Data from Sweden

The data in Sweden was collected in 2010 by the author and Jonathan Hall (Hall & Kostić, 2010). We used survey consisting of 71 questions to ask about integration in Sweden, transnational activities, and reconciliation. Stratified sample was used in order to make parts of the data comparable with surveys in BiH conducted by Kostić in 2005 and 2010. Census data in Sweden does not include ethnicity. Thus, the only way of creating stratified sample in Sweden was by using Bosniak, Croat and Serb surnames. A pool of 180 surnames was collected through reading newspapers and portals in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In each strata, surnames were ordered

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6 This view was conveyed during interviews with number of respondents active in the BiH national association in Sweden in 2010.
7 Opinions expressed during the workshop in Uppsala, December 2008.
8 While national associations may have many registered members, the number of people actively working within the association is in decline. This view has been conveyed by respondents active in the BiH national association, in 2010.
9 According to the Swedish Statistic Bureau in 2010 there were 54000 people originating from BiH living in Sweden (Swedish Statistic Bureau 2010).
alphabetically and than we chose every third surname on the list. Individuals were located by searching Sweden’s online public listings. Since the listings are geo-referenced, the survey is able to give us a fairly good geographical distribution of Bosniak, Croat and Serb migrants in Sweden. Each surname search resulted in a list of individual names with addresses, including a map with their geographic location in Sweden. In order to control for the homeland origin of the respondents, a question concerning their belonging has been included in the survey. In this way we could analyse only those respondents that came from Bosnia-Herzegovina, while excluding the respondents from other ex-Yugoslav countries. In addition, in order to control for respondent’s ethnic belonging we included in the survey an open-ended question about their ethnic identity. Respondents were selected proportionally by location (urban/rural). The survey covers the whole of Sweden. It was translated into the native language of the respondents and distributed by mail. It also included a cover letter providing basic information about the aim of the project. The collection of data was finished in 2010, and response rate was 28% (N=714) (for more on response rate see Hall 2013).

In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted between 2011 and 2014. Altogether I conducted nine interviews with Bosnians and Herzegovinians who migrated to Sweden after 1992. In this part of the study, most of the respondents were selected through the snowball method (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981). However, the respondents are currently settled in different parts of Sweden, and originate from all three communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Some of the interviewees migrated to Sweden as young children, although most of the respondents arrived when they were teenagers or young adults. In addition, all of the respondents were in full-time employment at the time of the interview. Finally, none of the interviewees reported taking part in official activities of diaspora organisations although some reported paying yearly membership fees.

Transnational activities

The typology of migrants’ transnational practices covers a wide range of activities such as cross-border voting, migrants’ rallies against injustices in the country of origin, or engagement in hometown associations’ projects in the homeland (Østergaard-Nielsen 2006). The concepts of “core” or “narrow” transnationalism are often deployed to define activities that are regular, and consist an integral part of an individual’s life. “Expanded” or

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See www.eniro.se.
“broad” transnationalism refers to more occasional practices (Østergaard-Nielsen 2006).

The choice of indicators of transnational activities in this paper is based on existing studies in the field (Al-Ali et al. 2001; Snel et al. 2006). According to Snel et al. (2006, p. 289), transnational activities are “cross-border activities in the true sense of the word, such as money transfers, or visits to and political participation in the country of origin”. These are classified in four categories: everyday economic activities, professional economic activities, political activities, and social and cultural activities. Fifteen indicators are used to capture the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of transnationalism among the survey respondents.

The survey questions address these four dimensions. Political activities include keeping up with political events in BiH, frequency of voting in state elections, being a member of a political party and giving money to a political party. Social and cultural activities include frequency of contact with friends and family in BiH (via email, telephone, etc.), how often one discusses politics, how often one discusses the war, frequency of return visits, frequency of giving money for community projects and being a member of a social organization in BiH. Everyday economic activities include owning a house and frequency of sending remittances to BiH, and professional economic activities include investing in businesses, traveling to BiH for business and conducting trade with businesses.

Some of the key characteristics of the sample

In the sample, 42.5 percent of respondents are women. The mean age is 44.6 years. 51.05 percent completed at most secondary school and 36.75 percent up to one year or more of university studies. 67.65 percent are married. Before the war, 70.4 percent lived in an urban settlement. In terms of ethnic representation 28 percent of the respondents from BiH identifies themselves as Bosniaks, 27 percent as Croats, 26 percent as Serbs, and 15 percent as Yugoslavs.

The survey findings confirm the figures from the national association of BiH collected in 1995 regarding the violence being the main cause of migrations (Medić et al. 1996, p. 82). Namely, the majority of our respondents (82 percent) arrived in Sweden between 1988 and 1998. A majority (61 percent) describes their coming to Sweden as for humanitarian reasons, and 13 percent for political reasons. A majority reports a lost property as a result of the war (69 percent). In addition, many interviewees are missing a close family member due to the war (42 percent). Some respondents were either wounded (8 percent) or
imprisoned in a camp during the war (10 percent). Finally, 15 percent acknowledges participation in fighting units.

Exploring the transnational engagement of conflict-generated migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina

This section examines the transnational activities that directly link conflict-generated migrants in Sweden with Bosnia-Herzegovina politically, economically, socially and culturally. Considering diversification of migrants from BiH the data is presented by ethnic identity. As noted, in the survey some 15 percent of interviews identify themselves as Yugoslavs warranting the inclusion of this group in the analysis. The data presented in Table 1 represent the percentage of respondents within each group exhibiting a high level of engagement in each cross-border activity. The data organized in four categories, political activities, social and cultural activities, everyday economic activities and professional economic activities.
Table 1
High level engagement in transnational activities by national identity (Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Identity</th>
<th>Bosniaks</th>
<th>Serbs</th>
<th>Croats</th>
<th>Yugo</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps up daily with political</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has voted at least twice in</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of political party</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives money to political party</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social and cultural activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly contact by telephone,</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss politics with family</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at least twice a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss war with family at</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>least twice a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits twice a year</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives money for community</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of a social organization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Everyday economic activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns a house</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sends remittances at least</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional economic activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invests in businesses</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travels to BiH for business</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducts trade with BiH</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are numerous interesting trends in the data. Most common is a high level of contact by for example email and telephone with family and friends living in BiH. The vast majority stays in contact on a monthly basis, the most active groups being Bosnian Serbs (86 percent) and Bosniaks (80 percent). Interestingly, while Croat and Serb respondents seem to visit BiH more often (12 percent visits twice a year), Bosniaks are by far most active in donating money for community projects (19 percent).

Regarding the social remittances, i.e. transfer of migrants’ cultural and social norms on their homeland counterparts and vis-a-versa (see Levitt, 1998), the data show that a sizeable proportion of respondents discuss both politics and the war on a monthly basis with their friends and family in BiH. Those most highly engaged in these discussions are Bosniaks, of whom 50 percent discuss politics and 48 percent the war at least twice a year followed by Bosnian Croats. Bosnian Serbs and Yugoslavs report seem to be least likely to discuss politics and war with their relatives back home. Thus, given that BiH migrants in Sweden are generally more moderate comparison to its kin in BiH (Hall 2013), arguably Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats have the greatest potential to make normative impact on their kin in terms of issues of peace and development in BiH.

In terms of political activities, 47 percent of interviewees report keeping up with political events in BiH on daily basis. Those most informed appear to be Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, with 46 percent and 52 percent respectively. In terms of political participation, Bosniaks tend to be twice as likely to have voted twice in BiH elections. 18 percent reported voting at least twice in national elections in BiH in comparison to 9 percent of Bosnian Serbs and 10 percent of Bosnian Croats. Interestingly, very few respondents in any national group report being a member or giving money to a political party, though those few that do it are Bosniaks. Based on these findings we can conclude that BiH migrants in Sweden tend to be well informed about the political situation in the BiH. However, direct political participation is limited among conflict-generated migrants from BiH. It is largely Bosniaks that have some direct influence on homeland politics by voting.

Data on the economic activities of BiH migrants in Sweden tells us more about migrants influence on homeland reconstruction and development. The data show that the frequency of remittance sending varies greatly between Bosniaks and the other national groups. 82 percent of Bosniaks send remittances to friends and family in BiH at least once a year, in comparison to 63 percent Bosnian Serbs and 62 percent Bosnian Croat respondents. The percentage of those owning a house in BiH is equally high among Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs (58 percent), though it is also
high among Bosnian Croats (51 percent) and Yugoslavs (43 percent). A rather large minority of respondents in all groups invests in businesses (25 percent) or report traveling to BiH for business (24 percent). However, only 9 percent of the respondents reports conducting trade with companies in BiH.

In sum the data indicate that the conflict-generated migrants from BiH are truly transnational. Respondents seem to be well informed about events in the homeland and engage in several transnational activities simultaneously. While engagement in some form is generally common across all groups, Bosniak migrants in Sweden participate somewhat more actively in homeland elections, but also reportedly contribute to a larger extent economically through practices personal remittances and support of communal projects.

Ambivalent peacebuilders? Exploring motives behind transnationalism

Exploring the qualitative interview data gives preliminary insight into the motives that seem to play a significant role in forming the transnational behaviour of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Sweden. Most of the activities are based on remittances to families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the respondents have also reported other types of informal remittances such as support to rebuild religious objects and the keeping of cemeteries in their hometowns. Moral commitment to and solidarity with their relatives are among the issues that come up in all nine interviews. These two issues seem to form the single strongest motive behind economic transnational activity towards their homeland. A middle-aged Bosniak man M, originally from Eastern Bosnia, who now lives in a small town in central Sweden explains his view on the phenomenon (Interview 1).

My uncle and his family returned to the family village outside Zvornik after the war. But life is hard in the countryside in Eastern Bosnia and they struggle to make ends meet. My father, although himself a pensioner, regularly sends money to his brother. Knowing their situation I try to help too, especially when I go to visit them. I take presents but also support them financially.

It is important to observe that this type of financial solidarity seems to be trans-generational. In other words, it seems that Bosnians and Herzegovinians who came to Sweden at a young age inherit a sense of obligation towards their family from their own parents. A young Bosnian Croat woman J living in West Sweden explains her experience (Interview 2).
My mom and dad had an agreement that each of them would financially support their own parents. Mom used to send money to her own mother, as grandmother could not survive on her state pension. We all also contributed to help get her a centrally heated two-room apartment in her hometown, so that grandmother does not have to bother with the wood stove during the winter. When mom died few years ago, I took it upon myself to continue regularly sending money to grandmother. This is something I feel I owe both to my mom and my grandmother.

However, when not helping their own relatives, Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Sweden try to establish other informal ways of sending remittances to their local communities. Bosniak woman A from central Sweden tells of her family effort to give stipends to children and young adults in need in her former hometown (Interview 6).

Through some friends in Tuzla we learned about this little girl who needed financial support. We helped by sending some money every month. Now we have involved some of our friends here and support one student in Zenica too. She gets 150 KM every month. It really helps her and makes studies easier while we do not feel it.

This type of informal bridging and support of financial remittances is sometimes also facilitated between formal institutions in Sweden and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Often it is well-integrated Bosnians with social capital and contacts at both ends who can play a role in facilitating contacts and transfers between individuals and institutions in the two countries. A middle-aged Bosnian Croat man T explains how such support takes place (Interview 9).

A Swedish friend of mine works in a primary school in Stockholm and her pupils decided to organise a project to help a school in a war stricken country. That year they decided to help a school in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They apparently did various activities, such as selling cakes door-to-door, and raising money within their families, neighbours, and sport clubs. However, they did not know how to get in touch with a school in BiH. She asked me for help, and I have a friend who is a teacher in a small village school in the outskirts of Sarajevo. Her headmaster was delighted at the idea. I helped facilitate the contacts between the schools and explained that the Swedish pupils had this specific project. The school outside Sarajevo needed a computer room and with help from the donation they established a little computer room with four computers. They took photos during the inauguration event when the project was ready and wrote a thank you letter to the pupils in Stockholm.
Besides family ties and moral obligations, there are reportedly numerous other reasons for informal remittance transfers to Bosnia-Herzegovina. One of the reasons frequently cited is a lack of confidence in the state institutions and legal frameworks in Bosnia-Herzegovina. When asked to reflect over the possibilities to invest financial resources in the Bosnian economy and create jobs instead of make direct transfers to their families, most of the respondents display scepticism justified by arguing that post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina is not a stable state, that the legal framework is not clear and that the country still has problems related to corruption and political patronage. An older Bosniak female respondent H from South Sweden respondent explains the problem (Interview 3).

Many of our people have accumulated substantial capital in Sweden. They could try to invest that capital in BiH, but one needs to have a stable state. This is not the case yet, and this is also partly the problem of diaspora. In my view, in our individual conversations we can convey certain attitudes and opinions to those who are active in political life in BiH. The government should have the interest to listen to these people and make the best use of their competence.

Another reason seems to be closely connected to the level of integration in Swedish society. The majority of those interviewed have lived in Sweden for almost two decades and are socioeconomically integrated in their places of residence. They have also established families and adapted to everyday life in Sweden, which influences their personal transnational strategies. Bosniak respondent Dž from Stockholm, who is in the middle of his career, explains the link between integration and transnationalism that is also discussed by several other respondents (Interview 8).

Once upon a time I was part of a Bosnian association and I was there all the time with my friends. We were together every night, watching movies, meeting and planning cultural activities. Initially fifty per cent of my time was spent on such activities. But then I started going to school, and afterwards I went to university. I never regretted it. Now I have a good job.

The combination of integration and family life dynamics seem to greatly influence the activities of individual Bosnians in Sweden. As a middle aged Bosnian Serb respondent O, who used to be part of a Bosnian diaspora association, explains in his take on the process of integration and participation in associations (Interview 4).
My wife and I used to be a part of our association, and just like many others, we wanted to make friends, learn from each other in the process of integration. That was one phase. Then came an active integration phase. Most of us got entangled in our own lives, getting education and work skills, sorting out housing, our children started going to school and have their own activities. All three of our children have activities: ice hockey, horseback riding, and music lessons. My wife and I divide duties and drive them around to their activities. We have a whiteboard in the hall where we keep track of each other’s commitments and usually meet up in evenings. The time and energy is not enough for much else. However, we do help our relatives in BiH, especially during the occasions when we visit them.

According to the respondent O, they usually visit their family twice a year, around the New Year and during summer vacation. Other respondents also report similar patterns of visits to Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the visit and transfer of remittances in relation to these visits are affected by a degree of ambivalence in relation to the expectations on both sides of the exchanges. The experience of the respondent M exemplifies the views shared in a number of other interviews (Interview 1).

There is that plastic bag (kesa) tradition among people down there. When we visit, the entire family expects me to visit them. And one cannot turn up empty handed. They all seem to expect to receive a plastic bag with presents. They still have the image from the 1970s when guest workers came from Germany. They think that we have it great living in the West and many expect to receive generous presents. On the other hand, I work hard to save for my trips to Bosnia; that is my vacation. I got tired of this, and these days I stay in my own house and tell everyone that I am back and they can come to visit me if they want to see me.

According to him and a number of other interviewees, it is not unusual to combine visits to Bosnia with visits to the Croatian seaside, often on the way back to Sweden. Some of the respondents explain that at the seaside they can rest physically and emotionally after the intense activities around visiting friends and relatives. As an older Bosniak respondent S reports, even this seems to be a negotiated compromise between the different, and often contradicting, needs many transnational Bosnians and Herzegovinians navigate (Interview 5).

Five weeks each summer, this is what I spend in BiH. For each year I am there more and more, and yet with each new year I am more and more reluctant to go back. I would like to visit and see other parts of the world. This has nothing to do with Bosnia; I just want to see some-
thing new during my summer vacation. Yet I feel sad; I have my friends and family there, and my holiday always ends up being a visit to Bosnia. It is the same story every year. I miss our way of life. Swedes are formal; they live to work. Our people are different, they work to live, and they enjoy life differently. They are more together and more informal. When in Sweden I miss that informality. In most ways, we have it better [in Sweden], but in some significant ways they are better off [in Bosnia-Herzegovina].

Different understandings of situation and context seem to create frictions between Bosnian transnationals and the society at large in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some respondents, especially those who came from smaller communities in Bosnia, report that they have heard pejorative comments about the diaspora visiting Bosnia-Herzegovina. Respondent H summarises the experience of several other respondents (Interview 3).

They love us when we send money, but in general they consider us peasants, and laugh behind our backs. Sometimes when visiting cafés they comment on the diaspora’s clothes and foreign accents loudly.

Respondent A reflects on her experience of the friction and growing gap between Bosnians from abroad and the locals in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In her view, much of the friction is due to the lack of information about how much Bosnian migrants help socioeconomic development in the country. According to her, the information gap is perceived as increasing, and is counterproductive for the overall development of the country (Interview 6).

The locals don’t know how much we help in terms of activities and financial support. Because of that there is a separation between us and them. The locals are annoyed at the diaspora, and we are annoyed at them. There is lot of irritation and less understanding and cooperation. This is terrible since we all have something to offer and complement each other. However, this division is just growing.

In summary, tentative qualitative data confirms the results from the survey regarding the trends in economic activities of conflict-generated migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina. In terms of the character of these activities, they are best defined as broad or expanded transnational activities since they represent occasional activities of migrants rather than being an integral part of migrants’ individual lives (see Østergaard-Nielsen 2006). The findings are in agreement with observations about the importance of access to economic and socio-psychological resources in the host society (Hall
2013, also see Bennich-Björkman and Likić-Brborić in this book). However, while these hostland resources enable conflict-generated migrants to make sense of their lives and cope positively with traumatic homeland experiences of violence and expulsion, they also seem to play an important role in understanding conflict-generated migrants’ transnational activities.

The tentative qualitative findings tell the story of well-integrated migrants whose choices of transnational activities are influenced by their socioeconomic integration and the demands of everyday life in Sweden (for more detailed account of see Bennich-Björkman and Likić-Brborić chapter). On the one hand, many interviewees report a lack in free time to engage in the cultural and political work of formal diaspora organisations in Sweden. On the other, the feeling of solidarity and commitments to their family in their homeland, which seems to be trans-generational, plays a crucial role in motivating economic remittances. In a sense, it is not surprising that fifteen years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, economic inter-personal remittances remain one of largest financial contributions to the Bosnian economy and to peacebuilding. However, this process is not without frictions. The diverging perception of migrants and local inhabitants in Bosnia-Herzegovina regarding their lifestyles and possibilities seems to form an expectation gap on both sides of exchanges that can reportedly lead to resentment at both ends as well as to a sense of ambivalence among conflict-generated migrants that engage in sending remittances. However, most of those interviewed continue to regularly travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and engage in economic remittances. Yet, although helping peacebuilding in the process, their motives seem to be rather personal, having to do with satisfying a complex range of individual emotional needs left unfulfilled in the process of connecting the lives they were forced to abandon back home to the new lives they have created in the context of host society (see also chapters by Korac-Sanderson; Pajnik in this book).

Conclusions

According to existing theory in civil war literature, conflict-generated migrants are anticipated to be particularly opposed and act against peace and conflict resolution in their homeland. Yet, the systematic exploration of transnational activities in this paper show that engagement of conflict-generated migrants can be conducive to homeland peace building. In
terms of observed trends, transnational activities, particularly economic remittances to relatives in BiH seem to be particularly common. Another interesting finding relates to capacities of formal national associations vis-à-vis individual migrants to promote political and economic development in the homeland. In the case of Sweden, it is the well-informed individual Bosnian migrants who seem to be true transnationals.

Although, a quarter of conflict-generated migrants report investing in business in BiH our data reviles that most common economic activity among Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serb migrants in Sweden include personal remittances to their relatives. Considering that BiH migrants contribute reportedly some 13 percent of Bosnian GDP, the predominant money transfer pattern can come to constitute a long-term challenge for BiH economic development. However, as tentative qualitative findings show the process is shaped by the high levels of conflict-generated migrant socioeconomic integrations due to accessibility of these resources in the hostland in combination with the strong personal emotional commitment and solidarity with relatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This individualized pattern of economic remittances and reluctance towards structural economic investment is further exacerbated by the lack of confidence in the institutions, structures, and legal system in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has been reported by Bosnian conflict-generated migrants living in Sweden.

While migrant remittances play a significant role in supporting the battered Bosnian economy, the relationship between Bosnian conflict-generated migrants and the local society in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not without frictions. These frictions occur due to seemingly diverging understandings of the respective life situations of migrants and locals, and the resulting differences in expectations at both ends of exchanges. This expectation gap seems to create a sense of ambivalence among conflict-generated migrants towards the society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The gap is overcome by a sense of moral commitment towards family, and the emotional need for migrants to re-connect fragments of the lives they were forced to abandon to the new lives they have created in the context of host society. It is this process that makes peacebuilders out of conflict-generated migrants. In their activities they generously support peacebuilding back home; however, the motives and rationale driving activities are deeply individual, and stretch beyond structural levels and policy agendas of peacebuilding after war.
References


In the shadow of uncertainty.

Refugee protection, short-sighted pragmatism and the problems of mixed “ethnic” identities

Zoran Slavnić

We become aware of the existence of a right to have rights … and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation... (Hannah Arendt, 1951/1968, pp. 296-297)

During the summer of 1993 the Swedish Government made the decision to issue permanent residence permits for about 50,000 Bosnian refugees, who were then in Sweden as asylum seekers. At the same time, the decision was made to impose visa requirements for Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) citizens. However, as the war in BiH was still in full swing, and as from early 1993 it was extended by the conflict between Croats and Bosniaks, the number of people who were fleeing from their homes increased even further. In this situation, given on the one hand that the war was creating new refugees, and on the other that in the countries where the majority of refugees had hitherto usually been sent, an increasing number of legal obstacles was being created, as a consequence refugees were forced to seek new avenues for acquiring refugee status in those countries. Since visas were not required for Croatian visitors to Sweden, some 5000 BiH citizens Bosnians who had the right, on various bases, to seek and obtain Croatian citizenship and consequently passports, used this opportunity to come to Sweden with Croatian passports and after entering the country, sought asylum there.1

Although the majority of these people actually came from war-torn BiH, and even though BiH residence addresses were entered in their Croatian passports, the Swedish Government decided that these refugees should be considered Croatian citizens; and since Croatia was obliged to help them they were to be sent back there. Almost a year after this decision

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1 For a short description of the situation of this group refugees, as well as related statistics, refer to Slavnic, 2000.
had been made, after the renewal of war operations in Croatia and after numerous protests against the initial decision in Sweden itself, the above-mentioned decision was amended from visas to temporary residence permits (tidsbegränsat uppehållstillstånd - TUT) for a period of six months, until 31 November 1995. Yet another year was to pass after the expiry of this permit for the Swedish Government to make a final decision on the expulsion to Croatia, but this time for only 2500 BiH Croats.

In the period August 1995 – February 1997, I conducted fieldwork on four occasions and interviewed the 30 refugees. I also talked to some 20 representatives of various organisations and institutions that were in contact with these refugees in one way or another. The refugees were interviewed in two Swedish towns, Karlskrona and Malmö, and with some of them I talked on several occasions during this period.

The life history of Jasna, which is the subject of analysis in this article, is that of one of these refugees. If we apply the methodological distinction between “exemplary” and “symptomatic” life histories (Ålund 1991), then we can say that Jasna’s history is an “exemplary” one for those citizens of BiH who have mixed ethnic identities. However, at the same time, this history is also “symptomatic” with respect to everything that this group of BiH refugees – i.e., those with Croatian passports who obtained temporary protection in Sweden – was forced to go through. In her history the difficulties of a new “normal” life (in BiH, Croatia and Sweden) overlap with feelings of exclusion from the social and cultural life streams in all the environments that she experienced as an undesirable, isolated and frequently exploited “alien”. Her visions of a return home are connected to her normal previous life and result in discrepancies between her personal wishes and the rough, short-term pragmatism of the various régimes and authorities involved, who are burdened with an ethnic categorisation of individuals and groups. At the same time her history reveals the gloomy background in which a refugee’s experience was created, and it is connected to the establishment of a new profiteering in which the refugees’ life has become a new currency of war and post-war economies (Duffield 1999).

Prologue: collapse of a normal life

When I met her first (in the summer of 1995) she was 35 years old. She was born and grew up in an industrial town in Central Bosnia, where she had lived with her husband and two children until the war broke out. She worked as a bank clerk for 12 years. She had never belonged to those to whom a sense of ethnic belonging meant a lot in life. This may have been
even more so because she came from a mixed marriage, her father being a Serb and her mother a Croat. Besides, she, herself, was married to a Bosniak. All these factors together classify Jasna among those who represented a very significant part of the essence of BiH before the war. This was a generation which grew up during the 1960s and 1970s in urban areas of the republic – the generation for whom life under conditions of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity presented a very normal state, which nobody considered as questionable, unnatural or temporary.

To explain this we have to understand the way that inter-ethnic relations were treated in the former Yugoslavia before the war. On the one hand there was a public political discourse that tried to integrate all the citizens of the multiethnic state on the principles of national, religious, cultural and political equality. On the other hand, although a competition among the national political élite for real power was going on behind this ideological façade (Goati 1997), a significant number of people, especially those who grew up in urban areas during this period, accepted the multiculturalism just mentioned as their own symbolic universe (Berger, Berger & Kellner 1973), or as an all-embracing social definition of reality which served as a compass for them in their daily relations with others, as well as in trying to find the meaning of life in general.

These kinds of value orientations, however, lost both formal and real political support after nationalistic parties came into power, especially after the outbreak of war. Those with the above-mentioned views, even when they were of the same ethnic background as those in power in certain areas, became outsiders in a same way as members of minority ethnic groups in these areas of Yugoslavia, and especially of BiH. The new all-embracing definition of reality, which now became dominant and which had the full institutional support of the authorities (most frequently even a formal one in a legal sense), was based on the new principles according to which the focus was given to ethnic homogeneity and inter-ethnic exclusivity (Slavnić 2000).

By deciding to leave, Jasna definitely refused to jeopardise her basic life principles for the apparent safety which she would obtain in return from the “new authorities”. She preferred to leave, seeking protection and a new kind of safety in a world which she believed to be organised on the same principles as her own. That was a central motive for Jasna’s departure and surely the most radical decision in her life hitherto.
The beginning of the war: the forming and closing of ethnic circles

The everyday life of a modern human being is, according to Giddens’s, determined mainly by the existence of a sense of “ontological security”, which can be defined as a sense of continuity and order between things and events in the environment one is living in. This sense is possible only within the predictable “routines” on which everyday life has been organised. The predictability of these routines contributes to maintaining human beings’ ontological security, while it is primarily protected by “trust” and “tact”, states Giddens. Thus, a contemporary human being cannot enjoy peace and safety, i.e., a normal everyday life, unless there is trust in other people (relying on their reliability and honesty or love), a trust in “abstract systems” (relying on experts’ knowledge and technology) and finally, also an orientation towards the future (organised and controlled) as a tool for connecting the past and the present. However, in order for this whole system to function, according to Giddens, a modern human being develops a whole range of skills for communicating with other people (i.e., “tact”). “Tact” (respect for the needs and requirements of the people with whom communication is established) not only contributes to the production and reproduction of everyday human beings’ interactions, but it also corrects and mitigates possible disturbances in these interactions, which, if they develop, can lead to conflict and consequently bring ontological security into question. However, in certain life situations, namely “critical situations” (such as, for instance inter-ethnic clashes), these disturbances are of such an intensity that they cannot be softened by “tact”. Then we have a situation of a radical disturbance of the normal everyday life which an individual is used to and feels safe in. This is when times of anxiety, fear and helplessness begin.

All this had a very significant effect on Jasna. She strongly believed that society was rationally organised. She was convinced that, as she was responsible for performing her job, others were behaving as she was, especially those responsible for the functioning of important social institutions. She expected to get the salary she deserved regularly each month for her work. With that salary she expected to provide for the normal life of her family, and that she would get assistance in local health institutions if she became sick; and, if her safety or property was in danger, that she would get help from the police. She also expected that, in situations when the only alternative to the political compromise was a

\[ ^2 \text{For the notions “ontological security”, “routine”, “trust”, “abstract systems”, “tact”, “critical situation”, which will be used in this text, see Giddens (1984, 1990, 1991).} \]
civil war, politicians would quite naturally try to avoid the war. Finally, she could not even imagine that professional soldiers could be so “irresponsible” as to start shelling the civilian population in the town in which they themselves lived. However, with the outbreak of the war this whole construction, which had created normal everyday life, broke apart, and the outset of war caught Jasna unprepared and scared:

For me everything was scary. First, on 19th May, they shot 19 airplane rockets at the town. That was terrible. Everything had started earlier in Sarajevo, but unless it happens to you, one simply cannot believe that the same thing can happen in your town as well. And that is exactly what happened. When it started in Croatia, you did not believe it would come to Bosnia. When it started in Sarajevo, you did not believe it would come to your town as well. But all of a sudden it started. Then it became frequent, almost every day we were shelled. I was shivering with fear all the time. But I still went to work, although I had to run all the way from one building entrance to another.

Obviously, Jasna was still trying to perform the daily routines with which she was building her own personal security and that of her family under normal pre-war conditions. She was going to work regularly, although for more than a year, she worked for only some DM 3 (€ 1.50) of monthly salary. For this money she could buy three eggs per month. By doing this, she probably sub-consciously tried to postpone a complete disintegration of the world that she lived in before the war. However, the situation became more and more difficult. It was particularly difficult for her to see her children deprived of regular schooling — the only reliable investment on which people such as Jasna can build their future. Besides, the family descended into a state of literal starvation.

It is really hard to believe, but there were situations, not that we were completely without anything to eat, but we had only flour, and I prepared some kind of curd-cake or something else made of dough, for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

A general feeling of insecurity in town was also growing, especially for ethnically mixed families in the situation of strained ethnic polarisation.

Nobody hurt me personally, probably because I was not a nationalist. I did not provoke anybody, so I remained in a normal relationship with those friends whom I had known previously, and I did not come into contact with other people during those times. The only problem was when one was in such a situation for too long. Then one had to meet with other people: when we were in the basements that we used as
shelters we heard them saying that all Serbs should be killed, or if the conflict was between Croats and Muslims, that all Croats should be killed, and so on. I personally could not take part in those exchanges, but with time, it got to you and you could not endure it anymore.

Moreover, as time went by, life became more and more difficult, and the end was nowhere in sight. The time came when it had been almost a year since the war started. Eventually, one of the family friends from Croatia contacted them and offered to be hosts for them, if they decided to leave BiH. But Jasna was still indecisive.

The situation was getting worse and conflicts between Croats and Muslims could be seen on the horizon. I felt terribly at that time. My town was somehow in the middle. Serbs were on one side and Croats on the other. I was constantly afraid that somebody might come into my home who would not care who or what you were. And this is why the children were crying non-stop. So finally we decided to go in whatever way we could.

The various dimensions of chaos

Immediately upon reading Jasna’s first descriptions of her departure from her home town one can notice a kind of discontinuity. That is, the picture the reader forms about Jasna’s situation as a whole, her motives, her strategies and her plans for future, is all of a sudden disturbed by her statement that she prepared everything for the trip in one day and that her intention was to remain in Croatia only for a month, and only to get some rest. This is obviously in opposition to the depth of suffering she went through together with her family, during more than a year of living under wartime conditions, as well as in opposition to the care with which she planned every detail of the trip. However, this spare line for expressing Jasna’s own motives for departure is actually a second part of her “basic line” (which is planned in detail), that is, the viewpoint behind which stand her real motives and goals, as well as real strategies for solving her own particular problem. Actually, this is some kind of a mental preparation for departure, a rationalisation, prepared in advance, of the situation for her own and sake of others in case of failure. But this is not all. This is only a beginning of creation of the strategy, which we, together with Giddens (1984), can classify among the “strategies for facing a critical situation”. Jasna joins the mass in a flight and faces an experience where the life of a refugee hangs by a thread of coincidences, under conditions of hopelessness and unpredictability. At the same time it is a framework for establishing a new “normal” life.
And then one day I heard on the radio that a special convoy was to be organised. That was a twenty-kilometre long convoy. Vehicles were from everywhere. The wounded, the dead were also a part of the convoy. … I got prepared in one day only. The plan was to leave for a month and take a rest from everything, and then to return. It never occurred to me that I was leaving for good, that is, for a long period of actually staying away from home. As soon as the convoy started, a ‘madness’ began. The UNPROFOR [United Nations Protection Forces], which were supposed to safeguard us, were nowhere in sight. Eventually two vehicles showed up, only to disappear again. The general atmosphere was such that as soon as we started I wanted to go back. It took us six days to get to Croatia. We were even shot at on the way. During the night you would just see some people appearing in front of the bus (nobody knew who they were or which army they belonged to, but all had those bands round their heads like “Rambo’s”), and the convoy had split up long before and only single vehicles were moving down the road, several kilometres apart.

In this story Jasna went through some dimensions of the hell in which one finds oneself during a war. These are dimensions of fear, humiliation, helplessness, but also include the emotion of a “real” ethnic belonging.

Anyway, after six days we came to the border. However, once there, we saw several buses returning from the border itself. Men on board were stripped naked and women and kids from three buses were squeezed into one bus. Standing side by side packed into one bus they showed the rest of us that ‘you will not enter Croatia’. But we went on further, towards the border. At the actual border crossing we stopped. People on the bus started singing and crying out of happiness since we finally made it, after such a difficult trip. Someone came onto the bus to check our documents. I had a guarantee letter for entering Croatia […] since I did not want to travel in uncertainty. I was afraid anyway. Then three soldiers came in with their guns pointed and said: “Those who are now going to be told to leave the bus, should leave without a word. If anyone says one word, the whole bus will be sent back. I was a bit scared at that very moment, but then again I thought: “I have documents, so there’s no problem”. However, I have a Muslim surname, which cannot be missed.

In this war ethnic belonging was the first criterion that designated the gulf between safety and protection on one side and torture and expulsion on the other. A second criterion was ethnic purity. Every ethnic mixture brought nothing but problems. Although not a Bosniak herself, Jasna was been treated as one since her husband was a Bosniak.
When they approached me, a soldier read no more than my surname and said: “Missus, take your bags and get out”. He did not even look at the documents. Till that moment kids were not quite crying, but now both started screaming. And I was actually the only person with kids on the bus, as nobody else had dared to take kids on such a risky trip. I wanted to say that simply I had all the necessary documents: “I have...”. He interrupted me and yelled: “Missus, I said if one word was uttered everybody would be out. Take you bags and get out”. The bus driver took my bags out and put them outside. This did not happen only to me. Almost half the bus was thrown out – all those who were not pure Croats. Then the buses took off and we who remained behind, from all three buses, gathered at one place not knowing what to do next.

If we now try to summarise this situation, we can see that on one hand we have “ethnic belonging” and “ethnic purity” that completely define reality. Exclusion of all outsiders and ‘mixed’ people was brutal, deep and complete, but because of the chaotic war situation, it was neither general nor systematic. On the other hand this fact, actually, enables people to cope with particular situations.

Then I enquired what I could do. I had made some enquiries beforehand, in case they were to throw us out at the border, and I had been told that there were always taxi drivers ready to transport you for DM 300. So, I had prepared this money for such an option. I went to the place where the taxis gathered and asked if anyone was willing to take us to Croatia (but one had to whisper all the time). They said they would, but for DM 300. This was the amount of money I had to pay to be driven just 2 kilometres to the border and to be left on the other side. As I did not have any other option, I accepted it. Then I and another woman with two kids squeezed into the taxi. After a while we came to the border. The taxi driver went out and whispered something to the border guards for some time. Then they approached us and searched through our bags, they even checked my make-up, deodorants and the like. Eventually they let us through by giving us only a five-day permit of stay in Croatia.

Jasna arrived in Zagreb the next day without a dime in her pocket. This was when the second phase of uncertainty began: the phase of struggle for survival under conditions of poverty and refugee stigma. She spent ten months in Zagreb under very difficult financial and social conditions. At that time the general situation in Croatia was very difficult, especially for refugees. The state, which was at war itself, had at the same time to care for almost 300,000 refugees from BiH alone (Valenta et al. 2011). Besides, the
general political climate in Croatia was not very much different from the one in BiH.

All this resulted in a very ambivalent behaviour of the state towards refugees. On one hand refugees were registered by the appropriate state bodies and institutions, thus the state was fulfilling its obligations in accordance with domestic and international laws and humanitarian conventions; this then became the basis for the international promotion of the Croatian refugee policy and politics in general, as well as the basis for securing international financial assistance (usually in hard, stable currency, which was so needed at the time), in order to be able to care for these refugees.

However, on the other hand, the refugees themselves frequently had little benefit from this assistance and the refugee cards gave them more headaches than concrete benefits. Additional problems for Jasna began when the conflict between Bosniaks and Croats started in BiH. This merely shows that refugees, obviously, cannot avoid the political dimensions of a conflict in the country of their origin even when they are outside of its borders, where once again they become the victims of ethnic categorisation.

It was horrible to listen to what was going on and wherever we stayed we had a lot of problems. For instance, at one place I stayed, everything was all right with those people and we visited each other. They considered me as one of them, a Croat, until one day my husband called over the phone and introduced himself. Then they made a whole circus out of it (this was actually the time of conflicts between Bosniaks and Croats). They were saying: “We are feeding their wives here and they are killing our people there”. They refused to talk to me from that moment.”

Subsequently, Jasna again found herself in a situation where on one hand she did not experience even a part of what made her become a refugee at first place, and on the other hand she had exhausted all the possibilities of her current situation, so that she was compelled to make yet another radical decision. There were only two alternatives. Either she went back home, to a war where she would face the very same material problems and moral dilemmas because of which she left her hometown, or she would proceed with searching for her lost security and dignity.

When she became really desperate, not knowing how to solve her problems, somebody advised her: “Well, why don’t you go to some other country?” She was told that many were leaving for Sweden; and that she probably would not be sent back from there since she had small children and she had been in a war-stricken country for such a long period. “Sweden
is good for children and, generally speaking, it’s a most humane country”.
But she was still suspicious and cautious. Finally, she made the decision to
go. This decision was made in the very same way as the one to leave BiH,
that is, when all the other possibilities to stay had been exhausted. There is
another similarity to the situation before her first departure: once again Jasna
made detailed and long preparation for leaving.

For six weeks in a row I went to the bus station to make enquiries with
bus drivers who were driving to Sweden. These drivers always told
me not to worry since nobody had been sent back. When I finally
made the decision to go, I borrowed money for the trip. Actually, I
heard that I needed to have some money with me since otherwise I
could have been sent back while crossing Austria or Germany, whose
authorities were allegedly afraid that some of the refugees might stay
in their countries. In any case, I had DM 400 as a reserve, just in case
something happened to the kids on the journey. Well, that’s how we
set out on the trip.

Encounter with the North-Western European normality
of refugee life

There were no problems whatsoever during the journey. After their arri-
val they were taken to the big reception centre in Malmö which was in-
tended for the temporary accommodation of refugees until they should
obtain more permanent accommodation. The next day they were given
an apartment to share in one of housing areas of Malmö. Jasna was ha-
ppy as she finally found a world that functioned properly: A world where
there was order and rules were respected. This was a world in which the
environment was such that she was sure she would find again her inner
peace and safety. After all:

...soon we started receiving financial assistance which was enough for
us. I was saving some money from that assistance, so in two months I
managed to return all the money I had borrowed. Finally, I did not
owe anything to anybody. That is how I am; I’ll rather eat less, but I’ll
repay my debts on time. After all, those people were so good to us and
they helped us by lending us money.

Generally speaking, that whole period was fine for Jasna as well as for the
kids. Her children finally started attending school; they also went to a
swimming pool, so they were overjoyed. In addition they were satisfied
with their accommodation, an apartment they shared with another woman.
This situation lasted for some two months. In a meantime, Jasna was
interviewed by the police. They asked her about everything and she gave them detailed descriptions. After two months they were moved to a refugee camp near the south Swedish town of Hässleholm. The accommodation was worse there, as they did not have their own apartment. However, this did not bother them too much, since they expected their case to be definitely solved soon.

Dimensions of helplessness: refugees in a legal labyrinth

All of a sudden, two families from the camp received invitations to see a lawyer. Others had no clue as to what was going on, so they made some enquiries with responsible refugee camp officers. The answer they had was: “...you know, a lawyer will help you get your residence permits earlier”. This calmed them down; a majority was however closely watching what would happen to those who received invitations to see a lawyer. They analysed and discussed these cases among themselves, looking for the reasons why a lawyer was assigned to those people. After a while, another woman went to see a lawyer. Afterwards she explained that she was told that some people might possibly be sent home, but there was a chance for her to avoid that outcome if she managed to acquire some additional documents from Croatia. As this woman had a Croatian address and not a Bosnian one in her passport, nobody from the camp was very much excited about that either.

Yet not long afterwards six more invitations to see a lawyer came to the camp and one of them was for Jasna. At first, Jasna saw this as a consequence of her insisting to solve her case earlier, in order to be able to be reunited with her husband as soon as possible. So she took it calmly again. She was the first one for an interview.

The interview started with his checking the data of my case, and then he said: “You know what, the situation is as follows. 99 per-cent of you will be returned and you must be ready for that. You will be all expelled from this country”. As he said it, I froze. Then I thought that the man might be crazy. What’s wrong with him? To be returned! I had never even thought about that. The whole the time I had been thinking only how I could get a permit as soon as possible. And the only question was time: whether I was going to get it immediately or maybe after two months. “Where are they going to send us?”, I asked because it was not clear to me. “To Croatia”, he said. “Why?”, I enquired. “Because you are Croatian citizen.” Then I tried to explain to him that I was from a mixed marriage, that I was alone with two kids... He told me that he could understand my situation and that he maybe might help me, but a majority of Croatian passport-holders would be sent back, for sure.
When she left a lawyer's office, Jasna was shaking all over from the shock. She only managed to say to the others: “He said they would send us all back.” They did not believe her, although her appearance made them feel fearful and insecure. However, the lawyer gave more hope about the future to all the others who were interviewed after Jasna that day. He told everyone that they might possibly be sent back, but hopefully everything was going to be all right. In any case, he was not as direct and negative as he had been towards Jasna.

Jasna was in shock for quite a long after the first meeting with the lawyer:

As soon as we got back to the camp, I started crying and did not stop for fifteen days. I did not even eat anything. Other people thought that I was really going to die. I also took on an unnatural black colour. They tried to comfort me. They were telling me how I had misunderstood everything because the lawyer had given them different information. I just kept on saying how he told me that 99 per-cent of us were going to be sent back. [...] altogether, that was killing me. My son was also crying non-stop, as he saw me crying. And I could not change my behaviour and regain my self-control. And he was crying and crying. Then many other women from the camp started crying, as well, when they saw him crying. Really, it was very difficult for the kids.

In the shadow of uncertainty: The struggle to stay, mobilisation, refugee culture and new co-operation networks

It was an additional burden when the psychosis which was created in the camp because of the danger of possible expulsion had become a reality. Nothing else was a subject of discussion in the camp. They only talked about who was the next to have an appointment with the lawyer, and then what they were told. Several weeks afterwards, when Jasna had recovered a little, she asked for a meeting with some refugee camp officer, who also tried to comfort her. Events had however already succeeded each other rather fast. People started getting negative decisions only ten days after meeting the lawyer. Before long, Jasna received one, as well. Only a few days before that, she visited the lawyer again, but this time he talked longer with her and promised to do everything to help her. After receiving her negative decision, she met her lawyer for the third time. She asked him to write a one more request. He did indeed write the request and sent it by fax. He also put the note “URGENT” on it. Only half an hour later, however, the answer came that there was no reason whatsoever-
er to postpone her return, as she was a Croatian citizen and Croatia was obliged to take care of her.

There was a panic in the camp. Some of its residents had already returned to Croatia. Others were trying their best to avoid the same destiny. Among other things a hunger strike was organised. Jasna took part in it, as well. Journalists were also invited. In the meantime, Jasna contacted the Red Cross. She also called some of her acquaintances from the former Yugoslavia who had lived in Sweden for quite a long time. She hoped that they could have some influential friends who could help. All of them promised to do something, but to no avail:

Only then I realised that nothing could be done to help. We also ceased with our hunger strike in the meantime, as it did not have any effect at all. They proceeded with sending people back. A decision on my expulsion was already in the hands of the police. At that time, I had already decided to hide, as I did not have any other option. Several days before I was scheduled for return, I left the camp.

This was a beginning of a new experience; hiding from the Swedish government officials and the beginning of co-operation with civil societies (NGO’s) and Swedish families. All this also contributed to establishing a new identity, while she was stretched between a feeling of helplessness and a struggle for the right to stay.

The period in hiding lasted for more than ten months. First they hid with some friends who offered them an apartment, which actually belonged to their son who travelled a great deal so the apartment was empty most of the time. They spent three months there. Jasna had earlier managed to save some two thousand Swedish kronas and that was all they had for that three months. They were forced to a maximum saving routine. The above-mentioned friends helped them from time to time with food, but they did not give them any money. At the same time Jasna was trying to get permanent and more reliable assistance from a church. In November, they moved in with a new host, still in Malmö, where they stayed until after Christmas. One problem was that those people frequently had guests and it was dangerous to keep refugees in the house. This is why each time that guests were coming, they had to move temporarily to another apartment. Eventually, those who were helping them came to the conclusion that it would be the best if they stayed in the apartment until further notice. And so it was: that is where they stayed until the Government announced the decision for a temporary residence permit, in May 1995. Here is how Jasna describes this period:
The people who were helping us were really kind to us. We had place to stay and food to eat. Still, the worst was the pressure and constant fear. Can you believe that for ten months, almost eleven, we never left the house because I was so afraid? I spent the whole time by the window. Each time the main entrance opened, I panicked with fear. At the time, I still did not speak Swedish, so it made me even more insecure. Whoever parked in front of the house (firemen, postman, garbage collectors), I was afraid. I even did not allow my kids to watch TV; we were whispering all the time.

As I have already said, at one point, some three months after they went into hiding, something happened and they could have almost been caught and expelled. Namely, there was news on the radio that due to the participation of the Croatian army in war operations in Bosnia, all expulsions of people with Croatian passports from Sweden were to be ceased. Although it came out later that it concerned only males, military conscripts, and not refugees like Jasna, she was not aware of it at that first moment. All three of them were screaming with joy all over the house, as she described it. At the time, they had almost completely run out of money. The only thing they still clung to was the advice they got from Red Cross, to keep up a bit longer until the Social Democrats came into power and the decision on expulsion would be immediately changed. They also told Jasna and her kids to listen to radio carefully for the said news. She immediately went to the SIV office in Malmö and set up a meeting with her assistant. They impatiently waited for that meeting because it meant returning to a normal life to a certain extent:

Both the kids and I were happy after everything we had been through. Before I left for the meeting, I told my kids: “I’m going now, and when I come back we shall go to a shop to buy something”. They were beside themselves with joy. They were telling me what they would most like to get. I accepted their wishes, but still, as if I were suspecting something, I told them not to worry if I stayed a bit longer, just to be on the safe side. So I went to the meeting.

She felt some kind of anxiety from the very beginning, when they did not call her inside at the exactly appointed time. At the same time, an older man, a woman and two more men came into the room where she was supposed to have the meeting.

...and even earlier I made some enquiries in detail about who was supposed to catch me, if they were catching me at all, and how those people should look like, and so on. I was told that those dealing with this issue were usually older people who were about to be retired. So, as soon as I saw an older man I thought they might have come because of me, but I immediately discarded that thought simply because I could not believe it.
But the moment she entered the room and saw all those people sitting there, it was immediately clear to her what was going on. Jasna automatically answered the routine data identity questions coming from the assistant, all the time only looking at the strangers sitting beside. Then the assistant told her that since she had received an expulsion decision in August that year, the present people were from the police with the task to implement that decision. What would happen to her at that moment was that she would leave the country.

Then I asked why it had been announced that expulsions were to cease. The answer was that it concerned only males, military conscripts. It occurred to me how strange that logic had been. They would allow males, military conscripts, to stay and they would return me with two kids to an area raging with war. Nevertheless, I could not say anything, as I started shaking all over. I only kept on saying how I must not return because I would be killed.

According to Jasna, the older man from the police was very calm and polite, whereas the woman started explaining to Jasna, in a very impertinent and arrogant way, how she did not have any rights to proclaim her case as a special one, how Croatia was obliged to accept her according to the Geneva Convention and that there was no reason for any further discussion, that Jasna should only get ready and go.

…it occurred to me that she was mentioning the Geneva Convention not even being aware that it did not matter in a war, at all. I said: “But you cannot send me back without my kids”. She, however, retorted: “That’s your business, if you want to go without kids, no problems. But if you want to take your kids, then you have to tell us where they are so we can go and take them”. I told them that I would never reveal where my kids were. Then she said I would be returned alone in that case. At that point I started thinking whether to tell them where my kids were or not. Earlier, when I enquired about possibilities if they caught me, everyone told me I could not be returned without children. On the other hand, I started thinking what if they sent me back alone, anyway? What then? On top of it, I was afraid because at that moment my kids were alone at home and it was already quarter to two. I told them I would be back shortly. Nevertheless, as she repeated her question about whereabouts of my kids, I refused to tell them.

Finally, they told her that they were going to take her to the police. First, they searched her to check if she had any guns – as if she were a real criminal. That was devastating for her since she had never had any contact
with the police until then. The older policeman did not take part in the search. A female SIV officer was standing beside without saying a word. At that moment, Jasna saw her as a person without any feelings at all.

I felt as if I had been dreaming. Nothing mattered anymore. Everything fell apart, as if I had died. That’s exactly how I felt, as if I had been dead. Then I started reacting in a very strange way. Completely unlike my usual self. I, for one, used to always be calm, never argued with anybody. However, at that moment, I started thinking of running away. That was very strange for me. Unbelievable. All the way towards the car, I was thinking what if I started running, would they follow me? Eventually, I could not do it. Once in the car, I was sitting in the back with a policeman. He was telling me something all the way, but I was completely absent minded.

When they came to the police station, Jasna tried to explain that her kids were in a very difficult psychological state. A policewoman commented that it had been solely Jasna’s fault since she had been hiding them, instead of returning to Croatia. Allegedly, nothing could happen to them there, since Croatia was obliged to protect them according to the Geneva Convention. That was when Jasna could not control herself any more:

Woman, forget about the Geneva Convention. Are you aware that nothing matters there? And how on earth is Croatia going to protect us when its army already shot at us when we wanted to enter Croatia? However, she retorted: “What kind of a mother are you? Are you aware of what you are doing to your kids?

After that they were all quiet for some time. The policewoman calmed down a bit and told Jasna that she should understand that she was only doing her job. She asked Jasna to make herself comfortable and to relax. But she also told Jasna that she had to be aware that she could not stay in Sweden and must return to Croatia. Again she asked Jasna about her kids. Jasna answered that her children were alone in an apartment, but she was not going to say where.

“Do you want to go alone, then?”, she asked me. Since I managed to be strong enough until then and did not tell them about my kids, I answered affirmatively. “Sign here, then”, she said. When I asked what I was supposed to sign, she explained that it was my consent to go alone. Then I said I was not mad enough to sign that I was leaving without my kids. I explained that I would go alone only if they forcibly put me on plane; otherwise, I was not crazy enough to separate from my kids voluntarily. Then she added: “OK, you do not have to sign it if you don’t want to. It’s up to you”. So we sat for quite a while thereafter.
Eventually, after one more attempt to find out where the kids were, they issued Jasna the decision to travel one of the following days. They told her to get packed and report to them prior to the stated date. Then they told her to go. Jasna could not believe that they released her. Once on the street, she was torn between the wish to run to her kids immediately and the need to be cautious since she could have been followed. Every passer-by was suspicious to her. It seemed that everyone was staring at her. She was roaming along the streets in her neighbourhood for a long that day, until she was completely sure nobody was following her. When she came home, her kids were very scared and concerned. She was, too. She was scared that somebody would come and take them. However, no one came. Shortly after that, the church decided to help them and they managed to stay there until May 1995, when they got temporary residence permits for six months.

The temporary permit

After the announcement about a temporary permit, Jasna reported to the Swedish Immigration Board (SIV) again. The problem of accommodation was solved as follows: Jasna found an apartment and the SIV subsidised the rental value with one thousand Swedish kronas. Although the apartment was small and modestly furnished, and they had to pay part of the rent themselves from the assistance they were getting for food, Jasna and kids were satisfied with this kind of solution. Besides, the children again started attending school and Jasna started a language course. Nevertheless, when talking about their situation, she mentioned problems connected to “temporarilyness”. They were still special citizens, singled out from normal life and the necessary assistance that was guaranteed to “old” refugees and “normal” citizens.

The kids were good at school. They already knew some Swedish, so it made their lives easier. I, for one, asked for a psychologist immediately in order to get some advice after everything I had been through. My son, for instance, was very sensitive, he was afraid of everything and cried easily. He was annoyed with everything. For example, it took me ten minutes every morning to put his socks on, because it irritated him. The same was with my daughter. They also had difficulties in socialising with other kids. They almost did not talk to anybody. It concerned me a lot. But I was told I could not get a psychologist. I also asked that I and the kids might go for a teeth check-up. The answer was the same. Thus, the temporary residence differed from our earlier situation only in the fact that we did not have to hide any more. Otherwise, we could not plan anything.
Regarding their future, definite solution of their case, Jasna is pessimistic. She points at new manipulations of refugees whereby they become a currency, used by various countries and various political interests in achieving their goals, without the slightest possibility for them to take any part in creating their own future. This is actually the essence of the practice of temporary protection policy.

(Non-) belonging; causes and consequences

Jasna’s refugee odyssey illustrates several complex social processes connecting micro/macro, global/national, local/individual levels. Firstly, her experience of war and of her escape from her hometown is an example of what the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina looked like and its potential impact. The refugees were displaced by means of a systematic and planned deprivation of the feeling of ontological security, i.e., the confidence in the people among whom and the system in which they lived. What remained were only the fear and uncertainty. In Jasna’s case, these feelings were further strengthened during her stay in Croatia – which finally made her decide to leave for Sweden.

Secondly, her experience of being refugee in Sweden well illustrates the Swedish new refugee policy established in the mid-1990s, which was based on temporary refugee protection and repatriation. The rhetoric in this new refugee policy tried to focus on the argument that its main aim was helping refugees in a better and more effective way. This argument is based on the assumption that by being removed from their national communities, refugees become automatically deprived of their identity, traditions, and culture (Malkki, 1995). Hence, the best possible solution of the refugee tragedy was—according to this discourse—repatriation, when the situation in their homeland normalized. In its concrete everyday practice, the new refugee policy appeared to focus in the first place on the protection of the Swedish borders, while real help to refugees to deal with their tragedy was of secondary importance (Aleininikoff, 1995).

In fact Jasna was exposed to a sort of twofold expulsion. She was deprived of her right to belong to her homeland, while at the same time she was refused protection in Sweden. In order to explain the reasons for this sort of expulsion, we need to recall Hannah Arendt’s (1951/1968) discussion of ambivalent relations between contemporary (“liberal democratic”) nation-states and human rights. It is the problem of the conflict between the sovereignty of the individual and the sovereignty of the people,

3 For a more detailed account on the trends in Swedish immigration and refugee policy at that time, see Slavnić 2000, 2008).
a problem that neither liberal political theory nor “liberal” political praxis have yet resolved. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the fundamental legacy of the French revolution, was according to Arendt (ibid., p. 290) a turning point in history regarding individual human rights. It represented a definite emancipation from the God or any authority other than Man himself/herself as a source of, as well as the ultimate goal of, law. Since “Men are born free and remain free and equal in rights”, and “The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and immutable rights of man”, no special law was needed to protect the Rights of Man, because all laws are supposed to rest on these rights, explains Arendt (Ibid., p. 291). The sovereignty of the people was at the same time proclaimed as a rule in the name of Man, and it was reducible to the sovereignty of the (individual) Man. In practice however — since individual rights could only be effectively guaranteed and protected by the nation state — the Right of Man has become a part of the right of people to sovereign self-government (Ibid., p. 291). Thus, as Bridget Cotter (2005) summarized it, the conflict between the nation and the individual results in the nation winning, as the state has become an instrument of “the nation”, rather than a protector of the individual. An individual’s right to have rights may be guaranteed only for those who belong to nation-states.

There are number of consequences that the above-described, and unresolved, contradiction produces in the contemporary world. Jasna’s story sheds light on several of them. First, it gives us an alternative perspective on the relationship between the war in the Balkans and its international context. The predominant dichotomous image of the civilized and democratic West versus the savage and undemocratic Balkans appeared to be very questionable. Instead of this image, one may argue that the war in the Balkans constituted a legitimate quest of the Balkan peoples to achieve what all other civilized peoples already possess, namely sovereign, self-determining nation states. Or, conversely, the “border closure policy” by the West can also be understood as a sign that Western European nations are not so far from “Balkan savageness”. In this context it could be said, with a paraphrasing of Schierup (1995), that a necessary condition for “de-Balkanization” of the Balkans is “de-Balkanization” of Europe. Indeed, judging from the way in which Jasna was received in the West, it became clear that universal principles of humanism, solidarity and democracy only existed as a cover for the realization of these countries’ own particularistic national interests.

Secondly, her story questions the dominant concept of the relationship between nationalism and modernity. According to the prevailing notion of modernity today, with roots in Parsons’s evolutionary macro-
theory from the 1950s, ethno-national movements and social exclusion are considered to be a pre-modern phenomenon on the one hand (Imhof 1997), while the “Western society” on the other hand is regarded as a sociologically ideal type for the “modern age” (ibid., p. 58). At the same time, modernity is, according to Joas (1999), constructed as a peaceful project in itself. This picture continues to be reproduced in the dominant public, political and scientific discourses, not least despite the fact that a number of eminent scientists (Bauman 1989; Wiewiorka 1997; Joas, 1999, 2003; Imhof 1997; Barkawi & Laffey 2001) have already pointed out that nationalism, racism, war and violence are permanent parts of modernity and not just by-products of its historical development patterns (Joas 1999, p. 457). In this context, refugees are not kind of anomaly in the international states system: they are creation of and an integral part of this system (Haddad 2003).

Jasna’s life story calls into question even the currently dominant perception of the relationship between nationalism and democracy. Nationalism is for most of us completely incompatible with democracy. Political activities in a democratic society must be based on a political ethics that focuses on responsibility (the ethics of responsibility), which among other things means that democratic countries are inherently peaceful. By the way, it is well known that democracies do not wage war against each other, as is often argued by protagonists of this view. In contrast, nationalist politicians in undemocratic countries base their political activities on so-called conviction ethics, or ethics of absolute ends. In reality, however, this is not about the dilemma between the ethics of responsibility and the ethics of ultimate ends, but about the question of what is the highest principle of political responsibility. In our time, which both Jasna’s history and also the results of relevant research (see for instance Joppke 1999, p. 262) clearly indicate, the highest principle is arguably the nation and national interests. Nationalism is thus not merely the historical basis that all currently known democracies are built on, but also, in terms of everyday politics, it is always superior to democracy. Here I mean that we are always willing rather to sacrifice some of our democratic principles rather than some of our national interests. The current trend in the reduction of our Western democratic procedures and liberal citizenships and human rights in connection with the so-called “war against terrorism” is perhaps the best example of what I state here.

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4 Nationalism is not only segregated from democracy, but also, as Wimmer & Shiller (2002) point out, geographically far removed from our democratic societies and link it primarily with the savage Balkans, as in our example.

5 On relationship between Max Weber’s “ethics of responsibility” and “ethics of ultimate ends” see Slavnić (2004).
Instead of a conclusion

Jasna’s story however is not just a story of the 1990s, at least not to the extent that it relates to the radical changes in the Swedish immigrant policy in this period. These changes were, in fact, just the beginning of what is today one of the main features of our everyday life, not only in Sweden but also in most other Western countries.

Changes in immigration policy since then are necessarily linked to the wider political and economic processes of the withdrawal of the welfare state, accompanied by erosion of social rights and labor re-commodification (Slavnić 2010; Munck et al. 2011). Tighter immigration control did not prevent or even reduce immigration, but it criminalized it instead, with all its consequences (intended or unintended) (Jordan & Düvell 2002; Anderson 2010). The increased insecurity and legal uncertainty to which immigrants have increasingly been exposed, make them vulnerable, and places them in a position that Bernhard (et al. 2007) calls a “precarious legal status”. Later on this legal status even frames their position in the labor market (Anderson 2010), providing unlimited opportunities to their employers to continue exploiting them (Jordan & Düvell 2002; Jones et al. 2006; Wright & McKay 2007).

Furthermore, relevant research (see e.g., Goldring & Landholt 2011) shows that their subordinate status in the labor market continues even after they have resolved their legal status and become “full citizens”. So their precarious citizenship status continues to be the engine of their further precarisation and exploitation on the labor market (Munck et al. 2011). To paraphrase Foti (2005), they become “hireable on demand, available on call, exploitable at will, and fireable on a whim”. In this sense, precarisation is not related to only one sphere of the life, such as work, but encompasses all aspects of life of this new class (which is called the “precariat”) as well as their past, present and future (Barbier et al. 2002; Tsianos & Papadopoulos 2006).

This is what is happening at the level of the individual fate of these people. On a broader level, the current structural processes of growing precarization are part “of the latest phase of migration [which] dovetails with the rise of neoliberal capitalism, for which migration serves as an important vehicle for the flexibilization of labour markets and a depreciation of the cost of labour” (Munck et al. 2011, pp. 254-255; see also Castles 2011; Schierup et al. 2014; Likić et al. 2013). Mass migration still seems to be a necessary precondition for capital accumulation (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Bauder 2006). Another aspect that needs to be emphasized here is that it is not immigration and immigrants as such that contribute
capital accumulation, but the immigrants’ deprived position in the labour market. Their exclusion is what makes them attractive for a capitalist economy. By being systematically pushed into the secondary sectors of the labour market, migrants help stabilize it for non-migrants (Bauder 2006). At the same time and in long run they also help the neoliberal reconstruction of labour market as such, which means worsened working conditions and work protection for all.

All these processes are helped by actual citizenship policies. Citizenship and the regulation of labour markets are inseparable from each other, where citizenship appears to be a legal mechanism that sorts workers into different, hierarchically organized categories (Bauder 2006, p. 26). Non-citizens (but also precarious citizens) are systematically pushed towards the lower end of this hierarchy. Non-citizens, as people per definition lacking citizenship rights, are rightless, powerless and vulnerable and this is exactly what makes them easy to slot into the toughest sectors of the labour market. This is also what makes them attractive for advanced capitalist economies today. “[T]hey are valuable just because they are vulnerable” (Bauder 2006).

Jasna’s story seems to be illustrative of these current political, economic and social processes. The precarious legal status that she experienced in the mid-1990s was to become the key characteristic of current immigration and labour market policies — not only in Sweden, but in most of the so-called “advanced economies”. Capital accumulation has always been based on exploiting human labour – what is new in current trends is that it increasingly relies on exploiting human dignity, also.

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When hospitality ends:
Asylum seekers from Serbia in Sweden

Tanja Pavlov

Sweden has traditionally been a country of destination and hospitality for citizens of Serbia. At the beginning of the 60s of the twentieth century, programmes of recruiting foreign workers, especially after the signing of bilateral agreements on employment with Yugoslavia in 1966 activated labour migration flows from Serbia to Sweden. Sweden also received a large wave of refugees in the 1990s which was the result of wars and socio-economic crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Following the lifting of visa requirements for citizens of Serbia in 2009, salvation in this country was sought by the most marginalised and poorest part of Serbian population – the Roma. Unfortunately, they “knocked on the wrong door” – seeking asylum without any grounds for doing so. This third wave of ‘uninvited guests’ provoked a reaction from the Swedish authorities to consider the possibility of reintroducing visas (Blic 2013a) i.e. “introducing a mechanism of suspension of visa free regime” (Blic 2013b) at the EU level. Countries on both sides of the 'European fortress' felt somehow jeopardised – those inside due to the violation of the asylum system and financial expenses of taxpayers, and those on the outside because of the possibility to remain outside the walls forever.

The focus of public debates was the issue of who was to blame – the EU countries or the Western Balkans countries and how to prevent uninvited guests by introducing restrictive measures while entering the country and more restrictive procedures for deciding on the asylum application through the accelerated procedure and reduction of social benefits (Andersson & Nilsson 2011, p. 168; ESI 2013, pp. 16-17). In all this dynamics the human and personal stories of people who had tried to find a better future in a foreign country were simply lost. They are called “bogus refugees”, “false asylum seekers”, “tourists” or “turncoats” who go to “paid holidays” (Knaus & Stiglmayer 2011). The rarely asked question is why these people, the poorest and most marginalised, together with the

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1 <tp@grupa484.org.rs>. I would like to thank my colleague Danica Cirić who helped me conduct interviews and my colleagues from Centre for Migration – Miroslava Jelačić, Vladimir Petronijević, Siniša Volarević and Danilo Rakić, for giving me useful suggestions.
entire families and often with borrowed funds headed to an uncertain future in a foreign country, leaving the country that was not in war and where their lives were not physically threatened. Why they found themselves in the same group with people from Syria where the civil war has so far killed 60,000 people and where 3,000 people flee to neighbouring countries every day (Almeling & Leon 2013).

This chapter seeks to answer this question by analysing the statistical data, objective circumstances in the country of origin and the country of destination and the perspective of migrants themselves. The first part presents statistics on asylum seekers from Serbia in the EU countries and particularly in Sweden and on their return to Serbia. The second part analyses the objective circumstances, at the macro and meso level that encourage this type of migratory movements. The third part of the chapter provides a perspective of the migrants themselves - their motivation and ways of participating in this type of migration. The fourth part reviews the current attempts of governments to respond to this challenge and proposes possible actions in the direction of seeking sustainable solutions. The chapter ends with the conclusions for policy makers and researchers about the opportunities to contribute to addressing the causes that underlie this type of migration i.e. facilitate the integration of Roma in the community through migration policies and research.

Methodology

Analysis of statistical data and migration policies

The purpose of the analysis of statistical data and migration policies was to establish the macro and meso factors that influence decisions of Serbian citizens on seeking asylum in Sweden. Statistics were analysed on the number of asylum applications of Serbian citizens in the EU and especially in Sweden, the structure of asylum seekers and decisions made about the applications. The data from the Eurostat and the Swedish Migration Board were used. Main limitation of these data is that at different periods they include citizens of Serbia and Montenegro or Serbia with or without Kosovo. Only the data from 2009 include solely the citizens of Serbia, without the citizens of Kosovo. The data from the state organs in Serbia on the number and structure of returnees from the EU countries were also analysed. They have limitations since the registration is mandatory only for forcibly returned asylum seekers and there is no information on rejected asylum seekers who have returned voluntarily. The data on
gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and the unemployment rate in Serbia and in Sweden were analysed, using data from Eurostat, national statistical offices and the UN. With regard to migration policies, the measures adopted in the EU, Sweden and Serbia to prevent the Serbian citizens from seeking asylum in the EU countries were analysed.

Interviews with returnees from Sweden

With the interview we wanted to identify the micro factors that influence the decision of the Serbian citizens to seek asylum in Sweden. A semi-structured interview was conducted, comprised of three sets of questions: 1) questions about life in Serbia before making a decision about seeking asylum in Sweden and the motivation for the decision, 2) the asylum procedure in Sweden and life while waiting for a response to the asylum application, and 3) the way of return and life upon the return to Serbia. Interviews were conducted in January and February 2013. We interviewed 13 returnees – asylum seekers from Serbia to Sweden, 6 women and 7 men. We tried for the sample to be as heterogeneous as possible in order to determine different perspectives and identify various challenges this population faces. The youngest respondent is 19 years old and the oldest 55, average age being 34.8. Four people have not completed elementary school, five have completed elementary school, three have completed high school and one has graduated from college. They are all married except for one person. Two families have one child, three families have two, three and four children, and one family has five children. All the respondents are Roma, except for one woman. They are all unemployed, except for one person who has part-time employment. Two persons are from Belgrade, 3 from Beočin, 2 from Niš, 2 from Vranje and 4 from Bujanovac. The respondents were reached through the Red Cross of Serbia (5 persons) and nongovernmental organisations Nexus (6) and Women’s Space (2) whose beneficiaries are returnees, Roma men and women. In this way, we wanted to ensure trust of the beneficiaries since they are the organisations and people that support them. However, two constraints remain. First, they may be the most vulnerable people because they receive assistance from the organisations. Second, because of the sensitivity of the issue and their fear of negative consequences, their trust and openness remain questionable. It is reflected in the duration of the interview – ranging from 20 to 54 minutes. Interviews were conducted mainly on the premises of these organisations and three were conducted in the respondents’ homes.
Statistical picture

Asylum Seekers from Serbia in Sweden

According to the Eurostat data (2013a) for the period 2009-2012 when the Eurostat collected data separately for Serbia, without Kosovo, the number of asylum seekers from Serbia in the EU-27 increased sharply from 5,235 people in 2009 to 17,715 people in 2010. In 2011 and 2012 there was a decline to 13,980 and 12,915 people, although the number is still high – more than double the number of asylum seekers in 2009. In 2011, according to the number of asylum applications in the EU-27 Serbia was 5th country with 13,980 applications, behind Afghanistan (28,015), Russia (18,330), Pakistan (15,700) and Iraq (15,170). The countries in which Serbian citizens have sought asylum in the past four years are mostly Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland and Luxembourg (Eurostat 2013a). Just behind Germany, Sweden is a country in which Serbian citizens most often seek international protection. Table 1 shows the period 1992-2011 and the average number of applications of Serbian citizens who sought international protection in Sweden.

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2 Five main citizenships of (non-EU-27) asylum applicants, 2011 (number, rounded figures). It should be noted that Afghanistan has 28,717,213 citizens (2002), Russia 142,914,136 (2011), Pakistan 176,351,000 (2011), Iraq 31,234,000 (2009), and Serbia 7,241,295 (2011, without Kosovo).
Table 1Applications for asylum received and residence permits granted for citizens from Serbian and Montenegro (Serbia, without Kosovo from 2008), 1992-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applications for asylum received</th>
<th>Residence permits granted$^3$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>59,359</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>1,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>16,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2,115</td>
<td>2,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3,446</td>
<td>1,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1,812</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,055</td>
<td>2,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3,102</td>
<td>1,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5,852</td>
<td>1,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5,305</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4,022</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>1,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2,001</td>
<td>2,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6,343</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,674</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115,480</td>
<td>35,501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Swedish Migration Board

Table 1 shows that Serbian citizens have a “history” of seeking asylum in Sweden. Their number reached its peak in 2010, with 6,343 applications.

$^3$ Residence permits granted 1992-2011 pursuant to the Geneva Convention, conscientious objectors, de facto refugees, persons in need of protection, humanitarian reasons, temporary permits, quota refugees, temporary legislation, previous temporary permits and impediments to enforcement.
Although this wave decreased to more than half in 2011 and 2012 with the number of 2,674 and 2,696 applications it is still much higher than 958 and 567 applications in 2008 and 2009. In 2011, Serbia was the third by the number of asylum applications in Sweden, behind Afghanistan (4,130) and Somalia (4,045). In 2012, it was fourth behind Syria (7,814), Somalia (5,644) and Afghanistan (4,755). Yet it must be noted that Serbia and Montenegro was the first by the number of applications in Sweden in 2003, and second behind Iraq in 2006 (Eurostat 2013b). The number of residence permits has been continuously decreasing since 2007.

Table 2 Gender and age distribution of asylum seekers from Serbia in Sweden in period 2009-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>43.59</td>
<td>56.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6,255</td>
<td>48.64</td>
<td>51.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,645</td>
<td>48.77</td>
<td>51.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EUROSTAT database, [migr_asyappctza]

With regard to gender (Table 2), the number of women asylum seekers from Serbia in Sweden increased from 44% in 2009 to 49% in 2011. The highest percentage of asylum seekers is children (38-49%) and young people aged 18-34 (30-34%), followed by persons aged 35-64 (19-27%). The elderly over 65 make from 0.5 to 0.9%. It seems that the number of children asylum seekers increased following the lifting of the visa regime. The asylum seekers are mostly of Roma ethnicity (ESI 2013: 11).

Table 3 First instance decisions and final decisions on applications by Serbian citizens in Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decisions /TIME</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First instance decisions</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4,760</td>
<td>2,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final decisions</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>1,570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EUROSTAT database, [migr_asydfsta], [migr_asydfcina]
Regarding decisions on asylum applications for citizens of Serbia, the percentage of positive responses in the first instance ranged from 3.6% in 2009 to 0.5% in 2010 and 1% in 2011, and positive final decision in the percentage of 7.7% in 2009, 3.9% in 2010 and 3.2% in 2011.

Statistics on asylum seekers from Serbia in Sweden shows that it is a significant group that needs attention. Asylum seekers are mostly children and young people of Roma ethnicity. The number of women is constantly increasing and is almost equal to that of men. Generally, it is quite a vulnerable population, but at the same time it is working age population. Sweden has issued a very small number of positive decisions to asylum applications from Serbia, but such a small number can also be a motivating factor for people who have nothing to lose.

Return to Serbia

With the end of the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the political changes in Serbia, the need for international protection of our citizens ceased to exist. A certain number of citizens had their temporary protection terminated, while others were not granted asylum. Return of our citizens from European countries is also done on the basis of readmission agreements. As an obligation in the process of European integration Serbia signed bilateral agreements – a total of 16 with 18 countries, including Sweden, and a unique agreement on readmission with the European Union on September 18, 2007. Accurate statistics on the number and structure of returnees to Serbia are lacking since those who return voluntarily are not registered anywhere, and there is a fear of the negative consequences of their unjustified stay abroad (police record and a ban to leave Serbia). The Commissariat for Refugees assesses that some 40,000 citizens have returned after they lost their right to stay in the EU before the visa liberalisation. According to the Serbian Ministry of Interior of Serbia, in the period 2003-2009, they received 28,000 requests for the return of Serbian citizens who were not eligible to stay in the EU. These citizens had sought protection abroad before the abolition of visas and spent several years abroad because they had a temporary protection or waited for a response to their request. Since the abolition of visas, Serbia has received 11,935 requests (Group 484 2012, p. 38). Table 4 shows the number of submitted and accepted requests for readmission and accordingly returned nationals in the period 2007-2011.
Table 4 Number of requests for readmission of Serbian citizens, issued authorisations, and returned citizens under readmission agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Submitted readmission agreements</th>
<th>Issued readmission authorisations</th>
<th>Returned citizens</th>
<th>Returnees who contacted the Office for Readmission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>2,805</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>1,132</td>
<td>3,572</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>1,557</td>
<td>4,377</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,706</td>
<td>3,118</td>
<td>4,434</td>
<td>1,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4,587</td>
<td>3,820</td>
<td>5,150</td>
<td>1,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,546</td>
<td>11,560</td>
<td>20,338</td>
<td>4,873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The number of requests increased from 2010, while the number of returned nationals continuously increased with each year. It is believed that the cause of the increased number of returnees is the fact that over 80% of them went after the abolition of visa requirements for citizens of Serbia, which led to changes in procedures – the so-called ‘unspecific readmission’ which includes organised land transportation for a large number of persons, without the prior regular procedures of state authorities of the EU member states and the Republic of Serbia. The asylum determination procedure was also shortened, from 6-12 months in 2010 to 3-4 months in 2011 and later to only 1 to possibly 2 months (Department of Human and Minority Rights 2012: 3-4). In Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia for 2010 and 2011 (Government of RS 2011b, 2012), can be seen that the returnees in Serbia were mostly men (73% in 2010 and 68% in 2011) of legal age (84% in 2010 and 81% in 2011).

Objective circumstances: macro and meso factors

In an attempt to answer the question why Serbian citizens seek international protection in Sweden, we have looked at all three levels of analysis present in migration theories – macro, meso and micro. Examination
of factors that influence the decision about seeking asylum has shown that they are factors in the country of origin and country of destination.

The importance of economic factors was emphasised, as well as the politics, historical colonial links, the sharing of a common language, social networks – previous asylum seekers, agents, family relations; restrictiveness of migration policies, benefits in the asylum procedures, geographical proximity, estimated probability of obtaining a residence permit, the risk of being forced to return home, etc. (Brekke 2012; Nordlund & Pelling 2012; Crawley 2010; Neumayer 2004, 2005).

At the macro level, we started from the economic circumstances specified by indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (Graph 1) and the unemployment rate (Graph 2) in Serbia and in Sweden.

Graph 1 GDP per capita in Serbia and Sweden in the period 2000-2011
Economic indicators show the huge advantage of Sweden, despite the economic crisis that has also hit developed countries in 2008. The unemployment rate in Serbia increased from 13.6 per cent in 2008 to 23.6 per cent in 2011, while in Sweden from 6.2 in 2008 increased to 8.4% in 2010 and fell to 7.5 in 2011. GDP per capita in Serbia fell from 6,498 in 2008 to 5,037 dollars in 2010 and increased slightly in 2011 to only 5,579, while in Sweden it fell from 52,632 dollars in 2008 to a minimum of 43,581 dollars in 2009 and increased again to 57,134 in 2011.

If the level of analysis deals with the places from which the Serbian citizens sought asylum in Sweden, the push factors in Serbia look even more impressive. One of such places is Vranje, a town in southern Serbia, in which we carried out the research. According to the latest census in the town of Vranje has 83,524 inhabitants (SORS 2012, p. 84). Compared to the population census in 2002 and 87,288 inhabitants, Vranje has decreased the number of inhabitants by 5% (RZS 2002, p. 34). In late 1880s and early 1990s Vranje had 34,000 employed people and in 2010 that number nearly halved to 19,000 (Stojčić 2011). The average net salary was 300 euro in 2011 (SIEPA 2013). The one of the reason for such a situation is the vanishing manufacturing industry, which used to be the engine driving economic development of Vranje in the 1960s, 1970s, right to 1991.

Regarding the situation of Roma in Serbia, if we apply the indicators of integration of immigrants in the receiving country – the share in the labour market, participation in education and drop out of school, housing, political participation, number of mixed marriages, etc. results are probably worse than any immigrant community in any other country. In
the governmental and non-governmental reports Roma are mentioned as the most vulnerable social group by both poverty and discrimination (Government of RS 2011c, p. 39; Belgrade Centre for Human Rights 2012, p. 38). In the area of education and health certain improvements are noticeable, but in housing and employment, “there are hardly any noticeable changes” (Belgrade Centre for Human Rights 2012, p. 38). The report of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (2012, p. 38) states that the issue of the Roma is mostly negatively treated in public in terms of their misuse of the visa-free regime as unfounded asylum seekers.

Furthermore, the political situation in the period since 2000 to date in Serbia has been full of turbulence and still continues to be the push factor. Although the political changes happened in Serbia in October 2000, and although in the country the ruling parties have had the word 'democratic' in their names and have been of pro-European orientation, we have witnessed constant political turmoil, which has even taken human lives. Especially difficult events were the assassination of the Prime Minister (March 2003), Montenegro withdrawal from the Union (May 2006), difficulties in cooperation with the ICTY and the fugitive war crimes indictees, and the still unresolved issue of Kosovo and Metohija is a continuous source of conflicts and loss of human lives. On the other hand, Sweden is the country characterised by political stability, transparent institutions, a high capacity for adopting new technology, a high level of education and flexible open markets, and the country among the top ten in international rankings such as the UNDP’s Human Development Index (Nordlund & Pelling 2012, p. 12).

Encouraging factors for this type of migration are definitely migration policies and regulatory frameworks in both countries observed. The abolition of the visa regime has enabled Serbian citizens to travel visa-free to EU countries and legally reside there for up to three months. Moreover, they are greeted by a country which, by the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is assessed with 83 points out of 100 and is in first place among 31 countries (EU members, USA, Canada, Norway and Switzerland).

Yet the question remains why Serbian citizens seek international protection instead of looking for a job in Sweden. Data and research show that it is not so easy for third country nationals to get employment in

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Sweden (EMN 2012; Nordlund & Pelling 2012; Weisbrock 2011). In the period 1972-2008, the law on labour migration in Sweden was very restricted, limited to very short-term employment or highly specialised occupations. However, due to aging population and shortages of workers in December 15, 2008 the Swedish Riksdag passed a new law on labour migration, which should facilitate the employment of third country nationals. The employer can hire anyone, regardless of nationality or profession, provided that they fulfil certain conditions: the worker must be able to live on their salary; and the salary, the insurance cover and other employment conditions must meet the prevailing or collectively agreed upon standards in a particular occupation or industry (Nordlund & Pelling 2012, p. 8). No more skill requirements, salary thresholds and limits on the number of permits. Even rejected asylum seekers may change the status by applying for work permit for a period of two months from the rejection of their asylum applications. Yet the requirement remained related to the advantage in the employment of resident workers and citizens of the EU countries. Although the number of applications for residence permits for employment purposes has gradually increased, there has not been a massive increase in inflows (OECD 2011, p. 132). Unemployment rate of third country nationals is still higher than the unemployment of Swedish nationals – 31.6% versus 7.6% (EMN 2012, p. 48). Weisbrock (2011, pp. 57-58) points out that the Swedish integration policy has not managed to prevent significant differences between native and foreign-born Swedes on the labour market.

Research with migrants from Iraq shows “that it is not self-evident that labour migrants should have better prospects for integration in Sweden than asylum seekers” (Nordlund & Pelling 2012, p. 5). The authors support this claim by the fact that many of the measures intended for integration of asylum seekers are not applied in the case of labour migrants, such as financial support for attending Swedish language classes. Furthermore, asylum seekers are often granted permanent residency from the start whereas labour migrants get work permits that are never granted for more than two years at a time, with the eligibility for permanent residency if they live four of the previous five consecutive years in Sweden on a work permit. Statistics show that a small number of Iraqis has succeeded in transforming temporary work passes into permanent residence permits. Temporary work permit holders complain about the uncertainty of their job and the possibility of being exploited by employers because they depend on them for getting permanent residence permit. Labour migrants from Iraq in large numbers work in jobs where there is a surplus
of labour and where salaries are lower and working conditions poorer than in the labour market at large.

On the other hand, the system of asylum protection is favourable for asylum seekers in Sweden. They receive accommodation, right to a lawyer, interpreter, emergency medical care, right to work and work practice, possibility for children to attend school, as well as a daily allowance. Upon the rejecting of asylum applications they can receive a travel allowance and a re-establishment support\(^5\). Duration of the asylum procedure for Western Balkan citizens until first instance decision takes 2-4 months, and until final decision after appeal takes additional 4-6 months (ESI 2013, p. 8). Therefore it is the period during which Serbian citizens can use the benefits of the system of asylum protection, but can hardly use it for finding a job, getting a work permit and having a longer stay in Sweden.

Socio-economic and political factors should be certainly accompanied by meso factors – social networks that potential migrants and returnees have and that can reduce the material, social and emotional costs of migration (Faist 1997; Massey \textit{et al.} 1998; Elrick 2005). Networks encourage independence of the migratory process in several ways: allow raising funds for the travel, ensure dissemination of information on the country of destination, minimise the risk of migration and facilitate adaptation to the new environment. According to the population census in Serbia (without Kosovo), the number of citizens from Serbia working in Sweden with family members ranged from 8,787 in 1971, to 12,351 in 1981 and 9,929 in 1991, up to 14,049 people in 2002. These numbers should be supplemented by the number of persons that have sought international protection in Sweden. Persons seeking international protection see a strong pull factor in acquaintances, friends and relatives in Sweden, and they take their families with them, so that the possible pull factor for staying in Serbia lost its importance. Furthermore, the sociological phenomenon of “herd behaviour” is also common – migrants often follow the course of other migrants believing it is the correct behaviour of the majority (Epstein & Gang 2004, p. 1; Warin & Blakely 2009, p. 1). Thus, for example, in Beočin (Vojvodina), the place in which we conducted our research, there are 64 Roma families who sought asylum and have returned from Sweden. Roma families are probably more influenced by each other because they live in isolated Roma settlements.

\(^5\) It is not available for Serbian citizens.
Micro perspective: migrants’ view

Migration micro theories have emphasised the importance of decision makers, their characteristics, desires and expectations with respect to migration. In order to understand migration, attention should be focused on the “autonomous decision-maker” who, “although in some cases under pressure in almost every moment of the decision making process can determine, describe the parameters of their decision: work, family, professional status, quality of life, cultural transfers and selection policies in both spaces, emigration and immigration” (Mežnarić 2003, p. 325). Many authors (Lee 1966, p. 51; De Jong & Fawcett 1981, p. 54) have pointed out that the decision makers do not decide to migrate on the basis of objective circumstances, but on the basis of perception of objective circumstances.

For that reason, through interviews with returnees from Sweden we wanted to see the migration cycle from their perspective – the decision to migrate, migration, stay in Sweden and return to Serbia. Their three key perceptions were identified: 1) the basis of the decision to migrate in search of asylum is the poverty and marginalisation of the Roma population, 2) asylum procedure in Sweden allows for better living conditions than the living conditions in Serbia, 3) upon returning migrants remain in the vicious circle of poverty with additional problems brought by this type of migration.

Making decision about migration: poverty and marginalisation as a motive

The first questions to returnees were related to their decision to migrate – how they made it, why they decided to migrate, why through asylum and why in Sweden. For all of them, the reason to migrate was intolerable economic situation, especially the inability to find a job despite all their efforts. None of them worked, either had never worked or had been laid off due to economic restructuring. There have been less seasonal jobs and generally manual labour that they normally do and that no one else would, because of advances in technology, and those that exist are less paid. Funds that they receive as social welfare are insufficient to feed their families which are usually large with many children. Closely linked to poverty are discrimination and marginalisation. The third reason they mentioned is a serious health condition. They mainly decided to seek international protection from poverty and marginalisation. Persons that have sought asylum after the abolition of the visa regime are generally aware that they cannot obtain international protection, but nevertheless
go there to survive winter and try to save some money they receive while waiting for decision on their application.

Interview 1.

[Do people know they will get a negative response?] ‘People know that but go anyway. Because they don’t have a life here. Live hard for no money. My family also work at fairs, in summer, for no money. You stand there all day, begging people to buy something. Because of this ... It’s much stress but there you have some peace of mind, because you don’t have such problems as you have here. If you understand what I mean. Because there [Sweden] you get more money than here. And you can fill the fridge for your children and you have no worries. Tomorrow when you open the fridge, you know you can cook something. While here, you open it, you have nothing ... Well, you certainly noticed that many Roma went, more Roma than Serbs. Because they are not given any help. Because, I'm talking to you from my personal experience, as we are Roma. My dad has a bit darker complexion. And there, in a car wash [in Serbia] they needed a worker. He went there to ask for a job and they told him directly: ‘I don’t want to lose my customers because of you.’

Girl from Nis, 18, went to Sweden in 2011

Going abroad to seek asylum looks like a seasonal job. Only in this case the entire family goes to “work”, as each family member brings more money to the family in the asylum procedure. They go in September and October when firewood and food for the winter should be obtained and children equipped for school, and when the winter months increase electricity bills. They try to survive the winter in the warm, with basic living conditions and to save money at least to return the money borrowed for the trip.

In making the decision to seek asylum, the crucial role is that of social networks, whether they have friends and relatives in Sweden, whether in their environment there are those who have stayed in Sweden and told them about Sweden as a country with high standards and benefits of the asylum protection system. They have met people with experience of seeking asylum in Sweden either in their Roma settlements or in another country where they have tried to obtain asylum. Some of the returnees say that they were informed about Sweden through the Internet.

Interview 3.

[Do many people go abroad in this way?] ‘Well I can say, yes. [Has anyone succeeded there?] You know that there have always been asylum
seekers, refugees. The people that left in 1991. We are generally, let’s say, jealous of their lives. We see that they have succeeded in their lives. They were accepted by Sweden and they stayed. Their children have finished education there. They have found jobs. It normally does not happen immediately, it takes years. They went to schools there, first learned the language, found jobs, but they had someone to help them…Now, to be honest, lately, we go there knowing that we can’t get their rights, but we think that we can improve our current situation. And people have hopes. For example, someone in the family is sick, and believes that he’ll go there sick and stay there on the grounds of that, but I think it’s also wrong. It all depends on the disease.’

Man from Vranje, 39, went to Sweden in 2010

When asked why Sweden, they provided as with another answer, that it is not only Sweden. In the 1990s, some returnees, along with their parents, were asylum seekers for example in Germany, and after the abolition of visas they decided to go back to Germany and then to Sweden. After the abolition of visas others tried to seek asylum in several countries e.g. in Sweden, Luxembourg and Germany. First, such migration movements show that reintegration of returnees who left before the visa liberalisation process has not been effective. Second, returnees are quite well informed about the systems of asylum protection in different countries and they migrate to countries with more favourable asylum protection system. Third, the question of efficiency of the Eurodac database is raised and whether the same Serbian citizens are recorded in the statistics of different countries, i.e. whether the mostly same people are in these migration flows.

They do not see the possibility to choose between asylum and labour migration. They believe that with their level of education, language skills, lack of connections and Roma origin that has a bad image everywhere, they do not have the option of entering another country through labour migration flows. The only remaining way to enter is by getting married to persons who have obtained legal residence abroad, which is even more dangerous and carries a high risk of being trafficked. All the respondents would gladly participate in labour migration flows if they were provided such an option.

Interview 5.

Wouldn’t it be logical that now, when all Europe want us Roma to integrate in Serbia, to have some living standards, a better life, isn’t it logical to allow us some seasonal work? No one would ask for asylum. And for the seasonal jobs, I’m telling you, I had a chance in Sweden, in Luxembourg, in Germany. So the Swedes, Luxembourg-
ers, Germans do not want to do the seasonal work. Why aren’t we allowed? I go for three months, work there and come back here.

Man from Vranje, 40, went to Sweden in 2010.

Stay in Sweden: asylum in Sweden is better than life in Serbia

Returnees assess the living conditions during asylum procedures in Sweden, and even the level of their acceptance and integration, as better than their living conditions and level of acceptance in Serbia. After the abolition of visas, they reach asylum centres in Sweden with much less risk than when the visa regime was in force and when they used illegal migration channels and services of agents (Group 484 & Nexus 2012, p. 42). They go by regular bus lines and later by taxi to the asylum centre. Upon arrival at the reception centres they mainly refer to economic reasons for seeking asylum, but as they realise that it is not a basis for asylum, by stating health reasons and discrimination on ethnic grounds they try to extend their stay in Sweden. Staying longer in procedure means a longer life in better conditions and opportunity to save more money from the daily allowance. The people who went before the visa liberalisation would stay in Sweden for several years. Among our respondents, there is a family who went there in the 1990s, who waited for three years for the decision on their application, and another one that left Kosovo in 2006, waited for five and a half years. Two families who left in 2010 were in the procedure for two years. Yet after the visa liberalisation, the asylum procedure usually lasts for two to three months.

The respondents pointed to the various benefits of the asylum protection system. They are grateful for housing, food, clothing, allowances, children’s education, health services, and above all the warm approach towards them and their children and the acceptance of their children by their peers. Those who stayed longer were able to save some money. They say that the funds they received ranged from 450 to 900 euro per month, depending on the number of family members.

Interview 13.

'We met good, nice, smart people, livings standards are high, everything is in place in Sweden ... I really like that. I was at the doctors there – you have an appointment at 9 a.m., you come at 9 and an interpreter comes at 9. Here nothing is regulated, even for instance when waiting at the pharmacy. There we were at the health centre, you push the button, get a number and wait for your turn – they are all nice, friendly, really ... I don’t have words to describe that ... The place
where I lived for three months, it is the place of my dreams, but unfortunately, I was born in the wrong time and the wrong place.'

Woman from Bujanovac, 32, went to Sweden in 2012.

Interview 7.
They gave us money ... about 7,200 crowns, 720 euro at the time. [Could you save any money?] To be honest, yes, we could.

Man from Vranje, 39, went to Sweden in 2010

... All kinds of people, but believe it or not, they had friends there [children], they are all people of flesh and blood and it does not matter whether you are of other nationality. There my child felt... I don’t know how to explain it, he was crying the whole on our way back ...

Man from Bujanovac, 55, went to Sweden in 2012.

There was a question as to how many of them tried to change the status of asylum seeker into labour migrant (the so-called “track-changers”), as of 2008 there is a possibility that after receiving a negative decision on an asylum application a person can apply for a work permit. However, in order to obtain a work permit key requirements are that the person had a job for at least six months as an asylum seeker and that the job lasts at least 12 months from the date of application with the same employer (Swedish Migration Board, 2011). The salary should be at least 13,000 crowns a month. But in order to be eligible to work they need to have identity documents and a proof of identity and that the asylum request has solid ground. Therefore, none of our respondents managed to get a work permit. Still there were trying to work and earn something through the collection of recyclables.

Interview 6.

I collected cans ... in containers and trash cans ... I could earn 100 crowns... 70 crowns, it depends .... 10 euro a day... it depends on how many you find ... There, our people say, it’s not a trash can, it is Mrs. Trash Can.

Man from Bujanovac, 37, went to Sweden in 2010
Back in Serbia: again in the vortex of poverty

Upon returning to Serbia migrants are again faced with poverty and additional problems caused by their migratory movements, especially those who stayed longer in Sweden or participated in circular migration. Of all the respondents, only one person is currently employed and it is not a permanent employment. Even if they brought some money with them, it was spent quickly on basic needs. Mostly all of them live on welfare. The negative consequences of migration are primarily reflected on their children who lose entire grades and very often drop out of school.

Interview 3.

When we headed for Sweden it was September and her generation started school. She attended schools for five or six days and then we left Serbia and we were there for two months. So we interrupted her education at the beginning for two months. After that we came back, the school accepted her again, and we were in Serbia for three months and then we went abroad again [to Luxembourg for a year]. It turns out that in the period we lived abroad, the child did not attend our school ... Younger son attends community college, because he was in the fifth grade when we left, and then they wanted to return him back to the fifth grade. He is 13 years old.

Man from Vranje, 39, went to Sweden in 2010

Some returnees say that their welfare amount has been reduced and that they have lost the right to be registered at the National Employment Service. Moreover, in their own words, some of the officials have estimated that now they have sufficient resources and that the welfare for them should be reduced or cancelled.

Interview 5.

Well, the lady social worker, who is my personal social worker, before I went abroad she gave me about 80 euro of social assistance. Because I was abroad and sought asylum the social assistance was reduced to 40 euro. Now you see, with 4,500 dinars social assistance and child allowance of 7,000 dinars, my family of five members have to live with that, to survive [total of 100 euro]. And three children still go to school. What am I doing here? What am I doing in Serbia? Who to refer to? She should go there and earn like me. So, I'll probably go back to Sweden.

Man from Vranje, 40, went to Sweden in 2010
It is important to mention the difficulties of people who have fled from Kosovo and return to Kosovo, though they have nowhere to go and end up in camps for the displaced in Serbia where there are no basic living conditions:

They came suddenly, about 5 in the morning; we were still sleepy, the children started to cry. Some 7-8 policemen entered the apartment and maybe a woman was among them, probably the translator. We were scared and disappointed, we did not want to go, we had nowhere to return to... They told us that our flight was leaving at noon and that we should get only the basic necessities, the rest of our stuff would be sent to us later, that we would find jobs in Kosovo [which has not happened]. They said the war was over and peace reigned.

27-year old man from Kosovo, he went to Sweden in 2006, (Group 484, 2013, pp. 59-61).

Their family house in Gnjilane in Kosovo is occupied, Albanians live there, and they had nowhere to return to. So they put them in a camp near Bujanovac (southern Serbia), ironically called “Salvatore” (Saviour), in which for more than a decade displaced persons from Kosovo have been “temporary” living.

Unsuccessful migration and return to poverty have made some returnees helpless and passive and without a wish to struggle for a better tomorrow, some have abandoned the idea of further migration, and some are even more determined to find ‘their place in the sun’ in another country. The only question is which migration channels will be chosen by the latter. One returnee has proved that after seeking asylum it is possible to migrate legally. Her sister in Sweden, who managed to get asylum in the 1990s and become a citizen, has accepted her daughter, who is now studying pedagogy and works in Sweden.

In conclusion, if we look at the two alternatives – Sweden or Serbia through the rational choice theory (see Scott 2000), according to which the decision maker chooses the alternative that gives them more benefits and less costs, it is clear why asylum seekers choose Sweden. On the one hand, in Serbia, any expectations and likelihood that these expectations will be achieved are equal to zero. Instead of any gain, loss is expected due to the costs of living in winter conditions. In Sweden, better living conditions are expected in the asylum procedure, a daily allowance that can be saved and there is even a probability of getting asylum (higher than in games of chance because the probability of being granted asylum is 1%) if they can prove that they are discriminated against and ill enough. Their only investment is the travel expenses. There is also a risk of getting banned from entering Sweden and the EU countries, but it is
not a widespread measure that is perceived as possible. The loss in the education of their children, they unfortunately do not see as a loss. This equation clearly shows that the solution of the unknown is in Sweden.

**Institutional framework: What else is possible?**

Policymakers on both sides of the “Fortress Europe” have tried to change this equation in the highest degree by trying to increase the risk of making a decision on such a type of migration and reduce the perceived gain from seeking international protection in the EU and in Sweden. The European Commission has strengthened the post visa liberalisation monitoring and proposed measures: continued and enhanced cooperation with the authorities of the Western Balkan countries, investigation of facilitators like travel agencies, transport companies; continuing targeted information campaigns, increase controls at borders and entry bans (EC 2011, 2012). In May 2011, the European Commission officially proposed a legislative amendment, expected to be adopted in early 2013, which would allow EU countries to suspend visa-free travel in an accelerated procedure (ESI 2013, p. 9). The suspension clause means that if one or more Member States are faced with “a substantial and sudden increase” in the number of asylum requests from citizens of a country, it is possible to introduce visa-free travel suspension for six months, if the EC considers the request justified and member state representatives vote on this proposal by a qualified majority. This group of restrictive measures also include ESI proposals (2013, pp. 15-16) to reduce the duration of the asylum procedure and the benefits provided during the procedure, and examples of countries using a national list of “safe countries of origin” that rapidly, within a few days, return citizens of the Western Balkans back to their countries.

In Sweden, through the project “Shorter Wait” there was an attempt to reduce the time for processing an asylum case to three months, as well as the number of pending cases (EMN 2011, p. 33). Since May 1, 2012 the “Return Directive” has been in power, according to which those who have received a negative decision on the application for a residence permit, may be barred from returning to Sweden and other Schengen countries for a period of up to five years. Return prohibition is issued if the country is not left within the deadline or if the so-called decision for expulsion is issued for direct execution. Swedish interior minister is also found among those who have publicly urged the European Commission

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6 Unlike 2008, when the average processing time for an asylum application was 267 days, and there were 13 977 pending cases, in 2011 the average processing time was 149 days and there were 10647 pending cases.
and the Cypriot Presidency of the EU to finalise an amendment that would allow EU countries to suspend visa-free travel in an accelerated procedure (ESI 2013, p. 9).

The Serbian government has promptly responded to all the EU requirements in order to prevent the re-introduction of the visa regime. The inter-ministerial committee has been established in charge of monitoring the visa-free regime and proposing measures for decreasing the number of asylum applications of Serbian citizens in the EU. Based on the decree that has extended authorities of the border police, measures have been introduced that can ban citizens from leaving the country (Official Gazette RS 2011). At border crossings, citizens are required to provide evidence that they will not misuse their stay in western countries: justified reason for travel, return ticket, invitation letter, hotel reservations, health and travel insurance, certain funds, etc. (Group 484 2012, p. 42). In addition, amendments to the Criminal Code stipulate the introduction of a new criminal offense of “facilitation of the misuse of the right to asylum in a foreign country” (Official Gazette RS 2005/09). For those citizens who have been issued biometric passports of Serbia and who have given a statement to the competent international authorities that they do not possess passports, MoI has initiated the procedure of announcing the passports invalid (Vukosavljević 2011). Information campaigns have been organised as well.

However, there is awareness at both EU and national levels that the issue of these asylum seekers cannot be solved only by restrictive, administrative measures, but it is necessary to influence “the other side of the equation” and improve living conditions in Serbia, especially for the Roma population and thus reduce the strength of push factors from Serbia. The EC has indicated the need for assistance to minority populations, in particular Roma communities in the fields of education and employment, with the EU assistance and bilateral assistance of Member States. Swedish Migration Board, in cooperation with the Red Cross in Sweden and Serbia and civil society organisations, has tried to support reintegration of returnees through humanitarian and legal assistance, integrative and educational activities in Serbia. The Serbian government has adopted a number of strategies and measures aimed at this population and institu-

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7 There is neither official information nor explanation regarding the criteria by which the border police ‘determines the profile’ of passengers that are required to show additional documents and provide evidence of travel purpose.

8 “Whoever, with intent to obtain benefit for himself or other person performs or arranges transportation, transfer, reception, accommodation, or otherwise assists a Serbian national to seek asylum in a foreign country by misrepresentation of his/her human rights and freedoms, shall be punished with imprisonment from three months to three years.”
tional mechanisms for their implementation: Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees under Readmission Agreements, Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma, Migration Management Strategy and National Employment Strategy for the period 2011-2020. However, their implementation is difficult to achieve in the country where unemployment rate is 23%, and where even educated people cannot find jobs. Therefore, it is necessary to find some other way to influence this side of the equation, in cooperation with all stakeholders in the migration process.

If we look at the characteristics of the migration cycle of asylum seekers in Sweden it is clear that it is actually seasonal and/or circular migration. “Circular migration refers to temporary movements of a repetitive character either formally or informally across borders, usually for work, involving the same migrants” (Wickramasekara 2011, p. 1). Asylum seekers leave Serbia in September and October to stay there during winter, return to Serbia, and then go again to another country. Therefore, the question arises as to why these people are not allowed to participate in seasonal and circular labour migration for the benefit of all stakeholders in the migration process. It is possible to replace hindered circular migration with regulated circular migration defined by as a situation which “may be managed and regulated when institutional mechanisms are implemented to determine the number of admitted migrants (e.g., with quotas), to monitor their limited duration of stay abroad, and to select their profiles and skills” (Cassarino 2008, p. 4).

Moreover, this kind of functioning in transnational space would allow a better integration of these people. The jobs and respect they have ensured in Sweden would strengthen their economic status and self-esteem, and consequently their social status and inclusion in Serbia. Although Sweden has opened the labour market for citizens of third countries, and is thus considered that bilateral agreements or any other regulation of circular migration is unnecessary, it is very difficult for poorly educated migrants to find work in Sweden without the encouragement and regulation of both countries. This regulation, usually through bilateral agreements, is important for addressing all identified shortcomings of circular migration, in particular the vulnerability of migrants in such migration flows.

Conclusion

This small exploratory study provides directions for thinking and action for both policy makers and researchers. For policy makers, it points to the need of more intense cooperation in addressing the causes that underlie
the occurrence of unfounded asylum seekers since they can appear in a
different form if not addressed properly – in the form of illegal and ir-
regular migration, such as for example human trafficking. The stories of
asylum seekers from Serbia in Sweden reveal that they feel more accepted
in Sweden, in the asylum protection procedure than in Serbia, in their
environment. The basic question underlying their migration is the ques-
tion of their integration in the country where they live, to what extent
they feel as “citizens at heart” in Serbia. Although all the actors in this
type of migration are aware that poverty and marginalisation of Roma is
the main motivation for the decision to migrate, the least has been done
regarding that matter since its solution requires structural socio-economic
measures that require time and financial resources. For that reason, the
focus is on restrictive, administrative measures that provide quick solu-
tions but have short-term effects. One possibility for the long-term solu-
tion is to support living and working of these people in the transnational
space by regulating circular labour migration between Sweden and Serbia.
In this direction, useful research would be related to integration and mi-
gration of Roma population and the paradoxical opportunity to achieve
their integration through the promotion of circular migration, living and
working in transnational space. Comparative analysis of the integration
of asylum seekers who have gained asylum and those who have not and
so have returned to Serbia, as well as Roma labour migrants in Sweden,
those who came to Sweden as labour migrants and the so-called “track-
changers” who have entered through the asylum procedure, could shed
light on this issue and offer more answers to policy makers.
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The end of Swedish exceptionalism? Citizenship, neoliberalism and the politics of exclusion

Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund

In the autumn of 2009, youth unrest ran like wildfire across the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the Swedish cities of Malmö, Gothenburg and Uppsala. One of the latest in a series of urban rebellions (with early manifestations in Britain and the US in the 1980s) it was preceded most notably by the Paris insurrection of 2005 and the rebellion in Copenhagen and other Danish cities in 2008. As recently as 2005, in fact, Swedish integration policy was still being promoted as a positive model in the aftermath of the uprising in the socially deprived French banlieues. But the current state of the nation demonstrates that even Sweden, habitually renowned for its generous welfare policies and inclusive policies over asylum and multiculturalism, has eventually caught up with neo-liberal globalisation and the related processes of segregation, racialised exclusion and poverty concentrated in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of European and North American cities.

Violent “street gangs” burning cars, setting schools and other institutions on fire, attacking police and fire fighters as well as other local agencies of the state, are certainly the instances of urban unrest most often reported on in the Swedish media. But they are just the more spectacular happenings in a continuous, low-scale rebellion arising from a multitude of alternative networks, social movements and voluntary associations. Some of them are more, some less politically profiled; some more, some less anti-racist, anti-fascist or anti-neoliberal; some more, some less militant. Some articulate themselves in clear ideological terms, reclaiming streets, cities and Sweden generally for a citizenry seen as falling victim to gentrification, escalating social inequality and injustice, and unsettled by repressive policies of securitisation.

A common denominator of the distrust felt by this multitude can be summed up in the sardonic Swedish poly-ethnic youth argot for the po-

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lice: Aina. Adopted from the Turkish expression Ainasiz meaning “without a mirror”, it implies “those who should be ashamed of looking at themselves in a mirror”, or “those without shame”. The way in which the recent outbursts of frustration in Malmö and other Swedish cities were represented and acted upon by the media and government indicates that Ainasiz may convey a symbolic meaning addressed to a wider audience than the Swedish riot police; a Swedish polity which continues to emphasise the necessity of living up to the liberal “core values” of democracy, equal opportunities and diversity, but the actual illiberal policies of which are, step by step, turning this society’s comprehensive charter of citizenship and diversity into a dead letter.

Sweden is, in fact, one of the North Atlantic societies that has most immigrants and inhabitants of recent “foreign background” in its population. Those of foreign origin, together with second-generation Swedes, account for over 20 per cent of Sweden’s total population; of them more than half are from non-European backgrounds. But in the larger cities the proportion of the population from immigrant backgrounds is considerably higher. Malmö, the third largest city in Sweden, has the highest proportion of such inhabitants. Here, two out of five people were born abroad, or have one or two parents who were born abroad, and half of all children under 5 speak a mother tongue other than Swedish.

In spite of extended processes of urban segregation, social exclusion and labour market discrimination (Ålund and Schierup 2009), Sweden continued, until recently, to be seen from an international perspective as the model of a tolerant and egalitarian multicultural welfare society; a kind of exceptionalist model for others to follow. It was a country that expressly aimed to merge extended rights of citizenship with a political framework free from essentialist conceptions of national belonging, through institutions geared towards this (Ryner 2000). Its rules for, and practices of, family unification have long been, and indeed still are, liberal compared to those of most other European states. Conditions for obtaining full citizenship are equally liberal, reflected in the fact that the rate of naturalisation among immigrants and their children has, consistently, been among the highest in Europe, with almost two in every three foreign-born inhabitants holding full Swedish citizenship. Sweden is probably also the country in the North Atlantic region, which has, until recently, demonstrated the largest degree of openness towards asylum seekers.

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2 Until 2003 the Swedish statistical category ‘foreign background’ included all inhabitants born outside Sweden plus children with one or two parents born abroad. Later statistics have modified the category ‘foreign born’, which, after 2003, came to include only inhabitants born abroad plus children with both parents born abroad.
from areas of the world unsettled by authoritarian rule (e.g. Greece, Chile, Iran), ethno-national repression and cleavages (Palestine, South Africa, Turkey, former Yugoslavia), economic marginalisation and internecine conflict (Somalia), or imperial conquest, occupation and devastation (Iraq, Afghanistan).

To trace the background to the urban unrest and the tense political conjuncture in general, it is necessary to go back to the mid-1970s and the formulation of a Swedish politics on multicultural citizenship – its ambitious intentions, but also its innate paradoxes. Over the last two decades, this politics has been transformed as it has become increasingly embedded in a wider neo-liberal trajectory. It is also necessary to look at the way in which the resultant urban unrest – and the conditions in which protesting youth live – have been represented in the mass media and in political discourse, with powerful political forces pressing for the introduction of a new and restrictive conditionality for accessing and retaining citizenship. What has transpired is that Sweden has aligned itself with common EU trends through an exclusionary policy of “circular migration” breaking with decades of policy on migration and citizenship.

From multicultural citizenship to diversity management

The fundamental features of Swedish integration policy were formulated in the 1960s and 1970s, and amended and reformulated on the premises of a principled, liberal multicultural citizenship in 1975 when a progressive reform of policies on migration and migrant incorporation was passed through the Swedish parliament. Its slogan of “equality, freedom of choice and partnership” boldly paraphrased the French revolution’s égalité, liberté, fraternité. The reform was based on an equitable welfare system, a liberal universalist conception of citizenship that had social citizenship at its heart and an inclusive multicultural conception of the nation. In combination with a reform of the Swedish electoral system in 1976 it guaranteed, in terms of “denizenship” (Hammar 1985), access to almost all established rights of civil, political and social citizenship, even for immigrant non-citizens. A generous asylum policy and permissive rules for family unification were backed by guarantees for fast naturalisation based on criteria of residence that were not restricted by language tests, oaths of allegiance, income criteria, and so on. The specific labour-capital compact, on which the Swedish welfare state rested, effectively blocked the use of migration as a vehicle for wage depreciation, serving at the same time as a guarantee of access to equal rights and a bulwark against discrimination and racial harassment.
In terms of the cultural rights of citizenship (Taylor 1992), “multiculturalism” (Rex 1985; Castlets 1994), or “liberal pluralism” (Kymlicka & Opalski 2001), the decade following the reforms of the mid-1970s appeared golden indeed, marked as it was by a distancing from the policy of implicit assimilation of earlier years. The Swedish model appeared to be one of the most balanced political attempts to merge a liberal-universalist framework of citizenship with particular identity claims. The articulation of the principles on which the reform was based promised equal access to rights of citizenship on formal legal terms, together with preconditions for realising the exercise of a substantial citizenship through forms of involvement in civil society that respected and drew on the cultural and social resources of migrants.

Yet the Swedish model of multicultural citizenship – or more specifically the way it was implemented through particular institutional practices and organisational strategies – was charged with potential tensions. And indeed, in our book Paradoxes of Multiculturalism (Ålund & Schierup 1991), published two decades ago, we discussed the looming dilemmas of this ambitious political programme. We pointed to the contradictions between the political rhetoric and an actually existing multiculturalism transformed, through corporatist institutional practices, into a bureaucratically managed “tower of Babel”: a nested hierarchy of ethno-nationally defined social collectivities that were monitored and depoliticised through a generous system of public support (but with many conditions attached) to “migrant organisations”, all inserted into a discriminatory and ethnically divided labour force. The egalitarian policies of the corporatist welfare compact, combined with a farsighted legislative and political approach to migration and new ethnic minorities’ access to social, political and civil rights, certainly ensured relative social stability. But general welfare policies and an elaborate system of collective agreements between the social partners were in themselves neither an effective nor a sufficient guarantee against discrimination and social and political disadvantage.

We addressed, in particular, an essentialising and stereotyping culturalism, explaining and devising cures to all social problems in terms of “culture”, that were implemented through discriminatory institutional practices. This became more and more prominent, in line with the widening disjunctions in the “Swedish model” of the welfare state in general and, from the mid 1980s, in particular, the increasing difficulty of incorporating a growing population of refugees from Asia and Africa into an ever more exclusivist labour market (Ålund & Schierup 1991). Members of violent proto-Nazi grassroots movements burned down refugee camps across the country and, in 1991, a populist party, New Democracy won seats
in parliament on the basis of its tough-against-immigration-and-immigrants rhetoric. Several important mainstream political actors and civil servants struck a similar note, bringing Sweden into a situation like that of the UK in the 1980s under Thatcherism.

While parts of the populist political programme were in fact adopted, in line with the gradual harmonisation of Sweden’s migration policies with the EU, this incipient surge was effectively pressed back in the 1990s by a realigned broad left-right political consensus. In the midst of a deep economic and social crisis, Sweden carried out a profound political-ideological review of its policies on migration and migrant incorporation (Ålund & Schierup 1991). A new integration policy was to replace the earlier immigrant policy. “Diversity management”, first branded for the development of public policy and corporate business in the United States, became emblematic, even as “multiculturalism” went out of fashion. A 1997 government proposition explicitly discarded the former focus on the rights and agency of culturally or ethnically defined groups. The refurbished integration policy was conceptualised as a policy targeted at the “total population”, based on an altered set-up of institutions in the labour market, the educational system, housing, health, culture, and so on (Inrikesdepartementet 1997). The policy was meant to take into consideration all who suffered disadvantage due to their ethnic, cultural or religious background, and the struggle against discrimination, xenophobia and racism was given high priority. But all citizens and inhabitants were to be responsible for integration; it was not primarily understood as a question for immigrants or ethnic minorities, but as a policy targeted at the development of an integrated society as a whole. This was to include building a new Swedish identity and a renegotiated national community, based on shared democratic values rather than common historical provenance (Ibid., p.7). In contrast with the corporatist spirit of the 1970s, the question of ethnic and cultural identity was now regarded as, first and foremost, a question for each individual (Ibid.).

In spite of differences between Left and Right concerning the exact interpretation of the new integration policy, there is an obvious convergence with the neo-liberal turn in Swedish politics in general, in which the ruling “third way” Social Democratic party elite was the driving force (Schierup et al. 2006). The merger of integration policy with new policies for economic growth and social inclusion through business-friendly policies is evident in a range of public reports. The buzz words for the refurbished policies for integration are “life-long learning”, “employability” and “ethnic entrepreneurship”. This has also influenced the perspective on migrant and ethnic minority associations (Ålund & Reichel 2007).
Whereas, in theory at least, the idea in the mid-1970s had been to support migrant organisations as autonomous corporative actors in civil society (Borevi 2002; Soininen 2003), the emphasis was now shifted towards prescribing their role as that of market-oriented stakeholders in employment projects and local and regional partnerships for growth.

At the same time the political practice of the post-second world war Swedish welfare state, driven by an ideology of distributive justice and aspirations for *equality of outcome*, now gave way – even within the domain of integration policy – to an ideology and institutional practice driven by market incentives that focused on *equal opportunities* (Schierup et al. 2006). The new integration policy also set out, in tandem with EU directives, to put the question of discrimination firmly on the agenda. The Swedish corporatist model, which had formed the wider context for the reforms of the 1970s, assumed that the general welfare policy, and the accord between unions and employers that guaranteed its validity, would as such function as a powerful countering force to disadvantage. Consequently, binding, sanctions-based legal frameworks that focused on combating discrimination, had long been deemed obsolete (Soininen 2003). This proved highly unrealistic. Thus the tightened legal framework for combating discrimination – harmonised with EU law and directives, and with a strong affinity to US anti-discrimination law and practice – introduced around the turn of the millennium represented an important *volte face* in Swedish policy (Schierup et al. 2006, chapter 8).

The new integration policy has supported the rise of an elite among citizens of foreign background to leading positions in business, public administration, politics, academia and the media. But the new directives were introduced alongside the gradual demise of the welfare state’s protective framework of social citizenship (Ibid.). Thus, given the concurrent neo-liberal trend in economic policy, welfare and labour market regulation, anti-discrimination legislation and diversity management have come to operate in social circumstances that, step by step, are becoming increasingly similar to the structurally based forms of social polarisation, poverty and racialised exclusion that obtain in countries like the US and the UK (Schierup & Castles 2011).

Significant groups now find themselves not only outside the ordinary labour market, but also excluded from unemployment insurance. Given Sweden’s traditional priority of implementing an active labour-market policy and upgrading skills, the welfare regime was not geared to cope with large-scale and long-term unemployment (Schierup et al. 2006). The active labour-market policy of the post-second world war era had been the baseline for decommodifying labour and the attempt to eliminate
low-wage occupational ghettos. Its neo-liberal character since 1990, reminiscent of US-style workfare (Junestav 2004), has come to underpin the adaptation of a marginalised reserve army, exposed to the market-driven discipline of precarious low-wage niche employment. A growing number of migrants and minority ethnic Swedes have been pushed from the centre to the periphery of the welfare system into a casualised labour market and a degraded informal sector.

The leading Conservative party – it dubbed itself “Sweden’s New Labour” during campaigning – has, since it came to power in 2006 as the leading party in a centre-right political bloc, put forward an even more root and branch workfare policy as its major political platform. Integral to this policy are stringent fiscal measures that have squeezed growing numbers of low-wage workers out of the unions. Further measures, forcing higher tariffs on workers in low-pay sectors of the labour market for unemployment insurance, combined with reduced health insurance coverage are likely to exacerbate these trends. Organised labour has seen its protective capacities significantly reduced in the current period, and migrants, as well as others outside the relatively protected core labour market, are feeling the consequences in terms of greater insecurity, the deterioration of employment conditions, proliferation of precarious labour relations and social marginalisation (Schierup & Castles 2011). To this is added an alarming rate of youth employment, concentrated in particular among youth of immigrant background; urban poverty and unrest that expose the consequences of labour-market marginalisation; and the shrinking of public services, particularly in education, in the disadvantaged districts of larger cities.

**Stigmatised territories and marginalisation**

Thus, the interdependent processes – long debated – through which the labour and the housing markets have become racialised (Rex & Moore 1967), and in which social and structural constraints have taken on spatial and territorial forms, have come to fruition in Sweden.

The new suburban satellite towns, part of a huge municipal housing programme undertaken by social democratic governments in the late sixties and early seventies, have become notorious as sink areas. They were built in tandem with the fast industrial development, and internal and external migrations, of the welfare state’s heyday some forty years ago. Old inner-city housing areas were cleared and rebuilt fit for business and gentrification. Immigrants and people on low incomes in general were directed to the new municipal suburban housing areas on the pe-
ripheries. But with the onset of the deep socio-economic crisis of the early 1990s, reinforced by the neo-liberal policies of the last two decades, these satellite towns have evolved into stigmatised territories, with a reputation for social problems and predominantly inhabited by the most disadvantaged of the ethnic minorities and a dwindling proportion of socially marginalised Swedish majority people. Hence, the adverse social consequences resulting from the transformation of the Swedish welfare state into a workfare state, a progressively more polarised dual labour market and racial discrimination, combined with the most rapid growth in social inequality in the OECD (Swensson & Pontusson 2000), have all become concentrated in the poorer satellite towns of the larger cities. Here, living conditions are similar to those in a number of other European cities, not least France, where, in the words of Riva Kastoryano (Kastoryano 2006), the urban multiethnic suburbs are places where otherness and poverty go together.

In these areas the interplay between spatial segregation, marginalisation in the labour market and public stigmatisation seems to generate a vicious circle. The number of people between 18 and 64 years of age who receive long-term income support is much higher in these areas, between 8 and 21 per cent in 2006, compared to the Swedish average of 1.5 per cent (Ungdomsstyrelsen 2008).

The social exclusion visited on immigrant parents tends to be transferred to their children (Schröder, Arai & Vilhelmsson 2000), a substantial proportion of whom grow up in poverty. In terms of international comparisons, the Swedish child poverty rate – with 12 per cent of all children in 2006 in families whose standard of living does not guarantee elementary needs – is not particularly high. But poverty is heavily concentrated in migrant and minority ethnic families in the major cities and lone-parent families (Salonen 2008). Thus, while almost one in three children of “foreign background” (two foreign-born parents) is likely to grow up in poverty, this is true for only one in sixteen children of Swedish background (Ibid., p. 40). Almost every other child of a lone parent born abroad is likely to grow up in poverty (Ibid., p. 50). In the city of Malmö, almost every third child grows up in poverty (Ibid., p. 570). Examining the distribution of poverty within cities gives an even clearer idea of how critical the intersection of ethnicity, class, residential segregation and poverty is. Several satellite towns in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö have child poverty rates of over 40 per cent. All these high-poverty areas have a majority of families from a migrant background. The satellite town of Rosengård in Malmö has the highest child poverty rate in the country, with more than two in every three children growing up below the poverty
line. Here, four out of five inhabitants are of immigrant background and fewer than two out of five adults aged between 20 and 64 have a secure, regular job; in some neighbourhoods the figure is even lower. This is what lies behind low average incomes and high levels of dependency on welfare benefits and informal economic activities (Ibid.).

Patterns of poverty and ethnic segregation correlate, in several aspects, with educational opportunities and achievement. In metropolitan Stockholm, for example, a pattern of spatially-profiled correlations between educational opportunities, ethnicity, class and gender has been recorded that distinguishes the centre of the city from its multiethnic periphery (Socialdepartementet 2000). In a recent report, Young Today, the National Board for Youth Affairs states that youth from a migrant background (those with both parents born abroad) got poorer results in elementary school, leading to lower rates of participation in secondary education (76 per cent compared to 91 per cent for the host population) and, potentially, at university level (Ungdomsstyrelse 2010).

Young people living in areas of housing deprivation also experience considerably more difficulty in the labour market than other young people in Sweden in general, in rates of employment as well as levels of education. Many are neither in education nor in the formal labour market. Whereas this was the case for 14 per cent of Swedish majority people aged 20–25 in the country as a whole in 2006, in several deprived areas of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, the rate was double that or more. Among young people in the disadvantaged urban areas, unemployment and clandestine sources of income reach critical levels. Although the comparability of national statistics can be difficult and controversial, it appears safe to conclude that the youth unemployment rate in Sweden is among the highest in the EU-15 (Ungdomsstyrelse 2009). This could be due to its highly and increasingly polarised dual labour market, with high thresholds of entry into the protected primary tier. The rate of youth unemployment is far higher than for the same age groups in Denmark and the Netherlands, which have comparable welfare systems, and probably higher than the rate in the UK, which averages the official unemployment rate of youth in the EU (Ibid.). Among youth in disadvantaged urban areas, unemployment is considerably higher than the official average of 27 per cent for those aged between 20 and 25 (measured as those registered as jobseekers in employment offices). In certain disadvantaged areas of the city of Gothenburg, for example, the rate of youth unemployment approaches 40 per cent. Correspondingly the employment rate for young people in the deprived neighbourhoods is lower than the national average, and between 20 and 30 per cent lower than in other parts of the
major cities; it is lower for young women than young men and lowest for young people born in Africa and Western Asia (Ungdomsstyrelse 2008).

“Cultural deviancy”, securitisation and moral improvement

The multiethnic suburban areas of cities like Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg and Uppsala have, during the latest two decades become favourite targets for the media, which focus on social problems such as a high unemployment, vandalism, criminality and welfare dependency. And they have become hotspots of urban unrest. Media coverage of the 2008-09 youth riots in Swedish cities consistently alluded to contemporary war zones in Afghanistan, Gaza or Lebanon – occasionally interlaced with long familiar allusions to urban ghettos in the US. Several reports did indeed convey a critical picture of police violence and brutality. “Police attacks demonstrate a level of violence that is not supported in any legal provision. Cops appear to believe that they have been dropped into a war-zone in Gaza”, one commentator asserted about riots in Gottsunda in the administrative area of Uppsala (wittily redubbed Ghettosunda for the purpose) (see Nicklasson 2009). Some reporters blame “society” and “politicians” for negligence, focusing on unemployment, welfare dependence, police harassment, the short-termism of investments in projects aimed at combating social exclusion, and so on (Buskas & Andersson 2009). “A sad picture of exclusion”, another reporter called the situation in the Gothenburg suburb of Hjällbo. Here, more than one in three young people between 20 and 25 was “outside the system”; not working, not studying, and with only a few having access to social welfare benefits. A new “underclass” was emerging in the poverty of suburbia. Youngsters are born in Sweden but “placed outside a society”, which “does not care a damn” (Sandahl 2009).

However, most media reports appear to draw less analytical conclusions. Obsessed with crime and violence among migrants, their dominant focus is on the spectacular and on (allegedly) culturally related “difference” and “deviance”. Acts of violence among young people – who are usually characterised as “immigrant youth”, ignoring the composite character of the protests or the varied backgrounds of those involved – are seen as conditioned by their private family problems, most often explained as inherent to “their culture”. This kind of interpretation of the problems related to social exclusion in the cities illustrates a more general tendency in how such problems are represented in the public sphere, in the mass media and through institutional practices. It also indicates how “moral panics”/public anxieties can become self-fulfilling prophecies that
create their own reality. The perceived problem of “immigrant culture” is disconnected from social reality (Ålund 2003), depicted as a monolithic entity collectively shared by ethnic groups or communities and exiled to the private, family sphere. The stereotype of “immigrant” gender relations, usually in the form of male oppression and female passivity, is created along the way (Ålund 1999). “Immigrant” or, increasingly, “Muslim”, culture becomes a smokescreen, behind which the wider societal context remains concealed.

Just as the neo-conservative “moral underclass discourse” (Levitas 1998), familiar in the US and the UK, that blames cultural “deviancy”, “dysfunctional” families and “deficient parenthood” as the root causes of a vicious circle of social exclusion and escalating violence, so the most common explanation for the recent youth riots was to blame parents for the difficult family conditions and inadequate socialisation of their children that forced young people on to the streets. At the same time, the burden of solving these general social problems is shifted on to the same parents and families who are to take responsibility for, and control of, their children so that they stay at home in the evening. This type of circular argument was, for example, well illustrated in a debate between youth, politicians and public celebrities on youth protests in Rosengård (a multi-ethnic suburb of Malmö) that was broadcast by the popular channel TV4. More militant interventions in the debate included the suggestion of a regular “curfew” to keep young people in their homes at night and the setting up of a specialised national police force to bring order back to Rosengård which would, at the same time, prevent violence and disorder from infecting the rest of Sweden.

However, the representation of the Swedish “suburban problem” in terms of cultural deviancy is nothing new. It was integral to the looming “new realism” of the late 1980s; the flipside of the emerging “new racism”, which, in Paradoxes of Multiculturalism, we described as a potential graveyard for the liberal Swedish policies of multiculturalism (Ålund and Schierup 1991). But the important difference, two decades later, is the tendency now to elevate this discourse to the status of political correctness and a tangible realpolitik, all in the name of “liberal core values” (Sambuni 2008).

Problems connected with the concentration of recently arrived migrants (mainly asylum seekers) and disadvantaged ethnic minorities, combined with urban social segregation, have been noted as critical in several official state-sponsored investigations, as well as in academic research (e.g.

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3 The programme, Debatt, evening 6th May, 2009.
Urban 2009). These have long been a point of contention in politics, with parties on the Left and the Right blaming each other for having caused “failed integration”, and vying with each other to market solutions to the problem of the country’s so-called “exposed city-districts”. While left rhetoric tends to urge more public institutional involvement and state investment in the disadvantaged satellite towns, the political Right persistently blames the “failure of integration” on the bureaucratic nanny state, which turns potentially resourceful new Swedish citizens into permanently passive and culturally deviant “welfare clients”. For decades, the exploitation of the “immigrant problem” in electoral campaigns had been played down, in tribute to the overall left-right consensus in Swedish politics (Schierup et al. 2006, see ch. 8). However, this is now changing and Sweden appears, step by step, to be moving closer to the type of politics practised in neighbouring Denmark and many other parts of Europe.

Largely thanks to its strategic development of a firm stand on the so-called question of integration, the Swedish Liberal Party (Folkpartiet) was able to take command of the political agenda before the 2002 elections by focusing on “demands on immigrants”. Subsequently the party presented a series of reports (2004–2008) titled Maps of exclusion that contended that social exclusion in major cities had brought Sweden “dangerously close to the point when ethnic and social conflicts may degenerate into open riots and other extremely tragic events” (Folkpartiet 2004, p. 6). Half a million people were deemed to belong to the “excluded”, the majority of them “immigrants”, of whom three in five came “from outside Europe”, living in areas marked by high levels of unemployment and crime (Folkpartiet 2006). The 2008 report, when the Liberal Party was in the ruling centre-right coalition claimed that the number of “exposed” big city areas had grown dramatically from three in 1990 to 156 in 2008 – a period during which the Social Democrats were in government most of the time (Folkpartiet 2008).

The reports do emphasise the importance of high levels of unemployment and dependency on welfare benefits, but allegedly dysfunctional lifestyles and deviant values are underlined as a root cause of the overall state of misery, with the cultural frames of reference of the excluded seen as causative in their own right (Dahlstedt 2009). In effect, as Meijling (2009) argues in a critical appraisal of the report, this “cartography of residential segregation” virtually “produces” the “excluded” by using measurements and criteria that lack any scientific basis. Residents are linked with geographical areas, but the marginalisation of these areas is disconnected from wider structures and processes in society. The reports
thereby fuel the idea that “deviance” is spreading of its own accord in an “uncontrolled manner” (Ibid.).

In order to fix what is perceived as an “uncontrolled” proliferation of exclusion, a motley series of measures have been put on the political agenda. They merge neo-liberal nostrums for social inclusion through growth with punitive surveillance, counterinsurgency and conservative concerns for reaffirming moral values.

One measure taken by the centre-right government, after ousting the Social Democrats from power in autumn 2006, was to engage researchers from the Centre for Asymmetric Threat and Terrorism Studies at the National Defence College to investigate the problems of “fundamentalism”. The specific target was the multiethnic neighbourhood of Rosengård in Malmö, seen as one of the most problematic and highlighted in the Map of exclusion. In January 2009, the Centre’s report (Ranstorp & Dos Santos 2009) – which has been heavily criticised for its lack of scientific validity – was presented to the public and endorsed by the minister for integration.

The report, which is based on interviews with a limited number of local professional staff “engaged in school, social services and police”, depicts the emergence of an alarming and growing “culture of threat” (hotkultur) challenging Swedish democratic values in a local community that is becoming permanently “isolated from the rest of society”. A similar trend is said to prevail in other parts of the city. The cultural fundamentalism of the (immigrant) residents forces young women to dress traditionally, it maintains, and the presence of Islamist parties propels anti-democratic movements and violent radicalisation (Ibid., p. 4).

The incipient strategy, a type of counterinsurgency through “intercultural dialogue”, is matched by a political programme for the resocialisation, redemption even, of the “excluded”, aimed at shaping or reshaping their mindset, “culture” and social being. During 2008, following an EU initiative, the government began promoting a dialogue on “core values” that was supposed to continue until 2011 (Sambuni 2008). Swedish government documents contributing to the dialogue (e.g. see Regernigen 2008) repeatedly betray a profound ambivalence that echoes contemporaneous discourses in the UK, the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe. Proclamations of the need for combining unity (core values) and (cultural) diversity end up, more or less directly, arguing for unity in terms of cultural assimilation rather than for cultural plurality backed by equity or equality (Ibid.). In this vein, the minister of integration, Nyamko Sabuni, focused on “strengthening respect for democracy and the fundamental human rights” that is inherent in Swedish liberal core values. Due to the
consequences of contemporary migration and ethnic diversity, Sabuni, concluded, there is an urgent need for intensified work on integration around these values (Sambuni 2008). In order to secure social cohesion, a shared vision and sense of belonging must be extended to those who live “outside society”, those new generations of “strangers” who have ever fewer shared values and contacts with ‘society’ than did their parents.

Thus, in 2008, the year of multicultural dialogue in the EU, Sabuni’s argument represented another political contribution to the construction of “the stranger” or, rather, the estrangement of the culturally different Other.

Erosion of citizenship

We have described the winding track traversed by Sweden over the past three decades. Our point of departure was a liberal multiculturalism that offered an extended and substantial body of citizenship rights – civil, political, cultural, social, and labour rights – to “newcomers”, and which had long been coupled with an enlightened asylum policy. However, the last two decades have, step by step, led towards neo-liberal disciplinary strategies, neo-conservative moral reaffirmation and the erosion of a comprehensive pact of citizenship. Seen in historical perspective, the riots of 2008–2009 appear to signify a breaking point, as it were, a probable beginning of the end of Swedish exceptionalism.

In the US, the Los Angeles insurrection of 1992 was accompanied by regressive authoritarian measures in which “Lock Down America’s” stunning incarceration rates were one of the most conspicuous instruments (Parenti 1999), alongside the introduction of repressive workfare policies (e.g. Fox Piven & Cloward 1997). In the UK, the riots, such as those in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001, were the pretext for introducing discriminatory citizenship tests (e.g. Van Oers 2009). Late-coming unrest in Swedish satellite towns has been met with surveillance measures for controlling so-called “extremism”. Under the banner of allegedly liberal “core values”, this formerly neutral country has adopted the credo of the “global war on terror” as an integral element of its policies for fixing “failed neighbourhoods”4 on the domestic front. The ongoing dismantling of the welfare state and repressive workfare policies continue to exacerbate racialised inequality, social exclusion and frustration among young people in deprived urban areas. At the same time, a surge of xenophobia and Islamophobia is being activated in a populist backlash that

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may end up by bringing Sweden into line with the retrograde policies of the Netherlands, Switzerland or neighbouring Denmark, although, so far, this remains to be seen.

Beyond EU declarations and directives on tolerance, diversity and policies against discrimination and racism, illiberal ideologies and political movements and power blocks are building up across Europe, configured around “integralist” (Holmes 2000) philosophies that evoke “nation”, “community”, “culture”, “religion”, “colour”, “blood” or “descent” as the essentialist factors binding society. In some cases, like those of France, Denmark or Austria, the metamorphosis of, so-say, “tolerant” societies has for some time been the subject of attention in the media, politics and social science. In other cases, a seemingly sudden transmutation has taken many by surprise, as when, during a short span of time, the Netherlands’ “liberal” and “tolerant” society, was observed to “go to the other extreme and demand conformity, compulsion and seemingly undemocratic sanctions against immigrants” (Vasta 2007). In the cases of Britain and Sweden, current developments appear more convoluted and ambivalent than in most other parts of Europe. Here “diversity” continues to be highly praised as a resource for economic growth and prosperity, and explicitly xenophobic populist parties are shunned by mainstream politics. However, “cultural difference” tends, at the same time, to be branded as ‘an excess of alterity’ (Grillo 2009) that needs to be controlled through assimilationist policies, citizenship tests, police action and biopolitical counterinsurgency strategies to control the populations under review, albeit under the rubric of democracy and human rights.

We see the discourses that preceded and responded to the recent urban riots in Sweden as a litmus test that shows the country how far it has wandered on this obscure track. These discourses range from blatantly xenophobic and racist statements to discrete and sometimes almost imperceptible reformulations in government reports. Violent neo-Nazi street level racism has receded, but has given way to a new, increasingly influential, ethnocentric, xenophobic and nationalist populism. As a late-comer to the growing European family of radically xenophobic populist parties, the so-called Swedish Democrats succeeded in entering parliament in 2010 with 6 per cent of the total vote and the potential to hold the balance of power between the ruling centre-right alliance and a left and green political opposition. The party’s historical roots are in the old Swedish National Socialist movement of the 1930s and the explicitly neo-Nazi movement of the 1980s. It has, however, worked assiduously to cleanse its image of such embarrassing historical blemishes and, like other nationalist-populist parties across Europe, has managed with some
success to wash away the stigma of being “racist”. Over the past decade the party has built up a solid network of grassroots groups throughout local communities.

Unlike in neighbouring Denmark, no alliance has been forged between any of the established parties and the national populists. On the contrary, the Swedish Democrats have been openly condemned by the Right as well as Left. Nonetheless, the established parties have tended to co-opt the Democrats’ message in a stiffening competition for the hearts and votes of the “genuine” or “authentic people”.

Take, for example, the proposal to amend Sweden’s policies of integration elaborated by the largest and most influential party in the ruling centre-right coalition, entitled Keys to Sweden and Swedish Society (Nya Moderaterna 2009). The proposal, characterised by its restrictive nature, is directed at the “newly arrived” in particular and “immigrants” in general, and is strikingly reminiscent of the arguments for citizenship tests in the UK. A special contract, it argues, should be established between the “newly arrived” and the state. The expectations and duties stipulated for each party to such a contract evoke the current workfare orientation of Swedish public policy, and are phrased in language that strongly recalls the “moral underclass discourse” identified by Ruth Levitas in the UK and the US (Levitas 1998). The proposal’s point of departure is what it describes as a “welfare dependency that tends to be inherited across generations of immigrants”, which, it claims, is particularly characteristic of multiethnic suburban areas where youth are brought up by social outsiders to reject Swedish society, its laws and norms. Given such a background, the conditions on which immigrants get Swedish citizenship are to be tightened (Nya Moderaterna 2009, p. 27). Moreover, the Working Group concludes, “citizenship received on false grounds can be withdrawn” in the case of criminal behaviour (Ibid., p. 28). No doubt is left about the importance of making it clear to immigrants that, in Sweden, Swedish values are crucial. “Citizenship in Sweden should not be watered down” (Billström 2008): a far cry from one of the basic principles of decades of Swedish policy, that citizenship unconditionally follows from residence (Sainsbury without reference to “cultural competence”, citizenship or language tests, or demands for allegiance or value-conformity). So far, this has not re-

5 Translation from ‘Verklighetens folk’ in Swedish. This phrase was patented by the Swedish Christian Democrats, a party in the ruling centre-right coalition, for use in campaigns during the parliamentary and municipality elections in 2010. In point of fact, however, it is a recycled brand, originally ‘invented’ and exploited by the xenophobic populist party, New Democracy in 1992. See, e.g., (Alliansfritt Sverige 2009).
sulted in any new legislation or formal measures, but it does illustrate a change in mainstream political discourse.

A new law on “labour immigration” was, however, passed through parliament in 2008 (Regeringen 2008), which provides another, more tangible, example of the erosion of citizenship. The new law paved the way for a temporary migrant workers’ scheme – even in Sweden. It has been described as “a slight revolution” (Cerna 2009) in a country hitherto buttressed by a long-standing, substantial edifice of citizenship that is perhaps more inclusive than anywhere else (Sainsbury 2006) and where schemes for temporary labour migration have consistently been rejected as against the principles of liberal democracy and its canonisation of labour rights, social rights and political rights as basic rights. In connection with the new law, trade unions and left parties voiced fears that the dependency of migrant workers on a single employer that it imposed would lead to their being placed in an exceedingly weak bargaining position, exposed to excessive exploitation (Davidsson 2008); a fear seemingly well grounded (Regeringen 2008, p. 26).

The law represents a qualitative break with the inclusive regulatory and citizenship policies over immigrant labour, premised on union power and the expectation of full employment. This affirmation of union power in a strongly regulated labour market has, for almost four decades, blocked – apart from a few exceptional cases, such as seasonal workers, limited recruitment to occupations with a documented shortage of skilled labour, and so on – almost all direct importation of labour from third countries. But, under the insignia of “human rights” and “international solidarity”, this has been matched by the upholding of one of Europe’s most enlightened asylum policies. The latter betokens a Swedish exceptionalism that has largely prevailed until the present. Until recently this has been manifested in, among other things, the relatively high rate, compared to other “western” nations, of asylum granted to refugees from Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

While, in practice, any recruitment of foreign labour from third countries previously needed agreement by the trade unions, the unions’ role is, under the new law, reduced to that of toothless consultation. The authority to process cases involving residence and work permits has been transferred from the Swedish public labour market authorities, which undertook detailed structural inquiries, through to the rapid, far less probing management of the Swedish Migration Board. Permits are granted on the principle that it is the individual “employer’s assessment of the need to recruit [labour] from a third country that must be the basis for the administration of matters of residence and employment permits” (Regeringen
The conditions are proper adherence to the prevailing labour market regulations and that the unfilled posts have previously been announced as vacant in Sweden, in the EU/EES area and Switzerland.

The law’s purpose, it is claimed, is for Sweden to move towards equalising its rules for the employment of third-country nationals with those pertaining to EU/EES non-Swedish nationals and citizens of Switzerland. However, this contention appears open to question. The law appears to be more instrumental in harmonising Swedish management of migration in line with temporary-worker systems currently developing across most of the rest of Europe. It introduces the possibility of the potentially large-scale importation of labour from “third countries” on the basis of temporary employment contracts, and – in contrast to earlier practice in Swedish immigration policy – provides a legal-institutional framework for extending migrants’ temporary residence on grounds of employment to longer periods. While any employment of more substantial duration used to provide the basis for being granted a permanent residence permit and denizenship, including access to full social citizenship (inclusion in the provisions of the social security system), this is not the case with the new law. The duration of a residence permit is dependent on the duration of a valid employment contract. The residence permit is, in principle, terminated when the employment contract is terminated. An initial contract for employment can last for up to two years, with the possibility for subsequent temporary renewals up to a total of four years. During the first two years, the contracted migrant worker is bound to a single employer, and to a certain limited section of the labour market. During possible further temporary employment contracts, the migrant is only bound to a certain section of the labour market, not to a single employer, but her/his residence permit is still dependent on a valid employment contract. After four years the migrant can be considered for full citizenship, on condition of being able to demonstrate a continuous employment record.

The law on importing migrant labour consequently opens up a third tier of access to rights of citizenship, alongside the previously dominant dual statuses of citizens and denizens. Through its strict insistence on making residence dependent on employment status, the law, in effect, extends consecutive Swedish governments’ ever more uncompromising insistence on a disciplinary workfare regime (Schierup et al. 2006, chapter 8), but shifts access to rights and entitlements from the realm of social policy and integration policy to the realm of immigration control. Given current government efforts to reformulate the conditions of access to or retention of citizenship, the formal opportunity promised to migrant workers
to opt eventually for full citizenship may turn into a cloak for actual practices preventing their substantial realisation, thus forging a covert alignment of Sweden with emerging all-European practices on “managed migration” (Guild, Groenendijk & Carrera 2009). However, harmonisation appears to proceed even in other realms of Swedish migration policy. Thus, the launch of the new legislation on the importation of labour, forged through the political process beyond any broad parliamentary consensus (Rojas 2006), is packaged together with Sweden’s eventual alignment with the EU’s restrictive and convoluted refugee and asylum rules and policies (e.g. see Hansen 2009). In this way, Sweden is becoming a fully integrated (and complicit) member of the EU’s “Area of Freedom, Security and Justice”.

Thus, as the final irony, joining the “Stockholm Programme”, within which so-called “circular migration” is the centrepiece of an integrated EU strategy for ‘managed migration’, appears to seal the end of Sweden’s former exceptionalism (e.g. Guild 2009). “Circular migration” is, too, a pragmatic solution for Sweden. In line with current policies across the EU, it promises politicians an escape from the horns of the political dilemma, between appeasing the populist surge by professing “zero migration” and the need to respond to pressure from business and public services for continued cheap, today often undocumented, migrant labour (Schierup et al. 2006). Such politicians can be economical with the truth in their constituencies, and, under cover of the EU’s overall programme for “managed migration”, continue to remould Sweden’s cumbersome “problems” of asylum and “illegal immigration” into a new, business-friendly “guest worker” system (Schierup et al. 2006 chapter 10).6 This holds out the promise of a panacea by maintaining a continuous global labour supply to a hyper-flexible labour market while, at the same fell swoop, it buys off extremist populism. The new labour migrants are, moreover, excluded from the edifice of citizenship, the most important bulwark of Swedish exceptionalism; thus they are potentially muted and effectively barred from participating in labour conflicts and wider political struggles.

It is against the background of these, and a multitude of other related current political processes that are eroding citizenship for all, that minority ethnic youth’s appeal to reclaim Sweden should be read as a message to the wider society beyond the boundaries of their disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods.

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6 Ibid., ch. 10.
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