THEORISING TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION IN OUR TIMES:
A multiscalar temporal perspective

Abstract

As the world rapidly becomes a different place for migrants and non-migrants alike, this article asks whether transnational migration scholars have an adequate conceptual toolkit to address the temporal dimensions of mobility regimes. The article notes the way those who initiated the transnational framework for the study of migration conceptualised temporality, critiques the failure of subsequent researchers to adequately address the rapidly altering conditions of migration and offers a concept of multiscalar conjunctural transformation. A multiscalar conjunctural approach allows researchers to address both time and space. It highlights emergent processes of capital accumulation by dispossession and the ways in which such processes are culturally, politically, socially and spatially constituted as people around the world respond to multiple forms of displacement and reconstitute their lives.

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Introduction

As it was developed in the early 1990s, transnational migration studies were built on an assessment of two interrelated transformations: the global restructuring of local economies that impelled large numbers of people to live their lives across border and the growing awareness and acceptance of migrants' transnational lives (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton-Blanc 1994; Goldring 1992; Kearney 1991; Kearney & Nagengast 1989; Rouse 1991, 1992). In the years that followed, a veritable transnational migration industry emerged composed of journals, research institutes and a myriad of grant-funded research projects, books, articles and hundreds of studies. The result was a rich descriptive literature on transnational families, hometown association, transnational politics and long-distance nationalism, status, multiple types of organisations, gender, remittance economies, religions, social security and diasporic identities (Bada 2014; Baldassar & Merla 2014; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Corten & Marshall-Fratani 2001; Ebaugh & Saltzman Chafetz 2002; Levitt 2001; Nieswand 2012; Olwig 2007; Pessar & Mahler 2003; Portes & Fernández-Kelly 2015; Truong & Gasper 2011; Walsh & Näre 2016). However, this research has generally been marked by a curious timelessness and sense of unchanging mobility regimes.[1] Scholars generally ignored the ways in which the initial transnational migration framework reflected the specific historical moment in which it was constructed.

The failure to adequately theorise temporality continues in contemporary migration research, despite recent important

scholarship on deportation (Coutin 2015; Drotbohm & Hasselberg 2014), bordering (De Genova 2013), and the migration industry (Sørensen 2013) that documents how growing nationalism, anti-immigrant right-wing movements and the attenuation of rights to settle have altered conditions for migration. In this article, I argue that we need a multiscalar conjunctural approach to migration that directly theorises the temporal dimension of mobility regimes and makes it possible to examine their fundamental alterations over time and in space. I begin by reviewing the temporal dimensions of the initial transnational migration framework. Next, I critique periodic efforts to summarise the state of transnational migration studies and to delineate developments in the field and future challenges. My summary reveals that most authors concentrated on spatiality and paid insufficient attention to temporality (Faist 2000, 2004; Levitt & Jaworsky 2007; Mahler 1998; Ozkul 2012; Pries 2008; Vertovec 2009). Finally, in order to constitute a more productive analytical framework, I offer "multiscalar conjunctural analysis", which simultaneously conceptualises global temporal transformations and their spatialities (Çağlar & Glick Schiller 2018; Glick Schiller 2015). I argue that in the emerging conjuncture, we must set aside our preoccupations with transnational migration and develop a study of the processes of dispossession and displacement. This approach can assist both scholars and activists who can situate processes of human physical and social mobility and the struggles for rights to move, settle, and speak in the name of humanity. I write as someone who contributed to the construction of the initial framework (Basch,

Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Glick Schiller & Fouron 1990) and who has served as a participant and critic of its development in the following decades (Glick Schiller 1997, 1999, 2003, 2009, 2010, 2015; Glick Schiller & Faist 2010; Glick Schiller & Fouron 2001; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004).

Temporal thinking in transnational migration scholarship

Recently, migration scholars have begun to discuss "temporality" (Boehm 2009; Featherstone, Phillips & Waters 2007), but in many cases, they use the term only to renew the arguments that transnational migration is not new and migrants have lived transnational lives over the centuries. For example, Featherstone et al. (2007: 386) "problematize the temporality of transnational networks, contesting assumptions and assertions that such highly connected geographies are recent developments" (Cohen 1997; Foner 1997; Glick Schiller 1999; Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Goldberg 1992; Kivisto 2001; Morawska 1999). However, most scholars of historical cross-border migration have neither asked why these ties become more significant and more visible at certain historical moments[2] nor understood that to address these questions, migration theory must directly address how change develops over time and in space.

Some migration scholars have dismissed migrants' transnational networks as ephemeral first-generation practices within the broader trend of assimilation and therefore not worthy of new research frameworks and initiatives (Alba & Nee 2003). In response, scholars of transnational migration have explored the "temporal limits on the persistence of transnational family practices", while documenting the persistence of transnational networks or identities among subsequent generations (Waters 2011: 1120; Glick Schiller & Fouron 2000; Kasinitz et al. 2009; Levitt & Waters 2002; Olwig 2007; Thomson & Crul 2007). However, this literature on cross-generational transnational ties has generally been descriptive. With rare exceptions such as the work of Feldman-Bianco (1992, 2001, 2011) and Cervantes-Rodriguez (2010), these studies have paid little attention to the changing relationships between migrants and the restructuring of global forms of power: economic, political, media and military.

Çağlar (2013, 2016) has built on Fabian's (1983) work on temporality to strengthen migration theory. Contesting approaches to migrants that situate migrants within 'transnational communities', portrayed as unchanging traditional cultures and hence outside of time, she maintains that migrants and colonised people must be seen as historical contemporaneous agents of modernity and current global processes. Only when migrants are situated in time can scholars and social movement activists understand their role in the constitution of contemporary global restructurings of power. In making such an assessment including the temporality of transnational processes and analytics, the concept of historical conjuncture proves fruitful (Çağlar & Glick Schiller 2018).

The moment of the transnational migration framework

In 1985, I sat together with two other anthropologists, Linda Basch and Cristina Szanton Blanc, in Linda's living room in New York City

to compare our observations about migration to the city from our research sites. We found that we were all immersed in a migration process in which people lived their lives across national borders. Linda stressed that she and her research colleagues had described this transnational process but had seen it as an established pattern in West Indian migration (Basch, Wiltshire & Toney 1990). Although we have sometimes been accused of ignoring the previous history of transnational migration, we proceeded to survey the literature and became aware that it was replete with description of people with migrant histories who lived with their "feet on both shores" (Chaney 1979; Sutton 1987).

However, we also were aware that cross-border lives had not been adequately theorised in the broader migration literature. The dominant migration paradigms of assimilation or ethnic communities of settlement ignored the participation of people of migrant background in transnational social fields, networks of networks that linked them simultaneously to countries of settlement and transnationally (Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992a, 1992b). Our concern was to move beyond description in order to understand what was happening in the world at that historical moment that made us feel it was necessary to propose a new transnational migration analytic. The significance of this question for a discussion of transnational migration and temporality is made clear by the fact that although we did not initially realise it, at that moment, we were not the only ones asking this question and calling for scholars to develop a conceptual vocabulary for the study of transnational migration (Goldring 1992; Kearney 1991; Kearney & Nagengast 1989; Rouse 1991, 1992).

Of course, the simultaneous rediscovery that migrants routinely lived their lives across state borders is an instance of an older question of the simultaneity of invention and scientific insight. As Merton (1961) noted, instances of independent invention are important for our understanding of both science and social theory. In furthering our understanding of the temporality of the transnational migration framework, it is important to ask about the moment in which migration scholars began to ask particular questions and review what we did and did not understand about restructuring of the political, economic and cultural conditions of migration, transborder connection and settlement.

As part of this new analytical framework, we raised the important epistemological question of the relationship between the way political, economic and cultural powers are configured in the world and the emergence of new academic trends and analytical frameworks. We also reflexively questioned our own engagement in both transnational networks and transnational theory building (Basch et al. 1994; Kearney 1991). We challenged explanations of migration that treated each country as having its separate migration dynamics described as "pushes and pulls" (Petersen 1958).[3] That is to say, we highlighted alterations in the 1970s in the processes of capital accumulation and their relationship to changing conditions of migration globally, making reference to the global array of networked forces and actors and the emergence of a new subjectivities that spoke to these conditions. As Portes (2001: 182) noted about our work – -and this summary would apply to many first-generation transnational migration scholars – we "provided a new perspective on contemporary migratory movements and generated a novel set of hypotheses about their patterns of settlement and adaption at variance with established models".

Saliences and silences about conjunctural dynamics: the initial transnational migration framework

Working in California and Mexico, Kearney & Nagengast (1989: 1-2) stressed that the Mexican migrants with whom they worked had become "embedded" within the global economy and therefore "intricately linked to dominant classes" and "connected with broad domestic and international social and economic forces". Analysis could not be encompassed within the nation-state as a unit of analysis. Rouse (1991: 8), making reference to Jameson's (1984) specification of "postmodern hyperspace", linked these transfigurations to "the gradual unfolding of the global shift from colonialism and classic forms of dependency to a new transnational capitalism". It was within this understanding of the global reemergence of more flexible forms of capital accumulation, which were simultaneously economic, political, social and cultural, that Rouse (1992: 42) critiqued the "bipolar model" that "assumes migration takes place between territorially discrete communities that retain their autonomy even as they grow more closely linked". Analysis could not be confined to the actions of migrants who created a new kind of transnational space. He called for analysts to examine "the interplay between the material developments and the culturally mediated agency of migrants themselves" (Rouse 1992: 42).

Rouse was among the scholars who responded to a 1990 conference call to develop "a research agenda" to explore "transnational migration" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992a: x) Participants were asked to "(1) examine the manner in which transnational migration is shaped by and contributes to the encompassing global capitalist system, (2) examine the analytical categories with which scholars have approached the study of migration and (3) analyze the manner in which transmigrants - caught between their experience of transnationalism and the dominant discourse of migration - construct their racial, ethnic, class, national and gender identities".

Conference participants discussed transnational migration in relationship to the Harvey's (1989: 147-152) "changing conditions of 'flexible accumulation' in the world economy". Contributors saw a transformation beginning in the 1970s when "capitalism … [became] globalized through innovative financial practices" (Ong 1992: 126; Georges 1992). They called for a rethinking of studies of international migration "because it was important 'from a transnational perspective' to offer a redefinition of social context" (Charles 1992: 101). Past transnational migration was also examined to historicise changing patterns of migrants' belonging and identity in response to the restructuring of multiscalar processes (Feldman-Bianco 1992; Goldberg 1992; Sider 1992; Willtshire 1992).

Building on this path-breaking discussion, in our co-authored book *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Dilemmas, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Basch et al. 1994), Linda, Cristina and I provided an analysis of the relationship between the specific historical conjuncture and the transnational processes we were observing. We situated the pace and shape of the transnational processes of the 1980s within the structural adjustment policies that were devastating the Caribbean and the Philippines, the regions in which we worked. We saw privatisation of services, disinvestment in education and health care, restructuring of governance, reduction in tariffs and devastation of local industry and agriculture as integrally related to deindustrialisation in the US and regions of Western Europe. Industries "ran away" from Europe and the US to find deregulated workplaces, and a new international division of labour was built on hyper-exploited racialised gendered labour.

Nations Unbound (Basch et al. 1994: 22) argued that scholars not only must recognise transnational migration as "inextricably linked to the changing conditions" of global capitalism and its processes of accumulation but also connect these altered conditions to the political, economic, religious, cultural and social practices and understandings within which migrants established transnational lives. It was within, and as constituters of these processes, in the 1980s that increasing numbers of people "hedged their bets" by living their lives across borders. At the same time, we stressed that migrants' transnational strategies, family ties and social and political relationships and identities reflected and contributed to these conjunctural conditions.

While *Nations Unbound* has been frequently cited to indicate that those who spoke of transnational migration envisioned the end of nation-states and the advent of globalisation, actually our argument was very different. We clearly stated that nation-states remained significant through their power to regulate borders, construct categories of citizenship and illegality and foster national narratives of belonging. Nation-states continued to contribute to racialisation, differences in gender and sexual attribution and stigmatisation and discrimination based on ancestry. Although the book spoke of conjuncture without using the term multiscalar, our data documented multiscalar processes composed of multiple contending and intersecting temporally emergent networks constituted by corporate, financial, national and social media; religious and familial institutions and actors. These networked actors linked together localities including villages, towns and cities; regions; nation-states and Europe and often spanned the globe. In short, in various ways, the cadre of diverse researchers who initiated the transnational framework for the study of migration did not ignore continuities but stressed that the "current connections of immigrants are of a different order than past linkages" because the current processes of restructuring and reconfiguring global capital "are different" (Glick Schiller et al. 1995: 52).

However, we posited stasis. We did not theorise how subsequent conjunctural changes might make processes of migration qualitatively different from the conditions within which the transnational migration framework proposed by the first-generation scholars had emerged. Instead, the scholars working within the initial transnational migration framework envisioned a stable regulatory mobility regimes across porous border, in which the "undocumented" served as an exploitable labour but were not uniformly viewed as criminal or subject to mass deportations (De Genova 2002). Many mobility regimes were maintained by migrants' expectation that eventually they would find a way to settle and build transnational connections. Even if migrants arrived undocumented or with some kind of limited visa – work, visitors or student in the US, guest worker or asylum seeking in Europe and temporary workers elsewhere – these expectations functioned to maintain these mobility regimes. These expectations were a basic but unstated aspect of the transnational migration framework.

Subsequent transnational migration scholarship: time and space as discrete analytical domains

Over the next more than two decades, an immense and impressive literature on transnational migration developed. Most contributors to this literature shared the assumption that the international migration system would remain in place – including the possibility for long-term settlement in the new homeland.

In place of addressing what was in effect rapidly changing conditions, what emerged was what Robertson (1992: 113) described as "globe talk" and which Ley (2004: 152) described as "a master discourse reproduced in intellectual, policy and corporate circles" that celebrated global interconnections and the rapid flow of capital, information, technology, ideas and people.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the rapid actions of global financial institutions and corporate representatives to impose first privatisation and loans and then structural adjustment within the formerly Soviet hegemon intensified the claims that the world was united through a global economy and "post-national citizenship" (Soysal 1994). Subsequently, celebrations of a global economy continued, even as successive regions of the world faced crisis and political instability in the wake of the increasing predation of globe-spanning neoliberal corporate and financial institutions. Decades of continual reorganisation followed the initial debt crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1970s–1980s: the real estate failures of the East Asian financial crisis in 1997; the bursting of the dot-com bubble in the US and elsewhere in 2000; the financial collapse of southern Europe, especially Greece after 2008 and the subprime mortgage collapse in the US and UK in 2008.

Many scholars ignored the unequal institutional power and personal and corporate wealth that were eroding the legitimation of intensive globalisation in the eyes of those increasingly dispossessed by its processes. They continued to speak about cross-border flows and referenced a new scholarship of rhizomic-decentred networks and the multiplicity and fluidity of connections and assemblages (Appadurai 1990; Deleuze & Guattari 2004 [1980]; Urry 2000). By and large, these scholars failed to recognise global political and economic contradictions that led to growing political angers and crises of legitimacy.

Instead, in this second wave of transnational migration scholarship, the discussion of conjunctural conditions and political economy was dismissed as "economism" (Ley 2004: 152). Smith (2001) rejected discussions on global political economy as necessarily disregarding human agency and local spatial and cultural difference, family networks and everyday life. Yet, in the cultural studies scholarship of Stuart Hall (1979, 1987) and those who continued this form of conjunctural analysis such as Clarke (2010, 2014), the Marxist-influenced approach to conjuncture specifically speaks of agency and culture.

To explain "the transnational turn" (Faist 2004), the second generation of transnational migration researchers highlighted the advent of new technologies (Faist 1998; Vertovec 1999). For example, Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt (1999: 223) stated:

> Transnational enterprises did not proliferate among earlier immigrants because the technological conditions of the time did not make communications across national borders rapid or easy. ... Communications were slow and, thus, many of the transnational enterprises described in today's literature could not have developed. ... [In comparison] the ready availability of air transport, long-distance telephone, facsimile communication, and electronic mail provides the technological basis for the emergence of transnationalism on a mass scale.[4]

While many of these authors linked technological change to changes in global capitalism (Levitt 2001) or globalisation, they offered no further analysis of what constituted globalisation and how its dynamics must change with the construction of changing mobility regimes. For example, in referencing historical change, Levitt and Jaworsky

(2007: 146) stated that "the frequency and intensity of migrant transnational practices ebb and flow in response to the intensification or slackening of globalization". Left unanswered were the questions of why globalisation processes or certain technologies develop and are popularised at certain historical moments, an important concern in the critique of technological determinism (Noble 1977).

Instead, scholars who tried to further theorise transnational migration concentrated on developing a vocabulary of space, scale and network, reflecting discussions about spatiality and placemaking that had already been initiated by geographers (Leitner 1997; Massey 1992; Faist 2000, 2004; Pries 2008; Vertovec 2009). Anthropologists and others committed to ethnography were particularly comfortable with this discussion because they felt at home with concepts of territorially based cultural difference. They have preferred to see their specific local field sites linked together through "multi-sited" methodologies (Marcus 1995). Meanwhile, sociologists developed the concept of transnational space. The literature on transnational migration became replete with what are fundamentally spatial terms including "transnational social space" (Faist 1998), "transnational community" (Levitt 2001; Vertovec 1999) and "transnational social formation" (Guarnizo 1997). Scholars offered a "growing body of empirical studies on various aspects of transnational social spaces" (Richter 2012).

Faist's (1998) approach has proved influential. He delineated transnational space not as a place but as a dynamic and bounded process. "Transnational social spaces go beyond strictly migratory chains of the first generation of migrants and develop a life of their own. A qualitative leap occurs when transnational social spaces are characterized by self-feeding processes or the dynamics of cumulative causation. This concept is similar to the notion of path-dependence that has been linked to stable equilibrium concepts in economics" (Faist 1998: 5-6).

In these efforts to delineate transnational space, time was not forgotten. In fact, Faist (1998: 8) spoke of "space–time" – but despite such temporal references, time was not theorised but instead allocated to a macro-level of analysis. For example, Faist (1998: 36) made various references to a categorical differentiation between the "micro-level" of migrant strategies within the bounded "self-feeding" internally constituted dynamic that he had identified and "macro-structural conditions," another level of analysis that must be assessed "in the longer historical perspective". In other words, "larger structural factors such as economic and political opportunities constitute a more remote, albeit an enabling and constraining context in which individuals, collectives and networks operate" (Faist 1998: 9; Pries 1999). Smith & Guarnizo's (1999) references to transnationalism "above" and "below" similarly divided the local grassroots level from the working of institutions of power, conceptualised as the terrain of global restructuring. Analysts were left without a conceptual framework with which to analyse the mutual constitution of space through time by migrants and non-migrants who were all incorporated into multiscalar networks of power.

In contrast, by building on *Nations Unbound*'s initial concept of transnational social field and simultaneity, Peggy Levitt and I contested static levels of analysis by approaching social relations within multiple intersecting and changing domains of power. We defined social field "as a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed. Social fields are multi-dimensional, encompassing structured interactions of differing forms, depth, and breadth that are differentiated in social theory by the terms organization, institution, and social movement" (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 1009). As we made clear, this approach is

nothing less than a rethinking of the concept of society in a way that encompasses the globe and all its differentiated places. Khagram & Levitt (2008) continued this usage of social fields, accordingly casting those who interacted in these fields as agents of change. "The world consists of multiple sets of dynamic overlapping and intersecting transnational social fields that create and shape seemingly bordered and bounded structures, actors, and processes" (Khagram & Levitt 2008: 5). However, they did not sufficiently confront the intertwining of time and space so as to address global reconfigurations.

As Doreen Massey (1999: 274) noted twenty years ago:

time and space must be thought together ... for they are inextricably intermixed. ... [S]patiality must be integrated as an essential part of that process of 'the continuous creation of novelty'. This cannot be 'space' as a static cross-section through time, for … this disables history itself. Nor can it be 'space' as representation conceived of as stasis, for this precisely immobilizes things. Nor can it be 'space' as a closed equilibrium system, for this would be a spatiality that goes nowhere, that always returns to the same. This cannot be 'space', either, as any kind of comforting closure (the closures of bounded, 'authentic' places), for these would also run down into inertia. Nor can it be space convened as temporal sequence, for here space is in fact occluded and the future is closed.

Although Khagram and Levitt acknowledged the importance of assessing power differentials within transnational networks, they did not link this assessment to processual change. Generally, scholars who have noted transformations of space through time have disconnected their analysis from references to multiple intersecting networks of power. For example, Vertovec (2009: 24) noted that when "processes accumulate to alter fundamentally some key societal structures, we can designate them as forms of significant transformation". However, he then delineated four separate processes: the economic, political, sociocultural and religious. This categorisation impedes analysts' ability to study the intersection of various forces, institutional networks and forms of power.

This type of categorical thinking has prevented most transnational migration scholars from theorising and studying the connections between changing forms of capital accumulation, political power and sociocultural and religious legitimation processes within the emergence of crises and fundamental alterations in mobility regimes.[5] They have failed to develop ways to conceptualise the mutual constitution of time and space so as to comprehend the transformations within and across neighbourhoods, localities, states, regions and globally that are restructuring the daily life of migrants, even as migrants' multiple actions, practices, affiliations and identifications constitute and are reconstituted by these reconstructions.

Time, space and the multiscalar analysis of historical conjuncture

The term multiscalar can serve as a "shorthand to speak of sociospatial spheres of practice that are constituted in relationship to each other and within various hierarchies of networks of power" (Çağlar & Glick Schiller 2018: 8). In this approach, the term hierarchy does not connote fixed relations of power but highlights situations of unequal power. The concept of multiscalar discards the notion of levels of analysis as well as interrelated nested concepts of

scale that geographers have deployed in the past to denote a fixed hierarchy of bounded territorial units such as household, neighbourhood, city, province and nation-state. Instead, it builds on the work of geographers such as Swyngedouw (2004) and Brenner (1999) who have approached scales as local, regional, national and global mutually constituted, relational and interpenetrating territorially referenced entry points for an analysis of globe-spanning interconnected processes.

Scholars of relational networked historical processes emphasise that multiscalar processes can neither be reduced to nor understood without understanding the dynamics of various modes of capital accumulation interacting within specific places and times (Smith 1995). However, while Jessop, Brenner & Jones (2008) and Brenner (2011) differentiate scale, territory, place and network and then discuss the relationship between these concepts, together with Sassen (2014), Çağlar and I (2018; Glick Schiller 2015) use the term multiscalar to bring together various intersecting territorially located places that are connected by multiple spatially articulated networked forms of differential power. Through their interactions and contradictions over time, these are the forces within which people transform their places and the world.

When it is coupled with an understanding of historical conjuncture, we suggest that the concept of multiscalar allows researchers to understand the ways in which space and time are knit together within historical processes. It also allows migrants and non-migrants to be understood as part of these intersecting multiple placemaking networks. "The concept of multiscalar social fields enables us to address and capture aspects of social relations through which broader social forces enable, shape, constrain, and are acted upon by individuals …. Migrants ... form multiple new social relations and maintain others as they settle in specific places and the networks in which they live contribute to the remaking of the institutional nexus of city-level, regional, national, supranational, and globe-spanning actors" (Çağlar & Glick Schiller 2018: 9). We came to these conclusions by examining the interactions of migrants of multiple different legal statuses as they interacted within the spaces of associations, religious institutions, residential areas, political organisations, hometown associations and social movements, which were connected within multiscalar transnational personal and institutional networks in three disempowered cities in three very different countries: Germany, the US, and Turkey.

Conjunctural analysis

In highlighting the historical transformations that are brought about by interconnected multiscalar networks and processes, the term conjuncture proves useful. Clarke (2014: 115), a cultural studies scholar, defines conjunctural analysis as an assessment of "the forces, tendencies, forms of power, and relations of domination" which at any moment in history can lead to regional and local political, economic and social arrangements that differ from each other. It is important to emphasise that this approach to historical change is simultaneously a discussion of time and space or "space–time" in the vocabulary that became popular in the 1990s, just as the full impact of the conjunctural changes of neoliberal transfigurations was being felt and theorised (Massey 1992). In the 1990s, the concept conjuncture became a taken for granted term in the literature about displacement, globalisation and crisis to describe the coming together in time of multiple intersecting forces (Denning 1996; Gill 1992; Lee 1998; Malkki 1995).

Marxists have used the concept of conjuncture to repudiate economistic or teleological readings of Marx by highlighting the relationships between multiple intersecting forces, processes and actors and the historical transformation of the economic, political, social and cultural organisations of capital accumulation that produce historical change (Althusser 1970; Althusser & Balibar 2016 [1965]; Anderson 1992; Gramsci 1951; Poulantzaz 1973 [1968]). Temporality and the restructuring of capital as a social relationship are understood as mutually contingent dimensions of human experience so that time is approached as an aspect of processual alterations. The concept of conjuncture is part of a vocabulary that helps "to analyze the many determinations of concrete reality, and thus open up new possibilities for political interventions" (Koivisto & Lahtinen 2012: 276). As such, historical conjuncture is "a form of historical explanation which seeks both to explain particular events and ideas, and to map the movement of a period as a whole, by relating them to the working out of a dominant combination of causes" (Rosenberg 2005: 29).

Conjunctural analysis provides an approach to the study of processes such as transnational migration that highlights the emergence of interrelated networks over time and across space. Rejecting a language of fixed periods or eras that "freeze world history" for several centuries at a time (Burawoy 1989: 770), conjunctural analysis alerts us to the intersection of forces that produce new realignments; changes in the configuration of political, economic, and cultural life; new social movements and the emergence of new concepts such as the transnational framework for the study of migration.

Building on his reading of Gramsci's discussion of "the crisis of authority", Hall (1979: 14-15, 1987: 20) noted that with conjunctural change, the previous forces of "order erupt, not only in the political domain and the traditional areas of industrial and economic life, not simply in the class struggle, in the old sense; but in a wide series of polemics, debates about fundamental sexual, moral and intellectual questions, in a crisis in the relations of political representation and the parties – on a whole range of issues which do not necessarily, in the first instance, appear to be articulated with politics, in the narrow sense, at all". He spoke to the question of agency as part of conjunctural moments, emphasising that these new settlements "do not 'emerge': they have to be constructed. Political and ideological work is required to disarticulate old formations, and to rework their elements into new configurations. The 'swing to the Right' is not a reflection of the crisis: it is itself a response to the crisis" (Hall 1979:15). In short, Hall offered an analysis of both the interrelated multiple shifts in in global reorganisation and how we think about these changes (MacCabe 2008).

Conjunctural transformations are crises, but each such crisis moves through networked space with differential but related outcomes that are experienced in different places at different points of time. As Clarke (2014) emphasises, conjunctural analysis allows us to move beyond assuming one uniform crisis and its unfolding, and conjunctures have no fixed length because their resolution is an outcome of the contradictions between the forces at work within multiple scalar relationships. The challenge is to acknowledge the variegated histories of the world regions, states, regions of states and localities, the simultaneous interconnections between structures of power located in different states around the world and the ways in which developments, movements and ideological changes that occur in one place affect differentially other places around the world (Çağlar & Glick Schiller 2018). The concept of changing multiscalar historical conjunctures, which are precipitated by differentially experienced crises and reconfigurations, allows migration scholars to assess the changing conditions within which people build, maintain and highlight or repudiate or are silent about transnational networks of connection (Glick Schiller 2015). Crisis, the contradiction between competing intersecting institutions of power and the reconfiguration of relationships that emerge, creates new conjunctural conditions that alter both the possibility of transnational migration and the ways we define and understand it.

Conclusion: the transforming conjunctural moment and the future of transnational migration as a process and analytic

In various sectors of migration studies, researchers have begun to ask why and how the current moment seems different from the recent past, although the answers given tend to focus on particulars rather than providing an overview of contemporary transformations. For example, Lucassen (2017) asks "why did Western and other European politicians become so alarmed and, in some cases, downright apocalyptic at the rise of asylum seekers in 2014-16, especially compared to the previous refugee crisis in the 1990s?" His "historical perspective" references a "perfect storm" of conjunctural forces but focuses on the rise in various anti-Islamic forces rather than asking what was happening in the world to create the climate of Islamophobia at that point in time. In this concluding section, I outline the dimensions of the current emerging historical conjuncture.

It becomes clear that increasingly the possibilities for migrants to live transnational lives through family visits, reunification, sending remittances, developing media, transnational politics and the formation of many types of non-governmental organisations including hometown organizations is becoming increasingly difficult. This is especially true for migrants of colour who live in Europe and the US, who are not Christian, who hold dual nationality or who are not citizens. Even those who have obtained citizenship are increasingly at risk for surveillance, harassment and even deportation. Therefore, we need an analysis that speaks more broadly about the conditions and multiscalar actors currently engaging in transformational movements. This means exploring within the same analytical framework anti-refugee, anti-immigrant, racist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, white Christian supremacy movements and anti-fascist/anti-capitalist forms of resistance and socio-political organisation and action.

Neoliberalism – an agenda to restructure the mechanisms of capital accumulation, eliminates Keynesian mechanisms of distribution and reorganises governance and daily common sense – has since the 1970s taken different forms over time in different states and regions (Duménil & Lévy 2004). Increasingly, "actual existing neoliberalism" (Peck, Brenner &Theodore 2017) led to contradictions that are producing a new configuration of conjunctural forces – the intertwining of networks of corporate, financial, governmental, media, religious and civil society organisations. Underlying these processes is the emergence of altered forms of capital accumulation, which some have identified as a crisis of neoliberalism (Duménil & Lévy 2013; Kotz 2015). Others speak of the triumph of fictitious capital (Durand 2017). There is general scholarly agreement that those controlling concentrated wealth are finding other forms of capital accumulation more profitable than the production of goods, whether the goods are steel, cell phones, garments or gizmos (Durand 2017; World Bank 2016). The emerging conjuncture is marked by a structural crisis of capitalism, increased disparities between the rich and others all around the world, perpetual war in various locations

and political crises of authority in regimes that had been legitimated through liberal democracy including Nordic countries (Duménil & Lévy 2013; Harvey 2004, 2012; Kotz 2015; Lehtonen 2016).

Marx (1887: 440, 507-509) used the term "primitive accumulation" for the dispossessive processes through which "the social means of subsistence and production" were transformed into capital. Renaming these processes of accruing capital by appropriating the means of subsistence and socially stored value as "accumulation by dispossession", Harvey (2004) has argued that while always present after the initial expansion of Europe, dispossessions and their resulting displacements have again become central to capital accumulation in the current conjuncture (Glassman 2006; Kasimir & Carbonella 2008; Luxemburg 1951 [1913]). Contemporary forms of accumulation by dispossession consist of not only older practices such as the seizure of communal land, precious resources and public spaces but also the acquisition of capital through neoliberal "reforms" such as the privatisation of public utilities, schools, housing and hospitals. In addition, integral to contemporary accumulation through dispossession are new and revitalised instruments of financialising risk and debt based on markets in mortgages, student debt and car, furniture, credit card and payday loans.

Processes of dispossession produce a wide range of physical and social displacements as people lose access to various means of subsistence. Sometimes, the dispossessive processes are violence and warfare linked to broader struggles for land and resources within geopolitical contentions, which cause people to flee from their homelands. Sometimes, the dispossessions that lead to displacement take the form of neoliberal "austerity" measures and "reforms" and restructuring and the privatisation of public land, housing, employment and benefits. Increasingly people in "advanced capitalist countries" find that the future fruits of their labour are being seized and they enter into a form of debt peonage because of various loans or their inability to pay fines and fees, losing jobs, homes, and even the ability to rent housing in the process. Globe-spanning financial corporations are instituting similar processes around the world. The results of these dispossessions and displacements have led to downward social mobility.

As a result of accumulation by dispossession and concurrent multiple forms of displacement, the lives of increasing numbers of people around the world are becoming more precarious. In cities, the displaced are becoming urban precariats (Standing 2011) – composed of people who have never moved but have none the less been socially dispossessed and displaced and people who have migrated either within or across borders only to face another cycle of displacement brought on by urban regeneration and debt. One of the implications of this perspective is that migrants and non-migrants share the experience of displacement by processes of capital accumulation.

The people from whom wealth is extracted are increasingly cast out or cast aside as worthless, regardless of legal status within the country where they live. In the past and at present, such appropriations are ultimately maintained by force but simultaneously legitimated culturally by narratives of national, racialised and gendered difference that cast those who are dispossessed as criminal, alien to "our culture" and "ungreivable" (Butler 2009). That is to say, in the emerging historical conjuncture, we are seeing accumulation through dispossession justified by categorising those who have generated value as less than human.

Understanding the emerging conjuncture makes clear why the previous social, cultural and political arrangements upon which the transnational migration framework was built are breaking down.

This mode of governance of the undocumented and of non-citizens and citizens of colour simultaneously maintained their exploitation and also allowed forms of social citizenship, settlement and rights. Currently, this entire mode of governance is under attack. Access to asylum, the right to move and settle and family reunion migration have become severely restricted. Borders have been securitised, and the bordering of bodies – surveillance within national territories – is becoming increasingly technologically sophisticated and routinised (De Genova & Peutz 2010). In the emerging conjuncture, whole new industries to accumulate profits from migrant bodies have become significant with capital accumulated through surveillance and "migration management", which includes short-term contract labour; the control, detention, and accumulation of migrant bodies and the corporate consolidation of rights advocacy (Lindquist, Xiang & Yeoh 2012; Sørensen 2013).

In the US and the UK, this conjunctural moment is marked by immigration raids that arrest, detain and deport long time unauthorised residents who have citizen children and spouses, homes and jobs (Rochabrun 2017). When migrants claim hard won local social citizenship rights such as protection from domestic violence or workmen's compensation when injured, they find themselves deported (Grabell & Berkes 2017). Tellingly for the prospects for transnational family, parents without authorised residence in the US face prosecution and deportation as criminal "human traffickers", when they seek to protect their children from the threats of gang violence and rape in Central America by bringing them to safety in the United States (Burnett 2017). In a UK example, the British government deported a woman after she returned from visiting Singapore to nurse her mother, although she had legal residency status in the UK, where she had lived with her British husband to whom she had been married for 27 years (Slawson 2017). Transnational acts of family connection are becoming punishable acts.

It is disingenuous to approach the current world situation without acknowledging that it differs in significant ways from the mobility regimes that constituted the setting within which so much of the transnational migration scholarship was conducted. The conjunctural transformations that increasingly dispossess migrants and non-migrants alike require an analysis and a politics that can speak to the situation of displacement facing increasing numbers of people around the world. Yet, most contemporary transnational migration scholars, even when they acknowledge new surveillance and deportation regimes, have not developed an analytical framework that can fully come to terms with these fundamental alterations.

As Hall (1987: 16) so rightly understood, there can be no "easy transfer of generalizations from one conjuncture, nation or epoch to another…. When a conjuncture unrolls, there is no 'going back'. History shifts gears. The terrain changes. You are in a new moment" that produces a new politics, culture, and forms of governmentality. Throughout Europe and in many locations in Asia and the Americas, dispossession and its displacements are fuelling nationalism by targeting migrants, gay people and people of colour, as well as those who receive any form of social benefits as threatening shared cultural values and national well-being. Nationalist political leaders and right-wing political movements argue that the dispossessed degrade public safety and morality.

In response, some scholars are producing a historical and analytical literature on displacement, expulsion and dispossession (Anderson 2014; De Genova & Peutz 2010; De Haas 2012; Kasmir & Carbonella 2008; Sassen 2014). However, more work needs to be done in transnational migration studies including an analysis of the politics embedded in our concepts. We need to acknowledge clearly

the emergent conjuncture in which anti-immigrant rhetoric, policies and legislation in multiple states and regions of the world make the movements across borders ever more difficult, even as the need to migrate becomes more pressing. At the same time, a conjunctural awareness will help make visible to both scholars and activists the conditions of dispossession and displacement that increasingly uproot and criminalise both migrants and non-migrants. Our analysis and our politics must confront a world in which people can neither stay at home nor leave to settle elsewhere. Because temporality has not been adequately addressed by transnational migration scholars, some researchers have quietly acceded to a world in which people are forced to contract their labour to escape intolerable conditions and yet have no right to settle, no civil protections and no freedom of movement. While initially scholars, as well as policy makers, political officials, grant funding agencies and financial institutions such as the World Bank, celebrated migrants' long-term transnational ties, more recently many of these actors began to promote "circular migration" organised through short-term contract migration (Portes 2007) or referred to transnational migration as "temporary" (EURA-NET 2017).[6]

It is incumbent upon those concerned with migration to directly challenge these conditions, which deny the rights to livelihood, human security and a future for people around the world, whether or not they are migrants. Theory and practice must recognise the conjunctures of intersecting networks of globe spanning but locally emplaced structures of unequal power including the power of capital (Delgado-Wise 2017) that constitutes all our lives and that are and can be reconstituted by people's individual and collective actions. Rather than assail all those who express their anger and despair in the face of dispossession through right-wing movements, the challenge of migration scholars is to recognise that the displaced and dispossessed within the emergent conjuncture have more in common than they have differences and in various ways are searching for social and economic justice (Çağlar & Glick Schiller 2018). Conceptualising transformations in the global historical conjuncture and its concomitant dispossession of those cast as natives as well as foreigners creates a new form of scholarship, a dispossession studies, that can not only theorise the temporality of displacements but also strengthen multiscalar movements for social justice (Feldman-Bianco 2015; Feldman-Bianco & Heller 2012).

Notes

1. I use the term mobility regimes rather than migration regimes (Glick Schiller and Salizar (2013) to indicate that various structures of power accord rights to   move, settle, and stay in place to individuals of certain classes and racialized categories and deny both mobility and stasis to others.
2. Migrants' transnationality was particularly visible from the 1880s to 1920s and from the 1990s to 2010 (Glick Schiller 1999).
3. Throughout the 20th century, migration scholars made reference to the push–pull theory of migration, without citation. Underlying all uses of the term is a form of "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002) that assumes each state has its own separate national economy that functions independently of all others.
4. Subsequently, Portes (2001: 187) rectified this statement and directly linked the growth of transnational migration to "the very logic of global capitalism [which] creates a continuous demand for immigrant labour in the advanced countries".
5. For an important exception to this trend, see Bevelander and Petersson (2014), Cervantez-Rodriguez (2010) and Feldman-Bianco (2011).
6. This marks a full-scale return to colonial labour regimes such as the one that existed in South Africa under apartheid.

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