



CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Clarifications

Abstract This chapter develops the conceptual basis of the book and explains its key terms. History systematically told from a perspective of migration changes national self-perceptions. However, it is not a question of adding a history of migration to so-called general history. Hence, migration should not only be brought to the fore in domains where its influence is obvious. Instead, all fields of society have to be looked at differently: democracy, agriculture, or, as is the case here, gender equality. What we need is a ‘migrantisation’ of our understanding of the past. Besides introducing key terms and concepts such as ‘gender innovation’, I explain why this book aims to overcome the often unproductive splitting apart of different forms of mobility that so far have rarely been analysed together.

Keywords Gender innovation · Migrantisation of history · Sedentary bias · Intersectionality · A unified analysis of migration

GENDER INNOVATION

The term ‘gender innovation’ is sometimes used to describe a gain in scientific knowledge. For instances, in a forthcoming book, entitled *Gender Innovation in Political Science*, the contribution of feminist scholarship to new norms and knowledge in various areas of political

science is analysed.¹ My use of the term is different. I understand gender innovation as a subform of sociopolitical innovation in relation to the emergence, implementation or dissemination of new forms of life in different areas of society, but always with reference to a change in gender relations.²

I strongly dissociate myself from another use of the concept ‘social innovation’, namely when it becomes ‘a convenient buzzword to forward neoliberal ideology in a time of austerity’.³ Note that, depending on the perspective of the beholder, innovation doesn’t necessarily have a positive connotation—in fact, the term ‘social innovation’ long had pejorative connotations, describing deviant behaviour and especially socialist doctrines.⁴ By choosing this concept, which is today usually positively connoted, I nonetheless intend to reverse the usually negative framing of migration as first and foremost a ‘problem’.

THE INTERSECTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PRIVILEGES AND NEW RECONFIGURATIONS

To understand processes of sociopolitical innovation, the concept of intersectionality is highly important. This term was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in a seminal paper in which she analysed the ‘particular manner in which Black women are subordinated’.⁵ At the intersection, different kinds of discrimination meet. The resulting oppressive

¹Marian Sawyer and Kerryn Baker, *Gender Innovation in Political Science*, Cham: Springer International Publishing (Palgrave Macmillan) 2019. Londa Schiebinger uses the term ‘gendered innovation’ in order to describe how a gender analysis can lead to innovation. See for instance <http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/what-is-gendered-innovations.html> (1 February 2018).

²Forms of life, in turn, are based on socially shared practices. Rahel Jaeggi, *Kritik von Lebensformen*, Berlin: Suhrkamp 2014, 77.

³Francesco Grisoli and Emanuele Ferragina, Social Innovation on the Rise: Yet Another Buzzword in Time of Austerity? *Salute e società* 1 (2015), 169–179, 169.

⁴Benoît Godin, Social Innovation: Utopias of Innovation from c.1830 to the Present (2012), in: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/SocialInnovation_2012.pdf (12 January 2016).

⁵Kimberlé Crenshaw, Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140 (1989), 139–167, 140. Even though the term was new, the awareness that categories intersected was not: Marlou Schrover and Deirdre M. Moloney, Introduction. Making a Difference, in: Schrover and Moloney, *Gender, Migration and Categorisation. Making Distinctions Between Migrants in Western Countries, 1945–2010*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2013, 7–54, 13. Therefore, one has

effect follows a ‘logic’ of its own and is not limited to the simple addition of the various forms of discrimination.⁶ An intersectional approach thus studies how specific discriminatory effects result from the connection of various kinds of oppression. Crenshaw developed her approach as a critique of how the legal system in the USA reacted to lawsuits where both race and gender discrimination were involved. Accordingly, the focus was on the specific effects of multiple forms of discrimination. Without neglecting the important dimension of discrimination, the concept of intersectionality can also be used in a broader sense,⁷ in order to analyse situations where certain privileges intersect with specific ways of discriminating and as a consequence, the potential for new social and political configurations results. It is precisely the coexistence of privileges and discrimination that can generate change, as several examples in this book will show. Intersectionality therefore not only allows the actors of different social movements to realise the ‘interconnectedness of the issues that concern them’ and in doing so to strengthen their struggle.⁸ Even without such an awareness of the actors involved, the intersection of privileges and discrimination can produce a situation that fosters social change, as we will see.

The clash of privileges with specific forms of discrimination has been addressed by different scholars. For instance, Floya Anthias called this ‘contradictory locations’.⁹ At the end of her article, Anthias also briefly indicates that such situations have a potential for transformation, but she

to be aware that ‘[c]hoosing this particular point of origin erases the synergy of intersectionality’s critical inquiry and critical praxis, and recasts intersectionality as just another academic field’. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality*, Cambridge: Polity 2016, position 1507–1509 (kindle).

⁶Patricia Purtschert and Katrin Meyer, Die Macht der Kategorien. Kritische Überlegungen zur Intersektionalität, *Feministische Studien. Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung* 28, 1 (2010), 130–142.

⁷For instance, it has been very convincingly shown that intersectionality does not operate uniquely in the direction of exclusion and that it ‘can also be used to understand how women deploy their agency to reverse the disadvantages of socioeconomic position, gender, and ethnicity which initially handicap them’. Yvonne Riaño, Drawing New Boundaries of Participation: Experiences and Strategies of Economic Citizenship Among Skilled Migrant Women in Switzerland, *Environment and Planning* 43, 7 (2011), 1530–1546, 1544.

⁸Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*, Cambridge: Polity 2016.

⁹Floya Anthias, Transnational Mobilities, Migration Research and Intersectionality. Towards a Translocational Frame, *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 2, 2 (2012), 102–110.

does not provide any empirical material to demonstrate this. The concrete examples described in this book shall hopefully take the theory of intersectionality a small step further by analysing such processes very concretely.

A ‘MIGRANTISATION’ OF THE PAST

History systematically told from a perspective of migration changes national self-perceptions.¹⁰ Such an intention can, however, remain on the level of an empty assertion, if the constitutive dimension of migration is not shown in concrete terms. For it is not a question of adding a history of migration to so-called general history. Migration should therefore not only be brought to the fore where its influence is obvious. Instead, all fields of society have to be looked at differently: democracy, agriculture, or, as is the case here, gender equality. What we need is not primarily a history of migration, which can be found in books that specifically address this topic, but a ‘migrantisation’ of our understanding of the past. In short, we need a different viewpoint.¹¹

Very often, dominant discourses—and not only in Switzerland—suffer from a sedentary bias and thereby produce an unquestioned assumption that migration is per se a problem.¹² If migration is perceived from the point of view of a sedentary bias, then it inevitably becomes something that ‘needs to be fixed’ by a certain set of policies: ‘The repressive variant is tight border control, the more liberal one is addressing the “root causes” of migration—especially poverty and violence in origin

¹⁰Some of the thoughts I am developing here have already been presented in a very condensed form in the following texts: Francesca Falk, Marignano da, Migration dort, Südafrika nirgends. Über eine gewollte Entkoppelung von Diskursen, *Traverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 3 (2015), 155–165; Francesca Falk, Hat die gegenwärtige Schweiz so wenig mit der vergangenen zu tun? *Wochenzeitung*, 7 January 2016 (2016), 20–21.

¹¹In this context, Janine Dahinden makes a plea for ‘de-migrantising’ migration research while ‘migrantising’ general social scientific research. Janine Dahinden, A Plea for the ‘De-migrantization’ of Research on Migration and Integration, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, 13 (2016), 2207–2225.

¹²This was analysed by, among others, Liisa Malkki, The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees, *Cultural Anthropology* 7, 1 (1992), 24–44; Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*, London and New York: Routledge 2006; Oliver Bakewell, Keeping Them in Their Place. The ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa (2007), in: <https://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications/wp-08-07> (1 November 2016).

countries—so that people do not have to migrate. Either way, migration is seen as harmful and dysfunctional'.¹³ The fact that migration often takes place under very problematic conditions should of course not be negated. The 'problem', however, is not migration itself, but rather the enabling conditions of our political and economic system, for instance in regard to the inequality under which most South–North migration takes place.¹⁴

A sedentary bias can also be found in academic approaches to migration. For instance, in recent essays I have shown how Swiss history has often been written in such a way as to frame migration as, above all, a challenge or problem in need of a solution.¹⁵ As a result, the fundamental way in which migration has shaped contemporary society is overlooked. The relations described in this book between migration and what I call gender innovation thus often go unrecognised. For example, if we look at one of the most recent publications analysing the women's movement in Switzerland, groups formed by 'migrant' women fighting for equal rights are completely ignored. It is as if they were not part of the women's movement.¹⁶ This shows that if we do not start to look at the past from a different perspective, statements, or omissions that are unjustifiable when migration is taken into account, will occur again and again. The Swiss case is not an isolated case. For the USA, the following statement was made in 2001: 'US women's history [...] still has not completely succeeded in conceptualising 'the immigrant woman' into its analysis of the women's movement'.¹⁷

The *present* struggle for gender equality too has so far mostly been written as one in which migration is seen as a problem. Specifically,

¹³Stephen Castles, Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, 10 (2010), 1565–1586, 1567.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Falk, Marignano da, Migration dort, Südafrika nirgends. Über eine gewollte Entkopplung von Diskursen, *Traverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 3 (2015), 155–165; Falk, Hat die gegenwärtige Schweiz so wenig mit der vergangenen zu tun? *Wochenzeitung*, 7 January 2016 (2016), 20–21.

¹⁶This is even more regrettable, as it is otherwise a valuable book: Kristina Schulz, Sarah Kiani, and Leena Schmitter, *Frauenbewegung. Die Schweiz seit 1968. Analysen, Dokumente, Archive*, Baden: Hier und Jetzt 2014.

¹⁷Christiane Harzig, Women Migrants as Global and Local Agents. New Research Strategies on Gender and Migration, in *Sharpe, Women, Gender, and Labour Migration. Historical and Global Perspectives*, London: Routledge 2001, 15–28, 20.

‘migrant’ men are seen as causing problems and ‘migrant’ women as having them—as being a risk and being at risk, as Marlou Schrover aptly puts it.¹⁸ The significance of migration as a possible motor of equal rights is thus erased both from history and the present.

This contribution presents a different picture of the role of migration in Swiss society.¹⁹ Specifically, it analyses distinct but also interrelated fields of research: access to higher education and political rights, the changing gendered division of work and, connected to this, the establishment of a nursery infrastructure. These fields have been selected to show that migration generated gender innovation in various constellations. They allow us to reflect on how, precisely, such processes of migration and emancipatory change occur and how they can be explained. This question will, whenever possible, be addressed by means of an agency-centred approach,²⁰ while at the same time taking into account those social structures that shape and delimit the possibility of individual and collective action.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPATIAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In 1984, a seminal issue on *Women in Migration* was published in the *International Migration Review*. Almost thirty years later, Donna Gabaccia, stated that ‘evidence has accumulated that every point in the migration process is gendered’.²¹ Despite this important insight,

¹⁸Marlou Schrover, *Feminization and Problematization of Migration: Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, in Hoerder and Kaur, *Proletarian and Gendered Mass Migrations. A Global Perspective on Continuities and Discontinuities from the 19th to the 21st Centuries*, Leiden: Brill 2013, 103–131.

¹⁹In German, the concept of ‘postmigrantism’ refers to the idea that today’s society is essentially shaped by migration. See for instance Erol Yildiz and Marc Hill, *Nach der Migration. Postmigrantisches jenseits der Parallelgesellschaft*, Bielefeld: Transcript 2015. Shermin Langhoff originally coined this term. As artistic director at the Ballhaus-Theater in Berlin (2008–2013), she launched a ‘young post-migrant’ theatre festival: Kijan Espahangizi, *Das #Postmigrantisches ist kein Kind der Akademie* (2016), in: <https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/das-postmigrantisches-kein-kind-der-akademie> (2 March 2017).

²⁰Damir Skenderovic, *Vom Gegenstand zum Akteur: Perspektivenwechsel in der Migrationsgeschichte der Schweiz*, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 61, 1 (2015), 1–14. Laura Agustin, *Forget Victimization: Granting Agency to Migrants*, *Development* 46, 3 (2003), 30–36.

²¹Donna R. Gabaccia, *Gender and Migration*, in Ness, *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell 2013, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781444351071> (3 February 2014).

however, many facets of the historical relationship between gender and migration remain unexplored. In showing how migration generates gender innovation in different settings, this study combines a historical perspective with a discussion of timely issues. It brings together a set of case studies, rendering visible their entanglements, and highlighting how the different examples are ‘both specific to and representative of a larger phenomenon’.²² This contribution focuses on the case of Switzerland.²³ Its findings, however, have implications for the understanding of migration and its relation to sociopolitical innovation in more general terms.²⁴

Historically, there has been a dichotomy in academic perceptions of migration and social–political change. One school of thought sees ‘migrants’ as responsible for sustaining the status quo, for example when they are labelled as wage squeezers and strike-breakers,²⁵ whereas others perceive ‘migrants’ as natural activists.²⁶

Albert O. Hirschman suggested in his famous treatise ‘Exit, Voice, and Loyalty’ that members of a group can either exit or voice their dissent, i.e. try to change the situation by leaving (exit) or by criticism

²²Michel Wieviorka, Case Studies: History or Sociology? in Ragin and Becker, *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, 159–172, 170.

²³Recently, numerous new books on the past and present of migration in Switzerland have been published and more will appear in the coming months. Here I will name only a short selection: André Holenstein, Patrick Kury, and Kristina Schulz, *Schweizer Migrationsgeschichte. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Baden: Hier und Jetzt 2018; Philipp Lutz, *Neuland. Schweizer Migrationspolitik im 21. Jahrhundert*, Zürich: Libro, Neue Zürcher Zeitung 2017; Barbara Lüthi and Damir Skenderovic, *Switzerland and Migration. Historical and Current Perspectives on a Changing Landscape*, Cham: Springer International Publishing (Palgrave Macmillan) 2018.

²⁴In this context, see Efremin. Evgeny, At the Intersection of Modernities: Migrants as Agents of Economic and Cultural Change, *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, 2 (2016), 531–554. The author studies the impact of ‘western modernity’ represented by immigrants from the USA and Canada on the working and living habits in Finland and Soviet Karelia (the more unexpected influence of returning ‘migrants’ on North American society is unfortunately not addressed).

²⁵See the example given by Stanford Morris Lyman, *Roads to Dystopia. Sociological Essays on the Postmodern Condition*, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press 2001, 144.

²⁶Gonzague de Reynold, *La démocratie et la Suisse. Essai d’une philosophie de notre histoire nationale*, Bern: Ed. Du Châtelier 1929, 230.

(voice).²⁷ This suggests that, if we transfer this concept to the *sending* country, migration and mobilisation are two mutually exclusive ways of reacting, and that trade-offs exist between exit and voice.²⁸ Interestingly, Hirschman later revised his thesis and acknowledged that the relation between exit and voice does *not* just simply follow a ‘hydraulic model’, according to which the more pressure escapes through exit, the less is available for voice. Drawing on the historical example of the last phase of the German Democratic Republic Hirschman came to argue that exit can cooperate with voice, voice can emerge from exit and exit can reinforce voice.²⁹ In short, he showed that under certain conditions migration can further rather than obstruct social and political change in the *sending* country.

This strict dichotomy between *either* ‘fighting’ *or* ‘fleeing’ has also been criticised by Donna Gabaccia. She points to the fact that ‘the word movement has two distinct meanings. On the one hand, movement means mobility or migration [...]. On the other, movement describes the desire for change and the organisations and alliances of people working for change’.³⁰ It is precisely this relationship between spatial and social change that this book analyses. In contrast to Hirschman’s work, however, the focus is not exclusively, but predominantly on the *receiving* country.

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Not every form of mobility can be called migration. However, the transition between different types of mobility is often fluid. And although the concept of mobility often functions as a generic term and is therefore understood in a broader sense, there is no clear demarcation line

²⁷Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1970.

²⁸In this context, see also Jeffrey Herbst, Migration, the Politics of Protest, and State Consolidation in Africa, in: 89, 355 (1990), 183–203, 183.

²⁹Albert O. Hirschman, Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History, *World Politics* 45, 2 (1993), 173–202. See also Mark James Miller, *Foreign Workers in Western Europe. An Emerging Political Force*, New York: Praeger 1981.

³⁰Donna R. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants. Rural Sicilians Become American Workers*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1988, 1.

between migration and mobility in the scientific terminology.³¹ In this book, my aim is not to define terms in a watertight way, but to investigate concretely what political and social effects can be produced by experiences of migration—understood in a broad sense.

In everyday language, migration is often understood as a movement that involves a crossing of national borders. But definitions always act simultaneously as headlights and blinkers. In fact, a now-dominant paradigm frequently leads to a situation where in public debate only cross-border migration and movements of the ‘global proletariat’ are perceived as migration. Other forms of migration—such as a change of residence for the purpose of tax reduction—are not usually labelled as migration. A bias can therefore also be seen in what is understood by migration in the dominant discourse. Furthermore, migration is nowadays predominantly negatively connoted, often in contrast to mobility.³² This can be seen, for instance, when the movement of expats (usually qualified as white) is called ‘mobility’, while other kind of movements connected to work are labelled ‘migration’—even if the length of stay at the ‘new’ location is of a similar length.³³ Given the current political situation, I argue that we need to transform the connotations of the term ‘migration’ rather than replace it.

A UNIFIED ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION

For researchers investigating the effect of migration on the ‘established’ population, it will at times be necessary in their analysis to separate out ‘migrants’ from the ‘rest of the society’, knowing that this is actually an impossible task.³⁴ In this context, the question arises of

³¹Colin G. Pooley, Mobility, in Ness, *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell 2013, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm376/full>.

³²Thomas Faist, The Mobility Turn: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, 11 (2013), 1637–1646, 1640.

³³Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, Why Are White People Expats When the Rest of Us Are Immigrants? (2015), in: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/mar/13/white-people-expats-immigrants-migration?CMP=fb_gu (20 October 2015).

³⁴Mark Terkessidis, *Nach der Flucht: Neue Ideen für die Einwanderungsgesellschaft*, Ditzingen: Reclam 2017.

when and for how long someone may be referred to as a ‘migrant’. It can be stigmatising to attach someone to a ‘migrant identity’ and highly problematic to ‘migrantise’ people who have long since become part of society.³⁵ As my approach is not intended to lead to the essentialising of identities, I put the term ‘migrant’ in single quotation marks. In fact, there is no straightforward distinction between ‘locals’ and ‘non-locals’—nor should such an approach be taken to imply that there was ever something like a pristine, stable world which was then suddenly affected by migration. Since the beginnings of human existence, societies have been shaped by various forms of migration. If many scholars today rightly point out that migration is to be understood as normal in history, we must not, however, lose sight of the consequences of an effective policy of sedentariness. The nineteenth century, for example, is to be seen as a period in which nomadic forms of life came under increasing pressure worldwide due to colonialism. Especially in those moments when the mobility of Europeans increased due to colonial constellations, that of ‘travellers’ was pathologised, both in the colonial regions and in Europe itself.³⁶

The approach envisaged here brings together international as well as internal migration, since it aims to overcome the often unproductive splitting apart of different forms of mobility that so far have rarely been analysed together.³⁷ It is about thinking processes together that would not otherwise be brought into concert in this way. Precisely this sort of unified analysis is necessary if we want to understand processes of changing gender relations that have been shaped by diverse forms of migration. In this context, Regina Röhild rightly pointed out that only when research focuses on the entire social spectrum of migration can it show that social and political inequality prevails not only between ‘migrants’ and ‘locals’, but

³⁵Regina Röhild, *Jenseits ethnischer Grenzen. Für eine postmigrantische Kultur- und Gesellschaftsforschung*, in Yildiz and Hill, *Nach der Migration. Postmigrantische Perspektiven jenseits der Parallelgesellschaft*, Bielefeld: Transcript 2015, 37–48, 46.

³⁶Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, München: C.H. Beck 2009, 537.

³⁷For new mobilities paradigm, see for example Thomas Faist, *The Mobility Turn: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences?* *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, 11 (2013), 1637–1646; Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, *Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39, 2 (2013), 183–200; Mimi Sheller and John Urry, *The New Mobilities Paradigm*, *Environment and Planning* 38, A (2006), 207–226.

also between different groups of mobile subjects.³⁸ It is indeed a limited concept of migration that cannot see these major distinctions. Rather, it itself becomes an instrument of the border regime, precisely because it follows the logic of the latter instead of exposing it.

³⁸Römhild, *Jenseits ethnischer Grenzen. Für eine postmigrantische Kultur- und Gesellschaftsforschung*, in Yildiz and Hill, *Nach der Migration. Postmigrantische Perspektiven jenseits der Parallelgesellschaft*, Bielefeld: Transcript 2015, 37–48, 42–44.

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