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Transnational Migration and Diaspora Studies: a state of the art

Sheida Besozzi

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Transnational Migration and Diaspora Studies: a state of the art

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Abstract

The 1990s have marked a transnationalist turn in the study of migration, with the migrant subject seen as increasingly bound both to the country of origin and that of settlement. The focus of Migration Studies, up to that point, had been that of studying migration from a Northern American and European perspective, in other words that of the country of settlement. Studies on transnational migration widened the scope by questioning the basics of Migration Studies. At times crossing over and at others in parallel, various authors within the field of Migration Studies and beyond, became interested in the notion of diaspora, through essentialist as well as postpositivist perspectives. This working paper contributes through a state of the art analysis of the evolution of the subfield of Transnational Migration and the field of Diaspora Studies within the broader Migration Studies scholarship with the objective of discussing the similarities and differences of these lines of study. Through a critical reading of the secondary sources explored in the text, the increasing importance given to migrants as socially and politically active agents is brought to the fore.

Keywords: Migration Studies, transnational migration, Diaspora Studies.

Laburpena

1990eko hamarkadan, migrazioaren azterketan aldaketa transnazionalista izan da, eta migratzaileak gero eta lotuago daude bai jatorrizko herrialdearekin, bai kokagunearekin. Migrazio Ikerketen ardatza, ordura arte, migrazioa Ipar Amerikako eta Europako ikuspegitik aztertzea izan zen, hau da, finkatze-herrialdearen ikuspegitik. Nazioz gaindiko migrazioari buruzko ikerketek irismena handitu zuten Migrazio Azterlanen oinarriak zalantzan jarriz. Batzuetan gurutzatzen ziren, eta beste batzuetan paraleloan, Migrazio Ikasketen eta harantzagokoen esparruko hainbat autore diasporaren nozioan interesatu ziren, ikuspegi esentzialista nahiz postpositibisten bidez. Lan honek, Migrazio Transnazionalen azpieremuaren eta Diasporako Ikasketen bilakaeraren analisi artistikoaren bidez, Migrazio Ikasketen beka zabalagoaren barruan laguntzen du, ikasketa lerro hauen antzekotasun eta desberdintasunei buruz eztabaidatzeko helburuarekin. Testuan aztertutako bigarren mailako iturrien irakurketa kritiko baten bidez, gero eta garrantzi handiagoa ematen zaie etorkinei eragile sozial eta politiko aktibo gisa.

Hitz-gakoak: Migrazio ikasketak, migrazio transnazionala, Diasporako ikasketak.

Resumen

La década de 1990 ha marcado un giro transnacionalista en el estudio de la migración, al considerarse que el sujeto migrante está cada vez más vinculado tanto al país de origen como al de asentamiento. Hasta entonces, los estudios sobre migraciones se habían centrado en el estudio de las migraciones desde una perspectiva norteamericana y europea, es decir, del país de asentamiento. Los estudios sobre la migración transnacional ampliaron el alcance cuestionando los fundamentos de los Estudios sobre Migración.

En ocasiones cruzándose y en otras en paralelo, varios autores dentro del campo de los Estudios sobre Migraciones y más allá, se interesaron por la noción de diáspora, a través de perspectivas tanto esencialistas como postpositivistas. Este cuaderno de trabajo contribuye a través de un análisis del estado de la cuestión de la evolución del subcampo de las Migraciones Transnacionales y del campo de los Estudios sobre la Diáspora dentro del ámbito más amplia de los Estudios sobre Migraciones, con el objetivo de discutir las similitudes y diferencias de estas líneas de estudio. A través de una lectura crítica de las fuentes secundarias exploradas en el texto, se pone de manifiesto la creciente importancia concedida a los migrantes como agentes social y políticamente activos.

Palabras clave: Estudios sobre Migraciones, migración transnacional, Estudios sobre Diasporas.

Index

1. Introduction

> "Salvo en algunos lugares de África, todas las poblaciones mundiales actuales son resultado de alguna migración del pasado (...) Toda la especie humana o somos inmigrantes o somos descendientes de inmigrantes"
> (Sutcliffe, 1998: 55).

> "Diaspora is a deeply political idea"
> (Sigona et al., 2015: xxii).

> "Diasporas are not and should not be understood as 'revolutionary subjects' or even benevolent agents of social change. Rather, they carry in their cultures and their everyday practices the potential to unsettle and to question, to challenge certainty with ambiguity, homogeneity with their difference"
> (Tsagarousianou, 2020: 14).

This text starts by revising the origins of migration theory, by looking at international migration, the different schools within it, and the shift that has taken place through the cultural turn within Migration Studies and the consequent arrival to transnationalist perspectives. In parallel, it proposes a reading of Diaspora Studies from its origins in order to place diasporas in dialogue with the broader field of Migration Studies. The aim of the first section is to introduce Diaspora Studies as an alternative vision to the way migration has been theorised since its origins, thus the structure of the text has developed accordingly. I find it fundamental to take this path, in order to understand why transnationalism and diaspora rose as differing analytical tools for the study of migrants and migration processes.

The first part of this work focuses on the developments within Migration Studies, centering on its interdisciplinarity. The way Migration Studies have evolved from the analysis of European migration to the US will also be of interest in order to finally locate Migration Studies within Europe. Migration is also analysed through the different schools of thought that still exist within the fields in order to finally centre on the concepts of assimilation, acculturation and integration as pertinent for the consequent understanding of transnational migration and diasporas.

The following section focuses on bridging transnational migration and diaspora. Although studies on transnational migration clearly originate in Migration Studies and are more specifically formed through the transnationalist turn in Migration Studies, Diaspora Studies is founded on a different theoretical path. That said, the symbiosis that exists between diaspora and transnational migration will be acknowledged. The section dedicated to transnational migration starts by looking at its definitions and characteristics, followed by the most important formations that have been theorised in the subfield. The section on

transnational migration ends by centring on the types of transnational migrant practices and the multiscalar approach in transnationalism.

The third section of this Lan Koadernoa focuses specifically on diasporas. It also starts by delving into the definitions and characteristics of diasporas, by taking a historical view on terminology and conceptualisation. Subsequently it centres on the most important characteristics of diaspora formations. The second part of the section places the accent on the diverse theoretical perspectives that exist in Diaspora Studies and the third and last explores the connection between diasporas, the country of origin and that of settlement, namely, the triadic relationship.

2. International Migration Studies: interdisciplinarity

The full scope of migration processes cannot be captured with one theory (King, 2012: 24; Cohen, 1996: xii; Sutcliffe, 1998: 34). Whilst large-scale migration, its central elements being large-scale trade and the expansion of global communication networks, has its beginnings in the modern era (Cohen, 1996: xi), migration has a much longer history (Sutcliffe, 1998: 57-58; Goldberg, 1994 in Hall, 2010: 586)[1].

Interdisciplinary analysis in Migration Studies has increasingly been dealt with (see especially Brettell and Hollifield, 2015). For some it was a given due to the nature of migration (Castles and Miller, 2009: 21; Pedraza, 1991: 304), for others its strength is unprecedented (Scholten, 2022: 19; Levy et al., 2020: 19), whereas for another set of scholars it is just insufficient[2], due to the hindering of existing structures within theories of migration (Levy et al., 2020: 20) as well as to the different epistemological perspectives that exist among social science scholars. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollefield contend that there still exists a wide separation between those who look at migration top-down, i.e. focusing on macro perspectives, and those who look at migration from the bottom-up, in other words centring on the narratives of the "individual migrant or the immigrant family" (2015: 2). For Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, it is more of a question of taking a deep and broad look at migration processes. Whilst disagreeing with it, the authors argue that there has often been a divide in the study of migration, with one section focusing on the reasons, procedures and sequences of migration, whereas the other on how the migrants have become assimilated into the host country. They would rather englobe both parcels as one whole area of Migration Studies and, additionally, think of the second section as one that deals with how migration impacts both the host nation as well as the country of origin (2009: 20). Along this same line, Levy et al. point out that since the beginning of the new millennium, an important distinction exists in

1 Sutcliffe gathers the principal characteristics of the three periods of migration that have taken place since the beginning of capitalism (16th century, 1500s) and before the 1960s. The first period corresponds to three centuries (1500-1800), during which the slave trade took place from the African continent to America. Approximately around 10 to 20 million people forcefully migrated in this period (Sutcliffe, 1998: 57). The second period stretched between the 1800 and 1900 and it involved the forced movement of temporary servants, known as "bonded or indentured labour" from India during colonial times and from China. It is estimated that around 30 million Indians left India during the colonial period and that 24 million came back (Lim, 1991 in Sutcliffe, 1998: 57). The servants were expected to return after their contracts ended (around 10 years) but many stayed, as for example the Chinese in South East Asia, the Pacific and Caribbean Islands, as well as South Africa (57). The third period started in the 19th century (1800s onwards) and it is formed by the emigration of Western Europeans (although especially from less developed regions such as Italy, Spain and Ireland) to America and Australia. Over 60 million people moved to those places, many in a permanent form, due to different reasons (economic, political and social). The third period differed from the other two for various reasons: 1) the migration was coming from a developed area; the demographic effects, especially in terms of the ethnic structure were different; although migration was not distinctively voluntary, the third group of migrants had a higher degree of choice compared to the other two (1998: 57-58).

2 Levy et al. (2020: 20) point to the academic journal business industry; the separations present in university faculty structures, as well as the way funding is spread and captured as possible motives.

the literature that is now more focused on looking at migration in terms of process and not as the point of arrival, which is how it used to be conceived between the 1970s and 1990s (2020: 21). Since 2000, Migration Studies have continued to broaden their agenda, both in terms of the plurality of the field and in relation to critical approaches (Scholten et al., 2022: 15).

2.1. The evolution of Migration Studies

2.1.1. Origins of Migration Studies in European migration to the United States

The origins of Migration Studies are situated within the work of the German geographer Ernest Ravenstein's *Laws of Migration* (1885) (Schiller and Faist, 2010: 4) and *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* by Florian Znaniecki and William Thomas (1927)[3]. Ravenstein's work in the 1880s (Zolberg, 1989: 405) and his *Laws of Migration* (1885) (Lee, 1996: 47), represent the "classic" theory of migration (Zolberg, 1989: 403). Ravenstein's objective was that of developing a theory of migration based on the "relocation of human beings across space, within or between countries" (Zolberg, 1989: 403). Ravenstein's *Laws of Migration* speculated on the reasons for (internal) migration and on the differences between types of mobility, as well as the situation that remains in the country of origin after migrants depart, or even on the differing dispositions of migration between men and women. His work, especially based on economic perspectives, represents the foundation for internal or domestic migration (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003 in Scholten et al., 2022: 10). Ravenstein`s *Laws of Migration* (1885) were based on seven rules: 1) "migration and distance" regarding the fact that the majority of migratory movements happen in short distances and with the objective of reaching big centres; 2) "migration by stages"; 3) "stream and counterstream", meaning that each movement of migration produces another movement in reaction; 4) "urban-rural difference in propensity to migrate", in the sense that people from the rural areas have a higher tendency of migrating; 5) "predominance of females among short-distance migrants"; 6) "technology and migration", being technology (in the form of transport and progress in manufactures and trade) a factor that increases migratory movements and; 7) "dominance of the economic motive", as for Ravenstein no reason for migration could be more important than the improvement of one's financial conditions (Lee, 1966: 47).

The experiences of immigrants from Europe to the United States (US from now on) and other countries at the beginning of the 20th century are the basis of mainstream migration theories Amongst them are push-pull and assimilation theories (Guarnizo et al., 2003: 1215). Research on migration was primarily based in the US due to "urbanisation and the Great Depression" (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003: 3-4) as well as the plural consequences

3 The work by Florian Znaniecki and William Thomas (1927) on Polish migration to Europe and America is foundational for the study of migration as well as for sociology (Scholten et al., 2022: 10), as it provides an in-depth exploration of the lives of Polish families who had migrated to the US, representing at the time of writing, the biggest immigrant group there.

that these phenomenons provoked[4]. The origins of Migration Studies are linked to urban growth and urbanisation and the depression of the 1930s and the movement of people from rural to urban areas. While during the 1920s and 1930s, sociologists, demographers and economists started entering the field of migration, it was from the 1940s onwards that migration research in the US began to interest researchers from other disciplines, such as physics, geography, anthropology, political science and epidemiology (Greenwood and Hunt, 2003: 4-5; 33). The 1960s were key for the emerging of academic publications and institutionalisation of the field, and particularly the 1990s for a bourgeoning of the field (Pisarevskaya et al. 2019 in Levy et al. 2020: 2).[5] Following Aristide R. Zolberg (1989), since Ravenstein, migration theory has evolved around four elements shifting it into being more: "historical"; "structural"; "globalist" and; "critical" (Zolberg, 1989: 403). Along the same lines, Alejandro Portes and József Böröcz argue that Migration Studies have changed from a theory centred on migrants' process of adaptation to the country of settlement, to a theory that has to explain immigration in relation to the international context (1989: 626).

2.1.2. Migration Studies in Europe

As seen in the previous section, Migration Studies originated in the US academic space and solidified in that same geographical area throughout the 1900s. Differently from the US, Migration Studies in Europe have a much shorter history and it can be argued that its cementing has been taking place in the last thirty years (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2018: 1). The study coordinated by Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Evren Yalaz that covered the papers published between 2000 and 2016 in the high-ranked academic journals *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS)* and *Ethnic and Racial Studies (ERS)* found that among the over 2400 articles published[6] the settlement countries of focus are still mainly the UK (238 articles), Western European countries (177) like Germany (66)

4 The institutionalisation of research on migration is particularly connected to the US, with the founding in 1924 (De Wind, 1999: 1280) of the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration, as well as the publication of works related to internal migration in the US and the connection between migratory movement and economic opportunity (Scholten et al., 2022: 11). Migration first started being studied in a systematic way in the Chicago School (Mahler and Pessar, 2006: 30).

5 With the aim of expanding Fairchild's work, and taking into account a wider contextualisation, William Petersen proposes five typologies of migration, which are expressed on the basis of whether migration is 1) "innovative", i.e. with the idea of seeking something new, a more favourable scenario than the current one, or 2) "conservative", linked to maintaining the current scenario (1996 [1958]: 5). Likewise, the typologies would be related to the aspirations of the person who emigrates, therefore, with issues that may be economic; personal; political and/or religious oppression (Ibidem: 5-6). The types of migration proposed by Petersen are: "primitive", related to the force of nature in moving human beings; "forced" and "driven", stemmed from the motivation of the state or some other social institution in causing the movement; "free", depending exclusively on the will of the person who decides to migrate and "mass" referring to the large number of people who make the migration (Ibidem: 6-13). Everett S. Lee amply defines migration as "(…) a permanent or semipermanent change of residence" (1966: 48). According to the same author, four are the factors that influence migration and the process of migrating, namely: 1) those related to the place where migration originates; 2) those related to the place where migration ends; 3) interfering barriers and; 4) individual components (Lee, 1966: 48).

6 It is worth mentioning that the authors focused on the articles that were of a qualitative methodological nature, which were 627 of the 2400 (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2018: 10).

and the Netherlands (54), whilst Southern European countries (114) such as Italy and Spain (in this order) are on the rise (Yalaz and Zapata-Barrero, 2018: 21), with 55 articles and 39 articles respectively (Ibidem: 22). With regards to sending countries and more specifically the Middle East region, Morocco is the country that captures the majority of the space, although the authors say that other countries in the region will also be going on the rise (Ibidem: 22).

Until the Industrial revolution, societies in Europe were not shifting and there was a low migration rate (Lucassen and Lucassen, 2013: 52). According to conventional views, migration to the European region became more pronounced after WWII (Lucassen and Lucassen, 2013: 52). By using a "cross-community approach to migration" (Ibidem), the same authors consider the conventional starting point to silence the reality of movements within Europe and more specifically the migration of Europeans to other world regions such as the Middle East and Central Asia; "circular and return migrations" (Ibidem); as well as the widespread presence of seasonal labour in Europe since the Middle Ages, particularly in the West and the South (Ibidem: 54). In relation to this last point, the authors refer to an increase from half a million people in the 17th century to about 25 million in the second half of the 19th century. Important locations for this were France, Italy and Spain, as well as, although to a lesser extent, the Western part of the Netherlands (with German migrants) and London (with Irish migrants) (Ibidem: 54).

Researching migration in the European context shows the presence of complicated connections spanning different locations throughout the world that reveal the effects of colonialism, "migration and globalisation" (Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018: 171). An example of this is visible in the effects of the 1973 oil crises that forced many migrants from Turkey, Algeria and Morocco to stay in Europe and bring over their families rather than return to their countries of origin (Lucassen and Lucassen, 2013: 60). The increase of migrants from Muslim territories locating in Europe has been accompanied by events like the Sulman Rushdie Affair and 9/11 which have had an impact on the how Muslims are perceived in certain European contexts (Lucassen and Lucassen, 2013: 62-63).

2.2. Different schools of thought in Migration Studies

Migration Studies have evolved from the first works by Ravenstein and the different clusters or theories that have developed and that are still visible in the scholarship and have been also following a historical path, as authors such as Russell King (2012)[7], Stephen Castles and Mark Miller (2009), as well as Levy et al. (2020) or Scholten et al. (2022) have been able to show. It is within the historical-structural approach and world systems theory that stronger connections are visible with Diaspora Studies and transnational migration.

7 It is worth mentioning that King intentionally leaves outside of his analysis the theories involving assimilation and integration (2012: 25). I will be dealing with them in the following section of this chapter as they aree relevant for my case study.

2.2.1. Economic theories of migration

2.2.1.1. Neoclassical economics and push-pull theory

This school of thought is related to Ravenstein's laws, considered by some as "economically deterministic", "methodologically individualist" and "dreadfully antiquated" (Samers, 2010: 55-56 in King, 2012: 12), although it is still considered to be the orthodoxy in economics and it maintains an important role in Migration Studies (Castles and Miller, 2009: 22). Ravenstein's laws are highly connected to the push-pull factors (King, 2012: 14). "Push-pull" theories lied at the basis of international migration (Portes and Böröcz, 1996 [1989]: 157) and connected the circulation of employment to impoverishment and underdevelopment of the migrant's country of origin (*Ibídem*). "Push factors" are understood as "economic, social and political" difficulties in the most impoverished parts of the world, whereas "pull factors" reside in the corresponding benefits found in developed countries (*Ibídem*). Castles and Miller (2009: 22) mention political repression as a push factor and political freedom as a pull factor.

2.2.1.2. Dual and segmented labour markets

This theory argues that international migration mostly depends on pull factors, in this case, the demand for certain typologies of low-cost and adaptable work, functioning within a "*dual labour market"* formed by a "primary labour market" of decent and respectable jobs for local workers and a "secondary labour market" with jobs that are characterised by lower conditions, insecurity and unpleasing atmospheres that are taken up by migrants (Portes and Böröcz, 1996 [1989]: 157-164). For Castles and Miller, this theory represented an attempt at including a broader scope of elements into economic research of migration (2009: 23-24).

2.2.1.3. The 'New Economics of Labour Migration'

This theoretical approach has made an impact especially since the 1980s and it considers decision-making within the family combined with neoclassical orthodoxy outlooks. It is based on the following two ideas: 1) migration processes are decided within the family and not individually; 2) diversifying earnings and reducing risks are part of the decision about migrating, and not just an increase in income, as suggested by mainstream writings (King, 2012: 22-23; Castles and Miller, 2009: 24-25).

2.2.2. The historical-structural approach and world systems theory

2.2.2.1. Historical-institutional approach

This approach was developed during the 1970s and 1980s with the objective of analysing migratory movements as ultimately related to capitalist labour (Castles and Miller, 2009: 26). It conceptualises the motives of international migration as framed within historically

shaped "macro-structural forces" and highlights the abusive and unbalancing role of the global capitalist economy (Morawska, 2012: 55 in King, 2012: 16). Dependency theory[8] (Frank, 1969) and Marxist political economy more broadly were at the bases of the historical-institutional approach (Castles and Miller, 2009: 26).

2.2.2.2. World systems theory

This theory revolves around Wallerstein's "*World systems theory*" (1974, 1979; Amin, 1974) and contends that the relationship between core countries, i.e. most important capitalist economies, and the periphery countries, i.e. the poorer countries in the world, made the latter dependent on the former in terms of "trade, capital penetration and migration" and thus shaped migration (King, 2012: 19; Castles and Miller, 2009: 26).

2.2.3. The transnationalist turn within Migration Studies

For Castles and Miller the neoclassical economic theories lacked a look at the history of movement of migrants, as well as of state consideration, whereas the historical-functional approach highlighted the role of economics and structure in the migration as well as oversized the one of capitalism in migration. That said, neither trends of approaches took into consideration "human agency", i.e. the reasoning and practices of migrants and migrant groups (Castles and Miller, 2009: 27).

According to King, the criticism towards the neoclassical approach to migration is found in its "determinism, functionalism and ahistoricism" (King, 2012: 14); lack of consideration of "personal, family or socio-cultural factors"; colonial history; manifold obstacles to "international movement"; and lastly, economic structure in relation to "dependency and underdevelopment" (King, 2012: 14). In terms of the historical-institutional approach and world system's theory, they contain three main problems: 1) the lack of agency with which migrants are portrayed; 2) the importance given to capital diffusion as the sole driver of migration; 3) state structure awareness. With regards to this third issue, King suggests that the "political economy" perspective has to an extent integrated the state, as it sees host countries' state policies as regulating migration flows (King, 2012: 19).

During this last period, we can highlight four typologies of studies that have promoted readings that go beyond the national dimension of migration and "methodological nationalism[9]" (Scholten et al., 2022: 16): 1) transnationalist approaches that put at the centre the links that migrant populations, transnational communities or diasporas maintain with their compatriots in other host countries and with places of origin; 2) "post-nationalist"

8 "Dependency theory", applied to migration, considers that this is self-sustaining and reproduces imbalance through "*cumulative causation*" (Myrdal 1957; Petras, 1981 in King, 2012: 17). In other words, this theory sees migration as forming part of an economic system where migrants are included into the structure of "capitalist economies" as subsidiary elements representing underdeveloped countries (Morawska 2012: 60 in King, 2012: 18).

9 A perspective widely used in Migration Studies that centres on the nation-state and the migrant in relation to the nation-state (i.e. country of settlement) (Schiller and Faist, 2010: 5). A more in depth look of it is taken in the following parts of this chapter.

visions that put the focus on the universality of the human being, regardless of the place from which they leave or in which they end up situating themselves; 3) the "local turn", which has to do with the fact that the focus of migrations sometimes goes beyond the nation or does not even reach it, focusing its qualitative study on a neighbourhood or city; 4) "the mobility turn", i.e. the importance of temporality and frequencies in migrations (Ibidem: 17). Likewise, self-critical and introspective approaches have manifested themselves in research related to: 1) the idealisation of ethnic identity and the need to take it into consideration in an intersectional way with other identity axes; 2) the relationship with the design of policies, for example those linked to issues such as "integration" and; 3) the visibilisation of the racist and discriminatory connotations that still persist in some sectors of this area of study (Scholten et al., 2022: 17-18).

Within the more recent turn of the transnationalist approach to migration we find the concepts of *Migration systems theory* originating in geography and *migration networks,* from sociology and anthropology (Castles and Miller, 2009: 27). Since the 1990s both perspectives have tried to provide a path for comprehending migration in a more nuanced manner (Ibidem). *Migration systems theory* is concerned with analysing thoroughly the connections between "the two ends of the flow" in terms of "state-to-state relations and comparisons, mass culture connections and family and social networks" (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987: 456-457 in Castles and Miller, 2009: 27). Colonisation, political weight, business and cultural connections help explain this theory. Migration is caused by the interaction of macro and micro-structures (Ibidem: 28). Macro-structures are "large-scale institutional factors", micro-structures involve "networks, practices and beliefs of the migrants" and meso-structures are the connecting links between the two (Ibidem). More in detail, macro-structures have to do with political economic aspects of the global market, the relation between states and the "laws, structures and practices" lead by the states of countries that send and receive migration (Castles and Miller, 2009: 29). The micro-structures consist of the "informal social networks" that migrants themselves create as a way of dealing with migration and the settlement process (Ibidem). Price (1963: 108-110) used the concept of "chain migration" for this same idea (Ibidem). With regards to the meso-structures, Castles and Miller state that recently it has acquired more attention. These structures involve groups or institutions taking on the roles of mediators "between migrants and political or economic institutions" (Ibidem).

2.2.3.1. Networks

Networks are widely present in more recent migration writing and especially in connection to transnational migration and diasporas. Possibly the widest utilised definition was given by Bauer and Zimmermann in 1997, as "interpersonal connections that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in the destination country and the country of origin by ties of kinship and friendship" (in Khanal, 2020). These informal networks are seen as *social capital*[10] due to their inclusion of "personal relationships, family and

10 *Cultural capital*, in the form of "information, knowledge of other countries, capabilities for organizing travel, finding work and adapting to a new environment" is also key in terms of beginning and maintaining migration (Castles and Miller, 2009: 28).

household patterns, friendship and community ties, and mutual help in economic and social matters" (Castles and Miller, 2009: 28). The multiplying and sustaining effects of migration networks make them into one of the fundamental explanations for migratory movements (Arango, 2004: 28 in King, 2012: 21). King defines migrant networks as "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, non-migrants and former migrants in webs of kinship, friendship and shared origin" (2012: 21). More specifically, "networks based on family or on common origin help provide shelter, work, assistance in coping with bureaucratic procedures and support in personal difficulties", thus making the process of migrating "safer and more manageable for the migrants and their families", by also aiding the "processes of settlement and community formation" in the area of immigration (Castles and Miller, 2009: 29).

Three are the main typologies of migrant networks: "family and personal networks", "labour networks", and "illegal migrant networks" (Boyd and Nowak, 2012: 79-83). According to Fussell (2012), these networks offer three useful pathways to further understand migratory courses through: 1) the forces of "*differential* migration"; 2) predictions of "*future* migration"; and 3) the different theories for explaining the motives for migrations and for explaining why they are prolonged "*in time and space*" (in King, 2012: 1).

As seen in Alba and Nee's (2003) framework of assimilation, ethnic networks come into play especially when migrants have less resources and need more support (Alba and Nee, 2003: 41). "Network mechanisms", contend the authors, are social means that control and oblige rules within closely bounded groups, making them into "elements of social structure" (Ibidem: 42). This is especially evident when migrants arrive to host countries and look for support in families, friends… in order to find jobs and long-term accomodation (Ibidem: 43). Migrant networks can extend through different countries. For a definition of a transnational network I turn to Mazzucato: "(…) migrants and the people they transact with, who are located in various countries, be they friends, family, colleagues or others" (Mazzucato, 2008: 201).

2.3. Theories of assimilation, acculturation and integration

Originating in the 1950s, discussions around assimilation, integration, acculturation, as well as the incorporation of migrants in the country of settlement are possibly still the most extended in Migration Studies (Scholten et al., 2022: 11) and a deeper understanding of these concepts will be of help for the section on diaspora. All of these theories put into dialogue the recipient nation-state-society with the migrants who are coming from a foreign nation-state-society (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 310).

2.3.1. Acculturation

Acculturation is understood as "the adaptation of immigrants to their new cultural context" (Eriksen, 1993: 19) and it is characterised by 'the minority group's adoption to the "cultural patterns" of the host society', beyond the attainment of the language spoken in the host country and including "characteristic emotional expression or core

values and life goals" (Alba and Nee, 2003: 23). For Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut acculturation is considered the first step in the ladder to assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 53).

According to Marc Bornstein, acculturation analyses how "people with one culture negotiate adjustment as they settle and adapt in a new culture" (2013: 39). Perhaps one of the earliest definitions of acculturation is found in Redfield et al. (1936): "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield et al. 1936: 149–50 in Bornstein, 2013: 38). In the 20th century, acculturation was seen in one-dimensional and unidirectional terms, as a process that always ended with migrants adapting to the host culture. Over time, studies have shown that migrants maintain cultural ties to the place of origin while acquiring elements of the host place (Bornstein, 2013: 39), thus making it into a complicated procedure that occurs at the individual and group level simultaneously (Ibidem: 40). At the group level, it is reflected in "changes in social structures and institutions and cultural practices", whereas at the individual level, it permeates into alterations at the cognitive and habitus level (Ibidem).

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) reflect on the narratives of second-generation migrants and their parents from El Salvador, Mexico, the Philippines, Nicaragua and Vietnam in the United States. The stories that are presented show how adaptation in a country of settlement involves both moments of "smooth acceptance", as well as those of "traumatic confrontation" that depend on the features that the migrant subject presents as well as on the "social context" that surrounds them (2001: 19). The authors highlight three modes of acculturation: a) "dissonant acculturation" "when children's learning of the English language and American ways of living and simultaneous loss of the immigrant culture outstrip their parents" (Ibidem: 53-54); b) "consonant acculturation" takes places more commonly when the first generation possesses high enough levels of human capital and it refers to the loss of language and cultural values of the country of origin taking place at more or less the same rhythm in both generations (Ibidem); and c) "selective acculturation" is when the second generation does not lose the language nor the cultural values of the first generation, thanks to the presence of a strong and numerous co-ethnic community, and when the second generation can actually achieve full-bilingualism (2001: 54).

Whilst acculturation has to do mostly with the "newcomers' adoption of the culture (i.e., behaviour patterns, values, rules, symbols etc.) of the host society (…)", assimilation regards the "'newcomers' move out of formal and informal ethnic associations and other social institutions into the nonethnic equivalents accessible to them in that same host society" (Gans, 1997: 877). For the same Herbert Gans, acculturation happens faster than assimilation and their divergencies are mostly founded on culture and society (Ibidem).

2.3.2. Assimilation

The concept of assimilation has its roots in the Chicago School sociologists of the early twentieth century (Alba and Nee, 2003: 18-19), especially in the work of Robert

E. Park and W. I. Thomas, collaborators and students. Sociologists from the University of Chicago wanted to comprehend the undergoings of migrants in the city of Chicago[11] (Ibidem: 19). Whilst originating in their 1914 piece "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to Negro" (Laubenthal, 2023: 84), the earliest definition of assimilation is given by Park and Burgess in 1921: "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (Park and Burgess, 1921 (1969). Assimilation is the process by which immigrants who settle in a new country become part of the hegemonic sociocultural and economic system in that country, whilst, at the same time, losing the cultural and political affinities with the country of origin (Guarnizo et al., 2003: 1215). It the words of Morawska, it represents a "vision of society increasingly unified in the course of gradual boundary reduction between group participants" (1994: 77).

The assimilation concept became the mainstream narrative in theoretical as well as public discourses in the US (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 44). Initially the Chicago School's notion of assimilation had to do with the idea of a miscellaneous majority society made up of people with differing ethnicities, races and cultures who eventually conform a shared culture that allows them to support the idea of a shared nation. The later writing by Warner and Srole, and especially Gordon, cut back on this malleable and indefinite version of assimilation (Laubenthal, 2023: 85-86). Milton M. Gordon's 1964 *Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins* is considered as the most important work concerning assimilation[12]. Gordon's greatest contribution was the

11 This had been derived from a more general pattern in sociology regarding overseas minorities (Portes and Böröcz, 1996 [1989]: 164). Assimilation is a "unilinear" procedure (Portes and Böröcz, 1996 [1989]: 164) with its origins in"social disequilibrium", understood as a "clash of conflicting cultural values and norms" (Ibidem), given that the mechanism of absorption into the main cultural and social structures depends on elements such as "language, religion and race of immigrants" (Portes and Bach, 1985: Ch. 1 in Portes and Böröcz, 1996 [1989]: 164-5).

12 Gordon had described other three models regarding migrants entering the country of settlement, apart from developing the assimilation model: 1) the Anglo-Conformity model; 2) the Melting Pot model and 3) the Cultural Pluralism model (Alba and Nee 2003: 831). They are understood as "expressions of popular beliefs or ideologies" regarding the formation of civil society in America. The first has to do with the post WWI campaigning of "pressure-cooker" Americanising process, where assimilation was equalled to acculturation in the Anglo-American cast and left out other assimilation dimensions, and structural assimilation incidences (831-832). The second model was popular in discussion of ethnicity taking place in America, especially in the post WWII period. It suggested an ideal picture of society in America and identity as stemming from the mix of the biology and culture of different people. The role of Europeans was widely recognised in the mix, as well as, although to a lesser extent, the role of non-Europeans. According to Gordon, the model in question worked along the phases of "cultural" and "structural assimilation", the latter seen in the projection of the diffusion of intermarriages (Gordon, 1964: 125); whereas the former considered to be both related to the idea of American culture being a blend of components from diverse groups, as well as to the process being a "one-directional" road towards Anglo-American cultural compliance (Gordon, 1964: 127-128). Gordon had an alternative vision where he saw civil society in America as being formed by different "ethnic subsocieties" where individuals would be situated the majority of their lifetimes (Gordon, 1964: 159). The third model was based on the conception of "pluralism" developed by the philosopher Horace Kallen (Alba and Nee, 2003: 26). The idea behind it was that societies would benefit when the diverse components of ethnicity would maintain their diversity between each other, similar to the way an orchestra expands its vigour through the interaction of diverging sounds. For Alba and Nee, it represents the "intellectual ancestor of contemporary multiculturalism" (Alba y Nee, 2003: 26).

"codification" of a conceptual framework on assimilation that specified seven elements through which identification with the host society could be understood: "cultural, structural, martial, identificational, behavioural, attitudinal, and civic" (Scholten et al., 2022: 11). These components were helpful in detecting the degree of a group's assimilation, in terms of both individual and group criteria (Alba and Nee, 2003: 24). Based on the North American model, Gordon stated that this process' last stop would be found in the "core culture" (*Ibidem*: 24) that in the aforementioned location would be "middle-class cultural patterns of, largely, white Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins"[13] (Gordon, 1964: 72 in Alba and Nee, 2003: 23). Gordon's seven steps started with "acculturation", a process that could not involve any form of assimilation and with a duration that could be infinite. The second step is "Structural assimilation", defined by Gordon as the "entrance of the minority group into the social cliques, clubs, and institutions of the core society at the primary group level" (1964: 80-81 in Alba and Nee, 1997: 830), is to be understood as "integration into primary groups" and gives way towards "all other types of assimilation" (Alba and Nee, 2003: 24). Structural assimilation" represents the driver towards fuller assimilation. The third step is "marital assimilation", therefore the practice of intermarriage. The fourth step in the ladder,"identificational assimilation", was defined by Gordon as "development of [a] sense of peoplehood based exclusively on [the] host society" (1964: 71). This fourth step could be seen as "overly demanding", as it requirs the loss of all original ethnic identity traits and the acquiring of "an exclusively national, American identity" (Alba and Nee, 1997: 830). The fifth step is "attitude reception assimilation", referring to the absence of prejudice; the sixth is "behaviour reception assimilation", meaning the absence of discrimination and finally, the seventh is "civic assimilation", occurring only when there are no conflicts or power struggles between the reception society and the migrant (Gordon, 1964).

According to Morawska, the classic assimilation model brought forward by Gordon needs to be "made time and space specific and embedded in multidimensional contexts, historicized" (1994: 76). Assimilation, continues Morawska, understood as "the process of incorporation of immigrants and their off spring into the economic, political and social institutions and culture of different segments of the host society" (2004: 1393), needs thinking through three dynamics, whilst at the same time recognising the need for nuance (Ibidem: 1394): 1) "mainstream upward assimilation", reaching host middle and upper classes; 2) "mainstream downward assimilation", reaching host struggling lower and underclasses; and 3) "ethnic-path" or "ethnic adhesive", adaptation occurring within immigrant/ethnic enclaves." (Ibidem: 1393-1394). For Peggy Levitt, the increasing acceptance of ethnic pluralism in settlement countries has brought with it a reduction in the need for assimilation processes (2001: 203).

There are doubts as to whether Gordon's premises were related to individuals or groups (Alba and Nee, 1997: 830) and moreover the concept has limits due to the starting premise of a one-group society that the minority group interacts with, thus leaving out the multi-ethnic dimension of the host-country society (Ibidem). In other words, Gordon based

13 Gordon makes a distinction between "intrinsic cultural traits" and "extrinsic traits", the former being "vital ingredients of the group's cultural heritage", such as "religion and musical traditions", and the latter "products of the historical vicissitudes of the group's adjustment to the local environment", and therefore less key for the group's identity and more easily abandoned (Alba and Nee, 1997: 829; 2003: 24).

his theory of assimilation on the assumption that acculturation meant an ethnic group getting closer to the ideal of Anglo-American culture (Ibidem. 833), without observing the heterogeneity that existed within it (Ibidem: 834). Therefore, in *Remaking the American mainstream: assimilation and contemporary immigration*, Richard D. Alba and Victor Nee propose a revision of the assimilation concept that moves away from the classic theory of Gordon and his successors and constitutes a neo-assimilation model (2003: 16). The view defended by Alba and Nee represents the possible result of a set of individual and collective efforts in "close-knit groups", taking place at different velocities and inside as well as between ethnic groups (Alba and Nee, 2003: 65-66). More specifically, Alba and Nee delimit a set of mechanisms that operate on different levels -"individual", "primary-group" and "institutional"- and that configure the processes of adaptations of migrants and their following generations. These causal mechanisms are divided into two groups related to social behaviour: "proximate causes", operating at the individual and social network level (primary-group and communal) and configured by the economic resources that persons have both individually as well as in groups; and the "distal", that has to do with more profound motives and is found within larger, institutional frames. The authors do not see assimilation as having one unique result, recognising that there can be differences within one ethnic group, nor as developing in a straight-line (Ibidem: 38). The adaptation of migrants in their host society involves various causal mechanisms (Ibidem: 39) that in turn respond to "collectivist modes of accomodation"[14] or "individualist modes of adaptation"[15] (Ibidem). Another important element in Alba and Nee's theory of assimilation is the recognition of the role played by ethnic networks, previously mentioned in this chapter, constituting a part of the social structure of assimilation (Ibidem: 42) and particularly tangible in the way migrants find support in them (Ibidem: 43)[16].

Classic assimilation theory was based on the experiences of East Central European and Mediterranean immigrants to the US in a specific period of time, that is, the turn of the twentieth century (Portes and Böröcz, 1996 [1989]: 165-170; Park 1928b; Gordon 1964 in Karimi and Wilkes, 2023: 2). Therefore, two of its main problems that can be highlighted are its lack of consideration of non-white groups, as well as of movements back to the country of origin (Portes and Böröcz, 1989: 165-170*)*. Classic assimilation theory lacked nuance and Portes and Böröcz proposed three dimensions worth delving into in order to expand the discipline of migration, namely: 1) the characteristics of emigration, having to do with the reasons for having to leave the country of origin and the differences between being a labour migrant or a political migrant; 2) the "class origins" of the migrant; and 3) the scenario at arrival, in other words, the features of the country of settlement (1989: 616-620). The prevailing view from the social sciences regarding classic assimilation depicts it as an antiquated ethnocentric theory against those minorities who simply want to maintain their culture and ethnicity of origin, say Alba and Nee (1997: 827). According to the same authors, the concept of assimilation has been seen until recently as "(…) a weapon of the majority for putting minorities at a disadvantage by forcing them to live by cultural standards that are not their own" (Alba and Nee, 2003: 2). Studies such as *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (1945) by W. Lloyd Warner

14 Here the authors make reference to particular ethnic groups: Jews, Japanese, Cubans, and Koreans

15 In this case, the authors refer to Germans, Scandinavians, Italians, and Filipinos.

16 The support is normally given by friends and family, who form part of those networks, and can be in the form of jobs and accommodation (Alba and Nee, 2003: 43).

and Leo Srole assumed that the standard that migrants had to reach was that of "middle-class Protestant whites of British ancestry" (Alba and Nee, 2003: 4). Faist contends that multiculturalism[17] and assimilation share the same view of culture as static and unchanging. More specifically, assimilation sees the core culture as static and unchanging, whereas multiculturalism, or ethnic pluralism, sees in those terms the minority cultures (2000: 214-215). Morawska argues that since the 1990s there is a renewed engagement with the concept of assimilation, that takes context further into account and that sees assimilation as a path that can be varied, irregular, and even undoable for many first generation and following generations of migrants in their countries of settlement (2004: 1371). Assimilation processes are manifold, and in the following pages the chapter will deepen into the five most common modalities.

2.3.2.1. Straight-line assimilation

Herbert Gans and Neil Sandberg (Alba and Nee, 2003: 27) spread the idea of "straight-line assimilation". This notion complements Gordon's notion of assimilation by adding the generational factor into the picture, where every generation plays a role in adapting to the society of the host nation (Alba and Nee, 1997: 832). The conception has been criticised for its assumption that ethnicity is exclusive to the immigrant population and for not taking into consideration its co-construction with the host society (Ibidem: 833). In this sense, the same Gans (1992) slightly modified the conception to "bumpy-line theory of ethnicity", which includes different lines to the idea of the straight-line, although the direction, that of assimilation, does not change, and neither the general idea of the generation's capacity (Alba and Nee, 1997: 833). Alba and Nee point out that the generational factor does not take into account the historical context in which a specific generation moves (Alba and Nee, 1997: 833). This brings into question the idea that assimilation and acculturation

17 There is confusion around the way multiculturalism is employed in public policy (Vertovec, 1996: 51). The way culture is understood, in order to conceive multiculturalism, is as though it is static, a given and coming from the outside (looking from the West of course) (Ibidem). Hall (2010) provides a distinction between "multicultural" and "multiculturalism", where the former describes the social characteristics and the governability problems that are faced by a society where different cultural communities coexist and try to develop a life in common while maintaining their original identity. The latter refers to the strategies and policies adopted in order to govern and administer the problems of diversity and the multiplicity that multicultural societies see themselves involved in (2010: 583). A multicultural society is seen as being formed by "a 'mosaic' of several bounded, nameable, individually homogeneous and unmeltable minority uni-cultures" (Vertovec, 1996: 51). These uni-cultures are normally referred to as "communities" (Ibidem). Stuart Hall (2010) and later Steven Vertovec (2018) following Goldberg (1994) conceptualised the following types of multiculturalisms: they talked of a conservative type, involving assimilation of the difference in traditions and costumes of the majority; liberal, through integration of different cultural groups in an individual universal citizenship, where diversity is tolerated solely in the private sphere; pluralist, with a formal backing to differences between groups along cultural lines and with different rights assigned to the communities within a community-based political order; commercial, believing in diversity between peoples as recognised by the market and thus in solving the problem through private consumption without the need for redistribution through power and resources; corporative (public or private) following the administration of cultural differences between minorities, bearing in mind the interests of the centre; and finally, critical or "revolutionary" highlighting power, privilege, the hierarchy of oppressions, and resistance movements (Goldberg, 1994 in Hall, 2010: 584). To overcome the fixed paradigm, Morawska suggests seeing multiculturalism as context specific and as multilayered, it can change depending on how one is located in a particular time-frame. She also argues for an identification with multiculturalism that acknowledges the nuances (2018: 127).

go in one direction, and actually says that although the second generation might want to forget something, the third generation might want to bring the memory back: "What the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember" (Alba y Nee, 2003: 27).

2.3.2.2. Socioeconomic assimilation

Socioeconomic assimilation has been used in the literature in two different ways: 1) more widely spread within the scholarship on ethnicity[18] and assimilation, and equalling the achievement of "average or above average socioeconomic standing" through "education, occupation, and income", as used since the work by Warner and Srole (1945)); and 2) understood as "minority participation in institutions such as the labor market and education on the basis of parity with native groups of similar backgrounds". The difference between the two ways of speaking of socioeconomic assimilation has to do with the historical contingency of assimilation (Neidert and Farley, 1985 in Alba and Nee, 1997: 836).

2.3.2.3. Spatial assimilation

"Residential" or, following Massey (1985), "spatial" assimilation is another dimension of assimilation that has been looked at recently. This concept of spatial assimilation is connected to the pattern of incorporation that comes from the Chicago School's ecological tradition, which sees the ways in which groups distribute themselves in spatial terms as related to their human assets and their level of assimilation (Alba and Nee, 1997: 836; 2003: 29).

2.3.2.4. Ethnic stratification and ethnic-path

Tomatsu Shubutani and Kian Kwan attempted to revive the Chicago School approach for the study of assimilation, by centring on specifying "causal mechanisms" (Alba and

18 The term "ethnicity" made its first dictionary appearance in 1972 in the Oxford English Dictionary. Its first application is by American sociologist David Riesman in 1953 (Eriksen, 1993: 3). The word 'ethnic' has a longer history. It originates from the Greek word *ethnos*, which in turn came from the word *ethnikos (*Ibidem*)*. Ethnos meant "heathen or pagan" (Williams, 1976: 119 in Eriksen, 1993: 3). During five centuries, between the mid-14th and the mid-19th, the word was used with that meaning in the English language. Since the mid-19th its usage steadily shifted towards being associated with "racial" features. For example in the United States, the use of the term "ethnics" was related to the identification of migrants with Jewish, Italian or Irish origin who were seen as subordinate to their British counterparts (Eriksen, 1993: 4). Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, who claim that ethnicity should be associated to both minorities and majorities or prevalent nationalities within a certain community (1983: 67; Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989: 3), refute this association of the word ethnicity with minorities or subordinate groups. The most common usage of the term ethnicity refers to the "classification of people and groups relationships" (Ibidem). Ethnicity is difficult to define in precise terms as the elements that make it up, i.e. religion, language, nationality, grouping, racial origins, are in constant mutation, depending on the context in which they are located (Newland, 1993: 145) and on the type of relations forged amongst various ethnic communities (Esman and Telhami, 1995: 9-10). The idea that certain characteristics, such as a common language, political organising and culture, can define an ethnic group can be problematic as many ethnic groups share the same features but they nonetheless separate each other. Therefore "objective cultural features" and "clear-cut boundaries" cannot be solidly used to define ethnic groups" (Eriksen, 1993: 11).

Nee, 2003: 30-31). The concept of ethnic stratification developed by Tomatsu Shibutani and Kian Kwan can serve to expand the assimilation paradigm (Alba and Nee, 1997: 838). Shibutani and Kwan expanded Park's "race-relations cycle" in order to propose an explanation of the patterns of ethnic layering to acquire innovative perspectives on the American case of race relations[19]. Shibutani and Kwan's work consisted in a correlative study through history of the systems of ethnic rule in different contexts both in terms of history and society. For Shibutani and Kwan a key issue was social distance, which they developed following Mead's symbolic interactionism (Alba and Nee, 1997: 838). Therefore, for the authors in question, a person's treatment in a given society depends on how the person is described in that society and not on who that person actually is. The way people are classified in a given society creates distinctions that are formed and maintained through categorisation, and such differences bring about social distancing between people. Thus, the social distances that emerge explain minority segregation and the hindering of assimilation (Ibidem). In other words, ethnic stratification is what blocks a migrant's possibilities in the opportunity structure of the context in which they have moved to. Shibutani and Kwan proved that ethnic stratification intrinsically present in society could obstruct assimilation processes, thus they pointed at institutions as having the power to have an impact (Alba and Nee, 2003: 65-66).

2.3.2.5. Segmented-assimilation

The theory of segmented-assimilation surfed in the 1990s to analyse migration processes involving non-European individuals and groups (Portes and Zhou, 1993 in Karimi and Wilkes, 2023: 2). Segmented-assimilation included the idea that items such as "ethnic capital, immigration policies, and racial prejudice" interlink in various ways, thus driving migrants towards accessing higher or lower social classes (Karimi and Wilkes, 2023: 2). According to Portes and Rumbaut, a segmented-assimilation is more representative of second generation migrant incorporation in American society. This is due to four reasons: 1) historical facets of first generation migrants; 2) the rhythm at which first and second generations have acculturated and the effects of this on average integration; 3) the obstacles that second generations are faced with when they try to adapt in the settlement country; and 4) the conditions that the family and the community can provide them with in order to get over those obstacles (2001: 45-46).

For the authors there are three key dimensions that mark the differences in how migrants incorporate in the country of settlement: 1) the personal characteristics[20]; 2) the society and norms of the country of settlement, including the role played by their co-ethnics; and 3) how their own family is structured (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 46).

19 Morawska divides this into four different types: host-country centred, associated with Russian Jews and Jamaicans; home-country centred, mostly Dominicans and Poles; home-and-host-country centred, mostly Cubans; and inward (own ethnic group)-centred, for Chinese (2004: 1395-1396).

20 The first dimension is understood as human capital but this is not enough as the context can have an impact on that capital (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 46).

2.3.3. Integration

Whilst the concept of assimilation is more centred in the US (Laubenthal, 2023: 84), the concept of integration started being used in the 1980s by European sociologists (Laubenthal, 2023: 84) and became more common in Europe (Esser, 2006). Following Milton Gordon's work, the German sociologist Hartmut Esser adapted the concept of assimilation into that of integration. The main difference in Esser's work is that he understood migrants as "rational actors", and made a point of including in his model an "initial ethnic pluralization", where ethnic backdrops are to be taken into consideration for various generations (Esser, 2004 in Laubenthal, 2023: 88). The way migrants socially integrate depends on the result of the interaction of their activities together with their social conditions which are in turn influencing the chosen activities in question. The migrants' social conditions involve various "contexts and levels". The author points to the individual level of "*family and migration biographies*" and to the societal levels involving the triadic relationship of the country of origin, that of settlement and the "ethnic group", including this last at the transnational level (Esser, 2006: 9-10). For Esser the migrant's decision of investing in the "acquisition of host country-specific capital" depends on "three basic constructs" that are *motivation, opportunities* and *costs* (Ibidem).

The concept has been criticised for expecting the migrants to have to integrate into the society of the "powerful majority" by making the effort of diminishing their ethnic cultural traits (Laubenthal, 2023: 88). According to Laubenthal (2023) integration is a concept that has not really succeeded in Europe. Maintaining culture as his key measuring point, in Esser's writing the migrant's objective is seen as being the entering in the majority group's culture, and in order to do so, they need support in order to fully integrate (Laubenthal, 2023). In policy language, at the European level, the tendency among the majority of countries is that of adopting a "top-down" perspective to integration within their frontiers, although a local turn is also taking place at the regional level (i.e. autonomous communities in Spain. See Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten 2017 in Larruina and Ghorashi, 2020: 129).

3. From International Migration Studies to Transnational migration and Diaspora Studies

Migratory movements were at the beginning analysed through two prisms: 1) by focusing on the practice of migrating, seen as "geographical movement across international borders"; and 2) the effects that migratory movements were provoking on the settlement countries (Tsagarousianou, 2020: 9). This changed as migrants and migrant communities started constructing spaces in their countries of settlement, building strength in their practices and, thus, the literature expanded on the idea that migrants could be agents of their own, and the process wasn't one way only, i.e. migrants in relation to the host countries (Ibidem: 2020: 10). King suggests that two wide patterns can be distinguished in recent migration research: 1) the tendency of fitting migration within the broader picture of "social change and social transformation", thus abandoning the idea of studying migratory processes as separate phenomenons; 2) the cultural turn in the social sciences, since the 1990s, which has moved migration research towards being more qualitative, rather than quantitative, and on focusing towards the actual experiences of migrants as opposed to analysing the motives for wanting to migrate (2012: 25).

Transnational[21] visions on migration started with the objective of reframing the notion of immigration and exploring the political elements that have outlined the image of the immigrant as drawn out of society (Schiller et al., 1995: 48). By looking at migrants, the features of globalisation in terms of the interlinkages of "economic processes, people, and ideas"[22] are followed by the reawekening in the "politics of differentiation", thus their daily experiences contribute to a much more nuanced interpretation of such connections (Ibidem: 50). Schiller argues for the recovery of a global perspective of migration that existed from the 1880s to the 1920s and was changed due to the recasting of the nation-state.

Transnational migration involves a new paradigm that breaks away from the idea that migrants had to be studied in relation to the country of settlement in terms of their incorporation and assimilation processes and that takes into account the country of origin as a separate society. Within the new paradigm, migrants' connections to the country of origin are always present, go beyond the national frontiers and involve diverse fields of "social action" (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo, 2002: 766). For Castles and Miller transnational migration and diaspora are located within the migration systems and migration networks theories, as for them the transnational approach expands on migration networks, putting an emphasis on all levels and not just the micro, as well as giving special importance to human agency (2009: 31).

The epic book by Basch et al. (1994) *Nations unbound: transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation-states,* opens up its first chapter

21 "Extending or going beyond national boundaries" (from Webster's Third New International Dictionary 1976: 2430 in Schiller et al., 1995: 49).

22 The global economy is central to the study of transmigrantions, in the way transnational feminism also shares the preoccupation of economic inequalities.

by arguing that Migration Studies focus on migrants' integration in the country of settlement and are not interested in the connections between these subjects and their countries of origin (1994: 4). The book's main objective was to construct an analytical framework around the concept of transnationalism (Basch et al., 1994), breaking away from "methodological nationalism". Methodological nationalism has been central in the social science scholarship of the West (Schiller, 2013: 33) and it is defined as "(…) an ideological orientation that approaches the study of social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states" (Ibidem), thus making the nation-state into the "natural social and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 301). Methodological nationalism as a way of thinking is key in understanding how and why international migration has been configured the way it has, as well as the importance given to migrant integration in the scholarship (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 308). By identifying four periods of nation-state formation going from 1870 until the early 21st century, the same Wimmer and Schiller come to the conclusion that, although in research produced by the Chicago School between WWI and the Cold War transnational ties between migrant communities were acknowledged, they were identified as ephemeral due to the strengthening of the assimilation idea (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002: 317).

Within migration scholarship there exists a lack of appreciation towards the everyday social practices that involve both migrants and natives (Schiller, 2013: 43-44). Migration Studies is a field that grew out of the West and that looks at migration as a phenomenon and migrants as subjects within that phenomenon, but from the point of view of the settlement country and the settlement country's population. In this sense, it is no surprise that concepts such as assimilation and integration are still so central in Migration Studies and why transnationalism has managed to put into question the whole assimilation and integration scholarship (King, 2012: 25). In 1995 Lie put forward that: "transnationalism identifies a multiplicity of migrant networks and communities that transcend received national boundaries" and that the concept of diaspora better captured those ideas as opposed to "immigration" and "assimilation" (1995: 304). For Schiller the key lies in placing migration within a framework that accounts for the inequalities that cross all people, whether migrants or not (201: 50).

3.1. Transnational migration

Transnational perspectives in Migration Studies emerged in the late 1980s (Mahler and Pessar, 2006: 41) and became a key field of study in international migration since the second part of 1990s (Al-Ali et al., 2001: 578), with the inevitability of finding work on migration nowadays that does not include a transnational outlook (Boccagni, 2012: 118). Being driven by ethnographers and extending the use of qualitative methodologies in Migration Studies (Mahler and Pessar, 2006: 42), at the beginning its focus lied on employment related practices by migrant communities from Central and South America in the US (Al-Ali et al., 2001: 578), although as its expansion continued, an increase in the diversity of perspectives and reach could be noticed (Ibidem: 579). According to Bermúdez, the increase in the intensity of the connection between the country of origin and that of settlement, related for example to transportation and communication, is what

distinguishes transnational Migration Studies from Migration Studies (Bermúdez, 2016: 20). The same author makes a clear case for the need of taking into account the broader aspects of transnationalism. In her book on the Colombian diaspora in Spain, the UK and Belgium, she bases the conceptual framework on three elements: 1) migrant transnational politics, 2) the role of migrants in pursuing activities towards peace in Colombia, and 3) looking at those through an intersectional perspective. Another element from the book that deserves highlighting is the way the author argues for the idea of diasporas as "active global players" (Bermúdez, 2016: 5).

Taking transnationalisation processes into account when looking at international migration gives an improved answer as to why "cross-border migration" has grown faster than the population of the world, as well as the ways in which this has an effect on social life on the planet as a whole (Pries, 2022: 240). For Pries, transnationalism has improved migration research for a number of motives: 1) it shifts understandings of migration processes by including many more aspects that have been developed since the origin of migration (Ibidem: 241); 2) it helps to deal with the connection between migration and integration, by analysing ideal types of migrants: "immigrants", "return-migrants", "diaspora-migrants", "transmigrants"; 3) it makes improvements in the sphere of migration policies, due to how it enriches interpretations of migration processes in cross-border dynamics (Ibidem: 242).

Transnational perspectives do not avoid looking at the nation-state or represent an alternative to readings of the nation-state, beyond methodological nationalism: "A transnational perspective looks beyond the nation-state without assuming its demise" (Faist and Fauser, 2011: 11). The potential of the transnationalist paradigm, Portes argues, lies in the practices that constitute its social and economic weight. He highlights three elements: 1) transnational communities are constructed within capitalist communities and are actually created to serve the concerns and necessities of "investors and employers" in developed countries; 2) these communities are different from the traditional ways in which migrants' adaptation in the country of settlement has been researched; 3) these social formations have a higher potential of growing through "autonomous popular initiatives", as opposed to other alternatives to global capital because they are framed through globalisation (1997: 4).

Alba and Nee see transnationalism as a pluralist alternative to assimilation, as it describes the way immigrants accommodate into their host societies in the novel context of globalisation, as well as a migration that is non-European (Alba and Nee, 2003: 6) "(…) it is implied that ethnics have a motivation to reject assimilation, at least in its crassest forms" (Ibidem: 7) as they maintain connection to their country of origin (transnationalism), going back and forth. Assimilation, integration and transnationalism deal with the procedure of settling and interacting within the host society as well as the social shifts that take place after immigration (Penninx and Garces-Mascarenas, 2016: 11 in Laubenthal, 2023: 85). All three are filled with preconceptions about the relations between migrants and the host society, and all three deal with "power relations, agency, and equality" amongst migrants and host societies (Ibidem).

Migrant incorporation and the maintenance of transnational connections are interlinked processes (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005: 895; 916), and thus "complementary"

to each other (Ibidem: 917) rather than mutually exclusive (Ibidem). As has been presented so far, there are two main perspectives around migrant incorporation: 1) whilst showing more complexity, migrants' incorporation into society does not make much difference from the previous practices of European migrants who arrived to the US in the early 1900s (see Alba and Nee 1997); 2) the incorporation of migrants follows a segmented path of assimilation depending on race and class variables (see Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005).

Transnationalism as a concept counters the prevalent view of the 1970s and 1980s that showed migrants as either assimilating into the host societies or eventually returning to their countries of origin due to failure of assimilation (Mazzucato, 2008: 201). Immigration to the US in the 1970s and 1980s was understood by scholars as bipolar in framework. Considering that migrants could not maintain links with their countries of origin and that there were many differences between those countries and their host country, there were two possibilities: 1) circular experience: migrants kept a strong connection to their country of origin and only stayed for a short period in the country of settlement; 2) linear experience: migrants "more or less gradually" inclined towards life in the US and thus eventually ended up settling permanently (Rouse, 1995: 353).

For Al-Ali and Koser, the approach to transnationalism needs to be flexible, rejecting the idea that there needs to be a steady connection between the country of origin and that of settlement over a certain amount of time for it to be considered transnational migration (2002). Following Vertovec and Cohen, from the volume *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism* (1999: xvi): there are four main characteristics that would point to the origin of a novel set of migrants: 1) technological progress in the form of "travel and information" that allows migrants to have "multiple identities and multiple localities"; 2) the global processes involved in family and network bonds; 3) the exceptional increase in remittances; and 4) the consequent disappearance of frontiers between the societies in the host country and in the home country.

3.1.1. Definitions and characteristics of transnational migration

According to Vertovec, "'transnationalism' broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states." (1999: 447), thus being transnational, means belonging to two or more societies at the same time" (Vertovec, 2005: 3). Al-Ali and Koser call for the importance of distinguishing between transnationalism and globalisation in terms of the latter being often "decentred from specific national territories", and the former being "anchored in" as well as going beyond "one of more nation-states" (2002: 2). For Keohane and Nye (1971 in Morrell, 2008: 13) the concept, first appearing in the international relations literature in the 1970s, described "the increasing freedom of capital from national regulation and also the potential for 'supra-state' institutions and co-operation within international relations". Various scholars alert of the fashion with the term transnationalism and with the risk of applying the term with insufficient "conceptual or definitional clarity" (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002: 1; see also Levitt et al., 2003: 565), making it into a "slippery concept" that has been used to describe many practices (Mahler, 1998: 66). The notion of transnationalism has been used in different disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, political science, geography and international relations,

although the concept's abrupt fame also involves escalating ambivalence, which runs the risk of turning it into "an empty conceptual vessel" (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998: 3).

Whilst for Vertovec transnationalism started before the nation was conceptualised (1999: 447), the actual use of the term dates back to the early twentieth century (Bourne 1916 in Levitt 1996; Bourne 1916 in Boccagni, 2012: 118), or the end of the nineteenth century (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998: 4), due to the coming together of various " historically specific factors" (Ibidem). Guarnizo and Smith point to the globalisation processes of the capitalist economy and its negative impacts on less industrialised nation-states; the technological advances in relation to transport and communication; global political processes such as decolonisation and the generalisation of human rights; and the spread of "social networks" that contribute to "transnational migration, economic organization, and politics" (1998: 4).

Transnationalism invites us to deepen our understanding of space in the dimensions of geographic and social spaces (Pries, 2022: 244)[23]. Transnationalisation and transnational are understood as follows: 1) when broadly, they are conceived as "socially relevant phenomena and processes that extend across the borders of nations and nation-states"; 2) as making "social relations" stronger; 3) in their narrowest sense they relate to the "extension and intensification of social relations and social entities that are nested pluri-locally in different nation-states and span across national societies without having a definite 'headquarters'" (Pries, 2022: 234).

The transnational field is characterised by the connection to capitalism, the rejection of conventional acculturation and its potential of grassroots practices to resist dominant forces (Portes et al.. 1999: 227-228). The typology of work for migrants in countries of settlement and the conditions of travel and communication have pushed migrants to forge transnational business ties between the two countries (Portes et al., 1999: 228), showing that the way migrants maintain their connections to their countries of origin rejects and transforms the classic adaptation model (Portes et al., 1999: 228-229). Transnationalism has to do with interconnectivity and more specifically with "interconnected social experience" say Basch et al. (1994: 6). Basch et al. contended that it was no longer sufficient to understand migrants in relation to their country of settlement or that of origin as separate instances, but rather, there was a need for a field that englobed all of these realities. Transnationalism is understood as: "processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." (Basch et al., 1994: 8). By end, transmigrants are understood as follows: "immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships –familial, economic, social,

23 Pries gives four definitions that are key for delving into these matters:
1) transnationalism: "social relations and groups that extend across the borders of nation-states";
2) transnationality: "characteristics of socially relevant objects of study (like families, organisations, infrastructures, social mechanisms, money flows)";
3) transnationalisation: "process and the making of social relations and textures spanning across national borders"
4) transnationalism relies on the nation-state's organisation and structuring of the most important parts of social life, whilst understanding that the nation-state cannot be "the exclusive container of the social (2022: 234)".

organizational, religious, and political– that span borders" (Basch et al., 1994: 8) who "(...) take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states" (Basch et al., 1994, p. 8). Transmigrants are very much connected to their original nation-states, to the extent that part of their identity is very much a result of that connection (Basch et al., 1994: 9), as well as to the simultaneous linkage to the host country (Schiller et al, 1992; 1995: 48).

The context to which the transmigrants migrate, generates a particular setting of possibilities and difficulties. The way each transmigrant fits in the new context frames their transnational practices: "While transnational practices extend beyond two or more national territories, they are built within the confines of specific social, economic, and political relations which are bound together by perceived shared interests and meanings" (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998: 13). The intensity in transnational ties among migrants are on the rise due to five motives says Smith (1997 in Levitt, 1998: 928): 1) the opening of "travel and communication"; 2) migrants have a more pronounced role in their countries of origin; 3) increasing legitimacy given to migrants and their descendants by the countries of origin; 4) countries of settlement play a more important role in economic and political terms than the country of origin; and 5) the fact that migrants are increasingly marginalised in their countries of settlement.

Steven Vertovec (2009: 15-16) shows that migration processes and migrant practices have changed from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century up until now and have taken a transnational turn in terms of: 1) the connection to the country of origin which due to technological advances has become more intense, broad and rapid; 2) the contribution of migrant transnationalism to other areas of globalisation related to culture, the economy, politics and technology; and 3) the vigour and velocity present in the linkages between the contexts of the country of origin and that of settlement is groundbreaking. Furthermore, he identifies the following elements as characteristics of this new type of migration:

- the importance of remittance flows in quantitative and qualitative terms;
- the political connections to the country of origin has been strengthened through technological processes;
- the growth in "migrant hometown associations" in terms of numbers as well as practices;
- the founding or strengthening of "government outreach programmes for emigrants";
- the easiness with which transnational connections can be manifested in various Western countries due to the evolution of "identity politics".

Originating in a workshop carried out in May 1990 and congregating many scholars to discuss the practices of migrants within at least two countries (Mahler, 1998: 63), Schiller et al. (1992) outlined six premises of transnational migration, that two years later were unified within the following four:

1) transnational migration is linked to global capitalism and must be theorised and analysed in connection to labour and capital, in this sense, technological advances are a fundamental development;

2) transnationalism is a pathway through which social fields across nations are created by transmigrants, through their everyday life practices, as well as society, economy and politics related connections;

3) scholars investigate through social science notions that converge "physical location, culture, and identity" and that can, in turn, modify their perception and analysis of transnational processes;

4) the fact that transmigrants are situated within two or more countries leads them towards being faced and involved in those nation-states' founding procedures, and these, in turn, affect transmigrants' "identities and practices" through the mainstream parameters to which they belong (Basch et al., 1994: 24-25).

3.1.2. Formations within transnational migration

3.1.2.1. Transnational social field and/or transnational social space

An evolution from migrant social networks (Levitt, 2001: 197) the notion of "transnational social field" is developed by Basch et al. (1994), through the transnational ties of Haitian migrants in the US. The concept involves the forging of transnational connections by taking into consideration the functioning of families, the economy and communication. The transnational social field is seen as a daily process, a slow process involving reactions within networks that are personal in origin and that sustain and better the economic conditions of migrants, as well as their status in society (1994: 164-190; Itzigsohn et al., 1999: 316). Itzigsohn et al.'s piece concentrates on the trasnational social field that is generated among the Dominican diaspora and that is to be understood as an area of "social interactions and exchanges" that goes beyond national frontiers regarding politics and geography and that represents the "relevant field of action and reference" for many citizens of the Dominican Republic also abroad. Participation by Dominicans in these social fields is varied in typology (political or economic) as well as intensity (1999: 317): "narrow" and "broad" being the ends of a "continuum of different forms of transnational practices". These ends, according to the authors are differentiated by three components: the extent to which the practices are institutionalised; the extent to which people get involved in the "transnational field"; and finally, the extent to which people move in the transnational field (Itzigsohn et al., 1999: 317; 323).

According to the authors, Migration Studies have been mostly interested in the procedures of integration and assimilation and constrained within the "ethnic communities" that migrants would create in the countries of settlement. On the contrary, the "transnational social fields" notion regards the connections that are alive and present with the home country and ultimately strengthened with the advances in communication and transport (Itzigsohn et al., 1999: 317).

Transnational social fields are constructed via the everyday life and practices of migrants and extend in all the features of their lives, involving politics, economy and collective and personal identity (Itzigsohn et al., 1999: 318). Similarly Levitt argues that "transnational social fields" constructed by migration processes involve all features of social lives (Levitt, 2001: 197). The diversity and thickness of a transnational social field has a positive impact in the possibilities to maintain connection with the country of origin, and related to this, the higher the degree of institutionalisation the higher the likeliness in the persistence of "transnational membership" (Levitt, 2001: 197-198).

A similar concept to that of the transnational social field is the "transnational social space" envisaged by Thomas Faist: "by transnational spaces we mean relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across borders of sovereign states." (Faist, 2010: 13) Faist distinguishes between three types of transnational social spaces: "transnational kinship groups", "transnational circuits" and "transnational communities" (Ibidem: 189), all involving an exchange of social capital although in each space there is a prevailing "mechanism of integration" (Ibidem: 195). In "transnational kinship groups", the prevailing resource is "reciprocity" between those in the country of settlement and those in the country of origin. This type of transnational social space normally involves first generation migrants and one of the most typical examples would be remittances (2000: 195). The other two types will be explored in the following sections.

3.1.2.2. Binational society

Similar to the concept of "transnational social fields" is that of the "binational society" developed by Luis Eduardo Guarnizo in the journal article **"**Los Dominicanyork: The Making of a Binational Society" (1994). This notion was conceptualised by looking at the interactions between migrants from the Dominican Republic and societies in the United States. More specifically the author referred to a metaphorical "binational citizenship" that these migrants had achieved through the intensification of their fight for "political and social rights" and the increase in their "ethnic economy" in the US, as well as the sustaining of social, economic and political linkage between the two countries (171-172).

3.1.2.3. Transnational community

The key defining feature of these communities[24] are the "dense and strong social and symbolic ties over time and across space to patterns of networks and circuits in two countries – based upon solidarity" that the members of these communities maintain among them (Faist, 2000: 196). Whilst stating that diasporas represent a form of transnational community (2000: 197), he later affirms that the former can only be understood as transnational communities if the diaspora members cultivate connections towards the country of settlement, otherwise they should be called "exile communities". Faist sees

24 The definition that Faist gives of community is taken from Nisbet and is provided in the following terms: "encompasses all forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time'" (Nisbet, 1966: 47 in Faist, 2000: 196).

the connection to the homeland as the key element in the conceptualisation of diasporas (2000: 197).

The transnational community thesis proposed by Portes is based on research among Dominican Republic enterprises (in the form of "small factories", "commercial establishments" and "financial agencies") established and controlled by former immigrants in the US (1997: 9) that depend on connections between both countries for their well functioning, thus making them transnational (1997: 10). What is really important about these transnational communities is that although they originated in economic transactions, they then broke into political, social and cultural frontiers (Portes, 1997: 15). For the transnational community to work, Faist argues that "reciprocity and solidarity" need to be present, in order to perform high levels of social uniformity, as well as a "common repertoire of symbolic and collective representations" (2000: 196).

The transnational community can be seen as the opportunity to get the whole story about migrants' lives. While migration involves adaptation and it is caused also by external forces (such as push-pull theories, in other words the factors that lead to migration both in the country of origin as well as in that of settlement, as seen in section 2.2.2.1.a), migrants are active agents in their stories (Smith, 1998: 197). Migrants construct "meaningful communities" in transnational settings by bargaining locations at the borders of belonging as well as the "institutions and practices" in charge of manifesting those belongings, and they also nurture "the imagination of a communal identity" (Smith, 1998: 197-198). A transnational community is historically specific and contingent and to a certain degree imagined (Smith, 1998: 226). These communities are not exempt from inequalities (Smith, 1998: 226).

Peggy Levitt identifies three types of transnational communities. The first is the "rural-to-urban transnational village", the rural being in the country of origin and the urban in the country of settlement. Here the author refers to her study that revealed such community between the Dominican village of Miraflores and the city of Boston (Levitt, 2001). The second type of transnational community is conformed between urban settings in the country of origin and that of settlement (2001: 200-201). And the third is related to the idea of "shared ethnic identities" and "shared norms and traditions" (2001: 201).

Within these communities we find "transnational public spheres[25]" understood as spaces within which, "through their collective associational and relational activities (formal or informal) in the public sphere, individual citizens mobilize and advance claims" (Soysal, 1997: 510). As such, these transnational public spheres are also gendered (Smith, 1998: 226).

25 For a definition of "public sphere" we rely on Peggy Levitt's interpretation of Habermas "public sphere is a space where citizens come together to debate their common affairs, contest meanings, and negotiate claims (Habermas, 1984 in Levitt, 1998: 928).

3.1.2.4. Transnational migrant circuits

The concept of "transnational migrant circuit" was originally put forward by Roger Rouse, through his PhD thesis in 1989[26] as the idea of a space in which migrants from Aguililla (Michoacán, México) in Redwood City built and sustained their connections, turning it into their vital context for planning their lives. An important feature of this circuit was that whilst its lengthy presence pended on those who dealt with transnational connections, the effects of the circuit would be wielded upon all those who were found within it (Rouse, 1992: 45). In "transnational circuits" the dominant resource is "exchange" in the form of reciprocal engagement between the actors that form part of the circuits. The tendency would be to make use of the assets from the country of settlement. This form of social space principally involves networks based on trade and, according to the author, other examples would be found among the Chinese, Lebanese and Indians (Faist, 2000: 195).

3.1.3. Multiscalar approach in transnationalism

Pries speaks of the expansion of the field of transnational migration in micro, meso and macro terms, first concentrating in migratory dynamics of families and households, then including analysis of transnational organisations at the meso level, and finally broadening to include "transnational societal institutions" (2022: 235). The multiscalar approach in transnationalism refers to the division between micro, macro and meso, The micro refers to "everyday life" "(such as telecommunication, shipment of goods or sending of money, and information seeking across borders)"; the macro refers to "social institutions" "as complex programs of routines, rules, and norms that increasingly structure significant terrains of life and span different countries", and the meso to the "growth of organisations", organisations being "as stable and dense loci of cooperation with rules of membership, given structures and processes, and stated goals.(Pries, 2022: 234). At the meso level, studies have focused on transnational organisations founded to strengthen cultural and social links in order to maintain traditions from the country of origin. These types of organisations have expanded their political objectives in the last few decades. Studies at the meso level have pointed to the higher probabilities of participation in these types of organisations on the part of those migrants who have lived longer periods in the country of settlement as well as on the part of those with higher levels of education (Pries, 2022: 237).

3.2. Diaspora Studies

Inasmuch as it can be criticised, the term diaspora is not going to disappear (Dufoix, 2008: 108). Diasporas, says Peggy Levitt, involve "expulsion or involuntary exile" where the memory of a "lost or imagined homeland" is central (1998: 928). The centrality of technologies, telephone, internet and satellite television has contributed to an academic interest in diasporas especially since the early 1990s (Vertovec, 2006: 3; 2009), with diasporas going up the ladder of the "policy agenda" since the beginning of the 21st century (Vertovec, 2006: 4). Diasporas play an increasingly pronounced role in economic

26 *Mexican migration to the United States: Family relations in the development of a transnational migrant circuit*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University, 1989.

terms, especially when looking at remittances, with a growing awareness on the fact that they are surpassing international aid (Vertovec, 2006: 4; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 15). The much easier connection maintained with the country of origin, due to the lowering in prices in terms of communication and transportation (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 14) can act as a distancing factor for migrants towards the country of settlement and result in a "failure of integration" (Vertovec, 2006: 4). Novel and more accessible means of communicating and transporting between the home and the host country have altered migrant practices by permitting the performing of "social and political roles" in both societies (Adamson, 2002: 157; 166; Bruneau, 2010: 44).

3.2.1. Definitions and characteristics of diasporas

3.2.1.1. Terminology in historical perspective

Delving into the field of Diaspora Studies requires placing our attention on the term "diaspora". The first time the term diaspora appeared in a text was in the *Septuagint*, i.e. the translation of the Hebraic Bible into Greek (Dufoix, 2015: 8). Previous to the nineteenth century, the term diaspora was not used in other languages apart from Greek (Dufoix, 2008: 15). It originates from the Greek word *diaspeirein* or *diaspeiro* where *speiro* means "to sow" and *dia* "over" (Cohen, 1997: ix), or, "to sow over or scatter" (Vertovec, 2005: 1) The usage of the term is first captured in the writing by Sophocles, Herodotus, and Thucydides in the fifth century B.C. (Dufoix, 2008: 4). The term is directly related to the history of the Jewish population (Vertovec, 2005: 1; Safran, 1991: 83). Until the 1950s its meaning was always connected to religion and more specifically to the dispersion of the Jewish population as seen in the Old Testament and in Christian churches in the New Testament, or to the cases of populations, such as Armenians, outside of the biblical context (Dufoix, 2008: 16-17). A gradual secularisation of the term diaspora took place thanks to the work of the historian Simon Dubnov[27] (Dufoix, 2008: 17-18). In 1939, the sociologist Robert Park extended the use of the term diaspora to refer to Asians (Dufoix, 2008: 18). Within the social sciences, the term diaspora starts appearing in the 1960s (Ibidem: 19). The usage of the term diaspora in the social sciences, until the mid 1980s would either refer to the idea of groups of people living outside of their country of origin or to the specific case of "African trading networks", or more broadly related to the Jews, people of African origin, Palestinians, and Chinese populations (Dufoix, 2008: 19).

According to Robin Cohen, the Greeks used the term "diaspora" in relation to human beings, to refer to migration and colonisation (1997: ix), whereas, when it came to Armenians, Jews, Africans and Palestinians, the term shifted to a more threatening result, connecting it to "a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile" (1997: ix).

27 Dubnov was the author of the entry "Diaspora" in the 1931 edition of the *American Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Dufoix, 2008: 17-18). In the 2001 edition of the *Encyclopedia*, the "Diaspora" entry is written by Robin Cohen (Ibidem: 18).

3.2.1.2. Conceptualisation in historical perspective

The definition of the concept of diaspora is characterised by its expansion (Dufoix, 2008: 2). For Dufoix the first two decades of the early twentieth century represent a period in which two important phenomena took place within the evolution of the concept of diaspora. On the one hand, the author refers to the "secularisation", as previously mentioned in terms of the expansion of its use from solely religious texts and, on the other hand, to "trivialisation", in other words, the broadening of diaspora cases globally (Dufoix, 2015: 9). For Dufoix, a definition of the notion of diaspora in the social sciences provoked a distinction into three categories: 1) "open"; 2) "categorical"; and 3) "oxymoronic". With regards to the first type, he places scholars like Armstrong and Sheffer, the former being the one who gave the first definition and the latter the more elaborate definition, which he then revised in 2003 in reference to "ethno-national diasporas" (Dufoix, 2008: 21). Considering the second typology of the definition, the "categorical", it has to do with definitions that are quite strict and that require the fulfilling of specific criteria, such as the idea that to be a diaspora the number of diasporans needs to be a very high percentage compared to the total population of origin (according to Lacoste, 1989), thus only "the Jewish (Ashkenazim and Sephardim), Lebanese, Palestinian, Armenian, and Irish" would comply with the definition (Dufoix, 2008: 22). For Dufoix, oxymoronic definitions would be those related to postmodern thought during the 1980s, related to the work of postcolonial authors such as Stuart Hall, James Clifford and Paul Gilroy seen in section 2.3.3.2. (Dufoix, 2008: 22).

With the objective of understanding and theorising diaspora both as an "intellectual phenomenon" and a "social process" (Dufoix, 2008: xii), the author looks at both the Jewish and the black diaspora in order to comprehend the increase in the popularity of the term diaspora. The conceptualisation of diaspora started in the late 1970s and two different lines of thought can be distinguished. 1) The first line, justifying itself through the Jewish case, sees diaspora in migratory or exilic terms, where elements such as "nostalgia", the maintanance of "original traditions, customs and languages" and the illusion of returning to the country of origin are present. Dufoix sees this version of thought as "centered" and "essentially political". 2) The second version of the diaspora concept connects itself to the "black/African case", thus it is linked to British cultural studies from the mid 1970s and pays a stronger attention towards identity. Here Dufoix also says that in this vision, diaspora is seen as "life" rather than "survival" and related to "heterogeneity" rather than "homogeinity" (Dufoix, 2015: 10). The author sees these two versions of diaspora conceptualisation as opposed to one another, where the former is "modern, centered, territorial and political" and the latter is "postmodern, emancipatory, deterritorialised and cultural" (Ibidem).

Looking back at early definitions of the concept, one of the most renowned is Walker Connor's: "that segment of a people living outside the homeland" (Connor, 1986, cit. in Safran, 1991: 83). Wanting to expand on that early definition, William Safran (1991) argued for the inclusion of categories such as "expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities tout court" (Safran, 1991: 83). Khachig Tölölyan, in the preface to the first issue of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* (Tölölyan, 1991: 4), journal that he himself founded, states that the concept of diaspora, first originating from the Jewish, Greek and Armenian experiences would englobe "words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community,

overseas community, ethnic community" (Tölölyan, 1991: 4). One of the broadest definitions of diaspora is to be found in John A. Armstrong's 1976 paper *Mobilized and Proletarian diasporas*, one of the very first scholarly material that addressed these particular collectivities: "any ethnic collectivity which lacks a territorial base within a given polity" (1976: 393). The transnational connection is captured more clearly in Ang's definition of a diaspora: transnational sociocultural formations of people who share real and/or symbolic ties to some distant "homeland" (Ang, 1994 in Song, 2013: 170).

Cohen argues that to grasp the meaning of the term diaspora one needs to look at the Jewish experience (Cohen, 1996b: 508). In addition, migration to multiple countries (Cohen, 1996b: 514), mutation over time and length in the historical construction of the diaspora are key features of the concept (Cohen, 1996b: 515). Anthias considers that the strength of the concept of diaspora lies in its "heuristic potential" (Anthias, 1998: 558), in other words, in its capacity to allow for new meanings and processes. Within the "heuristic potential" we find Adamson and Demetriou's argument for considering the dynamism of this section of the literature as it concerns the understanding of the concept of diaspora as "prescriptive", rather than merely "descriptive" (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007: 498-499). They are basically suggesting that its prescriptiveness lies in its ability to be used as a mechanism for identity construction and the creation of ways of "coalition-building and political action" beyond geographical barriers (Ibidem: 498). Diasporas are seen by Bello as "all those cases of minority communities -based on common feelings of belonging- that engage in collective agency to obtain social, cultural, political or economic objectives associated, at some extents, with the survival of the community itself" (Bello, 2015: 23).

3.2.1.3. Characteristics of diaspora formations

Vertovec points to the difficulty of relying on one definition of the term diaspora (2005: 2), nor to a list of characteristics associated to it (2005: 3). Belonging to a diaspora, he argues, is a matter of choice (2005: 3). Safran (1991) believed that a migrant community or a disseminated minority did not automatically become a diaspora (1991: 86-88), and so did Robin Cohen (1997: 22) as there were a set of characteristics that they found to be key in their differentiation. Cohen added that temporality was also a key aspect, in other words, how long before a diaspora is constituted? (1997: 22). Starting with Safran, he presents a set of six characteristics, that, although did not all have to be present at the same time (Safran, 1991: 83), gave a clearer idea of what a diaspora group would normally exhibit:

1) dispersion from a particular "original" centre to more than two locations in the periphery or "foreign" areas;

2) retention of a common "memory, vision, or myth" regarding the country of origin;

3) belief that being diasporic impedes full acceptance into the society of the country of settlement and thus a feeling of partial alienation and insulation;

4) belief that the country of origin is "their true, ideal home" and the location that the following generations will want to go back to when viable;

5) belief of collective commitment to the "maintenance or restoration" and "safety and prosperity" of the country of origin;

6) continuation of connection to the country of origin which in turn is key in defining "their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity".

Such characteristics would contribute to the diaspora being considered by the country of settlement as more "challenging" in comparison to other minorities or other migrant groups, as "they test the efficacy of the process of integration and the outer limits of freedom of consciousness, and, finally, the limits of pluralism" (Safran, 1991: 97).

Six years later, in *Global diasporas: An introduction* (1997) Cohen worked on Safran's initial seat of features, by accepting three of the six that he proposed, modifying two and adding another four, thus making his list a longer one of nine characteristics (Cohen, 1996b: 515). Just like Safran, Cohen does not see necessary for a diaspora to be seen and understood as a diaspora, to present all of the set of features (Cohen, 1996b: 515):

1) having left the country of origin, often in a traumatic way and settlement in at least two "foreign" territories;

2) migration based on work, trade or the pursuing of "colonial ambitions";

3) a group "memory and myth" related to the country of origin "including its location, history and achievements";

4) worshipping of the land of origin including a common "commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity";

5) the presence and group strengthening of a "return movement";

6) a potent and protracted "ethnic group consciousness" involving the identification of a "history" and destiny that are communally shared;

7) a conflictive connection with the country of settlement and its society;

8) the presence of a sense of "empathy and solidarity" with members of the same diaspora located in other countries;

9) the potentiality of an enhanced life in a receptive host country (Cohen, 1996b: 515; 1997: 26; 180).

On his part, from a distinctively more political outlook, Sheffer firmly believed in the constancy and intensity of the connections maintained by diasporas towards "their real or perceived original homelands" (Sheffer, 2006: 129). He contended that diaspora members are characterised by the following set of features:

1) "ethnonational-religious identity and identification" grounded on communal "non-essentialist primordial" and "psychological-cultural" elements of engagement;

2) maintenance of "non-territorial" frontiers via "highly developed and effective multiple organizations and networks";

3) loyalty to the country of origin;

4) positive and negative contributions to their fourfold linkages: country of origin, country of settlement, "international" associations and members of the diaspora located in other countries of settlement;

5) formulation and implementation of "strategic and tactical policies".

For Faist, the characteristics with the use of the term diaspora lie in the following: 1) related to the motives for migrating or dispersing; 2) connections of practices that cross countries frontiers between the country of origin and that of settlement; and 3) related to the preoccupations of incorporating or integrating migrant groups in the countries to which they have moved (Faist, 2010: 12-13).

Following Cohen (1997) and Sheffer (2003), but including terminology from the field of transnational migration, such as the idea of networks, Bruneau (2010: 36-37) provides a list of six key criteria to define diasporas:

1) the people that make up the diaspora have had to move forcefully from their country of origin to other regions;

2) there might be previous established formal or informal links with the regions to which they move;

3) the population, "integrated without being assimilated into the host countries", maintains strong ties with the identity and history of the territory of origin, in the form of "imagined community", that is also traspassed through generations;

4) the diasporic population is organised around networks that tend to be structured horizontally between the same diaspora located in various regions;

5) the identity related to dispersion is transmitted through generations;

6) diasporas tend to be independent social formations conformed of various associations. The work they carry out can be both beneficial towards the government of their country of origin, as well as resistant.

According to Tölölyan, the mapping of Diaspora Studies as a field needs reflecting on three dual notions in order to continue solidifying diaspora conceptualisation: the differences between dispersion and diaspora; the importance of objectivity and subjectivity in the study of diasporas, and the relationship to the home country. Tölölyan would have named the journal *Dispersion*, as diaspora to him is a type of dispersion related to ethnicity (Tölölyan, 2007: 7). In other words, "(…) those communities of the dispersed who develop varieties of association that endure at least into their third generation" (Ibidem: 8) and

that retain a certain "familial, cultural and social distance" from their country of origin whilst at the same time holding on to the connection towards it by affiliation (Ibidem: 11). With regards to the second binary, he highlights the role of memory for the endurance of diasporas (Ibidem: 9).

Shuvall echoes that defining a diaspora involves the taking into account of "affective-expressive components" (Chaliand and Rageau, 1991 xiv-xvii in Shuvall, 2000: 43). These are reflected in the following four aspects that are to be found at its base: "forced dispersion, retention of a collective historical and cultural memory of the dispersion, the will to transmit a heritage, and the ability of the group to survive over time" (Shuvall, 2000: 43). For Bruneau, diaspora communities have the "symbolic and 'iconographic' capital" that allows for the reproduction and the overcoming of distances between the communities (2010: 35-36). The notion of "iconography", put forward by Gottmann (1952: 219-221) has to do with the relevance of "visible and palpable symbols" in the form of historical buildings, for example, that support the consolidation of "social networks" especially during difficult times such as exilic movements. The symbols that form iconography are related to three areas: "religion, political past (memory) and social organisation" (Gottman in Bruneau, 2010: 38). Bruneau argues that iconography transpires historical buildings and reaches many other elements of place(s), from churches to local radios. In addition, diasporas are able to construct "places of memory" in the territories to which they move precisely through iconography (Ibidem). In this sense, space and time in relation to territory are very important dimensions for the concept of diaspora (Ibidem).

The term diaspora can be accompanied by adjectives that specify the membership, as the ones proposed by Van Hear, such as "near diaspora", referring to diaspora members that are located in neighbouring countries, and "wider diaspora" referring to those that are located further away (Van Hear, 2003 and 2006 in 2011: 91).

3.2.2. Different theoretical perspectives within Diaspora Studies

Until the 1970s there was not much of a talk about ethno-national diasporas, they were considered as "unworthy of serious consideration and in-depth study" (Armstrong, 1976: 393 in Sheffer, 2003: 2). Although the "first systematic analyses" start to appear in the 1980s (Sheffer, 2013: 225; 227; 230), it is in the mid 1990s when an actual proliferation of scholarly work on diasporas can start being noticed (Sheffer 2003: 4-5), and the creation of the academic journal *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* is an example of a solidification in scholarly work, that, according to many, is still in its early stages. The realm of meanings surrounding this concept is very broad. Early authors started by providing more descriptive definitions of the concept to becoming more fluid, or more concerned with its social construction capacity. As Donya Alinejad states "diaspora conceptualisations have evolved from group characteristics to a sense of "consciousness", "an unfixed mode of identification or a sense of belonging" (Alinejad, 2017: 31). According to Vertovec (1999), the scholarship on diasporas centres on three meanings of the concept: 1) diaspora understood "as social form"; 2) "as a type of consciousness" and 3) "as a mode of cultural production". The first meaning is utilised the most in academia. Within diaspora seen as a type of consciousness, the author identifies three characteristics: a) particular kinds of "social relationships" connected to "history and geography" (1999: 3); b) strain due

to "political orientation" (both in individual terms as well as collective); and c) in terms of "economic strategies" (1999: 4).

3.2.2.1. Positivist vs. postmodern perspectives

Positivists perspectives dominate the field of Diaspora Studies, although constructivist perspectives are increasingly becoming more important (Koinova, 2010: 150) especially in relation to the political character of diasporas. Along the same lines, Fiona Adamson suggests drawing a distinction between three different sets of scholarly writing on diasporas: "traditional" considered as "essentialist and restricted", "pluralist" as "essentialist yet expansive", and "constructivist" (2012: 27). This distinction is based on the way in which authors theorise on diasporas. The first two strands view them as fixed entities, naturally constituted due to a migrant, exilic or dispersing process, and the third one relates to the idea that diasporas come into being through social construction, by way of discursive practices, upper class usage or paths of political mobilising (2012: 27). According to Floya Anthias, a line could be drawn within Diaspora Studies to distinguish between authors such as Robin Cohen and Gabriel Sheffer, amongst others, that would pertain to the first two strands proposed by Adamson; and postmodern writers, such as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, James Clifford and Avtar Brah, that would fit into the "constructivist" strand (Anthias, 1998) linked to postcolonial and poststructuralist perspectives.

Stuart Hall also draws the same distinction between essentialist and postpositivist thinking. The first one is linked to the idea of scattering of people from their country of origin, to the importance of preserving their ethnicity and the marking of a strong sense of cultural difference (Hall, 2017: 163). The second one, and where he considers his writing to fit, just as Anthias was suggesting, is related to the idea of diasporas as "discursive production of new interstitial spaces" (Hall, 2017: 164) where "physical movement and displacement" are fundamental parts of global mergings and separations (Ibidem). Diaspora as a community with a strong identity related to the notions of nation and nationalism, as well as to an idea of continuing in the transmission of culture and tradition to the following generations, has been opposed by Cultural Studies writers such as Gilroy and Hall, favouring post-modernist conceptualisations. For them, in turn following the idea of the rhizome by Guattari and Deleuze, diaspora communities should be understood as hybrid models that lack a central idea of identity in terms of "filiation and heritage", but rather various constructions within a universe of "dissemination and hybridisation" (Bruneau, 2010: 37). Minchilli (2021)[28] states that talking about diaspora goes beyond the mere description of the migration phenomenon and moves away from notions of "integration" (2021). Ultimately, she observes, it leads us towards a much more complex reflection on the articulation of identities (2021). Although James Clifford, would link early usages of the term with the Greek and Armenian populations, he would also alert on the importance of taking those origins as mere "nonnormative starting points", as diaspora related concepts were "travelling or hybridizing in new global conditions" (Clifford, 1994: 306). In other words, suggesting that being aware of this nuance when exploring the field of Diaspora Studies is fundamental (Clifford 1994: 306).

28 Minchilli (2021), Perché parlare di diaspora?, *Menelique Magazine*, available at : https://www.menelique.com/perche-parlare-di-diaspora/ [accessed on 4/10/22]

Recent scholarship within the field of Diaspora Studies suggests that there is a specific intention of opening up this field in order to include increasingly more critical outlooks. For instance, the 2019 *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies*, edited by Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer, mentions the importance of conducting research that analyses diasporic subjects and entities from the bottom-up, rather than vice-versa, and that takes into account both emic and etic positionings (2019: 2). In the same text, Cohen and Fischer go as far as to say: "Concepts that are too precise become too prosaic, obvious and boring. Nor should they be confined and tethered by one historical experience or sacrificed to political wilfulness" (Cohen and Fischer, 2019: 4). Evolving from his 1997 analysis of diasporic subjects, which I have previously outlined, Cohen has, therefore, stated quite clearly that context does matter when studying diasporas. He is suggesting something related to what Avtar Brah was pointing out in 1996, building on Clifford 1994, which is the importance of historical contingency when studying these subjects (Brah, 1996: 176-177; Vertovec, 1999: 24). Following Brubaker, the expansion of the employment of the term diaspora has reached the point, he would write in 2005, of signifying a collectively being situated outside of the "home" (Brubaker, 2005).

3.2.2.2. Postcolonialist perspectives

Postcolonialism for Hall is a reconfiguration of colonialist times with all of its problematics such as dependency, subdevelopment and alienation within a globalised system of unbalanced power with a "postnational, transnational and neoimpelrialist nature" (2010: 587). Diaspora Studies connects to Postcolonial Studies (Cohen 2008:12), thus making it fundamental to place diasporas in relation to colonialism and forced migration (Vimalarajah & Cheran, 2010:11). Scholar Sandra Ponzanesi considers postcolonial writers such as Stuart Hall, Arjun Appadurai, Paul Gilroy and Avtar Brah as placing their focus on how diasporic expertise intersects with postcolonial matters of "spatial dispersion (…) identity formation and colonial residues" (2020: 980).

In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Stuart Hall, drawing on the diasporic experience of Caribbean identity, reflects on the concept of "cultural identity". For Stuart Hall, identity always involves a process that is never finished and that takes on meaning within a "representation" (1990: 222). For him, when we write and speak, we always do so from a specific position in terms of place and time and also from historical and cultural canons that are also specific (1990: 222).

For the author, there are two ways of understanding "cultural identity". The first gives the term a sense of unity. There would be a culture that is shared and that could be defined as a collective idea of "a true self" that would be found within other externally imposed selves that people who share a history and genealogy would have in common. This first definition is based on signs and elements that define the shared history and culture of a people and that are reproduced and recalled over the years and seem to be immovable (1990: 223). It is this view of cultural identity that is present, for example, in post-colonial struggles and that continues to be used to strengthen the representations of those [migrants] who are on the margins of societies (1990: 223). Linked to this idea of cultural identity are for the author the rediscoveries of stories from the margins that have been hidden by dominant narratives, and which therefore, when they come to light,

deserve to be remembered (1990: 224). In a way such stories form part of an imaginary common to all "forced diasporas" (1990: 224).

According to Hall, the second reading of the concept of "cultural identity" refers to the important divergences that exist within the same narratives. In other words, although there are many commonalities, the differences make us "what we really are" or, "what we have become" (1990: 225). For Hall this identity cannot be essentialised as it is constantly under construction, through both the past and the future. To justify this second view, Hall draws on Edward Said and his idea that people in the East have been constructed as "other" from the canons of the West, but also that these canons have led people in the East to understand themselves as "other" (1990: 225). Ultimately, the second view of "cultural identity" always represents a "positioning" (1990: 226). For Hall, Caribbean identity would have to be understood through these two visions, one based on commonalities and persistence, the other on divergences and separations, and thus in dialogue between the two (1990: 225-227).

In line with this concept of identity and relationality, we can situate Avtar Brah's notion of "diasporic space" (1996) which stipulates that diasporic subjects and local subjects, in other words, the country of settlement's population, need to be understood in relational terms and seen as fitting one same space known as the "diasporic space", a space that is always under construction through their continuous identity construction through constant friction (1996). Thus, understanding diasporas as subjects with the potential of being space-challengers.

In the same way, within the more fluid dimension of meanings of the term diaspora, related to postposivist understandings as opposed to essentialist ones explored in the previous paragraphs, we find Stuart Hall's: "Such subjects must learn to inhabit more than one identity, dwell in more than one culture, and speak more than one language, for as Homi Bhabha suggests, to speak in the unsettling place in between languages means to constantly negotiate and translate across their differences'' (Hall, 2017: 173). According to the same author, this comprehension of diaspora and diasporic subjects, as identity, is always in construction and constantly being shaped: "(...) such identities are always open, complex, under construction, taking part in an unfinished game" (Hall, 2017: 174). To Stuart Hall (1992), diasporas are always considered "cultures of hybridity[29]", as "They are irrevocably translated... They must learn to inhabit at least two identities, to speak [at least] two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them' (Hall 1992)." (Gidley, 2015: 37). Not for nothing, "Diasporas are simultaneously socially, economically and politically invested in more than one society" (Vimalarajah & Cheran, 2010:12).

For Bhabha (1994), who in turn follows Foucault and Gramsci, it is important to make clear the transformation that has taken place in the understanding of culture as something that, far from being homogeneous at the level of national and ethnic groups, is part of a mesh of diverse visions that operate in conflicting territories and can therefore exercise more or less hegemony. According to this view, a homogeneous culture is linked to supremacy,

29 Bhabha gives the following definition to hybridity: "(…) is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (1994:112).

which would therefore be located in the centres rather than in the peripheries (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 42). In this sense, Smith (1986) and Armstrong (1982) stress the importance of symbols and cultural myths in functioning towards the endurance of culture over time (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 42).

3.2.3. Diaspora linkage to the country of origin and that of settlement

3.2.3.1. Diaspora, nation and nationalism

The connection to the homeland is key in defining diaspora (Shuvall, 2000: 42), where nostalgia towards the country of origin is a very old subject (Dufoix, 2008: 80). Diasporas as political subjects, understood in their functioning as groups with a shared culture and national orientation need to be placed into conversation with writing on nation[30] and nationalism[31], as "nationalism and national identity have a double-edged character: they define not only who is a member of the national community but also, and perhaps more importantly, who is not, who is an Other; a foreigner." (Triandafyllidou, 2022: 208). The following set of key characteristics found in national identities have a lot of similarities with those of diasporas, as I will later show: 1) the idea of a "homeland"; 2) the presence of "common myths and historical memories"; 3) the conformity with normative "rights and duties" communal to all members of the nation; and 4) the idea of a communal economic system with regional movement for national members (Smith, 1991: 12).

30 Two concepts that are often used together, even as hyphenated words, are the nation and the state. Nation and state are two different concepts. The latter is connected to public institutions that exercise a "monopoly of coercion and extraction within a given territory", whereas the former has to do with the union based on culture and politics that a single community shares, together with a culture that is based on history and a shared homeland (Smith, 1991: 14). According to Gellner: "the 'state' is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may also be concerned with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They *are* the state" (Gellner, 2009: 4). Putting the two together, therefore reaching the further concept of nation-state actually refers to the state and nation sharing their frontiers, in other words that the people that live in the state actually all have the same ethnic culture (Smith, 1991: 15).

31 I will turn to Ernest Gellner for a definition of nationalism: "(…) nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state – a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation – should not separate the power-holders from the rest" (2009: 1). The concept of "state" seems much more tangible compared to that of "nation", the latter being an imagination, a myth, and thus in need of being opposed: "Nations are not inscribed into the nature of things, they do not constitute a political version of the doctrine of natural kinds. Nor were national states the manifest ultimate destiny of ethnic or cultural groups" (Gellner, 2009: 47). Before reaching that explanation of nation, Gellner provides two versions of how this concept is understood, neither of them being definitive nor well-grounded: the "cultural" and the "voluntaristic" definition (2009: 6-7). The former version defines the nation in terms of culture, i.e. two people belong to the same nation if both of them have the same culture (2009: 6). Gellner sees culture as "(…) a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating" (*Ibídem*). The latter definition goes a step ahead by implying an act of recognition between the two people, in other words, apart from sharing the same culture they need to mutually recognise each other as belonging to a shared set of said ideas and signs. Thus, in this second scenario, the nation is a result of people's beliefs, allegiances and "solidarities" (Gellner, 2009: 7).

Smith identifies external and internal objectives that are valid for both individuals and groups in relation to national identity. Within the external ones he mentions territory, the economy and politics: a) the territory geographically situates the members of the nation in terms of where they should work and live; b) the economy is controlled by the nation's interests in terms of natural and human resources, as well as the their movement within the national frontiers; c) the state and its structures in all their shapes and forms are directed by national identity (Smith, 1991: 16). With regards to the internal objectives, there is an understanding of the members of a certain nationality as driven by a common public education and the inculcation of allegiance towards the country, as well as an "homogenous culture". In this sense, there are "values, symbols and traditions" as well as the utilisation of "symbols" (Smith, 1991: 16) such as "flags, coinage, anthems, uniforms, monuments and ceremonies" that reinforce citizens' "common heritage and cultural kinship". To go even further, by way of this national identity in place, people from a nation are able to connect themselves in the world by connecting to the idea of a "collective personality and its distinctive culture" (Smith, 1991: 18).

The notion of **"**long-distance nationalism" needs to be taken into consideration (Anderson 1998), in other words, the idea that nationalism actually begins in exile. In *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983, 2006), Anderson's ultimate aim is to argue that nation-building and nationalist sentiments are linked to developments that have taken place in the West, more specifically, in the technologies of printing and capitalism (Ibidem: 37-46). In the process of doing so, he argues that "nationality", "nation-ness" and "nationalism" are cultural creations (2006: 4). He sees the nation as an "imagined political community" and one that is "imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". It is imagined because the members of this supposed nation do not actually know all of their fellow members, it is impossible to know all of them, thus they are imagining them and they are imagining their connection to them (*Ibídem*: 6). Also, inherent to this imagined community we find "horizontal comradeship" between the people that make it up, says Anderson, which is probably the only way we have of explaining why people are willing to kill and die for an imagination that is so limited (*Ibídem*: 7). This sentiment of belonging becomes sufficiently strong through the existence of cultural rhizomes within nationalism, that according to Anderson are to be connected to the realities that existed prior to the creation of nationalism and that to some extent are responsible for its formation. The two communities that Anderson has in mind are the religious community and the ancient dynastic community or "dynastic realms". With regards to the former, Anderson states that its decline in the late medieval period was due to: 1) the "discovery" of the non-European world by European travellers such as Venetian Marco Polo, and 2) the decrease in the use of Latin as the sacred language (*Ibídem*: 12-19). As for the latter, Anderson highlights the way in which monarchies had the power before and they managed to govern vast regions with the help of war and a type of "sexual politics" that constituted a specific freedom of marriage amongst monarchical families that did not follow nationalist patrons, and also the way it started declining during the 17th century (*Ibídem*: 19-21).

A nation-state might include the existence of "national" or "historical" minority groups, or migrants might enter the nation-state and in both cases there would be differences in terms of ethnicity and culture (Triandafyllidou, 2022: 209). According to Brubaker (1996)

both the nation-state and modern nationalism were born in 18th century Europe. The year 1792 would mark the beginning, through the French "battlefield of Valmy", and 1992 would mark the end through the signing of the Maastricht Treaty and the constitution of the European Union (1996: 1). According to the author, the creation of the European Union represented a shift towards "institutionalized supranationality" (1996: 2), although this new political structure has not actually decreased the importance of the nation-states that conform the European continent (*Ibídem*). Through these processes, new forms of nationalisms that are different and conflictive, are born (*Ibídem*: 4), and involve the area of Western Europe, although the author also expands it to other realities such as the Chinese: China, the newly nationalising South-Eastern Asian countries and the Chinese population that lives there, amongst other realities (*Ibídem*: 6). I consider Brubaker's analysis to be worthy of including here as his envisioning of the following political organisations share characteristics with the concept of diaspora. Brubaker explains them through the idea of a triadic connection between "national minorities", "the newly nationalizing states in which they live", as well as "the external national "homelands" to which they belong" through a bond that it based on ethnicity and culture, rather than "legal citizenship" (Brubaker, 1996: 4). Newly nationalising nation-states make assertions in representation of a "core nation" (1996: 5) based on ethnicity and culture rather than citizenship. The "core nation" is actually quite fragile and needs to use "state power" to pursue its goals (1996: 5). As a direct challenge to the core nations, Brubaker points to the "external national homelands" and their "transborder nationalisms" (*Ibídem*):

> A state becomes an external national "homeland" when cultural or political elites construe certain residents and citizens of other states as co-nationals, as fellow members of a single transborder national, and when they assert that this shared nationhood makes the state responsible, in some sense, not only for its own citizens but also for ethnic co-nationals who live in other states and possess other citizenships. (*Ibídem*)

The third entity is the "national minority" that is in the middle of the nationalising state where they are physically situated and the external homeland to which they belong to in cultural and ethnic terms (*Ibídem:* 5). Despite providing a categorisation of these collectivities, Brubaker defends the idea that nations, nationalities and nationness are in constant movement and cannot be taken as fixed classifications (1996: 21).

Nationality is not an "absolute concept" but it should be understood as the idea that members of a certain nation share more with other members than with the foreign people that enter that territory (Triandafyllidou, 2022: 211). For the author that involves there being an "out-group against which the unity and homogeneity of the in-group is tested". The identity of a nation only make sense when put in contrast with other identities, in other words, with other nations: "If the entire world belonged to the same nation, national identity would have little meaning" (Ibidem: 212). Triandafyllidou argues that the "Significant Other" has actually contributed to the making of nations historiography in terms of either being a group that has being characterised as being a source of inspiration or a threat for the burgeoning of the nation (2022: 212). "Significant Others" defy the nation in either "positive and peaceful" terms, as a source of "admiration and esteem", thus becoming an "inspiring Significant Other" or through their potential dangerous position, thus becoming

more of an “enemy to fight against”, a “threatening Significant Other” (Triandafyllidou, 2022: 212). There is a further distinction between “internal” and “external” Significant Others, the former being part of “the same political entity as the in-group” and the latter being part of a “separate political unit” (Triandafyllidou, 2022: 212-213).

According to Stuart Hall “nation” is a constructed notion, as well as “national identities” that are built “within discourses and other systems of representation”, thus connected to power and to the way power operates in society (2017: 137). Hall states that all Western nation-states have a common element that is the shaking of their unified national identities with the arrival of mass migration (2017: 147-148), as seen in the Fortress Europe countries (Germany, France, Britain, and Italy) where there is radical opposition to these entries in coordination with right-wing political parties” (Hall, 2017: 151). On the other end of the stick we find fundamentalist movements linked to “particularistic nationalism and ethnic / religious absolutism” (Hall, 2017: 156) in countries where Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise (Ibidem).

Nationalism, say Schiller et al., is “an early 19th century invention” (1992: 14). In the words of Schiller and Fouron: “nation-state building is therefore identified as a set of historical and affective processes that link disparate and/or heterogeneous populations together and forge their loyalty to and identity with a central government apparatus and institutional structure” (Schiller and Fouron, 1998: 132).

In conceptualising state-diaspora relations by focusing on the Haitian diaspora, Laguerre proposes five models of state-diaspora relations: reincorporation, ethnic, economic, political opposition, and transnational (Laguerre, 1999). The policies pursued by a particular nation-state towards its diaspora depend on the situation in which both are found, in other words, they cannot be generalised to all relationships (Laguerre, 1999: 634). The author argues that the nation has grown beyond the state due to the presence of the diaspora, therefore, nation and state do not correspond in territorial terms (Laguerre, 1999: 635). 1) The reincorporation model: the state from which the diaspora is from pursues mechanisms in order to support the relocation of part of the diaspora in the country of origin, in a voluntary of forced manner, gradually or as a considerable event (Laguerre, 1999: 637); 2) the ethnic model: the diaspora relates to the country of origin with the objective of improving its status in the country of settlement, through the achievement of particular rights (Laguerre, 1999: 638); 3) the economic model: the connection with the diaspora on the part of the state of origin is based on the extraction of remittance money for economic development, thus being purely financial (Laguerre, 1999: 638-639); 4) the political opposition model: here the diaspora is considered as a security threat and therefore a force to be opposed by the country of origin (Laguerre, 1999: 639); and 5) the transnational model: this model refers to the disappearance of borders between the state and the diaspora, the expanding of the nation into a “transnation” and the normalising of habits that take place across borders. The diaspora in this model is considered as part of the nation (Laguerre, 1999: 640-641), constructing the nation as bigger than the state (Laguerre, 1999: 635; 641).

According to anthropologist Thomas Eriksen, a growth can be appreciated in the social sciences, in relation to the study of ethnicity and nationalism, during the 1980s and

1990s. Differently to what had originally been predicted by many social theorists in the early 20th century, in terms of modernisation, industrialisation and individualism having decreased the study of ethnicity and nationalism, the reality is that, especially since WWII, they have grown in political weight (Eriksen, 1993: 1-2). Looking at migrants, what sometimes happens is that they end up maintaining their ethnic ties in the new places where they settle. This phenomenon has been increasing as modernisation processes have strengthened (Ibidem: 9).

3.2.3.2. Triadic model and beyond

The concept of "triadic relationship" or "triadic model" was elaborated by Myron Weiner (1970) and then further by Gabriel Sheffer (1986) in his edited book *Modern diasporas in International Politics* as a way of capturing the "feedback and interaction effects" in the connection between the diasporic populations, the home countries and the countries where they finally settle in. Sheffer deepens into the role of diasporas within trans-state networks. These networks are defined by Sheffer as "structured connections established by groups, institutions and corporations across national and state boundaries, that evoke the loyalties and solidarities inconsistent with and sometimes even contradicting the traditional allegiances to territorial states" (1986: 1). As diasporas seem to achieve "significant relations" that go beyond the "traditional boundaries of the states", the author considers it valuable to look further into "ethnic solidarity, connections and affinities" within these types of networks (1986: 2). In order to explore the triadic relationship, the book focuses on the Chinese diaspora, the Turkish diaspora in Western Europe, the Palestinian diaspora in the Middle East, the Jewish diaspora, the Indian and Black diasporas in the US and labour migrants in Europe and the Persian Gulf (1986: 7). In terms of the relationship between the diaspora and the home country, Sheffer argues that not all diasporas are protected by their homelands, and, furthermore, not all homelands want their diasporas to organise according to their own objectives (1986: 11). In line with this idea, in the same book, the chapter by Milton J. Esman also contributes to complexifying this relationship by recognising that the love of a diaspora towards the home country may be divided between the actual country itself and the regime in place at the time (1986: 346). Also, that a home country might take care of its diaspora also in order to control it "to prevent them from acting counter to the interests of the home government" (1986: 346).

Writing in 1976, Armstrong visualised the triadic relationship as more of a dual relationship or as a two-way relationship, as he only took into account the links between the diaspora and the homeland. He describes how both types of diasporas, archetypal and situational mobilised diasporas, have a relationship with the country of origin that is based on the "ethnic myth" rather than the actual current historical setting of the home country (pp. 394-395). This myth is more similar to the "modern" nationalism myth, in the case of the situational diaspora, whereas it is closer to the "religious" one in the case of the archetypal (p. 395).

According to Safran, the triadic relationship can cause both positive and negative effects to the diaspora community (1991: 92). The role of the country of settlement can, at times, be that of manipulator in order to advance its own goals related to foreign policy. In

those cases the country of settlement takes advantage of "diaspora sentiment" in order to do so. It occurred, for example, when, at the end of WWI, the US government made the Armenian diaspora think that they would pursue a free Armenian state in eastern Anatolia. This was done with the objective of weakening the Ottoman Empire. Or, later, in WWII, when the British government pushed for the creation of a "Polish brigade" to achieve a free Polish country, to then abandon it in order to pursue a postwar connection with the Soviet Union (Safran, 1991: 93). Also, the country of settlement can manipulate "diaspora sentiments" with the aim of having an impact on the conduct of the diaspora's country of origin. This, for example, is seen with the behaviour of the US government in trying to persuade the Jewish diaspora to put pressure on the Israeli state (1991: 93). At other times, it is the country of origin that might take advantage of "diaspora sentiments" in order to pursue its own goals, such as the case of Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republic of China, who in the early twentieth century looked for support from the Chinese diaspora in taking down the Ch'ing dynasty (1991: 93).

Within that model, and within the trasnational diasporic community more specifically, capturing the nexus between members of one same diaspora located in different parts of world, as Clifford would denote them, the other "decentered" and "lateral" connections (Clifford, 1994: 304-306) is pivotal. Postpositivist scholars have critiqued the concept of triadic relationship on the basis that it does not fully capture the level of heterogeinity that exists in transnational communities, that is to say that it considers them as "unitary actors", without conceding the existence of intersectional elements that have an effect on their political behaviour (Adamson, 2002: 158-159). Maria Koinova's contends that the triadic relationship, originating from a statist paradigm, does not account for "positionality", due to the diasporic actor's connection to various contexts, and thus, to various powers, exceeding the home country and the host country (2017: 598). Dufoix stands for a "more complex analytical framework" that gathers a more expanded vision of the "collective experience abroad" grounded on the connection that is kept with the "referent-origin" and the group feeling that is formed (Dufoix, 2008: 3). There is a need to go beyond the way the nation has been conceptualised, when looking at diasporas, due to the presence of interlinkages that cross nation-states (Koinova, 2010: 150) as well as an urgency in further relating to conceptualisation of diaspora in studies that look at the political practices of these actors (Koinova, 2010: 163).

3.3. Diasporas and transnational migrants: separation, parallelism or interlinkage?

Diasporas and transnational communities are increasing in numbers as well as organising more rapidly (Sheffer, 2006: 121), thus making it primary to investigate these actors as "agents of change" in relation to the triadic model delved into in the previous section, as well as the whole transnational social field (Mahler, 1998: 93-94). Related to this, technological advances in terms of transportation and communication have shaped migration processes in its origins and also as a process (Lie, 1995: 304). Media and communication technology shape migration and migratory processes (Leurs and Prabhakar, 2018: 247) and, in this sense, progress in communication and technologies is a distinguishing feature of transnational practices (Levitt et al., 2003: 569).

In policy design, very often diasporas and transnational communities are seen as the same groupings (Faist, 2010: 18), with globalisation being key in understanding transnational migrant practices and processes (Levitt, 2001: 202). Diaspora is how transnational communities were called in the past, as it is a concept that relates back to ancient Greece, say Castles and Miller (2009: 31), with the former having "strong emotional connotations" and the latter being "more neutral" (Ibidem). Scholars have pointed to a "diasporic turn" both in academic as well as in policy terms in the last decade (Adamson, 2019: 213) as well as a cultural turn that would help explain the shift. The growing interest from political science scholars started in the 1990s after the cultural studies, anthropology and sociology fields where Diaspora Studies first emerged (Koinova, 2010: 149). Whilst looking at diaspora theory as a theory that works on its own, other schools within migration or that are adjacent to it, such as ethnic theory, globalisation and transnationalism theories, need to be appreciated (Shuvall, 2000: 44).

Transnationalism and diaspora tudies are new conceptual frameworks for the study of migration (King, 2012: 9; Gold and Nawyn, 2013: 6), that for Steven J. Gold and Stephanie J. Nawyn represent two different approaches in the study of the connections maintained across borders by migrants and migrant communities. More specifically, on the one hand, transnationalism sees migration as a process that involves the embodiment and the interchange of preoccupations, relations, tools, requirements, as well as persons engaged in various contexts. On the other hand, the diaspora scholarship speaks of the interlinkages of persons, civilising traditions, and nation-states in representing sentiments of yearning and uprooting, as well as the possibilities for reconnecting, advancing, and liberating that is usual to migrant and exile populations in differing ambiences (Gold and Nawyn, 2013: 6). Whilst Gold and Nawyn contend that research on transnationalism and diaspora can very often overlap, they consider that in the case of the former, the stress is on migrants being practical and on their "agency", whereas, for diaspora research the emphasis is on the universality of sentiments of "loss" and uprooting (Ibidem: 436). Other scholars consider that "diasporism" is an ancient event, stating that the development of the diaspora approach comes before the transnationalist one (Sheffer, 2013: 437; Faist, 2010: 11).

For Thomas Faist (2010) the aforementioned concepts refer to "cross-border processes", although they differ in the sense that, whilst diaspora has been more extensively used for "religious or national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland", transnationalism refers to, in the narrow extent, the long-term connections that migrants have across countries and, in the broader sense, to not just communities of people but also "social formations" that could include "networks, groups and organisations" (2010: 9). Whilst there cannot be any "meaningful" separation (Ibidem: 12) and differentiating between diaspora and transnationalisation can be complicated (Ibidem: 16), the two concepts rely on different intellectual traditions (Ibidem: 9).

For Michel Bruneau (2010) not all the population that have scattered due to migration can be considered diasporas and other terminologies such as "transnational communities" or "territories of movement" should be used (2010: 41). The family is fundamental in understanding the transnational community (Ibidem: 43) and there is constant communication between the country of origin and that of settlement, very often big cities. The connection established between these different regions, founded on the motion of

the people of one village, with migration as the ruling practice, becomes a "transnational migration territory". Therefore, the "migration expertise" is key in constituting a transnational community (Ibidem). Moreover, the people that conform these communities tend to maintain the two nationalities, that of origin and that of the country of settlement (Ibidem: 44). One major difference between transnational communities and diasporas is that the former does not entail "uprooting from the territory and society of origin, nor trauma". In addition, transnational communities lack a strong desire to return, as their being transmigrants entails that they never actually move away from the place of origin (Bruneau, 2010: 44). These are driven by economic objectives, whereas political concerns are related to migration policies involving the country of origin and that of settlement (Ibidem: 45).

Thomas Faist points to the use of "essentialist notions of organic social development" in studies on diaspora as opposed to the rootedness in geography and sociology in the case of transnationalism. Also, whilst the former is more concerned with culture, religion, and nation, the latter are more interested in matters regarding "mobility and networks". It could also be argued that diaspora is more driven towards "community" and "dispersal", whereas transnationalism to concepts within social science (Faist, 2010: 16-17). In conclusion, according to the author, the way diaspora has been described and analysed is robust, including its taxonomies (Faist, 2010: 16-17).

Anastasia Bermúdez points to the usage of diaspora as more related to academic developments in Europe and transnational migration to those in the US (2016: 19). The use of diaspora is wider both in policy discourse as well as in the academy, as opposed to transnationalism (Faist, 2010: 11). Whilst diaspora is normally linked to "a community or group" and has been extensively used in the fields of history and literary studies, with transnationalism things might be more abstract as "transnational spaces, fields and formations" have to do with "*processes* that transcend international borders" (Ibidem: 13). The link between diasporas and transnationalism takes on many shapes and forms. For scholars Judith T. Shuval, Khachig Tölölyan, Anastasia Bermúdez and Robin Cohen, diasporas are found within transnationalism. Tölölyan sees diasporas as forming part of the transnational framework (2007) and for Bermúdez such framework allows for the integration of "goods, capital and information" with regards to diasporas (2016: 20). For others, such as Gabriel Sheffer, more in line with the essentialist conceptualisation of the ethnonational character of this group, diasporas cannot be viewed "as simply a kind of transnational entity" (Sheffer, 2006: 125). The link between diasporas and transnationalism is not automatic. Some scholars argue that whilst transnational communities can originate within diasporas, not all diasporas are by defect a transnational community (Vertovec, 2005: 3-4; Baubök and Faist, 2010: 21). Nicholas Van Hear sees the concept of "transnational community" as being more "inclusive", including diasporas but also populations that are located in countries that are adjacent and therefore may only need to pass one frontier (2005: 6). According to Morrell, diaspora and transnationalism are two notions that do not exclude each other (2008: 23) and Peggy Levitt believes that diasporas originate within transnational communities (2001: 203) to then become "building blocks of potential diasporas" (Ibidem: 202). Gabriel Sheffer reminds us that transnational focuses regard "people at large, not necessarily migrants" (2006: 123) although for him diasporas and transnational communities ultimately share some characteristics (Ibidem: 126), thus their study should not be dichotomised.

According to Faist diasporas and transnational communities share commonalities and divergencies on various levels. Whilst both sharing elasticity and both dealing with connections towards the countries of origin and the way migrants from those countries are incorporated into the countries of settlement (Faist, 2010: 20), the author highlights three main differences between diaspora and transnationalism: 1) the fact that transnationalism is wider in scope as opposed to diaspora, in the sense that diasporas are to be found in transnational communities, although "not all transnational communities are diasporas" (Ibidem: 21); 2) although "identity" and "mobility" are found within both concepts, there are differences in the way they are used, where diaspora stresses "collective identity" and the idea of a "shared imagination", whereas transnationalism always starts from the "cross-border mobility of persons", which is always found within wider movements of "ideas and goods" (Ibidem: 21-22); and 3) diaspora always considers generations whereas transnationalism is more concerned with recent periods of migration (Ibidem: 22).

Transnational migration and diaspora have been highly contested areas of study since the mid-1970s (Bello, 2015: 13). Ultimately, both approaches represent a shift away from the idea of migration as being a movement from one country to another, and they actually go deeper in the process of migration as being long-term and as having an impact on more than one society, including the one of origin and that of their "co-ethnics all over the world" (Castles, 2000: 25). Valeria Bello suggests that there are more definitions available for the topic of migrants in relation to threats of security than actual differences among approaches (Ibidem: 16). Baubock and Faist contend that a pragmatic approach regarding the uses of the notions of diaspora and transnationalism, in other words, following the way the concepts are used in each case and context, would be the most productive for the scholarship (2010: 7), as there are actually few differences separating the field of transnational migration and diaspora (Bello, 2015: 16). For Bello, the main difference between a diaspora and a community of migrants is that the latter are defined as such by the mainstream society of the country of settlement, disregarding the will of the actual group of migrants. "Immigrants' transnationalism" for Bello should be taken into consideration as the "process of influence" that groups or communities of migrants could exert on the countries of origin and residence, understood as "interstate connections or inter-societal connectivity or both" (Bello, 2015: 23). Thus she makes a case for the need for "interdisciplinary perspectives" in the study of migrants as active agents (Ibidem: 23-24; Borkert, 2018: 59).

Assimilation is a process that takes place very often unconsciously, when majority and minority peoples interact (Alba and Nee, 1997: 827), and therefore it cannot be ousted from the literature on transnational migration and diaspora (Vertovec, 2009; 1999). In her study of Russian Jews and Polish populations in the United States, Eva Morawska discusses different patterns of assimilation in connection to transnationalism. The way the migrants interviewed have assimilated is through an "ethnic-adhesive pattern", in other words, through a process of ethnicisation taking place through the fusioning of both countries of connection within an ethnic group rather than by integrating into, in this case, "mainstream American society" (Ibidem: 1379)[32]. The author sees a mix mode

32 It is worth mentioning that Morawska sees transnational practices by Polish migrants taking place especially in the private realm (Ibidem: 1383).

of ethnic-path assimilation combined with "regular, multi-level informal transnational engagements"[33].

That said, transnationalism is also considered as explicitly critiquing the concept of assimilation, and especially how it is centred on the nation-state (Laubenthal, 2023: 84). By revising the frontiers of social life it becomes visible that migrant incorporation can occur simultaneously to the preservation of transnational ties (Levitt and Schiller, 2004: 1003). In her study of Iranian diasporans, Moghaddari recently acknowledged that transnational political practices contribute to incorporation in the country of settlement (Moghaddari, 2020: 84). According to Cohen, there is a recognition in the migration literature that nation-states are moving away from the idea that migrants assimilate into a society, or incorporate into it, that they also maintain linkages with the country of origin, and that it can all happen at the same time (Cohen, 1996b: 507).

33 The assimilation is visible in five aspects: 1) the way the residency is concentrated in the Polish neighbourhood; 2) the knowledge of the English language is limited; 3) labour patterns are concentrated in establishments belonging to immigrants of Polish origin or Polish Americans; 4) home country sentiment towards Poland; 5) the understanding of being in the United States as "temporary" or "probably temporary". In the sense of transnational ties, the author contends that they have developed due to: 1) the idea that they have a "lasting moral obligation" towards their home country, mixed with 2) the intention of returning to Poland by a majority of the people interviewed; 3) the lower status in the US compared to the higher status in Poland (Ibidem: 1384). The assimilation of the Russian Jews has taken place also through an ethnic-adhesive path, although more directed towards the host country rather than the home country (Ibidem: 1386). Nostalgia towards the home country amongst Russian Jews is almost non-existent (Ibidem: 1390). How the Russian Jews have assimilated into America has to do in part with the fact that they do not feel a strong connection to the homeland, Russia, because they were a minority there, therefore they have been looking for that feeling of belonging in America. With regards to their lack of transnational engagement, again, the lack of connection to the homeland might be partly responsible, as well as a lack of the idea of return to the homeland (Ibidem: 1392).

4. Conclusions

The objective of this working paper has been to serve as a basis for situating the knowledge production of the two dimensions of transnational migration and Diaspora Studies within the broader literature of the field of Migration Studies. This work has delved into transnational migration studies and Diaspora Studies by showing the similarities and the differences between these fields. In order to do so, it has started by analysing the evolutions within Migration Studies, what allows for a better understanding of the further developments of the field in the late twentieth century directed to its transnationalisation. Particular attention has been placed on the concept of networks within Migration Studies, due to its importance in relation to Diaspora Studies. Section 2.3. has delved into theories of assimilation, acculturation and integration that still represent an important section of migration scholarship's interest.

In section 3.1., I have analysed the definitions, characteristics and approaches of the subfield of transnational migration. I have deepened into Diaspora Studies through a look at definitions and characteristics; at the chronology of its historical evolution; as well as at the theories regarding diasporas. Section 3.2.2. has analysed the different perspectives that are present in the study of diasporas, as well as the importance of concepts such as nation, nationalism, in order to finally understand the triadic model within Diaspora Studies.

This working paper has offered very initial thoughts regarding diasporas and politics, as first developed by Sheffer and Esman. Both authors placed under scrutiny the diaspora's connection to the country of origin, by showing, on the one hand, that there is a certain degree of control on the part of a government towards its diaspora and, on the other hand, that certain governments are unwilling to let their own diasporas organise through their own objectives (Sheffer, 1986: 11; Esman, 1986: 346). In this sense, the concepts addressed in section 3.1.2. are particularly useful in understanding the degrees that transnational migrant practices can take. The differences between "narrow" and "broad" transnational migrant practices (Itzigsohn et al., 1999); or "core" and "expanded" (Levitt, 2001: 198) referring to more or less regular (Itzigsohn et al., 1999) and practices that are "little" or "great" (Gardner, 2002: 192), having to do with more or less private, bring to the centre the social and political agency of migrants.

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