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Methodological Nationalism and Groupism in Research on Migrants from Former Yugoslavia

This article argues the need to critically reflect on the fragmentations along ethno-national lines in the field of migration studies in and about the countries of former Yugoslavia. Using the author's research with conflict migrants from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Norway as the primary case study, this article points to methodological nationalism and groupism as closely connected challenges to be addressed. Examples from the case study are used as reference points, with the belief that similar concerns can be applied and addressed in other case studies, having in mind specificities of each case study that deals with migrant "groups" in other receiving societies.

Key words: migration, methodological nationalism and groupism, former Yugoslavia.

Методолошки национализам и групизам у истраживању миграција са подручја бивше Југославије

Овај рад заступа потребу да се критички рефлектира о фрагментацијама по етно-националним линијама на пољу студија миграција о земљама бивше Југославије. Користећи као пример ауторкину истраживачку студију о ратним мигрантима из Хрватске и Босне и Херцеговине у Норвешкој, ауторка указује на методолошки национализам и групизам као уско повезане изазове на које треба обратити пажњу. Изабрани пример из истраживачке студије су искоришћени као примерне референтне тачке, уз уверење да сличне рефлексије могу да буду примењене и размотрене у другим емпиријским студијама, имајући у виду специфичности сваког појединог случаја и студије која се бави одређеним мигрантским "групама" у другим земљама дестинације.

Кључне речи: миграције, методолошки национализам и групизам, бивша
        Југославија.

Introduction

Methodological nationalism is identified as a problem of how social researchers relate to their field of research (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 309). Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick-Schillder (2003, 576) also describe methodological nationalism as the naturalization of the global regime of nation-states by social science, which reproduces images of the world divided into limited, culturally spe-

cific units of nationalist thinking. According to Bauböck and Faist (2010), within transnational studies, the alternative methodological trap of 'groupism' may arise. Thereby, even if researchers attempt to avoid taking sending and receiving nation-states as units in migration research, this attempt is often supplemented or replaced by "groupism": taking ethno-national and ethno-religious groups as units of research, which can be a consequence of the overarching power of ethno-national and other powerful "real-life" groupisms. At the same time, researchers are well aware that although the world is divided into nation-states, they are in reality not homogenous units containing only their own "titular" ethno-national groups. The need to develop methodological tools and innovations for studying transnational and diasporic phenomena empirically, without falling into the trap of methodological nationalism or essentializing groupism is emphasized (ibid, 0). A significant number of scholarly works in the social sciences, including works in transnationalism and migration studies, implicitly or explicitly criticize the essentializing views here referred to as methodological groupism. Rogers Brubaker (2004) summarized and explicitly "called out" these "groupist" tendencies among social scientists, but the tradition of such criticism predates his inputs. In particular "social constructivists" of the last century, many of them social anthropologists, play a prominent role in pointing out this issue. A number of recent works explicitly refer to methodological nationalism as a continuous challenge for social studies. The very discussion about methodological nationalism can be traced back to the 1970s, when the term was coined by Herminio Martins (1974) to describe developments in sociology at the time. More recently, works by Ulrich Beck (2000; 2005), Nina Glick Schiller and Andreas Wimmer (2002; 2003) influence a growing number of researchers.

Despite these insights, for many migration researchers in many countries, research without focus on particularly identified ethno-national groups in particular nation-states still seems inconceivable. Frequently in the field of migration studies (in particular, studies of European migration), research is accompanied and dominated by ideas of "native" or titular nationals who "belong to" and "come from" a certain nation-state, as opposed to migrants and/or minorities as "others" who do not "really" or fully belong. In those ways social science can repeat and reproduce dominant discourses in the societies that they study, instead of questioning and challenging them. As financing opportunities are often scarce, when a state does invest in migration research, it often does so in order to target "our" ethno-national diaspora, with possible positive long-term effects that come out of appealing to their patriotism and advocating for investment in "homelands".

In this article I critically reflect on one such particular case in the field of migration studies that proves the complexity of the issue, as well as the insufficiency of existing labels and divisions. First, I present how I conducted my own research, having these types of methodological concerns in mind. Next, I present concrete examples from my interviews to demonstrate why it is important to call for rethinking the approach to many other case studies and similar research foci. In a world divided by nation-states, how can researchers study any transnational phenomena without reproducing the essentializing views on national and ethnic "groups" imposed by this powerful division, while at the same time managing to

define and focus their research? Raising the question and reflecting upon these assumptions regarding social divisions are the first steps in moving beyond methodological nationalism and groupism. While concrete questions should be adapted to specific case studies, this foundational form of questioning should be applied to all cases in order to move beyond these methodological traps.

Rethinking research on migration from former Yugoslavia

Migration scholarship in former Yugoslavia, as well as research "based" and funded in other countries but dealing with migrants who originate from former Yugoslavia, often simply alternates between methodological nationalism and groupism. There are, however, several valid reasons to re-examine strictly or predominantly ethno-national foci. The reasons for critically examining methodological nationalism in this field are multiple, but here I summarize three of the most salient and important ones:

1. The phenomenon of the use of the concept *naši ljudi* (our people) is often used in vernacular discourse to denote a much wider "group" than the imagined exclusive ethnic groups. The networks of "our people abroad" are often in reality much wider and complex than exclusive ethno-national networks. Although ethnically framed diaspora networks are without a doubt present and influential ways of networking, they are certainly not the only ones.

2. The complexity of the "ethnic structure" of prewar former Yugoslavia makes the very issue of "origin" and "coming from" equally complex for migrants. This is often evident in the example of people who "ethnically" self-identify with another former Yugoslav ethnic group, rather than the "titular" nation in the nation-state of their birth and pre-migration residence. To delimit research based on ethnicity excludes and fails to regard the experiences of people who originate from the same area but do not identify with the dominant majority. Delimiting research based on territories of origin in terms of recognized states fails to consider the likely possibility that for many people, belonging to an ethnic group" trumps belonging to the land of birth or origin.

3. Migration paths of different types of migrants, and in particular conflict migrants from the region, are complex in the sense that many people do not simply migrate from the so-called "homeland" to their "final destination", but go through different residences in and outside the borders of former Yugoslavia. Work migrants and undocumented migrants often also "try their luck" in more than one of the receiving "Western" societies and reside in several places for shorter or longer duration. Due to these patterns of movement, as well as other reasons, it is necessary to adopt the so-called transnational lens in migration research.[1]

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[1] The main idea is to pay attention to connections and practices that transcend national space as a reference point for activities and identities. Alejandro Portes (2010, 1531) stresses "the need to examine the relations between migration and change under a transnational lens because of the in-

In the remaining sections of the article, I present examples from my research that illustrate and support the main reasons enumerated above, as well as some secondary reasons for rethinking common approaches to migration research.

During research for my doctoral thesis at the University of Oslo, between years 2011 and 2014, I focused on discourses of identity and belonging among migrants. In popular debates about immigration, powerful distinctions are often drawn between "immigrants" and "natives". [2] Similarly, this "non-native" population is often divided into ethnic or national groups. The process of designing and delimiting my research led to the posing of multiple critical questions, not least how to even name my research, in terms of the areas and groups in focus. When I chronologically delimited my research to conflict migrants that escaped the wars of the early 1990s (1991-1995 timeline), this left me with a "territorial" focus on refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, from two wars that took place during that time period.[3] Even in academic circles, I was often asked "which ones" of "them" (ethno-national groups) do I want to interview- whether "Serbs", "Croats", "Bosniaks", "mixed" people or some other pre-defined "group" members. Nevertheless I saw "ethnic origin", belonging and identity of potential interlocutors as very complex issues. Ethnic, national, ethno-religious, regional, class, or any other identifications available, are overlapping and thus create complex networks of identity categories, in which people cannot ever be permanently placed.

What about considering territories of migrants` origin as pre-conceived parameters for choosing interlocutors? "Coming from" somewhere is another problematic issue, that does not involve a simple or clear answer. This supposition is supported through many examples in the study. People answer the question "where are you from" in many different ways depending on the context, and responses are frequently multiple: listing all of the places that one – in some way – "belongs". In addition to living in different countries during the war, many young people who grew up in Norway lived, worked and/or studied outside of Norway. Countries where my interlocutors lived before or during war, besides Bosnia-Hercegovina, Croatia and Serbia include Sweden, Italy, Pakistan and Iraq. Some of the other countries they lived in after the war include Australia, Bulgaria, the UK and the USA.[4] This makes the sample truly international and transnational, and calls for a truly transnational perspective in the research of migrants.

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creasing boundedness of the global system." Steven Vertovec (2004, 3) defines transnationalism "as set of sustained long-distance, border-crossing connections."

[2] Terms such as "immigrants" and "natives" are used for the sake of referring to the dominant discourses that use and reify these constructs. However, I find them very problematic if they are 'essentialized' and taken for granted.

[3] A short war in Slovenia in 1991 also happened within this time period, however Norway does not have in any way significant number of migrants from Slovenia, and virtually none of them were conflict refugees. Conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia escalated some years after 1995.

[4] I could not exclude the importance of such experiences for the sake of the wider picture and comparison, and in order to hear their versions and understandings and interpretations of their

While focusing on the "receiving society" itself, I was also not sure how to avoid methodological nationalism. In migration studies one must carefully consider the rules of the states that act as receiving units, the laws that influence people's lives and determine whether or not they are allowed to settle in these geographical units defined as nation states. The real lives of real people depend on what we might call "Norwegian society": that "unit" and "power" that gets to decide if they are allowed to enter and consequently settle somewhere. It is to a certain extent presupposed in my research by both myself and participants in the study, that there is a specific and distinct "Norway" and "Norwegian society" in particular as juxtaposed to societies "back home". This juxtaposition triggers relevant narratives that are of outmost interest to this research. I do thereby in a certain sense take nation-states as units for definition of research, but consciously avoid them as immutable units of analysis. Equating society with nation-states and presupposing the container model of society is one thing. However, using some territorially limited areas as a way of focusing research and selecting a case study is a completely different matter, in particular when the goal of the research is to see how societies and nation states are constructed in the discourses of people. The project is thus only conditionally labeled as research on "Norway" as a field of study.

As most of the research was conducted in the capital city of Oslo, why not label this fieldwork as simply Oslo-based, instead of Norway-based, since it is certainly true that one cannot generalize from Oslo to Norway, and that Norway itself is a heterogeneous and diverse country with many different aspects and "societies" within? Although this complexity is a fact, there are good reasons for labeling this study as research on "migrants in Norway". The reason for this lies in individual migration patterns and experiences of the migrants in focus. Namely, the majority of the people I ended up meeting and talking to, who currently live in Oslo, actually lived all over Norway when they moved there in the 1990s. I tried to use the concept of nation-states, both existing and former ones, simply in the sense of geographic areas, as concepts that help me define the scope of my research and choose informants, rather than assuming them as natural and "real" entities with "real" characteristics.

The complexities of "belonging" and "coming from"

The following excerpt from the conversation with interlocutor P12 talks how the interlocutor discusses difference between ethnic origin and nationality.

I: Can you say: "I am a Norwegian?"

P 12: I can. You can say it to the Norwegians. Norwegian nationality, like in such and such sense, it is stated in your passport, that is one thing, and ethnic, ethnic origin… Well it means, in terms

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identities, "life in Norway", former Yugoslavs in Norway, and other important interests of this study.

of how statistics are kept, ethnic origin means like, there are, this and this many people that have an origin, um, parents that were, that had origin from, a certain country! They cannot get into that, whether one originates, from the Illyrians, or Albanians or Turks or… it is impossible!

P 12 considers that debates about one`s nationality should be simplified by people being able to relate to the civic nationality of the society whose "passport" they hold – meaning their country of citizenship – without entering into a debate about their ethnic origin. In his view, it is impossible for statisticians to define and "measure" Norwegianness in any other way, as the ethnic origin of people is too complex to be considered. What he imagines as nationality trumps ethnicity. However, this proposed identification is explicitly related to some types of official documents, while in everyday life people feel and get signaled that they do not or cannot belong "ethnically", whether they hold a certain citizenship or not. This takes "belongingness" from a level of individual self-identification, feelings and choices to the level of collective identities, to forming and imagining in and outgroups, and possible "othering" that often implies something essentially evaluative, negative and often even hostile.

The seemingly simple question of "where one comes from" reveals itself as even more complicated, problematic and unclear than people usually would assume. Not only do many people find it personally difficult to come up with a simple answer, but those answers that are deemed "inappropriate", inaccurate or incomplete very often get followed by the infamous "no, but where do you really come from". For example, at one point of the interview, Interlocutor P4 explicitly states that he does not have a homeland, since he identifies as a Serb from Croatia. However, he follows the statement about not having a homeland with some corrections: First he immediately rephrases the original statement in terms of sport being his homeland: "Ustvari, sport mi je domovina" ("In fact, sport is my homeland"). His reactions to sporting events between different national team are for him emotional evidence of his belonging. The other way he explains and somewhat corrects his initial negation of belonging is by talking about his "birthplace" in terms of the village and region he comes from, a place in which he does feel he belongs and that can be considered his homeland in the sense of "rodna zemlja", which literally translates as "the land of birth". It can signify an area or a place that one comes from, as well as homeland in terms of a country. Due to negative and traumatic personal experiences and memories from the war, as well as strong and developed nation-thinking, P4 explicitly states that his "rodna zemlja" is his village in Croatia, as well as the region of Dalmatia, but not the state of Croatia. He says it explicitly when asked what he considers his homeland: "Nikad država Hrvatska" ("Never the state of Croatia.) Belonging to the ethnic group of "the Serbs" is something salient that he subscribes to and reconfirms in numerous statement. In this way P4, who originally comes from the territory of Croatia, implies that he does not prioritize his country of origin when choosing "belonging" in a group. Ethnic origin overrides geographic origin in this case. Although P4 feels very connected to the particular region of Croatia where he was born, and visits the region as much as he can, the political entity or

the national state of Croatia for him is not something he can form an emotional bond with. He sees ethnicity as crucially defined by: "Language, history, common experience. What that group went through together, which path". The path that a group "went through" is a spatial metaphor (signifying moving through space) that the interlocutor uses for what essentially is imagined as a temporal process. This was also one of repeated occasions interlocutors stressed that concepts such as "nation" and "nationalism" mean something different "here" (the host society) than "there" (the sending societies).

Geographic origin and citizenship therefore do not directly correspond with self-envisioned and self-ascribed ethnicity or nationality. P8, another self-identified Serb among the interlocutors was born and partially raised in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he has never lived in Serbia. Right after he was asked what he thinks identity is, he chose for himself the ethno-nationally framed identification of "a Serb". He explained this by stressing the importance of his ethno-national identity in negotiations and presentations of the self "abroad", where he lives. He relates to his, as he calls it, national identity, in particular due to the fact that he lives abroad. In his words, "when you are abroad, that actually becomes your middle name". He explicitly ranks this identification, in terms of importance, right after one's family name, as something that characterizes one's belonging. Although coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, he reports not identifying as a "Bosnian", but a "Serb", which is explained as contingent on the way he feels that the particular identity-label (Bosnian) is perceived in Norway- as identical with Bosniak or Bosnian Muslim. P8 expressed his wish not to be mistaken for a non-Serb, as presented in this excerpt from our conversation, where he discursively subscribes to an ethnocentric understanding; whereby his ethnic identity "overrides" or "trumps" identification with his country of origin:

> P8: Um, then again in Norway, in Norway the nation is equal to statehood, therefore, if you say, um [laughs], if you identify based on citizenship, immediately you are um, they put you in that category also according to nationality. And then, I mean, you can explain that to someone who knows what the situation is like down there, but, for those that don't know, it is very complicated, so it is easier to say, when someone asks where you come from, to say: Croatia, or Serbia, or Bosnia, yup.

> I: And what is it that you say?

> P8: From, Serbia.

P8 contrasts how for "us"[5], certain labels for collective identities have bases in regional belonging and they are not related to ethnicity, while for "them" (in this context, most people in Norway) those same labels can be "misinterpreted" to signal ethnic belonging. By explaining this difference between how "Bosnian" is perceived "here" and "there", P8 indirectly states his reasons for presenting himself

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[5] In this context the constructed ingroup is "us" from the region, although earlier he explicitly refers to "us the Serbs".

as coming from Serbia. This, however, is a country he technically does not come from, and a place where he stayed only very shortly: in the period of transition from warring Bosnia to Norway, where his family found refuge and settled permanently.

In addition to ethno-national affiliations and reasons for "otherings", people can "other" their supposed "co-ethnics" from other regions or states. In that sense, many mentioned division into "Bosnians" and "Herzegovinians" as an important difference and a reason to other and exclude that has no connection with ethnicity but the area of origin. But even more often in my research interlocutors mentioned prejudices between people from Bosnia proper and Bosniaks from the Sandžak region in Serbia, a point of division and contestation between "Bosnianness" and/or "Bosniakness". Interlocutor P3, referring to this relation, stated:

> For example in Bosnia, for many people, a lot of people come from Sandžak, from Serbia they come to Bosnia, they come to Sarajevo. However they love, it means, they they love and say for themselves: "We are Bosniaks." And they are so, like, proud and they love, for example like, us, the Bosnians who are Muslims. While for example, eh, it is completely the opposite situation, vice versa, it is. For example, the same example of the woman I told you about, who comes from, like that from Sandžak, and when she comes to Sarajevo, it is like: "How is it that you talk?!" And it makes no difference that she has like, a Muslim name and all that, but she speaks in an ekavian dialect, they like, then they don't like her. Of course, for example, she even tells me, she says, we are in a taxi now, and the guy asks: "How come you talk like that, where are you from? In fact, she said "Sandžak (person)", and the guy said: "Oh no, like, how much I hate, like, I hate Sandžak people more then the Serbs", the taxi driver said. And like, where he was, he pulled over, and he said: "Go on, get out!" Like, out of the car.

There are various reported reasons and motives that people (typically self-described Bosniaks from Bosnia Herzegovina proper) list for contesting the "Bosnianness" of Sandžak people, relating to the "rural" stigma that the region bears and the strong inter-group prejudices of Sandžak as backwards. It can refer to their perceived "Serbian" accents, or the fact that they are labeled as "clannish", or simply that "they are coming" to "us", to the place where "we" already are, the place where "we" claim "roots" and a longer connection than the newcomers. A similar bias can be detected in Belgrade and Zagreb and some other regional centers like Novi Sad, in relation to newcomers, very often "Herzegovinians" of Serbian and Croatian origin, "Montenegrins", and many other groups constructed regionally, or in other ways. P3's division between "us", as "Muslims that are from Bosnia", and "them", as Muslims from Sandžak, implies "othering" "them" as non-Bosnian, disregarding the fact that they consider themselves Bosniaks and Muslims. "Home-grown" divisions and exclusionary practices get transplanted transnationally.

Several of the interlocutors argue that nationality in the sense of state of origin should override ethnicity. P7, for example, a self-identified Bosnian and a re-

ligious Muslim, contests the self-identification of Bosniaks or Muslims from the Sandžak region in Serbia as "Bosnians", or comparably, the fact that Serbs from outside of Serbia identify as "Serbs" instead of "Croats". [6]

After all the violence and conflicts in former Yugoslavia, many "outsiders" get surprised to discover that it is not at all unusual and unthinkable for people from the region who live abroad to use the term "naši ljudi", ("our people") or simply "naši" (ours), a more inclusive term than might be assumed for the region. Namely, many people imply all ethnic groups from former Yugoslavia when saying they have "our" friends, but most often referring to those that share a common first language. This "insiderhood" is of course contextual and easily challenged, due mostly to the recent conflicts. As any other constructed category of inclusion, the term can be used in different ways, by different people, in different contexts. Sometimes even the people who in many occasions actively subscribe to one of the "competing" ethno-nationalisms of the regions (whether implicitly or explicitly) use this inclusive signifier in other, less contentious occasions. If inclusive, it tends to be devoid of emotional content or identification that would make it unusual to include members of groups that can otherwise be considered to be "others". "Naši" is therefore not a fixed term and a clear category; it is a situational label that for the same person may mean different things in different moments or contexts. The use of the discursive labels "they" or "them" to denote certain "others" and imply exclusion, is also shifting and contextual. The conversations I took part in, both the official structured ones, as well as the random ones that happen in everyday life, confirmed that many people of different former Yugoslav origins tend to bond and network abroad as "our" people, speaking "our" language and knowing "our" culture. I followed in particular the way interlocutors used this term in interviews, and on occasions I explicitly posed a question regarding what they mean by it, whom they include and exclude from this signifier, and what it means to them.

P10, as a child from what he desribes as a "mixed marriage", has very personal reasons for the inclusive use of the term "our people", not only "here" in the Norwegian immigration setting, but in general.

> And me in particular, I have family from all the parts, those, I mean, both Croatia and Serbia, and Bosnia, so that, also Montenegro, so that I really, like… regard them as our people, cause, they are mine, in a way.

P6 explained the term "our people" as a term used differently "here" (the receiving society or "Norway") and "there" (former Yugoslavia):

> ...here, our people are, um, well I don't know, almost everyone from, former Yugoslavia, is more "ours". While down there, it is divided into nationalities. Say here, if you would see someone, don't know, and there are otherwise no problems, and if you see someone who

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speaks ours, you know: "Hey, what's up with you, what is happening?" Get it, because there are not many of them. But down there, people don't know, like down there, you ask who and what they are before you, you know…

P6 thus contrasts the situation "here", where one could consider anyone with a common native language "our" and probably approach people whom one hears speaking "ours" and ask them "what is up", to a situation in the sending societies, "down there". "There", he considers that people first find out and ask about other people's nationality and ethnic belonging before getting friendly in any way. "Down there", people assume different and exclusive interpretations of who is with "us" and who is with "them". One reason he offers to explain this discrepancy is the fact that "here" the people who speak "our" language are a minority, and find solidarity in the fact that they understand each other.

But what happens when some "delicate" or "sensitive topics" come out? P2 stated that conflict situations are reduced and avoided by the fact that people have only superficial level friendships with those "others" among "our people". As he puts it, the interaction tends to go this way: "Bez ulaženja u diskusije. To se izbjegava, po svaku cenu" ("Without entering into discussion. That is avoided at all costs"). What he means is that people avoid what he, and many others, label as "zapaljive teme" (literally "flammable topics"), as these topics can "ignite" the emotions and disagreement. P2 believes that the "situation" among people of different ethnic origins "here" in the diaspora context can best be explained by saying: "Nema puno konflikta, ali nema puno ni kontakta" ("There is not much conflict, but there is not much contact either.") He believes that the contacts that exist are largely superficial, due to strained inter-ethnic relations "there", "back home".

Discourses that include and exclude "others" from the constructed groups of us are in a salient way based on nationality, ethnicity and region of origin. However, nation and ethnicity are not the only bases for the construction of sameness and difference, and we cannot simply focus research on those parameters, in such way still adhering to methodological nationalisms and groupism. Among the other salient ways in which people include and exclude others, I identified six main distinctions that people in the study used to construct "sameness" and "difference". Some of these are linguistically based and argued. Others relate to experiential[7] sameness and difference (for example "migrants" versus "non-migrants", "here" and "there"). This includes the relation to "Norwegianness" on the one hand, and to people "back home" on the other. In addition, the salient divisions were "generational" sameness and difference, regionally defined sameness and difference, and class or status-based divisions, among others. We can see people using many different identifications in different contexts and moments.

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[7] According to Anna De Fina (2003,1) migration is both a social phenomenon and a personal experience. Commonalities people who go through that kind of experience, despite profound differences in motivation, background, origins, routes, etc., constitute a firm basis for understanding and solidarity (ibid).

Conclusion: What can we research on and how?

Even though I avoided taking nation-states as units of analysis, I use them to delimit the focus of the research. In reaction to the warnings of methodological nationalism, the best thing that could have been done in this particular research would have been to include all sorts of cross-border relationships and several "nation states" in this research, both former and currently existing states. To a certain extent, this would help to go beyond the study of migrations based on ethnonational classifications alone.[8] I do, however, avoid "ethnically" defining the research by declining to focus on any one ethnic group in particular. In relation to this I find Brubaker's (2004) critique of "groupist thinking" in the social sciences and the epistemological and empirical shortcomings of that frame (Brubaker 2004) quite convincing and useful. I also agree with his reasoning that ethnic "groups", while certainly not real entities, should not be understood as entirely imagined and constructed ideas either. Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2003, 576) formulate a similar point: "In studying migration, the challenge is to avoid both extreme fluidism and the bounds of nationalist thought."

As mentioned earlier, Wimmer and Glick-Schiller consider that methodological nationalism reinforces the identification that many scholars maintain with their own nation-states. However, my view is that the act of researching identity and belonging can also lead a scholar to deconstruct any personal connection with the nation state. Furthermore, the two authors concede (2003: 59) that they are unable to offer a set of analytical tools that would help overcome the challenge of methodological nationalism. What would be required are tools and analytical concepts not colored by the self-evidence of a world ordered into nation states. They suggest a transnational perspective on migration, and note "[r]ather than a recent offspring of globalisation, transnationalism appears as a constant of modern life, hidden from the view that was captured by methodological nationalism" (ibid, 59). Hannerz, in an interview with Rantanen (2007) refers to how Beck has criticized what he describes as 'methodological nationalism' in many social sciences. Yet Hannerz finds that methodological nationalism never really existed in anthropology to the same extent as in the other social sciences, due to the flexibility in anthropological conceptualizations. As I tend to agree with this, it was one of several reasons to "methodologically" relate to anthropology more than other disciplines in this interdisciplinary study. As much as asking how justifiable it is to keep taking nation states, "societies" and "ethnic groups" as units of analysis in social and migration studies, it is also worth looking into the concept of super-diversity as a guideline for defining the main focus group of this research. Super-diversity denotes internal diversification and complexity within diverse groups (Vertovec 2007, 2013). This is an important issue that I however could not deal with in this particular article.

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[8] As noted already, people included in research are also people who lived, or even grew up in other countries than just the country of origin and Norway. Deciding to exclude them from the research for these reasons, and to look for only «clear-cut» cases, would have been methodological nationalism.

For all the concerns, reasons and examples listed throughout this article, I argue it is necessary for the researchers interested in migration of any types of migrants, from any of the former Yugoslav republics to be well aware of and critically oriented to the exclusive and essentializing criteria that gets used when defining a field of research. Although focusing on "former Yugoslavia" as a strictly defined field of interest would be another trap of methodological nationalism, I found that such a focus is nevertheless both wider and deeper than a focus on particular successor states, and offers a better insight into the phenomena of both pre and post-Yugoslav migration.

In terms of the focus on receiving societies, most European national myths have at their core discourses on a common past, origin, "blood" and history. Imaginings of ethno-national homogeneity play a significant role in such myths. One of the clearest things that any researcher dealing with contemporary migration in European societies can observe is that "prophecies" about the demise of the nation state, ethno-nationalism and its power, are not enough recognized in everyday life and vernacular discourses.[9] The international order is still clearly based on the nation-state model, and not only that: If we approach this issue from the bottom-up level, the ethno-national model of belonging still seems to be the dominant way most people conceive their own social identities and the social identities of others. As Calhoun (2007) puts it, nations matter. However, describing and analyzing this fact is one thing, and blindly accepting nationalist divisions as "natural" is a whole other thing. Contemporary research on European migration should not ne framed as research on something widely perceived as an anomaly- someone living where one does not "really" come from. The rules of sedentariness, ethno-nationalism and "blood and soil ideologies" are a fertile research field as long as they are taken as topics of research and not adopted as ideologies and worldviews, or do not silently and secretly guide the research. From many scholars interested in diaspora we have learned how migrants can often reproduce nationalist ideologies. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2010, 160) puts it: "In many instances transmigrants are acting in ways that reinforce but reconfigure the institutions and nationalist ideologies of migrant-sending countries." True enough: but that is yet another reason why researchers should avoid reinforcing those ideologies.

Concrete examples from my research were brought forward here to illustrate why in this case research could not "neatly" be divided according to the country of origin or according to ascriptions and self-identifications of ethnicity. I am confident that in any other case study similar or different examples could be found that prove why methodological nationalism and groupism have to be overcome. The best way I found so far to "fight" these traps is constant critical reflection and self-reflection throughout all stages of research: Research design, material collection,

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[9] Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002, 322) refer to two waves of transnationalism studies that spoke of globalization in terms of epochal turn, from the historical period where our units of analysis were bounded, to the world of hybridity and complexity due to increase in trans-border activity, which was presupposed to signal the demise of the nation-state as both the center of power and as a potent source of identity politics.

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analysis, conclusions. To fight for a better world without "othering" and discrimination, just like any private person should be aware that we all have biases and prejudices, but be constantly on alert to catch, reflect on and fight their own, a researcher should be on alert about the terms she or he uses and defines, and ideologies he or she might reproduce. Constant self-reflection and reflection on all parts of the research is needed not to fall completely into named traps, or at least as a ladder to try to climb out of those traps. Each sentence we write and utter should ideally be read and re-read through this reflexive lens. Treating nation and ethnicity as a powerful discourse, but not a real thing, is an important tool and weapon in that fight. Using and analyzing the words and concepts without taking them for granted is desirable.

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