

DIRK HOERDER

Universität Salzburg

MIGRANT DECISION-MAKING AND LIFE-PROJECTS IN THE FRAME OF MACRO-REGIONAL POWER HIERARCHIES, MIGRATION SYSTEMS, AND DIASPORAS¹

“I was born in November, 1904, during the period of Austro-Hungarian domination.” – Wladyslaw Chuchla began his memoir – “My family of six people lived on an eight-acre farm. My education was cut short by the First World War; 1918: the Polish state is reborn. My father without a team of horses or wagon and in bad health. My brother returned sick. In 1919 my second brother was called up returning home wounded. At the age of twenty, I began to emigrate to Canada.”²

The statement, “people make their own history but under conditions not of their making,” has become a commonplace. They do, however, in structures they create and constantly adjust to their exigencies and those imposed in them. If Chuchla could decide “to begin to emigrate to Canada” he did so with the knowledge that there was a route and a network in place.

In this essay I will first discuss larger, even global frames of decisions-making and the options they provide and constraints they impose. This involves relating Chuchla’s place of birth in its evolvment over time in the macro-region and its history. It also involves a discussion of the routes to exit from both the local course of history and the geography. Second, for social scientists, it involves the question whether the conditions in the Polish land were singular or may be compared to patterns in other parts of the world. Third, I will look at migrant

¹ This text was presented during the 2nd Congress of Foreign Researchers of the History of Poland in a session moderated by A. Walaszek and J. Lencznarowicz – „Common or Different Experience? A Comparison of Migrations of Poles and Other Nationalities in the World”, September 15th, 2012, Kraków.

² W. Chuchla, *On the Farm and in the Mines* [in:] *Memoirs of Polish Immigrants in Canada*, ed. B. Heydenkorn, Toronto 1979, pp. 41–50, quote (abbreviated by D.H.) pp. 41. The farm size would translate into a mere 5000 sq m per person – far too small for any mechanization.

agency leaving other parts of the world but sharing with Chuchla the destination North America. In this discussion I would raise methodological and theoretical issues. Fourth, after this global perspective I will return to the local frames of departure and their connection to distant, also local places of arrival. Local communities are the spaces in which men and women make their decisions. They are transculturally connected rather than transnationally.

THE ATLANTIC MIGRATION SYSTEM AND THE POLISH LANDS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Chuchla's home in Blazowa, about 200 km east of Krakow or – in different perspective, of which there are always many – halfway between Krakow and L'viv, Ukraine, was (1) part of a Polish-culture region with fuzzy borders and people of other cultural backgrounds living in it, was (2) part of a Europe with many industrializing regions with insufficient “labor forces” or, in more human terms, with fewer men and women planning a life-course present than necessary for the respective dynamics of economic development, was (3) part of a system of migration extending beyond the oceans in which men and women moved to expected better options for investing their human capital and translating their life projects – or merely their socialized and thereby limited expectations – into an actual life-course, was (4) also part of a historical continuity – power hierarchies and struggles included – which had brought in-migrants to the region and which had segmented the Polish lands into three empires. Chuchla – and all his contemporaries – had a lot of issues to deal with.³

Historically the Polish-cultured lands had long been combined – through compromises and conflicts between the societies' top layers, the nobilities – with Lithuanian-cultured regions. These nobilities had kept the producers of food in total dependency, had made them serfs. Rulers, to gain an economically active population with ties to larger markets, with commercial and artisanal skills, with capacity to pay taxes would have had to liberate peasant families or attract migrants from afar. The former was neither part of social traditions nor of power options. The latter was almost proposed from outside: the persecution of families of Jewish religion and Yiddish dialect in the Germanies created a huge potential of highly capable migrants and the growth of the population of other German dialects and Christian religion created another reservoir for self-selective migration. Thus the eastern Central European land became many-

³ For a survey of approaches and theoretical frames see Ch. Harzig, D. Hoerder, D. Gabaccia, *What is Migration History?*, Cambridge 2009.

cultured with urban populations of German and Jewish-Yiddish speakers, with rural populations of Slavic or Baltic cultures, all interactive in hierarchies which placed food producers – peasant families and, interestingly, in urban contexts: women – as well as the cultural groups essentialized as “Slavs” at the bottom of social stratification. The Polish-Lithuanian polity – an accidental construct of noble families’ fighting or cooperation – had as its neighbors three increasingly powerful dynastic states, the Romanov Empire, the Habsburg Empire, and upstart Prussia to become the core of the Hohenzollern Empire. (Pruzen had been one of the Baltic peoples, had been subjugated militarily by crusaders who, to garner lands and productive people, had claimed to be German and act in the Christian God’s name. The name of those eliminated had then moved westward and others, of north German dialects, had been labeled Prussians.) In the 1790s – more than a century before Chuchla’s birth – the three bullies, to use a different term, had deprived the Polish-Lithuanian nobles of their realm and power and, in the process, had divided the people, Chuchla’s ancestors included among them. Thus, Chuchla was born in the Russian Empire and, he does not mention this, his family was probably connected to the larger economic sphere through Jewish-religion traders and German-language urbanites. The “Polish” society, like all European ones, was many-cultured and interactive.⁴

In the Polish lands, once again: as in most other parts of Europe, socio-economic structures, i.e. the decisions by individuals and families to invest and produce or – within the family – to divide their belongings between descendants, and demographic developments, the decisions of couples about the number of children in the frame of societal expectations and Church-propagated norms, did not match. Thus the amount of tillable land per person and, in result, food on the table of rural families decreased and urban artisanal and industrial developments did not provide sufficient jobs for a surplus rural population. While some could take the option of internal migration to nearby towns or larger cities, others had to migrate further to industrializing centers elsewhere in Europe, or across the seas mainly to North America. The decision to leave Europe (with an option to return) was taken by about 50–55 million men and women, 1815 to the mid-1950s – among whom about one third did decide to return and thus were temporary migrants (or “guestworkers” to use this problem-laden modern term). Within Europe – not included in the 55 million – men and women individually or as families moved from the peripheral societies in Scandinavia, East Central Europe and the Pale of

⁴ ‘Roots of the Transplanted’ – East European Monographs, eds. D. Hoerder, I. Blank, H. Rössler, 2 vols., New York 1994, vol. 1: Late 19th Century East Central and Southeastern Europe; vol. 2: Plebeian Culture, Class and Politics in the Life of Labor Migrants, esp. 1:37-110; N. Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vols., Oxford 1981.

Settlement and Ukraine, Mediterranean Europe, and Ireland to the industrializing core: England and the Scottish Lowlands, the Netherlands and Belgium, German and French regions, the Czech, Austrian, and Swiss lands. In most of Europe's larger cities and industrial and mining regions, in the four decades before 1914 no more than about one half of the population was born locally, all others were migrants. Beyond our topic of migration, these data highlight that any history written in terms of nation-states and politics miss most societal developments.

Furthermore, a larger, global perspective indicates that the Euro-Atlantic Migration System was only one of several. East of the Polish lands the Russo-Siberian System stretched to the southern Siberian agricultural belt as well as Harbin and Vladivostok. To the 1870s, the African-Atlantic-Americas System of forced slave migration was still being operated by traffickers in human beings – often with connivance of governments. After the formal abolition of slavery in the 1830s in many states and the British Empire in particular, this Empire – followed by others⁵ – added to the millennia-long migration traditions of the World of the Indian Ocean and the South China and Southeast Asian Seas a new system of bound labor, indentured servitude, which was to supply cheap and tractable labor for the global plantation belt and for extractive industries whether mining or rubber harvesting in these colonized segments of the world.⁶ Finally, in the 1880s, a large-scale North China-to-Manchuria Migration System emerged, first under pressure from extremely poor living conditions in Shandong Province, later also under the pull of Japan's imperial expansion and investment in Manchuria/Manchukuo.⁷ Patterns of migration were global and, to avoid short-term perspectives, had been hemispheric and (after 1492) global for two millennia.⁸ In the five systems of the 19th-20th century about 50 million men and women each moved in the North China, Atlantic, and Indian Ocean macro-regions, 10–15 million in the Russo-Siberian one, 2 million (of a total of 12 million) in the Black Atlantic-slave trade one (not counting those who died in Africa during the raids and forced marches to the ports of embarkation).⁹

⁵ Latecomers in abolition of slavery were the United States 1863/65 (i.e. after abolition of serfdom in Tsarist Russia) and Brazil and Cuba in the 1880s.

⁶ *Connecting Seas and Connected Ocean Rims: Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans and China Seas Migrations from the 1830s to the 1930s*, eds. D. Gabaccia, D. Hoerder, Leiden 2011.

⁷ A. McKeown, *Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842–1949*, „*Journal of Asian Studies*” 1999, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 306–337.

⁸ P. Manning, *Migration in World History*, New York 2005; D. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium*, Durham, N.C. 2002; Ch. Harzig, D. Hoerder, D. Gabaccia, op. cit., Chap. 1.

⁹ A. M. McKeown, *Global Migration, 1846–1940*, „*Journal of World History*” February 15, 2005, pp. 155–189; J. Moya, A. M. McKeown, *World Migration in the Long Twentieth Century* [in:] *Essays on Twentieth-Century History*, ed. M. Adas, Philadelphia 2010, pp. 9–52.

To return from this quantitative frame to individuals, their decisions and their adjustments: the free-as-opposed-to-forced-migrations juxtaposition that our languages and implied concepts provides us with is analytically useless and in its connotations racist. By connotation Europeans, whites, engage in free migrations and thus are active while Africans and others of colors of skin other than white (brown, black, yellow in the terms of the times) are engaged in unfree or forced migrations and thus are passive. Since they are passive, they need control or, at least, guidance. The systemic imposition of forced labor on people is thus individualized into passivity of non-white peoples – an analytical *non sequitur*, but ideologically highly useful to white colonizer peoples and personnel. Historians should have noticed this long ago. To correct their perspective: the some 50 million Whites left their places of birth or residence under severe constraints, in terms of sustainable lives much of 19th-century Europe was a disaster zone. Men and women *had* to leave, only who of a family or a community did leave might be decided. Migration was self-willed under extreme constraints. On the other hand, forced migrations are in some respects different: upon forced mobilization follows forced immobilization at the place of exploitation of bound labor. However, for the enslaved survival at the destination required ingenuity and creating of cultures under extreme constraints. This is well studied for Brazil but was, for long, overlooked for the United States. Asian “coolie” laborers, if remaining at the destination, also built communities and societies for example in the Caribbean region.¹⁰ The option to decide on departure and migration does imply time to prepare and get information. “I gathered information about Canada,” Chuchla remembered. Refugees and bound migrants cannot do so, in the Polish case refugees before advancing armies as well as men and women deported into Fascist or Stalinist camps.¹¹

The potential destinations and the regions with unacceptable and, often, unsafe and demeaning conditions, in which individuals make their decisions to depart, are connected by routes of communication, information flows, travel arrangements, continuous railroads or shipping lines. Thus, constrains forcing

¹⁰ D. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact...*, pp. 12–16. For the British-Asian indenture system, see D. Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922*, Cambridge 1995, for agency under the system’s constraints M. Carter, *Voices from Indenture. Experiences of Indian Migrants in the British Empire*, Leicester 1997. The literature on slavery is legion, for agency among African-Brazilians see S. B. Schwartz, *Resistance and Accommodation in Eighteenth Century Brazil: The Slaves’ View of Slavery*, „Hispanic Am. Hist. Rev.” 1977, no. 57, pp. 69–81; E. A. Alpers, ‘Moçambiques’ in Brazil: Another Dimension of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic World [in:] *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections during the Slave Trade*, eds. J. C. Curto, R. Soulodre-La France, Trenton – Asmara 2005, pp. 43–68.

¹¹ W. Chuchla, op. cit., pp.41.

people to depart are not of their own making (though the potential migrants may have contributed to them by submission to societal hierarchies, acceptance of exploitative economic and political structures, or patterns of procreation). Decisions to depart are within people's range of action, provided they can accumulate the means required for migration, and are limited by patterns of family and community support or restraint. The structures which permit and facilitate migration are the result of a history of such decisions and the practices of migration. To head from southeastern Poland to Krakow or Silesian mines, to jobs in other European countries, to income generation in North America or elsewhere in the world requires routes and these had been established by individuals making the same decisions earlier, by transportation companies profiting from the migrant fares, by companies recruiting workers, and by communities at the destination which facilitate insertion. The migration systems are regional, macro-regional, or hemispheric – the moves of individuals are from one locality to another locality (and perhaps onward to a third and fourth). The structures of migration routes have emerged from processes (structured processes) and adapt to whatever exigencies emerge (processual structures). Each and every migrant assesses options – within the information available – and attempts to achieve the best investment for his or her individual human capital without unacceptable emotional costs (cultural deprivation, loss of relations to kin and friends) and within social networks that permit access to social capital. Self-willed migrants are entrepreneurs in their own lives; refugees have to begin self-directed insertion once warfare, antisemitism, or other have deposited them somewhere.¹²

The frame in which Polish men and women had to arrive at their decisions in the 19th and 20th centuries have often been considered specific to the annexations of Poland – and they are different from decisions made in German-language lands with political self-rule and industrialization as well as from decisions made in Italy lacking political unity and economic development. But the Polish case is comparable to the Irish-British and Mexican-U.S. ones: colonization and informal empire that retards, usually deliberately, economic development and forces people to leave.¹³ In each case men and woman and sometimes couples with children depart from a society exploited or relegated to economic backwardness be a strong neighbor, Germany (or Habsburg, or Russia), Great Britain, the United States.

¹² C. Harzig, D. Hoerder, D. Gabaccia, *op. cit.*, Chap. 4.

¹³ K. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish. Exodus to North America*, New York 1985; *Patterns of Migration* [in:] *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, ed. P. O'Sullivan, vol. 1, London 1992. J. R. Aguila, B. Gratton, *Mirando atrás: Mexican Immigration from 1876 to 2000* [in:] *Migrants and Migration in Modern North America: Cross-Border Lives, Labor Markets, and Politics*, eds. D. Hoerder, N. Faires, Durham 2011, pp. 49–75.

In each case one destination involves labor market segments in the oppressor society. In each case economically and militarily powerful societies dominate less well armed (but not culturally inferior) neighboring societies as reservoir for poorly paid male and female workers in often disagreeable working conditions. (This comparison might, perhaps, be expanded to the People's Republic of China, in which industrializing urban regions rely on a rural reservoir of underpaid labor which – as in migration between states – is not accorded equal rights with residents.) Thus migrations from Poland in general and of Wladyslaw Chuchla in particular are integral parts of the global migrations at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century.

MIGRANT AGENCY: TRANSLOCAL, GLOCAL

Chuchla, politically active from his teens, appreciated the reestablishment of the Polish state in 1918. But politics and nation are distant from family economies, independence did not provide food for the family – an experience which many formerly colonized societies in the world were to make after decolonization in the 1960s. On borrowed money Chuchla left for Canada having searched out the best information available locally. He did not, however, have an immediate anchorpoint, friends or family, in the huge country. Of those on the boat with him, most headed for acquaintances, the others were sent to Edmonton, Alberta, where Ukrainian farmers had requested help. The mixed Polish-Ukrainian settlement in Europe – decried by nationalists and making the drawing of an unambiguous border as dividing line impossible – was an asset: the resulting (rudimentary) bilingualism increased the migrants' options at the destination. Chuchla encountered poor working conditions – but such were the living conditions for farming families or segments of families. With advice from locals, he quickly came to understand the regional labor markets for farmwork, mining, or wood-cutting in winter and was able to support himself and to pay back the loan for his passage. He briefly considered farming, but homesteads were isolated. Moving from job to job, he charted a course towards Polish communities, first a community in the making, then to an established mining one with church and associations. There he settled.¹⁴

Similar to the Polish men and women, many Irish and Mexicans left. The National Agricultural Labourers' Union investigators reported in 1873 about living condition in Ireland and England that the “wretched conditions of a class” made men and women as well as their children “the worst fed, the worst-clad

¹⁴ W. Chuchla, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–50.

and worst housed.” Via Liverpool “the agricultural laborer and his family, after years of unceasing toil, in a state of destitution” had to leave the country – state apparatuses do not care for their territories populations but expel those unwanted by elite-dependent bureaucracies. A delegate was sent to Canada to provide information on options for jobs or farming. By that time, 845,000 Irish already lived in Canada – one third of Ontario’s population was of Irish background. Many had first migrated to work in Scotland or England to earn the transatlantic fare.¹⁵ Migration from Mexico, where a Liberalist government had deprived Native communities of their land in 1855, began later. From the 1880s and more so after the turn to the 20th century people moved northward – few as far as Canada, most stayed in the southern U.S. but, as railroad workers they received travel passes with their pay, and soon reached Chicago and Detroit labor markets and the Mesabi Iron Range or settled farms in Minnesota.¹⁶ While Polish and Irish emigrants and temporary migrants developed near-global diasporic communities the vast majority of Mexican men, women, and children moved to the United States only.¹⁷ Men and women from all three groups sought out communities of their own language, food habits, customs and religion – they moved between local spaces around the globe, they established a “glocal” connectivity.

To return from these interstate power hierarchies and resulting migrations to aspects of gender and class, of charting of life courses, of labor markets and communities, we will reflect on four individual life experiences: John Chessa from Sardinia, Josefine Joksch from a marginal rural region in Austria, Rosa Cavalleri from a village near Milano, and Sam Chan from a village in Guangdong Province in southern China.

¹⁵ P. O’Leary, *Travels and Experiences in Canada, the Red River Territory, and the United States*, London 1877; D. Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada*, Montreal 1999, chap 6. D. Hoerder, *Individuum, Gesellschaft, Staat: Eine deutsche und eine irische Einwanderin im Kanada der 1920er und 1930er Jahre* [in:] *Gesellschaft und Diplomatie im transatlantischen Raum*, ed. M. Wala, Wiesbaden 1999, pp. 405-21.

¹⁶ D. Hoerder, D. Gonzáles de Reufels, *Migration to Mexico, Migration in Mexico – A Special Case on the North American Continent* [in:] *Migrants and Migration...*, pp. 188–209; immigrant life stories are published in M. Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant – Autobiographic Documents* (1st ed.: *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life-Story*, 1931), repr. New York 1971.

¹⁷ *Employment-Seeking Emigrations of the Poles World Wide, XIXc and XXc*, eds. C. Bobinska, A. Pilch, Kraków 1975; E. Morawska, *Labor Migrations of Poles in the Atlantic World Economy, 1880–1914*, „*Comparative Studies in Society and History*” 1989, no. 31, pp. 237-72; A. Walaszek, *Labor Diasporas in Comparative Perspective: Polish and Italian Migrant Workers in the Atlantic World between the 1870s and the 1920s* [in:] *The Historical Practice of Diversity: Transcultural Interactions from the Early Modern Mediterranean to the Postcolonial World*, eds. D. Hoerder, Ch. Harzig, A. Shubert, New York 2003, pp. 152–176.

As regards distances traversed by these and other men and women, research has foregrounded the geographic aspect while the social and economic distances have often been overlooked or misunderstood. Men migrating from rural to factory labor are said to experience major changes, women migrating from household of birth to that of employer have been assumed to remain “in their sphere.” (The critiques of the traditional constructions of gendered spheres have questioned these *clichés* which social scientists even used as *categories*.) However, women leaving village societies and their assigned position in the peasant class crossed the class boundary to (lower) middle-class families as well as the lifestyle boundary from rural to urban – they moved between almost non-compatible lifeworlds. As live-in domestics they had to adjust immediately and, confined to the hiring family’s space, had no supportive group. In contrast, men moving over the same geographical distance might not cross any social borders: as day laborers they would tend gardens or stables and would thus actually remain in their sphere. Rural men mobilized for road and rail construction in the vicinity moved locally from agricultural to infrastructural earthwork, then – in need of wage incomes – followed the moving construction site until, with saved wages, they could emigrate to same-type jobs with coworkers from their (inhospitable) “home” communities. They did not change status, class, or type of work. Men could create “spaces of their own” by distancing themselves from foremen, by immersing themselves in a pub or sports culture, or in labor union halls. Women as domestic workers had to live in very close contact with employer families, interact and adjust and could not create “rooms of their own.”

When new patterns of worldwide trade and commerce required construction of canals, ports, roads and railroads, whether in Panama, Uganda, or Canada, rural men familiar with shovel and horse- or mule-drawn earth moving equipment were in high demand. In 1908, 18-year-old John Chessa looked for work in his home town in Sardinia: few jobs were available locally but many were to be had in the Americas. His lack of skills, dialect, limited funds, and dependence on existing information and recruiting channels, restricted his choices to specific internationalized segments of the world’s labor markets. When agents for the Panama Canal Company recruited workers in Italy, the government intervened because of lack of any social security for the prospective migrants. These, not having security of sustenance “at hungry home,” circumvented the (protective) frame by leaving via France. Chessa helped dig the canal; moved on to a Mulberry Street, New York, community of Sardinians; because of lack of jobs moved to Pennsylvania mining work; and, finally, settled in the Sardinian community of Port Washington, Long Island, N.Y. A similar life story is that of Giovanni Veltri who, from a village not far from Naples, migrated to Africa, then laid railroad tracks in the Canadian West and became a small

entrepreneur hiring other Italians for track-work but interacting with migrants and residents from many cultural backgrounds and, given his contracts, with ranking railroad company managers of different class. Both, Chessa and Veltri, moved over huge geographic distances but not out of “their sphere” though Veltri could never have advanced to entrepreneurial status in his “stratified home” region.¹⁸

Josefine Joksch, like many children in poor rural regions in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire and elsewhere in the world, had to leave the poverty of her family’s abode – and could never return since there was not enough food: “Home” meant hunger, barefoot walking to school, little education, only thin dresses even in winter. She had to depart for the “big city,” Vienna in her case: the rich bourgeois households, noble family’s palaces; impressive and expensive facades and poor and underpaid working conditions. Through networks of her women acquaintances a position was available for her. The first interview with the mistress who had hired her reduced her to tears: being barefoot was a negative marker, so was shortsightedness. The children of the employer family did not only have many expensive toys, they also needed to be cared for, kept busy, and amused by Josefine. The chasm between class-based lifeways she had to bridge from one day to the next was immense, deeply disconcerting, relegating her whole previous life to insignificance, unhealthiness, incompetence. After a few weeks of such constant adjustment, chastisement, and demeaning criticism, she woke up one morning with a throat infection – and was dismissed on the spot as sick country bumpkin who might infect the comfortably cared-for children of a different class. Her subsequent life was one of starvation wages, mistreatment, undercutting of any self-assurance she could develop as a country-child. Many folk-tales deal with such conditions and life-courses, “national” all-male historians never did. The latter wrote five-percent versions of so-called national histories, dealing only with the mighty, mostly ruling men and big landowners or industrialists and a few empresses and princesses. Folk-tales in contrast dealt with migration and poverty. Josefine Joksch – consciously countering the orders of her middle-class employers – sought contact with working-class people and learned about the existence of the socialist party which offered courses to teach common people with little schooling to read and write. Determinedly, she learned enough to commit to paper her life-story. She had immensely higher barriers to traverse for sheer survival than John Chessa had in his hemispheric migrations. In school in her village the kids of her class going barefeet kept their distance to the kids whose parents could buy shoes for them. They “knew their place” and could

¹⁸ S. J. LaGumina, *The Immigrants Speak. Italian Americans Tell Their Story*, New York 1981, “John Chessa,” pp. 25–32; *The Memoirs of Giovanni Veltri*, ed. John Potestio, Toronto 1987.

escape from the assigned position only be migration and constant struggles and experiences of “being put into their place” again at the destination – the wealthy Viennese society.¹⁹

Clear borderlines also divided the poor in the backyards from the rich in the front buildings in a small village in northern Italy and they divided villagers from the nearby industrializing urban worlds. Such rigidly circumscribed spaces suggest localism. But the village’s laboring men, women, and children, in the 1880s, were part of multiple migratory spaces: Girls as young as seven years of age were sent to work in silk factories in neighboring communities; boys would accompany their fathers further afar to be trained as masons; young men went to France for seasonal or multiannual infra-structural earthwork; adult men, single or married, migrated to Missouri iron mines.²⁰ From this one village gendered, age-group-specific, and intergenerational migrations extended through two continents based on group-specific information and support networks. In contrast, the villagers had few or no connections to Naples, Rome, or even neighboring Milan. Their connections encompassed a regional silk economy, a space of infrastructural job opportunities in southern France, a trans-European circuit of masons, and a space extending to North America’s Missouri and from there, through secondary migrations, to Chicago and elsewhere. Rosa Cavalleri, called to Missouri to run her husband’s boarding house, arrived one evening and, by the next morning, had to prepare coffee for the men – a luxury restricted to the rich in the home village; she then had to shop with a German-language farmer couple and get the mail from an English-language post-master and by noon had to have ready a meal palatable to men originating from many regional Italian food habits and not only to her Lombardo neighbors. Borders to be crossed were many – but she learned that they could be crossed. Her husband was abusive and she availed herself of the larger frame of US law and gender relations to obtain a divorce and, knowing little English and no geography, moved along networks to a Lombard

¹⁹ Arbeiterinnen kämpfen um ihr Recht. Autobiographische Texte rechtloser und entrechteter “Frauenspersonen“ in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, eds. R. Klucsarits, F. G. Kürbisch, Wuppertal n.d.: Josefine Joksch: Nur ein Kindermädchen (um 1885), pp. 86–91, see also pp. 94–96, 97–98, 106–107; M. John, A. Lichtblau, Vienna around 1900: Images, Expectations, and Experiences of Labor Migrants [in:] Distant Magnets: Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840–1930, eds. D. Hoerder, H. Rössler, New York 1993, pp. 52–81.

²⁰ Once, three women silk weavers were recruited to Japan. See E. P. Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, Princeton 1990; L. A. Tilly, *Industrialization and Gender Inequality* [in:] *Islamic and European Expansion. The Forging of a Global Order*, ed. M. Adas, Philadelphia 1993, pp. 246–69, esp. pp. 275–281. For the 19th century “proletarian mass migration” see D. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact...*, pp. 331–365.

community in Chicago. There she raised her children and worked for the rest of her life.²¹

In 1913, Sam Chan departed from Hong Kong for British Columbia. He paid the entrance fee imposed on Chinese by the Canadian government in a frame of racist discrimination and diligently sent savings home to his wife and children. She tilled, husbanded, and enlarged their land and home. In keeping with Confucian practices during a visit in his home region he took a second wife, who had to work off cost of her passage as waitress but he paid for an education for her. The two had children but kept sending remittances to the other part of the family. In the decades between his departure and the late 1940s, the three adults had to keep a family economy functioning across an ocean while World War One, the Great Depression, and World War Two intervened, had to deal with Chinese exclusion in Canada and change of political systems in China – to republican just before Sam Chan’s departure and to Communist in 1949 with warfare and re-education campaigns. Living penuriously in Vancouver and other locations, where jobs were available, the dual family became the richest in the village – to be denounced after the 1949 regime change. They managed to provide their (Canadian) children with education. Migration permitted an ascent impossible within the frame of the village of origin. The second wife, pursuing her own agenda, crossed more borders than Sam Chan intended to do – and forced him to follow. He had to cross the boundary between old and new gender relations.²²

The migrants, whose trajectories have been outlined and interpreted – whether Polish, Irish, and Mexicans as groups or John Chessa, Josefina Joksch, Rosa Cavalleri, and Sam Chan as individuals –, seemingly moved, as common language has it, between countries. However, the analysis of their decisions and routes suggests a different pattern of selecting destinations. They did leave stagnant economies – statewide, regional, local and common in many states regardless of “national” culture, but all departed from one particular social space, whether place of birth or of residence, and arrived at an equally specific local space which provided emotional anchorpoints – family or friends or acquaintances from their village or urban neighborhood as well as labor markets for immediate insertion and, thus, for an income, if perhaps meager, and for food on the table. The destinations lay within a statewide, distant frame – Canada, the US, or other – that permitted more options than the state-societal frame of departure.

²¹ Rosa. *The Life of an Italian Immigrant*, ed. M. E. Hall, Minneapolis 1970, esp. pp. 76–88, 120–122, *passim*.

²² D. Chong, *The Concubine’s Children. Portrait of a Family Divided*, Toronto 1994.

Migration was local-to-local between two framing polities, one of constraints and few or no options, one with some options and flexibility but also with constraints, both connected by migration routes of migrant making.

CONNECTIVITY AND MIGRATION ACROSS SPACE: TRANSLOCAL – TRANSREGIONAL – TRANSCULTURAL

Migrants – as life-stories and research indicate – move between two (or more) specific locations. They leave a place/ space of birth and childhood family and an economy and labor market defined-space of adolescence via known and migrant-made routes to a connected locality with friends or family who provide access to a labor-market segment immediately upon arrival. They travel routes mapped by previous migrants, by information, by relationships. Since travel not only requires funds for the ticket but also – for the days on road, railroad, or ship – prevents earning, immediate insertion into an income-providing job is a prerequisite for survival. Labor migrants neither travel with savings nor to acquaintances who can afford to tie them over for more than a few days. That is why migration decisions – and thus statistics – follow economic cycles closely. Migration is translocal in larger frames – economic spheres as in the example of John Chessa, multiple gendered hemispheric labor-market segments in the case of the north Italian and southern Chinese villagers, spaces of linked cultural communities in the case of Rosa Cavalleri. The translocal moves occur in the context of regional options – jobs and economic sectors nearby, training of young men and women in the sectors of their regional economy-of-origin. Migration thus is also transregional. This holds true as much for 19th-century migrants as for those at the turn to the 21st century – Filippina caregivers or Bangladeshi domestics among others. Such moves made young people “independent” in 19th-century terminology. They could feed themselves and select from options – if limited ones – to chart their prospects.

The next-larger level has been conceptualized as “transnational.” The term, re-coined in the early 1990s and frequently used since, poses major problems. It refers to the nation-state which combines the political – control of borders and exit and entry rules – with the cultural – the national mainstream. The conflation of both into one whole involves an analytical impossibility: states, since the Age of Revolution, are theorized as treating each and every citizen as equal before the law; nations, since the Age of Romanticism but more so of nationalism, are theorized as hierarchically above “ethnics” or “minorities” and thus postulate unequal access to a state’s, a territory’s, a society’s resources. Groups defining themselves as nation instrumentalize the state apparatus to deprive others of

equal status. Thus, the two terms need to be approached separately. Migrants, in particular from the 1880s, move between polities that set frames of entry – they are inter-state migrants.²³ If moving repeatedly – as between the Russian and the German Empires, they might be “transstate” or, historically more correct, “transimperial” migrants.

“Transnational” as a term is also highly problem-laden because few states in the 19th and 20th centuries accommodate only one cultural group with their borders and many cultural groups are spread over several states. In the decades from the 1880s to the 1950s – or even later – “nation-state” – better: empire-constructed-as-nation – elites with the instruments of power and, in particular, the power to define, began to deport and import people into territories constructed as “national home.” The forced migrations involved have been analyzed repeatedly by historians, but mainstream political scientists have not questioned their constructs until the 1980s. In the words of Michael Marrus, “The growth of the modern nation-state implied not only the naming of certain peoples as enemies of the nation, but also the expulsion of significant groups for whom the state would or could not assume responsibility.” The process became commonplace in the context of World War One: “Otherizing” as a tool to expel those assumed not to belong to or said “to weaken the beleaguered nation.”²⁴ In the case of Poland and Ireland men and women demanding self-rule (“insurrectionists” or “rebels” in the terminology of the domineering elites) were deported; Siberia and Australia provided distant locations to deposit unwanted human beings. New Caledonia and other places had the same function for French elites who saw their position threatened by people of other class, the *Communards* for example.²⁵

Neither “nation” nor “transnational” are terms useful for analyses. Since, however, after migration people are not usually classified by local or regional origin but by society or state of origin – or in the case of some by ascribed race: “Jews,” “Orientals” – this level needs to be part of conceptualizations. As generic term, “transcultural” covers the local, the regional, the statewide, and the

²³ The development of frames is discussed in legal studies and, in their whole complexity, in: J. Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport. Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*, Cambridge 2000; *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, eds. J. Caplan, J. Torpey, Princeton 2001; *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period*, eds. A. Fahrmeir, O. Faron, P. Weil, New York 2003; *Citoyenneté et émigration: Les Politiques du départ*, eds. N. L. Green, F. Weil, Paris 2006, Engl: *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation*, Urbana 2007.

²⁴ M. R. Marrus, *The Unwanted. European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1985, pp. 51.

²⁵ Polish deportation experiences – and the deaths involved – are reflected in A. M. Kojder, B. Glogowska, *Marynia, Don't Cry. Memoirs of Two Polish-Canadian Families*, Toronto 1995.

national. It is a concept developed on the margins of knowledge production in the White Atlantic World in the 1930s and 1940s, in Brazil, Cuba, and Canada. Scholars socialized in these societies and analyzing their cultures came to realize the mixing, *mestizaje*, of men and women from specific European and African cultures in Brazil, discussed the processes of “transculturation” of American, European, African and Asian people in Cuba, and pointed out that – due to internal heterogeneity by region, social class, and gender – no society provides only one single pattern to which migrants could acculturate.²⁶

A study of Polish immigrant women in Chicago in a comparative perspective to German, Swedish, and Irish women, made the translocal-transcultural development clear.²⁷ The women arriving from Zaborów, Galicia, in the so-called Polish Downtown near the Goose Island industrial complex – like those from the other three groups – first and foremost had to find a job to support themselves. Only after developing a sense of economic security, income and knowledge of job market segments as well as spending needs and savings, they would begin to organize community life beyond their immediate social network: As much immediate cultural adjustment as is necessary for creating an economic basis and prospects, associational life and re-creating of everyday cultural continuities once a room to manoeuver had been established. When they decided to marry, 72 percent formed a union with a migrant man from the same village, another village within the home parish in Poland, or a neighboring village outside the parish. Another 25 percent of the unions were with men from other Galician villages. On average they were four years older upon marriage than those not migrating: four years of independent income (some of which may have been sent to family in the “home” with insufficient means of support). Migration provided new options but also permitted transcultural continuities.²⁸

* * *

In conclusion: Migrating men and women made their decisions to depart and about where to arrive in the frame of inter-state power relations, impositions by the elites (and, sometimes, neighbors) of self-elevated national cultures, and in local everyday-cultures, norms, beliefs framed by regional economies and the

²⁶ D. Hoerder, Transnational – transregional – translocal: transcultural [in:] Handbook of Research Methods in Migration, ed. C. Vargas-Silva, Cheltenham 2012, pp. 69–91.

²⁷ Peasant Maids, City Women. From the European Countryside to Urban America, ed. Ch. Harzig, Ithaca 1997.

²⁸ M. A. Knothe, Recent Arrivals: Polish Immigrant Women’s Response to the City [in:] Peasant Maids..., pp. 299–338. A similar local-transcultural study is A. Walaszek, Światy Imigrantów. Tworzenie polonijnego Cleveland, 1880-1930, Kraków 1994.

human capital that could be developed in them. They questioned undesirable “home” societies by leaving, undesirable everyday norms by changing them, and desirable but insufficient options at the locality of arrival by organizing community life and challenging labor and political arrangements. The myriad of decision made by migrants created societies – like the neighborhood in Chicago – which impacted on larger urban development in the receiving society and they withdrew their human capital from the unsatisfactory society of birth. Without migrants, Chicago and the United States or Toronto and Canada would have been different, without emigration European and other societies would also have been different. Emigration was a counter project to “nation” building. People selected identities rather than being duped by gatekeeper inventions of innate “national” identities. Elites – who propagated nation-states – did not even believe in them. The neighboring, allegedly national German Reich, wanted Polish laborers by force or under the duress of circumstances, the once powerful Polish(-Lithuanian) nobility had had no interest in including all people of Polish language, regardless of social status, into one nation. Polish migrants could chose destinations in a near-global diaspora, provided information and travel connections existed to their place of departure. Diaspora, too, is localized and in many different ways transcultural.