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"Ethnicity, Citizenship and Belonging in Latin America"

This series promotes an international scientific dialogue about the social, political and cultural implications of the concepts *ethnicity, citizenship* and *belonging*, which serve as conceptual tools for the interdisciplinary Research Network for Latin America to investigate both social dynamics and processes of inclusion and exclusion in past and present Latin American societies as well as in other regions of the world.

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Ethnicity, Citizenship and Belonging: Practices, Theory and Spatial Dimensions

Etnicidad, ciudadanía y pertenencia: prácticas, teoría y dimensiones espaciales

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ROBILLARD, Marine. "Pygmées Baka et voisins dans la tourmente des politiques environnementales en Afrique centrale." PhD dissertation. Paris 2010.
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FROM 'IDENTITY' TO 'BELONGING' IN SOCIAL RESEARCH: PLURALITY, SOCIAL BOUNDARIES, AND THE POLITICS OF THE SELF

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ABSTRACT

Since 'belonging' emerged as a key-concept in social science research, it is often used as a synonymous term to that of 'identity'. This contribution is a departure from this practice. It conceptualises belonging as a relational property of human experience, going both, "beyond" and 'beneath' identity formation. 'Belonging' is then discussed as an alternative concept to 'identity', calling for a thorough reflection upon the use of both terms with regards to specific social contexts and suggesting numerous advantages entailed in the belonging-perspective. Belonging stands for emotional social location that comes about through "sharing values, networks and practices" (Anthias). It evolves in a complex interplay between three dimensions of human experience and practices: commonality, mutuality and attachment – where individuals and collectivities relate to other humans in every-day life situations and within institutional settings as well as to material objects and natural environment. 'Belonging' refers to collective boundedness, but also to personal options of individualisation and to the challenges while navigating between multiple constellations of collective boundedness. Conceptualising belonging entails a reflection on groups' exclusivity, but also on collective ties and commitments – that render entering collectivities, but also abandoning them, problematic. This calls for a thorough inquiry into processes of social boundary-making and particularly into ethnic boundary-making.

INTRODUCTION

During his appeal hearing at the regional court in Dresden, Germany, in July 2009, Alex Wiens, a right wing-extremist of Russian-German origin attacked Marwa al-Shirbini with a knife, stabbing her to death. Marwa El-Shirbini, a Muslim-scarf wearing 33-year-old academician of Egyptian origin – took him to court for abusing her during an encounter on a Dresden's children's playground. Before killing her on court's premises, Alex Wiens asked Marwa El-Shirbini what on earth she was doing in Germany. He also confronted the authorities present in the court-room, asking why in the aftermath of 9/11

the Muslims were not deported in their entirety to where they came from. "I couldn't understand", I am quoting from his statement during the subsequent murder-trial in November 2009, "why she came to Germany, to this potentially unfaithful country that many Muslims hold in contempt. I (Alex) came to Germany because I have German roots and therefore this is my original home. I (Alex) couldn't understand (and now comes the sentence that I find particularly striking) ... I couldn't understand why and how she could feel at home, here in Germany".

Three facets of this testimony are in the forefront of this article.[1] First, to feel at home is important. Currently, discourses of home and belonging abound in public communication and they increasingly inspire academic research. Given its current attraction, it will be my aim, therefore, to reflect upon the concept of belonging and to propose analytical tools for capturing its salience. The empirical backdrop of my inquiry will be mostly the Western immigrant contexts, but this reflection is meant to hold for other social constellations as well.

Second, the heavily emotionally charged quest to belong is perennially impeded by others and systemically restricted. When murdered, Marwa El-Shirbini was denied her right to enjoy making Germany her home. Alex Wiens couldn't imagine feeling at home in Germany as long as Marwa felt comfortable there. Belonging is thus object of continuous negotiations between individuals and collectivities. This results in tensions and accommodations as well as in an on-going process of setting, transcending and blurring social boundaries. For our understanding of belonging it is crucial to know how it evolves within the protective confines of a specific life-world and how it is restricted within asymmetric power relations between those included and those remaining outside – with the modalities of inclusion and exclusion being two sides of the same coin (Luhmann 1997).

Third, Alex Wien's suspicion that an Egyptian Muslim could feel at home in Germany, reveals – unintentionally – that it is possible to belong to a new

[1] Many ideas underlying this article were jointly developed together with my colleague Gérard Toffin (cf. Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011). Nevertheless, this is a novel approach, going far beyond the scope of the previous text, concentrating on Western immigrant societies and considering individual aspects of belonging, in particular. I also should like to thank Peter Geschiere, Lara Jüssen, Raphael Susewind and Richard Wartenweiler for their useful comments on earlier drafts of this text.

social place when one's origins are elsewhere, and that it is possible to belong when one's identity (here, religious identity) does not confirm to the national mainstream. We need to distinguish, therefore, between 'identity' and 'belonging'. Both concepts are often used interchangeably – which is empirically confusing and analytically wrong. What purpose, otherwise, of introducing the new term 'belonging' into social research if the old 'collective identity' would do? – My conviction is that it would not and that it is not only important to distinguish both terms analytically, but also to delve into the implications of this distinction for envisaging the possibilities of living together in the transnationalised contemporary world. As I shall argue below, the concept of belonging, while taking up important preoccupations of the identity-concept, does more justice to the complexities, dynamics, and subtleties of human interrelating, to its situative and processual character than that of 'collective identity' does.

What is belonging?

What is belonging? To put it briefly: belonging is an emotionally-charged social location. People belong together when they share values, relations and practices (Anthias 2006, 21). Belonging is a central dimension of life that is easily felt and tacitly experienced ... and that is very difficult to capture through analytical categories. Nevertheless, given the growing scholarly interest in this notion, it is worth trying to do so. In my view, belonging as an emotionally charged social location combines (1) perceptions and performance of *commonality*; (2) a sense of *mutuality* and more or less formalised modalities of collective *allegiance*, and (3) material and immaterial *attachments* that often result in a sense of *entitlement*. How these dimensions come to intersect, that is "when do we belong?", is an empirical question, once we have agreed on their centrality for grasping this notion.

Before I proceed, I should like to differentiate between the individual's relation to a collective on the one hand and collective belonging on the other. The German language makes a clear-cut distinction, here, that is not immediately discernible in the English word 'belonging'. The German term *Zugehörigkeit* denotes an individual's belonging to a collective (as does the French term '*appartenance*' – that with its connotation 'à part' pinpoints a tension inherent in belonging, namely a distance between the self and a we-collec-

tive); whereas *Zusammengehörigkeit* stands for 'togetherness'. This distinction becomes of interest when we shift our perspective from group dynamics geared at maintaining the collective status quo to a consideration of an individual's embeddedness in a collective, its seeking access to it ... or trying to abandon it. While distinguishing 'belonging with' (*Zusammengehörigkeit*) from 'belonging to' (*Zugehörigkeit)* I should like to start with the former – that ideally combines commonality, mutuality and attachment.

'Commonality' – is a *perception* of sharing, notably sharing common lot as well as cultural forms (language, religion, and life-style), values, experience, and memory constructions. It is individually felt and embodied while collectively negotiated and performed. Commonality is often perceived through a social boundary-horizon that helps discern between the insiders and the outsiders. It thus relies on categorisations, mental checkpoints, every-day-life distinctions and public representations that often buttress boundary-maintenance (Migdal 2004). This is precisely where commonality is likely to attain the form of collective identity that requires the other / the outside for engendering a perception of internal sameness. But we must not restrict our understanding of 'commonality' to 'collective identity'.

Excursion: reaching beyond the lens of 'identity constructions'

Human preoccupations with 'identity' – be it collectivising activism; the language use in every-day talk, be it academic research and analysis – have been inundated by the individual and collective aspirations and resulting positionings, normative considerations as well as action derived from this notion (Jenkins 1996). On one hand, being so extensively invoked during the past decades, 'identity' seems to have acquired a natural property, becoming essentialised and reified. The incredible boom of this term instigated a great deal of critique, on the other hand – that was best formulated by Brubaker and Cooper (2000). In their seminal "Beyond 'identity'", they make a number of important observations: first, the term 'identity' has become so ubiquitous, combining 'categories of practice' with 'categories of analysis', that it caries a huge number of connotations. "Identity", they argue, "tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a week sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)" (ibid. 2000, 1). Second, given the substantial range in the meanings used by actors

and by scholars, the central connotations of this term can clash with one another as is the case with essentialising vis-à-vis constructivist approaches. Third, 'collective identity' transports homogenising notions of commonality and it endorses methodological ethnicisation (my term) by delineating clear-cut collective boundaries of the social.

Most important, in my view, is Brubaker's and Cooper's contention that 'identity' does not do justice to the full range of the human forms shaped by commonality, mutuality as well as by affiliations / attachments such as self-understanding or connectedness. Still: To suggest that we abandon using the term 'identity' would be to enter into a struggle against wind-mills. I opt therefore for sharpening our analytical tools, by venturing into the preoccupation with 'belonging' – a term that is more and more present in every-day use and that recently has become object of a rapidly growing number of academic inquiries. I do not expect this term to acquire more analytical precision than that of 'identity', but in quest to capture this term, we should be able to uncover the multiple, subtle and shifting modalities of forging and thinking the collective dimensions of the social life and the dynamic nature of social boundary-making.

Let me highlight some major differences between 'identity' and 'belonging': 'Identity' is a categorical concept while belonging combines categorisation with social relating. Identity is relational in the sense that it positions itself vis-à-vis the other. Belonging's relationality consists in forging and maintaining social ties and in buttressing commitments and obligations. Identity caters to dichotomous characterisations of the social while belonging *rather* highlights its situatedness and the multiplicity of parameters forging commonality, mutuality and attachments. Identity relies on sharp boundary-drawing, particularism, and is prone to buttressing social divisiveness. Theoreticians may argue otherwise, for instance deploying the concept of identification – that unlike 'identity' entails situative and processual connotations –, but identity politics have time and again revealed the exclusionary properties entailed in this notion. The politics of belonging (cf. also infra) are equally prone to effecting social exclusion, but also the opposite – widening borders, incorporating, defining new common grounds – has often been the case. This is precisely one of the reasons, I suppose, why the notion of belonging currently enjoys growing popularity in migration research.

Coming back to my preoccupation with commonality, we can infer that 'identity' highlights homogeneity of any given collective unit, whereas

'belonging' stresses commonness, but not necessarily sameness. Commonness tends to build upon a common cultural denominator – that however can be created anew and re-shaped. The German President Christian Wulff created quite a furore when he expressed his conviction that Islam belongs to Germany ("Islam gehört zu Deutschland"). This statement is a perfect example of future-oriented possibilities in forging belonging by incorporating new elements into the existing parameters of togetherness. In this vein, one important aspect of belonging is the commonality of purpose. For this reason, important characteristics of commonness entailed in the concept of belonging are mutuality, commitment and 'something' that is collectively at stake. The commonality entailed in belonging can be conceived by actors especially relating to the past and hence catering upon nostalgia (cf. Geschiere 2009), but it also can be future-oriented – as Kannabiran (2006) claims, seeing in belonging not only the possibilities of being, but also of becoming. As I shall discuss below, the politics of belonging often entail a visionary element geared at reshaping the individual or collective social location. By contrast, the politics of identity claim an established collective narrative that seeks its political realisation. As I intend to show, the dynamic properties of belonging are entailed in its multidimensional composition; in the 'thickness' of this term.

The academic focus on collective identities has narrowed down our understanding of commonality as a multi-layered condition. The concept of belonging underlines that people share significantly more than merely common identity markers. Belonging together – whether sharing collective identity or not – means sharing experience and the tacit self-evidence of being, of what goes without saying; means jointly taking things for granted, and sharing common knowledge and meanings. I am stressing this point because shared meanings undergo continuous change. Belonging evolves in social life worlds where collective knowledge reservoirs are perennially recreated in social interactions. They are realised in social practices, in established modalities of negotiation, conflict, compromise and accommodation, and also in a continuous overt and covert reflection about the validity of norms that hold in a given social world. Shared are the continuous negotiations over any social life world's modalities as habitualised, institutionalised and legitimised. They can crystallise in common boundary perceptions through identity politics, but also open up and blur social boundaries (Zolberg and Long 1999).

Shared understandings significantly buttress the sense of mutuality – the second dimension of belonging. Norms steering mutual expectations and

obligations create common horizons in here and now, stabilising them to norms of reciprocity, loyalty, and commitment. Mutuality means acknowledging the other which often results in compliance to rules ordering social relations (Simmel 1908; Weber 1972; Tyrell 2008). Families expect obedience, loyalty as well as pooling of resources. Associations and organisations expect participation, acceptance of common goals, and a sufficient contribution of time and resources. Belonging to a nation means sharing in given polity's well-being and enjoying civic rights, while reciprocating by performing civic duties, in particular, by paying taxes. For entering a national space and durably remaining, migrants need to present themselves as particularly deserving. Also cliques and friends jealously monitor mutual allocation of obligations and debts. These calculations – that can be more overt or covert – result in what I call 'regimes of belonging' that is, in institutionalised patterns insisting upon investments of time and resources, loyalty and commitment – that are the price people have to pay for belonging together. Otherwise, most collectives can resort to sanctions – through exclusion or ostracism.

The unlikely term 'regimes of belonging' combines the cosiness of human forms of commonality, the warmth of communitarian existence, with its putative opposite, i.e. 'regime' as something authoritative and constricting. A 'regime' is according to the political scientist Krasner (1982) a "set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations". Any self-imposed rules can be equally overwhelming and oppressive as those imposed by external rule. 'Own rule' within communitarian patterns can be all the more imposing as consent and subjugation represent themselves as voluntary – i.e. voluntary acknowledgment of the authority and wisdom of the elders, often male elders. In transnational immigrant regimes, the valid norms are forged be members of the national we-groups (Elwert 1997; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2009) that also extend to immigrants. Most newcomers usually do not fit into the national frameworks of values and norms and do not share cultural repertoires – at least in the perception of the autochthones. Under these conditions, forging civic commonality is an onerous process.

Both, social inclusion and social exclusion underlie regimes of belonging. All bounded collective units – states, ethnic and religious organisations, associations and families dispose of devices buttressing commonality, mutuality

and attachments, while simultaneously excluding outsiders. States, in particular, have a tremendous regulatory force, guarding boundaries, regulating access criteria, regulating the modalities of stay, and demand from denizens performing numerous duties. Migrants coming to Western metropoles must show themselves 'deserving'. As long as they don't enjoy full citizenship rights, migrants endure a restricted set of rights, while performing the full range of civic duties expected from people living in a given national territory. While paying taxes and when formally employed usually enjoying social rights at the place of destination, immigrants are incorporated into frameworks of generalised reciprocity (re-distribution of taxes), but are often denied creating attachments, by restrictions to buying land and by restrictions to displaying 'being there' – as for instance the Swiss debate of the minarets has revealed (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2009).

Regimes of belonging are not only structured by restrictive state rules. Public opinion is often dominated by voices celebrating the inlanders' cultural authority in determining values and norms underpinning the national or local commonality. The more mistrust vis-à-vis aliens, the less public acknowledgment of their presence and the more suspicion that a migrant wouldn't know how to socially navigate in his or her new home, the more cumbersome the process of creating new belonging in a new place. "Your homeland is where you are allowed to criticise" – This phrase, formulated by a migrant, of Greek origin, living in Switzerland, perfectly brings to light the intricacies of belonging and the subtle power of immigration regimes.

Attachments, the third dimension I am discerning, follow yet different patterns in creating belonging (Pfaff 2010). Attachments link people to material and immaterial worlds (Flinders 2002; Hooks 2009). Attachments make people belong to spaces and sites, to natural objects, landscapes, climate, and to material possessions. These are forged through such disparate links as embodiment, resonance of smells and tastes (as with Marcel Proust's famous Madeleine) as well as rights, citizenship and property rights in particular. Growing up in a locality can create a strong sense of belonging – and so does the ownership of land or a house. Wherever we leave an airplane, we are told: 'take your belongings with you' – which nicely brings one property of material attachments to light. It is difficult to forge attachments, but they can be created. Religious sites such as cemeteries and places of worship can be conducive here. Muslim immigrants have for instance created such places of attachment in many European places, but they usually had to struggle hard for this. Denying immigrants the right to erect visible religious structures marking their durable presence in the places of their arrival – as happened through the Swiss federal vote against the minarets, indicated towards the Swiss majority's reluctance to accept that Muslims could make Switzerland their new home.

In their combination, commonality, mutuality and attachments stabilise belonging, rendering collective sociability durable. They forge a strong and binding sense of naturalness – that is obvious to the insiders and that keeps the outsiders at bay. Claims to normality / naturalness of a given social order reduce complexity, by clearly discerning between the inside and the outside. And this state of affairs is likely to institutionalise power relations governing the social life between and also within any given collective. Shared knowledge, practices and norms are products of sometimes restrictive social practices and of unequally distributed chances and resources. Therefore, belonging often comes at the price of subjugation vis-à-vis norms guiding and guarding the collective life. To put it simple: belonging can be cosy, but also exclusionary and oppressive. It almost always comes at a price.

To belong in the modern world means to reflexively talk about home and your sense of place. Time and again, individual and collective belonging has been encroached upon, challenged, fought about, and protected. State rule, market forces, forced displacement, transnationalisation, pluralisation, acceleration of social change, and the widening horizon of human aspirations have rendered belonging contested – from outside and from within. The more it is contested and made explicit, the less likely it is to just be, share, and join in. The value then can lie in keeping one's protected space, often at the high price of self-subjugation under the governmentality of the own collective as well as at the price of excluding others and jealously guarding the boundaries of the small world of a we-collective. The other option of belonging is to render the boundaries of the social permissible, creating space for negotiations for new and expanded meanings of mutuality and togetherness.

And there is yet another property of belonging – that I am most interested in – namely, the possibility to forge new ties of collective boundedness. The concept of belonging provides us with a tool to inquire how horizons of togetherness are and can be widened in order to incorporate newcomers – how to extend collective we-understanding by including former strangers. In the climate of politically charged passions about belonging, social exclusion seems to be a norm in shaping relationships between we-groups and those considered outsiders. Nevertheless, throughout history all around the world,

new constellations of belonging have been forged and will come into existence in future. Bounded and exclusive belonging becomes increasingly problematic, given the pluralising nature of contemporary societies and given the differentiated character of any given collective social space that the regimes of belonging seek to cover up.

The multiplicity of belonging

So far, I highlighted the bonding properties of belonging as they are for instance found in the common understanding of ethnic groups. But we need to distinguish between ethnicity's (or nation's or a family's) self-representations, on one hand, and the properties of relations within collectivities on the other. The multifaceted and dense concept of belonging allows us to disentangle collectivising notions such as ethnicity for at least three reasons. First, from the point of view of social actors, belonging is always multiple. Any given constellation of boundedness competes with other constellations of belonging that vie with each other for membership and their members' commitment. Second, coming back to my distinction between 'belonging with' and 'belonging to', it is crucial to conceptualise belonging as created by individual persons in their negotiating collective constellations, that is, how persons navigate through the diverse constellations of belonging they encounter in their life-course. Third, collectives are internally differentiated. Taking ethnicity as one life-world is highly misleading, given the internal plurality coming with the intersections of socio-economic differentiation, gender, spatial distribution, and internal subdivisions by language, dialect or religion as well as all kinds of personal orientations such as political leaning or homosexuality – that may collide with communitarian norms.

Belonging in today's world is a complex affair. Take for example ethnicity. As soon as we go beyond groupist representations (to use Brubaker's concept) ethnic collectives are characterised by internal plurality. Within any given collective unit everybody differs in his or her social location and positionality. Gender, socio-economic status, political networks, resources and convictions, geographic location, life-style and aspirations, skills, profession and organisational memberships, religion and other commitments make for internal differentiations as well as for a multiplication of personal spaces to which one belongs in any given moment of time.

The concept of belonging gives us an analytical tool to see collective boundedness as structured by regimes of belonging, catering for instance to identity representations, while simultaneously pointing to the possibilities of moving across social boundaries as well as the options for negotiating their meanings. The discussion centred so far on the collective spaces of belonging – that could be nation-states, ethnic groups, associations or families, all acting as regimes of belonging. Exclusions, dichotomisations, particularist orientations and clearly delineated boundedness are important properties of such constellations, highly buttressed by identity politics. In order to understand how we-constellations widen their horizons and how they may render their boundaries permissible, it is important to reverse the point of observation and to grasp how persons navigate between the diverse constellations of belonging – in the course of their lives.

I repeat: from the point of view of individual persons, belonging is always multiple. In his or her life-course, everybody copes with the interplay between commonality, mutuality and attachment, by living simultaneously and subsequently in diverse constellations of belonging. Some forms of collective boundedness are ascribed – such as within family or one's ethnic group. Others are acquired – such as belonging to a university, a class, or a profession. Some are more exclusive (family, religion) than others (a hobby-club). Some forms of belonging are easier to obtain than, say, naturalisation in an immigrant country. Some forms of intersectionality are easier to combine than others – think of a male white Anglo-Saxon American Protestant, on one hand, or of a scarf-wearing well educated Muslima in Dresden, on the other.

In the course of time, my belonging will shift. I go to school, I study, I learn a profession, and enter a working place. I usually marry and from now on, less time is left for my friends and for the relatives in the parental home. I acquire a new status vis-à-vis my relatives and peers; I position myself anew. Some passages in the course of life demand abandoning a former location of belonging. Time and again persons of low socio-economic status were accused of treachery by their former peers while climbing the social ladder. Elites usually don't suffer this kind of alienation. Underprivileged socio-economic background – in my view, the most important dimension of inequality, besides gender and race – is likely to impose special restrictions upon persons. The writer Bruno Preisendörfer described, using the example of his own life, how higher education can cause children of parents with little edu-

cation an alienation from parental home. To the many privileges of children from upper strata comes, besides the material benefits and the ability to combine cultural dispositions and to simultaneously move in different social spaces, especially, that they are not compelled to change milieu while acquiring higher education.

In today's world, (1) people can simultaneously belong to two or more countries; (2) they can change belonging while passing through different stages in life – changing age groups and passing through different stages of status. (3) There is a situational multiplicity – when people divide their time between home, school, friends, hobby club, or religious organisation. (4) There are also diverse horizons of belonging: family, ethnic group, nation-state, and the world – and these horizons can coexist in a mode full of tensions.

Some forms of belonging are significantly more durable and more constraining. The estates of the Middle Ages come immediately to mind as a form of social ordering leaving little room for manoeuvre. The Hindu caste society continues to be similarly restrictive, but some degree of social mobility is currently observable in India and Nepal. Some dimensions of collective boundedness such as ethnicity and religion appear to be perennial and overpowering upon individual persons, but in fact, such ascriptive dimensions can be chosen by persons. Whether a person opts for engaging in ethnic activism, whether she strives to abandon, or at least to reduce her allegiance to the communal ties, or whether she is compelled to abide to communitarian rules, having hardly any choice, is an empirical question.

The personal navigation through the diverse constellations of belonging consists in more or less conscious choices and more or less permissible or restrictive rooms for manoeuvre when it comes to the constructions of the self, to new normative orientations, to negotiations and positionings. Belonging is hard work, means maintaining relations and displaying loyalty and commitment. Diverse belongings must be combined and are usually weighted against each other. For any person it is a central question which constellations of belonging create new possibilities, or rather have restrictive effects. Today's societies are so heterogeneous that it is impossible to assess which forms of collective boundedness open doors, or rather erect tight boundaries – have an 'enabling' or a 'constraining' bearing upon persons.

There is a myriad of tight boundaries and restrictions impacting upon personal navigation. Creating new belonging can be especially cumbersome.

Crowley (1999) uses for belonging a metaphor of a disco to which people seek entry. Outside at the door of a disco, people queue asking to be allowed inside. Similar imaginary queues can be found at the borders of immigration countries. The aspirants are to present documents; they will be assessed regarding their fitting in, and they will need some money. Whether they are deemed suited, will be evaluated through more or less explicit criteria. There is a significant disproportion between the 'inside' and the 'outside'. The more you cannot get in and have to stand in the cold, the more you desire access. And the opposite may be true as well. The Jewish comedian Groucho Marx once said that he wouldn't want to join a club that was desperate enough to accept people like him.

We also need to consider the challenges when persons find it difficult to get out of "their" collective. Such situations are not unusual. Facing majoritarian challenge, minorities often feel compelled to guard their boundaries, from outside and from inside. Minority members often face restrictions when opting for an exogamous marriage, when not abiding to communitarian norms (e.g. being homosexual) or when trying to lessen the confines of collective belonging by spatially moving away. Enjoying the warmth, the solidarity and protection of your parental home and / or the extended network of kin-relatives comes at the price of loyalty, displays of consensus, often submission, and pooling of resources. Remaining inside entails displays of being – or playing being – alike, what poses particular problems for those who have partly moved into new social spaces, especially while acquiring higher education, or when opting for alternative forms of living. 'Belonging together' restricts therefore attempts at social boundary-crossing (Lamont 2002) from outside and from within. In the same vein, collective belonging is under siege from outside and from within.

But what if the club you entered does not want you to leave? This is a frequent constellation. All kinds of minorities have faced such severe pressures that they close their ranks and jealously guard collective boundaries – for instance ruling against exogamous marriage. Your family offers protection, recognition and warmth, but demands your standing firm for it, demanding loyalty, consensus, and often subordination. Clubs and organisations and all kinds of former peers accuse you of dissidence, or even treachery, when you try to severe the mutual ties, and oscillate in the direction of another life-world.

On one hand, the desire to 'belong to' confronts persons with rules of collective boundedness, of 'belonging with'. On the other hand, it is through

personal navigation that constellations of 'belonging with' change their shape and that collective boundaries come under stress. Recent research on processes of collective boundary-maintenance has indicated how and when social boundaries are blurred and shifted, after individual mobility, for instance in immigrant contexts, has coalesced into collective patterns. The major value of belonging research lies in its not taking for granted collective boundedness. By combining the dimensions of commonality, mutuality and attachment it indicates to social closures as well as to possibilities of their opening-up, rather than falling prey to methodological collectivism. The belonging approach indicates to the tremendous tensions persons endure while navigating between social and spatial worlds, of course. It is obviously cosier and less dangerous to maintain your home where your religious or ethnic identity is not questioned. Marwa El-Shirbini paid with her life for somebody else's insecurity and for her attacker's inability to acknowledge that belonging is nothing fixed.

Politics of belonging: regimes of belonging and the politics of the self

A paradox of belonging lies in a basic tension. Belonging is something cosy and taken for granted. People belong together when things go without saying. To belong in the modern world, however, is to talk about home and your sense of place. Time and again, individual and collective belonging has been encroached upon, challenged, fought about, and protected. State rule, market forces, forced displacement, transnationalisation, pluralisation, acceleration of social change, and the widening horizon of human aspirations have rendered belonging contested – from outside and from within. The more it is contested and made explicit, the less likely it is to just be, share, and join in. The value then seems to lie in keeping one's protected space.

Belonging, as in 'be-longing', displays strong past-oriented, nostalgic connotations. As object of political action, it is very much an element of the present. The concept has also a strong aspirational, future-oriented element. Kannabiran (2006) distinguishes between belonging and becoming, suggesting that political struggles thrive upon ideas indicating where a given collective is heading to and what it is aiming for. So far, I concentrated on personal navigation between different social spaces of belonging and the entailed

politics of the self. But the past decades also witnessed pronounced collective mobilisation coalescing into different types of politics of belonging. At least three global trends have instigated these politics.

The first trend has usually been depicted as a third wave of democratisation and it was significantly buttressed by the fall of the Berlin wall and the inspiration provided by civic action in Eastern European countries. But almost simultaneously, civil society movements gained momentum in many parts of the globe. Previously colonised populations "have reversed the colonial flow from centre to periphery with increasing intensity" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 46f). Challenging established West-dominated normative orders, displaying alterity, and forcing the "problem" of difference into the public (ibid. 2009) realm, collective activism has shifted from deeply subjugated positions to self-conscious positions reclaiming oppressed space of resistance (Kannabiran 2006). These movements have embarked on a challenging path, by deploying techniques and technologies coming about with globality and transnationality (means of communication, networking), while organising against detrimental impacts of neo-liberalism. Large-scale infrastructural projects as well as the attempts of transnational corporations to secure intellectual property rights on such items as food grains or medicinal plants have greatly instigated the local sense of place and a spirit of local resistance (that I examined in my 'Challenging Goliath', cf. Pfaff-Czarnecka 2007).

The second trend buttressing collective politics of belonging came about with the global indigenous people's movement (cf. Pfaff-Czarnecka *et al.* 2007). This movement currently reaches a world-wide scope combining the politics of identity, entitlement, recognition and rights (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 47). This movement, initially carried by the US-American and Canadian First People as well as a growing number of ethnic activists in Latin American countries and in the Asian-Pacific region has importantly gained in terrain when the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established in 1982 – that was followed by the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, by the ILO-Convention 169 as well as by the UNDRIP (United Nations 2007). One important platform for the indigenous politics gaining momentum provided the Rio-Conference in 1992. The deliberations of this conference revealed the interconnection between the cultural (confining indigenous cultures to the private realm) and social dimensions (socio-economic and political power differentials and detrimen-

tal race politics) of indigenous peoples existence with the territorial dimensions of space and place (confinement to societies' peripheries; encroachment upon indigenous peoples lands). Both these trends have greatly instigated the collective politics of the self – i.e. modalities of agreeing upon common representations and developing practices of mutuality, geared indispensable for pursuing projects of belonging (Kannabiran 2006). The politics of the self are embedded in the regimes of belonging and combine common visions of the future, entrepreneurship (in the case of ethnic groups "ethno-preneurialism", to speak with the Comaroffs, (2009), measures of self-care as well as forms of self-fashioning buttressed by the idea of shared essence and common destiny. In this vein, they are important elements of governmentality.

The third trend comes with the transformative impact of neoliberalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 47) that has created new and ever denser interconnections between different regions of the world, coming about through financial flows as well the displacement of production sites and workers. Important interconnections come about between countries "sending" and "receiving" migrants. These global, international and transnational developments have greatly shaped societal change, impinging upon state's sovereignty, buttressing transnational social flows and exchanges and challenging national we-group understanding.

Under these – often intersecting – conditions a variety of politics of belonging came into existence, or – if they existed already before, have gained public attention. The first form of collective 'politics of becoming' is currently often depicted with a slightly confusing quest for 'social inclusion'. In this vein, collective mobilisation is aimed at 'uplifting' a collective social position within a universally conceived social structure (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Collective politics of belonging seek to abandon deeply subjugated social positions, by generating new types of resources geared at regaining the space of resistance and power. The language of rights has opened up new avenues for individual and collective mobility, be it the right to education (e.g. through quotas as in India), the right to different types of social welfare provisions, the right to self-determination (as in a number of South-East and Eastern European countries or simply more rights to local participation and self-rule (through measures of decentralisation and devolution of power). The term 'social inclusion' is misleading in the very sense that a possibility of 'joining in' by newcomers into established orders is implied, here – whereas uncountable examples of social struggles reveal that 'social empowerment' is

usually accompanied by a thorough transformation of any given society and its institutional orders.

The second type of the politics of belonging, coming especially to light with indigenous activism, is largely driven by identity politics. Such politics are usually oriented to the past, with the activists highlighting the common origins, genealogies as well as the reasons of having been there first, and the ensuing rights to particular territories. The politics of identity tend to highlight particularism, take recourse to strategic essentialism, catering to homogenising images of the collective self and thrive upon sharp ethnic boundaries that often discriminate between collective we-groups and outsiders. Politics of identity turn into politics of belonging when collective mobilisation reaches beyond the contested space of identity representations. The indigenous politics of belonging struggle for political self-rule, for reversing past wrongs, especially in the form of encroachment on ancestral lands, and by doing so insist upon decentring the realm of national political economic realms. In his most pertinent analysis of the perils of belonging, Geschiere (2009) demonstrated how such form of emancipatory action is likely to go hand-in-hand with a problematic collective particularism, excluding others to such an extent that they are denied the right to dwell in territories claimed by a particular ethnic group. Geschiere's argument is all the more powerful as he draws a parallel between the particularist ethnic politics of belonging, occurring in local realms of African national spaces, with equally exclusivist we-group self-understandings voiced by claustrophobic voices in numerous Western immigrant societies. In both cases, the exclusivist politics of belonging have been buttressed by the infrastructure of identity politics, discriminating between insiders and outsiders and erecting tight social boundaries around the collective units.

Against this backdrop, a third type of politics of belonging appears particularly crucial. This type of politics has recently been described in literature taking up recent migration flows as well as political reconfigurations asserting alterity and recognising difference with the terms 'co-habitation' and 'conviviality.' Judith Butler, who coined the term 'co-habitation' stresses that we can no longer decide ourselves with regards to whom we are living with. We are therefore compelled to maintain the pluralist character of living together – that doesn't follow our own choice – active. Gilroy (2004) argues in his 'Postcolonial melancholia' along similar lines. The ways of finding common ground in living together, despite differing identities, convictions

and forms of life, are multiple and indeed: possible. The option for creating civic commonality stand in opposition to exclusivist national we-group identity politics as they prevailed in the assimilationist ethos geared against newcomers. Currently, belonging is becoming an object of politicisation. Protecting one's home, keeping migrants at bay, or engaging in rivalries regarding who is more deserving to make a new place his or her home are all entailed in politics of belonging. But the more boundary-constructions, boundary-restrictions and boundary-protection become part and parcel of global reflexivity, the more wide-spread is also the awareness of the possibilities to mould boundaries and to create new spaces for possibilities of our living together.

Conclusion

I started this presentation by stressing the necessity to distinguish between the concepts of collective identity and belonging, while proposing the latter as a new and very useful lens to observe the dynamics of sociability in the contemporary world and to suggest modalities of conceptualising commonality beyond homogenisation and sharp ethnic boundary-drawing. The concept of belonging helps us grasping processes of moving, shifting and combining the boundaries of the social. The concept of belonging provides us with a tool to think of social practices of negotiating collective boundedness as in continuous flux, selection, and combination between diverse parameters of belonging.

My discussion should have revealed the complexity the key-notion of 'social location' entails. Having defined belonging as 'emotionally charged social location', it was my intention to suggest avenues for our understanding of this notion as combining different key-dimensions of social existence and experience. We may distinguish analytically between a particularist space of identity politics and a universalist social structure. According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000, 7), in identitarian theorising, 'social location' means "position in a multidimensional space defined by *particularist categorical attributes* (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation). In instrumentalist theorising, 'social location' means position in a *universalistically conceived social structure* (for example, position in the market, the occupational structure, or the mode of production (ibid. – italics by the authors). The concept of belonging compels us, however, to think of 'social location' in the combination of the two. After all, the social structure of contemporary societies evolves in a combination of diverse parameters and resources as well as capabilities (Sen 1999; Alkire 2010). The challenge of grasping the central features of the belonging concept is even greater given the fact, that the contemporary self-reflexivity under the conditions of our globalised and transnational experiences renders the human preoccupation with territorial space and local attachments perennially pertinent. Belonging then confronts the social analysis with the problem of finding analytical tools for doing justice to the multidimensional nature of this concept.

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