

Researching Transnational Social Spaces: A Qualitative Study of the Spanish Second Generation in Switzerland

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Abstract: Transnational social spaces, as they are increasingly researched in various fields of scientific inquiry and specifically in the area of transnational migration, constitute a complex field of research. This complexity raises, apart from theoretical questions, increasingly methodological ones. How can we research transnational social spaces? Which instruments and methods might be helpful in this endeavor? The article addresses these questions by presenting a methodological approach used in a project involving people of second-generation Spanish origin living in Switzerland. It discusses the theoretical anchors (time, people, and sites) that constitute the underlying logic of the approach and the various mixed-methods components such as biographical interviews, semi-structured interviews, visual materials, observation, and drawing. Finally, the conclusion consists of a critical reflection on the proposed methodology and the data gathered.

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1. Introduction

Various fields of scientific inquiry are placing increasing importance on space and the way in which we relate to it. For instance, in mobility studies, Laura WATTS and John URRY (2008) argue that travel time needs to be conceptualized as a liminal space, between here and there. Holly BARCUS and Stanley BRUNN (2010) elaborated a concept of place elasticity to acknowledge space attachment coupled with distance. Migration studies—which set the theoretical frame for the study presented here—and, in particular, studies on transnationalism have increasingly acknowledged, on the one hand, the importance of locality as the place where migrants touch ground (LEY, 2004) and where transnationalism from

below is rooted (GUARNIZO & SMITH, 1998). On the other hand, these studies also call for a conceptualization of the emerging social formation (e.g. transnational social fields [LEVITT & GLICK SCHILLER, 2004] where transnational exchange and communication take place). In most accounts, these social formations are heavily imbued with a spatial connotation (BRUNEAU, 2010; EHRKAMP & LEITNER, 2006; FAIST, 2004; FEATHERSTONE, 2007) leading toward the concept of the transnational social space (FAIST, 2006; FAIST & ÖZVEREN, 2004; PRIES, 2001, 2008). [1]

The growing body of empirical studies on various aspects of transnational social spaces (BALDASSAR, 2007; KING & CHRISTOU, 2010; QURESHI, 2006; RYAN, 2011) points toward the importance of looking closer at spatial questions in migration studies.¹ Various advances have been made on the theoretical level, even if a broader theoretical framework or consensus still needs to be attained. Some of these advances are important for the following methodological discussion and I will, therefore, address them briefly. [2]

First, as already mentioned, locality has become an important reference, especially in studies on transnationalism, to relate otherwise free-floating connections and flows to concrete social sites (MARSTON, JONES & WOODWARD, 2005). For instance, place can serve a double purpose. It can serve as the meeting point of networks, and it constitutes a social context in which migrants are rooted (LEY, 2004) and from which they connect to other people (GIELIS, 2009). Such an "orientation towards the site" provides researchers with an analytical lens that focuses on concrete material and social contexts (WOODWARD, JONES & MARSTON, 2010). A theoretical development that points in this direction is the usage of the concept of translocality (BRICKELL & DATTA, 2011), which allows the research to focus on local-local connections and includes traveling and non-traveling people. [3]

Second, these sites,² if we want to understand them in the context of transnational migration, need to be connected somehow. Such connections can be formulated in modes of mobility (physical movement), communications (non-physical contacts), exchanges of goods, and other services such as caring. Usually, this type of social connection is studied in the social sciences from a network perspective. Network research has a long tradition in migration studies, and it has become even more prominent recently in the context of a transnational

1 In this article, I focus on the context of migration studies because they constitute the field of research in which the project was conducted. Nevertheless, these comments also apply to other areas of studies that deal with questions of mobility and its materialities, as, for instance, Mimi SHELLER and John URRY (2006) refer to as "The New Mobilities Paradigm."

2 This is not the place to discuss diverse concepts such as "place," "locality," or "site." In the rest of the article, I will use the concept I find most suitable for my research, which is "site." In a geographic tradition, "place" works as a counter-concept to "space" and needs, therefore, to be understood as part of a dichotomous conceptualization. "Space" stood for a long time for the abstract and general, whereas "place" was connected to the local and concrete, as it is researched in qualitative studies. "Locality," then, refers to another dichotomy that spans from the global to the local. For the sake of avoiding these dichotomizations and, thereby, also implicit hierarchizations, I opt for the term "site" (see for a much more thorough discussion: MARSTON et al., 2005).

perspective and, in particular, pertaining to a spatial focus (FEATHERSTONE, 2007; FEATHERSTONE, PHILLIPS & WATERS, 2007). [4]

The sites connected through networks constitute, third, a spatial formation that needs to be addressed and conceptualized. The development of theoretical approaches to transnational social spaces is ongoing, while some important contributions sketch a possible direction (FAIST & ÖZVEREN, 2004; MAU, 2007; PRIES, 2001). This space that spans across borders and connects people and sites is characterized by a notion of the inbetweenness of space (KATZ, 1992). Andrés DAVILA LEGERÉN (2008, p.31) defines this inbetweenness as a kind of liminality, in the sense that it lies somewhere "between here and there." And these spaces are also spaces of mobility that are inherently constituted through the movement of bodies and goods (BRUNEAU, 2010; DAHINDEN, 2010). [5]

These short theoretical explanations make it clear that we are dealing with a social phenomenon that confronts researchers with a new complexity in terms of a spatial disruption and, at the same time, a highly connected social formation. Following other colleagues, I claim that we, therefore, also need empirical approaches that are able to apprehend the concepts briefly outlined above. The remaining part of the article deals, therefore, with methodological questions and proposes mixed-methods approaches to deal with these methodological challenges. The approach I will present was developed in the context of a broader research project: "Bridging Places across Borders: Constitution, Maintenance and Meaning of Transnational Social Spaces." It was jointly carried out by a group of scientists (Michael NOLLERT and Marina RICHTER at the University of Fribourg; and Janine DAHINDEN, Yvonne RIAÑO, and Marc TADORIAN at the University of Neuchâtel) and financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation. It aimed to advance our scientific understanding of transnational social spaces by developing, applying, and assessing a conceptual model that allows deep insight into the processes of emergence, maintenance, and evolution of transnational social spaces. [6]

The project serves also as an example for the methodological discussion. The project was designed to analyze transnational social spaces from various perspectives: first-generation migrants from Columbia and Ecuador, second-generation migrants from Spain, and non-migrants, all living in Switzerland. We, as a research team, chose these groups for various reasons. First, we were interested in including non-migrants in an analysis of transnational social spaces usually linked to migration. Second, we hoped to gain insight into the time aspect of these transnational relations by including not only first-generation migrants but also those of the second generation. Third, distance to a possible site of reference in another country outside Switzerland represented another variable for differentiation. Fourth, the groups can also be distinguished with respect to their citizenship status in Switzerland allowing for different forms of mobility. I was responsible for the subproject on second-generation Spaniards in Switzerland. The methodological approach I am presenting here was developed and tested in the course of this subproject and the material used in the following discussion

will, therefore, represent the networks and practices of second generation Spaniards living in Switzerland. [7]

The next section deals with existing approaches to methodological questions in the field of transnational social spaces. In particular, I will look at examples of "moving methods" and at methods that take into account the multi-locality of the topic, such as multi-sited ethnography. Section 3 outlines the methodological notion behind the approach used in the project and explains briefly the methods used. In Section 4 I will give a more concrete account of the approach, using data gathered during the project. Finally (Section 5), the experiences encountered are discussed. [8]

2. Researching Spaces of Migration

One of the first methodological claims made pertaining to research on transnational migration was the necessity to avoid methodological nationalism (GLICK SCHILLER, ÇAĞLAR & GULDBRANDSEN, 2006; WIMMER & GLICK SCHILLER, 2002). This claim corresponded with the mostly applied way of approaching transnational research: conducting empirical research in the places of origin and settlement of migrants (e.g., CHRISTOU, 2006; CHRISTOU & KING, 2010). This type of research design takes into account that migrants keep their ties to their places of origin and translates the uprooting of migrants into two social sites of rootedness. At the same time, migrants are still understood in ethnic terms, originating from one place or country and forming, therefore, a distinct ethnic group, as the discussion on methodological nationalism indicates. This shortcoming lies basically in the practicality of such a research strategy, where a geographical focus is needed for the sake of feasibility. Even if not intended, such multi-sited ethnographies (MARCUS, 1995) tend to ethnicize migrants because of their geographical focus. Applying an ethnographic perspective to several sites at the same time has become a fruitful but also time-consuming approach to assess the lives of people who connect various sites through their actions and interactions (AMELINA, 2010; SINATTI, 2011). Multi-sited ethnography has, in the way it is usually practiced, at least two shortcomings: On the one hand, most multi-sited research designs center on two sites, not on a multiplicity. On the other hand, it seems overwhelming to conduct an ethnographic research study with the same intensity in two or more different sites (HAGE, 2005). [9]

An alternative, though it is a resource-intensive one, was proposed by Valentina MAZZUCATO. What she calls "simultaneous matched samples" (2010, p.206) translates into a form of ethnography that is conducted simultaneously by two teams of researchers (in Ghana and the Netherlands). "The methodology thus takes migrants' simultaneous engagement in two or more countries directly into account" (p.209). Conducting qualitative as well as quantitative methods in Ghana and the Netherlands simultaneously and linking people from one country to the other via their networks addresses, thereby, one of the major issues in research on transnationalism: "Having transnational lives means that factors

affecting migrants' resources will have repercussions in more than just one country" (p.214). [10]

While such a resource-intensive research design is not possible to implement in every case, some scholars have opted to follow not the networks but the mobility itself. A moving ethnography (TARRIUS, 2000, 2002) focuses precisely on the spaces of movement and follows the people who travel physically. Following the goods (MARCUS, 1995) that are shipped in his study from the Maghreb to Marseille and then on to Western Europe, Alain TARRIUS reconstructs the underground economies that link these sites and analyses, thereby, what he calls "territories of mobility" (in the original in French *territoires de la mobilité*, 2001, p.45). The paradigm of mobility Alain TARRIUS describes for anthropology is echoed in sociology and more general in mobility studies (SHELLER & URRY, 2006; WATTS & URRY, 2008) and has been translated by Laura WATTS and John URRY into a methodology. For a study of traveling time in the UK, they used classical statistical surveys, focus-group interviews with travelers, interviews with stakeholders, and a mobile ethnography. "[A] mobile ethnography involves traveling with people and things, participating in their continual shift through time, place and relations with others" (2008, p.867). [11]

What is common to all of these approaches is that they use a mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data, interviews, observation, and other methods. An example here is the work of Norbert CYRUS (2008), who studied illegally employed Polish household workers in Berlin. He conducted interviews as a standard approach in migration studies and combined them with the ego-centric maps developed by Robert KAHN and Toni ANTONUCCI (1980) to list the sites that are important in the interviewees' lives. There seems to be, at present, a need to develop alternative methods such as maps or drawings.³ In particular, the usage of visual methods has become more and more prominent (e.g., BALL & GILLIGAN, 2010). This means

"that social scientists can extend the range of methods that they employ, and there are good reasons to consider extending in the direction of visual methodologies. [...] Images are one source of information that can play an important role in bringing researchers closer to their subjects and audiences, and in developing ways of thinking about and in these fields" (§50). [12]

3. Approach: Time, People, Sites, and Spaces

The methodological approach used in our research profited enormously from the various research designs described above. It adds another piece to the discussion of valuable methods in migration studies and, specifically, studies on transnational migration that span national borders and create, thereby, so-called transnational social spaces. As our main object was to study the constitution,

3 Apart from several papers, there are also conferences themed specifically on methodological questions in migration research. For instance, in 2010, a congress was devoted to these issues. Organized by Ayona DATTA and Katherine BRICKELL, the ESF Research Conference "Home, Migration and the City: New Narratives, New Methodologies" addressed the variety of methodological approaches that seem fruitful in migration research.

maintenance, and meaning of transnational social spaces, the design of the empirical part was geared toward these (rather abstract) spaces. The project had two aims: First, it was designed to explore the variety of transnational social spaces in which Swiss residents with different types and degrees of migration experience may be implicated. Second, we wanted to analyze the role of physical sites, the social position of an individual, state regulations, social networks and symbolic meaning in the constitution of transnational social spaces. The subproject I was responsible for and which provides the empirical data that illustrates this article, investigates these aims with regard to the second generation of Spaniards living in Switzerland. [13]

The theoretical points of reference outlined above served to structure the transnational social spaces into entities that were more easily accessible in empirical terms: sites, people, and the networks connecting them.⁴ Therefore, we concentrated on the concrete sites where transnational actions and interactions take place, where the memories and emotions that imbue these spaces with meaning are rooted. These sites are linked by networks of people that span across borders and are maintained through various forms of exchange and communication. Another aspect that was important for the analysis of the constitution and maintenance of transnational social spaces was the element of time. Understanding space as linked to time in an intrinsic way (MASSEY, 2005), as it never exists *per se* but has a history, made it important to acknowledge temporal aspects. [14]

These various elements of the empirical design made it necessary to opt for an approach, which led us step by step nearer to the spatial question. The steps were then organized into four phases that each provided data for at least one of the elements described above (see Table 1). Before I outline the various phases, I need to explain the sampling procedure as it was directly linked to the empirical phases. [15]

3.1 Sampling

Whereas it seemed an easy task to find people of the Spanish second generation through associations, the embassy and consulate, personal contacts and a subsequent snowball system, it proved to be much more difficult to narrow down the group of possible participants to the ones maintaining transnational social spaces. On the one hand, the concept was too abstract and theoretical for a direct sampling strategy of simply asking people. On the other hand, because the project was aimed at researching people's conceptualizations of the transnational social spaces, I could hardly select the participants by asking them whether they had transnational relationships or whether they were maintaining transnational social spaces. I opted therefore for a sampling strategy in two steps. [16]

4 The empirical design also echoes the theoretical background of the research project. Our analytical approach comprises five dimensions of analysis of transnational social spaces: 1. materiality—spatial distance and geographical location; 2. the social position and social roles of individuals; 3. the policies and state regulations of specific national contexts; 4. the social networks and social practices of individuals; and 5. the spatial representations of individuals.

As a first step, I started with a sample of 19 second-generation Spaniards in Switzerland. The sample aimed at a maximum variety in order to draw a first picture of the ways in which people of the second generation maintain or abandon transnational relationships. It followed the logic of theoretical sampling, diversifying the sample finally along categories such as gender, age, educational level, professional status, and parents' region of origin in Spain. This first phase served to initiate the research and the research relationship with the interviewees. Biographical interviews gave good insight into people's connections to Spain, the people in their networks, and site attachment. Based on these first insights, I was able to make a selection of the cases to follow further. I compared the interviews focusing on the way they maintained their transnational linkages. The temporal aspect proved to be an important characteristic when describing the way the second generation inherited the networks from their parents, appropriated them, and maintained them (for more details see, RICHTER, forthcoming). The comparison along the temporal characteristic led to the following five types:

1. Detachment/disruption: Usually, in the teenage years, detachment from parents happens in parallel with a detachment from the "parents' family." Often, an event such as the death of a grandmother in Spain or another person toward whom the second-generation youth felt love or obligation led to a decreasing interest in visits and contact with the family in Spain.
2. Continuity: The relationships to people and sites in Spain develop in the course of yearly visits to Spain—usually together with parents—to a stable and vivid network of relationships that the second generation call their own. This process happens without any friction in a quasi-continuous way.
3. Reconnection: When the relationships have become weaker over the years, sometimes an event like a birthday or a wedding celebration can bring the family together and serve as an occasion to rediscover the "Spanish" family.
4. A Spain of one's own: Most of the Spaniards who migrated to Switzerland arrived between the 1960s and the 1980s as "guest-workers." Some of the representatives of the second generation, then, surpassed their parents' educational level, attended secondary schools, and even obtained university diplomas. Some of them find "their own" Spain in arts, literature, and music and build their own network of relationships.
5. Being Spanish in Switzerland: This type represents cases, where the daily lives were very strongly lived in the context of the Spanish family, friends and associations in Switzerland without any direct social networks and interactions to Spain (RICHTER, 2010). [17]

For the further data collection, Type 1 was not followed, as these second-generation migrants had detached themselves from their parents' family in Spain. The same applies to Type 5. From the interviews representing Type 2-4, five cases were selected that represented them best. Two contrasting cases were selected for each of the Types 2 and 3; for the Type 4, only one case was selected, as it represents a weak type of transnationalism at the margin of the research question. These five central cases provided then the connection to people and sites in Spain (see Figure 1).

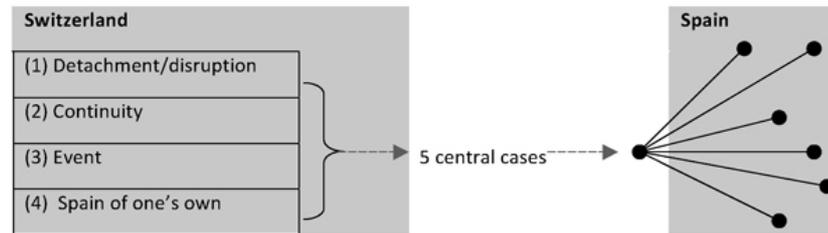


Figure 1: Sampling [18]

3.2 The empirical design

The four empirical phases followed the logic of the sampling strategy; starting in Switzerland, they were continued in Spain and then back in Switzerland again. Thereby, they approached the topic of the transnational social spaces step by step focusing first (Phase 1) on the personal history of transnational relations that includes the element of time as these relations develop, then (Phase 2) deepening these accounts by collecting systematized information about people and places in the transnational social spaces, further (Phase 3) completing the picture with the perspective of other network members in Spain, and finally (Phase 4) concluding in a kind of wrap up to discuss people's conceptions of these transnational relations and the transnational social spaces:

1. The first phase included narrative interviews with 19 second-generation Spaniards that followed the biographical timeline (FISCHER-ROSENTHAL & ROSENTHAL, 1997; SCHÜTZE, 1978 [1977]). They were asked in unstructured interviews about their biography in relation with Spain and family and friends there. The time aspect constituted the major axis of this interview, people and sites being named unsystematically during the biographical account. These interviews opened the field for me as a researcher to establish a relationship with the interviewees, allowed them to tell me "their" story, i.e. their point of view, and allowed me to select cases according to the types of second-generation transnationalism developed. The interviews were taped and later transcribed verbatim.
2. For the second set of interviews, I made selections and reduced the sample to the five central cases according to the sampling process described above. The aim of this second phase was, on the one hand, to gather more systematic data about the networks (people) and the sites. On the other hand, the interviews also provided the opportunity to ask for permission to visit family and friends in Spain. Two types of visual data were included in the semi-structured interviews: ego-centric network maps and geographical maps. The ego-centric network maps (KAHN & ANTONUCCI, 1980; SCHÜTZE, 2006) served to systematize the people of importance in the interviewees' network. Drawing and discussing the network then became a part of the interview. The geographical references (sites or movement) were then drawn on the geographical map of Spain and, if necessary, on a world map (for the usage of geographical maps in research see: RÖHL & HERBRIK, 2008).

Having a map and seeing other cities, villages, rivers, and mountains there helped many of the interviewees to remember other sites that were of importance for their transnational lives. Thus, the sites marked on the map were completed with additional crosses. Subsequently, stories and memories about these crosses on the map were then collected. The whole interview was taped and later transcribed verbatim.

3. The third phase took place in Spain. The aim was to complete the picture by looking at the networks from the opposite direction and to gather additional information about the sites mentioned in the interviewees' accounts. I contacted the persons the interviewees had indicated and informed previously and met them for semi-structured interviews. The topic of the interview was intended to get insight into their perspective on the transnational networks, communications, and interactions they were part of. Additionally, I visited all the sites my informants had told me about, took pictures, and wrote field notes. In short, I dedicated myself to what the second-generation migrants had done on their regular trips to Spain: "Making Routes, Making Place(s) and Making Images" (PINK, 2008).
4. Back in Switzerland, I contacted again the five informants and met them a third and final time. This interview served partly the purpose of reciprocity. After having conducted already two interviews with them and visited their family and friends, I felt that it was about time to "give them something back." This could be something material such as a type of sausage they had asked me to bring from Spain, or it could also be something very symbolic like pictures of a long-forgotten bar where one of the informants had spent his bohemian years in Barcelona. In general, I showed them the data I had gathered (field notes and photographs) and gave them an account of my fieldwork in Spain. Usually, they had already been informed by their contacts in Spain about my visit. To some extent, I had become part of these networks; I was researching them, but the people in the networks also started talking about my visits. The other aim of the visit was to conduct interviews based on the photos I had taken (see JENKINGS, WOODWARD & WINTER, 2008, photo elicitation). After having recalled people and sites of importance, I invited them to draw on a piece of paper a picture for this "formation" that spans between the city or village where they live in Switzerland and the various sites in Spain (and sometimes around the world). Often, I had to start myself with some very unskillful drawing of Switzerland and Spain and some amoeboid form in between to encourage them to start drawing. The conversations were taped and transcribed later verbatim.

Phase	Methods	Context	Time	People	Sites	Spaces
1	Biographical interviews	Switzerland	X	(X)	(X)	
2	Eco-centric network maps Geographical maps Semi-structured interviews	Switzerland		X	X	
3	Semi-structured interviews Photographs Field notes "Traveling"	Spain	X	X	X	
4	Photo-elicitation Drawing	Switzerland			X	X

Table 1: Four phases of the empirical design [19]

The four phases contributed data to the elements of a transnational space (time, people, and sites) and touched on the last phase, the spatial question, directly (see Table 1). Whereas it had seemed impossible to conduct an interview about space perception and about concepts of transnational social spaces in the beginning, the stepwise approach, taking into account the elements of people and sites along a time axis, allowed me to address the conceptual question of transnational social spaces through the method of drawing. [20]

4. The Case: Spanish Second Generation and Their Transnational Social Spaces

The empirical design outlined so far is based on various types of data. They all contribute to a different extent to the aspects of time, site, people, and the overall topic of transnational social spaces. To show how the various types of data gathered are interconnected, examples are given in the following section for every empirical phase. [21]

4.1 Phase 1: The biographical account

The first phase comprised a classic interview that aimed at a biographical account (FISCHER-ROSENTHAL & ROSENTHAL, 1997; SCHÜTZE, 1978 [1977]). To emphasize the timeline, I informed the interviewees that I was interested in hearing their biographical story about their relationship with Spain. As I was interested in hearing what their relationship with Spain entailed, I did not specify further what "Spain" and the "relationship with Spain" meant. In order to

help them to start, I told them to remember an experience or story that was characteristic of their connection to Spain, as the following excerpt shows:⁵

Interviewer: "I would suggest that you start with an experience or a story from your early childhood that is characteristic of your connection to Spain."

Teresa: "Ok. Well, what I always liked as a child was when we went, during autumn and spring break, me and my brother, our parents used to send us to our aunts in Barcelona. They live in the middle of the city. And we always liked it so much there, with all the taxis [laughs], and that you can just go outside and call a taxi, just like that [because it is much cheaper than in Switzerland]. Such things. But we spoke very bad Catalan and no word of Spanish at this time. My father [who is from Catalonia] and my mother, they spoke French together. For me, it was strange to speak Catalan so badly ... later, as a child, it was no problem; we always communicated somehow with our cousins. We spoke some French, and they some Catalan, and we always managed to understand each other. When I became a teenager, then suddenly it started to bother me that in a country where I was supposed to have my roots, I didn't speak the language properly." [22]

Apart from allowing me to establish a research relationship with the respondents and giving them the opportunity to "set the terms" by telling their story first, the account of each person's story of a relationship with family and friends provided a first glance into different types of second-generation transnationalism. Based on these accounts, I constructed the typology of second-generation transnationalism outlined above. It goes without saying that the material offers insight into many other interesting issues, such as the questions of why and how some second-generation migrants continue or re-establish their transnational relationships while others break their links to their parents' homeland and orient themselves to their country of residence—or to another country. For the course of the data gathering, the typology was important in selecting the five central cases to follow further. [23]

4.2 Phase 2: Systematic account of people and sites

The second phase included two main instruments (ego-centered network maps and geographic maps) that were both framed by a semi-structured interview to explain the visual data that was being produced. I explained to the respondents that I had gained an insight into their transnational relationships through the first interviews. Some people and sites had been named in this first account, and I wanted to systematize these issues further. [24]

To fill out the maps, I asked the respondents to annotate the people who were important to them for their relationship with Spain on the network map, always imagining themselves at the center of the map. Three sectors provided some guidance by dividing the map into three areas: family (*Familie*), friends and leisure time (*Freunde/Freizeit*), and work (*Beruf*). Further guidance was given by

5 The interviews were conducted in German. The excerpt provided here is, therefore, a direct translation by myself. Some annotations on the maps later are, therefore, also in German and some in Spanish, as we often referred to people and places in Spain. With some of the interviewees, the conversations even switched, at some point, to Spanish.

three concentric circles indicating how important or how near a person was to the respondent.

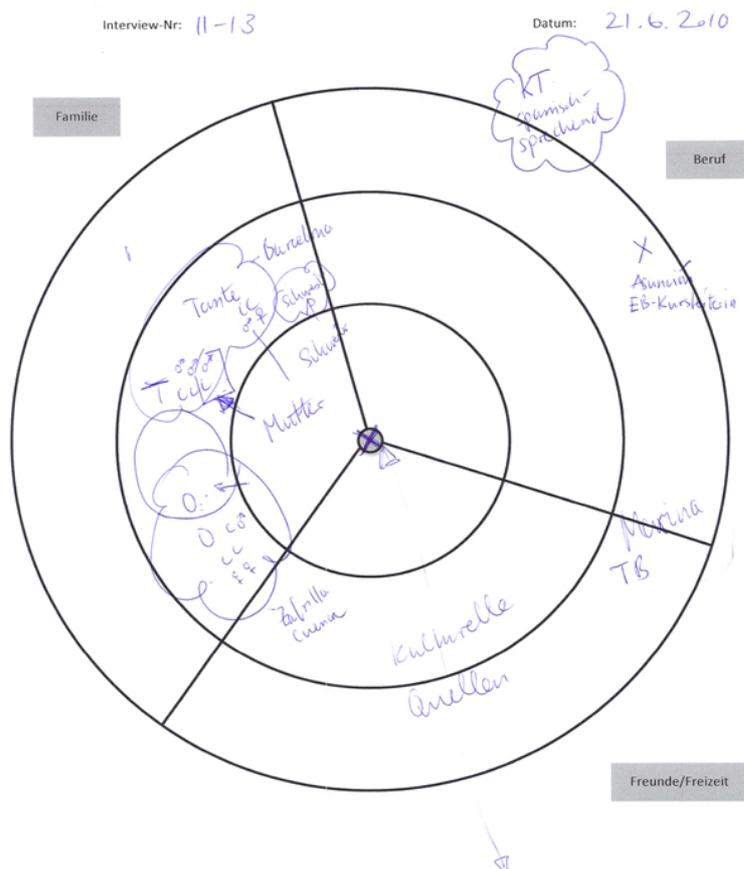


Figure 2: Ego-centric network map [25]

The respondent who drew and commented on this network map annotated most of the people relevant for his relationship to Spain on the side of the family. Some rather distant contacts in the professional field connect him to Spain. On the side of non-familial and non-professional relationships, he wrote, *kulturelle Quellen* [cultural sources] and explained later that his main contact with Spain consisted of cultural elements such as music (especially the songs collected by Federico García LORCA), literature, and art. The comments on the map given during the interview are very important in explaining such an annotation. They are equally important in explaining the relationship with the various persons annotated. The account clarifies, for instance, why the people pertaining to the family are all drawn in clouds: the contact is loose, if not non-existent. He mostly remembered the number of aunts, uncles, and cousins but could not remember all their names. Some contacts are more concrete and constitute, therefore, the persons (*Mutter*, *Schwester*—mother, sister) that connect him to this distant and "cloudy" kinship. On the line between professional contacts and friends or leisure time, he wrote my name, thereby including me in the network of people who connect him to Spain. [26]

After drawing these network maps, we proceeded to mark the sites where the people of the network-map live or belong on a geographical map of Spain. I then asked the respondents to tell me about these sites, what they remember about them, and what they mean to them. I also asked them, once the sites from the network map were marked, whether there were any other important sites that we had missed. They marked them as well and told me about their relationships with these sites.



Figure 3: Geographical map [27]

The geographical map shown here shows the sites I marked on the map derived from the network map (black crosses) and the additional sites or regions that the respondents talked about and named later (green areas). The geographical map served two purposes. On the one hand, it helped to talk about concrete sites, name them, and recall stories, memories, or concrete habits connected to them. On the other hand, the map also displayed many other possible sites in Spain and enhanced the accounts of the respondents because it helped them to remember sites that were, perhaps, not directly linked to specific persons or that also had lost their importance over the years but were still linked to important memories. This map shows quite clearly that if I had asked questions only about the sites related to people in the network map, I would have missed a great deal of information. This is especially important, as these sites are often linked to experiences the respondents had without their families, perhaps traveling by themselves and, therefore, establishing their own way of experiencing and relating to the country. [28]

4.3 Phase 3: Traveling

The third phase consisted of various elements that basically followed the people and sites resulting from the second phase. The sites I visited and observed resulted in photographs and field notes. The photographs were later used for the final interviews in the fourth phase. The following two photographs represent a street in the old part of Barcelona where one of the respondents lived for a year while attending a program at the University of Barcelona (Figure 4) and a beach on the coast of Galicia (a region in the northwestern corner of Spain) where a cousin of one of the respondents took me to show where they hold Sunday gatherings when their relatives from Switzerland come to visit them.



Figure 4: Carrer Sant Pere Mitja (Barcelona)



Figure 5: Beach on the coast of Galicia [29]

Sites and people were sometimes directly linked, as the second photograph exemplifies; in other cases, I asked the friends or relatives during interviews whether they had some special relationship with the sites mentioned by the respondents or whether there were other significant sites for them that were linked to the relationship with their relatives or friends living in Switzerland. The following excerpt from an interview refers to the street in the center of Barcelona pictured in the photograph (Figure 4).

Interviewer: "We have been talking about sites in Switzerland where you visited. Are there any sites in Barcelona that have to do with Teresa [a niece in Switzerland]?"

Aunt 1: "Well, what I thought was funny, when she came the second time with her partner, they went to live in the old part of the city, where I had given my first classes. And, well, I like the old part very much. Now, when I pass there, that makes me think of her. But that is rather recent."

Aunt 2: "You used to take her to the zoo."

Aunt 1: "Well, but that was when she was very young. But when she spent a whole year here, then we used to go the Palau de la Musica [concert hall]. But yes, it is mainly this little, tiny flat they had in the old part of the city that makes me remember her when I pass there." [30]

4.4 Phase 4: Drawing spaces

Finally, back in Switzerland, I met the respondents a final time to tell them, on the one hand, about my experiences in Spain with their relatives and, on the other hand, to complete the empirical design and address the spatial question. Visiting the respondents for the third time, the meetings started off very relaxed, almost like a meeting of friends. I began the meeting by telling them what I had done in Spain and whom I had visited, and I showed them the material I had collected. [31]

The photographs made them remember experiences they had not told me about before. For instance, the picture above showing a beach on the Galician coast (Figure 5) made one of the respondents remember that he used to go there as a child with his uncle to catch crabs. They used to bring them to his aunt, who cooked them for dinner. By talking about people and sites, the social and spatial formation that, in migration studies, is commonly called transnational social spaces became palpable. In the course of these conversations, I drew what we were talking about: Switzerland, the sites there, Spain, and the respective sites, people, and connections (Figure 6).

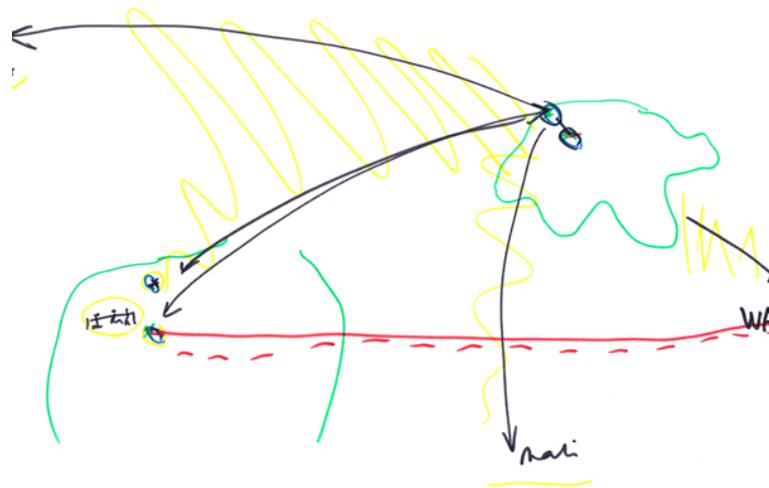


Figure 6: Drawing spaces: sites and connections [32]

The drawing shows Switzerland (the green area at the top right) and the Spanish peninsula (the green area at the bottom left) with people and sites marked in a very geographic way, localizing them in their respective countries. The black arrows represent connections between people and sites in these two countries and beyond. The red line refers to a special gift for a friend in Australia, where family members from Switzerland, Spain, and Mali had taken part in the idea, the purchase, and the shipping. The yellow-hatched area represents the transnational social space. In drawing this amoeboid formed space, I raised the topic without naming and explaining it. [33]

As one of the respondents did not agree with my version of sites, connections, distances, and all the notions implied by the drawing above, he made his own drawing:

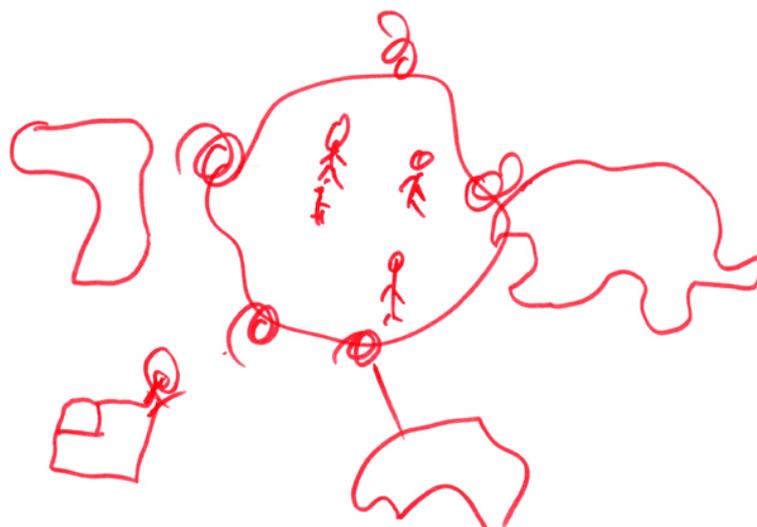


Figure 7: Drawing spaces: the time warp [34]

His drawing shows the family in the middle, comprising various persons. Something he called a "time warp" connects the family to different countries or locations: Switzerland, Spain, Australia, and the U.S.A. From his perspective, the family constitutes an entity that links different sites around the world and, with modern communication and transportation technologies, they can jump distances like in a science fiction film and be present (at least virtually) where their relationships link them. [35]

5. Experiences and Reflections

The data shown above are excerpts. They do not constitute a representative selection of my data and should, therefore, be read only as an empirical showcase. This article was not meant to provide an analysis of the data, but to present the mixed-methods approach and discuss its implications. [36]

The empirical design evolved with the research. At the beginning, it was defined that I would conduct biographical interviews with a first set of people of the Spanish second generation in Switzerland and that I would make a selection of central cases for further research. It was also decided to get to know the point of view of people within the networks. The various phases and instruments emerged gradually from the ongoing data gathering. It is important to note that the other two sub-projects did not follow exactly the same design. In each sub-project we tried to adapt the design as much as possible to the group of people we were researching in order to achieve rich data. The ego-centric network maps were, for instance, a less successful tool for researching the networks of the first generation Colombians. The responsible researcher had to rely more on narrative interviewing. The design and instruments worked well with my group of respondents, enhancing them in their accounts and allowing them to develop their own ideas about transnational social spaces and all the elements that constitute them. It proved extremely helpful to divide the analytical spaces into the time, people, and site components. As all of them are linked, they even enhanced each other: some people are linked to certain sites, or some sites are linked to certain periods in a person's life. [37]

Nonetheless, the research was based on the trust of my respondents. Without the respondents entrusting me with their contacts and their accounts, such a project would never have been possible. On the one hand, this represented a vital factor for success; on the other hand, it made me also become more and more part of my respondents' networks and their experiences. For instance, one respondent annotated me as part of his network that links with Spain because I made him think about his relationship with Spain. Another example is that, in the course of the several phases, some of the interviewees started to speak Spanish with me, as if the research had given us a sense of common experience. This posed the old problem of empirical closeness and analytical distance. [38]

The common experience I shared with the interviewees is partly due to the project itself. Visiting their family members and friends and especially traveling and visiting all these sites gave me experiences that we could suddenly share: we

knew the same people, had been to the same sites (of course to a different extent), and now had a common ground. This common ground was double in the sense that I shared with them the experience of belonging to the Spanish second generation in Switzerland. [39]

The growing interest in methods that capture movement itself has resulted in the coining of the term "moving methods" (TARRIUS, 2001; WATTS & URRY, 2008). This notion acknowledges that, if we want to understand movement, we also need adequate methods. This article was inspired by this notion but did not directly deal with movement as the subject of study. Movement was, nonetheless, an important notion throughout my empirical design. In particular, the notion of the moving researcher might be an important aspect for further consideration. I have described my own travel as a way of gathering data and as a common experience I shared afterward with my respondents. I would even argue that traveling to Spain was not only a means to gather data but was in itself a way of gathering data about traveling, about leaving Switzerland—the language, the climate, the sites—and arriving in Spain, meeting people, and talking about loved ones back in Switzerland. [40]

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