

Local City: Global People: New Perspectives on Migrant Simultaneity

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We begin with a scene from our current research. Nina and several students arrive at the God's Outreach Church in Manchester New Hampshire. The church is of the store front variety, situated on a block of shabby frame houses in a neighborhood inhabited by a mix of immigrants, refugees, and working class natives. The researchers have been invited by a Nigerian minister, Heaven's Gift, to come to his church and hear him preach. We are not sure what to expect. In Halle, Germany, Nina has been visiting a congregation of charismatic Christians who are primarily Nigerian, although there is a scattering of people from other African countries and a few German women. As soon as we walk through the door, we see that this church is different. Almost all of the congregants are white, their dress and the battered nature of their faces bearing witness to the harshness of their lives. Off to the side of the congregants Heaven's Gift sits, dressed in suit and tie, with his wife next to him in her Sunday best of good dress and church going hat. A white preacher conducts most of the service, accompanied by a small group of musicians, one of whom is a Ghanaian with a Harvard degree and a good job. When Heaven's Gift is called to preach to his fellow congregants he moves many to high emotion then calls on them to be healed. At his touch they silently fall to the floor in a state of bliss or trance.

There is much to be said about the parishioners and their Nigerian preacher but in this presentation I want to focus on questions of simultaneous incorporation. The research from which this vignette is drawn is from ongoing research we are currently conducting in two small cities that are experiencing new diverse migrations, Manchester NH and

Halle in eastern Germany. The object of the research is to better understand migrant simultaneity, defined as multiple incorporation. At the same time that members of migrant populations and their descendents foster or construct social networks across state borders they also actively become incorporated into a new locality. Incorporation, in our approach, is based on social relations. It is a *way of being* (Glick Schiller 2003). *Ways of being* refer to the actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage and generate social fields. Individuals can be embedded in a social field but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field. *Ways of belonging* are categories of identity that are ascribed to or chosen by individuals or groups. *Ways of being* and *ways of belonging* may or may not be linked. Individuals may have some sort of connection to an identity through memory or nostalgia that may stay in the realm of the imagination or be a product of or lead them to establishing social relations on the basis of that identity. These connections --near and far-- mean that daily practices as well as ideas may be shaped by forces not confined to the nation-state. Therefore, some forms of *ways of being* and *ways of belonging* are transnational.

Underlying our research is the hypothesis that migrant simultaneity is a basic frequent response to the migration process and therefore will be found across states and despite different legal regimes, public rhetorics, and provisions of services. The nature of the forms of simultaneity may vary between states, cultural groups, gender, and class but underneath the variation, migrants find ways of both incorporating within and across state boundaries. In this paper I will sketch, through the use of ethnographic examples, the way we are operationalizing simultaneous incorporation in this research. I will focus specifically on forms of religious simultaneous incorporation.

Theory Based Ethnographic Research

Our research is part of the current effort to move beyond the dichotomy within migration research between assimilationism, old and new, and transnational studies. In point of fact, from the beginning of transnational migration research, ethnographers had described simultaneous incorporation of migrants (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc; Kearney; Rouse 1992). Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, Cristina Szanton had specifically defined transnationalism as living simultaneously in two or more nation-states (1992; 1994; 1995). Yet because transnational ties had been understudied or systematically ignored and obscured as a result of methodological nationalism, most research and writing on transnational migration focused on the nature, persistence, frequency, degree of novelty, and cause of transborder relations (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; 2003). To critique the new transnational framework for the study of migration, a host of researchers responded with evidence of immigrant incorporation fostering and flaunting a theory of the new assimilationism (Alba; Kovisto). In this debate, and in the euphoria of new paradigm construction that has accompanied the growth of transnational studies, with significant exceptions such as Itzigsohn and Faist, simultaneity generally remained undefined, understudied, and underappreciated. Any data we have that has been systematically collected about simultaneity speaks only to several very specific dimensions of incorporation, economic activities and political affiliations and practices. Various researchers have noted that those individuals who maintain dense transnational connections tend to be the most incorporated into their new land. However, the dynamics of this simultaneity have not been explored.

In contrast our ethnography is examining simultaneous incorporation in its multiple dimensions. In the new land in which migrants settle, we examine a range of incorporative activities that link people to both homeland and new land. We also explore the range of ways of belonging that such activities both generate and reflect. How do we know simultaneity when we see it?

The choice of Manchester, New Hampshire and Halle, Germany, both small cities that are just now experiencing new migrations, reflect our interest in several issues that have an impact on the study of simultaneity including the size of the city, its previous migration history, the novelty of the current flows, and the institutional context established to respond to new migrants. Both are small cities that share a history of defining themselves as homogenous in culture and representative of their region, despite histories of earlier migrations and refugee flows. We are interested in ways in which the city, as a context for settlement, shapes the nature of the simultaneous adaptation. Most studies of migrant settlement and the theory generated from it have reflected the situation in large cities with well established and dense migrant populations that have organized themselves into ethnic communities and urban institutions organized to respond to ethnic communities. Migrant settlement in small cities with new migrations may well be different. In such contexts, settlement may well take the forms of ways of being and belonging that utilize transnational connections and identities but not ones that are based on homeland identities. Religious, regional, professional, social ties from the Masons to the Boy Scouts may be more visible as forms of incorporation. That is to say the context of the city may produce different forms of simultaneous incorporation. Or it may well be that because we so frequently concentrate on the visible ethnic communities of large

cities we miss that fact that even those cities foster multiple forms of incorporation within the new land and the homeland. At any rate, it is our belief that small cities provide excellent settings to explore the processes of simultaneous incorporation as it varies across or within groups.

City as Context

The city of Manchester has a population of 107,000 but the population of greater Manchester numbers almost 200,000. Greater Manchester includes towns that directly border on Manchester and is both a federal statistical unit and a catchment area for the provision of certain social services. The 2000 census reports 6.58 percent of the population of Manchester was foreign born. However, this number includes a fair number of elderly French Canadians, English, Greek, and Irish immigrants who have lived for over fifty years in the US. The foreign born from these four countries, almost all of whom are now established residents of Manchester who identify as Americans, make up 34% of the foreign born. The new immigrants therefore make up 4.2% of greater Manchester or about 8000 documented immigrants and refugees.

Manchester is a city founded on massive textile mills that in the 19th and early 20th century attracted a largely immigrant labor force. During its period of industrialization, Manchester did consider itself a city of immigrants but there was a heavy assimilationist pressure so that by 1990, visible signs of migration were few, ethnic organizations of French Canadians, Greek or Irish immigrants were moribund or filled with the elderly, and few people identified themselves as immigrants. Typical of this attitude is the response of a French speaking, French Canadian nun who when asked

about immigrant elderly, said there were none in Manchester because the newcomers were all younger people.

The departure of industry began in the 1930s and continued through the 1960s. A new migration began in the 1960s, primarily but not exclusively Spanish speaking, but the newcomers only became publicly visible and an issue of public policy in the 1990s when a diverse migration of primary and secondary immigrants and refugees settled and began to open up a range of small businesses. They were attracted by the availability of jobs, affordable housing, and public safety. Advocates for the new immigrants claim that some 70 languages are now spoken in the Manchester public schools but the schools' own census actually reports that children reported 40 different languages as their first languages.

As the number of immigrants grows in Manchester, there is increased public discussion of crime and a drain on public services but it is relatively minor compared to other locations (West 1992; Morris 1999); and there has also been a celebration of the new migration on the part of the current mayor and some of the business leadership. The mayor for example has made a point at both his inaugurations to have immigrants dressed in what the Mayor describes as "their native costumes" come to the podium and lead the assembled on-lookers in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The context for this positive reception is the niche that the newcomers fill in the economic development aspirations of the city leadership. The base of Manchester's re-emergence as a location of population and economic growth, after more than seventy years of decline, has not been "new economy" industries. Rather migrants have been attracted by the availability of jobs in low wage, low tech shops from meat packing to

axle making. On this base, city leaders have been hoping to build a new vibrant economy, hoping to attract more investment by celebrating their new cultural diversity as an indicator that the city has entered the age of globalization. The recent economic slowdown combined with skyrocketing housing costs may crush the hopes of both migrants and city leaders. The reports we are getting of undocumented Mexicans returning in significant numbers to Mexico serve as an indicator of the problem.

In the course of the past decade a set of institutions, some public, some non-governmental organizations supported by a range of public and private monies have established programs for and about the newcomers. With the support of state and federal programs and monies they have established a cultural diversity niche that has an impact on the way in which migrants understand themselves and their relationship to the city. In this niche newcomers are most often imagined as organized into ethnic communities, with the ethnicity defined in terms of nation-states of origin such as Vietnamese, Bosnian or Haitian. The category of Hispanic and African are also becoming prominent as ethnic identifiers. In this form of ethnic labeling, cultural politics, and identity construction, the city of Manchester follows patterns of structuring ethnicity for newcomers that has been well documented for large US cities. Researchers increasingly understand that organizations deploying these ethnic representations, whether they are social service organizations, neighborhood groups, or church congregations, are adopting a particular form of incorporation into the US. This form of incorporation is now publicly acknowledged within the politics of multiculturalism. What researchers less often acknowledged until the recent interest in transnational studies is the fact that many of

these organizations or their individual members may also maintain a range of transnational connections.

However, our research in Manchester highlights other forms of incorporation. I will just briefly outline a few of these forms as they emerge from our data about religious activities in Manchester. Our data make clear that the study of religious incorporation cannot be reduced to national identities either in a local ethnic form or transnational homeland ties. Let's return first to that minister from Nigeria. This minister has not formed a Nigerian congregation. In a city such as Manchester that would be difficult since there are only a handful of Nigerians in Manchester and they include Catholics and Muslims. However he has also not tried to build a broader African identity, although the multicultural politics of Manchester would encourage such an organization and there are several hundred African Protestants in Manchester. Instead he preaches at an evangelical church that is mostly white working class but includes in its ranks a Ghanaian Harvard graduate, and an Iraqi and Sudanese family.

Heaven's Gift was in fact able to relocate as a political refugee in Manchester through a powerful network of the Christian right and once in Manchester his knowledge of US life has been obtained by moving primarily within a circle of born again Christians of different classes. He is connected to a host of religious networks in the US that extend within the city where he has settled, throughout the US, and into countries around the world. This is his primary social field in terms of the density of his networks. He often chooses to conceptualize his public identity as neither Nigerian nor American but Christian. With this identity, he is becoming part of the social fabric of Manchester. He knows the former Mayor, a Republican known for his dislike of immigrants and blacks,

and knows state and federal officials. Heaven's Gift has a missionary office in Manchester, assisted by a Puerto Rican assistant and he moves readily in a circle of white ministers to whom he preaches the importance of making Manchester a city of Christians.

Yet the clock on the office of this mission is set to Nigerian time so he can keep track of the time in his office in Port Harcourt which is also linked to the world wide born again network to which he belongs. Among his transnational projects is an effort to locate used computers to train Nigerian youth.

Other African Protestants also tend to settle in an array of different local Manchester white congregations. At least this seems to be the case in terms of the Sierra Leonean and Southern Sudanese whom we have interviewed. There are a handful of Spanish-speaking Protestant churches that draw from a diverse population of Spanish speakers, including Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Colombians, and Mexicans.

But not all Spanish speakers, even new arrivals choose these churches, which at any rate are not organized along national lines. The religious affiliation a migrant established before leaving home can lead people into incorporation into Manchester. The religious group offers a welcoming non-ethnic community in the new city complete with youth activities and helps the newcomers to furnish their new home the appropriate style, as well as providing advice, companionship, and connections to social services.

This was the experience of Ray and his family. Ray and his wife were Mormons in El Salvador. Ray had traveled as a Mormon missionary in the region, before his current migration. When Ray settled in Manchester eight months ago, joining his mother and siblings who preceded him, he continued to make the Mormon Church a central part of his social as well as religious life, although his is only one of two Spanish-speaking

families in the congregation; the rest of the congregants are white natives of New Hampshire. Before he had been in town six months, and with the English he learned in that time period, he became a scout leader at the church. Although there is a Latin American center in Manchester and several organizations of Hispanics, Ray lives in a Manchester unconnected to any of these institutions. To operationalize incorporation into Manchester we need to use as measures the kind of contribution Ray makes to civil society through his scouting activities, the use he and his wife make of voluntary services such as ESL classes in a local Congregational church, and their interest in community activities such as programs on immigrants rights.

At the point at which we interviewed him, Ray was less interested in connections with his homeland than most of more than fifty migrants we have interviewed. Ray is in love with Manchester, seeing it as a paradise compared to his hometown and country, torn apart by the natural disaster of a hurricane and the human disaster of civil war. Yet his Mormon connections placed him in a world that stretches far beyond national boundaries. Meanwhile he still owns a house in El Salvador.

Catholic immigrants and refugees find themselves experiencing a range of different kinds of incorporation that may reinforce national identities or make other ways of belonging salient. While migrants are free to go to any parish, they are often not welcome. However, the Catholic Church has organized a specific parish which simultaneously constructs migrants as cultural others while making them part of the multicultural fabric of Manchester. Migrants are encouraged to attend mass at this parish, which is organized into specific masses for Vietnamese, Spanish speakers, and Africans. The African mass is particularly interesting because it is conducted in English by a

Nigerian priest who was specifically recruited by the Catholic Church to minister to African parishes in Worcester and Springfield Massachusetts and Manchester New Hampshire. The impetus came not from Africans but from the Catholic diocese in Worcester who believed that Africans were not attending church because it was not conducted in an African style: that is singing, dancing, and drumming. The idea was adopted by the Manchester parish and a mass was organized separately for Africans, even though it is in English and most of the African parishioners speak French, Swahili, and/or Arabic as trade languages, or local languages such as Dinka. A Nigerian congregant was recruited to help because he also speaks English. On specific holy days such as Easter the white American Church leadership pulls the congregations together for what is termed a multicultural mass. They also try to do this around the saint's day of the Virgin of Guadeloupe, a Mexican virgin and national symbol. Operationalizing incorporation in Manchester must also include the emergence of this new form of worship for the parishioners in this parish which highlights their status as newcomers, even as they become parishioners.

The people we have interviewed within this parish, whether their legal status is immigrant or refugee, have a range of personal connections to their homeland that rest on a foundation of family ties. They do not belong to hometown organizations; however they may have local African ethnic networks that stretch across religious affiliations. Gusi people from Kenya for example have friendship networks that connect people who worship in an African Seventh Day Adventist service in Lowell MA and in the Catholic African Mass in Manchester. Almost all people speak about the necessity and burden of sending home money including the Nigerian priest. But this becomes almost a silent

taken for granted activity of life, limiting the funds available for settlement but not the desire or the many efforts big and small to enter daily life in Manchester.

We find the emergence of cross-ethnic and cross-national forms of religious community among Muslims also. Manchester has a mosque. Currently there is not a separate structure, although after a struggle land has been purchased and permission secured to build. Meanwhile people worship in a rented space in an office building. The worshippers come from an array of countries. While South Asians predominate, the worshippers are very diverse and include people from Morocco, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Bosnia as well as from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India. In addition there are several men and women who are converts. We must take note of the converts because they remind us that incorporation is a two way street. People become part of Manchester by bringing Manchester into Islam as well as Islam into Manchester.

The mosque is part of a transnational Islam. Prayer leaders for Ramadan included second generation Pakistanis from London. It is also becoming part of Manchester, NH, and the US both in terms of the social connections it is making as an organization and in its understanding of the structure of race and identity in the US. To communicate the message of a multicultural America in a post-September 11th world, the Mayor, Police Chief, and past and present state Attorney Generals have made visits to the mosque. So, however, has the FBI, and mosque leaders are aware of the targeting and demonization of Islam. On one occasion, a worshipper charged with delivering the Friday sermon responded by quoting from Martin Luther King, telling the assembled members that Muslims are the new blacks of America, and urging them to organize in order to obtain civil rights. To operationalize the incorporation of the members of the mosque into

Manchester we must take into consideration the claiming of social citizenship through rights advocacy. This claim to rights and belonging co-exists with the use by the mosque of transnational Muslim connections, and the maintenance of mosque members of an array of home ties that may include networks to arrange marriages, support families, buy property, and build houses.

In the background of these local developments looms the chilling effect of the USA Patriot Act and the downturn in the US and global economy. As the economy cools, jobs become more difficult to get or keep, and migrants' efforts to incorporate into Manchester and transnationally are threatened. The United States without employment can be a most unwelcoming place. Persons back home expect a flow of money and resources. Transnational communication in the form of frequent phone calls, satellite news, mailed videos of weddings and celebrations all require resources. Meanwhile migrants whose backgrounds link them to middle Mexico rather than the Middle East are finding that INS agents search their house without warrants under the cover of the Patriot act. It becomes more difficult to even explain our research to migrants when people feel that an immigrant identity of any kind makes them suspect as un-American. In the past in Manchester many migrants shed their homeland ties and much of their cultures in the face of massive assimilative pressure. Currently, we have seen that the flourishing of migrant identities and cultures is encouraging the descendants of older migrations to more openly celebrate their diverse origins. The degree to which migrant simultaneity will persist in the current political climate is uncertain.

However, whatever the context, locally, regionally, nationally, or globally, to assess the continuing changing context of migrant incorporation in Manchester and

nationally, we must approach the topic not as a catalogue of cultural changes. Rather we must look at the development of new networks that bring people into new and varied sets of social relations. These social relations make the newcomers part of social fields that connect migrants to different sets of institutions which are part of the political, economic, social and religious institutions that reproduce the US nation-state. The religious organizations described in this paper, the born-again churches, the Mormons, the Catholic church, and the mosque all do just that. To assess simultaneous incorporation is to research the persisting or new connections that migrants also maintain transnationally. All of the religious organizations we have described have transnational connections which complexify and in some ways validate the migrants own more personal familial transnational ties. When we explore *ways of being* ethnographically, we examine the range of ways that simultaneity can be lived.