

Migrant integration and transnational linkages

Using a human security framing to move beyond nationalist presumptions

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Our main argument

- Critical review of literature on integration and transnationalism:
 - This literature reflects policy and public opinion concerns in culturally diverse (Western) societies
 - Suffers from methodological nationalism
- Human security analysis can help overcome limitations and brings new light

Integration and transnationalism: the literature

- Asked whether integration and transnational ties can coexist alongside one another
- Could not offer unanimous conclusions
- Turned to exploring different combinations / interactions of integration and transnationalism

Integration and transnationalism: competing loyalties?

The working concepts of integration and transnationalism seem based on underlying conception of these terms as opposites rooted in potentially competing loyalties

- Integration: adaptation to the norms & values of host society with the onus on the migrants to assimilate
- Transnationalism: transnational=ethnic communities; homogeneous set of belongings & actions; assumed to be a friction-free state of being

Methodological nationalism

Mainstream migration scholars “accept national borders as the borders of society and as the necessary institutional nexus for citizenship, democratic rights or a social welfare state” (Glick-Schiller 2010: 109).

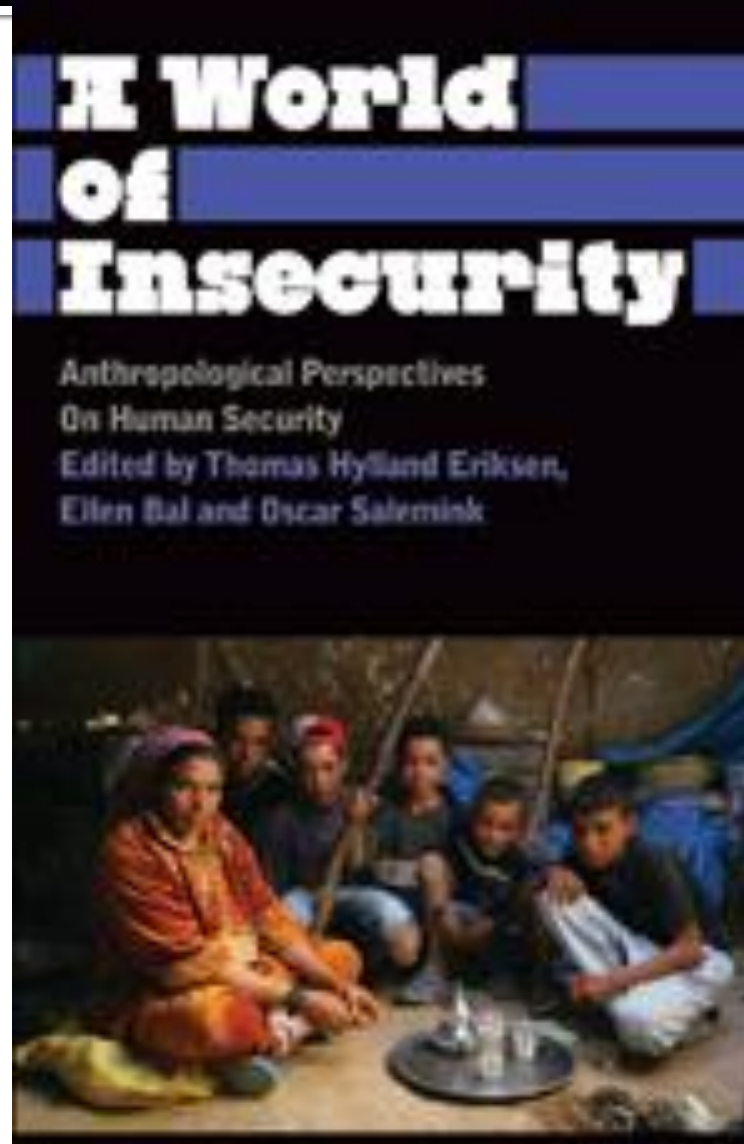
Failure to take up the earlier critical stance in 'transnationalism' research

Later transnational scholars “have responded to critiques of dual nationalities and transnational social fields by assurances that migrants with such ties and loyalties can and will rapidly assimilate”, thus contributing “to the assumption [...] that the migrant/native divide is the fundamental challenge to social cohesion and the stability and welfare of the states in which migrants settle” (Glick Schiller 2010: 109)

A human security framing

- Focuses on the ways in which different actors engage in integration and transnationalism as the outcome of a mutual bargaining process of material and emotional security
- Allows looking at transnationalism and integration as socially constructed and relational concepts and phenomena, rooted in specific understandings of ethnicity and difference

An example – Eriksen et al. 2010



Human security analysis: sources of insights (1)

Adopts a global framework

- Allows looking beyond methodological nationalism
- Can analyse integration and transnationalism as processes that interact inside nation-states, while people are embedded in multiple social & territorial frameworks
- Focuses on security at different scales that link personal, local, national, transnational

Human security analysis: sources of insights (2)

Takes a person-centred perspective

- Combines methodological individualism with the acknowledgment that people are members of (multiple) communities
- Anthropological-style focus on how people experience and live migration, allows a deeper understanding of migration systems and how they evolve

Human security analysis: sources of insights (3)

Combines global framework and person-centred perspective to uncover linkages between the two

- Restores transnationalism's concern for social justice rather than for nation-building projects of states
- Offers a framework that does better justice to contemporary rise of new nationalism, global interconnections, new precarities

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In conclusion

- Human security analysis interrogates a prevalent focus on integration as migrants' capacity to adapt and fit into existing societal structures, and interrogates the interpretation of those very structures by policymakers, academics, migrants and non-migrants
- It enters into the life-worlds, constraints, opportunities, and subjectivities of all participants and considers how these are interlinked

**Your comments
are welcome!**

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