Rethinking Native Anthropology: Migration and Auto-Ethnography in the Post-Accession Europe

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Abstract. This paper embarks on the epistemological debate on native anthropology and examines the complexities inherent in the process of production of ethnographic knowledge in the post-accession Europe. The author first addresses the questions of reflexivity in anthropology. In relation to this, the paper discusses the interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives on researcher's positionality in the field of the study and situatedness of knowledge claims. Subsequently, the author demonstrates how their own status as a native anthropologist was played out in their ethnographic fieldwork among Polish migrants in Belfast. To this end, the author examines their positionality in the field, pointing to intricacies of the insider/outsider status. Next, the paper focuses on the dialectics at work in carrying out an ethnographic study among the members of the same ethnic group, but away from home. It indicates potential disadvantages and advantages deriving from such a situation.

Keywords: *native anthropology, reflexivity, positionality, situated knowledge.*

Introduction

The postmodern turn drew attention of anthropologists to complexities inherent in the process of knowledge production. This involved re/depositioning the researcher from 'all knowing' analyst to 'acknowledged participant' in the construction of always partial and situated accounts (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). With this, reflexivity has become a core element of ethnographic fieldwork (Marcus and Fischer 1986). Through reflexivity an anthropologist engages in a meta-analysis of their research, analysing how their identity has shaped the process of knowledge

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construction. This paper seeks to bring some fresh insights to such a reflexive approach in ethnographic writing, by re-examining the concept of 'native anthropology'. In the debates around this issue, the authors challenge the essentializing notions of 'the self' and discuss the complexities inherent in the location of the native anthropologist in the field of their study. Specific positionality of a native anthropologist tends to be examined with regards to the knowledge production and situatedness of epistemological claims. Such reflexivity permeates accounts of halfies, bi-cultural ethnographers on a culture to which they partially belong (Abu-Lughod, 1993, 2000; Kondo, 1986; Narayan, 1993; Shahrani, 1994). Many of them find themselves at specific fieldsites demarcated by a series of crosscutting boundaries of borderland regions, in particular Tex-Mex la frontera (Anzaldua, 1987; Moraga, 1981, 1983; Rosaldo, 1989). It is often the case that anthropologists who were previously the subjects of ethnography become the authors of studies of their own group or 'ethnic autobiography', which consists of personal narratives written by members of ethnic minority groups (Reed-Danahay, 1997, 2).

Drawing on these debates, this paper seeks to discuss the important questions regarding the status of a native anthropologist in the EU, which emerge as a result of researcher's positioning within a complex web of multiple crosscutting cultural and social fields. This is particularly important due to the changes in the nature of anthropological research in Europe in the recent decades. The formation of border-free zone within the EU has created a new arena for ethnographic studies. Owing to the increased influx of migrants within some of the European countries, such as UK, Belgium, Germany and France, new important concerns emerge, in particular, with regards to the methodology of how to study migration as it actually happens. With regards to this, another issue that this paper will tackle are the possible implications of doing fieldwork in a situation when a native anthropologist leaves their homeland, parting with the familiar and the well-known, in order to follow their compatriots on their migratory pathways. This paper will examine the specificity of the situation of a native anthropologist in such a setting, by referring closely to my specific experience of conducting fieldwork among Polish community in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Firstly, different perspectives on the process of knowledge production will be discussed, justifying why it is crucial to embrace reflexivity in ethnographic research, and setting out in more depth a theoretical background for this text. Subsequently, the paper will explore the concept of a 'native anthropologist', pointing to complexities inherent in the relations of a researcher with their informants, and looking into the issue of insider/ outsider perspectives. The next part will deal with practicalities and ethical issues related to my fieldwork to then follow on to the methodological section of this paper, which will consider the specificity of conducting ethnographic fieldwork among the members of the same culture, but 'away from home' as well as possible epistemological issues emerging from that.

Positionality, reflexivity and situated knowledge

Following the post-modern turn in anthropology, the turning the lens onto the anthropologists themselves, putting into question the validity of the ethnographic data coming as a result of a study, and questioning if there is any objective truth marked anthropological enterprise. The anthropologist does not go to the field with tabula rasa, but, rather, takes with him/her certain interpretative system of his/her own culture (Kananeeh 1997, 7). In anthropological fieldwork relationships between the researcher and the researched which form the basis of conclusions and further studies, come as a result of situations in which an anthropologist participates. Seen from this angle, ethnographers help to construct situations which later become their data. They construct partial accounts, which are 'systems – or economies – of truth' (Clifford, 1986, 7). Power and history work through their accounts in a way they cannot fully control (1986, 7). In this way anthropological accounts are merely certain representations of social reality. An anthropologist in the field should be considered as a positioned author and interactions in the field are not just between persons but between social agents carrying certain cultural predispositions and engaged in power relations (Okely 1994).

For these reasons reflexivity in ethnography became a crucial tool in understanding how the researcher came to know. Reflexivity in ethnography involves an ongoing process which constantly returns to the questions 'What do I know?' and 'How

do I know it?' in order to maintain continual questioning as to where the information has been created (Hertz, 1997, viii). In feminist epistemology a concept of 'situated knowledge' has been applied to designate such a nature of knowledge claims (see further Hill Collins, 1993; Harding, 1991; Hartsock, 1999). The questions that feminist researchers ask are among others: What is the nature of objectivity? Does it require 'point of viewlessness'? (...) Must the researcher be disinterested, dispassionate and socially invisible to the subject? (Harding, 1991, 109) As an answer to this question, feminist researchers believe that strong objectivity requires what they refer to as 'strong reflexivity' (1991, 136). Sandra Harding maintains that the reason for this is because culturewide (or nearly culturewide) beliefs function as evidence at every stage in scientific inquiry: in the selection of problems, the formation of hypotheses, the design of research, the collection of data, the interpretation and sorting of data, decisions about when to stop research, the way results of research are reported and so on (1991, 136). The concept of situated knowledge has been later adapted by Kirin Narayan, who claims that all knowledge is partial and 'situated in the relation to people we study' (1993, 678). Given the situatedness of knowledge claims, reflexivity in ethnographic research should involve reflection on on self, process, and representation, and critically examining power relations and politics in the research process, and researcher accountability in data collection and interpretation. A reflexive research process can open up the research to more complex and

nuanced understandings of issues, where boundaries between process and content can get blurred.

Through anthropological reflexivity we are able to 'forgo nostalgic ideas of discovery' and appreciate the 'complex ways that diverse representations has constituted anthropology's subject matter' (Marcus, 1998, 197). As to the inclusion of personal information in the ethnography, Robert Krizek states:

> I recognize that part of going 'there' might include, in many research undertakings, staying 'here,' and part of understanding 'them' might include a reflexive examination of 'me.' Under no circumstances, however, at least for me, does ethnography, including the excavation of personal narratives, involve simply staying 'here' and understanding or studying 'me.' (2003, 145)

It should be noted here that reflexive anthropology has been accused of boiling down to 'navel-gazing' and solipsism. However, I do not believe that being reflexive about one's own positionality in the field is to self-indulge but rather it is a self-conscious reflection of how one is located within certain power structure and how this may influence methods, interpretations, and knowledge production.

Native anthropology and insider/outsider status

This paper will touch on a kind of reflexive anthropology, in which the authors are the subjects of their own studies. This kind of ethnographic approach started to flourish in ethnographic writing in the 80s and 90s. Kirin Narayan's essay 'How Native is a Native Anthropologist?' (1993) opened up the debate on the dichotomous relationship between a native anthropologist and insider. In her work, Narayan challenged the belief that native anthropologists are insiders regardless of their complex backgrounds as rooted in essentialist mode of thinking. She maintains, following other scholars, such as Messerschmidt (1981), that the extent to which a native anthropologist can be considered as an insider is questionable. Narayan then claims that 'factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider outsider status' (1993, 672). Hence, it should be always kept in mind that 'we all belong to different communities simultaneously [...]' as the anthropologist develops multiplex subjectivity with many crosscutting identifications (1993, 676). In other words, individuals then have not a single status but a status set (Merton, 1972, 22). To suggest that 'one must be one in order to understand one' is flawed as one is not just a woman, or white, or a college graduate, or middle-aged, but may be all of these and more (Merton, 1972, 24). Weston claims in a similar way that 'every situation carries its exoticisms, in so far as the exotic is always defined in relation to a set of assumptions held by the observer' (1991, 224). Strathern along the same line notices that 'being a member of the overarching culture or society in question does not mean that the anthropologist will adopt appropriate cultural genres' (1987, 18).

In a way anthropologists who study their own societies although unlikely to experience 'culture shock', they may be subjected to 'subculture shock' (Van Ginkel, 1998, 10).

The insider status can be a double-edged sword. On one hand it can be beneficial with regards to the production of anthropological knowledge. endo-ethnographers appear to have a good understanding of a macro-society and its daily routines, symbols and value systems, feelings of empathy (Van Ginkel, 1998: 256). In this respect, some of the suggested advantages arising from the insider status may be cultural intimacy, easier establishment of trust, and a lesser tendency for people under study to attempt to impress an insider and to present a more positive portrait of themselves (compare further Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). In the case of non-native anthropologists 'the ethnographic observation tends to become the 'negotiated reality' between the informants and the anthropologist, at least until the anthropologist's presence becomes less conspicuous'' (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984, 585). However, the same cultural intimacy can play to the ethnographer's disadvantage. Often, insiders tend to take certain things for granted, for example an insider's familiarity with a given social norm makes it even harder to discuss it with respondents due to the taken-for-granted reality. It is hard to take on position of being culturally blind and look at one's culture with a certain naïveté. Van Ginkel argues that whereas an anthropologist doing fieldwork away from home faces a challenge of how to 'get in' to the field, an endo-anthropologist is confronted with quite an opposite issue, that is,

how to 'get out in order to enable them to have an ethnographic gaze in familiar social environments' (1998, 258).

Drawing on these debates, the question that this paper is going to ask what could be the possible implications of carrying out ethnographic fieldwork among the members of one's culture but away from home. Such a situation creates an interesting context for debates on endo-ethnography as it adds on an additional layer of complexity to an already manifold positioning of the native anthropologist. Whilst an anthropologist in such a context locates himself among his own ethnic group, at the same time he is simultaneously confronted with the socio-cultural realm of the receiving society. Before I deal with the problems raised by my multiple identities in such a situation and their illuminating impact on my fieldwork and data analysis process, I consider it necessary to set the scene for my ethnographic encounter.

Research methods in brief and ethical considerations

My project started in December 2008 and lasted for one year until December 2009. During this period of time, I immersed myself in the socio-cultural worlds of Polish migrants. This included sharing accommodation with them and participating in different activities of the Polish community in Belfast, in more or less formalized settings. I went to Polish Saturday School lessons, and to dance and drama classes for the Polish youth. I also attended the Polish Catholic masses and visited Friday meetings of Polish

parents and children at a local church. Furthermore, I participated in other events, such as the Polish film festival, the Polish picnic, different feasts and carnival. While at the beginning of my fieldwork I mostly participated in the more formalized events, after a couple of months, I established rapport and developed good relations with my informants and often spent time with them on informal social occasions. For example, the migrants frequently invited me over for coffee or tea; for name's day and birthday parties. We would go for walks and trips together, and we would watch movies. I also was also invited to participate in festive events, such as Christmas dinner and Easter breakfast. Furthermore, I participated frequently in certain situations involving Polish migrants which arose at my workplaces. During my preliminary fieldwork it was a Mace shop, and at the beginning of my research it was a call centre. Finally, throughout the whole period of my fieldwork, there were situations in which I interpreted for Polish migrants: mostly at police stations, at GP practices, in the hospitals, courts, jobs and benefits offices, and schools. These sessions gave me more of an insight into the problems and issues that Polish migrants deal with in their daily lives.

In my research I emphasized to the members of the Polish community that my participation in community events was as a researcher gathering data for my study. I always asked my informants for their consent in the participation in my research, and I made sure they did not feel obliged in any way to participate. Furthermore, I protected the anonymity of the informants, using pseudonyms approved by the them, unless the person clearly stated

that they would like to have their name remain unchanged. Moreover, I took special care not to cause harm to people with whom I interacted as an anthropologist. For example, sometimes an interview may touch on sensitive issues, which may cause feelings of distress and emotional harm. I was extremely cautious when I was talking to the victims of hate crime. I made sure that it was not a problem for them to speak of it, and I assured them that they could stop at any time if they felt it was necessary. Also, I always probed if enough time had passed since the event in question had occurred.

Finally, I always aimed to give fair return to my informants for their help and services. I tried within reasonable limits to be as helpful as I could to my informants. I also always took care to take into account 'the centrality of reciprocal relationships and the saliency of mutual respect and understanding amongst all parties involved in all research relationships' (Va'a in Tengan, Ka'ili and Fonoti, 2010, 154, see further Anae, 2010). Most of the time, I helped them with their English, often filled out various forms on their behalf, accompanied them to banks, jobs and benefits offices, etc. In order to empower my informants, I also located an English course taking place in one the Presbyterian churches in Belfast and personally assisted them at the first lesson.

Endo-etnography among Polish migrants in Belfast

Overall I believe that my status as a native anthropologist helped me especially at the initial stage of my

research in establishing rapport with gatekeepers, in particular the Polish Association of Northern Ireland, and the Polish Saturday School. As a native speaker of the Polish language, employed as an interpreter, I was also able to collaborate closely with the organizations dealing with the issues concerning migrants, such as the Northern Irish Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland), and CAB (Citizen Advice Bureau). In addition, the fact that Polish is my native language contributed to my ability to communicate easily with my informants, who often do not speak English well. At the same time, thanks to my knowledge of the tacit rules – 'unspoken traditions imposed by myriad social forces on past, present and future' (Wolcott, 2005, 53), or 'socio-cultural grammar that guides behaviours and interpretations of these behaviours' (Fleisher, 1995, 12) among the members of my society, I had a better awareness of how these tacit rules constrain meaningful interpretations of the events and serve as a guide to action. In practical terms, I was able to maintain good relations with my informants, as I possessed intuitive knowledge about what kind of behaviours were acceptable in particular social situations and which are not.

However, the process of knowledge production, although facilitated by an ethnographer's insider status, is very complex and manifold, with other important aspects of the anthropological self coming into play and undergoing constant negotiation during the research. In terms of my own fieldwork, especially in the initial phase, different

dimensions of my identity, such as my status as a graduate female researcher coming from the capital of Poland, were, to use Narayan's terms, 'tugged into the open' (1993, 673) and at some points became an impediment to making my informants open up. This has been especially visible in relations with people from the rural areas of Poland, who often distrusted me as a scholar. I gradually gained their trust and friendship by referring to the situations that we had in common. For example, I often shared with my informants the fact that apart from being a researcher, during the first year of my PhD, I was working at a local shop as a sales assistant, engaging in burdensome tasks. It was particularly helpful in establishing rapport with the representatives of the working class, who understood my position and could easily relate to it.

Also, in case of particular informants with lower level of education, I gained their trust by using words and phrases in their class dialect, frequently slangisms and vulgarisms. This is common among anthropologists doing fieldwork at home. For example, Judith Okely, during her fieldwork among Gypsy-Travellers in England, abandoned her boarding school accent and had to 'learn another language in the words of her mother tongue' (1984, 5). Although such a technique may seem to be manipulative at first glance, anthropologists doing fieldwork among a society different than their own, learn their language in order to be able to grasp the socio-cultural reality, which orders their behaviour. As I was gradually, rather than promptly introducing these words into my day-to-day vocabulary, it did not give an

impression of unnatural strain and rather than occasioning mockery, I was gaining recognition in the eyes of my informants. In one instance, a 36 year-old male told me: 'With us you will learn how to swear'. These attempts decreased the social distance between my informants and myself. Naturally, the changes I made to my register were conscious. Outside these fieldwork situations, I would retain my own identity as a researcher and in any other contexts, I would not use the same register that I used with my informants. Had I retained their dialect in my everyday life, I would have faced a danger of losing my identity and then the boundaries between the researcher and the research would have been blurred.

Furthermore, I negotiated my positionality in the field by the means of my gendered identity. It was helpful in establishing good relations with women from lower class backgrounds, who had traditional understanding of gender roles, that I often sufficient knowledge about gendered social activities, such as cooking. In this way I was able to establish rapport with Zosia and Monika, respectively 39 and 33 year-old women, who had families and children. I got connected with them by spending time in their kitchen, learning how to cook Polish traditional meals and while doing so, talking about daily lives of Polish migrants in Belfast. Such an access to the private sphere of their home space helped me to gain intimate knowledge of intricacies of their lives. I also took on my gendered identity in interaction with individuals in the situations which involved children. For example, my identity as a female facilitated my participation in lessons and other activities taking place at the Polish Saturday School. Considering the fact that in the Polish society, gender roles are still dictated to a large extent by a patriarchal structure (Melosik, 2002), engaging in activities involving children, a typical female activity, would have been made more difficult if the researcher were a male. Participation in the events organized by Polish Saturday School let me get a better understanding of practices of cultural retention among migrants.

The final aspect of my identity that came into play during my research was my place of origin. In many instances the fact that I lived most of my life in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, reinforced the social distance with my informants, who often came from rural areas. To avoid this distance, I often referred to my place of birth and the towns associated with my early childhood. For example, whenever I could sense a certain dislike from my informants when they found out I was from the capital (this was usually visible in a grimace they made), I would add that my family is spread all over Poland. This was important especially in cases when my informants came from the same region. Take Ania's case as an example. She is a 25 year-old migrant female from Silesia. I found common ground with her referring to the fact that my father was born in Cieszyn, a town in the Czech-Polish borderland region and I often vacationed there. I could easily relate to her childhood reminiscences linked to Silesia sharing with her my own memories. For both an ethnographer and interviewee such an additional layer of shared identity is important in building trust and positive relationships, facilitating the research process.

As one can see an anthropologist's identity – just like their informants' identity is a multi-stranded and manifold entity. On one hand different strands of ethnographer and his interlocutor identity may be in harmonious relationship with one another. This may then stimulate dialogue between the two parties of the relationship. At the same time, however, different strands of anthropologist's and informant's identity may contribute to the increasing social distance between them. In order to ameliorate the problems arising from various locations within different social systems, such as gender, place of origin in Poland, and so on, it may be helpful for an anthropologist to focus on commonalities in order to encourage a better relationship with the research subjects.

Epistemological issues: away from home and native anthropology in unknown settings

Whilst the previous section discussed my positionality in the field as a native anthropologist, concentrating on the relationships I developed with my informants in the field, this part of my paper will discuss the intricacies ingrained in doing ethnographic research among members of the same culture, but not at home. Since we live in the world where cultures and societies are often de-localized and taken out of their own context, my position in the field was somewhat ambiguous. More specifically, my research was situated at a sort of cultural crossroads, where on one hand I was doing research on members of my own ethnicity, but at the same

time I was exploring the exotic and unknown, somehow distant location of Belfast. Therefore my investigation was a dialectical process, in which I was engaged in understanding the familiar in the unknown setting.

With respect to coming to know in a socio-cultural milieu, which one pertains to, the most challenging issue that such a location poses is how to step outside one's own culture and grasp through anthropological lens the taken-for-granted reality. In my case in order to 'get out' from the field and to rule out their preconceptions as a native anthropologist, I attempted to allow for a great deal of flexibility during the interview. Rather than asking them questions, I asked them to speak freely about their experiences of migration. This let me pay attention to certain issues that I would not have otherwise. For example, before going into the field I had assumed that members of Polish community in Belfast, just like myself, would feel predominantly Polish and it did not occur to me that they would take on any other kinds of identities. It started cropping up in the interviewees that my interlocutors felt strong attachment to their small homelands, localities and regions from Poland they were from. I then included additional question in the interviews: 'Do you feel yourself Polish'? Many of my informants then mentioned other types of identifications, including 'Silesian', 'Slavic', 'world citizen'.

Another important factor which was important in my fieldwork was careful attention not to fall into the trap of essentializing one's own culture. The initial mistake I made was a naïve assumption that all the traditions which I consider as 'typically' Polish

would be shared by other migrants, which proved flawed as even within the elements of one particular culture itself there are inconsistencies. This was clearly seen during the discussion that emerged in the course of the Christmas dinner. Tempted to obtain some more knowledge about traditional Polish Christmas dishes, I asked Monika questions that at first glance seemed obvious to me, a ''native'' anthropologist, namely how many dishes there are altogether, and what exactly they are. She answered: 'There are thirteen traditional dishes', and I was astounded to hear this, as I was always convinced that the number of dishes, according to the 'Polish' tradition was twelve. Krzysztof agreed with me on the issue. Furthermore, we had a logical explanation for that, 'Twelve stands for twelve apostles'. Monika responded to that: 'And thirteen stands for twelve apostles and Jesus'. Zosia supported her statement: 'Yes, indeed. I also believe that there are thirteen traditional dishes'. From that moment on, I paid careful attention to overcome such biases, asking my informants for as many descriptive details as possible with regards to the issues discussed.

Another epistemological issue at stake was related to the fact that whilst I was studying the members of my own culture, my fieldwork was located in an environment where the prevailing system of socio-cultural norms was distant from that of my informants. This had certain implications on how I came to know. Firstly, coming from Poland, in certain circumstances I did not possess enough knowledge to be fully familiar with the local specifics. In connection with this, in my participant observation

I was sometimes wondering if certain phenomena were typically Polish or were they also characteristic of Northern Ireland. For example, at the end of December in Polish Saturday School, children organized the nativity scene performance. I was not sure if this was something typically Polish or not. In a similar way, a teacher at Polish Saturday School during one of the lessons introduced a song to the students about 'golden fish'; I also did not know then if the story about the golden fish is something commonly known all over the world or just in Poland. Knowing the answers to these questions was of a great consequence to my research, as what I really was trying to make out was the following puzzle: 'Is this actually Polish cultural stuff aimed at strengthening of children's belonging as Poles?'. Had I been a non-native anthropologist studying Polish migrants in Northern Ireland, this would not have posed a question. I would have recognized these cultural practices either as Polish or belonging to a certain world canon. It was an important aspect of examining cultural changes among migrants, as these would or would have not serve as examples to support the thesis about cultural retention.

In addition to that, I lacked the local knowledge about the traditions in Northern Ireland, which made more difficult my attempts to analyze certain phenomena. For example, when I was attending the Christmas dinner organized by Krzysztof and Monika, I saw that the Christmas crackers lying on the dinner plates and was wondering whether this was the right set-up, as during the Christmas party at my supervisor's house, the crackers

were sitting next to the plates. I then asked myself a question, 'Has the original tradition of Christmas crackers altered or is this simply yet another way of decorating the table with crackers?'. I then asked Monika where she found out how to arrange them, a question that I may have not asked otherwise. Thanks to this, I found out that she prepared her Christmas decoration by following different instructions presented in magazines and in TV programmes. This gave me a better insight in how Polish migrants adapt the local practices, interestingly enough not through interaction with locals in this case, but through imitating certain media representations. In this case my unfamiliarity with the traditions of the migrants' receiving country, although seemed to make my understanding of the situation more difficult at first, in the end worked to my advantage as I obtained a fuller picture of cultural practices among my informants.

At some points, such a limited knowledge of the local culture may lead to misinterpretation of certain facts or observations. An example of this could be Halloween trick and treating. I was uncertain as to whether or not it is typical of all the children to treat this tradition as a competition as to who receives more sweets. I was also wondering if the groups of children who trick and treat prefer to stay away from other groups of youngsters in order to increase their haul. Initially, I suspected that this was a means of ethnic segregation, as the Polish children formed a distinct group from their local counterpoints, but then when I observed the dynamics around

the Halloween, I understood that the competition was just an inherent part of it. I then pursued this issue further with my local friends. Had I not done this, I could have misinterpreted the situation, reaching flawed conclusions. In this case, studying the members of the same culture but in an unknown setting brings an additional level of complexity to the research process as one has to stay alert and conscious of possible cultural misconceptions.

Overall, I believe that the fact that my research was located among the members of the same ethnic group but in an unknown setting has impacted the process of gathering an ethnographic data in a twofold manner. On one hand it gave me a certain epistemic privilege as I was familiar with the cultural idioms of the society under study. On the other hand it required special care to 'get out' of taken-for-granted reality and surpass the essentializing modes of thinking about one's own culture, realizing that cultures are fragmented and there are inconsistencies within one culture. At the same time given that my fieldwork was carried out in an unfamiliar setting, I had to be extremely cautious not to make flawed assumptions about the culture of the migrants' receiving country. My research involved then constant learning process about the new community in which migrants and myself came to live. I had to continuously put in questions my assumptions regarding the Northern Irish society, which often led to important findings which I could not have come across otherwise.

Conclusion: on anthropological endeavours in the post-accession Europe

Reflexivity refers to the problem of accounting for the role of anthropologists as participants in the cultures or societies, which they study. Beyond the question of the personal biases that may affect research, anthropologists need reflexive awareness of their impact on the objects of study and of how their identities may affect the process of knowledge production. In relation to this, it became common for ethnographers in the 90s and 2000s to explore their positioning in the field, and epistemological implications associated with it. Many of them raised important issues related to the status of a 'native anthropologist' and challenged essentialist assumptions that a 'native anthropologist' equals 'insider'. Drawing on these debates this paper is an attempt to consider important social and political changes that have taken place in Europe after the accession of the new EU member states in 2004 in thinking about the nature of endo-ethnography. This is particularly relevant with the increased mobility of people across the continent.

In this new context, often both the research and his fellow natives come from the same cultural background but at the same time both are in transit, in an unfamiliar setting, which confronts them with new cultural codes. This leads to a situation in which an anthropologist is engaged in a dialectical process of doing fieldwork 'at home', but 'away from home'. In such a case, there are two kinds of familiarity at stake within the research site. The first one is associated with the peoples under study. In this case, it is often advantageous to know 'the rules of the game' that are intrinsic for the culture of a given community. Notwithstanding the complexities inherent in the concept of native anthropologist, I believe that a native possessing this sort of knowledge can indeed provide a more authentic account. Another type of familiarity that comes into play in a research is the familiarity with the research site, where the fieldwork is conducted. My paper suggests that seemingly, it is frequently an advantage not to be fully familiar with the socio-cultural milieu where the research is carried out. It endows an anthropologist with a certain degree of naivity, which may be considered often as remedial for participation in a taken-for-granted reality and may lead to more insightful and critical analyses of certain social phenomena.

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