

Nina Clara Tiesler

# **Ethnoheterogenesis**

## **The dialectics of hetero- and homogenization in processes of ethnic framing and membership**

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## Abstract

This paper aims at refining the theoretical understanding of the coming-into-being of ethnicities in the light of societal and cultural change, and as a social form of symbolic collectivity. The specific contribution is to the research context of migrants and migrant descendants; wherein conceptual debates on self-perceptions, modes of belonging, group formations and collective subjectivities continue to be at the core of theoretical considerations. In conducting longitudinal fieldwork among Portuguese emigrants in diverse diasporic settings on the one hand, and Portuguese Muslims of Indo-Mozambican origin, on the other, this research inquired into different milieus and generations of people with migration experience in their family histories who share “memories of colonization and migration” (Weber). Over time, generations and migration trajectories, ethnic self-perceptions and membership roles changed among both groupings. The complex settings illustrated here move this preparatory work towards a new analytical concept which I call Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG). Emphasis lies on the genesis and changes of ethnic framing and multiplicity of ethnic memberships.

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# 1 Perspectives and Purpose: About this contribution

*Identity became more and more a cliché, its meaning grew progressively more diffuse, thereby encouraging increasingly loose and irresponsible usage. The depressing result is that a good deal of what passes for discussion of identity is little more than portentous incoherence, and the [scholar; nct] need not be intimidated into regarding it as more than that. What is called for, rather, is confidence in the traditional critical skills of the [scholarly; nct] craft. Philip Gleason, Identifying Identity: A Semantic History, 1983: 931.*

*Every public debate is overhung with the terror of a unifying national identity-ideal. For more than thirty years now, one battles in vain against the use of the identity category as an intellectual mace with which people get clobbered over the head, from Southern Spain to Gujarat, from South Africa to Sinkiang. "Words are deeds, too", the idealist Hegel said, and he was right. Hence, Critical Theory needs to understand itself in the tradition of taking words seriously and not dismissing categories as mere words. The wrong categories – and this is the experience of the transition from the short century to the present – can be perilous. Detlev Claussen, Critical Theory of the Presence Age, 2013: 5.*

*To speak Platonically, each thing has a part in as many ideas as it has manifold attributes, and it achieves thereby its individual determination. There is an analogous relationship between the individual and the groups with which he is affiliated. Georg Simmel, The Web of Group Affiliations, 1955 [1922]: 320.*

Sociologists study social behaviour, including its origins, development, organization, and institutions in order to develop a body of knowledge about social order, social disorder and societal change. As all spheres of human activity are affected by the interplay between social structure and individual agency, Sociology has always expanded its focus, including the study of international migration, and race and ethnic relations.

While Sociology is commonly understood as the study of society, Anthropology is viewed more as the study of humanity. Among its main subdivisions are Social and Cultural Anthropology, which describe the internal workings of societies around the world. Cultural Anthropology is the comparative study of the manifold ways in which people look to make sense of the world around them, while Social Anthropology (Evans-Pritchard 1951) is the study of the relationships between people and among groups (Ingold 1994: viii). Cultural Anthropology is more closely related to philosophy, literature and the arts, asking how one's culture affects experiences for self and group, contributing to a more complete understanding of knowledge, customs, and institutions relating to certain peoples. Social Anthropology is more akin to Sociology and History (Ingold 1994: viii) in

that it helps develop an understanding of social structures, typically of others and other populations (Jackson 1984, Mughal 2015). Socio-Cultural Anthropology, again, draws together the principle axes of Cultural Anthropology and Social Anthropology.

Studying race and ethnic relations has been a common pursuit for many sociologists and anthropologists, both in the past and in the present, especially though not exclusively in historical contexts marked by heightened migration. A short sociological introduction to the term “ethnicity”, which can connect with current anthropological perspectives, reads:

“To talk about human groups who define membership based on their belief in common ancestry, one can use the term ethnicity” (Bös 2010: 2).

While the work of many sociologists and social-cultural anthropologists can be applied directly to social policy and welfare, this contribution is an attempt at refining the theoretical understanding of social and cultural processes, through merging perspectives from both disciplines. It does so by choosing a subject matter which ranges from the micro level of individual agency and interaction to the macro level of systems and social structure: the coming-into-being of ethnicities, in the light of societal and cultural change, as a social form of symbolic collectivity which may enhance as much as it might restrict individuality. Studying the genesis and continuously shifting social forms of ethnicities is heuristically important in that it can help us clarifying processes of socio-, cultural- and political change in society at large (Claussen 2000). The present contribution uses the research outputs presented in parts II and III of the thesis as the basis for exploratory analysis. The main argument is that current analytical concepts and frameworks are too limited to grasp the complex and multi-dimensional formative processes, which produce ethnicities, ethnic framing and membership.

The second section of this paper presents a brief overview of sociological and socio-cultural anthropological perspectives on ethnicity and definitions of ethnic groups (2.). It is followed by an illustration of the essence of own research in the form of field notes relating to ideal-typical family biographies of the two groupings that formed the subjects of inquiry (3.). The complex settings as illustrated here in this preparatory work have inspired a new analytical concept which I term Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG), whose emphasis lies on the genesis and changes in ethnic framing and multiplicities of ethnic memberships. A common concept to describe and analyse the coming-into-being of ethnicities and ethnic change is ethnogenesis. The term is essential for the endeavour of this contribution; hence the next section is dedicated to its conceptual history. Accordingly to manifold perspectives on - and definitions of - ethnicity, tracing the conceptual history of the term ethnogenesis from the late 19th century up to the present day leads to insights into diverse scholarly traditions and ways of employing the concept - the

latter always depending on the very specific historical (and political) context of research (4.). While the linear and one-dimensional nature of most models of ethnogenesis is one source of motivation to conceptualise EHG as an alternative, another source pertains to the analytical shortcomings and reification of subjective experience when group formations and affiliations are tautologically explained through 'abusing' the identity-category. It is essential to this preparatory work, which moves towards a new analytical framework, that EHG should open up ways to resist what Eric Hobsbawm (1996) and others have coined "identity-jargon". Thus, the following section retraces the semantic broadening of the term "identity". By conceptualising ethnic affiliation as one of many membership roles, EHG aims to add to the development of a Sociology of Membership (5.).

## 2 Perspectives on Ethnicity

In analysing the history of the concepts and changing definitions of the terms "race" and "ethnicity" between 1920 and the year 2000 in *American Sociology*, Mathias Bös highlights the fact that the first phase (1920-1944) was used at a moment in time during which the works of W.E.B. DuBois were mostly ignored:

"The most important development at this time was the fight against scientific racism mainly fought by anthropologists like Franz Boas. This promoted the idea among sociologists to abandon the term race from their theoretical vocabulary." (Bös 2010: 7)

The reception and influence between these two academic disciplines is mutual despite distinctions and differences in terms of theoretical canon, perspectives and priorities of commitment, and preferences in research methods. Strict demarcation appears artificial and alienating when looking at the works of many eminent scholars, most obviously Erving Goffman (1922-1982), who held chairs in both Sociology and Anthropology. Added to this position are the many examples of scholarly work, which merge the traditions of both disciplines. Early discussions about the relationship of Sociology and Anthropology date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Ward 1895). A more recent example of actual engagement in approximation of theoretical perspectives took place during the academic year 1949-1950, in form of an interdisciplinary faculty seminar of sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists at the University of North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The purpose was one of "exploring possibilities of interdisciplinary integration in the human or man sciences". Among the senior participants who were seeking convergences between the disciplines were Nicholas J. Demerath, Louis O. Kattsoff,

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<sup>1</sup> It was supported by a modest financial grant to John Gillin from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (then called the Viking Fund, Inc.) and by aid in the form of research assistants supplied by the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina.

Harold G. McCurdy, George E. Nicholson, Jr., Rupert B. Vance, and Karl Zener. The mission resulted in the volume, *For a Science of Social Man: Convergences in Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology*, published in 1954 by Howard Becker, John Gillin, A. Irving Hallowell, George Peter Murdock, Theodore M. Newcomb, M. Brewster Smith, and Talcott Parsons (Becker et al 1954).

Eric R. Wolf underlines that "ideas about race, culture and peoplehood or ethnicity have long served to orient anthropology's inquiries" (Wolf 1994: 1). As for an early conceptualisation of the term "ethnic group", it is not only sociologists who can refer to Max Weber's *Economy and Society* [1920]. As Weber uses categories and concepts fundamental to anthropological research, such as kinship, his definition can serve as a starting point for this contribution, which aims to merge sociological and socio-cultural anthropological perspectives. Weber also refers to "customs" and "external habitus" as pointing to what can be understood as cultural habits and daily life culture. Some anthropologists indeed emphasize the cultural nature of ethnicity.<sup>2</sup> As a commitment common in both Sociology and Socio-Cultural Anthropology, one can name the study of cultural processes and practices through which human action is individually and collectively mediated. That is, a commitment to the study of people doing things, of action and

practices in specific settings of power relations, rather than the study of culture as an object. In conducting research among Portuguese emigrants in diverse diasporic settings on the one hand, and among Portuguese Muslims of Indo-Mozambican origin on the other, we have followed different generations of people with migration experience in their family histories<sup>3</sup> who share "memories of

We shall call "**ethnic groups**" those human groups that entertain a **subjective belief** in their **common descent** because of similarities of **external habitus** or of **customs** or both, or because of **memories of colonization and migration**;

this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it **does not matter** whether or not an objective **blood relation** exists.

**Ethnic membership** (Gemeinsamkeit) **differs from** the **kinship** group precisely by being a (believed-in) membership, not a group defined by actual social action.

In our sense, **ethnic membership does not constitute a group**; it only **facilitates group formation** of any kind, particularly in the **political sphere**. [...]

**Max Weber, *The Origin of Common Ethnic Beliefs: The Language and Cult Community*, 2007 [1920]: p. 301 (highlights in bold by nct)**

<sup>2</sup> Following Cohen (1974), one of the earliest and most influential schools of thought in this respect has been that of the former Rhodes Livingstone Institute anthropologists, notably Mitchell (1956), Epstein (1958), and Gluckman (1961), whose views were greatly affected by the special conditions existing in the industrial towns of Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, during the 1950s.

<sup>3</sup> The paper is based on empirical data material which derived from various projects. Research output is published in Cairns/Sardinha/Tiesler 2014, Tiesler and Lavado (forthcoming), Tiesler 2012, Tiesler and Bergano 2012, Tiesler and Cairns 2010, Tiesler 2009, Tiesler 2008, Tiesler and Coelho 2007, Tiesler and Cairns 2007. Most research projects were funded by FCT, namely, on



colonization and migration” (Weber). As these groupings show differing histories of migration and settlement, the field research on which this paper is based was focused on process as opposed to results, as sociologists and socio-cultural anthropologists are more likely to emphasise the importance of the societal and cultural change process than a specific time or event in history.

In the first edited volume on “urban ethnicity” Cohen (1974: ix) notes that ethnicity is a ubiquitous phenomenon. This is debatable as “ethnic communities do not represent a ubiquitous form of social organisation but rather the result of a historical process related to a specific technique of social distinction”, Gabbert argues, with reference to shifting boundaries and emerging ethnic communities on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast (Gabbert 2011: 77). They are not a “natural” form of organisation. And still, some defend the argument that ethnicity is as old as humankind, as Mathias Bös sums up in an in-depth analysis of existing scholarly contributions on the topic, here choosing the example of the much criticised book by Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986). Smith presents a long list of ethnic groups (e.g. Hittites, Luvians, Minoans, Canaanites, Amorites, Elamites, and so forth) as important in the political world of the ancient Near East during 2200 – 1700 BC. In his perspective “ethnic groups have been a significant factor in the rise and fall of political powers in the history of Europe and the Near East for thousands of years” (Bös 2015: 136).

There is, however, a totally different view that sees ethnicity as a typically modern phenomenon. This argument is expressed most forcefully by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, in their seminal reader *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*.<sup>4</sup> In one view ethnicity is ancient; in the other it is modern. This contradiction might be due to the fact that both views focus on different kinds of ethnicity. Smith sees ethnic groups as geopolitical groups. He observes the long history of often violent ethnic conflicts associated with group memberships and forms of belonging. Glazer and Moynihan are talking about the group formation processes in times of migration, urbanization, and globalization. For them ethnicity is something that emerges within the political system of modern multicultural societies.” (Bös 2015: 136).

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Portuguese emigrants in diverse diasporic settings: Return Migration of Luso-descendants: a cross-national perspective (PI: J. Sardinha, 06/2013 – 05/2015); Imagining Modern Portugal? The role of football in the (re)construction of communities and “Portugueseness” in six diasporic settings (PI N.C. Tiesler 2007-01/2011); on Portuguese Muslims: Muslim Youth in Portugal. Religion and Culture, Mobility and Citizenship (Postdoctoral grant 03/2007 – 05/2008), Muslims in Portugal. Religion, Collective Subjectivity and Shifting Perceptions of Home and Belonging (Postdoctoral grant 03/2004 – 02/2007). The Rockefeller Foundation NYC had funded a case study on Muslim-related issues and policies in post 9/11 Europe: The Portuguese Case, in 2006.

<sup>4</sup> “We are suggesting that a new word reflects a new reality and a new usage reflects a change in that reality. The new word is ‘ethnicity’, and the new usage is the steady expansion of the term ‘ethnic group’ from minority and marginal subgroups at the edges of society – groups expected to assimilate, to disappear, to continue as survivals, exotic or troublesome – to major elements of a society... [T]here is something new afoot in the world, and we may label it ‘ethnicity.’” (Glazer and Moynihan 1975: p. 5)

Connecting with Glazer and Moynihan, inter alia, and conceptualising ethnicity as a modern ideology based on renewed categories of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, Werz highlights that ethnicity is an enigmatic notion that can be conducive to illustrating a transformation that, during the 20th century, affected the states of consciousness of various people. Ethnic ideology or “identity-thinking” (Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s critique on “ticket-mentality”, 1969) are products of a dialectic of enlightenment and secularization; mirroring a historical process once described by Max Horkheimer as the onward comprehension of a life world that is identical in its disenchantment (Werz 2002: 13). Indeed, ethnic ideologies (just as national ones, cp. Anderson 1991, Gellner 1993) create history. Following Gabbert, who bases his theorizing on the Miskitu in Eastern Nicaragua, ethnic ideologies “take fragments from the past, string them together, construe them, and change their meaning or, if necessary, reinvent them” (Gabbert 2014: 197).

In accordance with Bös, and what Cohen understands as “ubiquitous”, probably in the sense of being pervasive or omnipresent, and due to the fact that ethnicity takes a “variety of form, scope, and intensity, and of its involvement in psychic, social, and historical variables”, one can conclude that ethnicity has been defined in a variety of ways, “depending on the discipline, field experience, and interests of the investigators” (Cohen 1974: ix).

As a starting point towards a consensus, one can take the entry on “ethnicity” in the recently published second edition of the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. The author draws upon historical aspects regarding ethnicity and ethnic groups, and argues that the concepts have been applied to a broad spectrum of groups in history. While ethnic community building is used to foster solidarity in macro-group structures, ethnicity also legitimizes social inequalities by descent. Furthermore, ethnic membership serves to fulfil individuals’ need for collective belonging:

“In the social sciences there is a growing consensus that ethnicity is socially constructed and historically contingent, but that many people perceive it as an important, unchangeable part of their identity.” (Bös 2015: 136)

Yet, the analysis of emerging and shifting ethnic mobilizations, ascriptions and identifications uncovers societal transformations. Reflecting on the historical aspects of ethnic thinking, Randall Collins argues that:

“Ethnicity is an intrinsically messy topic because the historical processes that produce it are intrinsically messy. Our analytical problems stem from the fact that ethnicity is always a distorted concept, an attempt to impose a pure category on a social reality that is not at all pure.” (Collins, 1999: 78; cited by Bös)

The specific contribution of this paper relates to the research context of migrants and migrant descendants, wherein conceptual debates on self-perceptions, modes of belonging, group formations and collective subjectivities continue to be at the core of theoretical considerations. Migratory contexts constitute a strategic lens for understanding “under what circumstances, among whom and in order to satisfy which needs or interests, do migrant selective identifications and dis-identifications occur” (Banton 2008: 1276). As mentioned above, theorizing is based on empirical data material derived from longitudinal research with two groupings: firstly, Portuguese emigrants and their offspring (Luso-descendants) in diverse diasporic settings; and secondly, Portuguese Muslim “postcolonial people” (Sayyid 2006: 1-10) of Indo-Mozambican origin. Apart from their quite diverse experiences of migration, of social inequality and return (travel and settlement), these groupings share a strong identification with the Portuguese nation which plays into their shifting modes of belonging, ethnic self-perception, societal positioning and community building.

Now, as ethnicities are produced by historical processes, how can one study the emergence of ethnicities when these processes are so “messy”? One possible way is taking a historical perspective during analysis while using abstraction from the very specific historical context in follow-up theorization. This can be done by constant comparison – in this case, between these two groupings but also between each of them and comparable social entities of differing ethnic or non-ethnic reference and identification. Secondly, ethnicity appears as a distorted concept, as an attempt to impose a pure category on a social reality which is not at all pure. As a methodological manoeuvre to avoid this, we suggest acknowledging that the coming-into-being of ethnicities is an ongoing process that typically involves de-ethnization as much as ethnization, forces of both hetero- and homogenization as well as a diversity of ethnic membership roles and multiple “ethnic options” (Waters 1990). The third methodological challenge is due to the circumstances that suggest ethnicities are socially constructed and historical contingent, but conversely, that most people believe ethnic ascriptions and membership is unchangeable. The experiences of the two groupings under analysis as presented in the research output (Part II and III of this thesis) underline the historical contingency in the genesis of ethnicities. More precisely, in taking both the diasporic context and that of origin into account, it highlights the fact that ethnic framing and self-articulations develop as “relational”<sup>5</sup> to other minority and majority groups as well as “situative” in specific power relations. In these processes, both societal contexts *shape* and *undergo* social and cultural change and can be described as ethnoheterogeneous (Claussen 2013). Above all, in close harmony with the narratives of the inquired families, analysis points out that

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<sup>5</sup> In Peter Worsley’s words: Ethnic communities are “the product of relationships” with other ethnic communities (Worsley 1984: 248; cited by Gabbert 2011: 77).

ethnicity can neither be seen as a form of collective subjectivity, nor as an unchangeable part of one's Self - but rather as one of many membership roles that individuals take up and are ascribed within specific constellations.

### 3 Notes from the Field(s)

Pedro grew up in Germany, born in emigration to Portuguese parents.<sup>6</sup> His parents left Portugal in the era of dictatorship (1926-1974). His father had been the eighth worker from Portugal registered in Stuttgart in the 1950s. During the first years abroad, Pedro's family lived in economic hardship in a working class neighbourhood, in rather ad hoc housing conditions. Portuguese had been the *lingua franca* at home, the meals were Portuguese, and during his childhood, Pedro and his siblings clearly perceived themselves as Portuguese. In their social surrounding they were seen as foreigners, guest-workers' children, from Portugal – as far as “their country” was known by name. Originally hailing from Alentejo, a rural southern region in Portugal, living in Germany had changed his parents' self-perception from predominantly “alentejano” to “Portuguese”. This was different whenever the family had the opportunity to travel to Portugal for holidays and family visits. While remaining Portuguese nationals up to the present day, as well as being connected to their former neighbourhood in Alentejo, here the local population naturally considered them as emigrants, more particularly, as Luso-Germans (“luso-alemães”).<sup>7</sup> Quickly, this concept started corresponding with the family's self-perception, at least when positioning themselves in a context of being Portuguese.

Pedro concluded his education at a technical college in Essen (Germany) and gained professional experience in the import-export business, using his language skills in German, English and Portuguese. Independently of his family, he moved to Portugal in the early 1990s, where he lives near Lisbon and continues to be successful in his professional realm. Whether in real life or on social media platforms, being in



Children of Portuguese emigrants in France, late 1950s. Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

<sup>6</sup> Interviewees' names have been changed. Pictures of private sources were provided by interviewees. Other pictures hail from open access sources and were shown to the interviewees in order for them to choose a best match to their memories.

<sup>7</sup> "Luso" stands for Portuguese.

contact with people with similar socialisation experiences makes him feel most comfortable: “Communication runs far easier, we always know what the other is talking about, it doesn’t need much explanation”. This includes Portuguese emigrants and Luso-descendants in Germany in general, and Portuguese and Luso-descendant return migrants, in particular – especially those who grew up in Germany, but also returnees from other countries. He considers himself “Luso-German”, according to his conception of belongingness, his daily life cultural preferences, and his ideas of his “origins”. On Facebook, he participates in networks of “Portuguese in Germany” and of “Germans in Portugal”. Furthermore, he forms part of a network of Luso-descendants in Portugal and has once participated at an international meeting of Luso-descendants from all over the world. In the midst of Luso-French, Luso-Canadians, Luso-Swiss, Luso-Americans, and so forth, it had been his “German-ness” in the first place, alongside a kind of “broken, kaleidoscopic Portuguese-ness” about which he became more conscious at this occasion.

Samira holds a bachelor degree in Social Anthropology from a Lisbon university, and another in Social Psychology from Cambridge. Together with her husband and children, she moved from Lisbon to London a few years ago, where she works as a freelance journalist and activist for deprived British-Asian children and youths. She continues writing her Portuguese Blog, which is followed by Portuguese Muslim and non-Muslim visitors who are interested in leftist politics, emancipatory struggles of ethnic and religious minorities in Portugal and social/humanitarian aid projects, among the latter many of whom are organised by the Islamic Community of Lisbon. Samira and her husband are Sunni Muslims and both their families have Indian roots. Her grandmother grew up in British India; later on she lived in Daman under Portuguese rule, where Samira’s father and his siblings were born, before the family left West India to settle in Lourenço Marques (today Maputo), the capital of Mozambique, a Portuguese colony until 1974. Here, her father worked in administration and later served the Portuguese army during the colonial war, as was the case of other Muslims of Indian origin.<sup>8</sup> Samira, her siblings and most of her cousins were born in Mozambique, living in relatively privileged conditions, comparable to wealthy and educated Portuguese non-Muslims in higher positions. Her parents were active in Islamic community matters and held Portuguese citizenship, as did other community members.

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<sup>8</sup> As for the position of Sunni Muslims of mainly African origin in Mozambique under Portuguese colonial rule, see Bonate 2007. Regarding Ismaeli Muslim of Indian origin in the same context, see Khoury and Pereira Leite 2012. As for the attempts of the Portuguese colonizers to monitor and activate Mozambique’s Muslim minority population shortly before and during the colonial war, see Vakil et al. (2011).

In the context of a conversation with this family, her grandmother once explained her definitive societal experience and respective self-perception with the words “I belong to British India”, while her father prioritised “being a Portuguese Muslim”. In fact, while living in India (Daman) under Portuguese rule, being (Sunni) Muslim had been more important. But Samira’s father also highlighted that his Indian origin had been a major reference, both in Mozambique and, up to the present day, in Portugal - with the exception of the early years in Lisbon during and shortly after decolonization, when several hundred thousand people (“retornados”) returned from the colonies, in their midst, Hindus, Ismailis and Sunni Muslims of Indian origin. “Our solidarity group had been the retornados”, he explains. “We are often called immigrants today, this despite the fact that we had been Portuguese nationals already in Mozambique. In our perspective, in fact, we were retornados”. Samira confirms the existence of this “solidarity group”, remembering her early Lisbon experiences as a child in the schoolyard. “The other Portuguese kids were picking on us. There I found myself in a corner, together with the white, Catholic retornado kids”. Samira also considers “being a Portuguese Muslim” her strongest reference, and that this matches the self-perception of her cousins, some of whom live in Mozambique, others in Leicester (UK). She explains that for those in Mozambique it also serves to set them apart from Mozambican Muslims and from non-Muslim Portuguese and Mozambicans. Those in Leicester actually meet with other Daman Sunni Muslim families who had lived in Kenya under British colonial rule before settling in Leicester. For her Leicester cousins, who “became quite British”, she adds chuckling to herself, the self-ascription as Portuguese Muslims was important not only in a family context which stretches across at least three countries but also in their conversation with the “British Muslims” from Daman, who frequently express something like “superiority out of the simple fact that they made part of the British Empire”. For many reasons, among them being Muslim [and not Catholic or secular] but also due to her visible Indian roots, being Portuguese had always been very important to her. It is only since she moved to London that she also notices being affiliated to the huge British Asian population there. “One of the beautiful aspects of going to Mecca is that we simply feel like Muslims, nothing more, nothing less”, she says, adding with a smile: “... and if anything else, there I suddenly feel quite European.” But this was stronger when she once went to the USA. Among other activities, mainly of purely touristic nature, she attended a meeting of Young Muslims there, with the organizers grouping them into the section “European Muslims”.



“Refugees from Ultramar”, later called “retornados” arriving in Lisbon from Mozambique, March 1974.  
Source: retornadosdafrica.blogspot.com

\*\*\*\*\* End of field note \*\*\*\*\*

In conducting research among Portuguese emigrants in diverse diasporic settings (Cairns/Sardinha/Tiesler 2014, Tiesler 2012, Tiesler and Bergano 2012), on the one hand, and among Portuguese Muslims of Indo-Mozambican origin (Tiesler and Cairns 2010, Tiesler 2009, Tiesler 2008, Tiesler and Cairns 2007) on the other, we have followed different generations of people with migration experience in their family histories who share “memories of migration and colonization” (Weber). The two groupings were selected in order to represent their differing histories and experiences of migration and settlement, their relationships with other societal minorities and majorities, their reference to the Portuguese nation, societal positioning, and their “lived” everyday cultures.

As illustrated by the field notes, over time different generations and migration trajectories, ethnic self-perceptions and membership roles have changed among both groupings. The first generation of Portuguese emigrants arriving in Germany, France, the USA, etc., changed a self-perception based on regional bonds to a national one; only through emigration they “became” Portuguese. At the same time, adaptation to the new surrounding and the strong connection to Portugal which they preserved meant that in relation to (and in interaction with) the people they had left behind, they became “others”: not only “the emigrants” but more specifically the “Germans, French, Americans”. It was in the conflict between the pressure of assimilation in the host societies<sup>9</sup> and weight of the “emigrant script”<sup>10</sup> that Portuguese emigrants and their offspring developed hyphenated self-perceptions of ethnic membership, such as Luso-German, Luso-American, Luso-French.

Elite Sunni Muslims of Indian origin that had been living in Mozambique before coming to Portugal in the course of decolonization are today often framed as “Indo-Mozambican”, a concept also applied to Ismaelis and Hindus who live in Portugal. Naturally, that was different at each stage of their migration trajectory (British India, Portuguese India, Mozambique under Portuguese rule, Portugal, and for some, further to the UK) and also for the different generations of the same family in each context. Members of this group represent the migration intelligence (Tiesler and Lavado, forthcoming) and integration figures of the ethnically diverse (Sunni) Islamic communities in Portugal. Their self-perception of being Portuguese Muslims and respective promotion of the pan-ethnic concept is of utmost

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<sup>9</sup> For Germany see pp. 63f; for France see Pereira cited in pp. 1-34; for the USA see Almeida 2010.

<sup>10</sup> The moral obligations which constitute the emigrant script are rooted in the period from post-World War II until into the 1990s, when remittances played an extremely important role in the local Portuguese rural economies; see pp.66f.

importance in Islamic community life and public discourse. The concept had already emerged during colonial times in response to the colonizers' ideology of the Portuguese Nation during the Third Empire. The first Sunni Muslim Portuguese students of Indo-Mozambican origin founded the Islamic Community of Lisbon, CIL, in 1968, and used the concept to be able to speak for all Muslims under Portuguese rule, including those in Guinea Bissau. Nowadays, the concept encompasses different ethnic groups of Muslims in Portugal and plays a key role for CIL in Islamic education. It underlines their loyalty to the Portuguese nation and the fact that they are Portuguese citizens, allows them to speak for and integrate as a socially and ethnically diverse Muslim community (of which the numerically strongest group hails from Guinea Bissau), and in Islamic education, leads to the educative formula: "being a good Muslim means being a good Portuguese".

When we asked other individuals and families who belong to the grouping of Sunni Portuguese Muslims of Indo-Mozambican origin about their self-perceptions and the ways they were perceived by others in different historical and geographical contexts, we found a long row of multiple options and diverse framings (in India: Muslims; in Portuguese India: Diu-, Daman-Muslims; in Mozambique: Indian, Sunnis, Portuguese Muslims; in Portugal: Retornados, Indian, Portuguese Muslims; in Britain: Indian-Portuguese, Portuguese Muslims, British-Asians, and so forth). And yet, the concept of Portuguese Muslims prevails. This is interesting in at least two aspects: class and culture. The concept stresses national and religious belonging and dissolves class and cultural differences. The migration intelligence and integration figures who conceptualised it are the educated middle classes who speak for a community which is diverse in terms of socio-economic backgrounds (including many deprived families which here find significant support) and Muslim cultures to be found in the contexts of origin. African Muslims in Lisbon partly share more cultural preferences in daily life with other Afro-Portuguese (a pan-ethnic self-perception currently in fashion among younger generations), meaning those with family roots in diverse Lusophone African countries, than with Lisbon Muslims of Indian origin. The latter often socialise with other young middle class Ismaeli (Shiite) Muslims of Indo-Mozambican origin – while all of them usually socialise in broader social environments and take part in peer groups that are not ethnically marked (Tiesler and Cairns 2007). The concept dissolves class and culture inside the community *and* in reference to the Portuguese "white" non-Muslim majorities. It is the successful work of the integration figures that the Islamic Community of Lisbon is in general positively recognised in the Portuguese public and well regarded among the *classe politique* (Tiesler 2008). A further study which compared young middle class Muslims with young middle class non-



Muslims indeed revealed very little difference regarding their daily life cultural preferences (Tiesler and Cairns 2010).

It is generally acknowledged that homogenising forces shape the formative processes of ethnogenesis and ethnic change, as former socially and/or culturally diverse entities are getting framed or start perceiving themselves as an allegedly homogeneous collective. The essence and exploratory analysis of the field-notes suggest that this view is one-dimensional and too linear. The strength of the ethnogenesis concept, as far as developed until the present day (see 4.), is its constructivist (and partly instrumentalist) approach which highlights the fact that ethnicities are socially constructed and historical contingent. Its weakness lies in the fact that it cannot grasp the entanglement, the interdependency and simultaneousness, of hetero- and homogenizing forces. Migrants from different regions in Portugal only started perceiving themselves as Portuguese by migrating e.g. to Germany. The homogenizing process of “becoming” Portuguese was part of – and only possible through – the heterogeneizing process of becoming Luso-German. As for the concept of Portuguese Muslims, the same dialectic of hetero- and homogenization is at play. The latter case makes particularly clear that ethnogenesis and ethnic change are not at all linear developments but rather multi-dimensional.

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In this section, we have looked at the complexity and variety of perspectives on ethnicities, concluding with a constructivist approach. A snapshot from the field made clear why the genesis of ethnicities is an ongoing process shaped by the dialectic of hetero- and homogenization. As the term ethnogenesis is at the core for the development of EHG it is here required to engage in traditional theoretical and historical craft. This means tracing the conceptual history of ethnogenesis in the following section (4.): from literature studies of the late nineteenth century, via archaeological anthropology and the Marxist ethnographers and their “Soviet Theory of Ethnogenesis” in the early 1940s, to the phases of the “ethnic revival” in American Sociology in the 1960s and 1970s, up to current anthropological research and sociological critique on “groupism” (Brubaker 2004). The most recent monograph on ethnogenesis is by Barbara Voss, a historical archaeologist at the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University who studies the dynamics and outcomes of transnational cultural encounters:

“Ethnogenesis refers to the birthing of new *cultural identities*. The emergence of a new *ethnic identity* or the reconfiguration of an existing one is not simply a question of terminology. Moments of ethnogenesis signal the workings of historical and cultural shifts that make previous kinds of identification less relevant, giving rise to new forms of *identity*” (Voss 2008; *italics by nct*).

This leads to the critique of the use of the cover-all and obliterating use of the “identity” category, and an introduction to Sociology of Membership in the next section (5.). The conceptual history of ethnogenesis, identity- and groupism-critique and Sociology of Membership define the theoretical basis for our work which suggests that EHG has the potential to become a useful framework for future investigations (6.).

## 4 The Conceptual History of Ethnogenesis: A brief overview

*One of the most important tasks confronting Soviet historians is that of opposing the fascist falsification of history, especially in the field of ethnogenesis.* Aleksandr Dmitrievich Udaltsov, *The Main Tasks of Soviet Historical Science*, 1946: 243

The most recent monograph on ethnogenesis, by Barbara Voss, was published in 2008 by the University of California Press, entitled, *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Race and Sexuality in Colonial San Francisco* (Voss 2008). “How did diverse groups of people, who previously had little knowledge of each other, navigate the challenges and opportunities of abrupt and sustained interactions caused by colonialism, conflict, and migration?”, is one of the key questions approached by the author, who also aims to generate a productive dialogue between queer studies and archaeology, and develop rigorous methodologies that support the study of sexuality and gender through archaeological evidence.

While several research fields of current relevance merge in this recent book, the study of processes which - in different times, disciplinary traditions and, henceforth, differing meanings - were called “ethnogenesis” has indeed a long tradition in Historical Archaeology (with the first publications using the term appearing in JSTOR in 1945, see Table 1.), Anthropology (1942) and in Area Studies, especially Latin American Studies, account for its early usage (1931), with the first entry in the Sociology category only appearing in 1962.

Bibliographical research via JSTOR in November 2015 revealed 3.997 search results for books, book chapters, journal papers, pamphlets, reviews, and other miscellaneous documents in all disciplines which use the term “ethnogenesis” in their full text.<sup>11</sup> The most recent contribution was published in November 2015; a review of a book on Neo-Indians, and the oldest published as early as in April 1873

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<sup>11</sup> The same pattern of search for the notion “ethnicity” revealed 135.626 results, with the earliest publication listed at JSTOR from the year 1935.

in the US American literature journal *The Aldine* (Thomas J. Watson Library 1873). This piece refers to a new and enlarged edition of Henry Timrod's (1829-1867) famous poems, edited by Paul H. Hayne, who, according to the text, "had written a touching memoir of his brother poet [...] whose life was a hard one but happily for him it was not a long one" (Thomas J. Watson Library 1873: 88). Often called the "Poet Laureate of the Confederacy," Henry Timrod is considered by many scholars to be the most gifted of the Southern poets writing in this era (Barret and Miller 2005). The earliest works found at JSTOR which mention the notion ethnogenesis are from Literature Studies, as Timrod's poem *Ethnogenesis* (1861) drew many young men to enlist in the service of the Confederacy.<sup>12</sup> In fact, with the outbreak of American Civil War, in a state of fervent patriotism Timrod returned to Charleston to begin publishing his war poems. His first poem of this period is "Ethnogenesis", written in February 1861, during the meeting of the first Confederate Congress at Montgomery, Alabama. Part of the poem (see textbox) was read aloud at this meeting (Barret and Miller 2005: 311-315).

#### **Ethnogenesis**

By Henry Timrod (1861)

Hath not the morning dawned  
with added light?  
And shall not evening call  
another star  
Out of the infinite regions of  
the night  
To mark this day in Heaven?  
At last we are  
A nation among nations. And  
the world  
Shall soon behold in many a  
distant port  
Another flag unfurled!

The number of bibliographical references at JSTOR decreases significantly to 166 when limiting the search to contributions to journals and books (excluding reviews, pamphlets, and so forth) which carry the notion "ethnogenesis" not only in their full text, but in their title.<sup>13</sup> Archaeology leads with 30 titles, published between the years 1945 and 2014, followed by Anthropology with 29 titles between 1962 and 2014, and Sociology with 20 contributions published between 1962 and 2015. The next disciplines in this ranking are Area Studies (an umbrella category) and History (Table 1). While Archaeology leads in terms of publications with "ethnogenesis" in their title among the single disciplines (that is to say, not in terms of broad, inclusive umbrella categories such as Social Science, Humanities or Area Studies), Anthropology leads the ranking of publications which make reference to the term in their full text, accounting for 684 titles published between 1942 and 2015. Sociology comes second with 417 titles (1962-2015), Archaeology third (409 items), followed by History with 339 contributions, and Asian Studies coming fifth with 180 titles published between 1950 and 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Born in Charleston, South Carolina, to a family of German descent, Henry Timrod was descended on both sides of his family from military men. His grandfather Heinrich Dimroth migrated to the United States in 1765 and anglicized his name. His father, William Henry Timrod, was an officer in the Seminole Wars and a poet himself.

<sup>13</sup> Specifying the search for abstracts is not recommended, as JSTOR only provides abstracts on 10 per cent of all items when including books and book chapters.

**Table 1: Publications with 'Ethnogenesis' (EG) in Title or Full Text (Source: JSTOR)**

Journals, Books & Book Chapters in [discipline]	No. of listed journals	No. of papers & books with EG in TITLE	Published between [years]	No. of papers & books with EG in FULL TEXT	Published between [years]
Archaeology	133	30	1992-2013	409	1945-2014
Social Sciences <sup>1</sup>	1089	29	1962-2009	1.015	1942-2015
Anthropology	124	25	1962-2014	684	1942-2015
Sociology	198	20	1962-2015	417	1962-2015
Area Studies <sup>1</sup>	245	18	1978-2011	649	1931-2015
History	484	13	1984-2003	339	1958-2015
African Studies	72	5	1990-2001	122	1968-2011
American Studies <sup>1</sup>	137	5	1999-2011	162	1976-2015
Asian Studies	166	5	1978-2008	180	1950-2008
Latin American Studies	74	3	2000-2007	74	1931-2012
Language & Literature Studies	431	3	1984-2005	128	1899-2015
Linguistics	63	2	1991-1998	47	1966-2014
Political Science <sup>1</sup>	229	2	1962-2007	141	1962-2015
Humanities <sup>1</sup>	848	2	1984-2003	222	1899-2015
Urban Studies	8	1	2004	3	2004-2010
American Indian Studies	10	1	2001	26	1979-2015
Population Studies	63	1	1999	15	1993-2014
Religion	156	1	2014	109	1958-2015
ALL	4.530	166	1962-2015	4.742	1899-2015

With the exception of the area of Language and Literature Studies, where reference is made to Henry Timrod's ode for "the nation among the nations", the earliest academic works are from Latin American Studies. A cryptic reference in German from 1927 (*Avis. Anthropos*, 22(1/2), 338–346) gives a hint on a new publication by J. Imbelloni, entitled, "Investigaciones para la Ethnogénesis Americana, No. 1, Buenos Aires 1926".

Another early contribution (in German) was by Hermann Trimborn, full professor for American Studies and Ethnology at University of Bonn until 1968, on the Chibcha High Culture. In accordance with the normative for the time practice of racial (and predominantly racist) categorization of peoples, the author expresses his concern about the lack of a "genetic explanation of the here blossomed high cultures" which, in his eyes, had been the "key issue to be determined in the general framework of American Ethnogenesis" (Trimborn 1931).

Many scholars who contributed to the early (Latin) American Studies were anthropologists, ethnologists and ethnographers. Historically, Anthropology as such has grown out of the interest in exotic peoples and has had at its core ethnogenesis and the classification of races. For instance, still in the year of 1962, the journal *Current Anthropology* (University of Chicago Press) published a paper on "Racial Analysis of Human Populations in Relation to Their Ethnogenesis" (Wiercinski and Bielicki 1962). According to the bibliographical search (Table 1), this is the oldest paper among the 25 found in 124 journals in Anthropology which carry "Ethnogenesis" in their title. The authors, at that time both lecturers in Anthropology at the University of Warsaw, were concerned with the considerable lack of agreement about the general concept of race, on which any racial classification must depend:

"The present unsatisfactory state of human racial classification, and especially the application of racial data to ethnogenesis, may be attributed to four factors: (1) lack of agreement about the general concept of race; (2) the use of different methods for the typological analysis of populations; (3) lack of information about the genetic transmission of racial characters; (4) difficulties interposed by the political implications of racist concepts." Wiercinski and Bielicki 1962: 2.

In 1963, during the VIIth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, the section "Ethnic Anthropology" met to discuss the "Application of Anthropology to the Problems of Ethnogenesis", together with topics such as "principles and methods of anthropological taxonomy, factors in racial differentiation, the variability of racial characters", and so forth.<sup>14</sup>

The Online Etymology Dictionary confirms that "Ethnogenesis" was the "title of an 1861 poem celebrating the birth of the Confederacy by U.S. Southern poet Henry Timrod" and provides a short entry: "1957 in modern usage, from ethno- + -genesis 'birth, origin, creation'."<sup>15</sup> As the first example of its usage displayed here appears the fragment "attempts to reconstruct the ethnogenesis of the peoples of Siberia" (no source indicated), a hint which puts the testimony regarding the "modern usage" from the year 1957 onwards into question. Indeed, with the exception the earliest references in Latin American Studies and the rather later sociological contributions on ethnogenesis, the majority of publications across all disciplines until the late 1960s referred to "Soviet Studies in Ethnogenesis", especially in the American journals. The earliest entry in journals of Archaeology was by Luce et al (1945), who in the section "Archaeological News and Discussions" reported on research of Soviet colleagues from 1941, e.g. on the history of the tribes of the upper Volga during the first millennium A.D. and on the

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<sup>14</sup> *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Feb., 1964), pp. 44-45.

<sup>15</sup> The entry in the Oxford Dictionary reads: "Ethnogenesis: the formation or emergence of an ethnic group".

ethnogenesis of the Slavs. As for Anthropology, Henry Field and Eugene Prostov presented "Results of Soviet Investigations in Siberia", 1940-1941, in the journal *American Anthropologist* (Field and Prostov 1942). The authors explain that for the study of ethnogenesis, the discovery of great territorial groups of monuments with corresponding four local cultures was of particular interest, namely the Baikalian, the Amur, the Ob, and the Arctic (Field and Prostov 1942: 392). Obviously, developing a theory of ethnogenesis was of utmost importance for Soviet academia. This need was met by the late Academician Marr's<sup>16</sup> theories of ethnogenesis, which were generally accepted and regarded as "the Soviet theory of ethnogenesis" (Schlesinger 1950: 9).

Ethnogenesis originally served as a Soviet approach concerned with the National Question in the new context *after* the October Revolution in 1917. In 1913, Lenin wrote his "Theses on the National Question" in opposition to the tsarist monarchy of the Great Russians. He argued for the self-determination of nations and their right to secede and form a separate state.<sup>17</sup> In 1922, when the new Marxist-Leninist state on the Eurasian continent, the Soviet Union, integrated multiple subnational Soviet republics, the National Question took a new turn. Ethnogenesis was developed and employed to acknowledge and preserve sub-national entities. But it also served to place them on an evolutionary scale towards an idealized concept of "civilization". This theory not only helped to construct separate ethnic units, later, it became the platform for independence movements during perestroika (Slezkine 1994).

During tsarist times, the antecedents of ethnogenesis as referred to in Great Russia, were still in the work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). In his "Addresses to the German Nation", Fichte outlined an idea for the construction of the German nation through education. He argued that not only would people see themselves as a separate ethnic social entity, but through education, they would train future generations to act in defence of this collective.<sup>18</sup> The education reforms introduced in Russia in the 1820s, reflecting Fichte's argument, sought to

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<sup>16</sup> Marr Institute for the History of Material Culture, Moscow.

<sup>17</sup> "[...] this a) for the sake of the basic principles of democracy in general; b) also because there are, within the frontiers of Russia and, what is more, in her frontier areas, a number of nations with sharply distinctive economic, social and other conditions; furthermore, these nations (like all the nations of Russia except the Great Russians) are unbelievably oppressed by the tsarist monarchy" (excerpt from the second thesis). Lenin wrote 10 theses for his lectures on the national question delivered on July 9-13, 1913 in the Swiss towns of Zurich, Geneva, Lausanne and Berne. Lenin, (Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1977, Moscow, Volume 19, pages 243-251.)

<sup>18</sup> His views were no doubt influenced by the French occupation of parts of Germany in 1808 when he delivered these lectures in Berlin. Furthermore, he gained the support of a large segment of the public who were also tired of the occupation and energised by this patriotism. As Fichte argued: "it is only by means of the common characteristic of being German that we can avert the downfall of our nation which is threatened by its fusion with foreign peoples, and win back again an individuality that is self-supporting and quite incapable of any dependence upon others" (Fichte 1968: 3).

train people's minds and bodies in order to create a coherent nation (Shnirelman 1996)

From the 1930s onwards, ethnogenesis was the predominant theory in much Soviet research. "Ethnogenetic studies" focused on demonstrating the existence and stable development of "nations" through language, customs, territory and economic life throughout history. Censuses in the 1920s and 1930s helped establish rigid concepts of ethnic groups and the development of peoples into nations through these categories (Hirsch 1997). In his famous "Marxism and the National Question", Stalin (1973) formally outlines these characteristics of a "nation," providing a framework for much research (Shanin 1989). Stalin's piece on the National Question is a short work of Marxist theory, written in January 1913 while living in Vienna.<sup>19</sup> Although it did not appear in the various English-language collections of Stalin's Selected Works which began to appear in 1928, "Marxism and the National Question" was widely republished from 1935 as part of the topical collection *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*<sup>20</sup>. However, Victor Shnirelman (1996: 10), a social scientist, explains, as "Soviet patriotism" or nationalism grew, scholars were encouraged "to study the formation and evolution of peoples living in the USSR". Here, the most pressing problem for the Russians was obviously the origin of the Slavs in ancient history, and a considerable amount of work is devoted to the subject (Schlesinger 1950). Following Rudolph Schlesinger, the influence exercised on the development of historiography among Slavs by the absence of political independence, and the prolonged struggle for it, was well known.

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<sup>19</sup> First published as a pamphlet and frequently reprinted, the essay by the ethnic Georgian Stalin was regarded as a seminal contribution to Marxist analysis of the nature of nationality and helped to establish his reputation as an expert on the topic. Indeed, Stalin would later become the first People's Commissar of Nationalities following the victory of the Bolshevik Party in the October Revolution of 1917.

<sup>20</sup> Eager to denigrate his nemesis, in his 1941 biography of Stalin, exiled Soviet leader Leon Trotsky intimated that primary credit for all that was worthy about Marxism and the National Question actually belonged to V.I. Lenin and party theoretician Nikolai Bukharin.

In the struggle for political independence and the mobilization of society for its purposes, a very important part was intended to be played, and was actually played, by the reproduction of a distant past when independent Slav states existed.

“From the point of view of those who made such statements the fact of the existence of those states was regarded as a guarantee for future ‘capacity of independent state-hood’ and as a foundation of the claim to it. Naturally such an application of the distant past could be successful only if the latter was idealized. This was the origin of the numerous ‘golden ages’ to be found in the works of Polish, Czech, Croat and other historians. In fighting this approach, Soviet historians were motivated by the fact that Marxist theory demands an application, to however diverse conditions, of ‘fundamental laws of historical development valid for all human society’” (Schlesinger 1950: 9).

The chauvinist application frequently made (often by Polish historians against the Eastern Slavs) of the migration theories cultivated by the nationalist schools of German history, made it necessary to give a fundamental counter-argument to all theories operating on a racial stratum, thus encouraging claims to

racial superiority. This is the very specific historical context in which the Soviet Theory of Ethnogenesis gained popularity, as developed by the late Marr's scholars, second to none by Aleksandr Dmitrievich Udaltsov.<sup>21</sup> It is an anti-racist conceptualization of ethnogenesis which emerged earlier than *The Online Etymology Dictionary* notes, as “since 1957 in modern usage, from ethno- + -genesis ‘birth, origin, creation’.” Accordingly to Udaltsov et al., national characteristics, especially language, are comparatively late formations resulting from common material conditions of life, and by implication, common forms of social thought. It follows that the current explanation of the geographical

Udaltsov, A. (1946). The Main Tasks of Soviet Historical Science. *Synthese*, 5(5/6), 243–244.

#### RUSSIAN SECTION

#### THE MAIN TASKS OF SOVIET HISTORICAL SCIENCE

By A. Udaltsov, Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences

Soviet historians are engaged in creating a science of history according to the Marxist-Leninist method and are studying the specific features characterising the progressive development of all peoples of the world. The history of the broad masses of working people, which constitutes the most important aspect of this process, is the subject of particular attention on the part of Soviet historians. In this field of history they are following the lofty traditions of pre-Soviet Russian historical science which won universal recognition through the works of Luchitsky, Kareyev, Kovalevsky, Vinogradov, Petrushevsky and many others.

One of the most important tasks confronting Soviet historians is that of opposing the fascist falsification of history, especially in the field of **ethnogenesis**, with objective scientific truth based on a critical study of source materials.

Problems connected with the origin and social development of the Slavonic Russian people are first on the list of immediate tasks of Soviet historians. A study of the history of their native land, its heroic struggle for independence, the development of its culture, the main stages in its history – Kiev Russ, the Muscovy State, the Russian Empire and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and, lastly, the study of the history of the many peoples comprising this Union

<sup>21</sup> Udaltsov was a Soviet historian and corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1939). From 1946 to 1956 he was director of the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.



distribution of certain nationalities by migrations, though not quite without foundation, “can be reduced to a very secondary place in the explanation of archaeological evidence on changes in social life, and replacements of one 'culture' by another. The traditional concepts of the 'original home' of certain nations or of an 'ancestral nation' belong to the realm of nationalist mythology.”<sup>22</sup>

Schlesinger sums up that in this concept there is no longer any room for autochthony in any other sense; that migrations in prehistoric times become irrelevant for the formation of the present nations. By that time, the need for verification of the “Soviet theory of ethnogenesis” by concrete application to archaeological and linguistic material was generally recognized (Schlesinger 1950: 10). As a consequence, Soviet ethnologists started exploring ethnogenesis outside the Soviet Union. This connects back to our bibliographical research on ethnogenesis, where the very first contribution on the topic from journals of African Studies, published in 1968, reported on the “Explosion of African Studies in the Soviet Union” (Desai 1968). Desai reviews works of Soviet scholars from the 1950s and 1960s who engaged in understanding the origin of the peoples of the Guinea coast, or were concerned with the origin of the people of the Central Sudan; “and some others which display a new approach to the very intricate problems of the ethnogenesis and cultural histories of Africa” (Desai 1968: 250).

It was not only the first appearance in African Studies that referred to the Soviet Theory of Ethnogenesis. This same holds true for the majority of early contributions to journals *American Archaeology*, *American History*, and even the *English Historical Review*, which refer, above all, to the works of Udaltsov.

Apart from its ideological use to classify the diverse national entities, the weakness of the Soviet concept of ethnogenesis lies in the assumption (or political programme) that ethnic groups are stable and continuously transmit their social structures from one generation to the next. The reforms introduced by Gorbachev in the 1980s, however, permitted Soviet scholars to reconsider the theoretical basis of their disciplines (Gullette 2008: 264f). The purpose and intention of nationalist ideologies in the post-Soviet period were hotly debated. In 1990, Anatoly Khazanov, an anthropologist, remarked that “Soviet anthropology is at present at the crossroads [...] connected with the general theory of ethnicities and particularly in its application to the ethnic situation in the USSR” (Khazanov 1990: 220; cited by Gullette 2008: 264). But this did not, accordingly to Khazanov – and like the situation in Bosnia at roughly the same time (Clause 2000) – explain or moderate the rising ethnic tensions visible in various parts of the Soviet Union. Following Gullette, Soviet scholars concerned with ethnic studies were hoping that the social sciences would move beyond this impasse and adopt a multiplicity of

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<sup>22</sup> Schlesinger (1950: 9) citing Udaltsov's report at the Anniversary Session of the Institute for the History of Material Culture, in S.I.F., 1949/3.

views. A few years later, Valéry Tishkov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in the Russian Academy of Sciences, lamented that ethnos - a term describing a community consciously aware of its distinctiveness and particular interests - and ethnogenesis were still the most “[...] powerful and sacred categories in post-Soviet Anthropology and in public discourse” (Tishkov 1994: 88). Tishkov, who was writing not long after the collapse of the Soviet Union, reported that ethnogenesis was regarded as “sacred”, because it supported ethno-nationalist ideologies. While ethnogenesis had been a Soviet tool to authenticate different “peoples” and to chart their position on a scale of civilisation, it was now used to demonstrate the independence of new countries and separatist movements (Gullette 2008: 265).

In his work on *The Use of Ethnogenesis in Kyrgyzstan*, Gullette explains that while ethnogenesis supported independence movements, its proponents also used it to express chauvinism and xenophobia:

“Scholars, such as Viktor Shnirelman and Sergei Panarin, criticised this view, specifically targeting the work of Lev Gumilev, one of the most popular ethnogenetic theorists since the 1960s. They claimed that nationalist leaders could easily use his work to create biased images for independent movements. Viktor Shnirelman and Sergei Panarin, two Russian social scientists, have summarised Gumilev’s formulation of ethnogenesis as:

[...] the birth of an ethnos [is formed] by [the] appearance of a small group of people, united by common sympathy and a great feeling of patriotism, who are prepared to sacrifice personal prosperity and even their lives for the achieving of their projected goal. In its name they are ready to break with their usual norms of behaviours, i.e. with the existing stereotype (Shnirelman and Panarin 2001:10)” (Gullette 2008: 265).

One can conclude by highlighting that the first references to the term ethnogenesis are to be found in Literature Studies. A descriptive use of the concept, on the other hand, was first implemented in Latin American Studies, circa 1930s, followed by its use in the fields of Anthropology and Archaeology in different regions and scholarly traditions in the 1940s. While the term “ethnic group” had been established long before, the novelty of the notion of ethnogenesis was in its explicit emphasis on the genesis, on a formative process of ethnic groups and entities, thus acknowledging, implicitly at least, that ethnic groups are not natural, given entities, but instead result out of historical processes.

Conceptualization and theoretical considerations appear from the mid-1940s onwards in Latin American Studies (works by ethnologists and anthropologists) and in Soviet (Archeological) History and Ethnology. In both strands it was used to differentiate between – and often with the intention to classify and categorize – social entities and populations along constructs of common history and cultural markers. As for Latin American Studies, the early use of the concept in colonial

times was marked by racial classification. This might explain why works mentioning ethnogenesis in their full text, despite first emerging in 1931, from this pioneering stage through to 2007, only constitute 74 contributions to Latin American Studies, with just three of these contributions having made reference to the term in their titles; and these contributions have also come more recently, between 2000 and 2007. The critical reflection on the categorizing works of colonial scholars has revealed that these scholars were to what Steven Thompson coined “ethnic entrepreneurs” engaged in “ethnic strategizing” (Thompson 2011: 99). The constructivist critique of ethnicity by Ranger (1983), Fardon (1987), and Vail (1989) argues that often the very categories under debate – and most certainly their reification – were the outcome of the colonial encounter. For African Studies in particular – but broadly recognized among anthropologists and beyond – the flexibility of precolonial social networks and the ways that colonial administrators, missionaries, chiefs and elders, and educated elites created increasingly fixed ethnic categories and identification through systematic miscommunication, misconstrual, and manipulation, has been particularly emphasized. Although the structural forces of power relations and “ethnic change” are today recognized as intrinsic to processes of ethnogenesis, ethnic strategizing “from above” might have caused the concept itself to go out of fashion in Latin American Studies for a prolonged time period, this before getting discharged altogether by constructivist scholarly tradition (e.g. Gabbert 2011, 2014).

From the 1940 to the 1960s, most academic reference to ethnogenesis at international level turned to the Soviet theory of ethnogenesis. The decisive context here had been the National Question, with eminent Marxist historians and ethnographers partly taking up the role of motivating actors of “ethnic strategizing”. It is no coincidence that the central issue was called the “National” and not the “Ethnic Question”. Nations were seen as historically formative, and ethnic classification seen as not to be based on racist categories. The mission was “opposing the fascist falsification of history, especially in the field of ethnogenesis”, pointing out that “national characteristics, especially language, are comparatively late formations resulting from common material conditions of life, and by implication, common forms of social thought”, and that the traditional concept of an “ancestral nation belong to the realm of nationalist mythology” (Udaltsov 1946).

While ethnogenesis was seen as the result of historical processes, the weakness of the Soviet concept of ethnogenesis, as stressed above, lies in the assumption (or political programme) that ethnic groups were seen as rather stable, social entities that would continuously transmit their social structures from one generation to the next. It did not consider what is today commonly referred to as “ethnic change”.

“Ethnic change” was probably most visibly introduced by the “instrumentalist analyses”, as pioneered by the Manchester School Anthropologists, a perspective based on the observation of migrant workers that placed ethnic markers on highly circumstantial performances within new urban political configurations (as opposed to positions deriving from cultural complexities of rural origin) (see Epstein 1958; Mitchell 1956). While successfully challenging the earlier fixed ideas about “tribalism,” these models had relatively little to say about the specific content of ethnic models, in particular, the affective elements that could become powerful political motivators. These and innumerable other works on processes of “ethnic change” and formation of ethnic groups and entities, from the 1950s onward, did not necessarily refer to these formative processes “ethnogenesis”.

The instrumentalist perspective has offered quite complete explanations for the process whereby an individual, family, or community reassigns itself from one ethnic category to another without fundamentally transforming the system at hand. Fredrik Barth (1969:21) coined this phenomenon “ethnic osmosis”. In current use, ethnogenesis, the creation of an ethnic category, can be seen as the constructivist’s logical counterpart to the idea of “ethnic osmosis”.

Following Steve Thomson, an American scholar of Political Anthropology, the Anthropology of Religion, and Development Studies, ethnogenesis can include both the “genesis”, proper of an ethnic category, and also the historical processes of “regeneration,” whereby major definitions of key boundary markers are renegotiated:

“The creation, definition, and redefinition of ethnic categories, in other words, constitute an on-going process. [...] As with all cultural phenomena, ethnicity is never truly a given but must be continually recreated. [...] We can identify periods of active ethnogenesis and periods of relative stability in ethnic group categories. The corollary of this argument is that ethnogenesis is never an instantaneous event. By definition there is some period of time during which an ethnic category is “proposed,” progressively claimed by individuals, and eventually recognized more broadly. Likewise, ethno(re)genesis, the significant redefinition of an ethnic category and its boundaries, does not occur instantaneously but proceeds over a period of time during which it is tested and contested, and either succumbs to the status quo or becomes generally recognized.” (Thomson 2011: 98)

In Sociology, the term has only gained momentum in the 1960s, during the phase of the so-called “ethnic revival” in American Sociology, with the first paper by Lester C. Singer, entitled “Ethnogenesis and Negro-Americans Today”, published in *Social Research* (Singer 1962).

In looking at all journal papers, books and book chapters across disciplines that appear in JSTOR carrying “Ethnogenesis” in their titles, Singer’s paper comes in 42th place. The “Top Ten” are all single chapters within the same book (the recent monograph by Voss, 2008), with the exception of an anthology of Southern Poems

(including Henry Timrod's war poem *Ethnogenesis*) edited by Barrett and Miller (2005), fourth. The overwhelming majority of the fifty most relevant contributions were published from the year 2000 onwards. Among this fifty, Lester Singer's paper is the oldest and only one published prior to the 1990s. When limiting the search to particular umbrella and single disciplines, Singer's paper comes sixth in Social Sciences, first in Political Science, and sixth in Sociology, here following five single chapters in different edited book. In short, until the present day, it is the most relevant paper in sociological journals.

Typical for sociological foci, the analysis of the relationship between the individual and social structure in formative processes of social entities is key for Singer. The author makes clear the notions that underlie the use of the term "social entity" as contrasted with the term "social category". Social categories refer "to numbers of people who constitute an aggregate because they have a common characteristic(s) about which society expresses some views and which therefore influences their life chances":

"The 'members' of a social category are not necessarily involved in any relationship among themselves. Thus the terms 'men', 'women', 'immigrants', and 'divorcees' stand for social categories. The term 'social entity', on the other hand, refers to a number of people manifesting such qualities as patterned relationships, shared values, and self-recognition. Thus a team, a gang, a community, an ethnic group, and a society all constitute recognizable social entities." (Singer 1962: 420)

For Singer, and importantly for our understanding of "ethnic groups", the central point of the contrast between the two terms is the "presence or absence of internal structure and the accompanying cultural, or ideological, element". He further suggests calling the formative process of ethnically defined social entities "ethnogenesis, meaning by this term the process whereby a people, that is an ethnic group, comes into existence" (Singer 1962: 423). He also reminds us that

**Lester C. Singer, *Ethnogenesis and Negro-Americans Today*, 1962: 424**

This process appears to have the following form,

- 1) A portion of a population becomes distinguished, on some basis or bases, in the context of a power relationship.
- 2) The members of this distinguished population segment are "assigned" to a particular social role and fate; that is, the division of labor becomes reorganized.
- 3) As these people react to the situation in which they find themselves, they become involved with one another, if the situation permits. In other words, social structures develop among them; it is at this point that entity characteristics first become apparent.
- 4) Then these people become aware of their commonality of fate. The growth of such corporate self-awareness reinforces the structuring tendencies.
- 5) The further development of the emerging ethnic group will then depend, in part, on the nature of the structures that develop the content of the group's "self-image", and the shared conception of its destiny. This, of course, emphasizes internal development, which is our present concern.

this process is only one of several kinds of group-forming processes, of which socio-genesis is the generic term.<sup>23</sup>

While there are a multiplicity of causal factors at work in processes of ethnogenesis, Singer suggests specifically looking at the context of power relations, that is, “the specific character of the relationship with the other segment(s) of the population”. This relates to a common social scientific sense, namely that internal group development and external (inter-group) relationships influence one another. In short: the characteristics of an emergent ethnic group are the consequences of factors outside themselves as well as their response to these factors. The bases may be ideological differences, imputed intrinsic differences, particular functions in the division of labor, etc. – this to be taken into account when describing a particular case of ethnogenesis. For a general outline of the process, however, the particulars are not important (Singer 1962: 423-428).

There is a parallel to Weber’s very argument that highlights the difference between a kinship group and ethnic membership (as a “believed-in membership”), precisely where Singer underlines that the ancestors of the people in question do not necessarily show any kind of “ethnic group characteristics”. Rather, it might only been possible to conceptualize former generations as a social category, not as a social entity.

Singer developed his concept of the formative process of ethnogenesis in response to a lack of adequate ways of conceptualizing “Negroes in Negro-white relations in the United States”, criticizing the fact that earlier attempts were based on static category concepts and, as such, appeared not to do justice to the phenomenon. In his eyes, the available data seemed to “require an entity concept that will allow the developmental factors to be taken into account”. Singer connects with the kind of process, which E.K. Francis referred to:

“Yet even on the ground of our limited knowledge it becomes clear that, generally speaking, the stages of development traversed by ethnic groups are: expansion - fission - new combination.” (Francis 1947: 398, note 11; cited by Singer).

“What we have here called ethnogenesis is related to Francis' sequence at two points. It is, on the one hand, temporally prior in that ethnic groups must have formed before they could expand. On the other hand, the last stage of the sequence is ethnogenesis. Consequently, the expanded sequence should be: ethnogenesis - expansion - fission - new combination (that is, ethnogenesis).” (Singer 1962: 429-430)

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<sup>23</sup> Socio-genesis is a term describing the origins of certain problems within a society; specifically, the fact that many problems originate due to specific attitudes (or activities) within a society.

Although the term genesis carries the connotation of “birth” or “creation”, ethnogenesis tended to be used to describe what was later called “ethnic change” or “ethnic osmosis” (Barth 1969). In introducing the ethnogenesis of African-Americans as starting *ab initio* (unlike all other inquiries up until that date in which ethnogenesis was used to conceptualize the transformation of some ethnic groups into other ethnic groups), Singer’s contribution added decisively to the works of his time because traditional perspectives had nearly exclusively focused on the survival and transformation of European-derived “ethnic cultures” in the USA. It was later argued – e.g. by Fredrik Barth (1969) and Anthony Greeley (1974) – that the process whereby ethnic groups come into being had been largely ignored. Similarly, as criticized by Pierre van den Berge (1967) as well as William Yancey et al. (1976), the emphasis on culture as an explanatory variable had tended to obscure the contribution of structural conditions to the emergence and persistence of ethnicity. During the same period, several scholars (e.g., Cohen 1969, Doornbos 1972, Hechter 1974, and slightly later Taylor 1979) suggested that while ethnicity may involve cultural referents, its development and persistence would depend on certain structural conditions. This is to say, the expectation that class or functional cleavages should become predominant over ascriptive solidarities in modern society seemed to be unjustified in view of the persistence of these structural factors (Mayhew 1968, Bell 1975).

This is a very important point and matches with our exploratory analysis of the concept of Portuguese Muslims which dissolves class and cultural differences. Furthermore, the awareness and need to differentiate between social category and social entity, as stressed by Singer. In contrast, our ideal-typical field notes made clear that Singer’s expanded sequence is too linear to grasp the formative process of either hyphenated or pan-ethnic conceptions of ethnic membership. This supports the argument that differing processes described as ethnogenesis can more tellingly be conceptualized as Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG) as our concept highlights the dialectic of hetero- and homogenization at work. However, the selected relevant sociological works introduced here underline, again, that in order to elucidate the formative process of ethnically defined social entities we need to consider the interplay between sociocultural characteristics and social structure, as well as intergroup relations in specific settings of power.

Furthermore, there are a few relevant alternative concepts applicable to or enhancing ethnogenesis and ethnic change, namely ethnic osmosis (Barth 1969), ethno(re)genesis, ethnocultural drift and ethnic strategizing (Thomson 2011). The question is whether or not EHG might serve as an umbrella category for these concepts.

The conceptual history of the term ethnogenesis provides an essential part of the theoretical framework for this endeavor. The second important aspect for such a framework derives from a key problem dealt with in researching migrants and sociocultural change in society at large – this less so in the field and more in relation to academic discourse: the (ab-)use of the identity category, and loose talk of “identities” and consequent lack of analytical insight. As mentioned above, it is no coincidence that our conceptual considerations and theorizing is oriented by “traditional”, critical, sociological and anthropological craft. “Traditional” in this context means before the identity-jargon became established. Even the most relevant works fall into this discursive fashion (e.g. ... “we define ethnogenesis as the emergence of new groups and identities – to describe community fission and coalescence”, and so forth).

There is indeed a complement to the instrumentalist, constructivist and other perspectives on ethnicity. Matching our purpose, a significant parallel line of argument addresses the nature of ethnic situations rather than the nature of “ethnic identity”. Essential to all of these perspectives is the insight that ethnicity, as a phenomenon, is fundamentally an attribute of pluralistic situations, especially “the asymmetric incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy” (Comaroff 1987:307, cp. also Thomson 2011). As the subtitle of Barth’s 1969 landmark volume states, we are considering “the social organization of cultural differences.” As the next section, Identity Critique and Sociology of Membership (5.) suggests, giving identity-jargon a miss might mean more than taking a significant parallel line in terms of focus.

## 5 Identity Critique and Sociology of Membership

*Today we could hardly do without the word identity in talking about immigration and ethnicity. Those who write on these matters use it casually; they assume the reader will know what they mean. And readers seem to feel that they do - at least there has been no clamour for clarification of the term. But if pinned down, most of us would find it difficult to explain just what we do mean by identity. Its very obviousness seems to defy elucidation: identity is what a thing is! How is one supposed to go beyond that in explaining it? But adding a modifier complicates matters, for how are we to understand identity in such expressions as “ethnic identity,” “Jewish identity,” or “American identity”? This is a question to which the existing writings on ethnicity do not provide a satisfactory answer. Philip Gleason, Identifying Identity: A Semantic History, 1983: 910.*

Our perspective on ethnicity relates to what is currently in development as the Sociology of Membership. While the notion was coined by Gerhard Preyer, whose theoretical framework is based on Luhmann’s system theory (Preyer 2006), this



work takes a different approach. This leads back to Georg Simmel's theory of the Web of Group Affiliations (in the original German, literally: "social circles"), written in the year 1908. Simmel explains that "conflict is admitted to cause or modify interest groups, unification, organizations" (Simmel 1955: 13), while solidarity in modern society is constituted by social cohesion through group-affiliation. Different types of groups comprise the affiliation process and the different group-affiliations of an individual are not (necessarily) in conflict but form its personality. Simmel says that although it is true that internal and external conflicts will arise with multiple group affiliations, it can also strengthen the individual and enforce the integration of his personality.<sup>24</sup>

"The groups with which the individual is affiliated constitute a system of coordinates, as it were, such that each new group with which he becomes affiliated circumscribes him more exactly and more unambiguously. [...] To belong to any one of these groups leaves the individual considerable leeway. But the larger the number of groups to which an individual belongs, the more improbable is it that other persons will exhibit the same combination of group-affiliations, that these particular groups will "intersect" once again [in a second individual, nct]." (Simmel 1955 [1922]: 319f).

Erving Goffman's writings on the formation of the Self connect with this idea, namely that the Self is developing in and comprised of the specific combination (or intersection) of roles. Goffman understands roles as behavioural expectations associated with social positions in relationships (Goffman 1959). In Goffman's terminology, it is a combination of roles that makes individuals unique; following Simmel's theory it is everyone's specific web of group affiliations; in our words, it is the unique combination of diverse *membership roles* which makes individuals non-identical with others. The Sociology of Membership opens up ways to withstand a discourse language that can be termed "identity jargon", marked by a loss of analytical categories and differentiation, just as (following Simmel) concrete objects lose their individual characteristics when we subsume them under a general concept in accordance with one of their attributes. And concrete objects regain their individual characteristics as other concepts are emphasized under which their several attributes may be subsumed. Little is explained and much reification and alienation underway when attributing one "ethnic identity" to an individual, giving the processual and relational nature, situativity and shifting concepts of ethnically defined membership, not to mention multiple options of "ethnic" affiliations (Waters 1990). Much less is explained when ascribing an "ethnic identity" to a collective.

Eric Hobsbawm (1996: 38f) explains that, while this is a relatively new subject, scholars have "become so used to terms like 'collective identity', 'identity groups,

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<sup>24</sup> He uses the example of marriage and how both spouses belong to new families, expanding one's interests and relationships, yet at the same time they can intensify one's conflicts.

‘identity politics’, or, for that matter ‘ethnicity’, that it is hard to remember how recently they have surfaced as part of the current vocabulary, or jargon, of political discourse”:

“For instance, if you look at the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, which was published in 1968—that is to say written in the middle 1960s—you will find no entry under identity except one about psychosocial identity, by Erik Erikson<sup>25</sup>, who was concerned chiefly with such things as the so-called ‘identity crisis’ of adolescents who are trying to discover what they are, and a general piece on voters’ identification. And as for ethnicity, in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of the early 1970s it still occurs only as a rare word indicating ‘heathendom and heathen superstition’ and documented by quotations from the eighteenth century. In short, we are dealing with terms and concepts which really come into use only in the 1960s. Their emergence is most easily followed in the USA, [...] mainly because the most obvious form of identity politics—but not the only one—namely ethnicity, has always been central to American politics since it became a country of mass immigration from all parts of Europe. [...]. Let me remind you that - in the style-setting USA at least - this decade also saw the emergence of two other variants of identity politics: the modern (that is, post-suffragist) women’s movement and the gay movement.” (Hobsbawm, 1996: 38)

Thus, the semantic broadening and exploitation of the term “identity” (which throughout the collective works of Sigmund Freud is mentioned only four times) and the discursive career of “ethnicity” went hand-in-hand and coincided with the emergence of social movements. In these latter contexts, “identity” was used in an emancipatory sense: as a normative political concept. It is therefore important to differentiate between analytical categories of hoped for heuristic value and political discourse.

In reviewing Erik Erikson’s work in his own study of the semantic history of “identity”, Philip Gleason (1983) reminds us that this word has been used as a synonym for “character” in an era when national-character studies were extremely popular – and that this doubtlessly helped smoothening the way for its rapid acceptance:

“But that is surely not a sufficient explanation for the enormous success of the term. What then was the decisive cause? The most important consideration, I would say, was that the word ‘identity’ was ideally adapted to talking about the relationship of the individual to society as that perennial problem presented itself to Americans at mid-century. More specifically, identity promised to elucidate a new kind of conceptual linkage between the two elements of the problem, since it was used in reference to, and dealt with the relationship of, the individual personality and the ensemble of

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<sup>25</sup> Erikson was closely associated with the social scientists engaged in wartime national-character studies. As Gleason explains, he “reworked much of this material for the chapter of *Childhood and Society* (1950) entitled, ‘Reflections on the American Identity.’ This chapter marks a milestone in the semantic history of identity because it was the first major publication in which the expression ‘American identity’ was used as the equivalent of ‘American character’.” (Gleason 1983: 925-26).

social and cultural features that gave different groups their distinctive character. The relationship of the individual to society has always been problematic for Americans because of the surpassing importance in the national ideology of the values of freedom, equality, and the autonomy of the individual.”

Following Gleason, the specific context of this promise of a new conceptual linkage had been the post-World War II critique of mass society which drew upon a variety of sources. Above all, what made it a matter of general concern was the recent experience of the rise of totalitarianism followed by the catastrophe of world war. Refugee intellectuals, who had special reasons to think about totalitarianism, were important contributors to the mass-culture critique. In his work on the history of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, Martin Jay has focused on a group of intellectuals seen as fundamental to this discussion. At that time, the group coalesced around Max Horkheimer saw in American society tendencies that could well end in totalitarianism, that were already producing "authoritarian personalities" susceptible to fascism (Jay 1973: 212-52). Their perspectives, however, took precisely the opposite direction regarding the use of the term identity. In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* [1947] and *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) they criticise identity-thinking in terms of a "ticket mentality". In the tradition of Critical Theory, Detlev Claussen comments that the loose talk of "collective identities" is a form of reapportioning old ideologies, as it confirms the identification with national or ethnic collectives for everybody involved. After the gratification of "belonging somewhere", it becomes forgotten that collective belongingness, in the first place, is a societal constraint. The practice of assigning individuals to collectives, no matter what they do or say, means mimicking the social constraint instead of criticising it (Claussen 1988: 8f).

Due to drastic change in the cultural climate in the next decade, the mass-society problem receded far into the background. But still, "identity" did not decline. Accordingly to Gleason, it gained even greater popularity:

“The problem of the relation of the individual to society assumed new forms in the turmoil of the 1960s [racial violence, campus disruptions, anti-war protests, and the abuse of official power and betrayal of public trust], but identity was more relevant than ever - only now it was of 'identity crises' that one heard on every hand. [... However,] the revival of ethnicity deserves special attention as perhaps the most important legacy of the 1960s so far as usage of identity is concerned. There is in the nature of the case a close connection between the notion of identity and the awareness of belonging to a distinctive group set apart from others in American society by race, religion, national background, or some other cultural marker.” (Gleason 1983: 927-928)

It is important to note that the rapid intertwined spreading of both words (ethnicity and identity) derived from a very specific historical context (the 1960s

in the USA) of societal and cultural change, providing a political discourse language, namely the one of/for ethnic identity politics; and this despite the fact that European immigrants had settled in the USA long before the “ethnic revival”.

Crossing the Atlantic took a while, but by the end of the Cold War the concepts had found a fertile breeding ground for dramatic proliferation in European academia. Since the end of the Cold War, the familiar categories of collective subjectivity - such as people, nation, group, class - have rapidly gained mobility. They pose a universe of open questions for those social scientists who study the phenomena of group formation and movements in which the search for a historical purpose in post-material conditions appears to gravitate to the centre of attention, especially for the middle classes. Claussen’s concept of the “religion of everyday life” (*Alltagsreligion*) might enlighten the proliferation of “collective identities” (Claussen 2000a). A religion of everyday life provides uncomplicated and unifying answers to current social questions of purpose and sense, such as “Who are we? Where do we come from? Who is to blame?”, in accordance with the requirements of an quotidian mentality which is unwilling to dwell at length on problems that are difficult to solve. Academic discourse languages are influential because nowadays they are rapidly conveyed to the public. Yet they are not necessarily long-lasting. Nevertheless, it is apparently very difficult for the middle classes to give up the search for and proclamation of cultural, national and religious “collective identities”.

Going back to the roots, and to social movements, it is important to recall that those engaged in emancipatory struggle (as well as their opponents) on the basis of ethnic thinking share a *subjective belief* (Weber) of common origin, kinship and/or culture, etc., this being sustained partly by shared societal experiences (of being different in terms of convictions, preferences, or physical features, and so forth). And still, individuals who make part of such imagined communities (Anderson) are not identical with each other. Imagined communities can be understood as real fictions (Claussen), albeit being grounded in subjective belief, consequent ascription and identification, thus having objective consequences in the political realm and beyond. In the case of ethnic categorisation, this affects mainly three levels: the first being the one of individual belonging and collective identification, the second referring to social inequality, and the third, causing a structuring of macro groups (Bös and Chiesi 2013).

One key feature in social research is mirroring the perspectives of social actors, this at a *descriptive level* which, in our case reports the inquired people’s necessities and motivations for – and experiences of – collectivity in specific societal contexts. Description provides the basis for follow-up analysis. Analysis can lead to theorizing where the development of categories of heuristic value is a

core concern. It is important to distinguish between a descriptive level of subjective experiences and an analytical one. Explaining identity politics based on the taken-for-grantedness of the proclaimed “identities” instead of acknowledging their socially constructed and shifting nature is tautological. “Identity” applied to collectives is not an analytical category. The example of so-called “ethnic conflicts” might illustrate it. In referring to the war in Bosnia, Claussen explains that conflict and violence did not derive from “ethnic differences”. Rather, violently experienced power relations embedded in society, in general, and the concrete experience of conflict and war, in particular, have produced ethnicities (Claussen 2000). When engaging in the effort of differentiating between the descriptive and analytical level and resisting the reifying perpetuation of social inequalities and macro-group structuring in academic discourse language, it is helpful to remember a classic from sociological theory, namely the Thomas Theorem formulated in 1928 by William Isaac Thomas and Dorothy Swain Thomas:

“If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.”  
(Thomas and Thomas 1928: 571-572)

As mentioned above, with regard to daily life discourse and politics of recognition, one way of elucidating the semantic career of “identity”, divested of its complex philosophical and psychological connotations, is the hint that daily life consciousness does not tend to remain steadily concerned with problems that are difficult to solve. Rather it is sustained by assurances that group formations share as their undoubted intellectual property:

“For the observer, the deployment of ‘identity’ as a kind of incantation is a cue for a societal demand for explanation. In daily life usage, ‘identity’ fulfils the function of filling uncertainties with sense and meaning. The vague definition of the word correlates with the necessary ambiguity with which normal people make a pragmatic compromise between the tangible uncertainties of social life on the one hand, and the need for affiliation to a social group, on the other.” (Claussen 1994: 60)

The problematic nature of the use of “identity” in these contexts is the reference to the single distinguishing characteristics and cultural features that collectively constitute a larger reality with which a person or group is rapidly identified. Gleason’s reading of Erikson’s *Childhood and Society* (1950) brings to the forefront the idea that Erikson encompasses these and other senses in his notion of identity, “but his characteristic emphasis is on a crucial psychic ingredient, something within the personality of the individual that makes it possible ‘to experience one’s self as something that has continuity and sameness, and to act accordingly’” (Erikson 1950: 38, cited by Gleason 1983: 930). This takes a snapshot of a moment in time in the life-long developmental work of the Self, equating the individual’s desire for continuity, belonging and coherence with an alleged continuity of one’s self-perception, an allegedly unchangeable group

belonging, and an allegedly coherent social reality which is not at all pure, at the level of analysis.

## 6 Conclusion: Towards a new analytical framework for future investigations

The purpose of this paper has been to refine the theoretical understanding of formative process(es) of ethnogenesis and ethnic change through merging sociological and anthropological perspectives beyond existing identity-jargon, and in doing so contributing to a Sociology of Membership.

The research at the basis of this theoretical endeavour took an actors' perspective and employed anthropological as well as sociological methods in the field. While acknowledging the importance of the emancipatory struggle of ethnically defined minorities, the analysis, however, does not perpetuate the political language of identity politics. The problem of the loose talk of identities is that it neither explains the socio-cultural heterogeneous premises for the homogenising genesis of ethnicities nor its heterogeneous outcomes. In doing so it enhances the structuring of allegedly homogenous macro groups along ethnic boundaries - in terms of "cultural", "national", "hybrid", "multiple", "pan-", "hyphenated" and so forth "identities". Instead, and as with a growing number of recent theoretical works (e.g. Banton 2011) in the "post-identity era" (Hank et al. 1994), it refers back to sociological and anthropological craft and concepts that were in use before the 1960s; a time when the words "identity" and "ethnicity" took off together for a vast career of semantic broadening in academic discourse.

An analytical framework coined Ethnoheterogenesis resists tautological explanations such as *"ethnic identities emerge from cultural identities and challenge or are being pressured by national identities as such causing collective minority identities and hybrid and multiple personal identities"*. It suggests rediscovering and recuperating self-perception, membership, affiliations, ascriptions, ethnic framing, representations, mobilization, social entities, reflexive ethnisation and de-ethnisation, collective subjectivity, collective identification, identity-thinking and -politics, from the unrecognisable condition to which they melt into in the "verbal container" (Claussen) of "identities". Here, they melt from subjective belief and needs for collective action, with the objective consequence of structuring macro groups in society and re-enforcing social inequalities along ethnically defined boundaries. By conceptualising ethnic affiliation as one of many membership roles, this contribution adds to the development of a Sociology of Membership.

The alternative concept I suggest is coined Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG) in order to highlight the hetero- and homogenizing forces and their entanglement inherent in these formative processes of social entities. This insight is based on several case studies among two groupings: Portuguese emigrants and their offspring in diverse diasporic settings and Portuguese Muslim families with triple migration trajectories. But the dialectic of hetero- and homogenisation in processes of ethnic framing and membership does not seem to be specific to only these two particular cases. Numerous examples of empirical material derived from research on race and ethnic relations, on hyphenated and pan-ethnic self-perceptions, point to this logic. That is why EHG has the potential to become an analytical framework of heuristic value for future investigations in this field. Thus, this paper aimed providing important preparatory work to pave the ways towards this goal by tracing the conceptual history of the key term (ethnogenesis) and introducing the most relevant sociological and anthropological perspectives.

As an alternative to the reifying identity-jargon, the EHG concept suggests perceiving individuals and their subjective experiences, preferences and unique webs of group affiliations as non-identical with others despite possible common ethnic affiliation and ascriptions to macro groups. Above all, as an analytical framework, EHG considers ethnic membership as *one among many* membership roles.

Who belongs here, and who does not? A Sociology of Membership observes and analyses the developmental contexts, impacts and consequences of this question. The answer to the question targets different aspects, frames, modes and conditions of membership and is constantly negotiated by diverse social formations, such as national states, political parties, firms, sport clubs, families, or ethnic groupings. Such negotiations are defined by – and are shaping – power relations. While ethnic claims and identity politics are found among both societal majorities and minorities, the term ethnic group (as well as national group) is commonly used to describe a societal minority.

It is not exclusive but indeed essential that a Sociology of Membership acknowledges that minorities in any society, however defined, are not homogenous units. Individuals and group(-ings) within a minority may differ in their reaction to subordination, type of leadership, ideology, degree of allegiance to their group, to other members or to the larger society, the ultimate goals of the group, etc. Consequently a minority (and by inference the contextual majority/ies as well) will generally not be a wholly united group - groups and individuals will favour various modes of action in response to majority constraints.

In his *Theory of Social Categories*, Michael Banton (2011) is on a par with Steve Fenton (2003) and Rogers Brubaker (2004) in his critique of “groupism”. As a starting point, Banton confirms that it has been conventional to conceive of ethnogenesis as a process by which a set of individuals come to conceive of themselves as a people. For the development of EHG as an analytical framework his following point is of major importance: instead of understanding ethnogenesis as a formative process of “a people [...] it would be more accurate to speak of ethnoacclivity and ethnodeclivity as processes by which the significance attributed to ethnic identification rises and declines. From a sociological standpoint it is as important to account for the absence of ethnic identification as for its presence” (Banton 2011: 193).

Every person can acknowledge one or more ethnic or national origins. As Steve Fenton (2003: 68) has observed, “the problem ... is not the word ‘ethnic’ but the word ‘group’”. Brubaker (2004: 8) has similarly criticized “groupism”, by which he means “the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts and fundamental units of social analysis”. Banton concludes:

“The conceptual problem is even greater when the recognition of ethnic origin is generalized by reference to ethnicity as if this were an independent factor that influences the behaviour of humans in many regions of the world. Some of these difficulties may be eased if the focus is moved from the concept of a group to that of a category.” (Banton 2011: 194).

This confirms what we have already learnt from Singer’s work, namely to speak of ethnically defined groupings as social entities. Additional to these insights, there is a different line of sociological inquiry regarding ethnogenesis, which can add to the development of our framework.

A model that grasps the simultaneousness and interdependency of ethno-cultural changes among both migrant populations and the society where they are part of was presented by Andrew Greeley (1974), an American sociologist and Roman Catholic priest, with empirical reference to the US context: a two-dimensional model of ethnogenesis. By conceptualising socio-cultural change in society at large as ethnogenesis, Greeley’s model went beyond the analysis of group affiliations but remained under-theorised despite its heuristic potential. As with other models of socio-cultural change, and concepts regarding ethnicities, Greeley’s model does not explicitly address the dialectic of homogenization and heterogenization in the process of ethnogenesis. It is for future investigations to verify if Ethnoheterogenesis can also be employed as a framework to analyse socio-cultural change in society at large. The notion of “ethnoheterogeneous societies” as coined by Detlev Claussen (2013) points to this potential.



In this paper, I have proposed the concept of Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG) as an alternative model to analyze ethnic framing and affiliations of individuals, groupings and macro groups. EHG can a) serve as an umbrella category for ongoing formative processes of ethnogenesis and ethnic change, including ethnocultural drifts and ethnic strategizing, and b) potentially develop further to grasp the process of socio-cultural change in societies marked by migration which we describe as ethnoheterogeneous.

Decisively for following the train of thoughts which lead to the concept of EHG was the opportunity to engage in fieldwork with a view to reconstructing family biographies and migration trajectories spanning two or three generations. The commitment to fieldwork is key to anthropological work and means a coeval presence with social actors, also presenting a way of challenging one's embeddedness in systems of theoretical knowledge. While it was possible to meet periodically with the same Muslim families since winter 1991/92, with a respective first case study carried out in 1998 (Tiesler 2000, Tiesler 2005), the research collected and chosen for this work took place between 2004 and 2014 as part of diverse research projects.<sup>26</sup> It included a number of case studies which drew upon a variety of qualitative and quantitative (Tiesler & Lavado 2016, Tiesler & Bergano 2012, Tiesler & Cairns 2010, Tiesler & Cairns 2007) and exclusively qualitative techniques (Tiesler 2012, Tiesler 2009, Tiesler 2008). We have conducted research on statistics and secondary data analysis, original quantitative surveys and questionnaires, ethnographies, participant observation, biographical narratives and semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Above all, priority was given to qualitative methods as I believe that societal and migration experience cannot be captured by using only quantitative methods.

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote no. 3.

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