Walking and Talking Integration: Triangulation of Data From Interviews and Go-Alongs for Exploring Immigrant Welfare Recipients' Sense(s) of Belonging

Uwe Flick[1], Andreas Hirseland[2], and Benjamin Hans[1]

Abstract

Integration of immigrants is a major political and societal topic in societies such as Germany, although there are different ideas about when integration is achieved. For analyzing integration from the immigrants' points of view, data triangulation of talking (episodic interviews addressing migration histories) and walking (mobile methods—go-alongs) reveals several levels of integration experiences. After outlining space and belonging as relevant theoretical concepts and the methods triangulated in a study, four case studies of immigrants from Turkey and the former Soviet Union in Berlin are presented. The immigrants' perceptions and aspirations toward belonging, participation, and integration are explored and compared from an intersectional perspective. We find differing ways of positioning toward the German majority society, of getting connected to it and coping with unemployment. Relations of work and social integration or marginalization are discussed based on the case studies and the relevance of using various kinds of data is demonstrated.

Keywords

data triangulation, episodic interview, mobile methods, migration and unemployment, work and integration

The Problem

In Germany, debates on immigration and related integration policies continuously appear on the political agenda. In times of expanding postwar industries, immigrants were considered as "guest workers" who were supposed to leave after their job was done. However, they turned out to well match Georg Simmel's notion of the stranger as the "person who comes today and stays tomorrow" (Simmel, 1908/1950, p. 402). Former "guest workers"—mainly from Turkey—made their families follow them or founded new ones in Germany. At the end of the cold war era, immigration from Eastern Europe, including the former Soviet Union (FSU), intensified. Many of these immigrants of the first generation or following ones were struck by the upheavals of the German economy, which destroyed many unskilled or industrial jobs and led to refined requirements for regular employments. Many long-term immigrants found themselves long-term unemployed and became qualified for social benefits. As welfare recipients, they are entitled to minimum financial benefits including housing costs. At the same time, they are obliged to accept any job or measures to improve their employability mandated by the "Jobcenter" (as they are called in Germany) as the cognizant welfare authority. However, the labor-market placement of welfare receiving immigrants appears to be complicated and in many cases inefficient. Therefore, this particular group is considered as problematic and sometimes hard to handle by some Jobcenter staff as well as in the wider public, assuming they lack the will to integrate themselves.

This concern is part of what constitutes the topic of an "integration problem" in public discourse. The situation outlined earlier is the wider context of a qualitative research project initiated and designed by the Institute for Employment Research, the Federal Employment Agency's research institute, and commissioned to the Freie Universität Berlin. This research turns the perspective from what is perceived as problematic in parts of the society to exploring what sort of problems immigrants experience in a life-situation in which they do not find access to the labor-market and have to depend on welfare. The study finally reflects possible shortcomings of the Jobcenters' integration policies toward immigrants.

[1]Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany, Germany
[2]Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, Nuremberg, Germany

Corresponding Author:
Uwe Flick, Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, Berlin 14195, Germany.
Email: Uwe.Flick@FU-Berlin.de

Accordingly, this study is interested in biographies, labor-market aspirations, personal networks, and forms of integration in everyday practices. Therefore, it triangulates several qualitative methods like (multilingual) in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, qualitative network-analysis, and go-alongs. The study focuses on immigrants with a Turkish for FSU background, as these two groups represent the largest subgroups of immigrants (Knuth & Brussig, 2010) in Germany.

This article covers only part of this research as it mainly addresses two aspects: (a) Methodologically, it focuses on the triangulation of in-depth-interviews with go-alongs. Considering methods as a means related to specific ends, we further show how the use of these methods is (b) related to our findings. After discussing briefly the relevant conceptual framework of the study, the methodical approach is outlined before we present some exemplary findings. Finally, we will briefly reflect the use of these methods and discuss how these findings relate to a better understanding of why immigrant welfare recipients face and suffer from difficulties in entering the labor-market.

Integration, Urban Spaces, and Places

Transnational migration studies usually tend to focus on the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of the subject (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007), often emphasizing one of these aspects. One controversial issue within the (public) German debate is "assimilation" (Esser, 2010), demanding immigrants to adopt the receiving country's norms and values and a high degree of identification. In contrast, a more multiculturalist perspective advocates the necessity of the receiving country's structure and beliefs to change as well:

> In many cases, the state historically defined the nation in a racially or religiously exclusive way—e.g. as a white/Christian nation. These exclusionary definitions of the nation must be challenged and repudiated if newer immigrant and refugee groups are to be fully accepted and integrated. (Kymlicka, 2003, pp. 151f.)

Thus, multicultural approaches foster a different understanding of integration: It is seen as a mode of coexistence, mutual understanding, and cooperation. This mode should be created by going beyond the conception of an ethnically or culturally defined society and its nation-state, in the end aiming at economic, political, social, and cultural participation.

Our study interest is oriented on the micro-level of integration as "the process of becoming an accepted part of society" (Penninx, 2005, p. 141). Such an approach is action-oriented and does not determine whether integration is achieved by assimilating or in a multicultural mode. Therefore, it might avoid the divisive question at which point of the process an immigrant is "really" integrated and is no longer an "immigrant."

Looking at integration from a micro-level everyday point of view takes into consideration the manifold ways people try to get along with the people around them and the environment they live in. This approach looks at how people, in our case immigrants, participate in the socio-ecological or spatial surroundings as spatially and socially "located" selves, interact with this environment, and get connected to it. It also focuses on how people develop a sense of belonging or, on the contrary, of alienation. "Sense of belonging" is a notion used in manifold contexts and a multidimensional concept (Antonsich, 2010b). It encompasses a conceptual, imaginary, level—as in the case of identities based on belongingness to a nation state as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983)—and a "politics of belonging" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). It also is related to subjectivity, since experiencing and expressing feelings of belonging are often linked to certain spaces and places at the interface of the private—household and workplace—and the public, consisting of the associational sphere of communities and neighborhoods up to the politico-cultural sphere of the nation state (Duyvendak, 2011). The positioning within these fields contributes to the production of belongingness or enables it as feeling "at home" (Antonsich, 2010b; Boccagni, 2017), which surely is part of a personal identity.

Sociological theories see modern identity as socio-historically "mobilized" (Giddens, 1991) and "fluid" (Bauman, 1997, 2001), shifting from inherited or acquired characters to a more self-liberated focus on "identification" (Bauman, 2001, p. 152). This concept indicates that—willingly or unwillingly—we identify ourselves or get identified with something, pointing to choices that were made more or less consciously. Thus, identities do not exist on their own but rather are a "mobile, often unstable relation of difference" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 13). To become socially powerful, they have to be acknowledged by relevant others. Thus, they need to include a performative dimension as they have to be displayed through actions and contribute to an individual's social and cultural positioning. Even in times of a "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2001, p. 146), individual placements in society are related to *places* to which individuals gain access and are attached with (Easthope, 2009). While in sociology, the concept of "space" refers to structure and social ordering (Agnew, 2011; Löw, 2008), the sociological and geographical notion of "place" refers to meanings and values associated with its materiality, emplacing difference and hierarchy as well as enabling proximity, interaction, and community (Gieryn, 2000). Thus, accessing and using places is highly distinctive, reflecting power structures and social inequality. Using place and being attached to it become some of the crucial aspects of an individual's personal and social identification, closely related to the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010a).

Most literature on these topics addresses questions like how places become or are made meaningful, what their impact on behavior is, which power effects they exert, and how attachment to place is created (Antonsich, 2010b; Lewicka, 2011a). Our study turns that perspective around and asks what—referring to integration—can be learnt from observing the use people with an immigration background make of the (urban) environment they live in and which at the same time surrounds them. To be able to make (a certain) use of space and places is a means to encode oneself in the flux of social life and society, maybe finally ending up with creating a sense of "being at home."

In our study, the aforementioned considerations made us look at how our participants are related to their spatial surroundings in Berlin, a city that offers a differentiated urban environment and a broad variety of places for almost any activity, taste, and lifestyle. Of course, we are aware of the sometimes overt, sometimes latent boundaries that regulate access to these places economically, socially, and culturally, which means—on the level of subjectivities—habitually (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Nevertheless, within that conceptual framework, the individual attachments of people with places and the activities places enable and demand at the same time can be understood as selective choices. These choices sometimes are consciously made, sometimes imposed by circumstances (e.g., lack of money, repudiation, or self-estrangement). Therefore, these choices reflect different modes of actively appropriating the socio-spatial environment just as the kind of relatedness toward the social and cultural values materialized in the places that meaningfully shape the environment (Agnew, 2011; Löw, 2008).

Such an analysis has to be sensitive toward intersectionality (Blokland, Giustozzi, Krüger, & Schilling, 2016) and thus take into account "multiple, intersecting, and complex social relations" (McCall, 2005, pp. 1772-1773) that evolve from or form the basis for different place attachments and realizations of local participation. Especially immigrant welfare recipients are vulnerable and might be subject to discriminating ascriptions like being perceived as lazy scroungers (Fohrbeck, Hirseland, & Ramos Lobato, 2014) or suspected to retreat into a parallel society and—as far as Jobcenters are concerned—not willing to comply.

Thus, the research questions pursued in the study and this article are located on two levels: First, we are interested in how the process of migration and integration is experienced and presented in a biographical perspective: How are the processes of migration and efforts to become integrated on the level of social environments and work understood retrospectively? What becomes visible in talking about these processes in interviews? Second, we focus on how the result of these processes and efforts materialize in the current situation: How do immigrants in their present situations take possession of the social and spatial environments they live in? How are these environments used and what is used of them? What becomes visible of this using and taking possession when walking through these environments with the immigrants? What do both levels reveal of processes, experiences, and evaluations of integration on the participants' sides? Thus, we triangulate theoretical perspectives addressing these two levels. Empirically, we work with a data triangulation based on several methodological approaches on these levels.

Method and Data Triangulation

This study is case-oriented, which means that we did not only try to collect statements but tried to reconstruct several interrelations between:

1. Participants' biographies as immigrants trying to arrive in German contexts and belong to their new surroundings;
2. Their conceptual frameworks for interpreting their life-situations, especially the role of paid work and subsidies as related to biographical experience and habitus;
3. Their perception of the institution "Jobcenter" and its influence on labor-market placement;
4. Their perceptions and presentations of the social and spatial environments they live and move in; and
5. Their conduct of life in general and their future aspirations.

In this article we focus the triangulation of two kinds of data (interviews and go-along), although in the study we also used other forms of data. Triangulation is no longer aiming at confirming results with those obtained by a second method. It rather aims at unfolding the complexity of phenomena under study by complementing several theoretical perspectives with each other and various methods with each other. Such a methodological triangulation can be applied within a method or between methods (Denzin, 1989). It allows to triangulate several kinds of data in a systematic way for a wider or deeper understanding of what is studied (see Flick, 2018). In our example, data triangulation referred to several levels.

Data were collected in *episodic interviews* (Flick, 2014), which, when needed, were carried out in a multilingual way (sometimes with the help of native-speaking research assistants). In such an interview, open-ended questions and situation-related narratives are *triangulated within* the same interview. The interviews referred to the interviewees' experiences and processes mainly in the past and their current concepts (of work or belonging, for example). Both are reported in talking to the interviewer. In our study, we applied *between-methods triangulation* by using go-alongs (Carpiano, 2009; Garcia, Eisenberg, Frerich, Lechner, & Lust, 2012; Kusenbach, 2003, 2018) in addition to the

interviews to literally bring our research on site (Carpiano, 2009; Hall, 2009).

Go-alongs are a specific person-centered (concentrating on a specific participant) and interactive (between participant and researcher) form of ethnography, which focuses on specific places (relevant for the participant). The approach is systematic in the selection of the participants and the focus of the research activities (Kusenbach, 2018, p. 349). Go-alongs can also be seen as a form of *within-methods triangulation*. They combine mobile methods (walking), observation, conversations with, descriptions, and explanations by the participant (talking). By sharing space, time, and experience with the study participants, we wanted to see how their everyday lives are rooted in the use of space and places. So, we asked participants to display on a map those places in their neighborhood and/or entire Berlin that are relevant to them and describe their everyday activities. Then, we asked them to show us around from place to place by either walking or using public transport.

Participants were invited to describe in detail what the respective places mean to them, which activities they associate with them, and to further tell us whatever seemed important, for example, their aspirations and past experiences. The go-alongs covered "trails" as well as "tours" (according to Kusenbach, 2018, pp. 350-351). They lasted five hours on average. The (male) third author of this article accompanied the participant and documented the process. Where necessary, a native speaking research student supported the researcher. Some of the conversations with the participant were recorded and transcribed, others were documented in field notes. After the "go along," the researcher repeated the tours, this time supported by a colleague who had not taken part in the original go-along. Being asked about the tour and the participants' reactions and attitudes toward certain places did not only help to complement field notes but also allowed to triangulate the original choice by confronting it with an outside perspective, relating the participants' choice and comments to the overall urban environment. These various types of data were collected, related, and analyzed in a data triangulation (Flick, 2018; Flick, Hans, Hirseland, Rasche, & Röhnsch, 2017).

Samples

For reasons of contrast, our sample consists of twenty cases each with a Turkish and FSU immigration background. These two groups represent the largest subgroups of immigrants (Knuth & Brussig, 2010) in Germany and differ in terms of education, culture, and gender. According to differing conditions in their home countries and reasons for immigration, the Turkish subsample is less educated in general than the FSU one. All participants have stayed in Germany for at least five years, most of them considerably longer. For this article, we focus on what the use of the go

along method could reveal, complemented by some insights from the earlier episodic interviews. The subsample of the participants of the go-alongs were chosen by contrastive criteria after they had been interviewed and agreed to show us around in "their" urban environment and the places in it they preferred. All in all, forty participants were included in the interviews, and ten of them in the go-alongs.

On the FSU side, the subsamples for the go-alongs included three male and two female participants between twenty-seven and fifty-three years old, among them scientists, psychologists, and technicians with an academic background, who came to Germany between 1990 and 2011. The go-along was done in German or Russian, and one case in a combination of both languages. The Turkish subsample for the go-along include three male and two female participants between thirty-six and fifty-three years old, who came to Germany between 1972 and 2008 plus one participant who was born here. Their professional backgrounds were not based on any formal or even academic training. They had mostly worked in practical contexts. The go-along was mostly done in a mixture of German and Turkish.

The research was conducted in Berlin, a large German city that consists of a variety of different districts. Each of the districts is grouped around (sub-)centers and shaped by different quarters with particular characteristics—such as more (or less) pronounced immigrant cultures, infrastructures oriented on leisure or consumption, points of (cultural) interest, and so on. As our participants' homes are spread all over the city, the go-alongs were carried out in different spatial contexts that provide insight into a broad variety of opportunities for space-usage and participation. These contexts can be sorted according to their localization within the overall context of the city at large, ranging from diverse quarters near the center to more homogenous peripheral suburban neighborhoods. The central quarters offer greater choices, for example, of food supply or cultural activities in a broader sense, like a variety of different cafés, clubs, bars, restaurants, churches, and mosques. These quarters provide chances to get in touch with the kind of people (and activities) someone prefers. Looking at our participants, we were interested in the actual usage of places, perceptions of opportunities and aspirations, and possibly efforts to enhance participation in everyday life, for example, by commuting within the city.

Examples: Spaces, Places, and Modes of Belongingness

By looking at four contrasting cases, we will exemplify different space- and place-related modes of belongingness. These modes appear through different choices, perceptions, and usages of urban places that refer to aspirations and positioning and thus to forms of integration and participation. Seen from an intersectional perspective, all cases have in

common that they need to handle similar living conditions and challenges as they share the same status: being unemployed and welfare recipient and having an immigration background. Having no job means no access to the pivotal social arena for acquiring recognition as a valuable member of society. It also means less chances to interact and cooperate with local people, to become a part of the ordinary everyday life, and to establish relationships and sometimes even get friendly.

In meritocratic, labor-oriented societies, access to the labor market still is the crucial field of integration. Our participants are welfare recipients with an immigration background. Therefore they risk to be suspected that they have come to Germany for living on social benefits, as these social benefits often are higher than the regular wages in their home countries. Furthermore, living on benefits means to be poor and a marginalized person within the consumption-oriented, highly commercialized settings of a wealthy German city, where access to certain places is—more or less overtly—money driven. This also applies to housing, since welfare recipients only have limited choices in this field. In Germany, the larger part of the population lives as tenants. Many landlords are reluctant toward welfare recipients, while welfare benefits only allow for housing at limited (low) rent in small apartments, which sometimes are allocated by the city's housing offices. All in all, one could expect that our participants have comparatively little choice in how and where to live. Regarding senses and modes of belongingness, this raises the questions of how to create a satisfactory social life corresponding with one's own aspirations and beliefs, of where to participate and of how and where to meet (which) people, and finally to capture one's share as a citizen in public space or—on the contrary—become marginalized and feeling extraneous.

The selection of the case studies for this article was guided by the idea of including contrasting cases, as they differ in age, duration of residence in Germany, migration histories (and related expectations), and educational and ethnic backgrounds. Accordingly, differences in the individual aspirations and realizations of local participation and corresponding senses of belonging can be expected. We start with two cases, Natalya from the FSU subsample and Orhan from the Turkish one, who both live in the same district, just about one mile away from each other.[1] Sharing the same space, the same quarters, and cultural scenes are in reach for both. So they could organize their everyday life around the same places and share similar experiences. Thus, their actual choices of places and activities, becoming visible during the go-alongs, are well suitable to illustrate—by additionally consulting interview data—the theoretical assumption that choices of place are indicators for different modes of (feelings of) belonging and integration or alienation and exclusion on the opposite, which reflect biographies, life(style) aspirations, and concurrently coping with the present situation. Two complementary cases—Larissa and Cahide—complete the picture because these four cases exemplify the basic structures identified in the analysis of the whole sample.

Natalya—From the Sidelines

Natalya, aged forty-five, studied psychology in Latvia and migrated to Germany in 2011 because she lost her job after falling seriously ill with cancer. Her sister already lived in Germany, and she expected to get better medical treatment here. In the interview, Natalya presents herself as rather open to her new environment, but she only speaks Russian and sees this as an obstacle against her integration into the labor market and into the social environment. Due to a lack of language skills, she was not able to work in her profession. Instead, she found a job as a health care assistant for about a year, which she had to quit when her cancer had to be treated again. In addition, she mentions that she has to take care of her child and is handicapped by her cancer, which prevents her from doing physical work (nursing). Subsequently she became continuously unemployed and finally dependent on welfare. Natalya lives with her twelve-year-old daughter in a small but decent apartment in a quiet street in which rainbow flags, sex shops, and clubs tag a gay area, but there also are Israeli restaurants, ordinary cafés, and residential buildings. She distances herself from the public presence of gay culture, whose members for her too often and too explicitly show their sexual orientation in public. She does not want to identify with the close neighborhood and, thus, does not intensify contacts in the immediate surroundings.

Nevertheless she likes her apartment mainly because it is situated close to the city center, so her daughter's school and places Natalya likes in particular are in walking distance. As the center and most important place of her everyday life, she presents a nearby fancy shopping promenade, which is widely known among the inhabitants of Berlin and beyond. The street is a broad avenue with much space for pedestrians for strolling around and window shopping. There are lots of luxurious shopping malls, boutiques, restaurants, and cafés. Being a central road axis, there are also many pedestrians, either workplace commuters or tourists heading to a nearby train station. Natalya sees and uses this environment as a kind of escape where she can watch all different kinds of people, like tourists with backpacks or business men, people dressed casually or very fancy. The broad sidewalks and car-free places allow to stroll or have a rest on a bench and watch the lively scenery, without being spotted and eyed skeptically and/or being perceived as an outsider. She positions herself as follows:

> I like to walk there [in the shopping street], because you meet many different people there. I like to observe people, how they

behave, what they do. And they are all different, how they act. This is also a touristic place, there are many tourists. (Excerpt from the observation protocol, translated from Russian/German)

This street and its places allow Natalya to just roam around and watch people. To do so gives her the impression of being one among others, while in more immediate social contacts, her limited German language skills prove to be an obstacle to communicate. By simply being there, she can imagine herself to be part of the luxurious world of consumption. Being restricted to the passive role of a spectator, she is taking part in something that she cannot really become part of, for example, as a female consumer. As a daydreaming observer, she does not really get connected to the world, which surrounds her in the sense of becoming part of a social network. For her, that does not seem to be a problem that really bothers her. Referring to her professional identity as a psychologist, she mentions that she rather likes to observe different people and their behavior—which to her seems to be satisfying.

Her place for networking and social bonding is a Russian amateur theater, which is located equally close to her home. Apparently, she still identifies with her profession and with a middle-class life. This place enables her to engage in culture and exchange of ideas without restrictions imposed by missing language skills and marginal status. She needs to manage the balancing act between presently being marginal by status and background and her aspiration to gain back the recognition as a highly educated middle-class professional. She manages this by grounding herself in ethnic cultural activities on one hand, and imagining herself to be part of an anonymous consumer and tourist culture on the other. Strolling around the shopping promenade helps her to normalize her marginal position and to sustain a self-satisfied sense of herself by presenting herself as a metropolitan citizen, merging in anonymity.

Orhan—Loss of Community

In the interview, fifty-three-year-old Orhan who is of Turkish origin mentions that it is important for him to know and to get in contact with people, to use the public sphere as a place to interact and to be recognized. When he came to Germany in 1977 as the son of working immigrant, Orhan was seventeen years old. He started an apprenticeship as a machinist, which he abandoned, taking up several jobs in diners and factories, until his last employer closed down in 2004. He mentions that he now regrets not to have finished a formal training. He sees this as one of the main reasons for his unemployment besides his age and the disappearance of industrial work in Berlin. He also reports that he experiences being unemployed and staying at home as very stressful. He also tells how he decided to go back to Turkey

without his older children, where he also failed to make a new start. After a short time, he returned to Germany. Since then he could not find a new job and became dependent on welfare.

Living close to Natalya, in the go-along, Orhan chooses different spatial contexts and thus reveals an alternate perception and usage of his spatial environment. In contrast to Natalya, Orhan lives in a social housing building placed close to an urban main road with much traffic and less amenity—compared with Natalya's favorite promenade, which still would be in walking distance. Nevertheless, this main road is the major axis of Orhan's tour and offers different shops, diners, and restaurants close-by, covering most daily necessities at low prices. This includes some Arabic or Turkish grocery stores, shisha bars, or kebab shops, and several pedestrians appear to have Mediterranean or oriental backgrounds. Once a week, he visits a neighborhood center, where a breakfast for unemployed people is organized. The purpose is less to provide food but rather to bring people together. He visits this place to meet people in a similar situation. He prefers this particular spot from similar alternatives in reach, because it is situated at a small square with further cafés, restaurants, and shops, which are mainly frequented by the middle-class residents of the quarter.

As a financially restricted welfare recipient—just as Natalya—he is not able to attend these amenities. But offering an outdoor area, the neighborhood center provides its visitors the opportunity to feel like sitting in a street-café just as the people in the commercial cafés next door or on the opposite side of the street. For those who are financially excluded from that type of public life, the neighborhood center offers an occasion to "legitimately" sojourn in this environment without being forced to spend (much) money or being suspected as a dubious person hanging out at the corner the whole day. That is why the neighborhood center—for him—provides proximity to the middle-class milieu he used to belong to during the times he was employed.

Orhan also uses other places in public to maintain his social life such as an ice cream parlor, a public park, and a Turkish teahouse, where he occasionally sees friends and acquaintances and discusses politics. Orhan has to show only a few specific places he likes or visits frequently. His narratives about activities in his neighborhood are mainly referring to memories of his better past, the times after his migration in the late 1970s until he became unemployed twelve years ago. Since his arrival in Germany at the age of seventeen, he has been living in the same part of the city and considers himself a legitimate part of this socially and culturally mixed neighborhood. His neighborhood and his biography seem to be indissolubly entangled. During the go-along, he talks with one of his neighbors in the café or to people in the teahouse we visited. He talks about regular meetings with one or two good friends—all of them of Turkish origin, too.

Since the beginning of his enduring unemployment, his view of the quarter has changed according to the fractions of his life-course. In his perception, the neighborhood seems to be less multicultural than before as former friends have moved or have deceased, and his social embeddedness has decreased:

> In the past it was even more beautiful here. Multi-cultural, many foreigners, of every nationality, many Yugoslavs. Now they have become less. The atmosphere was totally different in the past. . . . [This city] is my second home. In the future it could be my first, but it's like that, sometimes I am still "Kanake" [derogatory for people of Turkish or Mediterranean origin] for the Germans. Sometimes they do this, the Germans, I can see it in their eyes. They still have—I am a bloody Turk, some, not all, but many think like that. (Excerpt observation protocol, translated from German)

He reports that he quite often feels lonely and disconnected from the world around. One reason surely is the lack of meaningful occupation. This comes with fewer and fewer opportunities to become acquainted with native Germans. He is somewhat thrown back to acquaintances within the Turkish community, which, according to him, becomes increasingly politically and culturally fragmented. Orhan sees his immigration as an emancipatory life-event. He experienced new freedoms and attitudes toward life, which harshly contrast with what he describes as the traditional Turkish lifestyle. This lifestyle was dominated by social control, religious dogmas, gender inequality, industrial and technical backwardness, and so on. After his migration, he enjoyed his new lifestyle. In his biographical narrative, however, he also expresses an enduring lack of acceptance by Germans, resulting in disappointing and insufficient contacts and the feeling of not really being integrated. At the same time, he has only limited identification with people of his own origin. In his view, the Turkish community is split between antagonistic religious, political, or ethnic fractions. Each puts pressure on people to follow their respective agenda, which he refuses. This consequently restricts the places he wants to join to feel comfortable. So he finds himself torn between a no-mans-land among Germans and a far from homogenous Turkish community. Orhan feels that he does not belong to either group and was more and more isolated. He misses a community that could compensate the emptiness evoked by the lack of his most important place to evolve a sense of belonging—his (lost) work.

Larissa—Tapping the City

The interview with Larissa shows that she is twenty-seven and a cultural scientist and that she immigrated to Germany from Russia with her parents as a ten-year old. She was successful at school and has recently passed a university degree in cultural studies in a different town. After finishing her studies some two years ago, she moved to Berlin because of its metropolitan-like character to settle there and find herself an adequate job—unsuccessfully so far. In the interview, Larissa draws a picture of herself as an "almost-still" student, who has not (yet) managed to establish herself on the labor market and gets along with various internships.

During the go-along, Larissa presents many places in her immediate neighborhood. They include a small kiosk across the street where she buys cigarettes and frequently chats with the owner, a park, a shopping mall, and a fitness center she visits consistently. Living in a quiet part of a district at the edge of the city center, she uses her immediate surroundings mainly for ordinary activities of everyday life, such as shopping, sport, or relaxation. However, when talking about important places, she mentions places scattered across the whole city. She meets friends and former housemates at their places in other districts or commutes through the city to visit trendy bars and to see friends there. Larissa's way of coping with her situation and her access to her urban environment can best be described as driven by the desire for appropriate space and places.

Compared with the other cases in our sample, she is well connected to people who are engaged in jobs and middle-class-oriented leisure activities. Sometimes she sees former colleagues she met during an internship in the city center. She also volunteers in a German-Russian cultural organization. So Larissa often moves around all over the city, visiting a lot of different places, like parks, her gym, and bars for different purposes such as seeing friends, maintaining networks, or to simply relax. At first sight, her lifestyle seems to be metropolitan and student-like. However, she also expresses that she is much afflicted by her unemployment. She uses these places and activities, especially sports and voluntary work, for structuring her days, for having a reason to leave her apartment, and for having the feeling of doing something meaningful. The places she presents or talks about are not associated to Russian culture, except for the cultural organization. But many people within her broad network of friends and acquaintances have either a Russian background or are related to Russian culture through Slavic studies. Having studied Russian culture at a German university, Larissa can use her professional and ethnic background for participating and engaging in the cultural diversity of a city. She makes as much use as possible of the opportunities offered.

> A small town, that's not my thing. Well, I always wanted to live in a big city und somehow experience a little more, more possibilities. . . . Although I still have problems to find a job I really want to make it here. During the times, one has built something up, well a circle of friends, yes, some kind of network. . . . Many of my friends are Russian Germans, but also others, who occupationally have to do with Russia, my boyfriend for example, who works as an executive consultant

in the renewable energies' sector for Eastern Europe. (Excerpt from the observation protocol, translated from German)

The existence of Russian networks and organizations frame her possibilities to get and remain in touch with people of her own age, who share similar cultural and professional interests and backgrounds. At the same time, she also visits places, which are not exclusively Russian but more part of young urban professional leisure activities performed by native Germans as well.

Larissa's relation to her social and spatial environment differs significantly from Natalya's and Orhan's. For better understanding these differences, we should look at the conditions of these cases. Larissa is much younger than Natalya and Orhan, and she received most of her education in Germany, being highly committed to the implicit promise of especially higher education as a key to social advancement. For her, being unemployed can still be seen as an extended transitional phase between studying and taking up her first "real" employment, which is not unusual for university graduates. Thus, her position seems to be somewhat respectable, since she is not considered to be a "real" unemployed person, at least socially. Furthermore, although she is entitled to receive means-tested welfare, her parents help her out financially at times. In both respects, she is better off and has to restrict herself less than Natalya and Orhan.

Larissa has lived in Germany for most of her life and presents herself as—and aspires to become—part of a universalistic-oriented, metropolitan middle-class. But she feels that being of Russian origin still is of importance in various respects. One aspect is that she tries to stay in touch with her ethnic and family backgrounds, trying to make use of her training and bicultural skills on the job market. Another aspect emerges when she talks about an incident during a job interview, when she applied for a job at a radio station and was rejected because of her alleged Russian accent. The experience of being perceived as Russian and accordingly not as a "real" German overlays her ambiguous self-perception, making her doubt whether she really belongs to the majority society or is rather restricted to ethnically defined niches.

Cahide—Secluded Security

The cases outlined so far presented a choice of places that could be described as multicultural in the sense of being open to both immigrants and Germans. In contrast, the next case tells a story of deliberate seclusion.

In the interview with Cahide, a Turkish woman of fifty-three years, we learned that she came to Germany during her childhood in 1972. Due to family, language, and social problems, she could not finish school and obtain a degree. Nevertheless, she worked for many years as a nursing auxiliary, until this kind of work began to require a formal training and degree. She married quite early and has three children. When she lost her job, she became ill in addition. She got divorced and lost her youngest child in a car accident. All these problems stress her very much, and the increasing health problems prevent her from taking on a full-time job. Instead, she tries to do volunteer work.

The go-along shows that she lives in a working-class district at the edge of the city-center where unemployment rates are relatively high and housing is affordable. The vicinity is shaped by a mix of many Turkish supermarkets and cafés, small owner-run shops, and traditional German corner pubs. During the go-along, Cahide strongly emphasizes her preference of exclusively Turkish places and communities. The places she presents are all located in her immediate neighborhood: There is the playground across the street, which she often visits with her grandchildren. In some Turkish supermarkets, food seems to be cheaper than in German or company-run supermarkets. A butcher sells halal meat. In a public park, she meets friends exclusively of Turkish origin. She volunteers in an Ottoman-Turkish cultural club, which she describes as a wider family. Although not only Turkish immigrants frequent the park and the playground, she uses them to meet exclusively Turkish friends or family.

When talking about her life and about the places we visit in the go-along, Cahide stresses the importance of family, and the mutual support and warmth she experiences when she spends time in the Turkish club. In the streets of her neighborhood, she is often greeted by people with the same backgrounds, and she complains that Germans would not do that. In her opinion, Germans are too different from her and socially difficult in general. For instance, in her eyes, they would accept help only in emergencies, are quite pedantic when it comes to money, and drink alcohol. These are things Cahide vehemently dislikes and which for her make up major cultural differences between Germans and Turkish. Compared with other cases, during the go-along as well as in the interview, Cahide widely complains about the treatment she experiences at the Jobcenter. She feels mistreated when she is offered an inadequate job without taking her fragile health condition into account or when she feels that her former working-life is not sufficiently acknowledged. Similarly, she blames the German society for having forgotten the large contribution of Turkish working immigrants to building up the German economy. From her perspective, Turkish were treated as welcomed guests in the past. Today, when—as she mistakenly believes—jobs become scarce in general, the Turkish are only seen as foreigners, which she feels is signaled by the way the Jobcenter treats her.

According to her narrative, Cahide feels rejected both by German institutions and by the social majority. Thus, she retreats as much as possible from a society she does not perceive as multicultural at all. Thus, she secludes as much

as possible in a Turkish cocoon. This cocoon is made available through an extensive Turkish-typed infrastructure and environment in her neighborhood enabling her to live comfortably in a social niche. Therefore, Cahide can convincingly express a feeling of belonging to her district even though she rejects the German society as much as she feels rejected by it.

> Well, as I said, with Germans it is like that, only if it has to be. With us it's different, with us everyone is always welcome. "Please, stay a little longer, have something to eat. It is so cozy, let's drink a tea. Sleeping? You can sleep tomorrow." That's how we are. Naturally Germans have their principles and they cannot change. . . . Mentalities differ and of course you would expect that, wherever you are, be it at hospital, "Jobcenter," police or wherever, when I go to the discounter, I shop and when 10 cents are missing, I have to put something back. . . . Most Germans thought we would go back. But suddenly we stayed, then we were not welcome anymore. Then we were foreigners, yes, then we were foreigners. (Excerpt from the observation protocol translated from German)

While Cahide's biography, her social and educational background, and her feeling of rejection by the majority population appear to be quite similar to Orhan's narrative, she finds a very different way to locate herself socially and locally. She completely merges into her ethnic community. She adopts corresponding practices to become more and more involved in her cultural club and into the general Turkish public present in her neighborhood. Contrary to Orhan, who feels ambiguous and in between, Cahide transforms the felt rejection by German institutions and society into a strong sense of belonging to her ethnic community that represents a safe haven of sociability and association for her.

Discussion

Finally, we would like to briefly address two topics: (a) What is the benefit of a methodological approach that combines interviews with a mobile method of on-site observations (walking) and conversations (talking) as in our go-alongs? (b) What does the combination of verbal and mobile observational field data contribute to a (deeper) understanding of the integration problems discussed in the introduction of this article?

Our answer to the first question is that the use of mobile methods enabled the researchers to get more deeply in touch with the current reality of our interviewees' lives. This goes beyond of what would have been achieved by only applying face-to-face interviews addressing their histories. Even though our interviews quite often took place at the interviewees' homes, doing an interview necessarily remains a somewhat artificial setting. Being shown around places relevant in our participants' everyday lives, following (some of) the ways on which they move (and how) was something different and brought us closer to their lived experiences—compared with the reports about experiences in interview data. Thus, we highly appreciate our participants' readiness to spend their time with and for us. Being shown around provided an impression of how different and at the same time (to a smaller degree) how similar our private lives and our access to places and the opportunities for activities offered by a large city are and how comparatively well off and privileged we as researchers are.

Beyond these "subjective" reflections, there are some "practical" or—more specifically—"utilitarian" aspects, too. Going along with the participants raised lots of topics and created stimuli for narratives and descriptions that—as we could see when analyzing data in more depth later on—would not have emerged in the interviews alone, no matter how sensitive we tried to be during the interviews. Discovering some aspects that were completely new or the occasion to deepen topics that were held implicit in the interviews was one of the benefits. Going along as a shared activity creates a different situation that gives more space to the participants for spontaneous reflection and talk. That enriched our set of data in a way that could hardly have been provoked by simply putting questions or trying to evoke narratives through invitations to talk in an solely interview-based design (especially if the participant does not feel secure in a more or less "foreign" language). To literally *see* what is part of our participants' lives proved to be a source to further elaborate assumptions resulting from what the participants *said* during the go-alongs as well as in the interviews. So, the idea that go-alongs are useful as a means to make things *visible* worked out at least for the purpose of answering research questions posed in this particular research project.

This leads to answering the second question: What did we learn from this data triangulation when analyzing interviews and go along protocols in a related manner? One thing is that in the interviews, the topic "Jobcenter" was addressed in different ways—from a harsh critique based on disappointment and frustration to fanciful expectations about what the Jobcenter could or should do for helping to change the participant's situation. Within all go-alongs, not only the ones presented earlier, the Jobcenters were not even of minor importance as far as the choices of relevant places were concerned. In one case, in which the route to a place of personal significance had to pass the cognizant Jobcenter, our participant tried to avoid a deeper conversation about that particular place, showing symptoms of anger and tension and tried to pass by as quick as possible. This is astonishing insofar as the Jobcenters define their role as a social service responsible for managing support to overcome neediness and unemployment, officially describing their clients as "customers." And indeed, for jobless welfare recipients, the Jobcenter is a place and institution of crucial importance regarding their present life-situations. There is a

clear contradiction among the cases regarding the participants' evaluation of their experiences. Jobcenters are perceived as a spot of reinforced discrimination as in the case of Cahide, for example. But Jobcenters are also described as an awkward and clueless institution. Then they are seen as unable to provide the assistance needed to overcome the precarious situation the participants find themselves in, and, at the most, as capable of providing some money and occasionally publically funded short-time jobs.

Furthermore, the case studies show that welfare recipients with an immigration background are far from being a homogenous group as often suggested by statistics and parts of institutional and public discourse, which in turn sometimes encourage the ascription of prejudices. Accordingly, the case studies presented in this article and within our overall sample point to the fact that participants mostly feel disadvantaged and under scrutiny because they bear migration backgrounds. Experiences range from moderate rejection as illustrated in the cases of Larissa and Orhan to Cahide's assumption of being a victim of massive (institutional) discrimination. Following Thomas's theorem—"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 572)—these impressions are important for our participants' inner reality and consequential. The feeling of not "fully" belonging to society is either expressed in the doubt whether one will ever really gain access emotionally, socially, economically, or finally remains marginalized. This feeling runs through the narratives in the interviews and is reflected in the participants' choices of spaces and places during the go-alongs. Both indicate a link between our participants' disrupted senses of belonging and their specific relations to their personal maps that mark the boundaries of their social lives.

The relations to their maps expressed by our participants inform us about different positions and modes of belongingness. We see the position of a spectator and observer as in Natalya's case. Orhan's position can best be characterized through the loss of what he used to consider as "his" space and place relations, feeling alienated from the present and trying to regain a better past. Both cases find themselves in different trajectories as Natalya still expects to eventually find her way in while Orhan rather sees himself to be pushed back. His impression of sitting on the fence is typical for FSU and Turkish participants who only have little hope of ever finding a proper job again. These participants are preoccupied with the question whether to stay or to remigrate to their home countries. This preoccupation makes it hard for them to really make efforts in either direction—to further establish here or to go back.

The case of Larissa is different. She finds herself on a typical—in her case extended—trajectory from university to job. Her life is not that far away from her aspirations as she still can make use of her status as a well-educated young academic to get in touch with different people and their

lifestyle on an everyday basis. She does not find herself in a spectator role but feels herself involved in a participatory way. Nevertheless, her present situation is characterized by a sneaking suspicion that she might be subjected to latent rejection, since her alleged accent might be seen as a sign of "imperfect" assimilation. Thus, she tries to make the best of the situation through participating in multicultural activities at the junction between Russian and German culture and economics (which are enabled by a globalized popular club culture as well as economic interconnectedness).

A different way out of the immigrants' situation of sitting on the fence is to take sides completely as in the case of Cahide. She seeks and finds shelter in her secluded Turkish community, which to her offers the comfort of being able to not only feel but also practically be "at home." However, the price for this feeling "at home" is her remaining welfare dependency. This leads to the unavoidable confrontation with the Jobcenter, which represents the "German" culture and work-oriented, participatory values and which demands respective activities. There are similar cases within the FSU sample who prefer to spend their time almost exclusively with their families, which are at the same time strongly committed to religious communities like Jehova's Witnesses or (Russian) Jewish parishes.

More or less overtly and more or less consequential, it is the lack of work that constitutes an emptiness—or in Cahide's case with regard to the Jobcenter: a rupture—in the participants' life-worlds and everyday lives. Even in Larissa's case, participation in her scene is related to the option to find a proper job at some point. She is aware of that, being worried and impatient that she has not found one yet, although her chances to find a job do not seem to be bad. Presently, she still is connected to potentially helpful networks (Granovetter, 1995) by having access to their respective places and activities, which keeps her going and currently functions as a remedy against resignation. Considering this aspect, Natalya's and Orhan's present situations do not seem as promising as both are not connected to the active middle of a work-based society and, thus, do not even peripherally belong to it.

However, a closer look from an intersectional perspective suggests that integration is a much more complex process than just bringing people into jobs. None of the participants of either subsample migrated to Germany for living in a secluded community. But as the case of Cahide shows, assumed or experienced rejection or discrimination and a distorted sense of belongingness toward the majority society fosters alienation and seclusion. This might become an obstacle against efforts to enter a labor-market dominated by Germans again. Even finding a job does not ensure—according to Penninx's (2005) definition quoted earlier—that people will automatically become a fully "accepted part of society." Neither does it ensure in turn that they develop a respective sense of belonging and relatedness to the various

fields of social and public life as mirrored by the interrelatedness of social placements and places. But having a job would at least mean to overcome restrictions imposed by being an unemployed welfare recipient, running the risk of being quite frequently perceived as a somewhat dubious and marginal person. Taken by itself, employment promises an enhancement of our participants' life situations and their placement in society. What remains is their risk as people with a migration background to find themselves stuck between different cultures and different kinds of people and their respective habits.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Note

1. All names have been changed.

References

Agnew, J. (2011). Space and place. In J. Agnew & D. Livingstone (Eds.), *Handbook of geographical knowledge* (pp. 316-331). London, England: Sage.

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London, England: Verso.

Antonsich, M. (2010a). Meanings of place and aspects of the self: An interdisciplinary and empirical account. *Geojournal*, *75*, 119-132.

Antonsich, M. (2010b). Searching for belonging—An analytical framework. *Geography Compass*, *4*, 644-659.

Bauman, Z. (1997). *Life in fragments: Essays in postmodern morality*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *The Individualized society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Blokland, T., Giustozzi, C., Krüger, D., & Schilling, H. (2016). *Creating the unequal city: The exclusionary consequences of everyday routines in Berlin*. Abingdon, NY: Routledge.

Boccagni, P. (2017). *Migration and the search for home: Mapping domestic space in migrants' everyday lives*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Cambridge, UK: Harvard University. (Original published 1979)

Carpiano, R. M. (2009). Come take a walk with me: The "go-along" interview as a novel method for studying the implications of place for health and well-being. *Health & Place*, *15*, 263-272.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Duyvendak, J. W. (2011). *The politics of home: Belonging and nostalgia in western Europe and the United States*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Easthope, H. (2009). Fixed identities in a mobile world? The relationship between mobility, place, and identity. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, *16*, 61-82.

Esser, H. (2010). Assimilation, ethnic stratification, or selective acculturation? Recent theories of the integration of immigrants and the model of intergenerational integration. *Sociologica*, *1*, 1-29.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). London, England: Sage.

Flick, U. (2018). Triangulation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed., pp. 444-461). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Flick, U., Hans, B., Hirseland, A., Rasche, S., & Röhnsch, G. (2017). Migration, unemployment, and lifeworld: Challenges for a new critical qualitative inquiry in migration. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *23*, 77-88.

Fohrbeck, A., Hirseland, A., & Ramos Lobato, P. (2014). How benefits recipients perceive themselves through the lens of the mass media—Some observations from Germany. *Sociological Research Online*, *19*(4), 9.

Garcia, C. M., Eisenberg, M. E., Frerich, E. A., Lechner, K. L., & Lust, K. (2012). Conducting go-along interviews to understand context and promote health. *Qualitative Health Research*, *22*, 1395-1403.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Gieryn, T. F. (2000). A space for place in sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*, 463-496.

Granovetter, M. (1995). *Getting a job: A study of contacts and careers*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1997). Culture, power, place: Ethnography at the end of an era. In A. Gupta & J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology* (pp. 1-29). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hall, T. (2009). Footwork: Moving and knowing in local space(s). *Qualitative Research*, *9*, 571-585.

Knuth, M., & Brussig, M. (2010). Zugewanderte und ihre Nachkommen in Hartz IV [Immigrants and their offspring in Hartz IV]. *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, *48*, 26-32.

Kusenbach, M. (2003). Street phenomenology: The go-along as ethnographic research tool. *Ethnography*, *4*, 455-485.

Kusenbach, M. (2018). Go-alongs. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 344-361). London, England: Sage.

Kymlicka, W. (2003). Multicultural states and intercultural citizens. *Theory and Research in Education*, *1*, 147-169.

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, N. (2007). Transnational migration studies: Past developments and future trends. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *33*, 129-156.

Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *31*, 207-230.

Löw, M. (2008). The constitution of space: The structuration of spaces through the simultaneity of effect and perception. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *11*, 25-49.

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *30*, 1771-1800.

Penninx, R. (2005). Integration of migrants: Economic, social, cultural and political Dimensions. In M. Macura, A. L. MacDonald, & W. Haug (Eds.), *The new demographic regime: Population challenges and policy responses* (pp. 137-151). New York, NY: United Nations.

Simmel, G. (1950). The sociological significance of the "stranger." In K. H. Wolf (Ed.), *The sociology of Georg Simmel* (pp. 402-408). New York, NY: The Free Press. (Original work published 1908)

Thomas, W. I., & Thomas, D. S. (1928). *The child in America: Behavior problems and programs*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, *40*, 197-214.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2011). *The politics of belonging—Intersectional contestations*. London, England: Sage.

Author Biographies

Uwe Flick is a professor for qualitative social and educational research at the Freie Universität Berlin. Before that, he worked at the Alice Salomon University in Berlin in the fields of health services research, which is still his major area of research, with a focus on vulnerability and service utilization. He is author or editor of numerous textbooks and handbooks, most of which have been translated in several languages in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Books include *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (6th. ed., 2019, SAGE), The *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (2014, SAGE), *Introducing Research Methodology—A Beginners' Guide to Doing a Research Project* (2nd ed., 2015, SAGE), the *Qualitative Research Kit* (2nd. ed., 10 Vols., 2018, SAGE), and *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection* (2018, SAGE).

Andreas Hirseland, Dr. rer. pol., is deputy head of the Research Department "Joblessness and Social Exclusion" at the Institute for Employment Research, the Research Institute of the Federal Employment Agency. Recent research interests include qualitative research designs and methods, welfare state, and poverty. Recent publications include Fohrbeck, Anna; Hirseland, Andreas; Ramos Lobato, Philipp (2014): How benefits recipients perceive themselves through the lens of the mass media—Some observations from Germany. In: *Sociological research online*, Vol. 19, No. 4; »Die wollen ja ein bestimmtes Bild vermitteln.« Zur Neupositionierung von Hilfeempfängern im aktivierenden Sozialstaat, SWS-Rundschau, 2014 No. 2, pp 181-200 (with Philipp Ramos Lobato).

Benjamin Hans was a research associate at the division Qualitative Social and Educational Research at Free University Berlin. He studied sociology at Bielefeld University and is interested in ethnography, mobile methods, ethnic and national identity, borders and boundaries, and urban and neighborhood studies.