



Migration, Time and Temporalities : Approach

Background and structure:

The project was limited to three months in length (April – June 2012) and conducted by a team consisting of a geographer, sociologist and post-graduate anthropologist. It was born from an interest in how a consideration of temporalities might contribute to migration studies and was inspired by Michelle Bastian's AHRC funded work on time and communities. Bastian's project, *Temporal Belongings*, has to date has included a scoping study of the literature on time and the community (Bastian, 2011), as well as a series of events with academics and practitioners (see <http://www.temporalbelongings.org/index.html>). As will be discussed later, much of Bastian's work has bearing for migration studies, including the formation and sustainability of diaspora and transnational communities, and issues around belonging, diversity and assimilation. Building on her work, we hoped to consider migration-specific directions in which this temporalities focus could be extended. In so doing, our aim was to map the key areas in which there is existing work on time and migration, and to identify research gaps in the literature.

Like Bastian, we drew heavily from Arksey and O'Malley in designing and undertaking our scoping study and found their advice extremely helpful (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). In line with their methodology (drawn from their work mapping the literature on services to support carers), we consider a scoping study to be different from a systematic literature review in that whilst the latter is likely to have a well-defined question and concentrate on a relatively narrow area of research, a scoping study looks at broader topics, does so less systematically and does not necessarily have very specific research questions. Our aim was to keep the scope broad in order to rapidly map the field, rather than assess the quality of existing research or describe it in detail. Scoping studies are inherently difficult to pre-design and we had to reassess and sometimes redefine our methodology over the course of the study, making the process an iterative and reflexive one.

Mirroring Arksey and O'Malley, our scoping study was designed along the following stages:

- Stage 1: identify the research question
- Stage 2: identify relevant existing studies/literature
- Stage 3: study the selection – ranking their relevance and discarding any entirely irrelevant material
- Stage 4: chart the data – organise material according to themes
- Stage 5: collate, summarise and simplify the material
- Stage 6: write up results

Our initial research question was: *What are the key emerging themes from the existing literature on temporalities and time that can be developed as part of a theoretically and politically engaged migration research agenda?* Four elements of this question were identified:

- Why does time matter to analysis of migration?
- What has already been written about migration that refers to time, whether explicitly or not? (e.g. remittances, imagined homelands, 'second' generation migrants)
- What has already been written about time that is of relevance to migration? (e.g. the life course, decision-making, future-orientated policies)
- What methodological approaches have been successfully employed for empirical work on time and temporalities?

Identifying the literature

To answer these questions, we began by identifying studies within the time literature that had some bearing on migration concerns. Michelle Bastian's bibliography provided an excellent introduction for our project. Her scoping study consists of 885 references, ranked into four levels of relevance. We went through the references that she categorised as 'quite relevant' or 'highly relevant', identifying those of relevance to migration. Although there was overlap between Bastian's and our research interests, our focuses were different and so her relevance ratings did not always match our own interests. To compensate for this, we then used CiteULike to search her full biography, using the search words: 'migration', 'diaspora' and 'citizenship'. This brought up just 10 references that had not already been picked up, of which nine were deemed relevant enough to be included in our study. These had originally been missed because they were deemed only marginally relevant to Bastian's study.

Searching Bastian's bibliography in this way provided us with dozens of relevant references. In some cases this included pointing us towards studies that had their own rich bibliographies for us to examine. Finally, we turned to the key journal on time, that of *Time & Society*. We checked the book reviews and abstracts of all articles of the journal (from its inception in 1992 until the most recent in 2012).

We then turned our attention to the migration literature, identifying items which incorporated time, even if only implicitly so. We began this by drawing on Saulo Cwerner's bibliography in his seminal work on the times of migration (Cwerner, 2001). Again, we found a snow-ball effect occurred, in which one article's bibliography led to other articles, some of which had their own highly relevant bibliographies. In this way we examined the references of several key papers (these included Anderson, 2010; Golden, 2002; King et al., 2006). We also drew on the reading lists from certain taught postgraduate migration courses as well as the numerous suggestions generously given by colleagues. This was followed by an extensive trawl of articles from the journal *Mobilities*, which was chosen because it covers a wide range of types of migration. Abstracts were checked of all articles published between 2006 and 2012.

Finally, we conducted electronic database searches for omitted literature, using specific search terms. This included using Wiley's online library (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>), on the basis that it covered journals such as *International Migration* and *Population, Space and Place*. Searching with the terms 'migration' and 'time' generated over 300 thousand references, the majority of which were not focused on the movement of people. Checking the first 100 of these only generated about six useful references. Another search using the terms 'migration' and 'temporal' provided 58 thousand

references, which again mostly did not appear relevant to us. The searches were repeated with the term 'immigration' in place of 'migration', in the hopes it would limit results to those on human mobility, as well as with other search terms (such as 'citizenship' and 'future') and using other databases (including Google Scholar), but little meaningful data was generated using this strategy.

The methods described gave us a total of 552 references, of varying relevance. As noted, scoping studies are used to quickly obtain an overview of an area of literature, rather than provide an exhaustive or detailed examination of what exists. We do not claim therefore to have identified everything that might be relevant to time and migration.

Capturing the information:

All our references were listed in an EndNote library as well as Excel spread sheet. The latter contained the following information, with as many of the categories as possible completed for each reference in order to standardise the data:

- General information (title, author, year, source, abstract),
- The key migration aspect,
- The key temporal aspect,
- Relevance (1 - 4),
- The discipline of the study (they were primarily from sociology/anthropology, history, politics, philosophy and psychology)
- The methodological approach of the study,
- Geographical focus of the study,
- Whether the study related to individuals, collectives, policies, states or theory (Note: this form of categorisation was eventually dropped in preference for other organisational structures).

Although originally alphabetic in order, the finished database could be ordered in various ways, including according to relevance. We had 130 references of Relevance 1 (explicitly about *both* migration and time), 160 of Relevance 2 (explicitly about time *or* migration, and implicitly about the other), 237 Relevance 3 (relevant, but indirectly so), and 25 of Relevance 4 (marginally relevant).

Analysing the data:

Once all the references were accumulated in the database, we moved onto the collating phase, which Arksey and O'Malley described as one of sifting and sorting the material according to key issues (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). We appraised and organised the references into a number of themes, which were kept under review and repeatedly adapted to fit the material, reflecting what literature existed rather than any pre-determined categories we wished to use. There were 14 themes, many of which had a number of sub-themes. These were:

- Migration stages (Sequence; Synchronicity; Cycles/repetition; Permanence; Absence)
- Individual mobility (Experiential; Decision-making; Return)
- Subjectivities (Gender; Sexuality; Embodiment; Emotion; Place)
- Age ('Second generation'; Life cycle; Youth/families; Rites of passage; Ageing/death)

- Economics (Precarious labour; Organisational time; Gendered labour time; Time as resource; Debt & remittances; Unemployment)
- State (Policy/immigration control; Citizenship; Control over individual's time; Surveillance; Law)
- Technology (DNA; ICT; Media; Transport technology)
- Community (Cosmopolitanism; Belonging/integration; Transnationalism/networks; Types of time; Asynchronicity; Social change; The city; Religious time)
- Tempos (Suspension; Deceleration; Acceleration; Rupture; Duration; Rhythm; Linearity)
- Future (Prediction; Anticipation; Becoming; Modernity; Absent futures; Shared futures; Apocalypse)
- Present (Obsessed/denied present; Past/future in the present)
- Past (Shared histories; Memories/nostalgia)
- Methodologies
- Time theory

Many of the references were included in more than one of the (sub)themes, reflecting the multi-faceted nature of most studies. Data within each (sub)theme were organised in order of relevance and those of relevance 1 or 2 highlighted for ease of reference. Once all the data was organised thematically in this way, we analysed the material and then produced this written report. As you will see, the thematic structure described here was not carried into the report as it stood, but was modified to fit our discussion and to standardise the types of conceptual headings used. It was useful however to have the data organised as it was in the as this allowed us to easily ascertain the areas of work already examined in relation to migration and time, the relative number of studies existing in each case, and potential gaps in the literature. We remain grateful to Michelle Bastian and Arksey and O'Malley, whose methodically described approaches were invaluable to the design of our own scoping study.

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