



## **Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology**

Professor Dr. Günther Schlee, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, PO Box 11 03 51,  
06017 Halle/Saale, Germany, Phone: +49(0)345-2927100, Fax: +49(0)345-2927102  
Email: schlee@eth.mpg.de (<http://www.eth.mpg.de/~schlee>)

Author(s): **Günther Schlee**

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## **Collective Identification in Cities: reflections on city scale and group size**

### **By Günther Schlee**

#### **Abstract:**

The presentation addresses the question which factors affect collective identification in cities and towns of various sizes and degrees of global connectedness. It takes its examples from a variety of cities on different continents and has a focus on migrants. Group size seems to be a key variable as larger groups facilitate internal segmentation of social identities.

'City scale' and 'scalar positions' which are 're-scaled' have rightly become widely used concepts in urban anthropology and the study of globalization. A prominent recent example is the book 'Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants' edited by Nina Glick Schiller and Ayşe Çağlar (2011). In a brief epilogue to that volume I (Schlee 2011) had the opportunity to raise the question how many of the observations made in that book can possibly be better explained by the variable 'group size'. In some cases I have come to the conclusion that we need both the concepts of 'group size' and 'scale' to explain what looks like a complex interplay of the two. This conference on "Modern cities and social and cultural modernization of Russia" is a welcome opportunity to come back to this topic, although I have nothing to say about Russia. My examples from cities on different continents may, however, so I hope, also be of some use for the study of cities in Russia.

Cities and towns of different sizes also tend to be of different scales, in the senses of regional, national or global importance, with larger cities often occupying higher scalar positions and being more widely connected. But, of course, the two are not the same. A huge city – as industries are outdated or flows of trade relocate – can be downscaled from global to just national or regionally quite restricted importance. Both scale and size have an influence of migration. We would expect a rough correlation of the kind that big cities with a high scalar position tend to have larger migrant populations and – if we look at migrants of different origins – more of each kind of migrants. This may best be illustrated by a counter-example a very small place.

The small rural town in Westphalia where my family lives, the odd Eritrean, the Lebanese, the one Somali, and some Kurds are all aware of each other and socialize with each other in many ways. There seems to be a community of all non-European migrants. If we tried to define them, the definition would need to be as wide as that. They also all have a Muslim background, but that seems to be of secondary importance. A Kenyan Christian, who was our guest for an extended period, was also part of this circle.

If we contrast that to a city like Berlin, a case frequently cited in that volume(Glick Schiller & Çağlar (eds.) 2011) we would find larger populations in many migrant groups. The migrant community is divided along ethnic and religious lines, and communities are substructured by region of origin and other criteria. There are many of every kind, and therefore groups defined by relatively narrow criteria can be large enough to be self-sufficient in many ways (endogamy, socializing, mutual support...). Size comes with a higher degree of closure. A setting of this kind may be described in terms of Furnival's classic chapter about "The Plural Society" (1948: 303-312). Groups are largely self-sufficient and form closed spheres of communication which articulate only at certain points with the wider society. Often it is the men who are these points of articulation. Men interact on the labour market with the wider society and are often fluent in German, while women communicate almost exclusively within the Turkish community or a certain segment of it, and German has little functional value for them. As a consequence, they never manage to learn it properly, even if they make an effort from time to time and take a course.

The argument that larger communities can afford to have a higher internal complexity, that they tend to divide more clearly into subunits which have a higher degree of self-sufficiency

for a larger number of activities, while smaller communities have a weaker form of substructuring and a stronger tendency towards everyone interacting with everyone else, is a familiar one. It takes us away from urban anthropology to a rather rural setting and a discussion about “small scale societies”<sup>1</sup>.

The villages of north central India are grouped by Berreman (1978: 56-61) into two types: mountain villages and the villages of the plains.

The villages of the plains are populous and close to each other. They have a diverse caste composition. Interaction between castes is formal and contractual and takes place to the degree necessitated by economic specialization. Other spheres of life are separate. Intense and frequent interaction takes place within castes, not between them. Higher castes can live up to their standards of ritual purity by limiting their contacts to lower castes or untouchables in this way.

This is not possible in the mountain villages which are scattered and much smaller. Often the number of members of a given caste is so small, that interaction necessarily becomes inter-caste. There may only be one source of water and one shop and mutual avoidance is therefore impossible. Correspondingly, plains people regard members of their own castes who come from mountain villages as not equal to themselves. They do not meet the same standards of ritual purity. It is not possible to live a fully fledged caste system in too narrow a setting.

In the examples from urban settings in Europe and North America we will find a similar pattern, only that the social aggregates in question are not castes but migrant communities and their sub-groups.

### **Ghanaians and Somali in Germany**

To move on to studies closer to me, I now focus on two cases which have recently been the object of research projects at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. One is about Ghanaians (Nieswand 2011), the other about Somali, studied by my wife Isir, who is a Somali, and me (Schlee and Schlee, 2012). In the next section, I shall add a third case, that of Nuer in the United States examined by Christiane Falge.

In *Processes of Localization* (chap. 3), Nieswand discusses how Ghanaian migrants came to Germany and how they adapted to local conditions in Germany and in Berlin. In the 1950s, 60s, and 70s a small but constant number of college students came to both parts of Germany (in absolute numbers, fewer students went to the GDR, but proportional to the population there, the ratio was slightly higher). In the 1980s, however, the number of Ghanaian migrants seeking to come to Germany rose significantly. These migrants sought jobs, at a time when migrant labour was no longer welcome in Germany as the policies on recruitment of migrant labour, founded on bilateral agreements with Mediterranean countries, had already been stopped. In order to obtain a legal residence status for Germany, an application for asylum on the grounds of political persecution was often the last resort. The right to asylum is part of the German constitution and was, as such, a reaction to political persecution by the Nazis. This particular part of German history urged the Federal Republic of Germany to provide refuge and safety for victims of political persecution abroad. Thus, the right to asylum was much extensive in Germany than in its neighbouring countries. Especially after doors to other forms of immigration were closed, the possibility to apply for asylum was utilized by an ever growing number of persons. The figures cited by Nieswand

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<sup>1</sup> Berreman (1978: 46-48) links the distinction between “small scale” and “large scale” to other dichotomies like folk/urban, *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*, status/contract and 69 other pairs of concepts. In a way, most sociological and anthropological concepts can be subsumed under or shown to be related to this distinction.

(2008) illustrate this development: 5,289 in 1972, 121,318 in 1989, up to more than 322,599 in 1993. When, in the late eighties, the number of asylum seekers in Germany for the first time rose above 100,000 per year, a debate about 'misuse' of the asylum laws arose. The number was considered too high by large segments of the media and the public<sup>2</sup>. During the 1980s, the practice of examining the asylum applications had already become increasingly restrictive, and due to the visa requirement and contract penalties for airlines that accommodated passengers without visas, it had become more difficult to reach Germany and apply for asylum there. Ultimately, the German constitution's article 16, which stipulates the right to asylum, was amended in 1993. Asylum was only seldomly granted, but examining the application was a lengthy process allowing for the waiting period to be used to create other reasons for a residence permit. One such reason was marriage to a German citizen. This, of course, also applies to every other EU citizen, as they all have a right of residence in Germany, but then most of the EU citizens one encounters in Germany are – naturally – Germans. Nieswand's interview subjects stated that, in certain years, about half of the participants in events of the Ghanaian community were such German spouses. Over the years, many Ghanaians succeeded in obtaining rights of residence not dependent on their marriage to a German. Thus, the endogamy of the group increased (marriage and reunion with Ghanaian spouses) and the number of German participants in the events decreased sharply.

Somalia has been a refugee producing country, at least since the beginning of the military dictatorship by Siad Barre in 1969. The rise of refugee numbers greatly increased when the northern town of Hargeisa was bombed by aircraft of their own country in 1988 and ground forces poisoned the wells belonging to the Isaaq clan. Hargeisa was the capital of the former British colony of Somaliland, and the Isaaq, who are numerically dominant around Hargeisa, were perceived as belonging to a rival clan by the Siad Barre regime, which was based on a narrowing alliance of Darood clans. There was another sudden increase in refugees when Siad Barre himself was forced out of the country in 1991. The country had been in a state of civil war before and has been in such a state ever since, at varying levels of escalation.

The big wave of refugees around 1991 coincided with the tightening of the asylum laws in Germany. So there were two rather fundamental differences between Somali migrants who came after c. 1990 and those who came before that. The later arrivals came in much larger numbers and they faced a more restrictive legal and social environment. They often had a very precarious residence status. Even if they were allowed to stay, this did not mean they were allowed to work. It just entitled them to some form of welfare. Therefore, in the course of the years many of them moved on, mostly illegally, to England or other countries with a low wage service sector, which trade unions and politics had not allowed to develop to the same extent in Germany. Others moved on to Canada or other places where a secure residence permit and ultimately citizenship are easier to acquire (Abdulkadir Alim 2001). A secure legal status seems to be the more important factor in directing migrant flows than welfare<sup>3</sup>. Along these scores, Germany has ceased to be an attractive place for Somali, and

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<sup>2</sup> There is another argument about size hidden here, one that touches its subjective dimension. Before, Germany had one of the most liberal asylum laws in the world. This was written into the constitution as a reaction to the Nazi dictatorship. In view of their own past as oppressors and perpetrators of crimes against humanity, the Germans wanted to provide asylum for whoever was persecuted for racial or political reasons from anywhere on earth. For many Germans, however, the number of 100,000 asylum seekers per year was too high. Here, one may ask high in comparison to what? In comparison to the Germans who had to flee their country under the Nazi dictatorship? In comparison to the six million Jews who did not manage to escape? Apart from the difficulty in calling them high or low, another peculiarity of the numbers of asylum seekers is that the new arrivals are always counted while the numbers of asylum seekers, who go back to where they came from or who move on to third countries, are hardly ever quoted in the press.

<sup>3</sup> Somewhat cynically, one can apply a market model to this situation, in which the "buyers", the recipient countries of migrants, are not necessarily aware of what they are buying. Some countries have liberal immigration policies and in these cases the influx of migrants can be regarded as intended. In other cases, the migration flow might be the unintended consequence of an action or an omission. Some countries have restrictive policies but are unable to implement them. Great Britain is a popular destination for many reasons. The absence of registration at one's place of residence and the ease with which one can adopt multiple personal identities make it

many of the post-1991 migrants have never thought of staying there for long, with the consequence of making little effort towards local integration and a great effort to get out of Germany. Some have made frustrating experiences of trying to get to other countries and then being “repatriated” to Germany.

Nieswand continues his examination of the processes of localization by looking at the regional dispersion of Ghanaians in Germany, which is by no means even. Hamburg is in the lead with a big gap to runner-ups Berlin and Bremen. This is, in part, the result of economic-geographic reasons. Some of the first Ghanaian immigrants came as sailors (as did the first Isaaq-Somali in London). One essential factor in directing Ghanaian immigration is that Ghanaians will go where other Ghanaians already are – due to the reunion with family and spouses.

The same observation can be made about Somali. Refugees are allocated living quarters in widely dispersed places, often smaller towns, and later they cluster, not necessarily in big cities. Also in medium size cities of 200,000 or 300,000 inhabitants, a Somali community has a chance to develop and reach the desired density (in terms of numbers and spatial closeness of in-group contacts). Münster (270,000 inhabitants plus a large temporary student population) has such a small but socially largely self-sufficient community.

One important distinction, which Ghanaians make within the identity discourses of their own countrymen in Germany, is that between “college students” and “asylum seekers”. The “students” came to Germany – sometimes decades ago – legally in order to study. They already had the better Ghanaian education and acquired further degrees and qualifications in Germany. They speak German well, and they know and can handle life in Germany. From their perspective, it is the others, the “asylum seekers”, who give all Ghanaians in Germany a bad reputation due to their bad behaviour and lack of education. The “asylum seekers”, on the other hand, who work hard whenever possible, even under precarious conditions, make a point of standing up against the arrogance of the “students” by earning more money than them and also saving more. This is to improve one’s own status back in Ghana upon the hoped for return.

Again, similar observations can be made about Somali. In the Somali community in Germany, there is a real break, also marked by mutual prejudice, between those who came before 1991 and those who came after. The earlier ones often were students, they were individual migrants, they learned German, they integrated well, there are a number of mixed marriages etc., while those, who came with the huge influx after 1991, in many cases refused to learn the language, and rejected social contact to Germans. At some folklore events with music in some community centres or other public facilities, it has happened that German youngsters were sent out. Many Somali do not want these ‘uncircumcised pork eaters’ anywhere near themselves; they have strong tendencies of seclusion and self-sufficiency because they are large in numbers and they stick together. And of course the successfully integrated earlier migrants criticize the attitudes of the latecomers, and these in turn regard the former as overly adjusted and too westernized. When my wife, herself a Somali, asked those who had expelled German youths from their events whether they were not aware that all their lives and activities are supported by German *zakat*, they might not have liked the implicit comparison of German public funding and the Muslim tax for the poor.

In the first paragraphs, I have mentioned a small town in which almost all non-Germans are aware of each other and have developed some sort of solidarity. In larger agglomerations

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easy to draw more than one welfare check and to benefit from community housing schemes in more than one place. In addition, phony or faked education certificates are usually recognized there without much difficulty (to acquire more degrees of all descriptions from the British educational system, which is geared towards numerical output). Some Somali jokingly say they now exploit Britain in revenge of former colonial exploitation by the British. The only thing Somali really appreciate in Germany is the medical care.

this tends to be different, because more groups move above the numerical threshold of increased social self-sufficiency.

After describing the importance of Christian African communities – especially that of the Pentecostals – and of different ethnicities within the Ghanaian community, Nieswand turns to the Turkish as the “relevant others”. The relations between the groups are tense. The Ghanaians accuse the Turkish of having a racist attitude towards them, and consider the Turkish uncivilized. Christians from southern Ghana, who make up the bulk of Ghanaians in Germany, project negative stereotypes of Muslims, known to them from Ghana, onto the Turkish in Germany. They recognize the filth and slovenly life of the *zongos*<sup>4</sup>, the merchant quarters in southern Ghanaian towns populated by the Hausa, in the Turkish quarters of Berlin.

The Somali, themselves being Muslims, do not at all identify with the Turkish in Germany, but have, in fact, similarly reserved relations with them.

These examples should have made clear that not only city scale has an influence on forms of migrant inclusion. Often, it is more directly affected by group size. My interest in group size, however, does not come from size in the context of migration but in the context of conflict study. Therefore, I now turn to some considerations which stem from that context.

Subsequently, I will return to migration and apply these considerations there.

### **Identification politics, group size and the Nuer in Iowa**

The concepts used for the identification of social groups and categories typically do not occur in isolation. On the contrary, they form whole fields of related concepts (*Wortfelder*, word fields, semantic domains) or even nicely ordered taxonomies with lower level concepts, which are more specific, nested in higher level, more general ones. Examples for such nested concepts are dialects as part of languages, languages being part of branches of a language family or subclans being part of clans and so on. Religions also subdivide into sects or churches, which are part of superordinate denominations like Protestantism or Orthodoxy, which in turn all share the conviction of being part of Christianity. Much of this is of recent invention: Language classification started as a scholarly exercise only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The concept ‘religion’ also did not start out as a universal category. Its etymology (*re-ligio* – being tied back to) implies a dualist world view with ‘this world’ and the ‘other world’. This may fit for Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism but certainly not for all systems of belief and ritual practice that are classified as religions today. In Africa at least, local belief systems appear to have described themselves as ‘religions’ only in confrontation with Christianity or Islam in an effort to claim equivalence, at least conceptually. ‘Nations’ and ‘nation states’ are even more recent. While all concepts we use to speak about the things of the world are organized in taxonomies (‘horses’ and ‘mice’ being part of the superordinate category ‘mammals’, ‘orchids’ and ‘barley’ being ‘plants’ etc.), some of the concepts we use to describe social reality as we perceive it have recently become re-organized. They now fit into new, globally (or supra-regionally, regionally, generally: high scale) homogenized taxonomies. By fitting into the (recently) universalized category ‘religion’, an African belief system or a Siberian form of healing are placed in the same category as ‘Islam’ or ‘Christianity’. They acquire universal currency, at least on the level of (claimed) formal equivalence.

In this, ‘religion’ conforms to a general tendency. The general concepts, into which specific identities fit, tend to be globalized. ‘Ethnicity’ is another such example. There may be people who do not claim an ethnicity, but they become fewer and fewer, while ethnicity and

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<sup>4</sup> Van Dijk (2011) also refers to the *zongos*. Like Nieswand’s interlocutors, the Ghanaians van Dijk consulted in Amsterdam and The Hague also regard the *zongo* as a place of strangers. They stress, however, the spiritual power located there, not the filth.

nationality become universal grids of classification. Specific identities become part of encompassing taxonomies. Often one can observe the spread of rather bookish, scholarly concepts into the political domain and the popular perception. Language families in particular, are incorporated into public identity discourses, sometimes with disastrous, genocidal consequences ('Arians' and 'Semites' being the paradigmatic case, 'Bantu' and 'Hamites' in Rwanda being another example).

So, one has to keep in mind whose concepts these are, and who is adopting them and why. The classifications, which they are good for, are not true for all times but are historical, i.e. they have once come to be and since then been changing. Still, a study of identification has to start with the conceptual logic of it: a careful study of concepts, and how they relate to each other and to observable non-linguistic data.

The logic of the conceptual space needs to be completed by a typology of the *kinds of importance* different identifications have for actors.

Like in language in general, where we distinguish language and speech (Saussure: language / parole, Chomsky: competence/performance), also in identity discourse we have to distinguish the conceptual frameworks, which can be studied without taking actors into account (unless we want to describe their change, then people and the social forces they generate come back in), from the actual use of concepts for identification of self and other.

In actual speech, we might identify with a social category in all seriousness or we might do so ironically. Rhetoric comes into play here. We might claim to be of a certain nationality just for the authorities, for gaining certain entitlements, or we might regard it as relevant also in the circle of our close friends and relatives.

Language may be a mere emblem of identification, like for Russian-speaking Kazakhs, who do not speak Kazakh but point to the existence of that language as an element of the Kazakh claim to nationhood. Language may be of great symbolic importance like in Belfast, where everyday communication is in English but many people take courses in order to learn Irish, which they regard as part of their cultural heritage (Zenker 2013). Of course, a language may also be of great symbolic **and** practical importance, and it may be thought to be particularly close to our thought or inner self, if you look at it from a Herderian (Americans would say: Whorfian) perspective, in which language is believed to shape our thought to a significant degree<sup>5</sup>.

We deliberately describe all these differentiations as variables, not as dichotomies. A dichotomy is a scale with only two values, and we need more. A social category can be of a greater or lesser semantic reach with many intermediate values, and the same applies to its load of values or the status attached to it and all other descriptions we try on it. If you want to theorize, you need variation and co-variation.

Being anthropologists, most of the researchers working with me on the analysis of conflicts use 'qualitative' methods and do not need any elaborate mathematics. So we do not necessarily attribute numerical values to our scales of measurement. But within the models we think in, we definitely prefer the gradualist approach over the dichotomizing one.

After examining identification from these two perspectives: the system of concepts and their load in terms of values and emotions – the system and the actor approach, in short – we need a typology of changes of identification to capture the social dynamics, in which we are interested in as social scientists, and which we need for our emergent conflict theory.

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<sup>5</sup> Readers not familiar with the linguists mentioned in these paragraphs, may wish to consult the pertinent entries in The International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, namely *Linguists: Overview* (Crystal 2001) and *Language and Ethnicity* (Schlee 2001) for a quick orientation. The literature about them is voluminous.

These types of identity change comprise chosen or imposed identities (again with intermediate values like such chosen under certain constraints or imposed by soft pressure). Another differentiation is that between individual / situational identity changes (stressing different aspects of one's identity in different situations, 'passing as', or more binding forms like conversion) vs. historical changes of identity on the group level (upward or downward mobility of a caste, emergence of new ethnic identities, new historical identifications...). In such cases, either the group of reference may change or the 'ideological' content of an identification. The former may also change in response to the latter. A social identity that changes its content (description, definition, image) may lose its attraction for some people and become more attractive to others.

The next step in the development of our conflict theory, after describing the semantic space of identification and the channels of change it provides, the pathways of identification, should be to define options of identification. Dealing with options, we need a *theory of choice*. The only elaborate theory of choice available is called 'Rational Choice' or RC. We have an ongoing debate how to use RC. The soft underbelly of that theory certainly is the R. The more values you acknowledge, apart from purely monetary or economic ones, and the better you understand things, the more of your findings can be subsumed under the category 'rational' until nothing 'irrational' is left. The agreement is higher on the C. We certainly need a theory of choice, which will be a major component of a theory of action or the 'action' component of our conflict theory. There are also parts of action, like creativity and spontaneous drives, which cannot be modelled as choice situations, but much of action can be described as chains of choices.

It is in this field of choices, that incentives and disincentives provided by the social and natural environment, cost and benefits, material and other, come into play. It seems to be a fruitful procedure to look at the anticipated consequences of an act of identification. Group size seems to be a key variable here. There are all sorts of incentives to belong to a larger or smaller group, and corresponding to these we find discourses of inclusion and discourses of exclusion. In most cases, it seems to be true that people in an insecure position, who badly need to widen their resource base, open their groups to allow newcomers in and seek wider alliances, while people who have a strong position and many resources see no need to co-opt people, with whom they would have to share, and adopt more exclusive self-definitions. Size, however, needs to be weighted. Some people certainly count more than others in terms of the connections or skills they provide or on the side of costs (if they are demanding, a burden, an embarrassment ...). Choices are also limited by constraints like the need to be plausible. No matter how attractive a particular identification may be, it is of little use, if it lacks plausibility and people do not "buy" it. There are also choice enhancing, enabling factors which widen the range of choices. On the individual level such a factor is virtuosity: some people are better at stretching or twisting categories than others.

That social identities are not immutable but subject to continuing identification processes (I like to speak of identification work) is closely tied to the constructivist perspective, which has been dominant in social sciences for a long time. With every change of identity, the group size is affected. It is extremely unlikely that two different definitions of a group identity comprise precisely the same number of people. Group 'size', just like 'scale', is a variable, the importance of which is so obvious, that one wonders (and we have already expressed our amazement above) why it has not been studied more systematically. Ever since Barth (1969), no one doubts that social identities and differences are constructed in contradistinction to other identities. They articulate at the 'boundary' where self meets other. They are situational and can change (within certain limits, which need to be examined as well) following opportunistic considerations. This almost implies that migrants must develop new forms of ethnicity. They live in new boundary situations along with new others, and if the boundary is where ethnicities are articulated, new boundaries must lead to new ethnicities.

Yet in the field of Fulbe studies, Youssouf Diallo and I seem to have been among the first who have systematically compared different Fulbe groups, some older migrants, some more recent migrants, spread all across Africa with regard to the different forms of ethnicity and articulation with others, which the Fulbe have developed in different settings, (Diallo and Schlee, eds. 2000)

Migration may also breed religiosity and new forms of religious identification. History abounds of examples of migrations caused by religious persecution, but one might also look at the matter the other way round: Not to see religion as a cause of migration, but migration as a cause of religion, new forms of religion being brought about in response to the new social situation of migrants. Islam among Turks definitely takes on different forms in Berlin than in Turkey. In his thesis, Boris Nieswand has a great deal to say about Pentecostalism and other enthusiastic forms of Christianity among Ghanaians in Germany. Also Nina Glick Schiller has stories to tell about Christianity among Africans in Halle (cf. Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2011).

A key factor in these processes of identification and re-identification is, as we have explained, group size: not only the actual group size but also that group size, which an identification discourse aims to establish. If one is rich in resources and not in need of help to defend these resources, one is likely to define for oneself a rather narrow identity which results in few people with whom one has to share. If one is in need of wider solidarity, one will find similarities leading to very broad identifications. The resulting group sizes are thus an important factor which informs decisions about identification and the rhetoric of propagating identities. There are inclusionist and exclusionist types of rhetoric.

Let me illustrate the effect of migration on group identities and group sizes with just one example. I take it from a recently completed doctoral dissertation by Christiane Falge titled *The global Nuer*. The Nuer are, of course, one of the paradigmatic cases of anthropology. Everyone knows the classic study by Evans-Pritchard and the seminal and widely applied segmentary lineage model he developed therein. Christiane Falge, of course, re-examines Evans-Pritchard in the light of her own data and – in spite of the deconstructionist critique of the past thirty years – finds his analysis on the whole quite adequate. In the ramifications of the segmentary system, the Nuer define a narrow range of agnates as closely related to themselves. It is these close relatives who will engage in certain joint activities like contributing to someone's bridewealth.

As a result of American refugee resettlement policies, many Nuer have ended up in Iowa, often in the meat packing industry. They mostly live in smaller cities with a large slaughterhouse. They do not identify with African Americans, who after all are descendants of slaves. Rather they identify with those conservative, Christian middle-class whites who actively engage in Church life, including missionary activities and "humanitarian" action like help for refugees. In America, the Nuer learn the hard way that these brothers in Christ do not regard them as their social equals. Most of their social contacts are limited to other Nuer and most of their political interest is in Sudanese politics. The American passport and employment in America enable them to visit home, to invest there, to marry junior wives there and to engage in homeland politics. It is a somewhat one-sided simultaneous incorporation, in Nina's sense, with the focus on the country of origin.

When they marry, they still need bridewealth and for a host of other activities they need relatives as well. Being fewer in number than in their country of origin, they widen the range defined as 'close relatives' to include more kin types. They make the category more comprehensive so that it will comprise more people: This new mode of identification is guided by considerations of group size and takes place in response to a situation of migration.

There are yet wider identifications, of a truly global nature. And these thrive in rural as well as in urban settings. The Nuer see themselves as Crusaders against Islam and thus on the side of the good people in the War on Terror. To belong to the same group as George W. Bush (at the time Falge was writing) gives them a feeling of strength. Members of the American Right, who are perceived by the Nuer as Crusaders against Islam, might not publicly agree to this label. But if this identification is based on a misunderstanding, it might be a convenient misunderstanding, and the people in question do little to fight it.

With a finer-grained analysis, city scale will come into play here as well. A Christian identity may be claimed by all Nuer in the US (while the Christians among the Sudanese Nuer are only a large minority). In a small town, however, they will have to affiliate to whichever Church there is, while in a big city they have the choice between a large number of denominations and then split, often along clan lines, the church affiliation duplicating the clan affiliation. In other words: group size and city scale everywhere you look.

### **'Scale' and 'size' in European and North American Cities**

That there must be some relationship (probably more than one) between 'city scale', the size of the groups found there, and their substructuring, is pretty obvious. It is hard to imagine that city scale should have nothing to do with the inclusivity or exclusivity of the social identities people claim or ascribe to each other in these cities, and with the size of the groups defined by these identities. Going through the volume edited by Schiller and Çağlar, looking for this type of interrelationships, we do not find a coherent theory about this interrelationship, and hardly anyone would have expected that level of coherence from a collected volume. There are enough interesting insights, however, to justify going through the whole volume chapter by chapter and looking at what the individual contributors have to say about how scale and size interact.

In the introduction, Glick Schiller and Çağlar explain, with reference to Brenner (2011), that urban scale operates "as a localized node within globally organized flows", and that it has something to do with "hierarchies of city status". Indicators of city scale "include the size and strength of the banking sectors, the relative success in attracting flows of capital" as well as educational and other development indicators. "The size of the population of the city, rather than being an absolute measure, is a reflection of regional, national, and global relationships. It is not in and of itself an indicator of scale but very often interacts with" the factors which she has listed as such indicators.

Here 'scale' is something clearly distinct from but not unrelated to 'size'. The concept seems to have undergone a history of differentiation from 'size'. It seems to have been closer to it in the past. Samers (2011) explains that "'city scale' might refer to the size of cities", especially to "large cities and 'world' or 'global cities' ". He contrasts this understanding with another meaning of the term which has "emerged in the late 1980s" and refers to 'scales' (levels?) "upwards", 'downwards' and 'outwards' from the 'scale' of the nation state," i.e. something related to the hierarchical aspect also mentioned by Nina Glick Schiller. He also allows different perspectives: "...the process under investigation determines the 'scale', and not the other way round."

The observation that 'scale' in the development of the concept has moved away from 'size', is confirmed by my own reading of older works. It used to be 'size plus something', according to Barth "it should serve us to capture fundamental aspects of 'size' and 'complexity'" (Barth 1978: 253). From being 'size plus something', in this case complexity , 'scale' in recent usages has become something different from 'size', but interacting with it.

Without mentioning the term ‘group size’, Brettell (2011) makes an interesting observation about how it interacts with ‘scale’ in a given case. As a location of information technology, Dallas has a lower scalar position as the Silicon Valley, and as a consequence there are not enough Indians to have separate alumni groups for each campus. As a result they are all combined in one single organization, in spite of the “pride of the individual campuses” which would have favoured separate organizations. This argument is clearly about group size, in this case insufficient group size as a consequence of a not so elevated scalar position.

Like this one, there are many size arguments in this book hidden in a terminology which appears to be all about scale. In van Dijk’s discussion of Ghanaians in Amsterdam and The Hague (van Dijk 2011) we learn that these Ghanaians are a part of global Pentecostal networks. Is this just a finding about scale? (In this case ‘global’ in contrast to the ‘local’ character of Amsterdam or rural Ghana? In fact the ‘global’ dimension might also be called ‘transnational’, because of the preponderance of the US element<sup>6</sup>.) Is it not also a question of the size of their support networks? What does this mean in terms of taxonomic levels? Pentecostalism is a particular denomination of Christianity and not a mainstream one, but one of those often characterized as “charismatic”. Shifting the identification from ‘Christian’ to ‘Pentecostal Christian’ is a movement from the general to the specific, from a higher to a lower taxonomic level. It may however be the global connections provided by this narrower, more exclusive identification which represent a special value.

Goode (2011) describes “confusion between population size and scale”, not in the mind of scholars but in the mind of some social actors she observed. Policy makers and realtors campaigning to attract New York commuters to Philadelphia were unaware that, while increasing the population of Philadelphia, it would give that city a lower scalar position, making it even clearer than before that New York is where the action is while Philadelphia would be the affordable sleeping place. The implication is that these groups of actors, had they been aware of this “confusion” (this negative image effect) would have abstained from the campaign. Ultimately, of course, the behaviour of realtors is guided neither by scalar position nor by image but more directly by effective demand, which finds its expression in real estate prices.

Also with reference to Philadelphia, Goode describes a form of solidarity which has developed between all immigrants whose English still shows traces of recent acquisition. This is a response to “linguistic racialization”. “Without a critical mass of Korean professional and merchant class customers, fellow immigrants are seen as preferable to native born whites and racial minorities both perceived as racist toward people of colour and/or non-English speakers.” There is a size argument in here, and another one about identification: Had there been enough Korean customers, Korean merchants would not have needed to bother about other people. To the insufficient size of their own community of co-ethnics, the Koreans react with a somewhat unusual identification strategy: including all other newcomers, across all other differences, against the longer established residents.

For increasing their appeal in New York, the Murids do things they would never have done at home in Senegal: They involve women in their activities, even in public debates, and they play the African card for attracting African Americans. If this is not over-interpreting Salzbrunn (2011), they engage in politics of size by trying to broaden their base in two ways: by expanding across the gender divide and along ethnic lines.

In their comparison between two small scale cities, Halle/Saale (Germany), and Manchester (New Hampshire), Nina Glick Schiller and Ayşe Çağlar (2011) conclude that ethnic communities are a less viable pathway of incorporation. This is not only so because there are

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<sup>6</sup> There may be Pentecostal communities in Ghana, Peru, Kyrgyzstan and many other places. But the links of these communities to counterparts in the US are certainly more important than the links they have to each other. It is a US-centered network.

not enough co-ethnics around to form the network and the social environment of a person, but, in an interested twist to this argument, because the cities are not in a position to afford specific services for ethnic groups if each of these does not comprise the minimal number of people to deserve that effort. In other ways, the way group size and city or settlement scale interpenetrate in Halle and Manchester resembles what Berreman concludes about Indian villagers in India, Brettel about quite different Indians in Dallas and Goode about Philadelphia. Religious incorporation offers an alternative. (cf. also Glick Schiller et al. 2005).

## Conclusion

I have been interested in group size for a number of years<sup>7</sup>, and much of the work carried out by others in my department also considers group size an important variable. Nina Glick Schiller and I have repeatedly, and rather inconclusively, discussed whether we should speak of 'size' or 'scale'. My conclusion is that the two are not the same. Size is certainly one of the factors which contribute to city scale, and there are many other interrelations between size and scale. In order to study these interrelations, we have to keep the two concepts analytically separate; if we lapse them into one, the relationships between them are no longer visible.

Our reading of the contributions to Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011) has shown that the focus on 'scale' is very marked. For the analysis of the case material presented here, however, we should not focus too exclusively on 'scale'. We also need 'size', taxonomic levels, levels of inclusivity along different conceptual dimensions, between which people move up and down in their identity discourses. 'Scale' is just one of the conceptual tools we need in order to structure our mental representations of our social world. In itself it is a complex notion. It is a special tool for special tasks, not a *passe-partout* or multipurpose tool. And it may easily lead to confusion, if we do not follow Berreman's warning from thirty years ago: "If 'scale' is to be used in social analysis, its referent must be clearly spelled out, and the manner in which its constituent dimensions are to be operationalized and weighted must be specified." (Berreman 1978: 75).

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<sup>7</sup> For a synthesis see Schlee (2008).

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