7

Conclusion

"Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (Arendt 1958, 8). For Hannah Arendt, plurality means both equality and diversity. Expressed in acts of differentiation, plurality forms the condition of political life. Differentiation necessarily requires initiative, thus plurality gives rise to creativity; it carries in it the seed of novelty (Arendt 1958, 175ff.). Yet, it is impossible to determine an exact and enduring definition of a single person, as his being is always in flux. Due to this extrinsic intangibility, all human relations are notoriously uncertain. Acts of differentiation always happen in social contexts and "it is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose; but it is also because of this medium, in which action alone is real, that it 'produces' stories with or without intention" (idem 1958, 184). Through these stories, action becomes tangible, while remaining the result of human interactions whose agents, beginnings, and ends are not unequivocally identifiable.

This book essentially consists of incomplete ethnographic stories that explore the relationship between equality and diversity within webs of

human relations, that is, social fields. Its aim is to explain the relation between differentiation among Hamburg-based people identifying (among other things) as Iranians and their past and ongoing historically situated experience of local and global relations of inequality. My main interest thereby lies in merchants' and artists' kinship and professional relations.

Bringing together research on internal differentiation and transnational social fields, I used Pierre Bourdieu's concept of capital creation within Michèle Lamont's boundary approach to focus on processes of evaluation. The focus on evaluation allowed me to connect this approach to David Graeber's anthropological theory of value, making it possible for me to identify migrants' motivation in their strategies of capital creation and point out the potential of collective and individual action within and at the intersection of different social fields. The aim of this approach was to grasp the way migrants engage *with* and *in* power relations without using a vocabulary that reads migrants' agency solely through the analytical lens of racism, Islamophobia, and exclusion. Instead, I highlighted empirically how these dynamics emerge in historical interrelation with social processes in the global south, thus revealing migrants' involvement in them, as well as their motivations and potential for acting upon them—or not. Perceiving internal diversity as a part of contemporary Western countries of immigration is crucial to understanding shifting internationally interconnected and historically rooted systems of value, grasping societal dynamics, and enhancing social cohesion.

Internal Diversity

I approached the study of internal diversity through processes of differentiation. I argued that boundary-making in internal relations needs to be understood with respect to the particularities of the social fields in which it takes place.

I showed that social fields mainly constituted by local Iranians are shaped—to different extents—by relatively high levels of uncertainty. Uncertainty is high not only because of the modification of social ties through migration, but also because of Iranians' difficulties to transfer

resources acquired in Iran to the German context, or to get recognition for their Germany-specific resources as capital. It also implies a relatively high level of interdependence (Faist 1998; Portes 1998; Bauder 2005; Zontini 2009). Uncertainty may increase when the social field of internal relations among migrants overlaps with other fields that are equally marked by uncertainty, as it is the case with professional fields that lack formalized mechanisms of evaluation (Apitzsch 2010), such as the international trade with Iranian carpets and the film business. I will come back to this observation below. My point here is that interdependence raises the stakes of boundary-making.

The ethnographic chapters showed that social boundaries between Iranians are never fixed, but subject to negotiation. Dimensions of commonality and difference are overlapping, sustaining and competing with each other in constant processes of negotiation. They are constructed and deconstructed through discursive or behavioral forms of inclusion and exclusion (Lamont 1992; Lamont and Molnár 2002). For instance, in telling me that the restaurateur Abtin was a *Flüchtling* (refugee), Akbar sought to disguise the fact that he himself had settled in Germany only after he had been granted asylum and stress his identification as a "traditional Iranian carpet merchant". Behavioral boundary-making was reflected, for example, in the collective dancing of Golestanis on the stage of the FusIran festival, which underlined the identification with the association Golestan, while indirectly excluding those who remained in the public. We can thus understand the construction and deconstruction of social boundaries as a mutual—situational—evaluation of the interacting agents' social, cultural, and economic resources (Moghaddari 2016).

There are numerous markers people use in boundary-making, and the ethnographic material presented in this study certainly could not reflect all of them. Certain markers of difference whose importance derives from their recurrence in diverse social contexts may be highlighted at this point: whether it is the personal experience of doing kinship and the resources inherited from previous generations, or being identified by others as a member of a specific family, I argued that kinship ties influence the way Iranians relate to one another. Gender and norms of gendered behavior also constitute reasons for boundary-making—not only in kinship relations. In the same vein, the construction of generational

boundaries is recurrent, while the event of the Islamic revolution in 1979, in relation to personal religious adherences and political allegiances, is a pivot point in internal relations (Gholami 2014; Khosravi 2018). Class, ethnic, regional, and local identifications relative to Germany and Iran are also central to boundary-making, often in conflation with other forms of collective identifications that resonate with diverging motivations and conditions of immigration, represented in notions such as intellectuals, bazaris, *honaris*, or else the figure of the *Flüchtling*. Thus, markers used in Hamburg largely correspond to those extant research identified in other locations of Iranian immigration (Bozorgmehr et al. 1993; Bozorgmehr 1997; Sanadjian 2000; McAuliffe 2008). At the difference to newer destinations, however, long-established migrants in Hamburg are mostly merchants who tend to be more religious and/or friendly toward the current Iranian government than many post-1979 migrants. In this regard, dynamics of differentiation among Iranians in Hamburg are closer to those in other older locations of immigration, such as Dubai (Moghadam 2013, 2015; Adelkhah 2016).

In the literature on Iranian migration, this research contributes to rare studies who take truly transnational perspectives, in showing how Iranians' capital creation in transnational social fields influences their local inclusion (Ghorashi and Tavakoli 2006; Azadarmaki and Bahar 2007; Khosravi 2007; Ghorashi and Boersma 2009; Sreberny-Mohammadi 2013). Simultaneously, the case study fills the gap in (English-language) research about Iranian immigration in the earliest and today still one of the most important destinations of Iranian migration. Hamburg, in particular, a location that draws on a long history of economic and political ties to Iran, is a highly pertinent setting for further research on the role of migrants in Iran under international sanctions.

Within the great fluidity of social boundaries and the innumerous markers used, nearly all processes of social differentiation among Iranians in Hamburg are infused with definitions of Iranianness and Germanness. The relevance of these markers corresponds with research highlighting the importance of ethnic boundaries of Germany (Ehrkamp 2006; Bail 2008; Gruner 2010; Çelik 2017; Yilmaz Sener 2018). The identification or categorization as Iranian or German thus passes through the assessment of the volume and amount of resources judged as being

Germany- and Iran-specific. Such resources are, for example, language skills and accent, knowledge of codes of politeness, clothing styles, gender norms, relevant social ties, and so on. The why and how of this observation requires a look at the values these resources convey among Iranians and in other local and transnational social fields—a discussion to which I turn below.

While plurality is the condition of human action, inequalities arise from the situational valorization of resources in processes of differentiation (Bourdieu 1979). The study showed that the construction and deconstruction of a social boundary can both enhance and hinder capital creation. Individual agents may thus try to circumvent barriers to their generation of capital by constructing or deconstructing social boundaries, putting forward certain resources, such as ethnic and national identifications, and dissimulating others through impression management (Goffman 1963). The approach I developed in this book thus showed that boundary-making may be considered as a tool in the generation of capital, not only among Iranians, but also in other social fields.

Creating Capital Across Social Fields

Building on the analysis of internal differentiation, I showed that Iranians living in Hamburg try to create capital in not only one, but in several multidimensional social fields, some of which, at least, are transnational. For instance, besides being involved in the local Iranian social field, Hushang also strives to create capital in the German and the transnational Iranian social field of film professionals. Depending on their personal trajectories and on the social fields in which they are engaged, Iranians follow highly diverse strategies of capital creation.

As I traced collective strategies of capital creation through identitary narratives, I interrogated the motivation behind such a management of resources across social fields. Building on the anthropology of value (Graeber 2001, 2013), I showed that processes of evaluation reveal the values that are central in the respective social field: if the resources people put forward mediate value within a social field, they get acknowledged as capital. Thus, social fields are shaped by systems of value. Strategies of

capital creation arise when people try to enhance the efficiency of their resources within a given system. In doing so, they engage in what Graeber calls "politics of value", that is, constructing meaning that both acknowledges and resists existing systems of value. I will return to this below. It is politics of value that motivate people's strategies of capital creation.

Following up on Louis Dumont (2013), values thereby stand in relation to one another, some may be mutually exclusive, while others may be conditioned by key values. Expanding on Aihwa Ong (1999), who theorizes barriers to capital creation, I argued that limits arise when a person's resources fail to convey certain values within a social field. The barrier becomes more acute the more central these values are within the respective system.

Thus, going beyond extant research on transnational social fields (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Erel 2010; Nowicka 2013), I identified two reasons why the creation of capital in internal relations interacts with the agents' individual positioning within *and* between social fields. First, social fields may physically overlap. For instance, if Hushang's German colleagues see him on a film festival in Hamburg with Milad, his association with someone whose resources fail to convey the key value of familiarity is received in the German social field of film professionals. At the same time, an Iranian colleague engaged in the Iranian transnational field of film professionals might perceive this collective public appearance as mediating the values of professionalism and cooperation. Thus, depending on Hushang's politics of value in different social fields and on their importance for his strategies of capital creation, he may seek closeness with Milad or try to construct boundaries in their relationship.

Second, systems of value prevailing in different social fields may intersect. In this study, the mutual influence of systems of value was particularly visible in the evaluation of Germany (or Western)-specific and Iran-specific resources. Let me illustrate this point with two examples. First, in Hamburg of the 1950s, local newspapers called people who, through their physical appearance, that is, race, or national origin, were marked as Middle Easterners "carpet-crooks"—they were perceived as unfamiliar. In order to create capital in the German carpet market, they needed resources that mediate the value of familiarity with German cultural contexts. Young sons of Iranian bazaris who came to Hamburg

during these years liked to go to ball houses, and some of them had learnt European ballroom dances back in Iran. This was because merchant families were engaged in social fields in Iran under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, in which familiarity with Western cultural contexts was an important value. This was historically related to the fact that it was Western powers that had put the monarch on the throne in 1941 and helped him counter a democratic coup in 1953. His promoting values that correspond to dominant systems of value in the West signaled an effort to maintain their political support, thus perpetuating unequal global power relations.

Another example relates to the present-day German social sphere. I showed that in a local TV broadcast from 2013, young second-generation Iranians who put forward important Germany-specific resources were asked about their opinions on the political regime in Iran, and in particular on then-president Ahmadinejad. The journalist thus stressed the value of democracy, human rights, and equality—in its Western-centric understanding. Following the same logic, both in the systems of value prevailing among members of the association Golestan and in the transnational social field Iranian of *honaris* (constituted by artists and people close to the art scene), Iran-specific resources that convey opposition to the Iranian government and secularism—a value that may be termed, following Reza Gholami (2014), non-Islamiosity—tend to be acknowledged as capital. Resources that suggest regime-loyalty and adherence to the Islamic faith, instead, constitute a barrier to Iranians' capital creation in all three social fields as they suggest a lack of these values. Both examples show that systems of value that prevail in different social fields intersect, because historical interactions between unequally powerful agents in colonial and postcolonial contexts encouraged the integration of familiarity with the West, together with democracy, human rights, equality, and exoticism (in the perception of the ethnic and racial Other) as key values in many social fields across the world. In this point, this study joins postcolonial, feminist, and queer theory in highlighting the historical (re) production of global structures of inequality, including the involvement of migrants in it (Said 1978; Wolf 1982; Hooks 1986; Yuval-Davis 2007; Monsutti 2018).

The pervasiveness of these originally Western values, in turn, accounts for the importance of the barrier to capital creation their lack inspires (see also Lamont 1992). This study thus confirms existing research on immigration to Europe indicating that, in German, but—I add—also in many Iranian social fields, a lack of resources considered as Germany- or Western-specific can constitute a barrier to the generation of capital (Cederberg 2012; Weiss 2001). Consequently, because social fields may overlap or systems of value may intersect, people consider the evaluation of their Iran- and Germany-specific resources and its effect on their strategies of capital creation in all social fields that they find relevant.

In sum, there is not a single system of value to which all Iranians adhere. Instead, depending on the historical and social characteristics of a specific social encounter and the personal and professional trajectories of the people interacting, various systems of value intersect and influence the way social boundaries are created. As boundary-making in internal relations serves to optimize Iranians' chances to generate capital, their social differentiation must be understood as an expression of competitive individual and collective politics of value, engaging with various systems of value that shape local and transnational social fields.

Politics of Value and Potential for Action

Reminding Arendt's thoughts, each act of differentiation is an initiative to act on the world and one's place in it. Yet, the fact that it is embedded in a web of relations thwarts the outcome—to varying degrees. Building on Graeber's anthropological theory of value allowed me to trace migrants' politics of value. Their potential for action, in turn, represents the power an agent has to influence the meaning of his resources in a social field.

To illustrate what I conceive of as politics of value, let us look at Iranians' different engagements with the system of value in a single social field: the German public sphere. As a reminder, familiarity with German cultural contexts through assimilation is a key value, alongside democracy, human right, equality, and exoticism. However, as multiple national or cultural identifications tend to be conceived as mutually exclusive (Sökefeld 2004; Ehrkamp 2006), it is quite impossible for an agent's

resources to convey familiarity, as any resource identified as Iranian is accompanied by the misrecognition of Germany-specific resources. Thus, in this study, a very common approach among my interlocutors, such as Babak, the artist, was to put forward resources, such as accent-free German and knowledge of Iranian poetry, that convey familiarity (within the described limitations) and exoticism, while avoiding those resources, such as regime-loyalty, that mediate a lack of democracy. They often do so by staging Iranianness, and it may be through subliminal acts of over-stretching the performance that they express critique of this system of value. A newer and upcoming approach, mostly observed among long-established migrants, such as Omid the merchant, Behruz the cultural organizer, and Yara the educator, aimed at redefining the meaning of Iran-specific resources by promoting the exotic as familiar. Rarer are those people like Afshin, who follow the political goal to denationalize the meaning of their Iran-specific resources and promote the value of diversity as familiarity, stressing local belongings beyond any ethnic and national identification. Thus, compared to working-class Turks, who tend to reject the requirement of assimilation, this research confirms that middle-class Iranian professionals living in Germany tend to comply with this system of value even though they struggle with it (Sanadjian 1995; Ehrkamp 2006; Çelik 2015; Sadeghi 2018a, b). Indeed, the choice of the politics of value depends on migrants' unequal potential to act on existing systems of value.

Which are the factors that enhance the potential of action of people's politics of value? First, the volume and distribution of their resources as well as professional and personal trajectories will play an important role in the politics of value agents chose. The more Germany-specific resources one has, the higher is the potential for action in shaping the value of Iran-specific resources, as we saw in the conflict between Afshin and Babak. Second, it is much more efficient to pursue politics of value as a group rather than individually. In collaborations, however, we saw the importance of temporalities: while for short-term collaboration, such as the Color festival, it was enough for agents' strategies of capital creation to be compatible, in long-term alliances, such as among carpet merchants, in relevant social fields politics of value have to coincide or at least be compatible.

The ways systems of value connect across social fields in relation to the migrants' potential to action are central to the negotiation of internal diversity. The two case studies of Iranian carpet merchants and members of association Golestan showcase great variation in this regard: Hamburg's Iranian carpet merchants largely recreated the system of value that historically prevails in the transnational social field of Iranian carpet merchants, while engaging in the German carpet market and in the field of Iranian foreign trade. In the 1950s, this approach caused barriers to capital creation in the German carpet market. By the 2010s, through a variety of shifts in the systems of value, merchants' collective politics of value succeeded in creating capital by mediating family cohesion, historical local rootedness, and professionalism in all three contexts, although their respective systems of value remained largely distinct. Their successful politics of value fostered strong internal cohesion but also high barriers to the inclusion of newcoming merchants.

In the second case, covering a much shorter time period, the system of value created within the association Golestan was new and thus less coherent, compared to the one prevailing among transnational Iranian merchants. It developed as an engagement to the systems of value that shape the social field of the German public sphere and the transnational social field related to the *honari* imaginary, which both intersect in giving key value to familiarity with German or Western cultural contexts and certain forms of exoticism. While the founder-members wanted to oppose these hegemonic systems by creating a counterpublic (Nicholls and Uitermark 2016), a growing number of members worked toward their internal system of value intersecting with those prevalent in the two other fields.

In a way, Iranian social fields are often used as a toolbox for the crafting of Iranian identifications that serve in politics of value among Germans. However, internal relations also offer people, like Yara, the occasion to challenge established collective (class-related) identifications and gain upward social mobility. For others, such as Solmaz, refusing an Iranian identification was a way to withdraw from Iranian social fields and contest their prevalent systems of value. Others again, like Afshin, Danial, and Behruz, displayed Iran-specific cultural resources among Germans, although they had disengaged from local and transnational Iranian social

fields, often because they experienced the obligations attached to these relations as barriers to the creation of capital. The Iranian identifications my interlocutors displayed among Germans were a reinterpretation of collective identifications and imaginaries they nourished in local and transnational Iranian social fields. More research would be necessary to trace how these transnational renegotiations lead to respective readjustments of systems of value in Iran.

In tracing migrants' unequal potential for action within individual or collective politics of value, I acknowledge both their scope of action as well as its limits. In doing so, this research goes beyond studies of transnational migrants' strategies of capital creation that tend to either stress their possibility to challenge existing structures (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Erel 2010; Nowicka 2013) or underline their subjugation to them (Ong 1992, 1996; Weiss 2005). Thus, people identifying as Iranians in Hamburg may confirm systems of value dominating in a specific social field and simultaneously contest them elsewhere (Martuccelli 2006). Or they may defy the same boundaries they contribute(d) to create in different social or historical contexts. Based on these reflections, we can understand internal boundary-making as a reflection of migrants' politics of value. In more general terms, these findings suggest that research on transnational strategies of capital creation should consider in further detail the complex ways in which valuations of different forms of capital may interact across diverse social fields in which agents may be engaged.

Iranian-Germans?

The study of diversity among Hamburg's Iranians showed that the system of value prevailing in the German public sphere stands in stark contrast with the lived reality of a growing part of the German population, which actively nourishes various cultural identifications. In the face of the large number of newcomers following the summer of 2015 and the ongoing crisis of the European border regime, it becomes even more important to understand the ways migrants partake in shaping changing systems of value in the German society (Vertovec 2015; Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi 2017; Fleischmann and Steinhilper 2017; Nowicka et al. 2017).

The historical perspective on Iranian carpet merchants' collective politics of value showed that, despite the relative limitation of their potential for action, migrants' everyday collective action over long-time spans may influence the meaning of their resources and modify systems of value. Today, still, Hamburg-based people who call themselves "Iranians" tend to be referred to as "German-Iranians" (*Deutsch-Iraner*) or "Germans with migration background" in the press, stressing the Iranian as the more significant, that is, the determining, part of their identity. Yet, in the context of the refugee crisis, new social movements collectively try to reshape, similar to Afshin, Behruz, and Yara, the value of diversity or exoticism as connected to familiarity. Iranian public figures play an important role in this context (Moghaddari 2018). The historical perspective opens our view to the possibility that, one day in the far future, Iranians might call themselves "Iranian-Germans" (*iranische Deutsche*), as this book title suggests, or "Germans", or develop identifications beyond national categories. In order to grasp the changes which German and European societies undergo, a diachronic perspective is useful to further investigate relations among migrants of the same but also of different national and ethnic origins.

It is the role of research in social science to highlight contradictions and discrepancies in social life. In particular anthropology, here, has the capacity and probably also the vocation, to testify about the diversity that burgeons in contemporary—in particular European—societies. In this way, anthropology may contribute to raising a greater awareness about the value of plurality.

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