

2 Transnationalism and Diaspora. Analytical Frameworks

This chapter is devoted to some theoretical reflections on concepts regarding transnationalism and diaspora, and presents several core arguments. The chapter contains a review of various approaches in transnationalism studies, a summary of different definitions of the term, and focuses on differences between the notions of transnationalism and diaspora. This is followed by a discourse on durability of transnational ties, and, correspondingly, issues of second-generation transnationalism. In addition, I will present the conceptual triad ‘configurations–representations–encounters’ elaborated by Vertovec (2009b, 2015). I review the application of the model to the studies of migration-related issues, and thus take it as a conceptual-analytical base for my work.

The juxtaposition of transnationalism and diaspora studies is important, because it helps define points of intersection and divergence of these two notions. This conceptual framework provides the background for the analysis of my empirical data, and will further the understanding of specificities of Armenian transnational activity and manifestations of diaspora consciousness. Although my work is not directly about diaspora studies, the notion of diaspora is a significant and relevant factor as a category of practice at the level of representations. As the analysis in the empirical chapters of this book will provide evidence, diaspora consciousness plays a considerable role by influencing encounters, and also to a great extent determining representations. Also, as mentioned, I differentiate two categories of Armenians living in Germany—*arevmtahay* and *hayastantsi*—one of which (*arevmtahay*) has already had diasporic consciousness before establishing permanent residence in Germany. Meanwhile, *hayastantsis* find themselves either at the beginning, or within the process of formation of diasporic consciousness. The latter, at the level of representations, influences ways of being, encounters, perceptions, and dispositions of both immigrant categories.

To begin with, I will lay out the traditions and approaches in transnationalism studies and the definition of the term.

2.1 Transnational approach in studying migration

The term transnationalism started to capture attention among social scientists from the 1970s; however, it has become a popular and fashionable topic of research since the 1990s. The interest in such a new trend was conditioned by a new view on migration studies and migrant ties, which suggested viewing maintenance of migrant ties with the country of origin, and migrant practices in the receiving land in correlation with each other. It will provide more complete understanding of problems related to migration. Since then transnationalism research has included a variety of topics and directions – among them incorporation of migrants into the host country and simultaneous maintenance of social, political, religious, economic, and cultural connections to the homeland.¹¹ In this section I will first discuss whether transnationalism is a new phenomenon, or if it has been existing in parallel with history of migration; second, if maintenance of transnational ties is a common characteristic of all migrants;¹² third, transnationalism and assimilation debates, and fourth, specificities of second-generation transnationalism, and questions of its endurance over generations,¹³ as well as other related topics of research.

Thus, the transnational approach goes beyond a one-sided focus on migration-related issues and encompasses a wide range of activities, and tries to concentrate on multiple cultural codes and ‘homes’ that may in parallel exist geographically, ideologically, symbolically, and emotionally (Wolf 2002, p. 257).

2.1.1 *Traditions of studying transnational migration*

Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004a; 2007) provide a summarizing theoretical synthesis of transnationalism scholarship which gives clear and thorough understanding of research traditions and directions in transnationalism studies. After this synthesis, they build a new approach on studying transnational

¹¹ See, e.g. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999, 2001, 2002; Glick Schiller 1999, 2005b; Levitt 2001, 2002, 2009; Portes et al. 1999, 2001, 2003; Vertovec 1999, 2002, 2004, 2009a; Al-Ali and Koser (eds.) 2002; Itzigsohn and Giorguli Saucedo 2002; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2008; Guarnizo and Smith 2006; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 2008; Laguerre 2009; Lee 2011; Waldinger 2011; etc.

¹² See, e.g. Vertovec 2004, 2007, 2009a; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Morawska 2003a; Waldinger 2008

¹³ See, e.g. Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Eckstein 2002; Foner 2002; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002; Letitt and Waters 2002; Perlmann 2002; Rumbaut 2002, Smith 2002; Morawska 2003b; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2008; Waldinger 2008, 2009; Levitt 2009; Wessendorf 2009; Lee 2011

connections—a transnational social field perspective on society (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, b; 2007). I will reflect upon the latter later, in the section on conceptual-methodological framework of my work, which directly links with the perspective suggested by Levitt and Glick Schiller. In following, I will briefly introduce the traditions of transnationalism research, which will, in turn, lead to the definition of the term itself. In doing so, I lean on works of Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller who have summarized existing directions in transnationalism research. Hence, they distinguish four traditions among scholars researching on transnational migration (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2007, p. 183–184; 2004a, p. 1004–1006)

- The research done by sociologists and anthropologists in the US
- Studies done by the Transnational Communities Programme based at Oxford University
- Studies of transnational families and kinship
- An effort to reformulate notion of space and social structure.

The US school of transnational migration studies focuses on homeland–hostland connections and issues of assimilation. Scholars following this tradition are interested in determining conditions under which migrants maintained homeland ties and identities and commonplace transnational practices among the migrant population as a whole.¹⁴ In the scope of this tradition, some studies explore the relationship between migration and development, categorizing migration as a product of capitalism which makes small, non-industrialized countries dependent on migrant-generated remittances.¹⁵

The Oxford Transnational Communities Programme used a much broader definition of transnational ties than simply putting the accent on the land of origin and receiving country. Here scholars demonstrated that migrants are embedded in networks stretching across multiple states, and migrants' identities and cultural production reflect their multiple locations.¹⁶

The study of transnational families documents the way in which family networks constituted across borders are marked by gendered differences in power and status. Family networks maintained between people sending remittances, and those who receive them, can be fraught with tension. In the framework of this tradition, one of the focus areas is to what extent kinship relations

¹⁴ See, e.g. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Smith 1998; Goldring 2002; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2002; Portes, Haller, Guarnizo 2002; Morawska 2003b; Levitt 2003

¹⁵ See, e.g. Itzigsohn 2000; Landolt 2001; Portes 2003; Guarnizo 2003; Guarnizo and Smith 2006

¹⁶ See, e.g. Castles 1998; Morgan 1999; Faist 2000a, b; Riccio 2001; Van der Veer 2001; Abelman 2002

influence migration decision making (see, e.g. Ballard 2000; Chamberlin 2002; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002).

The fourth group of scholars uses a transnational approach to migration *to challenge social theory* (see, e.g. Guarnizo 1997; Faist 2000a, b; Morawska 2001; 2003). They propose migration as structuration to indicate the continuing dynamic between structure and agency, which takes place in a transnational space.

This brief summary is very useful since it sheds insight on the field of transnationalism research, highlighting the main group of research questions and problematic transnationalism scholars have traditionally been addressing. From this point, the discussion will follow to the direction of various understandings and definitions of transnationalism. Although researchers and scholars in this field point out slightly different aspects of the phenomenon, their views coincide in some core ideas, which I will then present following.

2.1.2 *Definition of transnationalism*

As noted above, transnationalism is studied from different angles and aspects, and that is one of the reasons conditioning a multi-aspect definition of the term. It would probably be more correct and precise to say versatile and differing understandings of the phenomenon, rather than a multi-aspect definition of the term. This diversity of interpretations of transnationalism, however, points out more or less the common phenomena – combination of plural civic-political memberships, economic involvements, social ties and engagements in cultural, social, political and economic activities, which are not limited by any spatial, territorial or geographical borders.¹⁷

Apart from border-spanning engagements and activities, transnationalism literature indicates another important aspect of transnationalism—*simultaneity*—living a life and being present in more than one reality simultaneously,¹⁸ feeling home at home and abroad.

The phenomenon of simultaneity leads transnationalism studies to consider movement and attachment at home and host countries, which rotate back and forth and change direction over time, as persons change their location, and depending on the context (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, p. 1011). Indeed,

¹⁷ See, overview in Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller, Szanton Blanc eds. 1994; Smith 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Vertovec 2002, 2004, 2009; Levitt 2003b, 2004; Khagram and Levitt 2008

¹⁸ See, overview in Vertovec 1999, 2009; Levitt and Waters eds. 2002; Menjivar 2002; Levitt 2003b; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004a, b, 2007; Glick Schiller 2005b; Khagram and Levitt eds. 2008; Wessendorf 2009, 2013

simultaneous attachments lie in the basis of transnationalism-related phenomena and issues. For example, simultaneously feeling at home in the country of residence and in the country of emigration (even maybe to different extents), identifying oneself as e.g. both German and Armenian at the same time, and feeling belonging not only to the country of origin, but also to the country of residence are important points of interest to scholars studying transnational migration. This thematic is also a core emphasis in my work, discussion of which in relation to the Armenian case will follow in the next chapters – in the analysis of the empirical data.

As mentioned, transnationalism has versatile and multiple interpretations. In the frameworks of this work I will summarize and present the most typical and relevant definitions of the notion. Thus, Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1992) describe transnationalism as a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. Taking simultaneous engagements as a point of departure, Glick Schiller et al. (1995) and Basch et al. (2008) suggest distinguishing *transmigrants* from migrants. According to them, only transmigrants live their lives across borders participating simultaneously in financial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political relations and getting involved in more than one reality. They live in a specific geographic place but yet occupy many social, political, economic, and cultural spaces simultaneously (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 2008, p. 261–272). Later on, the notion of transmigrant has been used also by other scholars (e.g. Guarnizo 1997; Glick Schiller 1999; Goldring 2002; Adick 2008).

Ideas of simultaneous presence here and there, and border-spanning engagements of various types are present also in Kearney's works (2000), however, from a slightly different viewpoint. The author distinguishes two different meanings embedded in the term transnational. One points to simultaneous occupancy in multiple locations crossing national borders, while the second aspect refers to the political, social, and cultural practices, whereby citizens of a nation-state construct social forms and identities that partly diverge from the cultural and political supremacy of origin nation-states (Kearney, 2000, p. 174).

Portes et al. (1999, 2008) insist that transnationalism should be regular and sustained, with long term contact, while Levitt (2002) prefers to envisage concrete continuum of transnational practices in which individuals may engage, rather than to refer to all-encompassing transnational being of migrants. The essence of both arguments is that border-spanning ties will fade away if they are not regular, which basically would mean they have no reference to transnationalism. Though I concede that regular and sustainable cross-border connections are important components of transnationalism, I still believe that the factor of sustainability should be re-discussed. Indeed, regularity and

sustainability of connections are strongly interconnected, nevertheless, connections can be regular but still less frequent. On this ground, I propose that in order for cross-border connections and ties to be called transnational, they do not necessarily need to be sustained and frequent. They might become sporadic and/or experience increase and decrease intervals, but not completely disappear.¹⁹ From this viewpoint, I grant Levitt's statement, and emphasize the importance to consider that the continuum of transnational practices provides the opportunity of understanding preferences and encounters of migrants in a diverse reality. Thus, encompassing the continuum of transnational practices with regard to possible influence of these practices and encounters on the sense of belonging and self-identification already provides a wide spectrum for social analysis.

Steven Vertovec provides not only a thorough study of transnationalism, but also a profound overview of transnationalism research with reflections on different authors (Vertovec 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009a). He suggests multilevel explanations of transnationalism, viewing it as a *social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and (re)construction of 'place' and locality* (Vertovec 1999, 2009a, p. 4–13). In the following pages, a brief presentation of each will follow.

➤ Transnationalism as *social morphology*. Transnationalism has to do with a kind of social formation spanning borders. In this realm, Vertovec, drawing upon Manuel Castells' (1996) analysis of the current Information Age, writes: "the network's component parts—connected by nodes and hubs—are both autonomous from, and dependent upon, its complex system of relationships" (Vertovec 1999, p. 3). This indicates the importance of diverse hubs and their relationships in interpreting transnational engagements. With regard to maintenance of transnational networks, the role of technologies becomes rather significant; nevertheless, it is important to note, that by emphasizing the importance of new technologies and developments in modern telecommunication, it is not meant that the latter create new transnational practices. What is here highlighted is the input of the current Information Age in the reconsideration and reformulation of social patterns that existed before. This has reinforced the transnational potential of diasporas, and thus made them more visible, due to a wide-range of opportunities for engagements and communication going beyond any kind of borders.

➤ Transnationalism as a *type of consciousness*. Vertovec describes this as individuals' awareness of de-centred attachments, of being simultaneously

¹⁹ My empirical data allow me to distinguish a specific characteristic of Armenian transnationalism, which I call fluctuating transnationalism and which I will touch upon in the following chapters devoted to the analysis of research results.

‘home away from home’, ‘here and there’ (Vertovec 1999, p. 5) or, for instance, Armenian and something else. Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc contend that the majority of migrants maintain simultaneous links to more than one country, and, as a rule, identify themselves with more than one nation which is derived from different identities they have (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc 1992, p. 11). The multi-locality and awareness of it fosters ‘here-and-there connections’ of migrants with others who share the same ‘routes’ and ‘roots’ (Gilroy 1993). A considerable role in this process surely belongs to the collective memory. The latter, in fact, becomes responsible for the formation of specific consciousness which is typical to diasporas.

➤ Transnationalism as a *mode of cultural reproduction*. Transnational ways of life often presuppose cultural translation and hybridity. This is mostly observed either through visual arts, music, and fashion, or simply through the process of socialization in culturally mixed environments (Vertovec 1999, 2009a, p. 7). It is to say, the children of immigrants are the primary targets or carriers of this mode of cultural reproduction. These young people can, however, consciously choose the behavioural and cultural patterns which would be more familiar to them. Therefore, they tend to bear diverse cultural heritages.

➤ Transnationalism as an *avenue of capital*, which in a nutshell means enriching social capital through and due to transnational corporations and cross-border involvements. The role of transnational corporations becomes especially crucial in this realm, since they are viewed as main contributors to and explanations for processes spanning territorial or geographical borders and national boundaries.

➤ Transnationalism as a *site of political engagement*. This mode of transnationalism points out that in parallel with social, cultural, and economic aspects of life, transnational approach can also be applied to political engagements. Moreover, Ulrich Beck mentions that national politics is not enough “to properly debate and resolve the new dialectic of global and local questions” (Beck 1998, p. 29). To understand and to address this dialectic the transnational framework is to be applied. Transnational political activism—of which most obvious and prime forms are international non-governmental organizations, the International Red Cross and different agencies of the United Nations—is winning more and more attention.

➤ Transnationalism as a *(re)construction of ‘place’ or locality*. Transnationalism has changed and challenged perceptions of place and locality. By simultaneous presence ‘here and there’ at any time, place and locality lose their classical meaning and perception. As a matter of fact, such notions as ‘transnational social spaces’ or ‘transnational social fields’ create trans-localities by

connecting and positioning social actors in more than one reality (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Castells 1996).

It is important to mention briefly the variety of terminology around notions of transnationalism and transnational. When the studies around the phenomena emerged (1990s), transnationalism was a prominent term. Thereafter, some variations of the notion appeared. For example, Thomas Faist distinguishes between *transstate* (Faist 2000c, 2008) and *transnational*. He uses the first term to refer to spatial factor of border-spanning connections, and the second term he refers to the human aspect of transnational migration, in other words, to migrants themselves. The term 'transstate' thereby indicates that the point of departure is not relations and spaces in between nations, but in between states and across states (Faist 2008, p. 79). Few scholars, however, followed his example (e.g. Fox 2005, p. 172). This is noteworthy because different terminology might be another reason for ambiguity around transnationalism; however, this explanation provided by Faist, dissolves and disentangles possible 'dark corners'. In my work I do not make a semantic differentiation between these two notions, and use the term transnational, referring to actions and practices of any social agents which go across borders.

Having discussed various viewpoints of the notion and phenomenon of transnationalism, in sum, I will emphasize two key aspects embedded in the term:

- ✓ simultaneity, i.e. simultaneous occupancy in multiple locations;
- ✓ multi-local engagements and ties, i.e. political, social, cultural; economic, civic practices stretching across borders.

I consider important, therefore, the focus on simultaneity in the sense of simultaneous 'presence' in various localities, and feeling homelike simultaneously in different places. From this point, I go back to the argument of Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004a, p. 1011), and especially emphasize the back-and-forth rotations of attachments in parallel with the change of location, context and circumstances. I strongly believe that those rotations impact not only the intensity of transnational activism, but also the sense of belonging.

Hence, summarizing the above-mentioned traditions of transnationalism research and versatile interpretations of the phenomenon, as a point of departure for my research, serve the tradition developed at Oxford University, and the tradition of reformulation of space and social structure. From this point, the three dimensions of transnationalism suggested by Vertovec are especially relevant – transnationalism as a type of consciousness, transnationalism as a (re)construction of 'place' and locality, and transnationalism as social

morphology. Coming out of these frameworks, *I view transnationalism as ties and connections of migrants, going beyond the country of residence (with any relation to the homeland), as well as the back-and-forth flow of material and immaterial resources binding to a common reality more than one locality and actors involved in it. The multiple localities these actors are involved in reflect their self-identification and the sense of belonging.* Therefore, in the scope of this work, I differentiate transnationalism at two different levels – at the level of social ties and encounters, and then at the level of representations. The latter is derived from and entails the diasporic consciousness. This means, ties to the homeland are assumed to be at the level of imagination. I will address this issue in the following chapters of this work.

2.1.3 New social phenomenon or the familiar transformed in its meaning?

After the first wave of euphoria around transnationalism, some researchers started questioning whether transnationalism is a new social phenomenon, or if it has always been a typical feature of migration. Indeed, migration movements are probably as old as the history of humanity. Immigrants have almost always to the greatest extent possible maintained connections (in this or another form) with their home countries. Is this not what transnationalism is supposed to be? What is new about it, then, that has made the phenomenon so popular among social scientists?

Glick Schiller, Levitt, and Smith distinguish several factors that make the situation of ‘now’ fundamentally different from the situation of ‘before’ (Glick Schiller 1999; Levitt 2001; Smith 2003). Among those counts:

- ✓ technological developments, and its effects on communication and travel;
- ✓ the shift to multiculturalism;
- ✓ the bulge of national identities which are not only determined by their reference to the nation-states;
- ✓ a new international human rights regime (named post-nationalism) which reduces the difference between ‘nationals’ and ‘foreigners’;
- ✓ a permit of dual citizenship in most countries.

Hannah Arendt also touches upon the question of the difference between ‘now’ and ‘then’. According to Arendt, the point is embedded in the circumstances of having no home or of having two homes (Arendt [1951] 1996). Due to the fact that some countries accept dual citizenship, having two homes has become even legally possible. Therefore, simultaneously feeling homelike in two countries, in

this case, is not simply a consequence of having attachments to both countries. Migrants having dual citizenship are connected to the country of origin and to the country of residence with legal ties and obligations (if they are a citizen of both countries). Dual citizenship, however, is only one of the factors regarding differences between how migrant connections and ties to homelands were before, and how state-of-the-art is now. Another important factor which makes the simultaneous presence and participation in two realities possible, are rapid developments in information technology and means of communication.²⁰ A huge number of telephone operators suggest cheap tariffs for calling to different directions. Thus, a range of modern cell phones allow to have internet connection at every point of the world, and to connect people from different edges of the world into one 'time and space reality'. Therefore, the development of modern means of communication and information technologies is, as Vertovec observes, 'social glue of migrant transnationalism' (Vertovec 2004, p. 219–224). Due to a variety of means of communication, such as cheap phone calls, Internet, as well as online social networks, ties between home and host countries are becoming quick and more frequent. Today's migrants can communicate staying at home in any number of ways simultaneously.

Technical and technological changes and developments are surely important factors making 'now' different from 'before', by contributing to intensive and sustained maintenance of transnational connections. Still, I believe that what also makes the modern transnationalism specific, in addition to the mentioned factors, is the point that it has become a type of consciousness, as Vertovec puts it (Vertovec 2009a, p. 4–13). This type of consciousness points out individual's awareness of his or her complicated and entangled attachments, and of being simultaneously home away from home. In my contemplation, by merging borders of time and space, modern communication technologies contribute to the development of this type of consciousness, or in other words, it fosters the feeling and awareness of dual belonging.

To summarize, arguing around the question of whether transnationalism is a new social phenomenon, or something familiar transformed in its meaning, a few aspects must be taken into account. Even if transnational life existed before, it was not understood as such. Transnational perspective thus provides a new analytical lens to focus on what has not been seen before (Smith 2003, p. 725). Up to present, a number of social scientists study variety of transnational lives with the aim to discover new examples of it.²¹ Thus, some types and ways of

²⁰ See, e.g. Vertovec 2004; Orozco 2005; Kane 2011; Bortoluzzi 2012; Greschke 2012; Hepp, Bozdag, Suna 2012; Pertierra 2012

²¹ Hanagan 1998; Smith 1998, 2000; Glick Schiller 1999; Foner 1999, 2001; Morawska 2001; Portes 2001, 2003

transnational life are new, and the study of their manifestations makes contribution to transnationalism research and existing literature.

Another aspect to consider is the repetitive character of history. Regarding transnationalism, it is about new manifestations and interpretations of, to some extent, familiar social phenomena. Indeed, migrants have always been maintaining connections to their home countries; however, modes of these connections have changed. The content is the same—migrants are connected to homes—but first, the form and possibility of maintenance of connections is different, and second, multi-local and simultaneous engagements make certain impacts on migrants' consciousness. In other words, changes in the form have reflected changes in the content, and made social scientists pay attention to modern developments, and come up with questions about possible circumstances and impacts that these changes might bring to familiar meanings. Hence, the question to discuss is not whether or not transnationalism is a new phenomenon, but rather, what interesting aspects of studying a transnational perspective can offer.

2.1.4 Durability of transnationalism: reproduction of ties vs. fading connections

Transnationalism is a migration-related social phenomenon; however, opinions about endurance of transnational ties over generations vary. In the realm of studies of the second generation, three mainstreams of thought can be distinguished: scholars of the first mainstream thought speak about second-generation transnationalism,²² and take as a point of departure the fact that migrant offspring to some extent engage in transnational activity. This might not totally repeat the transnational activity of the parents; nevertheless, the transnational lifestyle of the parents still influences migrant children. Others speak about second generation from the viewpoint of assimilation,²³ or acculturation,²⁴ or incorporation.²⁵ Smith, for example, even states that assimilation helps create transnationalism (Smith, 2002, p. 163). And finally, the third wing, in the name of Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald (2004), questions endurance of transnationalism over generations. They look at 'here-and-there connection' from a different point of view. Waldinger speaks about immigrant transnationalism (Waldinger 2011), but argues that here-and-there connections get attenuated over time and

²² For a review, see Levitt and Waters eds. 2002; Khagram and Levitt eds. 2008; Levitt 2009; Lee 2011; Wessendorf 2009, 2013

²³ See, e.g. Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1997, 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Moya 2005; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2008

²⁴ See, e.g. Berry 1997, 2005, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut 2001

²⁵ See, e.g. Landolt 2001; Itzigsohn, Giorguli-Saucedo 2002 a, b; Levitt 2003b

generations, and loyalties transform from old to new homes (Waldinger 2008, p. 3–29). The essence of Waldinger's argument is that the continuance of transnationalism is in question, and that the future of most immigrant children will not be transnational.

In their concept of segmented assimilation, Portes, Zhou, and Rumbaut (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001) state that assimilation does not necessarily mean a total fusion (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, p. 44). Since they suggest that assimilation occurs partly, it could be presumed that some 'space' is left for transnational practices. Thus, children of migrants do not practice a transnational lifestyle with the same intensity as their parents (Portes, Zhou 1993). Nevertheless, they do not stay totally away from transnational lifestyle and maintenance of transnational ties either (Levitt 2009). Children of migrants are raised at the crossroads of several cultures, and as Levitt points out, having mastered these cultural repertoires, they can act selectively in response to the opportunities and challenges they face. Thus, as Jones-Correa notices: "transnationalism could continue, or even be rejuvenated and reinforced, among the second generation owing to the continued influx of first-generation immigrants from the country" (Jones-Correa 2002a, p. 220).

My own view, however, is that putting transnationalism and any of these categories on the same level is not methodologically quite correct, for they relate to different processes. Transnationalism refers to types, intensity, and ways of connections crossing borders of the country of residence, whereas the other notions cover the realm of the immigrant and host country relations in different spheres. Ultimately, they are not contradictory. Immigrants might have completely incorporated cultural values and behavioural patterns of the host country, and may in parallel maintain connections to the homeland, and have attachments to it. Even if those connections are symbolic, transnational ties do not disappear with progressive incorporation. I presume, therefore, that the factor of incorporation into the country of residence alone cannot determine the endurance of transnationalism over generations, or the sustainability of transnational ties. I will further elaborate on this argument in Chapter 4, drawing deductions from my empirical data.

Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo and Lee in their works categorize transnationalism in terms of the continuance of transnational ties. Thus, Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo distinguish three types of transnationalism (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2002b, p. 899).

➤ '*Linear*' transnationalism, which refers to connections of migrants with families and relatives at home countries. These connections include remittances, travels, conversations, other types of connections, etc. 'Linear' transnational ties might weaken in course of time.

➤ *'Resource-dependent' transnationalism*. This type of transnationalism affirms that transnational practices depend on resources. Newcomers are normally short of them, and from this point of view, transnational practices increase in parallel with incorporation into the country of residence. Transnationalism emerges when migrants have enough resources to engage in transnational activity.

➤ *'Reactive' transnationalism* considers transnational practices as reactions to negative experiences of incorporation. In this case, transnational practices serve as a compensation of frustration and/or discrimination that migrants may experience in the host country. Transnational engagements and activities help them regain the feeling of self-realization.

Helen Lee, studying transnationalism of second-generation Tongans in Australia, identifies another three specific forms of transnationalism – *intradiasporic, indirect, and forced transnationalism* (Lee 2011, p. 303–309).

➤ *Intradiasporic transnationalism* reflects not only connections between homeland and host country, but also across the diaspora, and translocal connections between different population clusters within a single nation. These ties are especially important for the sense of national belonging (Lee 2011, p. 303).

➤ *Indirect transnationalism* refers to indirect attachments to the country of origin (Lee 2011, p. 306–307). In other words, this type of transnationalism reflects emotional attachments of second-generation migrants. For example, they could have never travelled back to the country of origin of their ancestors or never send any remittances, but they still somehow associate themselves with that country. They might have been maintaining some connections with relatives or friends through various forms of communication, such as phone or Skype calls, e-mail, or via various social network web-sites, even letters, etc. What Lee calls indirect transnationalism, is linked to *emotional transnationalism*—a notion Wolf (2002) proposes, referring to second-generation Filipinos in the United States. Emotional transnationalism goes beyond direct transnational engagements with the country of origin, and reflects emotional attachments and belonging to the nation of ancestors.

➤ *Forced transnationalism* can overlap with some forms of indirect transnationalism, and the sense of 'forced' here refers to the lack of choice of the second generation (Lee 2011, p. 308, 309). Therefore, forced transnationalism may have several variants of manifestation: first, when migrants send remittance to families and relatives left in home countries, driven from the sense of duty to remain loyal to the family. Second, it may express itself through donations to the church or other kinds of transnational organizations, which struggle for maintenance of national cultural and historical heritage and/or national traditions. Third, a specific manifestation of forced transnationalism can be sending children to the

country of origin – to grandparents or some other relatives for a certain period of time. In this case the motivation is to introduce the culture and history of the homeland to children, and thus to prevent forgetting one's roots and origins. Time spent with the 'environment of origin' can contribute to a faster and better incorporation of 'native' norms and patterns of behaviour. In this case, 'root incorporation' is not a result of the children's own choice.

These typologies show that when speaking about the durability of transnationalism, the factor of time should not be viewed only as the reason for fading connections. Throughout time transnational ties might not only decrease, but also increase (e.g. 'resource-dependent' transnationalism). Portes et al. (2002, p. 289) also point out that people who are residing for a longer time in another country, are more likely to engage in transnational activities. Thomas Faist (2000a, p. 200) comes out with the similar assumptions that migrants and refugees, who have settled down in countries of residence for a long time, still have transnational links with countries of origin. Thus, when discussing the endurance of transnationalism, it is important not to take as a point of departure the assumption that in the course of time transnational connections and practices fade away. The process can take also the opposite direction – transnational practice might increase parallel to time spent in the country of residence.

Transnationalism, indeed, is quite a broad term, which includes various domains – cultural, economic, political, social, and emotional, etc. As mentioned earlier, referring to transnational practices, it is important to specify which ones they actually relate. This statement becomes especially relevant in the scope of research on second-generation transnationalism. Moreover, the first and the second generations might express different interests in the spheres of transnational activity. Hence, Joel Perlmann (2002) and Jones-Correa (2002a) argue that transnational practices in the cultural domain are more common among the second generation, than say in the economic domain. According to Jones-Correa, in the cultural sphere, everyone is potentially transnational (Jones-Correa 2002a, p. 232). In other words, it is more probable that second-generation migrants will involve in cultural transnational activities, rather than practice economic modes of transnationalism. In addition, even highly incorporated migrants of the second, third, and fourth generations to some extent and in some ways periodically practice transnational activity related to cultural and historical heritage of ancestors. For example, generations of Armenian diaspora all over the world, even those who do not master Armenian language, and have never been in Armenia, actively partake in discussions and organized activities (sometimes they appear not merely in the role of a participant, but as active organizers) around different issues and problems concerning Armenia. A primary example is the

issue of the worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and a range of activities related to it.

To conclude, my statement regarding the discourse on endurance of transnationalism and its reproduction in the second generation is that children of migrants are, to some extent, transnational. However, I also argue that transnational practices and linkages with the home country are not the dominant activity of the second generation. Transnational practices, manifested as sustained cross-border relations, are, in fact, not the core characteristic of the second generation's everyday routine. Interestingly, this point is to some extent true for both generations: for some, transnational practices might occupy more 'space' in the routine of daily life, for others, less; however, they exist and do not completely vanish. Therefore, engagement in transnational activities on a daily basis is not at all a necessary condition to maintain attachments to the homeland. Such transnational connections at the level of imagination are typical to diasporas. Thus, the latter have strong feelings toward the homeland, and are interested in its daily life and events happening there; even though they may not be transnationally very active.

2.1.5 Transnational social fields as analytical categories

The concept of transnationalism, as stated, suggests that migration needs to be studied, taking into account linkages of migrants to countries of origin. In this logic, the continuum of studies includes some over-territorial space, where transnational activities and flow of resources take place. From this perspective, everyday practices, movements, and interactions of migrants create a sort of over-local social space. Due to transnational practices and transnational activism, the contemporary world is becoming more and more deeply interconnected, and various realities are getting bounded in transnational coexistence, which makes possible a simultaneous presence in different social spaces. Beck describes this as 'social proximity in spite of geographical distance, or, social distance in spite of geographical proximity' (Beck 2000, p. 105).

Referring to these over-territorial spaces, literature on transnationalism proposes two main terms – transnational social spaces²⁶ and transnational social fields.²⁷ Both concepts open up a broader view on connections and processes occurring between immigration and emigration countries. Methodologically,

²⁶ For overview of the authors and term usage see, e.g. Faist 2000a, 2008; Pries ed. 2001, 2008; Jackson et al. 2004; Faist and Özveren 2008; Faist and Sieveking 2011; Charsley 2012; Faist et al. 2013

²⁷ Goldring 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004 a, b, 2007; Basch et al. 2008; Nowicka 2015

they provide the possibility to study simultaneous involvements in more than one reality or 'here-and-there presence'. Multi-local engagements prove the above discussed: transnationalism and such categories as e.g. incorporation into the host country do not belong on the same plane of analysis. To put it succinctly, incorporation into a host society, and simultaneous maintenance of connections to the country of origin are not diametrically opposite, and do not exclude one another. Back-and-forth movements, 'here-and-there connections' are the result of transnational migration, and, thereby, are one of the most important 'construction materials' of transnationalism. Here is how the explanation of the notions appears in transnationalism literature.

Transnational social spaces are dense and durable configurations of social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts. They structure everyday practices, social positions, and identities, and exist beyond the social context of nation-societies (Pries 2001, p. 5, 23). Faist et al. see transnational social spaces as social formations which arise due to transactions of migrants and other agents across borders (Faist et al. 2013, p. 2). Having been formed due to concatenated cross-border ties and practices (Faist et al. 2013, p. 53), these social formations enter the second phase of development manifested in new forms of border-spanning links which create and develop second and further generations (e.g. by combining cultural practices from different countries) (Faist 2000a, p. 201–202).

In parallel, literature offers, nevertheless, another concept regarding the research on multiple engagements and connections of migrants – the concept of *transnational social fields*. Authors (see references above) draw on the concept of fields of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984, 1992, 1993). According to Bourdieu, a field is an 'open space of play with dynamic borders which are the stake of struggles within the field itself' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 104). It is a zone of social activity in which there are actors who create a certain kind of cultural product (Bourdieu 1993). The boundaries of a field are dynamic, and the field itself is created by the participants who are joined in struggle for social position. This is an analytical concept which can be applied to studies and analysis of actions and social practices of social agents. The fact of belonging to a certain field determines an actor's social practices, preferences, and dispositions.

Thus, from the perspective of border-spanning and over-territorial 'places', transnational social spaces and fields indicate similar phenomena – various connections between the sending and the receiving countries through number of immigrants' transnational ties and engagements. I believe, nevertheless, that the notion of transnational social fields enlarges the spectrum of analysis, by accentuating certain sort of capital articulating in the field, positions of actors, and back-and-forth movements of those actors throughout the field. In

this work I will lean on the notion of fields, differentiating *transnational social fields* and *local-diasporic fields* of my research participants, which correspondingly include (and are based on) real transnational connections, and those social ties which do not literally 'travel' beyond the borders of the residence country, nevertheless, the transnational character of those contemplate the level of imagination (peculiar for diasporic communities with subjective diasporic consciousness). A detailed description of these fields will follow in Chapter 4, in the section devoted to the analysis of configurations. In addition, the notion of transnational social fields, with the reference to Bourdieu's concept of fields, allows the analysis of immigrants' encounters, representations, and configurations, and takes into account the interconnection and interrelation of these aspects.

Indeed, the concept of social fields has a great input in the study of transnational migrant ties, as it makes clear that the incorporation into a host country and enduring transnational attachments are not binary opposites. Moreover, as Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron argue, application of the concept of social fields to the studies of transnationalism allows one to overcome the conceptual impasse created by some definitions of transnational processes, according to which transnationalism creates a sort of 'third space' between sending and receiving countries (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999, p. 356). My study confirms this argument, and assumes that to engage in transnational practices, migrants do not necessarily need to appear in a 'third space'. In parallel with Glick Schiller and Fouron, I also emphasize that the transnational lifestyle and border-spanning connections do not oppose national aspirations. They go hand in hand, and are parallel to each other, and in the case of Armenians they strengthen and/or weaken where nationalistic aspirations might find proper fuel for their manifestation depending on the context and situation.

Applying Bourdieu's terminology further, I consider habitus (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1990, 1993) an important factor in being able to explain preferences of social practices and daily encounters, as well as transnational activity and engagements. Moreover, issues of self-identification, belonging, preferences of social encounters, and thus durability of some transnational practices are interconnected; and factors conditioning and determining one may influence manifestations of others.

Taking the above mentioned as a point of departure, I apply the notion of social fields, distinguishing transnational social fields, and local-diasporic fields. This allows me to analyse my data from the point of interconnection of migrant encounters and practices, self-identification, and the sense of belonging. In doing so, I employ the conceptual triad of 'configurations–representations–encounters' as presented by Vertovec (2009b; 2015), and then analyse my empirical data in the framework of its interrelated domains. By applying the triad to the study of

transnationalism and related issues, I propose that in order to have complete perception of the phenomenon, it is necessary to study configurations (transnational and non-transnational social fields, situations, contexts that immigrants engage in), practices and encounters of migrants, and various modes of representation (self-identification, identification of others, representation in media) not as separate research domains, but as a whole – taking into account their mutual influence on one another.

2.1.6 Conceptual triad of ‘configurations–representations–encounters’ in transnationalism studies

Description of the triad’s domains and their relevance to the studies of transnational migrant ties

The conceptual schema of ‘configurations–representations–encounters’ in the works of Vertovec refers to studies of diversity, and contributes to thorough understanding of modes of social differentiation. It is a unique guide for scholars whose research is about complex social environments. I take this conceptual model, or analytical triangle, and employ it to the study of transnationalism and transnational ties. Moreover, I build the analysis of my empirical data within the framework of this model. In the following, I will briefly present the model with its three domains, showing their correspondence and possible application to transnationalism studies. To do so, I will separately discuss domains of configurations, representations, and encounters, first presenting how Vertovec defines each domain, and after explaining my approach of how and in which sense I apply each of the mentioned domains to my study.

Domain of configurations refers to the structural conditions within which people carry out their lives (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). It includes articulations of power/status, political economy, opportunity structures, segregation, stratification, etc. Following this logic, and employing it to the study of transnationalism, transnational social fields, and local-diasporic fields, I refer to in my work, represent such configurations. Thereby, in the framework of my research, the domain of configurations corresponds to social fields. A field, as Bourdieu defines it, is a mediation between the practices of participants and the surrounding conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 105) where those who take part in the dynamics of the field (whom Bourdieu analogically also calls players) apt to increase or to conserve the sort of capital they possess. This happens due to an agreement that it is worth to play (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 98, 99). Applying this terminology of Bourdieu to my research, I consider transnational social fields to be explicit configurations in which migrants engage

during their daily routines. They ‘play’ transnationalism and ‘struggle’ to maintain the symbolic capital they own – Armenianness.

The concept of transnational social fields is encompassing, and shows the wide range of cross-border connections not specifying types of transactions: for example, some might travel, others might call on phone, or use other means of telecommunication. In this scope, it is an interesting and new attempt to study engagements of migrants in certain types of activity. Levitt and Waters, hereby, argue that “the more diverse a transnational social field is, the greater the number of ways within which migrants can remain active in their homeland. The more institutionalized these relationships become, the more likely it is that transnational membership will persist” (Levitt and Waters eds. 2002, p. 10). I partly follow this claim, however, I do not intend to mean that those with stronger social ties will be more transnationally active than those with weaker connections.

Domain of representations, as presented by Vertovec, refers to the conceptual ordering of the world, social concepts and categories, frames, cultural idioms, etc. (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). To put it otherwise, representations are social constructs or social constructions of reality. There are as many different interpretations of the reality as there are social actors. In the scope of my research, I view representations as self-identification of social actors, and as the identification of others by the same actors. In the role of others may appear Germans, Armenians, as well as anyone else. In this sense, of particular interest are the ways in which social actors construct images of themselves, other Armenians (both living in Germany and in Armenia), and Germans, and how they relate or distance themselves from those images. Hereby, I place those images and the modes of their construction by social actors in the domain of representations. In addition, social media is an important and interesting mode of representation: on the one hand, it can be a ‘constructor’ of the reality of social actors, which will influence encounters in transnational social fields, and on the other hand, social media is a suitable arena for social actors to present themselves, and follow representations of others. In this sense, I consider the analysis of (transnational) activity in the scope of social media as an important part in the domain of representations.

Domain of encounters refers to actual interactions, and how different modes of relation to each other change attitude (Vertovec 2009b, 2015, p. 15). In the framework of my work, I place social practices of actors into the domain of encounters. The range of these social practices is quite large, as it varies from daily routines, transnational activity and engagements, back-and-forth travels, and cross-border engagements to institutionalized transnational activities, or organized work of transnational associations.

The following figure schematically describes the conceptual model ‘configurations– representations–encounters’, and reflects its essence. The two-sided arrows, situated between the triangle’s domains, indicate inter-connectedness and mutual influence of each domain. The figure also shows the correspondence of each domain to analytical categories in my research. Therefore, in addition to representing the model itself, the figure below also reflects my own approach to the implication of the model. Ultimately, it embodies my argument that transnational social fields, local-diasporic fields, situations, contexts, etc. that immigrants engage in, social practices and encounters of migrants, and various modes of representation, should be studied in relation to each other and not separately. I consider that doing so will provide a thorough explanation of self-identification specificities which will lead to better comprehension of the sense of belonging. Moreover, this analysis will provide better opportunities and possibilities to research whether, and to what extent, transnational engagements might impact components of belonging, or whether transnational ties pass from generation to generation (and if yes, which ties survive).

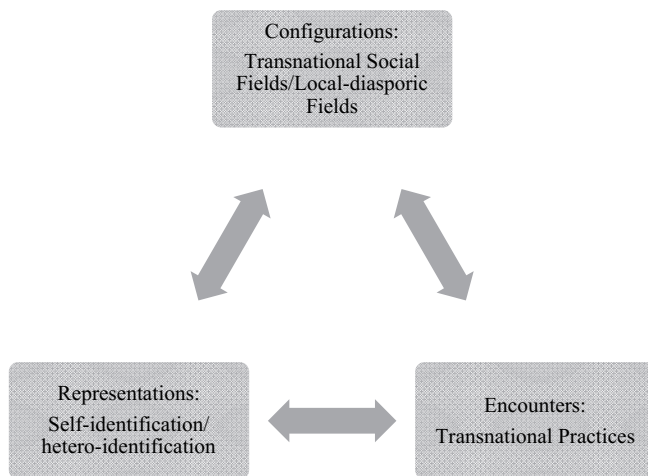


Figure 1: Conceptual triad ‘Configurations–representations–encounters’: application in transnationalism studies

As the figure shows, three domains of this analytical framework are interconnected, and each one is a necessary condition for the existence of the other. In other words, structural conditions, in which interactions take place, are conditions for construction of corresponding reality or for categorization. Moreover,

structural conditions and categorizations (configurations and representations) are the basis for encounters which take place in the given structural conditions. Thus, three angles/corners of the above-presented triangle strongly determine the existence of each other. The same logic determines interrelation of transnational social fields, self-identification, and transnational practices. On the one hand, transnational social fields are 'structural frames' for various transnational practices; on the other hand, these practices shape transnational social fields. Self-identification and identification of others occur on the basis of interactions and practices, and it depends on the structure and features of the field within which actors interact with each other. Moreover, actors construct their self-identification and identify others based on their own experience and practices in the fields. As Vertovec (2015) mentions, this triad is a conceptual schema, a methodological abstraction, and, as such, provides methodological insights to studying transnationalism and phenomena related to it.

Thus, a starting point for my analysis is neither configurations, nor encounters, nor representations separately, but the interdependence of all of these by taking into consideration important factors such as past dispositions of migrants, the social context in which those dispositions have emerged, and in which encounters took place. In other words, it considers the role and possible impact of diaspora consciousness, images of the homeland, and collective memories on social formation, and reproduction of social (transnational and not) practices. This provides better comprehension of the Armenian case, as I will show in the following, that collective memory of the past has had quite an important and specific impact on self-identification of Armenians, and that the articulation of Armenianness and patriotic aspirations (these are strategic aspirations, the engine and basis of which is strategic nationalism) might become a subject for symbolic struggles (who will better represent Armenians, who will better contribute to development of friendship and relations between both countries, etc.).

Interconnections of actors' practices, habitus, and social fields apply another perspective to the study of transnationalism. It is a key point to better understand the process of social formation of migrant ties, and the interconnection among migrants' encounters, their self-identification, and social fields they are involved in. From this perspective, in order to understand transnational connections and their endurance over generations, a complex study of migrants' practices (transnational and non-transnational), their habitus (a result and cause of ways of being), and social fields (transnational and diasporic) is necessary. This kind of approach contributes to the studies of transnationalism, transnationalism literature, and to theoretical heritage of Bourdieu.

Some previous studies in the field of migration and transnationalism have applied the concept of social fields, referring to Bourdieu;²⁸ however, the main focus of these studies is on the concept of the social fields itself, and the modes of its employment in studying transnationalism and migration. They use the concept of social fields to describe activities and movements of transnational actors, but do not focus on interconnection of these fields with encounters and representations of actors.

The role of habitus within the triad

Proceeding with the analysis of the triad and its relevance to transnationalism studies, I assume that habitus plays an important role in understanding the above-described interconnectedness. It is present in every domain and simultaneously conditions the existence of the others. As Bourdieu explains, habitus is “internalized and converted into disposition structures, as well as a set of historical relations that generates meaningful practices, and perceptions that give meaning” (Bourdieu 1984 p. 166; 1993, p. 16, 97). In other words, habitus is a system of dispositions that generates and organizes perceptions, practices, and representations (Bourdieu 1990, p. 53). It is a specific schema of perception, appreciation, and action (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 16).

As Bourdieu elaborates on his statement: “habitus is not only a structuring structure (*modus operandi*)—a condition for practices and perceptions of practices—but it is also a structured structure (*opus operatum*)” (Bourdieu 1984, p. 166–167). It is a precondition for practices and dispositions, and at the same time, it is structured by dispositions, which generate practices (Bourdieu 1990, p. 63). Practice is a subordinate category and does not possess the same capacities of structuring and being structured at the same time (as habitus does). Thus, various aspects of practices must be interpreted as analytical categories inherent to the habitus (Nowicka 2015, p. 13). In other words, ways of being determine practices, and also perceptions of these practices.

Therefore, I claim that the habitus is an explanatory factor for a person’s ways of being (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004a), which shows the connection between configurations and individual practices. In this realm, as Levitt and Glick Schiller suggest, two main categories should be distinguished – *ways of being* and *ways of belonging* (Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004a, p. 1010). The authors refer *ways of being* to actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in, and not to the identities associated with their actions. *Ways of belonging* re-

²⁸ Goldring 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004 a, b, 2007; Nowicka 2015

late to connections to homeland mostly at the level of consciousness which can be manifested through memories, nostalgia or the feeling of homesickness. To put it differently, ways of being are preconditions for social practices and self-identification of social actors, whereas, ways of belonging refer to the attachments to the homeland, and feelings of being home at one place or another. I use the notion of ways of being to describe peculiarities of self-identification of migrants, admitting that ways of being and their interpretation/perception are the basis of self-identification.

Coming out of the connection between ways of being and habitus, I presume that the latter plays a determinant part in a person's own choice of his or her social environment. This choice does not only depend on his or her inherited capital and cultural heritage, but also on the cultural, social, and symbolic capital of the ones whom this person intends to involve in his or her social environment. In other words, preferences of social environment depend firstly, on totality of person's past and present circumstances and experiences, and secondly, on representations of those circumstances and experiences. On the one hand, the habitus is a result of incorporated structures (configurations), imagined and real images, memories, and perceptions (representations), and thus it is a condition for existence of a transnational field. The latter, indeed, exists due to various representations—conceptual orderings—as for example, the homeland image (real and mythical), representations of Armenianness, and ways of being. In parallel, practices drawn from and conditioned by these images, identifications and memories are also determinants of the fields. On the other hand, the field and representations, in the above-mentioned categories, determine the habitus. Hence, these considerations bring me back to my initial argument; that is, to understand each of these notions thoroughly, researchers should study them in relation to each other.

To summarize, I employ the model of 'configurations—representations—encounters' as a conceptual-analytical framework for this book. The three domains of the model are interconnected, and each domain, simultaneously, is a condition and reason for the existence of other two. Consequently, various social ties and practices actually construct transnational fields, but at the same time they are determined by the field. Representations that agents have of their own selves and of other social agents flow out from their practices/encounters, which take place in the frameworks of this configuration, or another. Moreover, as Bourdieu notices, representations are products of a schematic system of perception and appreciation (Bourdieu 1990, p. 139). They are products of habitus. Simultaneously, habitus determines 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' encounters. Respectively, representations *are socially constructed* on the basis of these encounters. The application of the triad-schema gives thorough understanding of

interconnectedness of contexts, agents, practices, images, memories, identifications, and reflections upon all of these.

Thus, after presenting the concept of transnationalism from different perspectives, and my conceptual-analytical approach with the application of the triad ‘configurations–representations–encounters’, I will proceed with the next subchapter devoted to disentanglement of the notion of diaspora, and some comparative statements regarding diaspora and transnationalism.

2.2 Who are diasporas and why are they transnational?

As stated earlier, diaspora is important for my studies as a category of practice and from the point of representations, since diasporic consciousness influences a rather large spectrum of relations regarding my research participants, as will be shown later.

This part of my work is devoted to the definitions of the term diaspora, and to discussions on some overlapping points of the terms diaspora and transnationalism. In literature, the terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’ are often used interchangeably, or overlap each other. Indeed, it is not easy to separate the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism in any meaningful way, mainly because it is hard to imagine a diaspora which is not transnational, or which does not engage in any transnational activity at all. However, the two terms differ in the meanings and phenomenon they signify. First of all, speaking about diaspora, the idea for any reason of a dispersed population crosses the mind, while dispersion is not a determinant for transnationalism, as such. Second, the term diaspora refers to a community or a group, and has been widely studied in the scope of history and literary studies, whereas the concept of transnationalism, in the name of transnational spaces, fields and formations, refers to processes that go beyond borders, and thus appears to describe more abstract phenomena, as over-territorial and de-centralized ‘places’ and connections.

Before going further with the discussion of possible confusion regarding the notions of transnationalism and diaspora, as well as similarities and differences between these two concepts, it is important to define the term diaspora, especially taking into account the detailed explanations of transnationalism in the previous subchapter.

2.2.1 Concept of diaspora

Diaspora is an old concept of which the usage and meaning have faced some changes nowadays, taking into account challenges of current developments in

social sciences and modern approaches to the study of migration and related issues. Many social scientists, historians, and even politicians have devoted their works to the studies of diaspora, and there are a number of definitions of the term, and correspondingly, different opinions on which criteria are essential for the formation of diaspora.²⁹

Originally, the term diaspora referred to historic experience of particular groups, and the classical diasporic groups have been the Armenians, Jews, and Greeks.³⁰ Later it started also including religious minorities in Europe. Nowadays, the usage of the term diaspora has expanded, and it is used to describe almost any immigrant community and dispersed population of various types. However, the important precondition for diaspora formation was and is dispersion. It is still important to note that although dispersion and diaspora are interconnected or interrelated, they do not indicate completely the same meaning, or the same phenomenon. Dispersion is a reason and basis for diaspora formation, but not all dispersions become and/or form a diaspora. As mentioned earlier, diaspora is not a term with a clear and univocal dimension. Its various definitions might cause confusion about which specific characteristics of the diaspora differentiate it, for example, from other transnational communities and immigrant groups.

Thus, the fact of population dispersal is one of the main characteristics of diaspora, more precisely, forced dispersions of the population in the past, or exile, or even annihilation, related to the religious realm (Cohen 1997, 2008; Brubaker 2005; Dufoix 2009; Tölölyan 2012). In addition to dispersal, another characteristic, typical for a diaspora are peculiar links or attachments to the homeland. Thus, in his definition of a diaspora, Shain emphasizes common national origin and a distinct status of belonging to the homeland, irrespective of the real place of residence and citizenship (Shain 1994–1995, p. 813). The Armenian diaspora perfectly fits the mentioned criteria of dispersion, origin, and specific links to the homeland. It has the same national origin, and, for the most part, was formed because of exile, or as the result of numerous attempts of annihilation of the nation as a whole. Regarding the Armenian diaspora, exile is a consequence of forced deportation of population, and escape from violent

²⁹ There is still a huge range of literature on diaspora, here are the most important concepts, on which I lean in the scope of my work Abramyan 2005; Bauböck and Faist 2010; Armstrong 1976; Baser, Swain 2009; Ben-Rafael, Sternberg 2009; Ben-Rafael 2010; Butler 2001; Brubaker 2005; Cho 2007; Clifford 1994; Cohen 1997, 2008; Darieva 2011, 2012; Demmers 2002; Dufoix 2009; Freinkman 2001; Fuglerud 1999; Hovhannisian, Meyers 1999; Laguerre 2009; Manaseryan 2004; Pattie 1997b; Safran 2001, 2007, 2009; Shain 1994–1995; Sheffer 2003, 2007; Smith 2003; Sorensen 2007; Skrbis 1999, 2001; Tölölyan 1996, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2012; Thon 2012; Vertovec 1997, 2005; Waltraud, Tölölyan, Alfonso 2004

³⁰ Clifford 1994, p. 306; Cohen 1997, 2008; Brubaker 2005, p. 2; Baser and Swain 2009, p. 46

massacres. For that reason Robin Cohen calls the Armenian diaspora a victim diaspora (Cohen 2008). As a consequence of dispersals, certain nations (dispersed nations) form communities in countries of residence. If those communities sustain over generations, and still maintain their sense of national belonging, they could become a strong diaspora group, which can act on behalf of the homeland. That is what Tölölyan emphasizes defining the diaspora. He names ‘diaspora’ those communities of the dispersed, who develop varieties of association that endure at least into their third generation (Tölölyan 2012). Due to the endurance of diasporic belonging, the distinct character of diaspora attachments to the homeland survives through diasporic generations, and entails specific consciousness of diasporas. Vertovec describes this as a form of emotional attachments to the land of origin and its attributes – language, religion, and other socio-cultural characteristics (Vertovec 2005, p. 2). Vertovec thus accentuates another important aspect of diasporas – diaspora as a type of consciousness (Vertovec 1997).

The fact of dispersals and specific links to the homeland is also a focus in works by Faist and Brubaker regarding diaspora. Brubaker suggests three key criteria as composites of diaspora: (a) *dispersion*, (b) *homeland orientation*, (c) *boundary-maintenance* (Brubaker 2005). In this sense, the approach of Brubaker to diaspora, or what should and could be called diaspora, is interesting. He suggests that instead of speaking of a diaspora as an entity or a group, it would be more fruitful and more precise to speak of diasporic stances, projects, practices, etc. (Brubaker 2005). Brubaker believes that doing so would help avoid generalizations by grouping all members of a diaspora into one whole unit. The concern of the scholar is that this kind of unification approach in diaspora studies risks to put aside the differences between active diaspora members and their practices, and those who do not actively engage in diasporic projects, and are not committed to diasporic stances (Brubaker 2005, p. 12–13).

Elaborating on Brubaker’s three composite criteria of diaspora, Bauböck and Faist continue his argument, stating that a diaspora can be distinguished by three characteristics (Bauböck and Faist 2010), which are:

- ✓ Causes of migration or dispersal – mainly including forced dispersals.
- ✓ Links between cross-border experiences of homeland with destination countries. This characteristic includes the whole spectrum of relations between diaspora groups and homelands, and, admittedly, the discourse on return to the imaginary homeland (country of origin, ancestral land) at some point.
- ✓ Incorporation into the countries of settlement.

In addition to these three key criteria of dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary maintenance, Safran adds another point, which is *shared collective memory* of the ancestral land, which members of the diaspora idealize and call homeland (Safran 2001). There are more criteria to the basis of diaspora formation, however, than merely the fact of exile and shared collective memories of the ancestral homeland. Those criteria, of course, do not necessarily refer to all types of diaspora. Some of them, instead, may be relevant to just one diasporic group, whereas, for others, the definition may have different criteria of importance. Thus, Robin Cohen distinguishes four main types of diasporas, and each category has different criterion as the basis (Cohen 1997, 2008). Hence, in accordance with Cohen's classification, there are:

- Victim diasporas (Armenians and Africans)
- Labour and imperial diasporas (Indians and the British)
- Trade and business diasporas (Chinese and Lebanese)
- Cultural diasporas (the Caribbean).

Though in Cohen's typology the basis or the core criterion of diaspora formation is different, homeland orientations and boundary maintenance are still, to some extent, present in each of the type mentioned. This kind of diaspora classification makes clear, however, that dispersals of population as an important element of a diaspora, do not always have violent roots, or do not always have a forced character based on a trauma.

Proceeding with the discussion of the core composite criteria of a diaspora, another point in the life of a diaspora is incorporation vs. boundary maintenance. At this point, I consider important to emphasize the differentiation between incorporation and assimilation. Diaspora groups are well incorporated into the countries of their residence, and are integral parts of those societies; however, the notion of diaspora does not consider total assimilation or fusion. In the case of total assimilation, there would not be any diaspora as such and no transnational practices (political, economic, and social-cultural activities) on behalf of and for the sake of homelands. The notion of diaspora, therefore, excludes total assimilation, since it would practically mean the end of diaspora. By this claim, I consider assimilation from the viewpoint of the sense of national belonging. Maintained consciousness by descendants of a certain nation and a sustained sense of belonging to that nation are key characteristics of diasporic groups, regardless of generations and the status occupied in the residence country. At the early phase of establishment in the new country, diasporic groups maintain relationships with the homeland through the family members and relatives left there. Later on, those relationships enter a new phase of life, getting an

institutionalized character; or, to say it otherwise, homeland connections tend to take place through institutionalized practices. It becomes possible due to certain diasporic organizations, which have for their missions to represent the homeland and its interests in the host countries, and to act in favour of the homeland. Institutionalized character of relationships with the homeland changes the structure of transnational social fields – the latter becomes institutionalized, as well. Diaspora activities, nevertheless, are mostly situated in both institutionalized and non-institutionalized transnational fields. Transnational activity of diaspora is institutionalized regarding the official part of their engagement in the cultural, social, economic, and political life of the homeland. Moreover, the content and direction of diaspora's transnational practices cover different spheres of life in the host country, given the core interest points of the diasporic group in a concrete country. To take a case in point, the Armenian diaspora in the United States is quite active, especially in lobbying regarding the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the United States. France was one of the first countries to recognize the Genocide, and for that reason, activities of the Armenian diaspora in France are focused mainly on other aspects of Armenian life in France. The Armenian community in France is especially active in social-cultural spheres, and further developments of French–Armenian relations and partnerships. Germany, as well, has various German–Armenian associations which actively work on the development of German–Armenian partnerships in the political, cultural, social, and educational spheres.

Hence, when speaking about diaspora, one should consider that despite its complete incorporation into the countries of residence, diaspora does not totally assimilate, and maintain some boundaries—may also be imaginary—with the host society (Armstrong 1976, p. 394–397; Tölölyan 1996, p. 14; Cohen 1997, p. 24). Diaspora will otherwise stop existing, as such, in the sense of dispersed people, who always keep in mind an idealized image of the homeland, and to some extent relate themselves to that 'sacred' space with the name of ancestral land. However, the question is why diaspora members choose to maintain their national belonging, and not to assimilate to the host population; even taking into account their high level of incorporation – they speak the language, bear cultural elements, behavioural patterns, and to some extent also historical heritage of the host society. Sheffer identifies four social-psychological approaches to this, as he calls it, 'ethno-genesis' (Sheffer 2003, p. 18). Thus, *the essentialist, instrumentalist, psychological, and constructionist* approaches (Sheffer 2003, p. 18–19) suggest different versions of why members of ethnic groups tend to maintain their identification with the people of the same origin even after being a long time resident of another country.

Essentialist approach leans on biological and cultural similarities, which unconsciously unify people of the same ethno-national origin. For example, by biological similarities the same appearance (hair colour, skin colour, eyes, etc.) is meant, and by cultural similarities the same language, traditions, food, etc are indicated.

Instrumentalist approach says that the sense of belonging to a certain group, in this case to diaspora, might be beneficial. Thus, people tend to maintain their sense of belonging to diasporic groups as they pursue some practical-instrumental goals. Belonging to a diaspora group can consequently bring useful contacts with influential people, authorities, and thus provide access to material and immaterial resources. This instrumentalist explanation emerges from rational choice approach, therefore, belonging to a diaspora and identifying oneself with a diasporic group is some kind of a rational choice.

Psychological approach claims the feeling of comfort among people of the same origin. Common historical past and common collective memory create this feeling of comfort and shared commonalities. For the Armenian diaspora a strong collective memory is the Genocide, and this memory is passing from generation to generation, unifying the Armenian diaspora all over the world around the importance of national values and their intergenerational transmission.

Constructivist approach comes from constructivism theories in sociology, according to which all units of sociological analysis are social constructs. Diasporas are, therefore, social-cultural constructs too. If diasporas are socially constructed units, then their actions, identification with the given diasporic group, and the sense of belonging to that group, are as well socially constructed. Moreover, I would say it is a double social construction – from the side of diasporic groups, and from the side of non-diasporic groups. It is interesting how diaspora appears in the eyes of non-diasporic groups, or the homeland.

The explanations of the four mentioned groups provide interesting claims on the tendency of diaspora not to assimilate. However, I consider them as ideal types. That is, each of them alone is not sufficient, and is not able to thoroughly explain the phenomenon. In one case, nevertheless, some points from each explanation may be more relevant than others, and in another case, the combined and all-inclusive application of the four explanations could provide an appropriate basis for interpreting diasporic aspirations and connections to the homeland, or to the members of the same diaspora elsewhere in the world.

The definition of diaspora by Vertovec as a type of consciousness (Vertovec 1997) contains some elements from the aforementioned explanations. As such, diaspora consists of positive and negative memories of the common historical past, or in other words, of shared collective memories, which is also

pointed out in Safran's works (Safran 2001). The negative memories are associated with violent evictions, and possibly discrimination, which was the reason of migration; whereas, positive memories nurture identification with the historical-cultural heritage, and considering themselves as a part of it. Those memories are types of construction; moreover, I would say a type of subjective construction (although every construction, to some extent, contains elements of subjectivity). Presuming that collective memories are results of a subjective construction, and coming out from the argument that diaspora is a special type of consciousness receiving food from these memories, the notion of diaspora can also signify a condition of subjectivity, as Lily Cho notices (Cho 2007). She points out that diaspora emerges from deeply subjective processes of collective memory, suffering and losses, and contingencies of long histories of displacements, which are passed from generation to generation through collective narratives. I principally agree with the perspective of Cho about the condition of subjectivity. Moreover, going back to the definition of diaspora as a type of consciousness proposed by Vertovec, I claim that this type of consciousness, itself, contains a condition of subjectivity; first of all, because positive and negative memories that endure in collective narratives are results of a *subjective selection*. Second of all, the image of homeland in diasporic consciousness is also a result of *subjective creation*. In this sense, I consider diaspora as a *type of subjective consciousness*, the endurance of which occurs through collective memories.

Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the importance of diaspora as a mode of cultural production (Vertovec 1997) involving the production and reproduction of transnational, social, and cultural phenomenon through hybridization (Hannerz 1992). Nowadays, this becomes especially relevant because of the modern means of communication, and the possibility to exchange every type of information very fast in a short period of time. Cultural production means the proliferation of newspapers, journals, TV programmes, Internet pages and various websites, blogs, etc. Diaspora carries this specific function of cultural production, familiarizing young generations with the history and culture of their ancestral land, and thus, realizing the function of transferring national values and norms (also behavioural patterns), and keeping the national identity alive.

Given so much literature on diaspora, and correspondingly, various definitions of diaspora on the basis of different criteria, I find it necessary to clarify the definition I lean on in my work, with regard to its relevance to the Armenian case. Coming from this point of view, the important criteria for the Armenian case would be non-voluntary dispersion of population, and collective memories of a traumatic past. In this sense, I will follow Vertovec, viewing a *diaspora as a social form of dispersed population cemented by collective memories of the common past and of the ancestral land* (Vertovec 1997; 2005) *by the symbolic*

and real ties to the homeland. From my point of view, the distinguishing factor is that diasporas entail a type of subjective consciousness, which conditions aspirations, engagements, attachments, and connections to the homeland, determining the sense of belonging to that 'sacred' land. The homeland is an imaginary and an idealized image in diaspora consciousness.

In addition to various criteria to define diaspora, the literature also suggests a number of diaspora-related notions. Thus, Sheffer distinguishes between terms 'diaspora', 'diasporic' and 'diasporism' (Sheffer 2003, p. 10–12). According to him, diaspora is a standard term, a substantive, which indicates a certain ethno-national group. 'Diasporic' is an adjective, referring to this ethno-national group, and determining its certain activities and practices. Besides that, diasporic can also refer to certain organizations functioning in a transnational field, and acting on behalf of a diaspora group. Behavioural patterns of diaspora groups influence those diasporic entities. Thus, the term diasporic designates features of a diaspora as a social and political formation. Finally, 'diasporism' signifies that various categories of diaspora share characteristics that create structural, organizational, and behavioural similarities (Sheffer 2003, p. 12). In other words, diasporism points out that all dispersed groups regardless of national origin or historical period, who reside in different geographic spaces, belong to the same social phenomenon, and to the same social field.

Having discussed the most relevant features of diaspora, I will now turn to the next section devoted to the dialogue between diaspora and transnational community.

2.2.2 Transnational community or diaspora

Diaspora and transnationalism studies often overlap with each other; however, they do not address the same phenomena. The main difference between diaspora and transnationalism lies at the construction point of the notions. As presented in the previous section, one of the important characteristics of a diaspora is the dispersion of population (in some cases under pressure), and its integration without assimilation. Meanwhile, transnational communities (though not *every* transnational community), do not consider forced dispersion of the population. Nevertheless, transnational communities, as well as diasporas do not exclude the fact of living integrated in the host country without assimilation. The core feature of transnationalism is a process of back-and-forth flows of resources, whereas the key point for a diaspora is the diasporic consciousness, or the sense of stemming from one place, of having roots in the same homeland. In other words, it is a type of subjective consciousness with an idealized and mythical image of the homeland, which has almost a sacral meaning for diasporic people.

I state that activities of all diasporas are transnational, but not all transnational communities can refer to the category of diaspora in accordance with the determinant criteria of diaspora discussed in the previous section. Diaspora is a trans-global network nation (Laguerre 2009, p. 197), which must be transnational (Safran 2009, p. 76). The last statement flows out from the mission and devotion of the diaspora to engage in various activities connected to and related to the homeland. Members of a transnational community (as well as of a diaspora) can be individually concerned for the wellbeing of the relatives in the homeland. They can send remittances, and maintain connections to the homeland or with relatives living in any other land. But, in contrast, those are not organized actions aimed at contributions to the wellbeing of the homeland. In general, transnational communities are not politically and economically strong enough to develop an agenda or make lobbies in the political and cultural realm for the favour of the homeland. Furthermore, transnational communities do not have such goals, and raising interests of the homeland in the country of immigration is neither their major avocation nor the main aim.

For the transnational community, the homeland is ‘actual’ or ‘real’, and not ‘mythical’ as for a diaspora. This argument can be especially well illustrated, leaning on the case of the Armenian diaspora. Forced evictions—the reason for formation of the Armenian diaspora—led to the loss of a considerable part of geographical territories belonging to Armenia. Consequently, the land, which used to be the homeland for a significant part of the Armenian diaspora, at present, does not belong to the Republic of Armenia. That is, the land *arevmtahays* identify with as their homeland, does not exist anymore in practicality. Those were territories of Western Armenia which are now part of Turkey (Manaseryan 2004, p. 6). The homeland (and the meaning of homeland), therefore, becomes mythical for them in its literal sense. In this situation, the agenda, love, and aspirations of the Armenian diaspora towards the homeland are projected on what is left of Armenia – the present Republic of Armenia.

Most representatives of transnational communities actually and actively engage in back-and-forth travel, and the exchange of resources with the homeland, whereas connections of the diaspora to the homeland bear mostly an instrumental character. In other words, transnational communities exchange resources directly with the homeland, whilst interactions and communication between diaspora and the homeland have, as a rule, a mediated character. They are mediated by some organizations, associations, or political parties. It is to say, those connections generally take place in an exchange–development nexus, and include diaspora lobbies in the residence country in favour of the homeland, diaspora investments in different spheres in the homeland, and many other

activities driven by the purpose to introduce the culture and life of the homeland, and to articulate the homeland interests in the country of residence.

The basic factors for diaspora network-building are symbolic capital, and memories transmitted from generation to generation. Belonging to a diaspora allows living simultaneously in three dimensions, or as Vertovec puts it, “diaspora integrates three dimensions: (1) the global dimension of dispersed ethnic groups who reside in different countries, and identify themselves as belonging to the same group; (2) local dimension of states where these groups reside; (3) the dimension of the homeland or home country” (Vertovec 1999). The preference of one dimension or another differs from person to person.

To summarize, certain content-driven and structural factors condition differences between diaspora and transnational communities. Some similarities between these notions are typical, though. Diasporas are transnational in nature. As Tölölyan believes, “a community of transnational migrants might become a diaspora when its members develop some familial, cultural, or social distance from their nation, but yet continue to care deeply about it not simply on grounds of kinship and filiations, but by commitment to a certain chosen affiliation” (Tölölyan 2012). A person can be diasporic, as he or she shares the same origin with the ancestral land, and has attachments (practical and real, or symbolic and emotional) to that land. A diaspora is to some extent an autonomous social formation, partly independent from the host and origin countries, and possessing the power to do lobbying in the host countries in favour of the country of origin. In this sense, diasporas are emblems of transnationalism (Tölölyan 2008), for they embody the essence of border-spanning activity, and exchange of resources. Only the forms and ways of realization of these transnational practices are different. Due to diasporas, transnational social fields are created not only between the homeland and the residence country, but also among other countries, where people of the same diaspora live. Thus, diasporas also contribute to the development of connections among various transnational social fields.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has framed the conceptual basis of this book, covering two of the most important key terms—transnationalism and diaspora—from the point of their relevance to my work. From the discussion of different approaches to transnationalism studies and various interpretations of transnationalism, I then turned to the concept of diaspora and the discourse on similarities and differences between the notions of diaspora and transnationalism, and possible confusions between them. Thus, from my viewpoint, transnationalism refers to real cross-border connections, back-and-forth ties, whereas the essential feature of diaspora

is its specific consciousness. Therefore, I understand diaspora as a *type of subjective consciousness*, which entails warm, tender, and sentimental feelings for homeland, however, not necessarily presupposes engagement in sustained transnational activity and practices. In the scope of this book, I define transnationalism at the level of social ties, real social practices and encounters, and at the level of representations. Transnationalism at the level of representations presumes attachments to the homeland through imagination. In other words, it is a kind of social activity with an imaginary reference to the homeland – a characteristic point for diasporic consciousness. This issue and its manifestations are to be elaborated in the following chapters of this work.

Further, this chapter has provided insights into the application of the conceptual triad ‘configurations–representations–encounters’ to the studies of transnationalism. I have presented the meaning of model’s domains and modes of their interconnection, specifying that in the framework of my research, I understand configurations as transnational (as well as non-transnational) social fields, encounters as social practices and engagements of migrants, and representations as self-identification of social actors. In addition, social media and diaspora as a category of practice also appear in the realm of representations, since diasporic consciousness may influence modes of self-identification. On this ground I have developed an argument that in order to study transnationalism and related issues thoroughly, a complex and interrelated analysis is necessary. That is, to understand specificities of social formation of ties, their reproduction, features of self-identification, and factors influencing the latter, there is a need to conduct a complex analysis, which will take into consideration the wholeness of the three domains simultaneously. In short, a starting point for the analysis should be the interrelation and mutual influence of configurations, encounters, and representations.

Taking all this knowledge as a basis or a point of departure, I turn to the next chapter, which provides insights into historical background and main waves of Armenian migration, and observes German–Armenian associations as diasporic structures and their transnational activity. Besides, the following chapter contains reflections on periods of the Armenian diaspora formation, and the development of relations between the homeland and the diaspora, in accordance with the distinguished historical periods of the three Armenian republics. In this realm, I will also address features of Armenian long-distance nationalism, and argue that the latter has specific context- and situation-dependent character, which I will name *strategic nationalism*, and will present how and to what extent certain collective memories can contribute to the development of this strategic nationalism.

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