Approaching new migration through Elias's 'established' and 'outsiders' lens

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Abstract*: When considering social positions and features that become distinguishing for migrants' positioning, scholars quite often rely on empirical descriptions, based on discrete and supposedly clearly definable factors. Whereas elements such as legal position, citizenship, etc. are of huge relevance in numerous contexts, in other domains relying on such delineations while studying discriminatory processes oversimplifies the picture. In this paper, a conceptual issue regarding the understandings of the positions of migrants (particularly recent migrations to the Western Europe) is raised. After a discussion of the definitions of 'new migrations', a broad heuristic device for thinking about 'new' migrants' positioning will be outlined. This framework – inspired by Elias and Scotson's The Established and the Outsiders (1994 [1965]) – can be adapted in different manners by academics addressing topics related to definition, marginalisation, and discriminatory processes. The central point is that although various characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, legal position) can be assigned importance in human figurations, the relationships of othering, inequality, and domination need to be seen in the light of the configuration of social relationships and power imbalances.*

Keywords*: New migration, positioning, outsiders, Elias, sensitising framework*

1. Introduction

The term 'new migration' frequently appears throughout the literature on migration. Furthermore, other terms referring to novelty are widely used in theoretical and empirical literature across various disciplines: migration studies, sociology, political sciences, criminology, social psychology (cf. section 2). This suggests some sort of distinction for new migration in comparison to other (if you will: 'old') migrations, even though groups referred to as 'new' are highly diverse in terms of geographic areas of origin, motives for migration, backgrounds, paths, and situations in the countries of immigration. Authors often speak of over-aggregated groups or distinctions that have been made in purely empirical terms (i.e. research ignoring heterogeneous and ambiguous lived realities, where the same people have different positions and identities in different interactions and contexts). Such observations give rise to essential questions such as: why bother researching the positions of groups as ambiguous as 'new immigrants'? Conceptually, naming such internally diverse social dynamics 'new' (or in any way different) without solid theoretical underpinning, implies oversimplification and possible consolidation of static notions (Koser and Lutz 1998). The question is not so much whether or not migration *is* a new phenomenon or whether some groups of immigrants *are* different in one way or another. To me, it seems more relevant to focus on diversification in terms of changing attention and representations; the conditions of inequality under which migration takes place (Castles 2010); the contexts of the societies immigrants end up in and become a part of; and, most importantly, their position in these societies. In that respect, dynamic yet straightforward distinctions are necessary in order to monitor the positions of vulnerable groups and to facilitate discussions on possible discrimination as well as emancipatory potential.

The main issue within the scope of this paper is how being 'new' is translated into social positions (and vice versa), perceptions, and treatment of the so-called new migrants, and how these positions are defined and researched in academic literature. First, the following section discusses the various definitions of 'new' used in academic literature. In section three, I will go into a number of theoretical perspectives and studies that are attentive to representation and identification processes, in order to move the discussion onto the possibility and the desirability of approaching new migration through the lens of Elias's figurational sociology (Elias and Scotson's *The Established and the Outsiders* (1994 [1965]) in particular). In section four, the reader will find an introduction to this approach and its contextualisation, as well as several critiques that are relevant if we are to adopt this framework on the topic of migration in late modern contexts (Young 2007). Subsequently, in section five, the essential ideas of *The Established and the Outsiders* are translated to the topic of positions of new migrants. Combining these ideas with different elements used to define new migration, I suggest a sensitising framework for the study of the positions of vulnerable migrant groups. This framework opposes clear-cut and oversimplified definitions of 'new', relying on one or several objective features. It particularly invites constructionist approaches with a focus on relational issues, such as subtle differentiation and discriminatory processes in daily interactions, but also in institutional contexts, focusing on micro-policies (e.g. with attention to assumptions underlying problematisations of certain aspects of 'new' migrations) and on how positioning [1][#N1] is constituted, expressed, given meaning, and translated in various contexts.

2. Defining 'new' immigration and migrants based on objective features

'New migration' seems to have a generic meaning when it comes to the question of what makes it so distinct. Compared to early literature on (modern) new migration westwards, such as at the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s, we now have the benefit of hindsight. At the same time, this issue is still very much relevant, as global movement is ongoing and continues to receive public, political and academic attention. A substantial part of the existing literature on the subject focus on explanations of migration movements (e.g. Castles 2010; Faist 2010; Massey et al. 1998; Portes 2010), but for the purpose of this paper these are left aside. The central issue is rather how migrants are positioned (and position themselves) in the receiving societies. I divide the features that distinguish the particularities and positions of new migrants (found in the academic literature) based on temporal aspects, geographical criteria, patterns, in addition to the strategies of migration movements, legal positions, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions and the role of social networks. Bear in mind that each of these elements can be integrated into the conceptual framework (signs) outlined further on in this paper.

2.1 Temporal aspects in defining 'new' migration

From a historical perspective, human migration is hardly a new phenomenon; therefore 'new' is commonly related to a certain époque. In that sense, new migration is frequently defined in terms of the arrival period of immigrants[2]. For example, the post-Cold War migration; migration in the post-Fordian period; migration following the collapse of communist regimes (Koser and Lutz 1998); migrations that came about in light of changed migration policies in many (Western) European countries in the aftermath of the oil crisis of the 1970s; migration in the fluid or late modern context (Bauman, 2000; Young, 2007); post-EU-enlargement migration (Favell 2008) or migrations that take place against the backdrop of increasingly restrictive immigration and crimmigration laws and policies (Aas and Bosworth 2014; João Guia et al. 2013).

Another temporal indicator of 'new' that refers explicitly to recent migration history is the duration of residence in the country of immigration (e.g. Martiniello 2010; Ryan et al. 2008). At the same time, some immigrants are not seen as new, regardless of the length of their stay. Consider, for instance, the migrations of highly skilled professionals that are not even referred to as 'migrations', but as 'mobility' (Castles 2010), or the migrations between the most prosperous Western countries, etc.

Finally, immigrants are sometimes defined as 'new' in terms of generations based on the birthplace, 'new' is then equated to first generation.

2.2 Geographical origins and migration paths of 'new' migrants

Geographical criteria are commonly used to distinguish migrant groups. In that respect, new migrants are seen as groups that are separately relatively small and highly diverse altogether, originating from countries from which emigration was virtually impossible, or at least uncommon, in the past (Martiniello 2010).

The motives for migration, along with the strategies of 'new' immigrants, appear to be more diffuse than those of 'classic' immigrants (e.g. economic migration, professional migration, asylum seekers, people seeking subsidiary protection, illegalised migration, transnational relationships). This diversity in migration trajectories is incorporated in the term 'mixed migrations' (IOM 2004) [2] [#N2].

Other authors emphasise the importance of ethnicity, regardless of the country of origin or migration routes. In this sense, Roma in particular have received researchers' attention (Barker 2013; Terrio 2008; 2009).

Post-colonial and classic labour migration (and family unifications in the aftermath thereof) are rarely considered new, perhaps not only because of the background or motives as such, but also because, at some point, separate integration policies were established around these groups and the receiving countries were, as it were, prepared for the reception and integration of these immigrants (De Boom et al. 2008). This viewpoint thus highlights the importance of the political context in the receiving societies.

2.3 'New' in terms of legal positions

Citizenship is rightfully considered to be vital for migrants' positions. For instance Guild (2009) elaborates a typology of European inclusion and exclusion, where migrant groups are 'ranked' based on citizenship, visa-agreements with the country of citizenship, their residency position, and the consideration of some third-country nationals as security threats. Groups referred to as 'new', generally do not score very high on this hierarchy.

The extent of 'novelty' is also straightforwardly defined in terms of residency status, as 'new' immigrants often find themselves in precarious legal positions. This legal distinction is indeed crucial as it determines their spatial and social mobility possibilities and position in the receiving society,as well as their access to numerous formal institutions (e.g. the labour market, higher education, health care, housing, welfare, etc.). Some authors even go as far as speaking of new classes of immigrants based on their legal status, which determines opportunity structures (De Boom et al. 2008). In the European context of open internal borders and the promise of freedom, we see an interplay between inclusion and exclusion, where the possibilities of mobility are endless, but where mobility is at the same time a major source as well as result of restrictions and position inequalities (in that sense one might speak of the 'European Dream').

2.4 New classes?

Recently arrived migrants often find themselves in precarious socio-economic conditions. This is not solely expressed in terms of material possessions, but at times in the inability to convert cultural capital (such as education qualifications, language, etc.) into economic capital (Bourdieu 1986; Ryan et al. 2008). Although 'new' doesn't automatically mean deprived or opposed to/segregated from other groups, exploitations and discriminatory practices in the labour and housing markets, as well as educational systems, are also commonplace towards groups referred to as 'new'.

2.5 The role of social networks

Social capital as conceptualised by Pierre Bourdieu (1980; 1986) is prominent in migration literature. Social capital is then conceived in terms of an individual's benefits [3][#N3] from being a part of networks, where the deliberate construction of sociability is seen as a resource (Portes 1998). Bourdieu contends that under certain circumstances social capital can be converted to economic resources or institutionalised in the form of nobility/prestige. However, this process of acquirement and conversion of social capital is not reducible to economic investment, rather it takes investments of time, reciprocity and bonding. (Bourdieu 1986; Palloni et al. 2001; Portes 1998).

Other authors have different takes (Coleman 1990; Portes 1998). A quite different interpretation of social capital is that of the political scientist Robert Putnam (1995), who sees social capital as a collective means. Activity of civic community, strong institutions, consensus, participation, and positive communal relations are seen as vital. In migration studies, this (and also Coleman's) interpretation of social capital sees individual mobility as destructive to social capital and it pins faith on civic participation and assimilation of migrants into the receiving communities (Ryan et al. 2008). Nannestad, Svendsen and Svendsen (2008), for example, apply this understanding of social capital as a collective good, coming out of voluntary co-operation. They particularly problematise the integration of non-Western immigrants into Western societies and the potential danger of bonding social capital within migrant groups (i.e. creating parallel societies and the importance of bridging these networks outside the intra-communal engagement) [4][#N4].

In social capital and migration literature in general, 'networks' have varying meanings: the presence of prior migrants, ethnic, religious and other interpersonal networks and social institutions, family (Sanders and Nee, 1996), etc. These networks might offer opportunities for employment and information, but also networking, mutual acquaintances, recognition, and socialising.

Frequently social capital is used to explain migration movement and continuation (Espinosa and Massey 1997; Garip 2008; Palloni et al. 2001), but also to understand the settlement and positions of recently migrated groups. Scholars have further fine-tuned and differentiated the types of social networks (e.g. not exclusively ethnic communities), their temporal and spatial fluidity, and the varying degrees to which people are able to access them and acquire different kinds of support and resources (Ryan et al. 2008).

3. Notions of 'new' in research attentive to the *processes* of new migrants' representation and identification

To understand what is substantially going on with regard to the so-called new migrants (and particularly if one poses *how*-questions), especially while speaking of subtle and non-institutionalised exclusionary processes, we also need to incorporate cultural and dynamic aspects of being what we intuitively call 'new'. Aspects that go beyond tangible characteristics of migrant groups and allow us to study not only positioning,

but also self-positioning, shifting attitudes and reactions to these groups, encounters of different groups of people, (counter-) processes of othering, and so on.

To deal with *irrational* reactions to (new)migration issues, widely known theories are utilised: concepts such as moral panics, different kinds of threats, perceptions of economic and labour market competition. Often, stereotypes of migrants as being poor, desperate and somehow inadequate (King 2010) are applied to explain how some migrants are dealt with (by individuals, groups or whole institutions). What is reacted to is in that sense mostly seen as collective fantasies, prejudice or lightning rods that serve electoral purposes. Whereas structuralist dualisms guide many of the othering debates, there are more sophisticated, dynamic notions. For instance, Young (2007) distinguishes between liberal othering and the more broadly known conservative othering (i.e. one-sided demonisation). Liberal othering implies viewing the other as someone lacking culture and values and thus failing to socialise in 'our' society. This lack is, however, not inherent or unchangeable – for instance, it might be caused by material deprivation and is thus in principle improvable. Meanwhile, whole groups of people are still seen as homogenous, as deficient people that need to be pitied, rehabilitated and educated. Until then, they are less than 'us' and are distant from 'us'.

The *symbolic* aspects of exclusion and the othering of migrants were also discussed in migration studies based on different theoretical frameworks: for instance, in terms of Simmel's strangers, or in terms of culturally constructed social strangers or cultural outlaws (focusing on exclusion from legal protection and human rights guaranteed by the culture (Butler 1990)). More recently, Barker (2013) discusses a transformation of the Swedish Öresund Bridge into a symbolic (yet quite real) border for foreign Roma 'beggars'. In this case, this transformation is contextualised as the result of neo-nationalistic pressure, but also other historical shifts are used to explain such developments (e.g. shifts from colonial to post-colonial attitudes towards migrants, globalisation, EU-enlargement, etc.).

In past years, scholars increasingly translated complex and blurry globalised realities into more sophisticated concepts, distancing themselves from one-sided static notions and dualisms, where migration-related positions are merged into contexts that were previously not immediately associated with migration (e.g. crimmigration (Stumpf 2006), or the funnel of expulsion, covering the interplay between inclusion/rights and exclusion (Johansen 2013)). These layered, fluid and rapidly changing contexts are reflected in writings on liquid modernity (Bauman 2000), or the interplay between inclusion and exclusion in late modernity (Young 2007).

4. All that 'new'… do we also need a new approach?

As for the objective definitions, some authors combine several criteria in order to define 'new immigrants' (e.g. legal and temporal aspects with specific migration paths/schemes (Martiniello 2010)), but after taking a brief look at the distinguishing features of 'new migration', two things become obvious. First, the globalised reality is too complex to divide groups based on one criterion or on simple compositions of criteria. Moreover, those definitions are of course strongly dependent on the questions one attempts to answer and the purposes of such distinctions. A standard definition of new immigrants does not even seem to be possible or desirable, as being 'new' as such is an empty adjective and positions can be expressed in different ways, in different contexts and at different levels. Secondly, the question: do we even need to make such distinctions, inevitably arises and if such distinctions are necessary, how to avoid vulgar dichotomies, neologisms and nostalgia? The features deployed to define new migrants might be useful as empirical distinctions, but substantially, defining groups of people based on their origin, migration motives, etc. often implies static dichotomies and mechanical, permanent and one-sided labeling(King 2010; Van Hear 2010).

The more dynamic notions briefly discussed in section three offer more nuance and rightfully complicate the picture. However, how one can grasp these processes of positioning (in particular instances, as well as at the meso- and micro-level without over-generalisation and absolute claims) is an issue that has been discussed to a lesser extent. Moreover, what seems to be little elaborated is the role of the position of new immigrants at the relational level and especially how these positions are shaped and reproduced, focusing on processes through which certain features become significant.

Elias's approach(1994 [1965]), discussed in the following section, has the potential to remedy these shortcomings. It argues for grounded and processual understanding of human figurations, with particular attention to power relations where the power is relational and not fixed (Loyal 2011). Furthermore, the approach is attentive to the processes of signification and internalisation of structures (Siisiäinen 2000). Referring to 'position(ing)', I mean these aspects, where power relations, networks and the changing receiving context particularly need to be taken into consideration, in order to study how the positions of newcomers are being (re-)created at different levels and in various expressions in daily practices.

5. Figurational approach revisited

To contribute to a more holistic approach for new migrations, by including how positions and reactions to some groups are constituted and (re-)negotiated, I suggest approaching 'new' from a figurational perspective, and exploring the linkages between the relations of 'new' migrants and the receiving societies (this might be at the individual level, but also in group relationships and in institutional contexts, *infra*) on one hand and the established–outsider figurations on the other hand (Elias and Scotson 1994 [1965]).

Figurational sociology is mainly associated with the work of Norbert Elias and allows us to study the position of one group in relation to the other(s). These positions are dynamic and their dynamics are not exclusively determined by objective elements (such as economic position). Furthermore, figurations and mutual dependency of groups and individuals, as well as assumptions and representations of the respective protagonists are given a prominent place (Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop 2008). Without having the ambition to evaluate and incorporate Elias's heritage as a whole, it is worthwhile to direct our attention to the notions of 'established' and 'outsiders' developed by Elias and Scotson (1994 [1965]), as a sensitising framework in approaching issues discussed in this paper.

First, a brief introduction. The initial study was conducted by John Scotson, under Elias's supervision; the book was first published in 1965 [5][#N5]. In *The Established and the Outsiders*, Elias and Scotson present the results of their research in a British community they call Winston Parva. The initial intention was to study and explain the differences in delinquency of groups of people living in three different neighbourhoods of Winston Parva – differences they assumed would be merely determined by their respective economic conditions. However, the findings did not confirm the authors' expectations and they uncovered 'non-economic layers of conflict' between two groups, both living in working-class areas. These conflicts went far beyond crime or security issues, and therefore they decided to look into the broader relations between those groups to interpret the findings.

Elias and Scotson claim that the groups in their study were comparable as far as their socio-economic situation was concerned, and that demographic factors, cultural, ethnic or religious differences between the groups were insignificant. Despite these similarities, the authors found quite remarkable group relations – relationships that were characterised by exclusion (both material and by means of gossip, group disgrace and social control), stigmatisation of outsiders as unclean and deviant, extrapolating the worst characteristics of the minority to the entire group (Dunning 2004; Elias and Scotson 1994 [1965]), thereby enforcing exclusion,

social network formations, and 'us' versus 'them' representations and encounters. The main difference between the groups were the relative durations of their stay in Winston Parva, and it is this distinction that was particularly *assigned significance* by the research participants. The established group was characterised by strong internal cohesion, social networks and a shared background. The other group ('outsiders') was relatively new and its members were basically strangers to each other, who could not count on significant social networks and powerful (institutional) positions.

The case of Winston Parva shows how power is exercised and reproduced in everyday interactions and micro-relations and how, in reacting to the perceived threats to their monopolised power resources, the established use stigmatisation to assert their own superiority and group charisma (Loyal 2011). The main idea of established–outsider figurations is that the essential differences between groups are not the feature that is assigned a specific meaning (i.e. duration of the stay in the community), but rather it is imbalances in power and status relations.

Contrary (or perhaps: complementary) to the prevailing (progressive) ideas at the time, Elias stated that although material and economic inequalities form a substantial aspect of these relations, they are not limited to those factors (i.e. power is not reduced to material/possessed elements, it is relational and dynamic). In that sense Elias praises what he calls 'Marx's great discovery', but sees it as a 'half-truth' and criticises the taken for granted 'tendency to see it in the end of the road to discovery about human societies. One might rather regard it as one manifestation of a beginning' (1994 [1965]: xxxii-xxxiii). In other words, Elias did not deny the weight of modes of production on power relations and class formation, but argued that macro-level economic factors were not the only forces shaping social figurations, interdependency chains and the relative cohesion of groups (Dunning 2004). Symbolic factors and status also play a role and become particularly tangible when power balances are less uneven. In addressing how this occurs, Elias also leaves room for socio-psychological processes (the creation of group identity, labeling, emotions). Positioning and discriminatory practices are then not an absolute inherent tendency that just occurs in particular societal contexts (Loyal 2011).

Furthermore, and particularly relevant for migration related topics, Elias criticised the obviousness of objectivation of some aspects of relations characterised by inequalities (e.g. rather arbitrarily referring to 'peripheral' characteristics such as race, origin, religion, etc. [6][#N6]). He held that these are the outcome of unequal power [7][#N7] distribution and not what actually determines people's positions and relations in the first place. Therefore it is valuable to look into how and why, throughout social dynamics, certain characteristics become weighty, as well as what connects them and why they eventually become distinctive features.

The nature of power resources and their distribution can vary in different settings but according to Elias, the mechanisms of figurations characterised by unequal power distribution are comparable overall, and in themselves determined by the way people and societies they live in are historically developed as cohesive and organised (Loyal 2011). Outsiders are groups that do not have the necessary social networks and can count on less tolerance, informal handling, and are often perceived as threatening. The established, on the other hand, have access to power resources from which the other group is excluded in the first place. The established mobilise these resources to keep the others 'in place' and to assert the position of their own group.

In short, the established–outsiders figurations allow us to look beyond the assumptions of absolute and one-sided exclusion and beyond the typical dualities of rationality or irrationality (Elias and Scotson 1994 [1965]). Furthermore, the approach departs from the question of what elements are given weight throughout social dynamics, what factors shape or challenge persistent images, without *a priori* defining these factors, which is of vital importance for studies of relational elements and subtle processes of positioning. The approach is

attentive to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and to mutual dependency (e.g. certain groups are assigned functions: in an economic sense, functions in shaping public opinion and electoral strategies, in symbolic demarcations of groups as others, and so on (Brandariz García 2013; Castles and Kosack 2010 [1972])).

6. Adopting the established and the outsiders to define and approach new migration: critiques and potential

6.1 Critiques to the established–outsiders framework applicable to migration topics and their nuances

A critical reader has perhaps noticed that despite the substantive value of Elias's approach, it needs actualisation and adaptation to the globalised realities, with often blurry community boundaries where people retain multiple identities in various situations and might be considered established in one situation and outsiders in another. I discuss four points of critique (or issues that require extra attention) that might be made in regards to the social positions of migrants.

[A] The role of the economic, political, and administrative institutions and the media in established-outsider figurations is only articulated to a limited extent. The power of the established and its occurrence, evolution and expression are well elaborated in the book. It is mentioned that the established occupy more influential institutional positions and have access to articulation power, which allows them to safeguard their interests. However, Elias prioritises group relations and cohesion, whereas the role of state institutions, regulations and their enforcement is left out of consideration. Nevertheless, such regulations, administrative categories and, in fact, nation-states as a whole have not in the least dis-empowered and 'outsidered' migrants in terms of rights, entitlements and stereotype (re-) creation (Loyal 2011). This is more of an addition than a critique, implying that the established are not only citizens (who might well be stratified as well, whereas migrants' positioning occurs based on additional characteristics). Albeit constituted by people, such structures also shape individuals and their actions, so institutions and entire states might as well be protagonists in the established–outsider figurations. While the majority of established–outsiders based literature focusses on relations between comparable groups, the processual-relational approach allows these configurations to be taken other analytical levels, if the established are not reduced to, for instance, citizens.

Additionally, Loyal (2011) calls for attention to the role of the media in facilitating or challenging representations of migrants, especially when it comes to portraying people as threatening, and to group disgrace.

[B] Elias isattentive to both context and the empirical realities of the figurations, but the notions of 'established' and 'outsiders' as such lend themselves to static interpretations: they cover the emergence of different groups that subsequently remain more or less stable, or change slowly and naturally over time. In that sense, established and outsiders fit the thread throughout Elias's writings by emphasising long term group processes (Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop 2008) and the explanation of status distinctions as biological and historical rationales for human survival (Loyal 2011), resulting in the danger of somehow legitimising or at least naturalising stigma and discrimination. Despite the importance of temporal aspects in looking at the changing positions of immigrants, this assumed sequential self-reproduction of human relations, and the relative autonomy of processes/figurations is an important line of critique to Elias's work (Hall 2012). Although the time spans considered in the established-outsiders theory are much shorter than

the long époques in Elias's other contributions (such as *The Civilizing Process*), this point should be kept in mind while discussing highly politicised and economically sensitive issues, such as migration in these rapidly changing contexts (Castles 2010).

[C] Elias and Scotson's insights might benefit from more de-localisation while transferring them to the late modern period. Some authors succeeded in translating the established–outsiders theory to broader issues, at city level or even at societal level, finding various exclusionary and stigmatising practices, albeit in different forms (Bauböck 1993; Loyal 2011; May 2004). Furthermore, internal cohesion of groups of people might differ considerably from the classically assumed image of a strong group defined as established as opposed to barely cohesive outsiders (May 2004). There are several examples of established–outsiders based studies that incorporate this point, merely focusing on conflict dynamics (e.g. an insurmountable criticism, but also a point to keep in mind while applying the theoretical framework.

[D] It could be stated that Elias does not account for gender, ethnic, and colonial relations (which have historically proven to be very weighty), attempting to combine all of these under the denominator of the *established* and the *outsiders*. To conclude that this implies that he therefore denies the reality of ethno-cultural discrimination, gender inequalities, etc. is, however, an overstatement. As outlined in the fifth section, foregrounding of particular characteristics needs to be seen in the context of different power ratios, however the particular expressions of domination and discrimination are something to be researched and understood in their empirical reality, in all their particularities and expressions (Loyal 2011).

6.2 Applications of the established-outsiders framework in migration studies

Coming back to the topic of migration, several migration studies apply the established–outsiders framework. These can be divided into literature that focusses on mechanisms of group divisions, on positions of migrants in a community in relation to other groups (e.g. Korte 1987; May, 2004; Warmenbol 2007; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007). On the other hand, some established–outsiders based literature studies the social dynamics concentrating on shifts in identities, in relations between groups of people, and changing power balances (e.g. Perulli and Valzania 2010). For the purpose of this paper, I mainly concentrate on the former, but application of established–outsiders theory to migration does not exclude the possibility of studying (conflict) dynamics.

Loyal (2011) adopts the framework of discrimination towards recent migrants in the Irish context. The point of departure of this paper is the critique of abstract post-structuralism and absolute/homogenous conceptions of othering, which, moreover, fail to explain why and under what specific conditions othering occurs in the first place. Furthermore, I have conducted research into discriminatory practices towards new migrants in the context of youth justice, applying Elias's starting points (and the conceptualisation of new migrants outlined in section 6.3.), with the focus on discursive practices throughout youth judicial encounters and 'outsidering' of young people with migration backgrounds (Petintseva 2015).

6.3 Turning the questions of positioning around: relevance of the framework and an outline of signs pointing to new migration related outsidering

The point of departure of an established–outsiders framework is that distinctive features (i.e. expressions of power inequalities) can differ in their nature. Therefore different contributions offer various interpretations of

distinctive features which at some point become pivotal in established–outsider figurations. Applying this framework to features which, in their totality, define the social positions of new immigrants has implications for the selection of elements that can be seen as *signs* of the *process* of outsider*ing*. These features can be explicitly or implicitly present in assumptions and in (self-)discourses and the material realities of the groups concerned. The features do not need to be invariable, strictly defined, and deducible from the established–outsider theory (because this theory states that virtually any difference between groups can be instrumentalised in established–outsider figurations, and also because, as discussed above, new migration involves numerous facets that cannot all be captured in a predefined set of indicators). I suggest that instead of simply copying the theory as articulated by Elias and Scotson, using it as a sensitising framework. This is relevant as it provides a valuable starting point for researchers by not limiting the interpretation of definitions at use in addition to the scope of the analysis. This rather broad approach encourages scholars to start from a curious academic 'hunch'. That 'something' can be looked at through a theoretical lens and/or departing from a provisional definition. Still, the researcher keeps an open mind to processes that she/he might have thought about differently at the beginning or did not find at all before.

Secondly, content-wise, it elicits the elaboration of heuristic devices that can be used to look at social positions of groups such as new migrants. To make this more specific, I revisit the definitions of the positions of 'new' immigrants. Based on the core aspects of the established–outsiders theory and integrating the content of the distinctive features of 'new migration' (cf. sections two and three), the *signs* that point to the *process* of outsider*ing* would be fourfold:

> [1] The relatively powerless position: in economic terms, but also as far as access to social or formal facilities or institutions is concerned (e.g. legal status, possibilities of mobility, status differentials in institutional contexts);
>
> [2] The lack of protection and opportunities offered by membership in powerful social networks (cf. section 2.5.);
>
> [3] Limited internal cohesion between new immigrants as a whole, just based on the fact that they are all somehow 'new' (as we are dealing with less locally-bound entities, we need to de-localize Elias's initial analysis, so a suitable example would be the possibility of resisting in terms of a political voice);
>
> [4] Representations of these groups as threatening, images based on the most undesirable characteristics of a limited number of people considered to be members of this group (e.g. issues of social distancing, ethicizing, and problematising particular characteristics).

The relative weight/extent to which those signs are present then defines *to what extent* groups can be seen as 'new' in terms of the established and the outsiders in particular circumstances (which is not simply a yes/no assessment). Those aspects not only incorporate objective characteristics of what is referred to as 'new', but also the symbolic elements and relationships with other groups. The specific interpretation of features that become distinctive when speaking of positions can be relatively stable or dynamic; they can be easily recognisable or implied. Distinctions and their role in treatment and positions of 'outsiders' can be institutionalised, functional, normative, or rather intuitive or emotive (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007). This allows us to approach positions from different thematic and disciplinary angles, keeping the four suggested aspects I distillate from Elias's theory on one hand and migration literature on the other, as a sensitising thread. This approach to 'new' migration allows a researcher to trace the processes of

outsidering in daily practices, lived realities and subtle discourses, in micro-contexts but also at the institutional and state level.

7 Conclusions

In this paper, I have explored the idea of a particular approach to the 'positions' of new migrants – an approach that is inspired by the notions of 'the established' and 'the outsiders' (Elias and Scotson 1994 [1965]). This framework provides a starting point, which allows us to turn the questions of stigmatisation around and to actually look into the processes that pre-structure social constructions of otherness (Paulle et al. 2010), and not only to study the forces behind these processes, but the reality of these processes in practice and in particular circumstances.

In general, the established–outsiders framework is an approach for the study of maintenance and shifts in power relations between people in specific arenas/practices, attentive to the effects of these power differentials (Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop 2008). It is not a post-factum explanation of social reality(May 2004), rather it is a perspective that is particularly useful to define groups and their inter-dependencies and to understand how definitional processes take place.

Research wise, it is valuable because it invites openness, transparency, and inductive sensitivity to what is going on in the empirical reality, without imposing labels and stable notions, yet having a critical potential (i.e. its attentiveness to power ratios). This openness is crucial as 'outsidering' can manifest itself at different levels and in different circumstances. In a way, Elias overcomes oversimplified statements because he bridges the material-symbolic distinction. Established–outsider figurations are more than discourses, collective fantasies or irrationality, they are not simply the mechanical effects of material inequalities, and one also needs to consider social relations, networks and inter-dependencies (Loyal 2011). Correspondingly, there is also a nuanced view of humans, who are simultaneously material, social, cultural and psychological beings, whose actions and relations are guided not only by economic forces, but also by mutual dependencies, emotions and immediate contexts. 'Outsidering' is not one-sided, rendering outsiders as passive recipients of domination. Although positions, categories and stereotypes are often internalised because of power differentials, resistance and creative actions are certainly possible and exist(Ferrell, Hayward and Young 2015).

With regards to 'new' migrants in particular, I've outlined definitions of new migrants and critiqued over-aggregation and simplified distinctions while speaking of complex social dynamics. I have tried to contend that researchers need to look at the social positions of individuals rather than their legal status, migration motives, ethnicity, etc., since these are secondary criteria deriving from (established–outsider) power relations. The idea is that one should see the positions of 'new' immigrants within the framework of human figurations and the spirit of the approach dictates that we start by exploring what is going on (e.g. definition and/or discriminatory processes in daily interactions, in education, in policing and judicial matters, in media representations, etc., where looking at 'objective' characteristics is not sufficient or where migration-related positioning might not be explicit). The elements used to define 'new' are not dismissed as non-existing, but the analytical lens is directed at how and why these features become weighty in established–outsider dynamics.

At the same time, even though such differences in themselves are peripheral, categorisation is not to be ignored in studies of inequality and in studies where categorisation is assigned to certain groups by others. At the end of the day, this categorisation has very real consequences (discursive, subjectification, lived (Bacchi 2009) and material effects). So how does one trace the occurrence of categorisation, and of processes of

outsidering without prefabricated definitions, and without taking certain categorisations for granted? The deliberately broad and flexible framework outlined in this paper can be relevant content-wise in approaching new migrants' position*ing* (or if you prefer: outsider*ing*). In the light of established–outsiders, 'new' is not just a label or an empirical description, but a social concept that can be interpreted in different manners with different accents, departing from a straightforward yet open theoretical perspective, that leaves space for the incorporation of the nuances found in empirical reality. In that sense, it is a heuristic device for providing analytical clarity which can be, in principle, translated to a variety of topics. More specifically, through the distillation of four signs referring to new migration (section 6.3), I have adopted the main principles and content of this theory, combined with the definitions of 'new' migration used in the literature, to the positions of migrants.

Notes

1. With 'position*ing*' I do not refer to the concept frequently used in marketing, referring to the strategic positioning of businesses to achieve certain goals. Positioning instead refers to the social positions of migrants, but without seeing positions as stable and unchangeable entities, in that sense position*ing* is dynamic and also allows space for integration of the issues of *self*-positioning. [#N1-ptr1]

2. Although in its other definition, 'mixed migration' refers to irregular migrations (UNHCR 2013). [#N2-ptr1]

3. Although social capital is generally seen as a positive thing, it has been pointed out that it might well have negative effects (e.g. ghettoisation, limited access to new knowledge and resources, exclusion of outsiders, restrictions on individual freedoms, competition and distrust) (de Haas 2010; Portes 1998; Ryan et al. 2008). [#N3-ptr1]

4. It is frequently falsely presumed that there is an inverse correlation between bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2007 cited in Ryan et al. 2008). [#N4-ptr1]

5. As the original thesis is lost, it is difficult to distinguish which parts are from the hand of Elias. It is assumed that he wrote the theoretical appendices and the theoretical essay that was added to the book in 1994 (Wouters 2007). [#N5-ptr1]

6. Although historically physical or normative–cultural differences were prominent as distinctive features (Loyal 2011). [#N6-ptr1]

7. Power resources may be constituted of material possessions, but also of non-material power resources (e.g. group size, social networks, institutional positions, and the power to assign certain discourses the status of knowledge/truth). These sources in themselves are not necessarily power resources, but they gain an importance/relevance in specific contexts (Hogenstijn and Van Middelkoop 2008), in relational dynamics. In that sense Elias's concept of power is quite close to Foucault's understanding of power as being relational, as opposed to a possession or status (though with different attention to the historicity of power). [#N7-ptr1]

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