

Transnational migration and political articulation: making new sense of 'exit and voice'

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Transnational Migration and Political Articulation:

Making New Sense of 'Exit and Voice'

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Abstract

Albert O. Hirschman's scheme of "exit and voice", long a classic in the study of migration and its political implications, was conceived within the framework of "methodological nationalism". However, the rise of migrant transnationalism is eroding the distinction between domestic and foreign actors on which the postulate was based, that exit meant renouncing on voice. Combining theoretical considerations with empirical insights from Latin American migration, this paper calls for a critical reappraisal of Hirschman's scheme. In times of transnational migration, exit, voice, and loyalty are no longer exclusive categories; instead, transnational migration can be conceived of precisely as a new and non-exclusive configuration of exit, voice, and loyalty, and the modalities of this reconfiguration become key to understanding the political implications of migration. With such a revised understanding, the Hirschmanian metaphor can indeed be a helpful heuristic tool for studies of current migration phenomena.

1. Introduction

This paper returns to a classic of social science literature: “Exit, voice and loyalty”, a concept first formulated by Albert O. Hirschman in 1970 and much expanded on since. While conceived of as a general formula for human behavior, the Hirschmanian metaphor became particularly well-used in the study of international migration: In the face of a dissatisfying situation ‘exit’ in the form of emigration from one nation-state to the other and the raising of ‘voice’ - a category which “can be graduated, all the way from faint grumbling to violent protest” (Hirschman 1970: 16) - were modeled as mutually exclusive alternatives.

However, the changing nature of migration in the 1980s and 1990s gave rise to the emergence of the transnationalism paradigm in migration studies (e.g. Glick Schiller/Basch/Blanc Szanton 1992, 1995, Portes et al. 1999; Pries 1996, 1999; Massey 1998, Faist 2000, Portes/Guarnizo/Landolt 1999, Vertovec et al 2003). As cost and time for long-distance transport and communication radically decreased, not only for goods but also for migrants the so-called “distance tariff” has shrunk, making it incomparably easier to maintain social, economic and political ties over wide geographic separation. This challenged the conventional understanding of migration as a unidirectional movement from the country of origin to the country of destiny, into which the immigrants would integrate over time and, as the assimilation paradigm expected, eventually blend in with the local population. Instead, since the 1980s and ‘90s migration studies diagnosed the evolution of transnational social spaces and transnational communities.

As migration became “the most important field of research for processes of transnationalization” (Pries 1999: 3), this research frontally challenged the “methodological nationalism” (Glick Schiller/Wimmer 2002, 2003) underlying conventional migration research no less than it was challenged in the debate about the changes in international relations and new forms of governance (e.g. Zürn 1998: 68). With the onset of the transnationalism paradigm, Hirschman’s scheme fell – exceptions apart – out of use as it was regarded as an emblematic example of “methodological nationalism” no longer apt to capture the new phenomena. Pries’ comprehensive work on the “transnationalization of the social world” (Pries 2008) is emblematic; while it does cite Hirschman’s work, this is used only very briefly in the context of business behavior and is not at all discussed in its applicability to migration.

This paper argues that we may find it useful to take a second look at Hirschman’s analytical metaphor in the study of transnational migration. Its formulation indeed was linked to an idea of the nation-state as closed unit. However, if sufficiently adapted, its categories can still be a

helpful heuristic tool in analyzing migration in its different facets. Indeed, we argue, transnational migration can be understood as a reconfiguration of exit, voice, and loyalty – taking these not as mutually exclusive alternatives but, quite to the contrary, combining these in new forms.

In line with the time constraints of the Bielefeld conference, this paper does not pretend to be more than an analytical sketch. It will develop as follows: In a first step, the Hirschmanian model and its traditional application to emigration is revisited. In the following sections different aspects of the model will be confronted with empirical examples of transnational migration, drawing on cases from Latin America and the Caribbean. [Text. Line Spacing: 1.5. Text. Line Spacing: 1.5. Text. Line Spacing: 1.5. Text. Line Spacing: 1.5. Text. Line Spacing: 1.5. Paragraphs like this.]

2. Exit, Voice and Emigration: The Hirschmanian Model

While Hirschman's exit and voice model has been intensively applied to migration issues, its original design is much broader, claiming validity as much for human behavior in economic markets as in organizations, social institutions or national governments (Hirschman 1970). Its general model is an essentially dualist structure of two contrasting reactions of consumers, members, or citizens to what they sense as a decline in the provision of services or goods. "Exit" typically is the action of changing to buy a product from a competing firm, of leaving an organization, or, in the case of nations, the decision to emigrate. "Voice" typically is the act of complaining or protesting in order to obtain a change in the behavior of the firm, organization or government, which would lead to a recuperation of the quality of the product or service. The core idea of the concept is its postulation of an essentially "hydraulic relation" or "seesaw pattern": the easier available the exit option, the less likely is voice. Hirschman takes this to the point that "the presence of the exit alternative can (...) atrophy the development of the art of voice" (Hirschman 1970: 43).

In addition to 'exit' and 'voice', Hirschman introduces a third category, loyalty, which, he argues, essentially delays exit as well as voice when there is a decline in the performance of an organization to which one belonged or felt particularly attached to. Loyalty is a very broad category, which encompasses a spectrum ranging from unconditional identification and en-

thusiastic support to passive acceptance, inertia or even submissive silence. This third category, however, never received the same prominence as exit and voice in the academic career of the concept¹.

Regarding emigration, Hirschman (1970) describes the function of exit undermining voice with the historic example of the so-called “labor safety valve” developed by Turner (1920) which had explained the absence of a strong workers’ movement in the United States by the existence of the “open frontier” – the possibility, real or imagined, of exiting by “going West” (Hirschman 1970: 106-19) as an alternative to organizing protest. Hirschman argued that similarly we should speak of a “European safety valve theory”: The massive overseas emigration from Europe in the 19th and early 20th century was the functional equivalent to the “open frontier”, greatly reducing the extent of labor militancy and social conflict in their countries of origin (Hirschman 1981a: 225-26). In the context of migration, the category of loyalty, refers to all those bonds of belonging that people develop with their place and community of residence.

For the case of international migration, Hirschman noted a particularity in regard to the functioning of exit and voice: “The state has one option that is not available to other organizations and to firms: by virtue of its territorial authority and by using its monopoly of force, it can lock up its members within its own borders” (Hirschman 1986: 93). A state, who had made use of this option in particularly spectacular form, was the German Democratic Republic, and more than two decades after his initial 1970 book, Hirschman applied the exit and voice scheme to the fate of the GDR in an award-winning article (Hirschman 1993).² The case of the GDR focused on a type of migration which indeed was far from transnational and could be very much understood by the traditional perspective on emigration as a one-way affair. Hirschman’s reading of the political dynamics of the GDR’s collapse led the author to modify the model of interplay of exit and voice; in this case – Hirschman, concludes – exit and voice did

¹ It is telling that while Hirschman’s 1970 book was titled “Exit, Voice and Loyalty” the German translation already omits “loyalty” from the book’s title, making it simply “Abwanderung und Widerspruch” (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1974). Hirschman himself followed this concentration on the two categories, exit and voice, in his own articles expanding on the concept (e.g. Hirschman 1986 and Hirschman 1992). As Dowding et al. note that “loyalty” had been “the most criticized concept in Hirschman’s framework” (Dowding et al. 2000: 476) and suggest that, instead of “loyalty”, “non-exit” and “silence” should be considered as the logical complements to exit and voice. Other authors have called for different modifications: Rusbult (1987) introduced “neglect” as a fourth category; Keczkcs (1994) argues for “passivity”.

² This article was first published in German as “Abwanderung, Widerspruch und das Schicksal der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik” in 1992, winning that year’s Thyssen Foundation prize for the best article published by a German-language social science journal.

not work against each other but rather as a “tandem” (Hirschman 1993: 177) or as “confederates” (Hirschman 1993: 186), reinforcing one another.

3. Exit as Loss?

Hirschman’s model sees it as a given that exit, just as it leads to reduced income for a firm, automatically represents a loss for organizations and states. This is so even if the “labor safety valve theory” sees emigration as eventually beneficial for the sending country (Hirschman 1970: 106-19) – but these are seen as political gains that compensate for what socially and economically is a loss. In his later work Hirschman does concede “the possibility that emigration relieves a country’s economic or political stress, is therefore welcome, and may even be encouraged by the state” (Hirschman 1986: 93). But he immediately returns to his original point of argument: “But massive emigration is at some point bound to be viewed as dangerous: it will no longer be compared to a ‘safety valve,’ but rather to a dangerous ‘loss of blood’” (ibid).

The perfect case to underscore Hirschman’s view of “exit as a threat to the small modern state” Hirschman (1981b: 258-65) is the GDR prior to 1961, where the East German government felt the growing drain of qualified professionals as such a terrible hemorrhage that it deemed dramatic action – the building of the Wall – necessary to impede exit. Even if Cuba’s socialist government reacted very differently in the early years after the Revolution and kept to an open door policy for emigration which enabled an easy exodus of the former upper and middle classes, this still fits into Hirschman’s scheme. There certainly was a sense of loss, and the government did blame many economic shortcomings on the unpatriotic behavior – in Hirschman’s terms: the lack of ‘loyalty’ - of the professional elites who abandoned the country. If it nevertheless celebrated the departure of the old elites as the liberation from the chains of bourgeois mentality and power structures, this signaled that the economic loss was seen as more than compensated by the accompanied political gains.

However, the case looks different if we consider the phenomenon of transnational migration as it emerged since the 1980s and 1990s. The most obvious evidence is the boom of emigrant remittances to the countries of origin, a clear expression of the social ties migrants maintain through transnational networks. These remittances have increased so greatly in the past two decades that they have come to play a crucial role in many Third World economies. For Latin America remittances amount to figures higher than all international aid and development cooperation for the region and at par with the total amount of foreign direct invest-

ment (MIF 2003). These money flows by no means should be understood either as temporary or as mere altruism. Much rather, just like firms have transnational production chains, migration research shows that also families and households increasingly constitute themselves transnationally, with remittances serving as informal family loan arrangements (Poirine 1997).

In 2006, for Mexico alone remittances have reached US\$ 23 billion in 2006. For 10 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean remittances constitute ten per cent or more of Gross Domestic Product. Rather than a hemorrhage, emigration and its monetary return flows serve as a vital lifeline for these and many other Third World economies.

As the amount of remittances an emigrant sends to his relatives in the country of origin typically follows an inverted U pattern and tends to decrease after reaching its peak, in order to maintain a continuously high flow of remittances a country also needs to maintain a continuous flow of emigrants.

These developments have given rise to much work from international financial institutions such as the IMF or the IDB on how best to use remittances for macro-economic development purposes. But even in socialist Cuba in the 1990s, the emigration of thousands of Cubans did not mean as much relief in the sense of “less mouths to feed” in a situation of severe food shortages, but became a key source for foreign currency . The legalization of the U.S. dollar, announced by Fidel Castro in the summer of 1993, was designed precisely to foster family remittances which – through rapidly opened dollar stores – the government could siphon off in order to obtain the hard currency revenues needed to maintain the economy afloat. Since then, remittances to Cuba have grown to an estimated US\$ 1,100 million (MIF 2003), surpassing by far the combined revenues of the island’s traditional export products, sugar and tobacco.

Taking up the theoretical findings on transnational social networks, the Cuban economist Pedro Monreal (1999) concluded in a remarkable study that the ‘export’ of emigrants and the ‘import’ of their remittances to the island became crucial for Cuba’s world market integration after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist states of Eastern Europe: “Even if for some this may be a troublesome idea: The phenomenon of the remittances can be seen as expression of the fact (...) that de facto a significant part of the Cuban economy’s ‘modern’ sector is located outside of its national boundaries” (Monreal 1999).

In such a perspective, exit in the form of emigration is not a loss for the national economy but rather an investment of human capital into an economic sector in which returns – in the form of remittances - are particularly high.

4. Exit as Internationalization of Voice

The Hirschmanian scheme sees emigration as renouncing on the possibility to articulate voice. However, something different may happen: exit may lead to the externalization of voice. If a citizen by choosing the exit option can free himself from the conditions that have impeded articulating voice domestically, after emigration he might raise his voice all the louder from the outside³. In addition, the growing importance of migrant remittances for many communities or countries of origin provides migrants with an extraordinary level of socioeconomic power on which they can base their claims to participation even if physically absent.

Articulating voice from abroad can be a two-fold activity. For one, the improvements in communication and transport enable much more direct forms of raising voice in the country of origin. And second, the emigrants can raise their voice abroad to influence international actors' behavior towards their country of origin.

This is illustrated well by the Haitian case after the Aristide government was ousted by the coup d'état of General Cédras in 1991. While Aristide went into exile in New York, he there could build on the networks and resources of a well-established migration community, which could not be considered as exile, but which largely closed ranks in the call for the reinstatement of the Aristide government. These networks included close links to the Afro-American community in the U.S. and their political representation in the Congressional "Black Caucus" which became vital to influence U.S. policy. This voice after exit became so forceful that eventually the Clinton administration ordered military force to pressure the Cédras regime to step down and re-install the Aristide government.

Another example of exit in order to raise voice is the Cuban emigration after 1959. While early intents of the exiles to militarily re-enter the politics on the island failed, the Cuban emigrants in the United States became active in raising their voice against the antidemocratic nature of the Castro government⁴. While the Cuban government can largely prevent the Cuban emigrants reaching out directly to the public sphere on the island, person-to-person con-

³ In a different context, Kato (1998) in her study of party discipline among Japanese legislators pointed to the possibility of people choosing to exit and then to raise their voice from outside.

⁴ Pedraza (2002: 254) takes up this idea when she asks whether for the Cuban society "those who exited became its voice". While the émigrés and their highly vocal organizations cannot substitute the independent civil society curtailed on the island, their continuous voice is a factor in Cuban politics in its own right.

tacts very much carry the emigrés' voice to the island in what O'Donnell termed "horizontal voice" (1986). More importantly still, the Cuban emigrations has been highly effective in interacting with and exerting influence on the U.S. government's policy versus Cuba. This has gone hand in hand precisely with the emigrants' leaving their condition of "exile" and adopting U.S. citizenship, thus raising their weight in U.S. politics. In the USA, Cuba policy is a prime example of what has come to be called "intermestic affairs" (Manning 1977), that is, issues in which international and domestic considerations are profoundly interwoven (Hoffmann 2002). It is noteworthy that the principal political organization of the Cuban emigrants, the Cuban-American National Foundation, carries in its very name the transnational character of the emigrant community: The hyphenated identity of "Cuban-Americans", rather than "Cubans in exile". The term "National" in the organization's name is particularly irritating as it does not define to which nation-state, Cuba or the U.S., it refers, or whether to some "national" identity beyond a single nation-state.

Hand in hand with the externalization of voice, however, also goes an internationalization of voice, as the transnational societal relations become connected with inter-state relations. While the political organizations of the Cuban-Americans have been successful in influencing Washington's Cuba policy, this has also been a boon to the Cuban regime, since it serves as evidence for what is a key thesis of the Cuban government: That you are "either with Fidel or with the Yankees", with no alternative in between. This polarization has been an instrumental mechanism to delegitimize any type of dissenting voice on the island. Thus, exit via emigration cannot be seen only as reducing oppositional voice on the island but also resulting in the externalization of voice from outside, but in addition it may also impact negatively on the conditions of articulating voice domestically for those who stayed. In the Cuban case, over time the line between externalized Cuban voice and U.S. government action has become so blurred, that what had been an internal conflict of Cuban society is now framed as part of the international conflict between Cuba and the USA.⁵

⁵ An example is the Helms-Burton law passed by the U.S. Congress in 1996, in which U.S. law prescribes in detail the conditions for what would be accepted as a democratic government on the island (Hoffmann 1997).

5. Exit, Voice and Re-entry

While Hirschman sees emigration as renouncing on the possibility to articulate voice, this turns a blind eye on what we can call the “boomerang effect” of exit. In traditional migration, the classic version of this is the idea of exile and return. Latin America’s long tradition of political exile served Hirschman as illustration for ‘exit undermining voice’. He writes: “Latin American powerholders have long encouraged their political enemies and potential critics to remove themselves from the scene through voluntary exile. The right of asylum, so generously practiced by all Latin American republics, could almost be considered as a ‘conspiracy in restraint of voice’” (Hirschman 1970: 60f.)

However, Latin America also illustrates how exit in the form of exile may serve to prepare the re-entry of voice. Just to take the Cuban case, we have the prominent example of the national hero José Martí, who returned from exile in New York to lead the country’s war of independence at the end of the 19th century, and of course the case of Fidel Castro who left Cuba in 1953 to exile in Mexico only to make his re-entry on board of a motor yacht three years later with the nucleus of a guerilla army that would take up the armed revolutionary struggle.

However, the new type of migration that emerged since the 1980s and 1990s knows many more ways of re-entry into politics than the traditional exile model. Take the case of the Dominican Republic’s current President Leonel Fernández who emigrated as a child and grew up in New York and only entered Dominican politics after he returned to the country for his university studies. Another emblematic example of political re-entry after exit in the times of transnational migration is the case of Andrés Bermúdez, a Mexican migrant to the USA who so successfully entered the agro-business that he came to be known as the “tomato king” (*el rey del tomate*) (Smith/Bakker 2005). While a successful migrant, whom the assimilation paradigm would see perfectly positioned to fully “melt” into U.S. society, Bermúdez maintained so much ‘loyalty’ to his place of origin that he campaigned for the position of mayor in his native town of Jérez in the Mexican state of Zacatecas.

In both cases, and in contrast to the idea of exile and return, the experience of living in the USA was much more than a mere biographical stage in the curriculum vitae of the candidate. In both, their identity as part of a transnational migrant community became an essential resource in the political arena of their countries of origin: In the case of Leonel Fernández, the international profile and know-how he acquired symbolized a change towards a more outward-oriented foreign and economic policy; he could count on considerable economic support from the Dominican community in New York; and for many Dominicans on the island

who depend on remittances from relatives abroad or who may plan to migrate themselves, Fernández' close ties to the emigrant community proved promising political assets (Sagas/Molina 2004).

In the case of the “tomato king”, he was successful in the 2001 elections due not only to his image of economic success but also to his promise to “Americanize” Mexican politics, meant as clearing them from the vices of corruption and clientelism (Stiegler 2005). However, these elections were nullified as the candidate was seen to not fulfil the electoral requirement of continuous residence in the locality for the year preceding the mayoral election (Smith/Bakker 2005). In Hirschman's terms: Exit from the community was taken as justification to deny voice.

This incident however kicked off intense political lobby-work from Mexican emigrants in the U.S. directed at the authorities in their place of origin to change the electoral law. Those who exited did not renounce on voice (or redirected their voice to the country of residence) but directly claimed participation in the polity they had migrated from. Eventually, in 2003 the Zacatecan Congress allowed migrants with bi-national residence to run for offices. Moreover, parties were obliged to reserve quotas on their electoral lists for emigrants, thus institutionalizing their political representation at the state level.

While a number of requirements remain, the paradigmatic shift cannot be overlooked: not only do emigrants maintain ties of loyalty and make transnational claims, but also the sending polity accepts that exit is not foreclosing voice, but instead enables voice as recognition for (and to preserve) the ties of loyalty maintained by their emigrants. Exit thus did not undermine voice, but led to an understanding of an extended polity that goes beyond the borders of the nation-state.

6. How dichotomous is exit?

Hirschman's category of voice is broad and allowing all variations of gradualism. While voice, we recall, “can be graduated, all the way from faint grumbling to violent protest” (Hirschman 1970: 16), for Hirschman exit is a clear-cut dichotomous category: “One either exits or one does not” (ibid: 15).

Transnational migration clearly challenges this assumption. If strong bonds are kept with both the community of origin as much as they are developed in the place of residence, and if they act in transnational spaces rather than in one nation state or the other, then exit via

emigration is a rather relative affair. If the polity is understood in an extended sense, trans-border migration does not constitute the either-one-does-or-does-not exit. Between Puerto Rico and the United States building lives in both places has led some to define the island as a 'commuter nation' (Torre et al. 1994). But also in nation-states without the special status of the Puerto Rican case, the inclusion of the migrant communities abroad was advanced symbolically and institutionally. In Haiti, alluding to the country's administrative division in nine departments, the Haitians abroad are commonly referred to as the "Tenth Department" as to symbolically underscore that albeit living in New York or Paris they still belong to "the imagined community" (Anderson 1983) of the nation. The debate over "transnational citizenship", which for instance in Mexico has put the debate over civic and voting rights for the more than 8 million Mexican emigrants living outside of the nation's borders on the public agenda (e.g. Fitzgerald 2004), is challenging the very political fundamentals of the traditional nation-state bound notion of exit as a clear-cut dichotomous category.

It is remarkable how little of the migrant transnationalism has found its way into the broader discussion on the exit and voice approach. For instance, Dowding et al. (2000: 471), while being quite critical in their appraisal of the Hirschmanian concept and its extensions, fully endorse the dichotomous understanding of exit: "Exit is a fairly crude, binary response. (...) Operationally, exit is a dichotomous, voice a continuous variable". When applied to migration, this understanding has become wholly inadequate.

Disentangling nation, state, and government leads us to another important point: if dissatisfaction with living in a specific country leads to emigration, this might have to do little with the present governments' actions or the availability or not of the articulation of voice.

In the market model, whose logic Hirschman's scheme transfers to social and political processes, competition for clients is absolutely legitimate, and it takes place in a framework that should provide equal conditions for all competitors. As a consequence, exit and voice are seen as reactions to decline in the quality of services which is the responsibility of the referring firm or, in our case, government, and due to their "erroneous behavior".

However, in the political, economic, and social reality that frames the migration between Third World and First World states these assumptions are hardly met. The structural roots of underdevelopment and the enormous differences in income levels between North and South can only to a very limited degree be attributed to the decisions or "mistakes" of any specific government, but much rather they are the result of long-term processes connected to the countries' subaltern integration into the world market. Beyond the differences in income levels, migration theory has emphasized a number of other factors inducing migration, amongst

others arguing that patterns of human migration follow linkages or bridges established by political domination, as in the case of former colonies, and by global flows of capital, goods, and services (e.g. Sassen 1988), and pointing to the importance of “chain migration” in which transnational networks from past migration build up social capital that serves as catalyst for future migration, independently of the initial causes of emigration (Arango 2003: 15-16; Massey 1998). The exit and voice model, with its emphasis on “repairable mistakes” and focusing on governments and their actions, needs to be complemented with this type of explanations, if long-term and structural factors are to be taken into account adequately.

Here, the distinction between the state and its government is so important because both act on different time scales; the state usually is a rather long-term affair, while governments typically change every few years. So taking Latin American and Caribbean migration to the USA, Cuba seems to be a clear case for the thesis that the suppression of voice pushes the exit function. However, a look at other countries of the region is instructive. If we have spoken of the high emigration numbers from Cuba during the 1990s it is worth noting that these are below those of its major Caribbean neighbors, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica even in absolute numbers, and all the more so if calculated as per cent of the population (see the data from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, cited by Max J. Castro 2002: 5). While Haiti’s recent past has been politically tumultuous, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica both have had rather stable political multi-party systems with comparatively high availability for the articulation of voice. In both cases, emigration can be explained not so much as reaction to particular government behavior, but as a result of the structural conditions of the country and the perceived perspectives in the reception country (in both cases greatly favored by existing émigré communities in the United States).

This leads us to suggest that also in the Cuban case, given the long-term structural economic discrepancies between Cuba and the USA and the close bonds to the large community of Cuban émigrés, it is unlikely that with whatever liberties given to the articulation of voice in whatever pos-Castro scenario, Cuban migration to the USA will be at significantly lower levels than at present if not forcefully restricted by administrative means. What will change, however, are the possibilities for transnational activities which at present are greatly restricted by the political regime on the island and the conflict between both governments. In fact, the condition under which the Cuban government lets its citizens emigrate goes by the formal name of “salida definitiva”, (literally: ‘definite exit’), which explicitly underscores the Hirschmanian notion that once you exit you relinquish on your rights to voice. In a different political constellation, the Cuban state certainly could adopt more inclusionary approaches, so that – particularly given the geographical proximity between Miami and Havana – a

highly dynamic transnational social space could be expected to evolve from its very limited current form.

7. Transnational Migration as Reconfiguration of Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

Hirschman's work is not one that establishes comprehensive guidelines to follow but rather that of an intellectual "provocateur" (Foxley, Mc Pherson and O'Donnell 1986: 3). If his concepts have been thought-provoking, this includes the need to refine and rethink them in the light of changing empirical phenomena.

Transnational migration undermines the concept's fundamentals embedded in methodological nationalism. The categories of exit, voice and loyalty change their meaning, and it will be difficult to establish simple see-saw mechanisms as in Hirschman's original scheme. However, the Hirschmanian metaphor may still be of heuristic value for our understanding of the dynamics of present-day migration and its social and political implications. This paper with its sketchy empirical examples from Latin American cases hopes to have shown both: the ways in which a number of the original assumptions of Hirschman's concept are inadequate to appropriately understand the new transnational field that emerged from migration in the times of globalization; and as well the potential merit of taking the categories of exit, voice and loyalty beyond their fixation on the nation-state in order to come to grips with the new phenomena.

With the Hirschmanian categories in mind, transnational migration can be understood as a paradigmatic change in the configuration of exit, voice and loyalty – away from an understanding that sees these as mutually exclusive alternatives but instead focussing on the particular forms in which they are combined. For an advanced research agenda, these categories would need to be operationalized and put to empirical testing. By themselves, they are merely signposts in heavy traffic which do not substitute a detailed road map. But as any driver knows, if moving in a new city, widely visible signposts can be of great help to make sense of more detailed information on dead-ends and one-way streets.

Finally, there is some irony in that transnational migration in some way returns the Hirschmanian concept to live up to its original title. While in Hirschman's original scheme the three categories were actually "either-or", transnational migration stresses the "and" between them: The new migrants live up to the postulate of combining exit, voice *and* loyalty.

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