Exile dynamics and impacts of European Social Scientists since the 1930s
Transnational lives and travelling theories at
El Colegio de México and the New School for Social Research in New York

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Ruhr-University Bochum (Humboldt-Chair at EL Colegio de México until 10/2017)
Conference “Knowledge in Flight: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Scholar Rescue in North America”
December 4th | Leo Baeck Institute / December 5th | The New School for Social Research

1. Scholars as forced migrants during the 1930s
2. Comparing The New School and El Colegio de México
3. Lessons and conclusions
1. Scholars as forced migrants during the 1930s

“Knowledge in Flight:
Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Scholar Rescue in North America”

How to name “scholars in flight or in rescue”?
• scholars, intellectuals, scientists, activists, journalists, writers
• refugees escaping from death or exiled persons
• émigrés (emigrated based on political/religious exclusion and/or persecution)
• assimilating emigrants/immigrants
• suffering and return oriented Diaspora-migrants

➔ Forced migrants as neutral and open term; migration as iterative, open ended, pluri-local, pluri-directional process of negotiated participation in social and societal affairs, self ascription and ascription by others

➔ transnationalism research against “methodological nationalism”, life is possible in transnational pluri-local/pluri-national social spaces

Much studies on preconditions, forms/context and consequences/impact of fleeing, of arrival and possible return of individuals or specific groups (according to scientific discipline, political/racial/religious etc. reasons of flight etc.)

Desiderata:
• comparative studies (regions, periods, organizations)
• theoretical/conceptual embedding, e.g. travelling theories, transnationalism, rescue between charity and instrumentalism
New School for Social Research

- In 1919: founded as new model of higher education for adults leaning on Germany’s Volkshochschulen by critical scientists, some of them censored for criticizing US entry into WWI (Ch. Beard, Th. Veblen, J.H. Robinson, W.C. Mitchell, J. Dewey)
- In 1933 director Alvin Johnson founded University in Exile (later Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science) sponsoring some 180 scholars and their families persecuted by Nazi-regime as Jews or socialist/communist; financial support of Hiram Halle (businessman and inventor in oil industry) and the Rockefeller Foundation; cooperation with Rescue Committees in UK, Switzerland etc.
- Some 75 full-time professors, some 800 graduate students; 12 Centers, 4 Special Programs
El Colegio de México

- In 1938: foundation of Casa de España, based on direct permit of Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas
- October 1940: foundation of El Colegio de México, Alfonso Reyes as President during almost twenty years
- During 1970s: save harbor for forced migrants mainly from Latin America
- 7 Study Centers; some 180 full-time-professors; some 450 students; study programs: 3 BA, 8 MA, 7 PhD; more than 100 new books per year
- Cosmopolitan, republican organizational culture, combining societal responsibility and commitment with scientific rigor
- Public fellowships, meritocratic system
2. Comparing The New School and El Colegio de México

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<tr>
<th>General climate in country of arrival</th>
<th>New School</th>
<th>Colmex</th>
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<td>Roosevelt’s New Deal since March 1933; welcoming of Keynesians/New Dealers, but also certain Anti-Semitism; general cosmopolitan climate and history of New York City</td>
<td>Consolidation of Mexican revolution and higher education; central-leftist and nationalist government; general anti-immigration law and culture, antisemitism</td>
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<th>Higher education system</th>
<th>Highly established with a mix of renowned private and some public universities</th>
<th>In the making and consolidation only since the 1920s, perceived low quality</th>
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<th>Institutional setting</th>
<th>Private organizations like Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, Oberlaender Trust, philanthropists</th>
<th>Direct access of cosmopolitan Mexican intellectuals to governmental decision makers via personal networks</th>
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| ‘windows of opportunity’ | no established group opposed to recruitment of refugees; raising money for a dozen of refugees from April to October 1933 | diplomats and intellectuals with access to government; educational reforms since mid-1930s; ambiguity at UNAM |
## 2. Comparing The New School and El Colegio de México

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<th>New School</th>
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<td><strong>Cosmopolitan leaders</strong></td>
<td>Alvin Johnson: grounded in scientific work, academic management and scientific editing; personal networks of social scientists all over the world, especially in Europe</td>
<td>Daniel Cosío Villegas: intellectual and writer with longstanding diplomatic experiences; initiated rescue in early 1938; Alfonso Reyes as refugee himself; both with established networks in Europe and Latin America</td>
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<td><strong>Institutional goals and effects</strong></td>
<td>Strengthening/upgrading of a well situated academic organization academically and internationally</td>
<td>Funding a new academic organization, strengthening the national higher education and opening a national-popular perspective</td>
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<td><strong>Forced migrants addressed and invited</strong></td>
<td>Important European countries, leftist-critical, Jewish persons from Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Belgium</td>
<td>Exclusively Spaniards, specific combination of nationalistic populism and special relation with ex-colonial power</td>
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3. Lessons and conclusions

1. Catastrophe and bane for some, boon and opportunity for others; between charity and instrumental utilitarianism

2. Combination of cosmopolitan/transnational leaders and windows of opportunity (organizational goals and institutional environment)

“In fact, Johnson’s failure to sustain a permanent faculty at the New School after 1922 may have worked to the refugee’s advantage. At the New School no established group opposed their recruitment, nor were they under any compulsion to blend in or to become Americanized” (Krohn 1993: 86)

“We would have a characteristic that would provoke sympathy all over the world, in the same way as it did for various foreign universities when having received the wise German men expelled by the hitlerism [...]. At the same time, we would acquire ten men of the first line, who would help us raise the level of our culture that has fallen so many years ago” (Daniel Cosío Villegas in 1936, cited according to Lida 2000: 33, translation LP)
3. Lessons and conclusions

1. Catastrophe and bane for some, boon and opportunity for others; between charity and instrumental utilitarianism

2. Combination of cosmopolitan/transnational leaders and *windows of opportunity* (organizational goals and institutional environment)

3. “Knowledge in flight” and dealing with scholars as forced migrants is a collective and historical learning process

4. Forced migrants’ trajectory as iterative, open ended, pluri-local, pluri-directional process of self ascription and ascription by others, as negotiation

5. We need more studies comparing regions, groups, organizations and periods, framed by theoretical concepts (like travelling theories, transnationalism etc.)
3. Lessons and conclusions

6. There should be some bridges between science and practical coping with current challenges and needs; power relations have to be considered.

**Forced migration challenges and recent initiatives between Middle-East and Europe: multi-level, multi-organizational, public funding and science foundations**

The UNHCR program Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) since 1992

Due to the refugee movements from Near and Middle East, Africa and Asia, **Europe became the main region of arrival of scientists seeking refuge**. The top five countries of origin of individuals supported by the Scholars at Risk network (in total 192) in 2016 were Syria, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Ethiopia. And the five main target countries of internationally displaced researchers in 2015 and 2016 were Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden (according to the sequence of the ranking in 2016). Six out of ten researchers came to Europe, and four out of ten went to the Americas (Humboldt Foundation 2016: 12ff)

- [UNHCR program Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI)](http://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/40dbee984/albert‐einstein‐german‐academic‐refugee‐initiative‐fund‐dafi‐frequently.html)
- [Project “Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians” (HOPES)](https://www.daad.de/der‐daad/fluechtlinge/infos/en/46510‐hopes‐higher‐and‐further‐education‐opportunities‐and‐perspectives‐for‐syrians/)
- [International network of universities and Scholars at Risk (SAR)](https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/the‐network/)
- [Phillip‐Schwartz‐Initiative; coordinated by Alexander‐von‐Humboldt‐Foundation](https://www.humboldt‐foundation.de/web/philipp‐schwartz‐initiative.html)
- [German Research Foundation (DFG) and Volkswagen Foundation program to integrate refugee scholars and scientists in research projects funded by the foundation](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/announcements_proposals/2017/info_wissenschaft_17_17/)
- [Academy in Exile: 6 fellowships for Scholars from Turkey for 24 months in Berlin or Essen](http://iaspm‐dach.net/2017/10/24/jobs‐fellowships‐fuer‐tuerkische‐akademikerinnen/)

**Thank you for your attention!**