

Transgression and reproduction: On diversity, otherness and mobility in the multicultural place/space

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This paper discusses the contradictory and transgressive forces in the multicultural place/space from an empirical, theoretical and methodological point of view. Since Harvey's (1989) theory of time-space compression there have been a lot of theoretical investigations into the technological aspect of globalisation. It has been argued that globalisation is a challenge to the nation-state and the concept of place because we live in a world where borders and barriers no longer are significant. We live in a virtual and borderless world. But at the same time place-identity has been part of place-marketing and place promotion where the main task is to build distinctions and imaginative borders to other places and often to other people. We also see that this "borderless" world is not the reality for all people. The mobility in a context of international migration still depends on class, race, ethnicity and gender, and immigration policies in Europe are more restrictive than ever.

Through a discussion of different concepts of place and space, this paper argues theoretically that this contradictory and transgressive situation is best understood as virtual, real and imagined place/space at the same time. And further, from a semiotic approach and from an approach of experiential realism, it is argued epistemologically and methodologically to take into account the material aspects of interpretation, and the embodied experience, if we want to understand transgressive practices in contexts of international migration and ethnic relations in small towns and rural areas.