Chapter 15
Globalising Rural Areas: International Migrants in Rural Germany

Birte Nienaber and Ursula Roos

Abstract International migrants sometimes decide to live in rural instead of in urban areas. These migrants can be clustered into different groups, e.g. amenity migrants, cross-border migrants, asylum seekers, training migrants and working migrants (seasonal and permanent). In rural areas in Germany, for example, in 2010 11.1 % of the population had a migratory background. In the German census for 2011, people with a migratory background include "all immigrant and nonimmigrant foreigners, all German citizens who immigrated after 1955 into the current territory of the Federal Republic of Germany and those Germans with at least one parent who immigrated into the current territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1955" (translated from the text from the Statistisches Bundesamt, Zensus 2011: Ausgewählte Ergebnisse. Wiesbaden, 2013b, p. 26) (Statistisches Bundesamt, Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Bevökerung mit Migrationshintergrund – Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2010. Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2. Wiesbaden, 2011). Even though this phenomenon of international migrants moving into rural instead of urban areas exists, it has long been neglected by researchers.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate how international migrants support the development of a "globalized countryside" (Woods, Prog Hum Geogr 31 (4):485–507, 2007). Afterwards we focus on two different German case studies. First, we analyse international migration into the district town of Merzig (Saarland). Second, we investigate cross-border migration into rural areas in the German-Austrian borderlands (Bavaria). Based on the results, in our conclusion we discuss the statement that international migrants globalise rural areas.

Keywords Rural regions • Globalisation • International migration • Saarland • Bavaria

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15.1 Introduction

When people think of rural areas, they often think of the so-called rural idyll with the traditional localised community. However, things have changed. Rural areas in Europe and in many other parts of the world are now integrated into globalisation processes. "'Globalization' surfaced as the buzzword of the 'Roaring Nineties' because it best captured the increasingly interdependent nature of social life on our planet" (Steger 2009, p. 1). However, it was not only a challenge for the 1990s, but is still a key challenge facing the regions in the early twenty-first century. Significant challenges can be of social, economic, cultural, ecological or political procedural or normative dimensions. Furthermore, globalisation is seen as a discourse (e.g. Kelly 1999). Steger (2009) explains different aspects of globalisation: the creation and multiplication of networks, the expansion and stretching of social relations, activities and interdependencies, the intensification and acceleration of social exchanges and activities as well as the subjective level of globalisation.

Cid Aguayo (2008) argues that globalisation processes take place in all aspects of life, even in small settlements which she calls "global villages". As these globalisation processes also appear in rural areas, Woods (2007) calls these regions "globalized countryside" and names ten characteristics. For our paper, the three most important of these characteristics are that a globalised rural region "is both the supplier and the employer of migrant labour" (Woods 2007, p. 492), "attracts high levels of non-national property investment, for both commercial and residential purposes" (Woods 2007, p. 493) and "is characterized by increasing social polarization" (Woods 2007, p. 493).

Keeping these three characteristics in mind, in this paper we wish to investigate the impact of international migration into rural areas and how these migration processes globalise rural regions. Firstly, we want to give a general overview of international migration into rural areas. We thus investigate the question of which migrant groups discover rural rather than the very intensively analysed metropolitan/urban regions. Afterwards we focus on two different German case studies. Firstly, we analyse international migration into the district town of Merzig (Saarland). Secondly, we investigate cross-border migration into rural areas in the German-Austrian borderlands (Bavaria). Based on the results, in our conclusion we discuss the statement that international migrants globalise rural areas.

15.2 International Migrants in Rural Areas

The variation of international migration into rural areas is very broad. However, the research done on international migration into and not from rural areas is quite a new research topic.

A considerable amount of research has been done on seasonal workers, especially those employed in agriculture: for example, the Polish asparagus harvesters

in Germany (e.g. Becker 2010) or the Moroccan strawberry pickers in Spain (e.g. Mannon et al. 2011). Besides the migrant agricultural workers, there are also some international migrant workers who arrived in rural areas as part of the influx of guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s and settled there, instead of moving and staying in the industrialised urban parts of Germany (e.g. Geiger 1975; Nienaber and Frys 2012; Nienaber and Roos 2012a, b). Besides these specific types of working migrants, research has also been done on international working migrants to rural areas in general (e.g. Jentsch et al. 2007; Danson and Jentsch 2009).

Another type of international migration that has been further analysed by researchers is "amenity migration", a type of lifestyle migration. "Amenity migrants" do not want to live in urban areas or in their former rural surroundings, but search for a "nice" and more attractive place to live. This amenity migration can be associated with retirement (e.g. British people retiring to Tuscany (King and Patterson 1998), as in the general anthology edited by Brown and Glasgow (2008)), with recreational aspects (e.g. Gallent et al. 2005; Glorioso 2009; McIntyre 2009), with the desire for "subjective well-being" (e.g. Cai et al. 2014) or with the search for the rural idyll (e.g. British moving to Pomurska, Slovenia (Lampič and Mrak 2012)). This type of migration can be also seen as a rural gentrification process, although rural gentrification processes are multifaceted (Stockdale 2010) and this is only one aspect of it.

Another example of international migrants coming to rural areas is that of asylum seekers who cannot freely choose their place of residence in the country where they applied for asylum. Setting up new homes for them in the rural countryside sometimes leads to problems between different local actors (e.g. Hubbard 2005; Findlay et al. 2007). It also "raises serious questions about the ability of the [e.g.] English countryside to accommodate Otherness" (Hubbard 2005).

A non-forced international type of migration is cross-border residential migration. This type plays an increasingly important role regarding the internationalisation of rural border regions in many parts of Europe (e.g. from the Netherlands to Belgium or to Germany (e.g. van Houtum and Gielis 2006; Gielis and van Houtum 2012), from Poland to Germany (Balogh 2013; Nienaber and Kriszan 2013) and from Italy to Slovenia (Jagodic 2012)).

All these international movements are often connected with transnational social networks. For example, Brazilians came to the rural municipality of Gort in the Irish county Galway to work in the meat processing industry as they had just lost their jobs in this field in Brazil. Then gradually more Brazilian workers were attracted and in 2006 one-third of the population of this town had a Brazilian migratory background (Maher 2010). Such networks can become established in very different rural settings.

Furthermore, there is also research regarding special marketing activities for attracting foreigners to rural, sparsely populated or depopulated regions (Eimermann 2013; see also Hedberg and do Carmo 2012).

In Hedberg's and Haandrikman's (2014) analysis focusing on international migrants moving to the Swedish countryside, they document how heterogeneous

international migrants are regarding to age, sex, nationality, household structure, labour market status, duration of stay and residential location.

Considering these various types of international migration in rural areas, Oliva (2010) calls the Spanish rural areas "rural melting pots". He therefore wants "to refer to at least three things. Firstly, we suggest there is a process of constant social diversification as a result of the mobilities that have arisen in recent decades (like returning pensioners, retirement migrants, neo-liberal inhabitants, ex-urban professional classes, holidaymakers and amenity migrants). [. . .] Secondly, this concept indicates uncertainty over processes of change and social diversification. [. . .] Finally, the concept refers to the idea of a structure or container that is both physical and social – the rural areas where these processes can be seen and the sociological environments in which those involved draw up different social strategies" (Oliva 2010, p. 279). Therefore it is not only the process of international migration to rural areas that is discussed but also the consequences for the regions, specifically the integration of migrants (e.g. Jentsch 2007).

15.3 International Migrants in Rural Germany

In German rural areas, all the types of migrants mentioned above can be found. As one consequence, international migrants are very diverse, e.g. sex, age, nationality and duration of stay. However, nowadays there are four major groups of international migrants in rural Germany. These are working migrants, ethnic Germans ("Spätaussiedler") as well as Jewish contingent refugees from the former Soviet Union and asylum seekers. These migration groups are not equally distributed across rural regions, so some areas are particularly preferred by specific migrants or migrant groups compared with others. While working migrants mainly live in economically viable regions, the other groups stay in areas of allocation – often close to their first reception centre or temporary accommodation. However, from 1 January 2010, the law was changed so that Spätaussiedler are now allowed to freely choose their place of residence and are not being allocated a specific destination for the first 3 years (Schader-Stiftung 2011).

In the 2010 census, 10,336,000 people lived in rural areas in Germany. 11.1 % of them had a migratory background. 3.6 % were foreign citizens with migratory experience themselves, 0.7 % had no migratory experience, 4.3 % had already gained German citizenship but had migratory experience themselves, and 2.4 % had German citizenship without migratory experience of their own but with a migratory background. Compared with 2009, the amount of people with a migratory background living in German rural areas was reduced by 4.2 %. In comparison with conurbations or urbanised areas, the percentage of citizens with a migratory background in rural regions is low. For example, only 6.5 % of all foreign citizens with personal migratory experience reside in rural areas compared with 67.9 % in conurbations and 25.7 % in urbanised areas (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011). Beyond that, there are differences, for example, regarding age structure between

the indigenous residents of rural regions and those originating from elsewhere. While 68.8 % of foreign nationals are between 25 and 65 years old (i.e. working age), only 43.3 % of the Germans with a migratory background and 54.5 % of the Germans without one are aged between 25 and 65. Moreover, the Germans with a migratory background are the youngest of the three groups, while the Germans without a migratory background are the oldest (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013a; own calculation).

In rural Germany, 83.15 % of all foreign citizens have completed a school-leaving certificate in 2011, but nearly half of them (46.1 %) have a lower secondary school certificate and only 24.2 % of them a high school certificate (Abitur). 11.7 % of the foreign citizens have no school certificate and 4.4 % are still in school. Compared with conurbations, in rural areas there are fewer people with Abitur, but more having a school certificate in general (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013a; own calculation).

For foreign nationals, in 2011 the average household size in rural Germany was 2.31 persons per household (compared with 2.36 in conurbations and 2.41 in urbanised areas), whereas for German citizens with a migratory background it was 2.37 (compared with 2.39 in conurbations and 2.48 in urbanised areas), and for German citizens without a migratory background it was 2.04 (compared with 1.89 in conurbations and 2.02 in urbanised areas) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013a). In addition, there are also differences regarding the income of people with and without a migratory background. Accordingly, the income of foreign citizens and German citizens with a migratory background living in rural areas was lower than the income of German citizens without a migratory background (see Table 15.1).

At the same time the percentage of people depending on financial assistance (welfare) was higher (see Table 15.2).

A study of rural international migrants to the federal state of Saarland and to the eastern part of the federal state of Saxony showed that migrants are also very diverse in terms of their reasons for migration as well as their experiences in Germany. In general, the interviewees with a migratory background in Saarland were very satisfied with their move to a rural area. Nevertheless, they also mentioned negative aspects they were confronted with. That is why they demanded, for example, "equality of migrants on the labour market, more language assistants and courses in rural areas, less bureaucracy and more integration into local activities" (Nienaber and Frys 2012, p. 86). The comparative evaluation of the results of both

Table 15.1 Net income per household in rural areas 2011 (percentage of each group)

	<1300 €	1300–2000 €	2000–3200 €	>3200 €	n.a.	Total
German citizens without a migratory background	27.7	24.3	25.5	18.6	3.9	100
German citizens with a migratory background	31.0	23.0	27.4	15.5	3.1	100
Foreign citizens	36.1	22.9	26.8	14.1	0.0	100

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2013a; own calculation)

Table 15.2 Income source per person in rural areas 2011 (percentage of each group)

	Employment	Family members	Pension	Welfare	Total
German citizens without a migratory background	45	22	27	6	100
German citizens with a migratory background	36	40	14	10	100
Foreign citizens	47	26	13	14	100

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2013a; own calculation)

case studies (Saarland, eastern Saxony) explains how dominant values in rural areas could on the one hand complicate the integration processes and on the other hand could sometimes cause xenophobia. However, migrants who decided to move to a rural area often prefer rural lifestyles (due to their own childhood or due to positive attitudes towards rural life) (Nadler et al. 2012). However, this is on the condition that they are allowed to freely choose their place of residence and not be allocated one according to an allocation formula.

In addition to these types of international migrants residing in rural Germany, there are also seasonal workers, especially those working in agriculture, but also in gastronomy, hotels and the construction business. These migrants stay only for a couple of weeks or up to 4 months each year working in Germany and then migrate back to their country of origin (Becker 2010). Statistics focusing on the numbers of such people working and staying in rural as well as in urban areas do not – to our knowledge – exist.

15.4 Case Studies

With the aim of tracing the migration and integration paths of international migrants living in rural areas, 12 problem-centred interviews were conducted in 2013 in the district town of Merzig (Saarland). The selection of the interview partners was based on socio-demographic aspects (e.g. age, sex, educational background and current labour situation) as well as the migratory background (e.g. nationality, duration of stay and reason for migration). For the interviews, an interview guide was developed, focusing on the four dimensions of integration (structural, cultural, social and identificational integration) and consisting of questions regarding individual migration as well as integration processes. After the interviews had been transcribed, they were analysed in the form of migration and integration biographies, tracing these processes and helping to identify factors that were useful for integration and those that were a hindrance to it. Two out of these 12 interviews will be explored in the Sect. 15.4.1.

In Markt Scheidegg, in Bavaria, we conducted ten qualitative in-depth interviews with Austrian citizens in 2011 about their reasons for living in Markt Scheidegg and their integration into their home communities as well as into their

arrival communities. These interviews were then transcribed and analysed. Moreover, a network analysis has been made for some of these interviewees. In an additional step, all houses where Austrian citizens were registered were mapped with details of the type of housing, the age of the houses, etc., to find out if any special spatial residential structures exist. As the municipality has changed the house numbers and names of streets several times, the houses of fifteen Austrian residences could not be identified.

15.4.1 Migration and Integration Paths of International Migrants in the District Town of Merzig (Saarland)

The district town of Merzig is located in the federal state of Saarland, near the French and Luxembourgish borders. Due to the below-average housing density, the sparse population and the high percentage of open spaces, for example, the regional development plan, "settlement" section, includes the town as well as the whole district in the spatial category of "rural areas" (Chef der Staatskanzlei 2006). In 2012, Merzig had a population of 30,267, with approximately 1980 people with foreign citizenship from over 75 different countries (Kreisstadt Merzig 2012a, b). The municipality was awarded the honour of "Ort der Vielfalt" ("Place of Diversity") by the federal German government in 2010 with regard to the multitude of social strata, lifestyles, social backgrounds and cultures as well as innovative social approaches, which were developed above all by local international migrants. Specific encounter structures have already been developed thanks in part to the multicultural character of Merzig, e.g. the "Interkulturelle Woche" (Intercultural Week) or the "Nacht der Kulturen" (Night of Cultures). In the same manner, the mosque in Merzig organises interreligious and intercultural festivals in order to promote dialogue between the religions and cultures. Also with regard to culture and sports, there are several opportunities which have been organised by people with a migratory background. These include the Italian theatre group Compagnia Teatro Popolare "Citta Di Merzig" and the club "Associazione Sportive Italia", as well as a Kurdish and Turkish soccer club which has Arabic, German, Polish and Turkish players. Some of the existing self-organised immigrant associations include the Spätaussiedler integration association "Miteinander Leben e.V." and "DITIB Merzig", which is a Turkish cultural centre with a cultural association as well as a mosque congregation (Internationaler Bund 2009).

The variety of inhabitants, in terms of nationalities, cultures, religions, migration purposes and ways of life, amongst other things, makes up the multicultural character of Merzig. This diversity is also reflected in the interviews. Two shortened migration and integration biographies are therefore presented below. Amongst other types of migration purposes (e.g. migration for employment purposes, migration for other purposes, German resettlers) that can be found in the municipality,

these are examples of migration for training purposes and migration for humanitarian and political purposes.

15.4.1.1 Migration for Training Purposes

Sebastián O.[1]: "It's An Absolutely New World When You Are Here. You Have to Explore What It Is and See What the New World Offers."

Sebastián was born in the mid-1970s in Mexico. After completing his high school-leaving certificate, he started a course of study in the field of electrical engineering. During his studies he decided to do a PhD in Germany, so he applied to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for a PhD scholarship. After being accepted, Sebastián left Mexico with the intention to return after completing his PhD. He arrived in Germany in autumn 2002. Regarding his German-language skills, the DAAD organised a 6-month language course in Hesse. Furthermore, they took care of the flat-hunting as well as the administrative matters, e.g. visa extension. The scholarship as well as the support he received from the DAAD created good conditions for his stay in Germany. However, the lack of language skills caused problems at the beginning, so Sebastián was motivated and willing to learn German quickly and well. Besides the official language class, he participated in a Tandem Language Programme and learnt on his own initiative by reading the daily newspaper. In addition to improving his language skills, the course and the Tandem Programme gave him the opportunity to make contact with other people. He thus built up initial contacts with other people from Latin America, but also from Germany, with whom he spent his free time.

After finishing the language course, Sebastián transferred to a university in Rhineland-Palatinate to start his PhD thesis. There, he met open-minded colleagues who had sympathy for his situation as an immigrant. They therefore organised an apartment for him and offered to use English as their common working language. Through his contacts amongst colleagues as well as fellow students, Sebastián built up a new social network. Beyond that, events organised by the general student committee gave him an opportunity for socialising. At one of these events, he met his future wife, who studied at Saarland University at that time. Some years later, and shortly before the completion of his PhD thesis, Sebastián moved to Saarland to be with her, because of the birth of their son. During his studies, he came to the decision not to return to Mexico, and this was strengthened by the birth of his son. Instead, he preferred to stay in Germany to gain some work experience. After gaining his PhD in 2008, he therefore started job hunting in the Greater Region (bordering parts of Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, France) as well as in Baden-Wurttemberg. Sebastián's former colleagues from the university as well as friends assisted him with the written applications. On the one hand, they supplied him with insider information regarding the field of electrical engineering and on the other

[1] To preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, their original names have been changed.

hand they did the proofreading of the documents in support of the application. After some weeks, he received a job offer in the field of electrical engineering and automotive technology at a company in Baden-Wurttemberg. However, a so-called "Vorrangprüfung" (priority review[2]) had to be carried out before Sebastián definitively got the job. The new workmates were interested in his country of origin, which provided a common basis for discussions. Personal contacts with German colleagues in particular also enabled him to improve his German-language skills. In addition to the personal acceptance, he was also appreciated for what he could deliver. After 2 years of service, Sebastián got a different job in this federal state. While his wife and son still lived in Saarland, he stayed in a flat in Baden-Wurttemberg during the week and commuted back at weekends.

This separation between family and workplace as well as the wish to have a common centre of life in the future prompted him to search for a new job in the Greater Region. In 2012, he found a vacancy in an international company in Luxembourg. Due to the new job, his wife's position as well as the existing social and technical infrastructure, Sebastián and his family moved into the district town of Merzig in the summer 2012. However, the move meant a daily commute of 60 km one way, but for him it was more important that his wife could work near their child's kindergarten, so as to be available if necessary. The family rented a flat in the centre of Merzig. While they have only tenuous contacts with the neighbours in their living environment, primarily the couple have established close relationships with other parents with whom they came into contact at the kindergarten and at the playgroup. Beyond that, Sebastián's circle of acquaintances and friends consists of former colleagues from the university as well as from his previous jobs. Although the friends are spread over Germany, they regularly meet up with their families. In addition to his connections with non-German citizens, e.g. Bulgarians, Dutch, French, Italians, Spanish and Spätaussiedler, his contacts with Germans are of particular interest to him. Sebastián justifies this by saying that some of the non-German residents may return to their countries of origin someday, which would mean that he would lose touch with them. In the case of the German inhabitants, it is likely that they will stay in Germany. In particular, he appreciates the mentality of the "Saarländer" (people living in Saarland), which is characterised by openness and friendliness. He thus feels that he is welcome in Merzig as well as in Saarland, so that he has a sense of belonging and of kinship with the host society and therefore wants to live in Merzig permanently. On the basis of local and regional kinship, in Sebastián's case a national sense of belonging also developed, which is why he defines himself as a "German-Mexican" who has his centre of life in Germany. In particular through his wife, children, friends and colleagues, a personal relationship with Germany has grown. He is grateful for these relations

[2] Based on the job description, the German Federal Employment Agency "has to check whether priority applicants are available on the regional or national labour market. Only if there is no appropriate person available the Employment Agency is allowed to accept the appointment of the foreign worker" (translated from the text of Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge and Nationale Kontaktstelle des EMN 2010, p. 28).

as well as for the opportunities that were given to him in Germany. Due to his bond with Germany, it was his wish to take German citizenship. In 2013, he and his son became naturalised (Interview No. 9).

15.4.1.2 Migration for Humanitarian and Political Purposes

Karim F.: "Kurdish Heritage Does Not Prevent Integration into German Society as a Kurd."

Karim was born in the late 1970s in Syria, as a member of the ethnic group of Kurds. Following his school-leaving qualification, he began his studies in the field of food science and completed them successfully. He was hired by an international, globalised company in Syria. Accordingly, he worked together with colleagues from all over the world, including Germany. From 2008, due to his German-speaking colleagues as well as his interest in learning foreign languages, Karim attended German-language courses. Unlike his brother, he did not wish to leave the country. However, the outbreak of the Syrian civil war forced him to flee. Even before the war, he was a political opponent of the government, which is why he came under threat from the government and supporters of radical Islam. The supporters of radical Islam in particular threatened him with death, so he decided to flee to Germany. He chose the federal state of Saarland, where his brother and his uncle already lived. On 1 January 2012, Karim entered Germany and applied for political asylum. He was first housed in the reception centre in Lebach (Saarland).

He received support from the authorities with regard to all the formalities, the request for political asylum as well as participation in an intensive language training course. The employees of the department showed respect and esteem for him, feelings that he never experienced as a member of the ethnic group of Kurds in Syria before. In particular, the closeness to his brother and his uncle gave him a sense of safety. However, the situation in Syria as well as his escape weighed on his mind.

After his application for asylum had been assessed, Karim was recognised as a refugee and was thus entitled to begin gainful employment. The work permit is very important for him because on the one hand it means he can become financially independent and on the other hand it enables him to pursue a meaningful activity. As soon as his German-language skills are sufficient, he plans to obtain employment or further training. He also aims to have his degree recognised. His limited language skills restrict him in establishing contact with German citizens. He therefore has only some passing acquaintances amongst his uncle's neighbours. He has experienced openness and sympathy for his situation as well as interest in his country of origin, which has helped him to develop feelings of esteem and well-being. Through intercultural exchange and education, Karim also dreams of establishing a close relationship with the host society. In his opinion, common interests will help to build up a social network. Once he has proficient language skills, he will participate in, for example, cultural events or art exhibitions and establish a German-Kurdish association encouraging intercultural exchange.

As he is aware of the importance of language, he steadily improves his language skills by attending language courses and reading German-language newspapers. He also watches German television. Karim's brother explains unknown words in German to him, while Karim translates the words into Kurdish in order to improve his memorisation of terms. In particular, children's books and films using simple syntax are, he believes, helpful for his language acquisition. While he still requires linguistic support during doctor's visits and visits to the authorities, he does shopping and runs errands independently. Because of the language course that takes place at the adult education centre in Merzig, Karim lives during the week in his brother's flat in the district town. Still, his domicile is the first reception centre in Lebach where he spends the weekends. Together with his brother, he is looking for a flat in the district town of Merzig. However, existing resentments on the part of the majority society as well as the upper limit of rent imposed by the social security office make the flat-hunting more difficult. Karim attributes the lack of understanding for his situation shown by local people primarily to the fact that they have had no personal experience of migration. For example, some landlords with a migratory background were more open-minded about renting to migrants, but even with them, he has not yet succeeded in signing a tenancy.

There are still many bonds to his country of origin, which is why Karim is often homesick and misses his former home. As soon as the political situation allows a return migration, he wants to go back to Syria. At the moment, the civil war and the fear of persecution by supporters of radical Islam make any return absolutely impossible. That is why he maintains his relationships with family and friends via social networks. However, the war and the associated intermittent collapse of the Internet make regular communication more difficult. In addition to his personal contacts, he also maintains his links with Kurdish culture. Thus, for example, Karim celebrates the Kurdish Newroz festival and participates in Kurdish weddings. If the political conditions in Syria do not allow a return, he could also imagine that Germany may become a "home" country for him. The feelings of well-being and security in Germany give him confidence and optimism for his future. Furthermore, the respect as well as the tolerance that the host society has shown for him and his culture enables him to develop multiple cultural links (Interview No. 11).

Both biographies reflect the diversity that accompanies international migration processes. This diversity comprises, for example, socio-demographic aspects, countries of origin, the voluntary nature of migration and the reasons for it, cultural and religious backgrounds as well as the existence of transnational networks. Due to immigration and the associated diversity, not only urban but also rural areas gain plurality and improve international networking.

15.4.2 Cross-Border Migrants at the German-Austrian Border (Bavaria)

At the German-Austrian border there are several German towns with a higher rate of Austrian citizens. Thus, for example, in 2011, there were 117 Austrian citizens living in the Bavarian village of Markt Scheidegg that is located close to the border with the Austrian federal state of Vorarlberg. Forty-seven percent of them were born between 1960 and 1969, 22 % between 1950 and 1959, 13 % between 1980 and 1989, 11 % between 1970 and 1979, and 10 % between 1940 and 1949. The other age groups were less than or equal to 5 %. 53.8 % of the Austrian citizens in Markt Scheidegg were female and 52.1 % resided in the main town. The other inhabitants were spread over small villages or lived in isolated farmhouses (own calculation according to the information from the municipality of Markt Scheidegg, May 2011). 62.4 % of the mapped residential addresses of Austrian citizens were built before 1990 and 32.5 % of the houses need major refurbishment. Otherwise, some of the houses were very newly refurbished imposing villas. Regarding the form of accommodation, 16.2 % of the Austrian citizens lived in apartment houses and 28.2 % in one-or-two-family dwellings. Furthermore 10.3 % resided on a farm. Just under half of the Austrian citizens lived in residential estates, the others lived in mixed-use houses. Other properties besides agricultural ones were hotels/restaurants, garages/repair shops, offices, surgeries or hospitals (analysis of mapping). While Austrians came to Germany in the 1950s and 1960s to find jobs, now people (Austrians or Germans) often work on the Austrian side of the border (Interview with the Mayor).

The qualitative interviews show more in detail why the interviewees moved to rural Germany and reflect the extent of social, professional and identificational connections to Austria that exist. Regarding the reasons for migration, the interviewees in Markt Scheidegg can be grouped into four different types: one group includes marriage migrants, the second group atypical cross-border commuters, the third group Austrian citizens in Markt Scheidegg without a migration experience of their own and a fourth group comprises working migrants. In the following section we will exemplify these groups by analysing one example per type.

The first interviewee to be studied here represents the group of marriage migrants. She is between 60 and 65 years old and came from the Vorarlberg area of Austria that is just across the border. She moved to Markt Scheidegg because she married a German in the 1970s. She still has personal bonds to her sister and brother who live in Austria. However, apart from her former husband, she has no contact with any former friends in Austria. Due to her professional involvement as well as her social networks in Germany (she has contacts to Germans as well as Austrians, especially to two Austrian neighbours), she feels quite integrated in the municipality of Markt Scheidegg. Austria is her home country and she still has very important mental ties to this country, but she has now lived in Germany for 25 years, and prior to that she had already worked in this country for 20 years. Although she feels comfortable about living in Germany, neither a sense of Germany as a homeland

nor a national identification with Germany has developed. However, she wants to grow old in Markt Scheidegg. In her mind, she does not perceive the border between the two states any longer (Interview No. 2).

The second interviewee is between 50 and 59 years old, single and has a different story. He represents an atypical cross-border commuter, meaning that even though he is an Austrian citizen, he lives in Germany, but still works in Austria. This situation causes several problems, such as regarding the different tax systems and insurance systems, as well as bank loans. In 1980 he moved to Germany for the first time. In recent years, on the one hand he has changed his place of residence across the border several times, moving from Austria to Germany and back again, and on the other hand he had various jobs in Germany as well as in Austria. Before settling down in Markt Scheidegg, he lived in Vorarlberg, but he does not originally come from the federal state of Vorarlberg, but from the state of Upper Austria. After his divorce, he searched for a place to live that is closer to his work and decided to move to Markt Scheidegg. He has no contact with Austrians living in Markt Scheidegg, but with Austrians in Austria (family, friends, colleagues), and with Germans in Germany as well as with Germans in Austria. Besides these contacts he maintains links with family members and friends in Switzerland and in Liechtenstein, with whom he is in regular contact. In his opinion, knowledge of the country of destination is mostly important for the integration process. Using the same language in the country of origin as well as in the country of destination is particularly useful. Furthermore, there is the shared history: Markt Scheidegg was part of the Habsburg regime before Napoleon came and the border shifted, and this could positively influence his personal integration. Although he could not really define whether he feels Austrian or German, he limits Germany to Bavaria or even to the region of Allgäu, which he calls "his Germany". One step in his integration process was the gaining of political "power" which allowed him to vote in the municipal council elections in Germany. However, he would not request the German citizenship that would enable him to vote in state or federal elections as well. With regard to his perception of the border, he only recognises the border when he sees the former customs house which reminds him of crossing an open border where there used to be check points in the past. Furthermore, he also has the feeling that the Austrian and German mentalities are somehow changing and drifting further apart. He finished the interview with "It is never perfect. That does not exist" (Interview No. 3).

The third example representing an Austrian citizen without a migration experience of his own is an "Ur-Scheidegger",[3] born and raised in Markt Scheidegg. He is between 40 and 49 years old and lives together with his wife as well as his three children. Whereas his grandfather originally came from Austria, his children have now dual nationality. Other branches of his family moved back to Austria or have recently come to Germany (his brother-in-law). He feels very well integrated, especially as he has been elected to the municipal council of Markt Scheidegg.

[3] Indigenous person from Markt Scheidegg

So even though he has more contact with Germans, he also has contact with other Austrians (living in Austria or in Germany). Since the border is open and does not close at midnight any longer, many more people cross the border to join sports clubs or other types of associations. However, he is only involved in associations on the German side. The main problems for him as an Austrian citizen living in Germany have been renewing his ID card and obtaining a work permit for his apprenticeship when he was younger. Due to the fact that he was born and raised in Markt Scheidegg, he feels at home and loves the countryside (Interview No. 5).

The last example that will be shown here illustrates the type of working migrant represented by a woman who is between 50 and 59 years old, living in Germany since 1980. She moved directly to Markt Scheidegg even though she worked in the neighbouring district. She feels integrated into the community of this municipality, but outside the district she has no other contacts with other parts of Germany. Her parents, siblings and friends are all still living in Austria. Although she has now been in Germany for longer than she was in Austria, for her Austria and not Germany is the home country. She thinks that her contacts with Germans and Austrians are more or less equal. Once a week she crosses the border for shopping as well as to meet family and friends in Austria. Having her Austrian master craftsman's diploma recognised in Germany caused problems at the beginning, and she had to do an additional 14-day course to enable her to work as a self-employed person, as she does nowadays (Interview No 8).

These four examples show that even though all these people could be called cross-border migrants (see Fig. 15.1), their biographies are very different. Moreover, their reasons for moving to Germany and keeping or cutting their links to Austria are very diverse. The reasons why they moved to a rural region are very heterogeneous too: the main reasons are the proximity to Austria (family, friends, job), marriage (municipality where the husband is from (often farms)) and/or cheap real estate market (especially to rent).

15.5 Conclusion

The biographies of the international migrants in rural German areas in Saarland and Bavaria that have been explored here show some similarities as well as differences. On the one hand we have investigated short-distance international migration, mostly just across a neighbouring border from Austria to Bavaria (Germany), and on the other hand we have long-distance migration from Mexico or Syria to Germany.

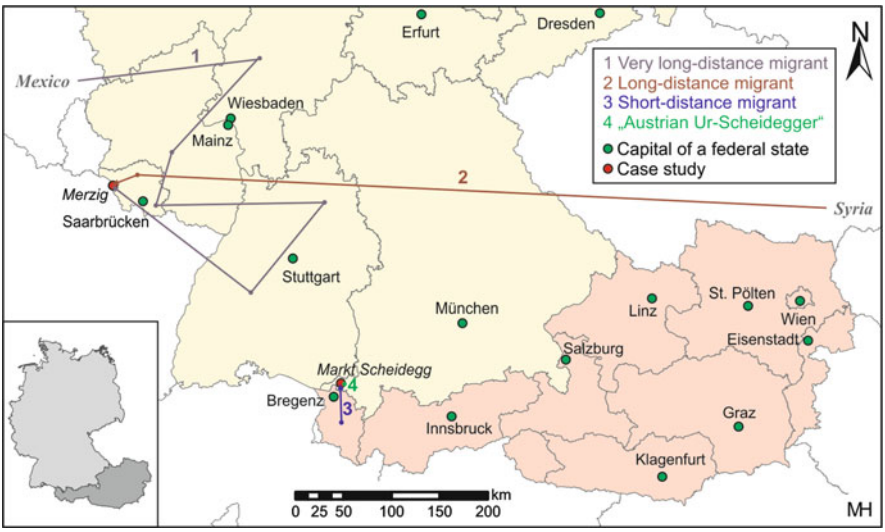

Fig. 15.1 Map of the migration patterns of four interviewees (Source: own elaboration)

Moreover, the examples show that the reasons for the decision to move to a rural area are very diverse: e.g. marriage, friends/relatives, work, cheap real estate market or allocation by the first reception centre. Also, the variety of examples shows that even though most of the interviewed migrants came by choice, the migrant from Syria, at least, was forced to flee.

To conclude this chapter, we want to come back to the three characteristics of a "globalized countryside" (Woods 2007) relating to mobility.

Firstly, a globalised rural region "is both the supplier and the employer of migrant labour" (Woods 2007, p. 492). Analysis of the migrants' biographies show that work is an important factor in choosing where to live. If this workplace is in a rural area, it can attract international migrants. Moreover, marriage migration can be combined with work. In the interviews that were explored here, Austrian women came to Germany to marry into farm households and then worked on the farms. So even though work was not the reason for the woman to migrate, it was the reason for her future husband to stay and to marry somebody who is willing to work on a farm as well.

Secondly, a globalised rural region "attracts high levels of non-national property investment, for both commercial and residential purposes" (Woods 2007, p. 493). This statement can hardly be supported by the results of these interviews. It can be partly supported by the mapping of the houses where some houses were very newly refurbished villas, but other houses were in very bad shape. Moreover, in these case studies most migrants rented apartments (e.g. because of the cheaper real estate market) or lived in a house inherited by the husband. Only the example of the Austrian citizen without a migration experience of his own shows investment in property for residential purposes. The self-employed migrant invested in

commercial premises in Markt Scheidegg. However, the interviewees in these case studies did not make a high level of investment.

Thirdly, a globalised rural region "is characterized by increasing social polarization" (Woods 2007, p. 493). Using the results from the mapping, social polarisation can be seen even within the group of Austrian migrants in Markt Scheidegg. Otherwise, the results of these interviews show that international migration to rural regions increases social diversity, for example, in terms of nationality, educational background, forced or voluntary migration, method of integration or relation to the home country. This does not mean that social polarisation is explicitly promoted by international migration, but case study regions exist where this characteristic might be more relevant (e.g. Nienaber and Kriszan 2013) than in the two case study regions mentioned in this chapter.

Although only one of the characteristics of a "globalized countryside" can be fully and the other two characteristics only partly supported by the results of these interviews, the case studies provide strong evidence that rural areas are already part of globalisation processes and of globalised migration patterns. This leads to a constant increase in social diversity and international influences.

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