

Barbara Frank-Job

Immigration as a Process

Temporality Concepts in Blogs of Latin American Immigrants
to Québec

INTER-AMERICAN STUDIES
Cultures – Societies – History

ESTUDIOS INTERAMERICANOS
Culturas – Sociedades – Historia

Volume 27

Series Editors:

Giselle Liza Anatol (Kansas)

Anja Bandau (Hannover)

Olaf Kaltmeier (Bielefeld)

Wilfried Raussert (Bielefeld)

Editorial Board:

Luzelena Gutiérrez de Velasco (Colegio de México)

María Herrera-Sobek (University of California at Santa Barbara)

Djelal Kadir (Pennsylvania State University)

Gary Francisco Keller (Arizona State University)

Carmen Martínez Novo (University of Kentucky)

Olga Ries (Universidad Alberto Hurtado)

Stefan Rinke (Free University of Berlin)

Barbara Frank-Job

Immigration as a Process

Temporality Concepts in Blogs
of Latin American Immigrants to Québec

 **Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier**

Copublished by

UNO University of New Orleans Press

Immigration as a Process:

Temporality Concepts in Blogs of Latin American Immigrants to Québec /

Barbara Frank-Job. –

(Inter-American Studies | Estudios Interamericanos; 27)

Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2021

ISBN 978-3-86821-820-6

New Orleans, LA: University of New Orleans Press, 2021

ISBN 978-1-60801-215-2

SPONSORED BY THE



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

The project, on which this book is based, has been funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF). The responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the author.

Cover Image: Leo Reynolds, Clocks 06; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lwr/24894705383/>;
Creative Commons License (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Cover Design: Brigitta Disseldorf

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Frank-Job, Barbara, author.

Title: Immigration as a process : temporality concepts in blogs of Latin American immigrants to Québec / Barbara Frank-Job.

Description: Trier : Wissenschaftlicher Verlag ; New Orleans, LA :

Copublished by UNO University of New Orleans Press, 2021. | Series:

Inter-American studies ; volume 27 = Estudios interamericanos | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020044530 | ISBN 9781608012152 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Latin America--Emigration and immigration. | Latin

Americans--Québec (Province) | Latin Americans--Blogs--Québec

(Province) | Immigrants--Blogs--Québec (Province)

Classification: LCC JV7398 .F73 2021 | DDC 305.868/0714--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020044530>

© WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2021

No part of this book, covered by the copyright hereon,
may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means
without prior permission of the publisher.

Publisher: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, Postfach 4005, D-54230 Trier,
Bergstraße 27, D-54295 Trier, Tel. 0049 651 41503, Fax 41504, www.wvttrier.de, wvt@wvttrier.de

Copublisher: University of New Orleans Press, 2000 Lakeshore Drive, Earl K. Long Library,
Room 221, New Orleans, LA 70148, United States, 504-280-7457, unopress.org

To Christopher

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Immigration Policy and Temporality: “Votre parcours d’immigration”	9
3.	The Appropriation of the Immigration Process: Meaning Constructions of Temporality by Immigrants	32
4.	Narrations of the Immigration Process	46
4.1	Narrative Appropriation of the Temporal Structures of Immigration	48
4.2	Narrations of Stages and the Collective History of Immigration	51
4.3	Putting Narrative into Perspective, Positioning and Constructing a Collective Identity	66
4.4	Narrations on the Experience of Temporality in Immigration	76
5.	Blogging about the Immigration Process as a Therapeutic Coping Strategy	82
6.	Conclusion	111
7.	Annex: Overview of the Blogs Used	113
8.	Works Cited	114

1. Introduction¹

This essay is based on the analysis of a corpus of mostly Hispanophone blogs on the topic of immigration to Québec, comprising more than 3000 pages, which were put online between 2004 and 2017, as well as the online communication of the official (French) Canadian institutions of immigration.

The authors of the blogs come from the numerous Hispanophone countries of origin in Latin America and are in the most diverse stages of their immigration process: from potential immigrants interested in emigrating to Québec who exchange information with more experienced immigrants and get an idea about the process, to immigrants at the most diverse stages including freshly immigrated ones, to immigrants already successfully integrated into French-Canadian society, who in retrospect describe, narrate, and comment on their long journey on the basis of selected experiences and topics.

In their descriptions and narratives, the bloggers trace the entire immigration process in their own words, from the decision to emigrate to the gradual passage through various preparatory steps to immigration itself. This in turn is presented as a long process of individual stages of integration, which only comes to a narrative conclusion with the acquisition of Canadian citizenship.

The immigration process, as presented in blog entries, is accompanied interactively by more or less regularly participating actors who comment on it. A continuous communication process lasting several years comes about in which the immigrant actors construct different concepts of temporality, in some cases reflecting and discussing them. From this perspective, immigration is defined as a sequence of stages in a comprehensive process that is both the motor and the basis of processes of change in feelings of identity and the appropriation of new identities. As a result, these constructions help immigrants who are interacting to make sense of the immigra-

1 I am deeply indebted to my colleague Stephan Gramley for his important contributions and for providing a revision of the English text.

tion process as a whole and of the challenges, personal disappointments, or injuries it poses and to cope with them.

Against the background of Michel de Certeau's reflections on the identity policy content of the actions of everyday actors in the context of given institutional structures (de Certeau 1990) and taking into account the results of current research from clinical conversation analysis (Opp, Frank-Job, and Knerich 2015; Opp and Frank-Job 2017) and psychological narrative research on the therapeutic significance of verbal interaction via biographical experiences (Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann 2004a and 2004b; Neuner, Schauer, and Elbert 2009; Schauer, Neuner, and Elbert 2011; Scheidt, Lucius-Hoene, and Stukenbrock 2015), this essay understands this process of constructing meaning as a method in which the participants appropriate and work on the institutionally given directions and structures of immigration and thus also process and cope with problematic and stressful experiences on the path of immigration. These theoretical contexts will be explained in the following.

The fact that temporality plays an important role in the blogs of immigrants is not surprising. After all, the immigration process represents a long, new period in the biography of every immigrant, which makes changes perceptible and also makes painful adaptation processes necessary. Nevertheless, we were surprised to see how multi-layered, creative, and, above all, how important for identity construction the concepts of temporality among immigrants have proved to be in the course of our corpus studies.²

This finding leads us to the very special heuristics within the situation of blogging immigrants on the one hand and the important role of interaction in the formation of (concepts of) identity on the other.

It is known from the sociology of knowledge that biographical upheavals, to which we can count immigration, are heuristically par-

2 I would like to thank Nicole Drees-Alvarez and Alba Crespo Ruiz, who have collaborated on the development and analysis of the blogger corpus in the past years.