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Temporary migration in Asian-German transnational spaces: A conceptual reflection

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses the key concepts relevant in answering the central research question of the EURA-NET project: “*What are the transformative characteristics and development impacts of the temporary mobility of people and what are their policy implications on European and global scales?*”¹ The concepts discussed are related to the various realms which the EURA-NET project touches, including mobility (migration, social and spatial mobility) and related aspects of temporariness, cross-border ties (transnational forms of migration and diaspora) and societal changes (transformation and development). Furthermore, different migrant categories, from which interviewees for the qualitative interviews in the EURA-NET consortium member countries are selected, are included in the analysis.

As most of these concepts are discussed in divergent ways in different disciplinary and academic contexts, as well as in policy and public spheres, the report does not intend to limit itself to any exclusionary definitions. Yet, it seeks to offer a range of potential understandings, useful for the analysis of the generated empirical data and the interpretation and cross-country comparison of these results, with respect to EURA-NET’s central objectives, from different angles.

The discussion of concepts starts with addressing the very comprehensive mobilities perspective, which includes many forms of spatial and social mobilities. Beginning with spatial mobility, this perspective is then narrowed down to focus on migration as a particular form of spatial mobility, which is relevant for the empirical research in the EURA-NET project. After that, the meaning of diasporas, migrant networks and cross-border migrant ties is addressed, and the transnational perspective – as a particular way of analyzing migration and its societal consequences – is introduced.

The following sections are then concerned with ways of approaching the concept of temporariness, and with some challenges encountered when relating temporariness to migration. In

¹ This report presents findings of the collaborative research project Transnational Migration in Transition: Transformative Characteristics of Temporary Mobility of People (EURA-NET). The project is funded by the European Union under the scheme Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities. This report reflects only the author’s views and the European Union is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

the context of temporary forms of migration, the migrant categories most relevant for the EURA-NET project are discussed: international students, high-skilled migrants, low-skilled migrants, family members, lifestyle migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as undocumented migrants.

Moving back to the second form of mobility included in the mobilities perspective, the report then turns to a discussion of social mobility and its different characteristics, including its horizontal and vertical dimension. Consequently, the particular link between spatial and social forms of mobility are introduced, and in the remainder of the text discussed in relation to different temporary migrant categories. Related to this analysis, the final section of the conceptual discussion highlights different concepts of gradual and fundamental, as well as value-free and value-bound changes within societies.

The third part of the report is concerned with the question how key concepts discussed in section two are interrelated and interdependent, particularly in relation to temporariness and respective migrant categories, which are defined as relevant in the European-Asian transnational social space. It particularly addresses conceptual interlinkages between temporariness and relevant migrant categories, temporariness and transnationalism, temporary migration and social mobility, as well as migration and development. Finally, some questions resulting from the conceptual analyses in this report, to which results of the EURA-NET project can contribute with some important clarifications, are addressed.

2. RELEVANT CONCEPTS

This section introduces the most relevant concepts and discusses ambiguities in their academic and policy understanding. Where appropriate, connections of these concepts to the research questions and objectives of the EURA-NET project are highlighted.

Mobilities perspective

There are different theoretical accesses to human movements; one of the broader conceptualisations has been based on the *mobilities perspective*. Urry (2007) discusses and summarises this angle under the notion 'mobility turn', that he defines as a distinct way to focus on economic, social and political relationships. The mobility paradigm (Urry 2000 2007) empha-

sises the primacy of mobility in the current world and investigates ways in which mobility reconfigures social life, in relation to fundamental change and progress in society². From a 'post-disciplinary' viewpoint the mobility turn emphasises "how all social entities from a single household to large-scale corporations presuppose many different forms of actual and potential movements" (Urry 2007:6). Different forms of travel, transport and communication are understood to stay in relation to the realisation and organisation of economic and social life through time and space. This means that the understanding of mobilities has got two central dimensions that are to some extent interrelated, namely spatial and social mobility. Both dimensions and related concepts will be discussed in the following sections.

Spatial mobility/migration

Spatial mobility is defined in the mobility turn as a very broad category of human movement. It includes many different forms, John Urry (2007) has listed five mobility types: corporeal travel of people, the physical movement of objects, the imaginative travel through print and visual media, virtual travel and communicative travel via messages, phones etc. Mobility studies investigate, among other things, how mobility is embodied, practiced, perceived and imagined. Studies can be agent-centric, focusing on mobile or immobile subjects, or state-centric, focusing on structures. Power is a significant aspect in mobility studies; who is allowed to move (or stay), where and when and how the mobility of some groups rests on the immobility of other groups.

Migration can thus be conceptualised as one expression of mobility. In contrast to other forms of mobilities, migration is understood principally as internal or international movement (Skeldon, 2008). In terms of numbers, internal migration is the most significant form of migration, which is often reduced to rural-urban movements. There is, however, evidence that rural-rural types of migration are of higher importance, as shown by Skeldon (2001) in the context of developing countries. As King and Skeldon (2010) argue, internal and international migration are addressed in different academic literatures, focused by different concepts, researched through different methods, and discussed in different policy agendas. However, migration in many cases includes different stages of both internal and international migration so that internal and international forms of migration are often linked. According to Skeldon (2008), international migration is a quantitatively less significant phenomenon, which is, how-

² The mobilities perspective embraces human movement in a very comprehensive way and thereby accounts for societal developments. Yet, it can also be argued that this perspective goes too far by seeking to establish mobilities as the central category for social analysis.

ever, extensively discussed in international public discourses, as reflected, for instance, in the debate about the ‘migration-development nexus’ (Faist, 2008)³. This large interest is also visible in political and academic discussions around ‘migration and mobility’ (Castles, 2010) in the context of international movements. Accordingly, respective political discourses, as also visible in EU debates on human movement, refer to certain categories of mobile people in a positive way and discuss them as symbols for progress and cosmopolitanism in society. Thus, these migrants symbolise a form of mobility that is “...equalled good, because it [is] the badge of a modern open society” (Castles, 2010: 1567), as well as of a globalised world. On the other hand, other types of internationally mobile people, especially those moving from economically developing to developed countries, are perceived as a threat (Castles, 2008). These migrant groups are identified as redundant and their migration intentions are perceived as driven by scarcity in their home regions. These forms of movement are often presented as migration, which is considered “as bad because it re-awakened archaic memories of invasion and displacement” (Castles, 2010: 1567). As Boswell and Geddes (2011) show for the case of the EU, the distinction between migration and mobility is also discussed within the social sciences, whereby migration sometimes refers to movement from periphery to core regions, and mobility refers to movements within a single or between different core regions.⁴ In turn, a distinction between migration and mobility with respect to flows in the opposite direction is not similarly discussed in the social sciences.

The two discussed concepts of human movement also play an important role in the EURA-NET project, particularly related to the interpretation of research findings with respect to people’s self-perception as migrants, their perception of the immigration context, including public discourses and respective policies, which might influence the length of their stay. This perspective should be put in relation to the political and academic perspectives discussed above about the societal contribution of mobile people and migrants in different categories.

Diaspora

After discussing different forms and perceptions of mobility and migration, this section turns to social processes related to dynamics between sending and receiving contexts. Therefore, this part discusses the approaches of diaspora and transnationalism that were focused in

³ The relationship between migration and development is addressed in section three “connections between relevant concepts” in this report.

⁴ Similar conceptual considerations might also be of relevance for the case of other migration systems.

much academic migration literature in order to highlight international migrants' links between and within relevant communities and geographies.

In general terms, diaspora is used in academic contexts in order to describe people and social groups, who reside in another country than in the origin and “whose social, economic and political networks cross the border of nation-states, or indeed span the globe” (Vertovec, 1999: 1). As de Haas (2006) shows, in international political discourses, migrants' collective agency is often discussed as one central characteristic of diasporic communities that is associated with development in countries of origin.

The term diaspora was originally used “in a context-bound way, that of Jewish history and the plight of Jewish people being dispersed ‘among the nations’” (Baumann, 2000: 313). This initial particular understanding of and focus on diaspora has expanded partly over the last decades in academic literature towards a comprehension that includes the movement and stay of people and groups in regions that are afar from the country of origin (Baumann, 2000; Skeldon, 2001). According to Skeldon, an important characteristic of diaspora is represented by social networks. These link the diasporic “communities in destination, within those organizations that maintain group identity, and between origin and destination areas” (Skeldon, 2001: 29). This indicates that the usage of diasporic social networks represents cross-border social processes similar to international migrants' transnationalism. The difference is that “diaspora has been often used to denote religious or national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland, whereas transnationalism is often used both more narrowly- to refer to migrants' durable ties across countries- and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations” (Faist, 2010a: 9).

International migrants' transnationalism

While not all international migration is transnational, the transnational lens is a useful way of approaching cross-border social ties and practices of international migrants – in different geographical contexts – and of non-migrants. It is important to state that transnational links are not necessarily only established and maintained by migrants but also by non-migrants, including family and friends left behind, and other non-migrants in both emigration and immigration countries (Faist, 2014). Transnationalism can be described as:

“the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc-Szanton, 1994: 6).

The result of migrants' and relevant non-migrants' continuous transactions are social formations, defined as transnational social spaces (TSSs). TSSs are dense, stable and durable social ties that "consist of combinations of ties and their contents, positions in networks and organisations, and networks of organizations" (Faist, 2000: 197). Migrant networks are important to coordinate and operationalise household and collective forms of social practices, such as civil society activism and the strategic planning of collective goals. They are defined as channels connecting "migrants and non-migrants across time and space [through which] information, assistance and obligations" are exchanged (Boyd, 1989: 641).

Different forms of expression through TSSs can be identified. According to Faist et al. (2013) these are a) transnational kinship groups (e.g. households, families and other kinship relations), b) transnational circuits (e.g. advocacy networks, business or science networks), and c) transnational communities understood as entities "without propinquity" (Webber, 1964). Additionally, transnational organisations can be understood as a particular type of cross-border social spaces (Pries, 2008).

Transnational actors may commit in a broad range of realms of social life, such as expressed, for instance, in periodical phone calls, visits, remittances, investments, etc. (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). These exchanges are defined as transnational social practices (TSPs). TSSs are constituted through social ties and respective cross-border social practices, which represent concrete forms of transactions between 'here' and 'there'. TSPs are accomplished not only by international migrants, but also by relevant non-migrants in sending contexts, thus it is not a unidirectional activity. According to Faist et al. (2013) transnational practices can be differentiated between familial transnational practices, socio-cultural transnational practices, economic transnational practices, and political transnational practices. In relation to social spaces and respective practices, migrants' transnationality refers to the degree, intensity and durability of involvement in different TSSs through social practices. The degree and intensity of migrants' commitment in the transnational context can be measured in a 'continuum from low to high' (Faist et. al, 2013).

Principally, it can be argued that transnational studies have paid more attention to more long-term and circular migrants' than to temporary migrants' transnational contributions. In a few studies, particular categories relevant for temporary migration were focused with regard to their transnational linkages. One example represents the study of Saxenian (2005) that addresses transnational professional ties of Indian and Chinese highly-skilled migrants living in the USA to their home countries. The author addresses the transfer of technical and institutional knowledge through transnational communities by introducing the concept of 'brain circulation'. Although she discusses transnational practices accomplished by a migrant category that is often discussed as temporary migrants, the focused professionals in the US case study are representing circular migrants. For the case of Germany, Schüller & Schüller-Zhou

(2013) have analysed that Chinese students at the individual level and through alumni associations on a collective level maintain strong transnational links to families, communities and state institutions in China. These links involve different cross-border spaces and social practices.

In order to be able to discuss the link between transnationalism and temporariness more broadly, in the following section the concept of temporary migration is revisited, critically reviewed, and connected to different migrant categories.

Temporary migration

As Dustmann, (2000) discusses from an economic point of view, temporary migrants are perceived from the perspective of the host country, meaning that temporary migrants' stays are understood as limited in time in the host country, although they might leave the country of origin with permanent migration intentions. In distinction to political migration, according to the scholar, temporary migration is considered as exclusively economically motivated.

In contrast to circular migration, defined as “regular, repeated temporary labour migration” (Vertovec, 2007:3), the European Migration Network (EMN) defines temporary migration preliminarily as a process that “involves a one-time only temporary stay and eventual return which closes the migration cycle” (EMN, 2011: 21). The UN addresses temporariness in relation to labour migration, defining **temporary labour migrants** as “people who migrate for a limited period of time in order to take up employment and send money home” (UNESCO, 2015a).

While these definitions represent an economic and policy perspective, from a critical social science point of view – as the EURA-NET project indicates – there are currently no profound empirical findings nor theoretical insights regarding the characteristics and impacts of temporary migration. To overcome this gap, research in the EURA-NET project is ongoing. As a working definition EURA-NET addresses temporary migration as a type of movement which lasts between three months and five years, with variations in this range depending on the relevant migrant category. This definition is based on the fact that within the EU policy framework stays of less than three months are defined as tourism and do not require a resident permit, while persons staying longer than five years are considered long-term residents. As a preliminary discussion, this paper provides some ideas around relevant aspects of temporary migration. Accordingly, the following considerations of influencing spheres to temporary migration can be helpful in providing reflections for the analysis of empirical results and further theoretical clarification of the concept. Consequently, from a sociological perspective, migration can be perceived as a more or less ongoing process, whose trajectory to a large extent depends on different legal, socio-cultural and socio-economic factors, which are also considered as significant analytical spheres in the EURA-NET project. In line with this idea,

particular conditions in respective spheres in both countries of origin and destination are likely to affect previous intentions of migrants who initially planned to stay only temporarily.

a) *Influencing factors in the politico-legal sphere*: International migrants in each migrant category can be strongly influenced by the politico-legal framework. The duration of stay of migrants is often determined by national and supra-national legislation in destination countries and sometimes also in countries of origin.

b) *Influencing factors in the socio-cultural sphere*: The intention and the final decision to stay or to leave can also be influenced by socio-cultural conditions in different societal spheres. Particularly in the destination society, this means that migrants, who might obtain the right to permanent residence, can decide in the course of their stay to leave earlier than intended due to difficulties in the integration process, including linguistic and cultural difficulties and/or a hostile social environment. Yet, on the other hand, social conditions in the country of origin can also influence the duration of stay, for instance related to a different lifestyle and a perceived greater freedom for personal development in the destination.

c) *Influencing factors in the socio-economic sphere*: The motivation for permanent or temporary stays is also related to the socio-economic conditions of migrants in certain categories. Therefore, labour market conditions in destination societies, i.e. the availability of adequate employment opportunities, wages and working conditions, related to expectations of personal advancement, are important factors influencing decisions about the length of sojourn and the spatial course of the process. Decisions about the length of stay can also be influenced according to economic conditions and developments in places of origin.

As this brief overview shows, migration courses can change in both time and space. Temporary migration may need to be analysed from the perspective of a particular point of time because during the migration trajectory real-life developments can influence intentions regarding the period of stay. In concrete terms, the final duration depends on many factors, which can change temporary stays into permanent ones and vice versa, or lead to different patterns of migration, such as circular types of migration. Thus, although this does not entail any consequences for the research of preliminarily defined temporary migrant categories, it should be considered during the methodological reflections and during the analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

It is also important to note that the assessment of temporariness depends on the perspective. From a policy point of view, certain types of temporary migration are desirable in order to fill sectorial labour gaps. These can be related to demographic transitions and/or competitiveness in the global market. Therefore, governments have publicly discussed temporary stays – often with positive connotations – and created respective legal instruments and laws to provide access. This is for instance the case in Germany (Aksakal & Schmidt-Verkerk, 2014) but might also be relevant in other national contexts. This, however, does not mean

that these political expectations are necessarily achieved, as social actors also respond to other societal circumstances relevant for their well-being and future plans.

There are different categories of migrants that match with the characteristics attached to temporary migration from a politico-legal point of view. These are discussed in the following sections.

Migrant categories as forms of temporary migration

As the state-of-the-art report published in the context of the EURA-NET project (Pitkänen & Carrera, 2014) shows, different temporary migrant categories are relevant in the European-Asian context: international students, skilled and high-skilled professionals, low-skilled workers, family members, lifestyle seekers, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as undocumented migrants.

- a) International students: This category is defined by the UNESCO (2006) as migrants, who have left their country of origin and moved to another country with the main objective to study. For distinguishing between those, who have moved from one country to another and those who have not moved previous to their studies, the OECD differentiates between 'international student' and 'foreign student'. The former refers to students “who have crossed borders for the purpose of study” (OECD, 2013: 1) and the latter refers to citizenship. In this fashion, foreign students represent non-citizens, who are enrolled in an educational institution without necessarily crossing borders in order to study. In distinction to foreign students, international students have no permanent residence in the host country, in which they carry out their studies. On the other hand, their prior education is relevant, meaning that they are defined as ‘internationally mobile students’, if they have received their entry qualification to tertiary study in another country than the destination country (Clark, 2009; UNESCO, 2006). Currently, internationally mobile students receive huge public interest that may have to do with the size and the potentials attached to this migrant category in receiving country discourses as future high-skilled personnel, as well as with revenues generated by way of tuition. Nonetheless, international students do not represent the unique form of mobile people aiming to obtain qualifications. In contrast, there is a broad range of other people, who enter host countries in order to conclude secondary level or vocational training, carry out language courses or internships, as well as accomplish stays as au pairs, in which mainly young females work and study. These subcategories do not represent a quantitative majority, but should be taken into account, when dealing with internationally mobile students.
- b) High-skilled migrants: Existing literature on high-skilled migrants includes a broad range of definitions that sometimes also depend on country-specific understandings (Cerna, 2010) expressed in immigrant laws tailored for specific needs. In general terms, high-skilled migrants possess “a university degree or extensive/ equivalent experience in a given field”

(Iredale, 2001: 8). There are also other definitions, not linked to education, for instance related to occupation or salary levels. The employment sector of highly skilled persons can vary from local private companies to transnational ones, and include education and health care in the public sectors (Cerna, 2010). This indicates that there is a broad range of occupations in which members of this category are employed. For example, in the case of Germany this occupational spectrum ranges from foreign investigators in public universities to locally recruited professionals and intercompany employees in transnational companies (Aksakal & Schmidt-Verkerk, 2014).

c) Low-skilled migrants: There are two ways of approaching the concept of low-skilled labour, either based on the requirements for the job, or on the educational level of the person who carries it out. Therefore, low-skilled “can be either a characteristic of the job or a characteristic of the worker” (Chaloff, 2008: 127). While the needs of employers and the prerequisites of recruitment programmes focus on the skill-level required for the job, immigration policies focus on the education level of migrants. The latter is in line with a definition by the OECD, suggesting that “low-skilled are those whose education is less than upper secondary” (OECD, 2011: 56). While there is no universal definition of low-skilled migrant workers, they are generally perceived as having received no or very little training on the unskilled job they are performing in the destination country (IOM, 2008).

d) Family-related migration: Migration for the purpose of family reunion is defined by the UN as “people sharing family ties joining people who have already entered an immigration country” (UNESCO, 2015a). The right to family reunion for legal migrants is recognised by many countries, with the exception of the case of some contract labour systems. Thus, migration in the context of family reunification in most cases refers to spouses and children joining family members who are migrating or have previously migrated, often for the purpose of working in the destination country for a limited period of time. Therefore, in general, the length of stay of family members is linked to the length of stay of the migrant who (temporarily) works in the destination country. Another form of family-related migration occurs when foreign spouses join partners who are already resident in the destination country with the purpose of living together (Aksakal & Schmidt-Verkerk, 2014). This form of family-related migration might be more permanent, unless families decide to move on to live in a different country.

e) Lifestyle migrants: The category of lifestyle migrant encompasses different types of often relatively affluent people “migrating in search of a better way of life” (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009: 609), usually to destinations with a favourable climate and lower living costs in relation to the country of origin. In contrast to mobile professionals, these people can be involved in formal or informal labour markets, but rather than striving for career development they move abroad in order to find a more meaningful and relaxed life. Life in the destination

is often understood as more authentic than in one's native country and the choice of living abroad is typically conceptualised as an escape from the hectic, consumer-oriented lifestyles, the 'rat race', diminishing income opportunities and pressurised working environments (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

f) Refugees and asylum seekers: While the terms are often used interchangeably in colloquial language, there is a legal difference between refugees and asylum seekers. The 1951 Geneva Convention defines refugees as people who are outside the country of their nationality "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UNHCR, 2006: 16). In contrast to this global definition of refugees, the definition of asylum seekers varies depending on different national contexts. The UNESCO defines an asylum seeker as someone who "has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status" (UNESCO, 2015b). The decision if asylum seekers are granted protection depends on state authorities in the destination countries and is often taken on a case-to-case basis.

g) Undocumented migrants: As opposed to the migrant categories described above, which relate to a purpose of stay and associated visa categories or other forms of residence permits, the term undocumented migrant refers to the legal status of a person in the destination country. Undocumented migrants can thus be found in all of the above migrant categories, and their legal status might change during their stay. The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) defines undocumented migrants as "those without a residence permit authorising them to regularly stay in their country of destination. They may have been unsuccessful in the asylum procedure, have overstayed their visa or have entered irregularly" (PICUM, 2015).

Many of these above definitions can be the result of academic research but also of policy and legal categorisations. In view of their growing importance there is a need to more thoroughly understand these categories through academic analysis.

Social mobility

There is a relationship between the previously discussed spatial movement and people's social positions within societies. According to Galbraith (1979) migration is the oldest human strategy against poverty that may affect social mobility.

In order to provide a common theoretical background for both forms of mobility, the following introduces social mobility, which is later discussed in relation to temporary migration as a form of spatial mobility. Social mobility represents a sociological concept, in which the movement of individuals, families and social groups from one social position, category or situation to another is analysed (Berger, 2000). Through setting the focus on '*intra-generational mobility*' the movement of individuals in the personal course of life may be

measured (Saunders, 2010). This can be accomplished, for instance, by the comparison of first occupational activities with those they carry out in later states of their career. In contrast, by addressing '*inter-generational mobility*' individuals' social move is evaluated by comparing their social position or categorical affiliation with that of their parents when they had the same age (Saunders, 2010). Furthermore, social mobility can take place on an *individual* level, in which a single person moves, or rather on a *collective* level, in which entire social groups or strata change between social positions (Berger, 2000). Social mobility can occur in a *vertical* dimension, in which people potentially change from higher to lower positions, known as *downward mobility*, or vice versa, also termed as *upward mobility* (Geißler, 2006). In the *horizontal* dimension, there is also a flexibility of people assumed, but in contrast of the previously noted case, this movement implies, for instance, an occupational shift, this change however does not mean a significant positional transition from social strata or class to another (Berger, 2000). According to Saunders (2010), there are two principal ways of analysing social mobility; on the one hand through purely focusing on income and on the other by considering social strata. In order to analyse the movement between social strata/class, different hierarchically ordered types of strata/classes need to be defined. The ability to ascend to a higher social class is strongly related to the access to societal resources that Bourdieu (1986) has defined as economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. Due to the fact that some people possess such resources while others are excluded from the access to these capitals, a condition of inequalities of opportunities exists that hinders significant upward social mobility of society members from lower social strata and classes. On the other hand, social exclusion as a mechanism for social inequality can be due to broader transformation processes, in which positional movement of society members is likely to proceed as a forced process. Structural change can cause individual or collective social mobility. This can take place when broader political and economic restructuring processes occur. As a consequence this can lead to circumstances that systematically exclude society members or even whole population segments from the economic sphere of society and foster social inequalities, termed as *structure mobility* (Geißler, 2006). This brief introduction also indicates that spatially mobile people are also involved in processes of social mobility. This means that geographical mobility, and migration as a specific form of it, represents an individual exit option that includes also a personal strategy of upward social mobility in society.

Thus, while upward mobility is an individual strategy of migrants in the first place, it is also embedded in collective contexts, such as families and communities of origin. The effects of these personal strategies on households and communities, and vice versa, are complex and need to be evaluated according to specific contexts.

Furthermore, it is likely that migrants relate their social positions and potential changes to it to the place where they feel 'at home', which is influenced by the length of stay. In this vein,

in the course of migration, the reference framework is likely to shift; while temporary migrants might tend to relate their social position to the society of origin, long-term stays may change the frame of reference to the society of destination.

The relationship between spatial and social mobility is also an interesting topic to be considered in the EURA-NET project. Thus, it will be revisited in section three.

Change in society

The EURA-NET project defines four relevant concepts with regard to change, namely transformation, progress, evolution and development. The following discussion considers the concepts transformation and development.

The relationship between migration and societal transformation processes can potentially be approached in different ways: 1) Migration as a result of transformation: Polanyi's (1944) account in the Great Transformation does not explicitly refer to migration. However, it describes processes leading to what Castles (2007) terms social transformation, which in turn might influence migration on national and international scales. Nowadays, social transformation becomes visible in the form of global economic and political restructuring under neoliberal globalization (Delgado, Marquez & Puentes, 2013) which is characterized by global economic practices and international policies and has unfavourable repercussions at local levels (Glick Schiller, 2009). Transformation processes can also be focused through the transnational lens by conceiving them as working bottom-up. 2) Responses to transformation: Transnational formations can be used to overcome certain adverse impacts of broader transformation processes. 3) Institutional transformation: Transnational social practices can also initiate or accelerate institutional transformations at different societal levels (Faist, 2010b).

Just as transformation, also development represents a broad multidimensional analytical field, meaning that it embraces economic, political, social and cultural spheres. In different societies and spheres not all of these dimensions are necessarily developed in the same way and to the same extent. In approaches related to modernisation theory development is discussed as a value-free universal process. Yet, in contemporary discourses, such as in the Human Development approach, it is often considered as a desirable and societally defined process, and therefore value-bound.

In sum, there are different perceptions of the concepts transformation and development, which are approached within the EURA-NET project as value-free and value-bound change, respectively.

3. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RELEVANT CONCEPTS

After discussing and critically addressing key concepts for the EURA-NET project, the most important links between these approaches will be highlighted in the following sections. Due to the high relevance of the concept of temporariness in the EURA-NET project, its relationship with different migrant categories, transnationalism, social mobility and development is elaborated in this final section.

a) *Temporariness in relevant migrant categories*: The previous discussion on temporary forms of migration and its potential shift to permanent stays and vice versa has shown that migrants' personal intentions and decisions on the length of stay can be influenced significantly by external factors in the course of the migration process. Analytically, this means that temporary forms of migration need to be considered in a concrete point of time and this particular point of time needs to be reflected methodologically, if the analysis is linked to empirical studies. Main factors that may affect personal intentions and following decisions are addressed in this document as the politico-legal, socio-cultural and socio-economic spheres, which stay to some extent also in interrelation to each other. These considerations are also central for the relevant migrant categories within the EURA-NET research that will be exemplarily discussed based on some migrant categories in the following. With regard to noted influencing factors in the politico-legal sphere this means in the case of high-skilled migrants that they enter the European Union through the Blue Card scheme that is legally limited to a maximum period of stay of four years. Thus, officially these immigrants represent temporary migrants at the beginning of their stay. However, personal intentions may change during the migration trajectory. Supported substantially by the host country legislations, to obtain a permanent resident permit after the time frame of four years (e.g. in the case of Germany) previously temporary migration can disembody in a permanent stay, or result in circular migration. On the other hand, in the case of asylum seekers and refugees, the preliminary expectation is to obtain a long-term permit, until the situation in the country or origin improves. Yet, these expectations to stay permanently can be foiled by a negative decision on the asylum application, whereby the expectation of permanent stay will be changed into a temporary stay. Also the socio-cultural aspects can influence migrants' temporary stays. Both high-skilled migrants, who entered under the Blue Card scheme and received after four years the right to permanent residence, as well as successful asylum seekers can change their status from permanent to temporary migrants by using the exit option, returning to the home country or moving on to a third country. Changing intentions and decisions in the course of the migration process can be importantly influenced by socio-cultural settings in source and destination countries or by the ability of and opportunities for migrants and their families to adapt in these societies. Consequently, socio-cultural factors can motivate migrants with permanent

residence status to only stay temporarily. Finally, also socio-economic factors can influence decisions and trajectories with regard to temporary or permanent stays. As noted previously, the access to adequate employment opportunities, incomes and working conditions in combination with personal expectations of career development can play an important role. Particularly this is relevant for international students, whose primary intention is to enter into a particular host country temporarily with the objective to conclude university studies. Most receiving countries provide graduate students the opportunity to stay after finalising their studies in order to seek for an appropriate job in the host country, such as in the cases of Germany and the Netherlands (Pitkänen & Carrera, 2014). Hence, if the receiving countries' economies offer adequate working and career opportunities the probability that these immigrants stay in a long-run is relatively high. This can imply that they change their intentions from staying temporarily to staying longer than they intended or longer than it was scheduled by their legal status. Changes with respect to the length of stay are also related to migrants' rights, which can signify an enlargement of their participation in society. Socio-economic factors in the countries of origin can also influence the length of stay, such as in the case when economic conditions aggravate and additional capital is required through migrant earnings. Regarding temporariness in each category still unresolved questions exist that should be focused in the research work of EURA-NET: *In which ways are noted influencing factors interrelated to each other? How important are these factors with regard to the intentions and decisions of temporary or permanent stays? What particular relation do the discussed migrant categories have to temporariness, and should they be exclusively perceived as temporary?*

b) Temporariness and transnationalism: In the present document both temporariness and transnationalism are discussed broadly, which however does not say anything about the interrelation between both concepts. As noted previously, there are some studies that focus on transnational links of particular migrant categories that are addressed in current discussions on temporary migration. Yet, there is no general conceptualisation that systematically links transnationalism and temporariness. In line with this idea, as Dahindem (2010) remarks, transnationalism has often been applied to settled migrants and much less attention was paid to temporary movers' transnationalism.

This also signifies that there is the need to produce more information with regard to the relationship between temporary migration and respective transnational characteristics. As both transnationalism and temporariness are central concepts studied in the EURA-NET project, research results can provide a significant contribution to this connection. With regard to the different relevant temporary migrant categories, it seems to be important to understand, which forms of expression transnational social spaces have and which kinds of social practices exist in each category. Additionally, it seems to be relevant to comprehend migrants'

transnationality in the categories of professionals, international students, lifestyle migrants, low-skilled migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants. The focus on existing interrelations between temporariness and transnationalism in the different migrant categories opens up questions that are partly also addressed within the EURA-NET project and also should be taken into account in the research: *Do transnational features play a significant role in relevant temporary migrant categories within the European-Asian transnational space? Which particular forms of social spaces exist in each migrant category? Are these interrelated with each other? What kind of transnational social practices are carried out in these spaces?*

d) Temporary migration and social mobility: Social mobility stays in relation to spatial mobility, whereby one form of spatial mobility represents temporary migration. This means in the context of international migration that people can potentially move socially downward or upward through spatial mobility. As noted previously, this stays in close relation to the reference frame determined by migrants' individual perceptions in the process of individual adaptation to the destination context. Potentially migrants identify their reference framework as related to emigration and immigration contexts as well as respective communities.

The opportunities and challenges that migration implies in relation to upward and downward mobility are linked to a broad range of factors. Politico-legal frameworks can represent one important factor. Depending on respective political settings in receiving countries, international migrants can use to different extents their personal skills, and exploit existing opportunity structures. As Saunders (2010) discusses based on the example of the UK, in meritocratic societies, personal talents and motivation matter and can play an important role, because both talents and motivation can be expressed freely and disembody in better occupational positions. Therewith potentially intragenerational upward mobility can be achieved. Otherwise, when destination countries' legislation does not allow exploiting such potentials, it is very likely that internationally mobile people will not be able to move socially upwards.

Immigration policies have changed over time in many destination countries due to labour market necessities. For example, in the framework of the guest worker programme in Germany, there was a need in the labour market mainly for low-skilled migrants. Although some guest workers possessed higher educational levels, for a long time German migration policy did not allow the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad (Treibel, 2008). Thus, these international migrants were not able to achieve individual upward social mobility by exploiting their talents and motivations due to legislative restrictions. In turn, since 2012 such legal recognition, based on the Federal Law on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, is possible (Bosswick, 2013), and migrants with higher educational levels can legally compete for better occupations and potentially achieve upward social mobility. Socio-cultural aspects that are related, for instance, to discrimination through stereotyping and classification related to habi-

tus, both as mechanisms for social inequality, can play an additional role that impedes successful competition for jobs of international migrants. This indicates that migrants, to which certain stereotypical attributes are attached, can stagnate in lower social positions without having access to upward social mobility. Finally, from a socio-economic point of view, structural transformation and following structural mobility can signify that economies and particularly labour markets are affected. In combination with unfavourable policies for socio-economic integration, for certain migrant categories, this can translate into bad employment and investment opportunities.

Currently, there is ambiguity with regard to the particular relationship between temporary migration and social mobility in the different relevant categories. Social mobility is no explicit concept addressed in the EURA-NET project. Nonetheless, downward social mobility can have a link to social exclusion and social inequality. Therewith it stays in relation to transformation as a root cause of exclusion and inequality in society. In this vein, it represents a solid theoretical frame in order to understand and explain social phenomena also in the context of temporary migration. Still unaddressed questions are: *In which particular ways is social mobility related to temporary migration and especially to each migrant category relevant for the EURA-NET project? What are the implications of social mobility with regard to decisions of temporary or permanent stays?*

e) *Migration and development*: There is also a relationship between migration and development, which has received a lot of interest in international public discourses (Faist, 2008). In this debate, the major focus lies on economic and to some extent on social migrant transfers. This means that from a mainstream socio-economic perspective migrants' remittances are focused as a significant developmental contribution to families, communities and sending countries (World Bank, 2007). However, from a critical point of view, this approach does not represent a comprehensive view because often remittances represent only a socio-economic improvement at the household level without significant spill-over effects at the community level and potentially leading to increasing social inequality (De Haan, 1999).

Although there are significant barriers, migrants are able to contribute in many ways in different spheres of development that go beyond financial aspects, including social, political and institutional contributions (Aksakal, 2012). In this interrelationship between barriers and potentials, it seems important to stress that significant contributions to political changes may take place more indirectly, for instance through political pressure and influence in sending regions. Finally, migration and development are also related to the previously discussed social mobility concept in the sense that migrants and migrant communities in different migrant categories can advance and thus experience individual or collective upward social mobility. With regard to temporary migration and development, especially through transnational ties, there is still a dearth of research with very few exceptions, as discussed above (Saxenian,

2005; Schüller & Schüler-Zhou, 2013). This means that there are still some open questions, requiring empirical research and more profound theoretical considerations, related to the following questions.

In which manner do existing TSSs and respective TSPs have effects on sending, receiving and temporary migrants' development? In which ways are these cross-border practices challenging national and international politics in sending and receiving countries, both in the context of migration from Asia to the EU and from the EU to Asia?

CONCLUSION

This paper has addressed theoretical perspectives and key concepts relevant for research into international temporary movements in the framework of the EURA-NET project. A common theoretical-conceptual framework seems to be an important task for the research process, the analysis of results, and a comparison between results from different national contexts in the EURA-NET consortium. An additional argument for the definition of a common theoretical background is that researchers within EURA-NET have different academic backgrounds and perspectives. While this diversity of theoretical and practical angles offers many opportunities, it also represents a challenge for the common conceptual understanding and data analysis. This might be compensated by a common conceptual framework, which can be used as a point of reference. Accordingly, the main task of this document is to compile a critical review of relevant concepts from the perspective of social sciences and to address the most significant interconnections.

In this paper, this was achieved through starting the discussing with the broad concept of mobilities that embraces a wide range of human movement. The focus was narrowed down to the concepts of migration and mobility that are currently approached in two different ways; 1) approaching migration as a subcategory of mobility, and 2) as two opposing concepts, referring to those who are positively judged at a normative level as mobile people, and those who are negatively judged as migrants.

Perceived as a particular way of approaching migration, transnational concepts were introduced and contrasted with the concept of diaspora. In order to approach the relationship between transnationalism and temporariness, the following sections introduced and critically discussed the concept of temporariness and resulting challenges for migration studies. Afterwards, significant migrant categories that are often legally framed as temporary forms of migration were discussed. Thereafter, social mobility was addressed. Although this concept is not explicitly thematised in the EURA-NET project, it is still implicitly included in other relevant concepts, such as the migrants' significance in development and transformation processes.

In the final section, a discussion on interconnections and interdependencies between the most relevant previously discussed concepts was carried out. Particular focus was set on the significance of temporariness in different migrant categories that were discussed in relation to the three different analytical spheres: politico-legal, socio-cultural and socio-economic. Afterwards, interconnections between temporariness and transnationalism were addressed. It was argued that currently there is no theoretical approach that embraces both temporariness and transnationalism comprehensively, especially when considering that temporary migration includes a broad range of relevant migrant categories. Also the relationship between temporariness and social mobility was highlighted and it was said that different factors in noted analytical spheres can have impacts on the vertical mobility of temporary migrants, such as the right to legally recognise formal qualifications. However this aspect represents only one criterion that influences social mobility. Also socio-cultural and socio-economic factors have important effects. In the socio-cultural sphere, this means, for instance, that discrimination through stereotyping or through habitus-related classifications into social positions can play an important role for migrants' vertical mobility. In the socio-economic sphere temporary migration and social mobility might be related to structural transformation, such as in the case when an economic crisis or broader economic and political restructuring occurs, affecting labour markets and consequently employment opportunities. Finally, migration and development were addressed with regard to their interconnections. It was discussed that there is a broader public interest, expressed in discourses, which show that the relationship between the concepts needs to be more critically addressed than is actually the case in current debates. With regard to temporary migration, there is no comprehensive approach establishing a connection to development. Particularly, this indicates that the understanding of temporary migrants' contributions to development should take into account in more dimensions than only the economic one, and should not only refer to the sending communities but also include respective migrants in their categories and destination areas.

These noted points indicate that several concepts relevant for the EURA-NET project are important to consider in the period of fieldwork and during the analysis of data. It is suggested that the analysis of transformation and development processes in the social, political and economic spheres, generated by temporary transnational migration between Asia and the EU, will be facilitated based on these conceptual considerations.

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