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Transnational Social Protection: An Emerging Field of Study

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Transnational Social Protection:

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Abstract

How do the efforts at social protection by cross-border migrants impact upon social inequalities? While the 'old' social question between workers and capitalists was addressed within the frames of national welfare states and social policies from the late nineteenth century onwards, the 'new' social question – running along diverse lines of inequalities, such as gender, class, ethnicity and religion – has implications far beyond national borders since flows of persons, goods, capital and services are transnational. Migrations are of particular relevance for understanding the transnational social question because they link the disparate and fragmented worlds of unequal life chances and social protection. Of particular interest is the question of how cross-border social protection involving migrants results in the reinforcement of existing inequalities, e.g. between regions and within households, and creates new lines of inequalities. This state of affairs necessitates a rethinking of national social citizenship and its significance for the legitimation of social inequalities.

Key words: transnationalism, social inequalities, international migration, social mechanisms

Introduction

Given high and persistent levels of social inequalities on a global scale (Held and Kaya 2007) it is important to ask how strategies of social protection address this issue. Social protection, that is, strategies to cope with social risks arising in capitalist economies in fields such as employment, health, care and education, clearly extends across the borders of national states. Take, for example, the social protection of Dutch pensioners living in Spain, of former labour migrants from Morocco in France returning to the region of origin, or of domestic care workers from Ukraine working in German households, and the ensuing restructuration of care work in the regions of origin. A closer look at these cases reveals that social protection is not necessarily provided and consumed within the territory of a single national (welfare) state. Rather, the increasing mobility of persons affects how social protection is organized, and, moreover, the social protection of persons who are mobile across borders may have implications for more than one state and for social groups across borders. Migrants and other categories of mobile persons, such as those engaged circular mobility (e.g. seasonal workers), engage in and sustain dense and continuous ties across borders, so-called transnation-

al social spaces. Migration is taken as a strategic research site[1] that illustrates the challenges to the boundaries of social protection in national (welfare) states and the emergence of new cross-border social spaces and boundaries along lines of ethnicity, citizenship, gender, religion and class. Thus, the focus is on how social protection is organized in the context of cross-border migrations and the impact it has on social inequalities. The argument pursued is that while social protection is a response to global social inequalities it also, inadvertently, reproduces old inequalities and creates new ones.

The first part of this chapter sketches the transnational social question and the perception by observers and activists – social movements, governments, organizations and social scientists – of stark inequalities across borders. The second part introduces a transnational methodology and the concept of transnational social spaces, namely dense, continuous and sustained patterns of social and symbolic ties of persons, groups and organizations across the borders of national states. Transnational spaces are shown to be scaled on levels ranging from families to international organizations, and embedded in dimensions or principles of social order – families (and household), civil society (and community), market and state. Based upon these methodological considerations, the third part considers the mechanisms that generate social inequalities in a transnational frame and raises questions about the implications of existing and newly minted social inequalities for social protection and for social order.

Approaching the Transnational Social Question

From a global perspective today immense social inequalities are pervasive. A sixth of the world's population – over 1 billion people – live in absolute poverty (World Bank 2011). Malnutrition, insufficient medical care and low life expectancy, but also inadequate social security in formal employment or in the informal sector, threaten the lives of many, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia. On a global scale, distress and social instability are reminiscent of the living conditions that obtained in a large part of nineteenth-century Europe. At that time the "social question" was the central subject of extremely volatile political conflicts between the ruling classes and working-class movements (e.g. Grimmer-Solem 2003). Are we now on the verge of a new social conflict, this time on a transnational scale, characterized by manifold boundaries – such as those between capital and labour, North and South, developed

[1] For other strategic sites, such as multinational companies, see Macdonald and Marshall (2010).

and underdeveloped or developing countries? The protests of globalisation critics, for instance by manifold social movement organizations at the World Social Forum over the past decade, can certainly not be overlooked (cf. Carver and Bartelson 2011). There is also a proliferation of political groupings and NGOs rallying across national borders in support of various campaigns such as environmental, human rights and women's issues, Christian, Hindu or Islamic fundamentalism, or "food sovereignty." The broader issue of concern is thus: Do political decision-makers and activists today share the perception of a transnational social question, and, if so, is there an evolution of global social norms enforceable by way of transnational social rights and social citizenship beyond national state borders? Take, for example, the declaration of the so-called Millennium Development Goals (MDG); these comprise eight so-called development goals that all member states of the United Nations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include eliminating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality, fighting disease epidemics, and developing a global partnership for development. In other words, is a shift taking place from national social policies to global social policy in the twenty-first century, implying a move from national to post-national solidarity and the corresponding rights, obligations and policies?

Whether or not the transnational social question is being adequately addressed by global, European or national social policies is the context in which the central problem of this chapter is located, namely how social protection is actually organized by non-state actors across borders and the consequences for social inequalities. This question thus takes as its point of departure the now-classic discussion of social citizenship. T. H. Marshall (1964[1950]) argued that national social citizenship as a way of addressing social protection reduces risks emanating from market participation and exclusion and thus has the potential to decrease social inequalities. He looked upon social citizenship as a means to counter the inequalities produced by capitalism by granting individuals egalitarian status and a set of rights attached to full membership in a national society. In his view social rights and social policies stabilize welfare capitalism on the national level so that they may even be able to legitimize social inequalities which continue to exist even after redistribution. The question posed here takes the debate on social protection out of the container of the national welfare state and places it in a social space beyond the national state. Yet this space is not simply an extension of the national welfare state on another scale, such as supranational or even global social citizenship or policy. Rather, the approach taken here moves the social question and issues of social protection from the national into the transnational domain. “Transnational” here connotes a focus on cross-border transactions involving non-state agents. Such an analysis focuses on social protection organized by states and international organizations but also by non-state agents, such as families, networks and groups. Two of the issues arising in this context re-

late, first, to the (de-)commodification of labour power in "sharing spaces" (Ferrera 2008) such as welfare states and supranational structures, and, second, to questions of membership (cf. Mau and Burkhardt 2009).

The first issue concerns the changing relationship between the principles of social order – namely, state, market, community and family. As the examples introduced above suggest, certain spheres of work, such as long-term care of the elderly, have been re-commodified or not yet commodified in certain EU member states and other wealthy countries. Domestic work, for example, has become a site of commodification and thus employment of mainly migrant women with the increased labour force participation of native-born women in European welfare states. And nursing work has expanded as a field with both changing patterns of labour force participation and an increasing share of elderly who require such care (see, e.g. Yeates 2008 and Williams 2011). Underlying these developments is the question about the relationship between these four principles of social organization. Commodification would suggest an increased role of market principles but also stronger involvement of civil society or community and family which have to make up for the lack of rights provided by states. Also, in many emigration countries certain social rights have not (yet) been institutionalized for the majority of the population. Moreover, commodification does entail a clearly regulatory (but not redistributive) role of the state (cf. Polanyi 1957). Such regulations can be found not only in welfare stateness but also in immigration regime(s). After all, migration regimes determine access to formal social entitlements through border control and through the regulations of migrants inside welfare states; for example, there is a gradation of access depending on the kind of residence and work permit (Faist and Dörr 1997).

The second issue, concerning membership, also exemplifies the cross-border challenges to national welfare state regulations. From a transnational perspective, migration is about the boundedness of social protection with respect not primarily to territory but to formal membership such as citizenship. The question at stake is which rights and resources for whom? This is crucial because formal social protection in the form of insurance and assistance has evolved over the past 150 years in European welfare states as a matter of nationally bounded collectives of regulation and redistribution, reciprocity and solidarity. Some of these rights have moved to the European Union (EU) level and apply to citizens of individual member states in a new scalar system of citizenship, that is, nested membership (Faist 2001). In the EU, the free mobility of workers who are citizens of EU member states is also cushioned by the portability of social insurance benefits through coordination rules (essentially, Regulation 1408/71) and competition rules. Many of the regulations, both nationally and supranationally, apply not only to citizens of member states but often to all those who have been legally resi-

dent for a considerable time as well. The latter may also be citizens of third countries, extra-communitari. It is not only 'rights of individuals via citizenship' but also 'rights of individuals via personhood' – a development that is not unique to the EU but can also be found in other contexts such as North America (Soysal 1994). The substantive issue is access to protection and thus to rights, entitlements and the fulfilment of duties. A crucial issue for migrants in particular is the portability of social rights and thus benefits.

While these considerations are undoubtedly important for understanding the legal-political aspects of social rights and access to social provision, they are insufficient for capturing social protection and social inequalities as transnational phenomena which are also produced on the level of families and communities across borders of national states. The boundedness of rights derives from a national view and pertains to the immigration side only. What about the countries of emigration, most of which are not welfare states, and the implications of systems of social protection in those locations? Does migration lead to a hollowing out of crucial sectors providing social protection (e.g. brain drain in the health care sector, care drain in families left behind), or to much-needed supplementary income increasing the likelihood of adequate social protection via remittances? And what about the manifold non-state linkages of protection across borders?

Methodologically, this chapter offers an effort to develop and apply a transnational approach. Studies in a transnational vein are critical of methodological nationalism, that is, the often unstated assumption that national society or the national state is the "natural" unit of analysis and of data collection. Yet there is a need to go beyond criticism and explicitly name the reference points for transnational analysis (see Faist 2012). The hallmark of a transnational approach is that several levels and dimensions of analysis are considered, and the notion of scale is centrally important: first, levels of analysis such as the local, the national state, the European and the global; and second, the principles of social organization, such as family/household, community/civil society, state and market. No single level or dimension of analysis should be privileged a priori.

Toward a Transnational Approach

Social rights have underpinned the rise of national welfare states for over a century, and since World War Two have been enshrined as human rights in international conventions such as the General Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). Yet social rights cannot necessarily be enforced as individual human rights beyond welfare states. In fact, beyond national (welfare) states there is mostly "soft law," such as social standards and the convenants of international

organizations. Moreover, social rights are distributed very unevenly across various parts of the world (Faist 2009). In short, the shifting of justifications for social norms from social rights to more general human rights and above all to voluntary self-regulatory measures have not (yet) resulted in the establishment of enforceable global social norms. How, then, is social protection actually provided and with what consequences?

Analyses of national welfare states – including international comparisons – are often concerned with the integration of migrants in crucial spheres of the distribution of life chances, such as schooling and employment. They also focus upon such issues as the effects of mobility on demography and ramifications for pension schemes. Complementing empirical studies of the social integration of immigrants is the broader question of how solidarity in national (welfare) states is organized. One of the challenges visible in international migration processes for immigration states, for example, is how solidarity can be made possible. Welfare state solidarity has evolved historically since the nineteenth century within bounded national collectives out of smaller pools of risk organization (Baldwin 1993). Inherent in the operation of state-organized social protection is the congruence of state authority, territory and people, that is, the overlap of territory and membership, which means that only full members of the polity have full access to social rights and social provisions.

International migration has made visible the partial unbundling of territory and membership. In between the clear distinction between full members – citizens – and non-members – aliens – fall those who are permanent residents who do have close to the full modicum of social rights. These are the so-called denizens. This phenomenon has been stimulated and made visible by international migration to countries of the European Union. Movement and legal settlement imply reference to migrants who are partial or even quasi-full members of the respective welfare state when it comes to social rights. While social rights are an expression of citizenship, denizens may partake in such citizenship rights without being full members, lacking, for example, the full political rights such as the right to vote and stand for office in national elections.

But an important caveat should be added: Not all international migrants are denizens; quite a few are undocumented with respect to residence and/or employment with only emergency rights, or are legal immigrants who have not achieved full residency status. Nonetheless, this state of affairs implies a decoupling of full membership in a (national) polity, on the one hand, and access to social rights, on the other hand. This decoupling, in turn, puts into question the full congruence of membership, rights and duties and the resource called solidarity, or – somewhat less demanding but equally important for welfare states – reciprocity (e.g. be-

tween generations in pension schemes). Such considerations, however, view social protection exclusively within the frame of welfare states as immigration states. They do not take into account the cross-border elements of social protection, both at the level of states through instruments such as bilateral treaties, and at the level of the community or civil society, for example through social support mechanisms among migrants and significant others. In addition, there is the wider context of the assemblage of state and non-state social protection mechanisms.

Included among the highly formalized and systemic arrangements are not only various international organizations and NGOs but also the state-sponsored and state-run schemes mentioned earlier, such as bilateral treaties, international conventions pertaining to social rights and supranational arrangements such as EU social policy.

Social protection assemblages contain formal and informal, state and non-state dimensions. On a small scale, there are informal friendship networks and highly institutionalized kinship, e.g. family, arrangements. In kinship groups, migration decisions can be seen as informal insurance arrangements, for example, providing for supplementary income in case of crop failure. Migration often involves intra-kinship transfers, for instance when an aunt sends remittances to be used to pay school fees for nieces and nephews, or for relatives' health services. Also of great interest are collective arrangements beyond kinship, such as those found in voluntary associations like hometown associations, cultural associations and funeral societies. The latter, for example among African migrants in Europe, not only fulfil essential functions with respect to ensuring burials in the homeland but also serve as arenas in which political and economic bargains are struck.

Overall, the assemblages for social protection not only crisscross national borders but also intermingle state and non-state arrangements. For example, child care in immigration countries is often provided not only by official child care facilities but also by relatives coming in from abroad to look after young children so their mothers can work, thereby complementing in situ child care programs, or in some cases filling in if such programs are absent or too costly. In some cases elderly relatives who cannot be cared for in the sending countries are also brought in (cf. Righard 2008). In short, sometimes migrants import their care needs or bring them along in the absence of formal arrangements or to complement formal social provision. There are also arrangements beyond families and households. Typical migrant associations providing social protection are funeral societies but also hometown associations. In addition, there are active non-migrant organizations such as religious communities and NGOs. Quite often, welfare states on the local or national scale interact with migrant associa-

tions or other civil society agents to provide social protection. A Prominent examples can be found in the Southern European states such as Spain (Fauser 2011).

This short sketch of social protection assemblages across borders suggests that both state and non-state actors and institutions interact in addressing social risks and social inequalities. Two realms can be analytically distinguished in order to discuss social inequalities in the context of cross-border social protection. The first, on a primarily discursive level, is the debate on what has been called "development" of regions and "developing countries". In this discussion it becomes clear that non-state principles of social order such as civil society, market and family have gained more prominence over state principles in policy and public debates during the past few decades. This debate suggests that since the late 1990s migrants have been conceptualized by international organizations and state governments as development agents and providers of social protection. Second, we need to unearth the social processes operative in efforts at social protection – and this can be done fruitfully by identifying the social mechanisms which result in the (re)production of inequalities.

Migrants as Development Agents and Providers of Social Protection

For cross-border and mostly informal social protection, the example of migrants and migrant associations, hailed as "development agents" since the early 2000s, is illustrative. Since an overwhelming share of financial remittances is used for purposes at the heart of social protection – namely education costs (e.g. school fees) or health expenses – the renewed policy emphasis of international organizations and national governments, the 'new mantra' (Kapur 2004) of linking migration and development, serves well to highlight the problems involved. Over the past few years, migrants have been constituted as new development agents in cooperative schemes between immigration and emigration countries. The fundamental idea is that migrants are important mediators for initiating development or conflict mediation because of their bi-lateral loyalties and ties as well as their local knowledge of the needs of so-called developing countries. Financial remittances back home, complemented by social remittances – that is, the transfer of ideas such as democracy or gender equality; the transfer of knowledge, capabilities and competencies; insider advantages that migrants might have such as linguistic competences, social contacts, familiarity with bureaucratic processes – are thought to benefit development in the migrants' countries of origin (Faist 2008).

There is nothing new about the fact that migrants often remain in contact with, and continue to send resources to, those back home. What is truly novel is the greater incentive for civil society or community agents to replace the old, state-centred, development policy paradigm of the 1960s and to build on and fuse into the market and civil society paradigms of the

1980s and the 1990s. Programs based on such approaches have been pushed by international organizations such as the World Bank, by development cooperation organizations and by national states. European immigration countries concentrate their development cooperation policies on countries bordering the EU in the south and the east, such as the Joint EU-Africa Strategy. EU policies and public policies of member states increasingly link development cooperation with migration control, putting more emphasis on the legitimacy of national economic interests in highly qualified workers (Glick Schiller and Faist 2010). In emigration countries, the image of migrants has changed from that of "turncoats" to "heroes". Many states, for instance Russia, Ghana, Mali, Mexico and the Philippines, have meanwhile established diaspora ministries. Measures taken include tax relief for emigrants who, for example, live and work in Silicon Valley and invest in India, while both symbolic and practical policies such as the tolerance of dual citizenship help to uphold the loyalty of emigrants.

The deployment of migrants as development agents, along with increased endeavours by international organizations, states and NGOs to create incentives for migrants to become involved in promoting development, can be observed on two levels. On one level, individual migrants, vested with economic skills and social ties, are the focus: diasporic migrants return as highly qualified workers for brief assignments to their countries of origin or develop small-scale projects on their own initiative – for example medical doctors in the health sector. On a second, collective level, the focus is on families and above all migrant self-organizations that not only support relatives and friends in their countries of origin but also become involved in activities such as building wells or schools; key terms are diasporas and transnational communities. In some European countries, sometimes in cooperation with international organizations, there are now state programs that combine the periodic return of migrants and their involvement with development cooperation (de Haas 2006). It should be noted, however, that such programs – the co-développement scheme in France for instance – were originally created to encourage the return of migrants to their home countries, and are built on close and politically asymmetric ties from colonial times. The French case, for example, is a cross-border, translocal scheme with bilateral elements. Today, such schemes combine incorporation, development and migration control policies by supporting local projects run by migrants. The international level has become more important, given the involvement of international organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and international non-governmental organizations such as Oxfam.

In light of these new policy measures for promoting migrants as development brokers, certain attributes of migrants that were hitherto regarded as drawbacks – such as "fence sitting", that

is, sitting in between emigration and immigration countries, for example – are re-interpreted as mobility competencies and thus assets; in this case as bridge builders and brokers. In short, cross-border ties and associated resources, indeed the very transnationality of migrants, has become a characteristic of development and thus also social protection. Transnationality refers, for instance, to commitments in migrants' regions of origin, which were formerly seen as an indicator of non-integration or a failure of integration by immigration states. From the perspective of the new policies, incorporation in the country of immigration is seen as being entirely compatible with transnational involvement and commitments in the country of origin. Indeed, empirical studies show that incorporation in the country of immigration is virtually a pre-requisite for meaningful involvement in development policy activities. Transnational activists as a rule still have their local roots in their regions of origin and use them as a basis for transboundary involvement. This is confirmed, for example, by the activities of African organizations in Germany that are involved in development cooperation and help with the building of schools or water systems (Sieveking 2011).

This short sketch of the scales and therefore the levels and dimensions of cross-border interchange indicates that transnationalization is itself embedded in changing principles of social order – namely state, market, civil society and family. Social policy and development thinking has moved from a focus on the national state to more of an emphasis on local government and international institutions (Mkandawire 2004).Two kinds of social transformations have fostered this focus on the emergence of migrants as development and social protection agents: statehood and civil society; and market and transnationalized civil society. Notably, family and kinship usually does not figure prominently within discussions of principles of social order; it is mostly relegated to studies on care. Nonetheless, family needs to be brought into the discussion, and these social transformations must be discussed with respect to all four principles of social organization. Civil society in its relationships to market, state and family is used as a lens to gauge the changes in social protection across the borders of states.

(1) *Statehood and Civil Society*: While in modernization theory we found a strong belief in the crucial role of the national state, this belief was called into question after the 1960s and 1970s. A sea change took place as international development organizations focused more on market as a principle, and as notions such as community and civil society emerged as the lodestars of development – hence also the current mantra of the importance of migrants and migrant associations for development and social protection. The epitome of the market focus was the "Washington Consensus". Around the same time community and civil society entered discussions in the context of strategies in the service of basic needs. It has been in this context that migrants were re-invented in the early 2000s as a civil society or community ac-

tor, either as individuals remitting funds or as migrant associations in the form of diaspora or transnational communities. It is therefore no coincidence that organised groups such as hometown associations in Mexico, returnee associations in Jamaica, or charitable foundations in Egypt have gained importance in political discourse and sometimes in policy making. In short, over the past decades, the central role of the national state has become de-emphasized in favour not only of the market but also of civil society and community. Equally noteworthy is the now frequently made distinction between the central and local state. In the face of decentralization and attendant slogans such as ownership and stakeholdership, local governments, along with civil society and community, have assumed a greater role. The migration-development nexus proves an exemplary case in point. In immigration states such as France vis-à-vis North and West African states, such as Morocco and Mali, the aforementioned idea of co-développement sees migrants as their own development agents with respect to the sending countries. According to this view migrants and their diasporas alleviate poverty, help to solve (violent) conflicts, especially if local governments work with diaspora groups, and deliver better results. In general, the focus on local governments and diasporas has come to be especially relevant in cases where national states in developing countries have failed to assert territorial domination, establish rule of law, institutionalize democracy and launch "sustained" economic development (reflected in, for example, consistent economic growth rates). States invest hope in non-governmental organizations and local government in a synergistic collaboration with diasporas. Not surprisingly, migrants' collectives in all forms, hometown associations, diaspora knowledge networks, businesspersons' networks and even religious congregations, are now sought after by governments seeking to entrench their own interests.

(2) *Market and Civil Society*: Not only have state-civil society relations changed but so too has the linkage between market and civil society. Communities or civil society are becoming more and more a complement to liberal economic approaches in the era of the post-Washington consensus. Two elements work together: liberal economic thought on the one hand, and participatory approaches on the other. Liberal economic thought would suggest that migrants are their own best development agents, recalling John Kenneth Galbraith's dictum on migration as "the oldest action against poverty" (Galbraith, 1979, p. 7). While the second element, participatory and grassroots approaches, does not suggest a "market citizen," it has nevertheless been conducive to conceptualizing migrants as development agents and developers of social protection, and it expresses altered state-civil society relations. In participatory approaches, voice in combination with exit and continued loyalty, that is, a commitment of transnational migrants to regions of origin, stand at the core. Participatory approaches as expressed, for example, by reports of the United Nations Development Organization, focus on collective remittances (UNDP 2009).

(3) *Family and Civil Society*: International migration today has resulted in the increased prevalence of what have been called transnational families – families with members living in different national states. Research on these families has been spurred by the understanding of the gendered nature of mobility, in particular the "feminization of migration", that is, the fact that there has been an increasing share of women moving as independent migrants and not as spouses joining their husbands or remaining separated. The decentralization and deregulation of manufacturing production and the demand for professional services which require service labour, such as care work in the health, domestic and other sectors, have contributed to consistently increasing cross-border mobilities and concomitant ties. Of special interest is that more and more transnational families must remain spatially separated, whether due to newer types and patterns of migration or restrictive immigration laws. At the same time we see that migrants can now more easily stay in touch with loved ones owing to easier travel conditions, the Internet and other forms of telecommunication, previously unavailable. There are thus not only local communities without geographical propinquity, but also families without propinquity. Therefore, the issues raised concerning transnational families, such as transnational motherhood and the involvement of families in transnational social movements, need to be seen against the backdrop of the life course in and of families. In connecting transnational families to civil society, two issues arise. First, transnational families may assume new forms, challenging sedentary concepts of families. Second, transnational families raise new questions about involvement of individual migrants in larger communities.

First, family studies in the past have emphasized geographical proximity as a prerequisite for interaction and exchange within families. As a result, transnational families and family practices across borders have often been treated as temporary phenomena, with family reunification in the host society as the preferred outcome for all family members. Yet transnational family life may not necessarily lead to family disintegration and may be part of a strategy for social mobility for all members. Partly owing to the fundamental restructuring of labour markets, there are proportionally more positions for women in the service sector abroad, and there are fewer opportunities for legal labour migration which normally includes the right to family unification in one place. In recent years, family reunification has become more difficult, expensive and time-consuming for immigrants from non-EU countries in European countries (cf. Betts 2011). This constellation makes care within families difficult, e.g. providing care for the young and the elderly due to, for example, visa restrictions.

Second, it is likely that all kin and peer relations, not just relations between partners, parents and children, are reconfigured by transnational life courses, if we consider that domestic life and private life are not insulated from their wider social sphere, and that families play roles in

public life. An obvious instance is migrant associations or religious congregations, whose membership often consists of families. Religious associations of African migrants in Germany, for example, fulfil manifold spiritual but also social support functions. In some cases, women are very active, not in public roles but in providing support for community services in emigration locales behind the scenes (Sieveking 2011). Changing gender relations within families are mirrored in civil society activities in other ways. There are also instances where women take their activities into the streets. The Mexican women farmworkers' organization "Líderes Campesinas" has taken its protest into the public by marching in the streets of California cities and protesting domestic violence (cf. Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000).

Overall, a transnational approach does not presume prematurely a truly global consciousness and a global circulation of resources. A useful heuristic concept is transnational social spaces, which refer to cross-border social spaces with dense, continuous and sustained transnational ties that concatenate into social structures. Transnational spaces refer to relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across the borders of sovereign states. They consist of combinations of ties and their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks or organizations that cut across the borders of at least two nation-states. Social and symbolic ties, the smallest elements in such spaces, refer not only to one locale but to several. Thus transnational structures point to connectivity beyond national containers and to the simultaneity of sociality in various locales (Faist 2000).

Social Protection and Social Inequalities

Having established the 'new' discourse on the relative importance of the relevance of the principles of state, market, civil society and family we now move to identify the social mechanisms operative in this context. Returning to the two examples introduced before, care work and pensions, we get a clearer sense of inequalities arising in transnational spaces. Of particular relevance is the way in which we disaggregate monolithic conceptions of family or households, distinguishing not only between migrant households and those who purchase care work but also between migrant households in the emigration and immigration context.

To identify the (re)production of inequalities, the underlying proposition here is that it is useful to look for the social mechanisms rather than simply the universal theories trying to explain everything. A social mechanism aims toward causal reconstruction of processes leading to defined outcomes. The term social mechanism refers to recurrent processes or pathways, linking specified initial conditions and specific outcomes, the latter of which can be effects produced or purposes achieved. Mechanism-based explanations seek to explain a given

social phenomenon – an event, structure or development – by identifying the processes through which it is generated (McAdam et al. 2001: 24).

The (Re-)Production of Social Inequalities (1): Transnational Care

The first example, dealing with care work, illustrates the usefulness of a social mechanism analysis in understanding the processes involving changing boundaries from a transnational optic. The example outlines the process of emergent new boundaries by drawing on a detailed study of East European women originating in Ukraine and Romania and working as domestic and care workers in households in Italy (Piperno 2007). This is a case of transnational personal care services chains linking social protection in regions of origin and destination, Romania and Ukraine – Italy.

To articulate a mechanism-based approach in transnational studies, one can distinguish between types of social mechanisms and scales of sociality (Figure 1). The first dimension refers to types of social mechanisms – here: inclusion and exclusion; opportunity hoarding; and exploitation. The second dimension concerns dimensions of mechanisms. Out of various possibilities this short sketch distinguishes between relational and systemic mechanisms. Relational mechanisms alter the "connections among people, groups, and interpersonal networks" (McAdam et al. 2001: 26). They emphasize relations among and between individual and collective agents, such as persons, small groups and associations. The systemic realm concerns the impact of structures and their emergent properties for social protection.

In the relational realm, public and academic discussions of the effects of care chains have emphasized the problems raised for those 'left behind' in the regions of origin. Akin to global commodity chains, i.e. successive links in the production of goods, "care chains" comprise patterns of personal links to provide care across the globe (Hochschild 2000: 172). Mass media have focused on the elderly and the children who are left to fend for themselves following the migration of women to Western Europe. Some media have dramatized these consequences as "social orphans", or in the case of Poland, "Euro orphans". Certainly, the picture is much more complex than the one painted by mass media, namely abandonment of the aged and the young who are left without care. Ethnographic evidence from different parts of the world, such as Latin America, Africa and South East Asia, suggests that migrant women often leave children in the care of substitute mothers, their fathers and the extended family (Parreñas 2005). Nonetheless, we do not know how the inequality effects of care work function in both emigration and immigration regions. It is useful therefore to move beyond the issue of "transnational motherhood" and look in detail at the mechanisms underlying displacement and substitution of care. On a systemic level, it is also necessary to understand

the reorganization of care in immigration regions ("care gap") and the consequences for both emigration regions ("care drain") and immigration countries (cf. Lutz 2008).

Figure 1: Social Mechanisms Generating Inequalities – The Example of Care

Social Formation/ General Social Mechanisms	**Small Groups & Networks** - Relational -	**Societal institutions** - Systemic -
Inclusion/ Exclusion	*Belonging* (e.g. access to networks and jobs)	*Immigration policies & citizenship* (e.g. irregular status; visa free circulation; family reunification)
Opportunity Hoarding	*Networks* of referral; remittances	*Concentration* in certain sectors
Exploitation	*Working conditions* (e.g. household work)	*Adverse Redistribution:* skills and care drain; cf. brain drain / reverse remittances

In the broadest sense social closure as *inclusion and exclusion* speaks to the aspect of belonging. In the relational realm this implies membership in groups and participation in networks, which are important, for example, for entry to social collectives providing access to jobs, housing and child care. Participation in networks, cliques and groups is crucial for women both to get access to jobs in Italy, often to irregular work, but also to find child care, to engage in long-distance parenting, and, in cases where older relatives are left behind, to care for the elderly in Ukraine or Romania. Institutionally, inclusion/exclusion is epitomized in citizenship, of which the legal aspect of belonging to polities is decisive because it facilitates opportunities for border-crossing travel. Romania has been a member state of the EU since 2002 when the visa requirement for short term stays was abolished, reducing travel costs and other hurdles, while Ukraine is still a third country. Citizenship and thus freedom of travel make a difference. For instance, Romanian minors visit their mothers in Italy more often than do their Ukrainian counterparts – probably with far reaching implications for child care and parent-child trust and interactions. Moreover, the employment status of Romanian women workers as EU citizens is more advantageous compared to Ukrainian women, and thus legal security is greater.

In essence, social closure as *opportunity hoarding* refers to a particular group occupying niches in, for example, the economic sector, such as an immigrant group in the local restaurant business of a city (Tilly 2005: chapter 10), and drawing benefits from this niche monopoly. In contrast to inclusion and exclusion, this mechanism does not necessarily entail direct competition with other groups. Relationally, a group of nurses from Romania may occupy a territorial and occupational niche such as care for the elderly in an Italian city or a neighbourhood thereof. Through strong and weak ties, newly migrant women may get recruited for other families or may take the place of those who move back to Eastern Europe or onward. In this case, opportunity hoarding ensures that members of a group (e.g. hometown) or a network (e.g. friendship) benefit from referrals. One may surmise that there are reciprocal relationships. Institutionally, informal hiring in the Italian social security system functions as a prerequisite enabling women from the two East European countries to engage in opportunity hoarding. The Italian social security system does not, unlike the German one, provide for formal pathways for care through instruments such as elder care insurance, and thus necessitates or at least gives stronger incentives for informal care arrangements (Bettio et al. 2006). It is in this way that we can observe the evolution of new assemblages of social protection, which do not have the high level of formal differentiation characteristic of national security systems.

Exploitation is the use of an economic resource, in this case labour power, for ethically unacceptable purposes. It thus presupposes clear normative standards of what is acceptable and fair in employer-employee relations (cf. ILO 2010). Relationally, informal work or irregular work in households, sometimes even without a legal residence permit, entails practically no legal recourse because the worker has to fear expulsion on the grounds of irregularity – even though courts may fine the employer. On an institutional level, exploitation here refers to redistribution across regions, in two ways.

First, one can observe a “care drain” from Eastern Europe to Italy, that is, in Italy, some of the domestic workers are skilled nurses trained in the countries of origin. As a consequence, the investment in training is lost, and shortages of labour in the care sector of the locales of origin may arise. It is certainly difficult to arrive at conclusive evidence regarding the whole process – one would need to factor in incentives for young persons who may be enticed to train as nurses because of the role models provided by successful professionals abroad (Stark 2004), and also the effects of return migration. Nonetheless, it stands to reason that there may be losses for the sending regions involved, especially for those that cannot replenish the workers or skilled personnel lost through their own training institutions or from exporting labour from abroad (cf. the notion of “brain cascades”, Faist 2008).

Second, though not necessarily offsetting the losses just mentioned, there are remittances from destination to origin – above all financial – by women who work as domestic helpers or care givers. While one may engage in endless calculations and debates over the amounts transferred back and forth and even enrich the analysis by non-monetary transfers such as "social remittances", the implications for social inequality are probably significant. More concretely, there is growing inequality on the household level in both sending and receiving regions. In the regions of origin not all households participate in international migration – those participating are mostly the relatively privileged ones, and not all benefit equally from remittances (Robles-Silva 2011). In Italy and other European countries in which care workers from Eastern Europe are active, the employment of often irregular domestic workers adds another layer of inequality into households and families.

This observation leads to another question, namely, the implications for social inequalities on other scales, for example, regions of origin/return and destination. On a regional level, there is the risk of adverse redistribution of resources from origin to immigration regions. Not only is there a "care drain", but there are also reverse remittances. We know from studies that migrants often need to invest considerable sums in order to establish themselves in the destination regions, e.g. for obtaining papers to work legally (e.g. Berggren et al. 2007), and they do not always recoup these investments through they wages they earn subsequently.

A transnational optic may also help to disaggregate monolithic terms, such as household, and to thus arrive at a nuanced understanding of the generation and reproduction of social inequalities. Households encompass three units of "cooperative conflict" (Sen 1987) involved in care chains: the household of the employer, the migrant transnational household in the immigration region, and the (relatively) immobile transnational household in the region of origin. It stands to reason that the employer household obviously gains from the employment of (illegal) care workers. The size of that gain depends on how (old age) care work is organized in welfare states of immigration regions. Often, migrants can provide care at a comparatively more affordable price.

The effects on the migrant household in the region of origin are ambiguous. On the one hand, these households may gain from financial remittances to cover education and health expenses. On the other hand, because of the temporary or long-term absence of the main care giver, other household or kinship members have to take over this function – usually other female household members, less often fathers (cf. Dreby and Adkins 2010). As numerous accounts indicate, the new care givers themselves may be overburdened (Pérez Orozco

2009). The care situation of the migrant family in the immigration context is usually the most precarious: while migrant women provide care for the employer household, often working long hours, care of their own children is uncertain (Hochschild 2000).

The (Re-)Production of Social Inequalities (2): Transnational Pensions

A second exemplary case of transnational social protection and inequalities is pensions. Already 10 percent of Swedish public old-age pensions, for example, are paid to recipients who are living outside Sweden (cf. Gustafson 2008). These pensions are paid to Swedish citizens migrating within the EU, for example, to Spain or Turkey, or former "guestworkers" moving between immigration countries and their countries of origin (King et al. 2000). In the relational dimension, in addition to the usual markers of class, gender and ethnicity, there is also transnationality – that is, leading a cross-border life – which is a marker connected to the production of inequality. The opportunities for leading a transnational life-style are not only connected to financial means and social resources, such as networks of friends and kin, but also to the macro-political regulation of mobility and settlement. In an institutional dimension, it is the quasi-global commodification of care which is one of the driving forces of transnational social protection (Figure 2). The two fields of care and pensions are thus inextricably related.

Figure 2: Social Mechanisms Generating Inequalities – The Example of Pensions

Social Formation/ General Social Mechanisms	**Small Groups & Networks** - Relational -	**Societal institutions** - Systemic -
Inclusion / Exclusion	*Belonging* (e.g. class differentiated patterns)	*Citizenship* (e.g. EU citizens vs. former labour migrants)
Opportunity hoarding	*Transnationality* (e.g. opportunities for a cross-border lifestyle)	*Transnational coupling* (e.g. enjoying health insurance; cp. East Asia)

Patterns of *inclusion and exclusion* with respect to class differentiation are strongly associated with patterns of belonging, that is, exclusion from and inclusion in communities of co-citizens, co-ethnics or co-religionists abroad. EU citizens moving within the EU and countries associated with the EU, for example, either congregate within enclaves that are fairly homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and nationality in countries such as Spain or Turkey, or they blend in on a more individual basis with the local resident population. The former pattern can be discerned among middle- or working-class pensioners with little knowledge of the language of the destination country; the latter among higher-class pensioners who consciously choose to settle outside pensioners' enclave communities, having at their disposal not only

sufficient financial means but also linguistic and cultural skills, such as knowledge of the language(s) in the country of settlement, for example. In a very crude way, many pensioners' colonies in Spain and Turkey made up of British, Nordic or Dutch citizens correspond to the former; individualistic pensioners in selected Greek islands to the latter type.

Again, as in the case of care workers, citizenship makes a notable difference. This is obvious in the differences between intra-EU mobility of citizens of member states vs. those from emigration countries, such as "guestworkers", who have not naturalized in immigration countries and return to the countries of origin. For many pensioners of this latter category who worked as labour migrants, it is important to be able to move back and forth because of health services. Yet for former labour migrants from "third countries" this is not self-evident. In order to be eligible for public health care schemes in The Netherlands or Germany, retired Moroccan or Turkish migrants, for example, need to maintain permanent residence in the immigration countries. If they fail to do so, they are often simply cut off from the health care standards they are used to (Böcker 1993). In contrast, free mobility to partake in social insurance schemes across borders of member states is usually not an insurmountable obstacle for EU citizens moving inside the common European sphere.

A typical *opportunity hoarding* mechanism in cross-border movements is transnationality, which connotes a cross-border life-style, either individually or more often in family contexts. In both Europe and Asia, pensioners' migration was initially an option only for high-income groups, yet this has changed over the past decades. Nowadays, middle-income pensioners can also afford to relocate abroad. This means that a growing percentage of persons engage in a transnational life-style, not only the so-called highly-skilled and professionals, merchants and businesspeople, but also groups not active in (transnational) labour markets but living off transfer income. Transnationality is thus partly enabled by national welfare state policies. For example, pensioners can afford to hoard opportunities by selecting appropriate climate zones throughout the year and choosing the services most important to them, such as health and care, appropriate to life-course-specific needs. As evidenced by the varying legal status and socio-economic conditions of pensioners, the exact means of opportunity hoarding is highly context-specific. It is important to note that opportunity hoarding – in this case choosing particular locales or services – does not necessarily result in denying them to others (cf. Tilly 2005).

Transnational coupling as a social mechanism refers to formal linkages between organizations in different national social security systems. In this regard it is instructive to compare the movement of pensioners within the EU to movements in East Asia along the lines of de-

mographic resemblances and legal differences. As in Europe, in Japan the population aged 65 and older is projected to rise from 19 percent in 2005 to 30 percent in 2025 (Toyota et al. 2006). In addition, East Asian populations have undergone significant life-style changes: pensioners today have fewer children, and fewer daughters-in-law see it as an obligation to look after the elderly. As well, state pension schemes make it possible for the elderly to live independently. Often, differences in income levels and purchasing power between their own and other regions function as an incentive to move. All these factors have created more potentially mobile pensioners. While these factors are fairly standard in the OECD world, the legal conditions under which movement occurs are different. In the EU increasingly unified laws have facilitated mobility, and while pensioners can move freely between member states, considerable legal and policy gaps still remain. In an ongoing process, demands are being made for further changes in regulations. In East and Southeast Asia, by comparison, national borders are much less permeable, even though both emigration and immigration countries have been active in promoting the movement of pensioners. For example, Japan has advocated "long-stay" tourism abroad, modelled on the "Malaysia My Second Home" program. In this particular case, the program was driven largely by the over-capacity of private hospitals following the Asian financial crisis. This comparison demonstrates that the movement of pensioners does not occur in isolation. It is embedded in and complemented by the activities of transnational organizations, such as health service providers who engage in the delivery of services across borders. In this case it is organizations in the tourism industry and health services, for example, which couple across borders.

Nullius in Verba: The Transnational Social Question and Social Inequalities

A transnational analysis that goes beyond national protection systems is able to capture the complex processes of inequalities unfolding in social spaces across borders. Three observations can be made about how the analytical viewpoint foregrounds the perception of inequalities.

First, a transnational optic does not look at resource flows as one-way streets. It takes into account the two-way flows of resources, and does not stop at a consideration of financial remittances flowing from destination to origin, and skill or care or brain drain from origin to destination regions. It allows for a more fine-grained analysis. Take the example of financial remittances. The claim that financial remittances have increased dramatically over the past decade should be viewed with caution. Abundant research has established that migrants often need to invest considerable sums in order to get a foothold in the destination country, encompassing expenses for travel and securing legal status, a trend which is growing. As

migration policies become ever more selective and restrictive, irregular migrants have to invest ever more resources to legalize their status. The figures presented by international organizations usually reflect only one-way streets and officially transferred money flows. One would need to take a comprehensive look at the two-way flows of investment in migrants and remittances in order to gauge the economic potential of migrant transfers (Khadria 2009).

Second, scale matters, that is, it matters significantly whether we employ a relational or a systemic dimension of social protection and inequalities across the borders of national states. Cross-border migration may involve processes of declassing (e.g. skills not transferable officially) or engendering (e.g. women slotted into irregular domestic and care work and men into agricultural work). Yet this is only one side of the coin. Ethnicity is one of the markers which are often used to slot migrants into certain occupational niches, thus (re)producing a structure of labour market inequality. At the same time, and this constitutes the other side of the coin, ethnicity can function as a basis of *self*-ethnicization by migrants who identify hemselves as belonging to group X or Y as the case may be in order to gain access to positions they desire, or to make successful referrals for friends, relatives and acquaintances. For example, some migrant men from East European countries refer to their ethnicity to gain access to agricultural jobs in Germany, while migrant women from similar regions do the same to find work in the domestic service sector (Amelina 2009). While from a systemic or institutional perspective ethnicization serves to uphold and create structures of occupational inequality through exclusion, from a relational perspective – in this case from the view of migrants themselves – it serves as a mechanism of opportunity hoarding.

Third, social inequalities have more than one dimension. This analytical sketch has dealt with inequalities between migrants and non-migrants, and migrants and their relatively immobile significant others. The underlying question is: inequality between whom? In households, for example, inequality increases because migrant domestic labour is injected. It stands to reason that the employment of migrant labour may yield different effects for households and labour markets. Through the employment of migrants, gender inequalities in households may not decrease because the division of labour between men and women remains unchanged due to the presence of exploited labour. Yet domestic labour may enable middle-class women employers to pursue careers more rigorously than before and thus change gendered patterns of participation in formal labour markets. Needless to say, the effects also depend on welfare state arrangements – and these are in need of further research. In welfare regimes with a high degree of de-commodification of care, we would expect families to be somewhat less likely to rely on migrants to care for children or elders.

In sum, this analysis has suggested that an approach to the transnational social question, as seen through the ways in which social protection is organized across borders among migrants and relatively immobile persons, has to start by acknowledging the connectivities of persons, collectives and institutions between different locations and states. Migration is indeed a suitable research site because it shows the ties across largely disparate worlds of institutional social protection which range from highly advanced welfare states, through newly industrializing countries in Asia, the transition countries of Eastern Europe, developing countries, and to the economically least developed world.

A close analysis of social protection in transnational social spaces reveals that the efforts of migrants and their significant others quite often reinforce old inequalities and produce new inequalities. While transnational social protection strategies may indeed affect livelihoods and improve them significantly (e.g. via remittances used for education, health care or consumption), the basic inequalities between regions of origin and destination are more or less reinforced. Institutional forms of social protection in both types of regions do not change as a result of migration but are often – as in some emigration countries – put under additional strain, for example, by the care drain. The hopes invested in migrants as development actors and social protection providers are therefore usually overblown, even though there seems to be some evidence for poverty-alleviating effects of remittances on the family level for some world regions (Adams and Page 2005). Instead, new inequalities arise in the course of migration, such as differences between households with or without remittances, and the gendered division of labour in the productive and reproductive spheres. The consequences for protection and inequalities may be different for transnational households in the region of origin and destination, and between these and the households in countries of destinations.

The most distinctive feature of the transnational optic is the move away from an externalist perspective. Most globalization approaches suggest that it is mainly globalization itself which produces inequalities. Yet the problem is not only one in which external forces (e.g. flows of capital and resulting migration flows or failing states and refugee migration) may result in migration and new inequalities. Rather, it is inequalities between world regions, and within and across them, in terms of categories such as class, ethnicity, religion and gender, which are constitutive of the schemas and resources involved in transnational livelihoods and the implications for inequalities. And it is precisely these inequalities which are also driving processes of transnationalization on various scales.

On a systemic level, the disparities between countries of origin and immigration provide a context in which cross-border chains develop, which may result in brain drain and care drain.

The position of countries and regions within an economic hierarchy matters. On a relational level, this patterned context of inequalities provides room for migrants to manoeuvre in transnational spaces. The position in social – e.g. occupational – hierarchies gives strong clues as to whether and how persons, groups and organizations are able to partake of transnational opportunities. For example, the professionally educated may be better able to transfer occupational skills than so-called semi-skilled or unskilled labour. And even within professional categories differences abound. While some may be able to transfer their degrees and skills without much devaluation and declassing, like the many scientists working in research institutions, others may have to retrain or work in low-skilled service positions (Betts 2011: 60-77).

This leaves us with the issue of legitimating social inequalities. Obviously, social inequalities in transnational social spaces cannot be dealt with solely in a national frame. On the national level, as T.H. Marshall pointed out long ago, social rights and, above all, social citizenship are important for legitimating social inequalities arising out of capitalist markets. For transnational social spaces there is no similar normative reference frame. Thus, it does not make sense to speak of "transnational (social) citizenship"– except in the sense of overlapping national citizenships, namely dual citizenship. Nor is it meaningful to speak of "global" or "world" citizenship in an institutional sense. World citizenship is simply non-existent de facto or de jure because, apart from exceptions such as claims to compensation for land loss in the case of development projects like dam building, there is only soft law or social rights in international conventions which cannot be claimed successfully by individuals. Also, it is still an open question to what degree national citizenship has been changed by incorporating global standards such as human rights and has thus evolved toward "post-national membership" (Soysal 1994). Transnational social protection and concomitant social inequalities are dealt with on various levels, with national states as well as international organizations or local municipalities playing a role – in addition to the other dimensions of social organization, namely market, community and family/household. Global criteria and norms such as international conventions, and a global horizon of thinking as a cognitive schema, serve as reference points for agents who strive for political change in this area. Indeed, there are identifiable global trends in meta-principles such as the postulates of equality and democracy that show a shift in public awareness concerning transnational exchange, interdependence and dependencies (Furia 2005), as well as rudimentary efforts to think about instruments for global social policy (e.g. Alam et al. 2011, Cabrera 2011, Mahon and Robinson 2011). Yet the loci of struggles remain very local and national, albeit intertwined across borders and within an emerging global horizon of what are appropriate standards of social protection and legitimate social inequalities.

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