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TENSION, TRUST AND TRANSFORMATION

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RN13 – Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives
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the collaborative project was to highlight the challenges of family migration while simultaneously documenting their ordinariness and resilience, offering lessons, and pushing for more humane and family friendly policies. The documentary highlights the challenges and opportunities of family migration (broadly understood) and the strategizing that that involves. It also shows how forced immobility (imposed by Covid and the hardening of borders) affected transnational relationships and impacted participants differently, mainly according to their generation/life course stage.

The paper discusses the tensions between the trust participants have in the potential for social mobility offered by the receiving society and the reality of everyday experience of family life across borders. While Covid restrictions have receded, Brexit-related immobilities and separations are increasing, sharpening some of the challenges and contradictions highlighted in the paper.

Intimacy Lost? Ruptures, Affect and Perception of Distance Among Polish Migrants in Iceland

Anna Wojtynska

University of Iceland, Iceland

Expansion of communication technology allows people to stay in almost constant touch at far, creating impression of immediateness that led some to talk even about death of distance (Cairncross, 1997). The new media has been extensively utilized by members of transnational families to maintain a sense familyhood and collective welfare (Bryceson and Vourela, 2002; Madianou & Miller, 2011). Some of the recent studies about migrants' transnationalism describe how frequent contacts enable migrants to feel simultaneously at home and participate care exchange in a satisfactory way (White and White 2007; Baldassar 2016). King-O'Riain (2015: 256) pointed out that regular usage of communication technology allows families to create "space of transconnectivity (home/away space)" as they practice "simultaneous and ongoing belonging across significant temporal and geographical distances". Similarly, Liccope (2004: 136) concluded that by using mobile and home telephones individuals manage to create a form of virtual connectedness that might efficiently substitute for physical co-presence and so "boundaries between absence and presence eventually get blurred" (cf. Laurier 2001). These studies, however, tend to overlook (or depreciate) inevitable ruptures and discontinuity inherent in transnational living (Werbner 2013). Geographical distance, especially in times of uncertainty, turbulence and multicrises, can become acute challenge for transnational families that may be in need of additional assistance and emotional support. Based on the ethnographic research among Polish labour migrants in Iceland, I focus on the notion of risk and loss of intimacy related to periods of separation that emerged as significant issue in migrants' accounts. In this presentation I present migrants' narratives of distance and proximity in order to critically engage with somehow too optimistic picture of new media communication.

JS | RN13_RN35_T03: Social protection of transnational families

The Problem Of Social Protection Of Transnational Families In Europe

Vida Česnuitytė

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

The presentation is inspired by the issues studied within the working group WG3 "Social rights and social protection of transnational families" of the COST Action CA21143 „Transnational Family Dynamics in Europe (TraFaDy)". As a result of global mass migration, lot of families in nowadays are forced to organize their lives across the state borders. One of the main tensions raised by such situation is social integration of so-called transnational families in the countries of destination. The phenomenon of social integration is multi-layered, therefore, the presentation is focused on selected social integration aspect only – social protection of transnational families' members in European countries. The problem is that most current social protection schemes were created for the citizens of national countries, and are based on social solidarity and social transfers at national level. When members of the family migrate to other country, a question emerges: who protects them in case of social risk – home country or country of destination? In case of social risks experienced by the migrants – European Union citizens, the latter question is more or less solved. Though, for social protection of migrants from Third countries, schemes still need to be transformed and adapted.

The presentation is based on the systematized social protection documents existing at national, international and supranational levels. Also, illustrations on social protection of immigrants settled in Lithuania provided.

Social Protection of Migrant Workers and Their Families in Migration Regimes between the Former Yugoslav Countries

Sanja Cukut Krilić[1], Jelena Predojević Despić[2]

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Continuing economic disparities, the collapse of key industries, skills and demand mismatches on the labour market and political instability have been among the key drivers of emigration from the former Yugoslav countries in the last decades. Within these flows, Slovenia represents an important country of immigration due to existing historical, cultural and linguistic ties, geographical proximity and existing migrant social networks. There exists a continuous reliance on labour migration and on posting of workers in Slovenia as both a receiving and a transit country to other

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countries of the EU. The posting of third-country nationals, particularly citizens of the former Yugoslav countries, has also increased significantly since 2010, especially in the construction sector. In this manner, the social protection issues of migrant workers have become an area of increased research interest. Nevertheless, less attention has been paid to the implications of such migration flows for transnational family lives. Drawing on statistical data and qualitative interviews with posted/migrant workers and their families from the former Yugoslav countries (especially Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), the paper would explore the social protection issues created by this channel of labour mobility and migration using the life course perspective. Not neglecting the importance of formal social protection mechanisms, it will point to the importance of informal networks in living transnational family lives. It will explore how migration and employment policies produce hierarchies of vulnerabilities (for instance, labour rights violations, cultural, language and information barriers, economic dependencies, work place safety issues, lack of labour rights enforcement, conditions for family reunification) that are a product of various mechanisms in sending, transit and receiving countries.

Investigating Separated Families: Towards A Transnational Analysis of Policies, Bureaucracy And Everyday Life

Laura Odasso[1], Milena Belloni[2], Mieke Vandenbroucke[2]

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Family migration has become the dominant legal mode of entry in Europe in the last four decades. Several studies have analysed the policies and practices regulating the right of different kinds of families (migrant, mixed, refugee) to be reunited. However, these policies have mostly been investigated within the frame of a specific state. This project, instead, topicalises the policies and related bureaucratic/administrative practices transnationally. We do this by focusing on two aspects: 1. The material culture of migration bureaucracy; 2. Family and community resources to navigate the complexities of procedures. These two aspects, we argue, are key to understanding the contemporary process of family reunification and can only be fully understood if they are analysed interdisciplinary and with a transnational lens. In order to advance the research on this topic, this paper brings together three disciplinary angles (sociology; anthropology; linguistics; development studies), in different national contexts (Italy, Belgium, France, Ethiopia, Uganda). The exchange between empirical research and different theoretical perspectives, will allow us to draw some conclusions for a future agenda on the study of this topic.

Family Reunification and Administrative Citizenship: A Transnational Perspective

Milena Belloni, Gert Verschraegen

MIGLOBA, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Whereas literature on migrant family reunification primarily examined the relationship between migrants and policies of destination states, typically located in the Global North, this chapter investigates the process of applying for family reunification through a transnational lens. Drawing on multi-sited ethnography among Eritrean refugees, we focus on the case of family members, who await reunification in the first country of asylum, and show their limited capabilities to perform what we term "administrative citizenship". This concept sheds light on the material processes of identification and documentation that shape legal membership. As this chapter illustrates, refugees' life circumstances compel them to interact with different state systems, administrations and identification systems. Their interactions are often marked by limited opportunities to perform their administrative identity due to deficient or discriminatory registration systems at home and in exile. As we show, lack of documentation – or accepted documentation – by the assessing state emerges from refugees' unique social, political and administrative position of outsiders in relation to their country of origin, their often precarious status in their first countries of asylum, as well as from the limited capacity of their bureaucratic dossier "to travel" across borders.

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