Transnationalisation in North and South: Concepts, Methodology and Venues for Research

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Discussions of globalisation have amply and aptly described the increase in the intensity, velocity and scope of cross-border exchanges. These include financial transactions, the exchange of goods and services, and various efforts to deal with these challenges, including the supranational advancement of global governance (see e.g. Lechner/Boli 2003). Much less attention has been devoted to conceptualizing cross-border social and symbolic ties and their concatenation, such as the life-worlds of persons and the organisational activities of associations who move around and maintain ties in a cross-borderised world. In order to capture the societal dimensions of cross-border social life, terms such as transnational social spaces, transnational social fields or transnational social formations usually refer to sustained ties of geographically mobile persons, networks and organisations across the borders of multiple nation-states (Basch et al. 1994; Faist 2000a; Faist 2000b; Portes et al. 1999). To list but a few examples, transnational families practise complex forms of livelihood which imply geographical distance and social proximity in earning a living and raising children (e.g. Murray 1981). Chinese entrepreneurs have long been known to rely on guanxi – friendship-communal – networks dating back to hometown ties in China in order to integrate economically in a great variety of countries all over the globe (Ong 1992). Kurdish political activists in various European countries have organised in various associations to address both governments of immigration states and rulers in Turkey in order to advance their cause of an autonomous 'Kurdistan'. And in the UK, Muslim organisations made up of migrants from South Asia, have sought to gain recognition as a religious association while forming part of a global umma. Such border-crossing social – political, economic and cultural – formations are not only found in the North and West but are probably equally widespread in the South and East. After all, cross-border migration is not only South-North and

North-South but also runs in directions such as South-South or East-East and North-North.[1]

It is rather obvious that, although transnational approaches have centred on cross-border interactions and social formations in the context of international migration, and have thus has pointed to sustained and dense cross-border transactions involving North and South, East and West, most research has focused on and been carried out in the West and North. But not only has research focused on these regions – not surprising in view of the fact that most scholars working in a transnational vein were socialised and work in these regions. What is noteworthy is that comparatively little attention has been given to a balanced description of North-South linkages, including not only sites in the North and South but also the linkages. If the South is included, they are mostly valuable studies on locales in the South (for example Haugen/Carling 2005; Leichtman 2005). What is needed is certainly a strengthening of research on the South and East, giving perspectives to scholars from the South. Short of such mid-term goals, a short-term and first step involves a more rigorous analysis of the interlinkages between North and South, East and West. One of the venues for this much-needed step in research on transnationalisation is the newly rediscovered migration-development nexus, that is, the two-way link between migration and development.

In particular, transnational migrant networks and migrant associations have lately been at the centre of the optimistic visions of national governments in the OECD world and international economic development policy establishments such as the World Bank (for an overview, see Maimba/Ratha 2005; on optimistic claims, see World Bank 2006). First, the surge in financial remittances over the past three decades transferred by transnational migrants has given rise to a kind of euphoria. Annual remittances from economically developed to developing and transformation countries more than doubled during the 1990s and have been approximately twenty percent higher than official development assistance (ODA) to these countries. Second, knowledge transferred through networks of scientists and experts from North to South is increasingly seen as "brain circulation" beneficial to all parties involved (cf. Lowell/Findlay/Stewart 2004). The transfer of ideas is seen as helping developing and transformation countries to participate in knowledge societies, which are the basis for innovation, productivity, and development. In a wide sense this knowledge transfer includes networks of scientists

1 The United Nations (UN) defines migrants as persons living outside their country of birth or citizenship for over a year. The world total of migrants amounted to about 100 million in 1980. Of those were ca. 50 million in the North, compared with 52 million in the South. By 2006, out of a global total of some 190 million migrants, 61 million had moved South-South, 53 million North-North, 14 million North-South and 62 million South-North (UNDESA 2006). Obviously, categories such as North and South represent gross over-simplifications, since many countries cannot be readily classified as either North or South. For example, there are also quite a few transformation or transition countries in the former Eastern block, or emerging powers such as China.

and experts from the USA to China, or the diffusion of the practice of participation in the formal labour market by women migrants from Bangladesh who stayed in Malaysia and returned to their country of origin (Dannecker 2004). Thirdly, there are social remittances, which involve the transfer of ideas regarding the rule of law, good governance, democracy, gender equity and human rights. Politically, social remittances have achieved a growing prominence in the aftermath of interventions into armed conflicts and efforts at reconstructing countries ravaged by civil war – evidenced lately in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Occasionally diasporas made up of exiles, refugees, and labour migrants are hailed as mediators in conflict resolution, for example in the cases of South Africa or Nigeria. However, all these mechanisms of transfer also have their dark sides. For example, refugee and exile communities that have fuelled conflicts in their countries of origin from abroad, such as Kosovo Albanians or Chechen freedom fighters.

The newest round of the migration-development nexus is the idea of what in French has been called *co-développement*. Co-development means that migrants are productive development agents. It very well describes the public policy approaches of immigration countries to the migration-development nexus, at least those propagated by several states such as France, the Netherlands, the UK and international organisations such as the World Bank. Co-development does not build upon the permanent return of migrants to their countries of origin but tries to tap into existing transnational ties of migrants who are seen to be transmission belts of development cooperation. The question comes up how this new enthusiasm (Faist 2007a) can be fruitfully analysed from a transnational perspective. What is puzzling from a transnational view is that the new optimism envisages one-way flows from North to South, occluding reverse flows.

The central puzzle then is: On the one hand we can observe that public and academic debates in the newest round of the migration-development nexus address mostly one-way flows, the transfer of resources from North to South – financial remittances, human capital, knowledge and even so-called social remittances, such as the export of democracy and human rights. The newest round of the migration-development debate, like the older ones in the 1960s and 1980s, is couched in terms of development and development cooperation. On the other hand, studies taking a transnational approach suggest that we do not see one-way traffic but two-way flows. Certainly, we can still observe brain drain, as evidence in research on "brain strain hotspots", such as the health care sector in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, where the nurses and doctors who migrated abroad cannot be replaced (cf. Lowell et al. 2004). Also, countries such as the USA and the UK have benefited tremendously from tuition fees from students hailing from the South and East. Moreover, we may think of findings which indicate "reverse remittances", for example, families of migrants in Accra, Ghana paying for their kinfolk in Amsterdam to "get their papers", that is, to legalize their status in the Netherlands. And taking a broader historical perspective, it seems odd that the

migration-development debate would focus predominantly on North-South transfers, as it is well-established that only colonial and imperial domination of large regions of Africa and Asia set the conditions in which migration systems could develop (Wallerstein 1983).

The first part of the analysis delineates three levels of transnational analysis, located in the realms of lifeworlds, associations and systems respectively. While the focus of transnational approaches is on the associational level (meso-level; Faist 1997), the lifeworld or interaction level (micro-level) and the systems level (macro-level) are to be included. The second part shifts attention to various types of meso-level social formations, called transnational social spaces. Transnational spaces can be conceptualised as being inbetween a space of places and a space of flows (Faist 2000a: chapter 1). The third part deals with transnational methodology, arguing that research should strive to consider multi-sited research, and research dealing with meso-level formations – not only associations but also the "spaces inbetween associations" and organisations. In the fourth part the analysis then moves on to consider an application of transnational methodology, the recently rediscovered migration-development nexus.

Transnational Approaches: Life-worlds, Associations and Systems

The Oxford Dictionary of English dates the emergence of the term "transnational" to ca. 1920, documented with a quotation from an economic text that saw Europe after World War One as characterised by its "international or more correctly transnational economy" (ODE 2003: 1762). Indeed, the term re-emerged in the late 1960s to denote increasing economic and political interdependence between industrialised countries and the spread of trans- or multinational companies operating across the globe (Keohane/Nye 1977). The newest round of the term transnational, which started in the late 1980s and early 1990s, took a bottom-up perspective and asked about migrants as agents in constellations of increased cross-border flows, not only of goods, but also of people (Basch et al. 1994). It is within this latest context that transnational approaches have flourished. They have explored counter-trends to the dis-embedding of social systems in an increasingly globalised world. Transnational studies look at processes of re-embedding the social in cross-border societal formations.

Transnational social formations – fields, spaces – consist of combinations of social and symbolic ties and their contents, positions in networks and organisations, and networks of organisations that cut across the borders of at least two national states. In other words, the term refers to sustained and continuous plurilocal transactions crossing state borders. Most of these formations are located inbetween the life-world of personal interactions, on the one hand, and the functional systems of differentiated spheres, such as the economy, polity, law, science

and religion. The smallest element of transnational social formations is transactions, that is, bounded communications between at least three persons. More aggregated levels encompass groups, households, organisations and firms.

There are various ways to conceptualize transnational social formations, which can be thought to be part of more general cross border societal configurations. Transnational approaches, as do globalisation theories, world society and world polity theories, look at the current waves of global connectivity not as a new material phenomenon. Cultural pluralisation is not anything new in world history but has been the rule for centuries. Colonialism, wars of conquest, mass migrations, the slave trade, world wars, and refugee movements have been processes with global dimensions for several centuries. Viewed in a world-system perspective, capitalist markets required migration across borders of states and empires (Wallerstein 1974). What is new is not so much cultural pluralisation as a result of increasing global connectivity – more a matter of degree than a new quality – but global awareness of it. This awareness can be described as one important dimension of globalisation (Robertson 1992). It is reflected in academic analyses and in mass media.

Nonetheless, transnational approaches differ from both world society and world polity theories, on the one hand, and more general globalisation studies, on the other hand. On an epistemological level, transnational views argue against a simplistic top down world society or world polity version of global or glocal conditions, which suffer from a neo-functionalist oversimplification in the first case and an exogenous rational actor model in the second. World society theories view societal processes from the vantage point of an already existing world society. The systems-theoretic notion of world society presupposes that global communicative connectivity already exists. According to theorists such as Niklas Luhmann, society is the most encompassing social system, defined as the sum total of all communication connected to communication. As communication is geared towards global connectivity, only one society exists: world society (Luhmann 1975: 57). World society theory places a high premium on functional differentiation. In a functionally differentiated society, each subsystem fulfils one specific function coded in a binary way. For example, the political system decides on power or not to have power, the science system on truth or not truth, the economic system on money or not to have money, and so forth. Such functional differentiation is a form of homogenisation. Social formations other than those which are functionally differentiated, such as segmented or stratified forms, play only a secondary role. World society is the inevitable result of functional differentiation (Luhmann 1997: 809). In the world polity theory of John W. Meyer and the Stanford School, the starting point is the existence of a world culture, which is culture exogenous to local contexts, worldwide, and based on the premises of modern rationalisation in Max Weber's sense (Meyer et al. 2000). This world culture is rationalistic in that it does not primarily consist of values and norms which are debated and towards which actors orient their behaviour, but on "cog-

nitive models". Actors accept such standards, that is, cognitive models, even though they may not be ready to act according to the standards prescribed; for example, in taking over English language curricula without adapting them to local circumstances.

There are various problems with both world society and world polity theory. Firstly, these theories postulate a priori and without further systematic empirical consideration that a world society or world polity actually exists. We can certainly observe the emergence of global institutions, for example, in the realm of political governance, such as the United Nations and its sub-organisations or the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Other prominent examples are the national state as a universal principle of political organisation, the use of money as a medium of economic exchange, and global standards in travel, time and communication. Yet such global structures or globally diffused institutions only exist in selected policy domains. Even if we turn to the universal semantics of human rights, rule of law, democracy or gender equity – terms which fulfil the function of meta-norms of meta-cognitive models – we observe that they do not rule universally. Also, functionally differentiated structures exist only to a very narrowly confined extent in many parts of the world. Social protection and social insurance in many parts of the world are just one crucial example (Faist 2007c). While some policy fields such as trade have been regulated by a complex and evolving international regimes, which may amount to elements of global governance, cross-cutting issue areas such as geographical mobility are a long way from being regulated by such mechanisms. Even in the realm of the United Nations various UN agencies compete for competence in these fields.

Secondly, both world society and world polity approaches are top down approaches which define the properties of lower order elements. Moreover, according to such views, it is modern organisations and networks which rule the societal world, while social formations such as families, tribes, and communities play a negligible role, if at all. World polity theory maintains that cognitive models shape the actors although authors working in this mould have conceded that it is not only world polity and world culture that shapes actors but it is also actors who shape world polity. For example, the very fact that the World Bank has championed the diaspora model of development has very real consequences for conceiving development. Different agents – a term used to ascribe the effectiveness of actors in influencing the social world – hold different notions of development. These notions change as a result of new paradigms. As a consequence, it still has to be shown how world society or world polity models shape local or national patterns. We can name many local or national patterns which do not necessarily go back to global models. For example, states in the OECD countries have employed very different models of incorporating migrants at the national level, ranging from assimilationist to multicultural paradigms (Castles/Miller 2003). Moreover, states have viewed very differently the desirability of migrants' transnational ties. While former colonial powers with a

long experience in penetrating developing countries have seised quickly upon the idea of co-development, that is, employing migrants as development agents, others, often characterised by less intense transnational and international ties, have only recently started to think about such models. Examples for the former category are national states such as France, the UK, Spain and the Netherlands, for the latter Germany, Austria and Sweden (cf. de Haas 2006).

Thirdly, neo-functionalist approaches neglect the crucial aspect of legitimation and thus the whole realm of normatively bounded agency (Peters 1993). And the world polity approach suggests that actors reap benefits from adapting to cognitive models such as the mainstreaming of tertiary education models, for example, the "Bologna Process" in the European Union. Political conflict over the very definition of such processes is merely semantic. However, to reduce the analysis of social and societal formations to instrumental concerns, and to occlude normative and ethical or expressive dimensions is to truncate the rich variety of the orientation of agency. Conflicts over whether social orders or systems are legitimate are a driving force of social change and transformation. For example, political agents active in pushing for gender equity criticize existing political arrangements and justify their strategies by reference to overall meta-norms such as human rights. In a similar way, those trying to establish a national state from abroad through secession may refer to norms such as national self-determination. In these two very different cases it is the legitimacy of existing orders which is at stake, both on the level of empirically observable acceptance of authority and power and on the level of normative criteria used to evaluate institutions.

Transnational approaches also need to be carefully distinguished from globalisation theories. Transnational views refer to overlapping ties and linkages of non-state agents between various national states. The hunch that political transnationalisation is a set of processes with a potentially global scope has implications for the functions of states, supra- and international organisations. In contrast, globalisation approaches focus on processes transcending state territories. Various aspects of society and governance on the local, national, regional and global levels can be thought of as nested within each other – always connected by potentially global communication. This characteristic also applies to global governance, namely the rapid emergence of multilateral cooperation and international organisations.

On a methodological level, transnational approaches – along with world society and world polity theories – aim to overcome "methodological territorialism" (Scholte 2000: 56), that is, conflating society, state and *territory*. Such methodological territorialism is evident in many analyses which prioritise state agency in the traditional Weberian trilogy of the congruence of territory, authority and people. Yet it is evident from empirical observation that processes such as migration challenge national institutions such as citizenship, and – in conjunction with processes such as gender equity and denizenship rights – favour

dual citizenship (Faist 2007b). In addition, transnational approaches also strive to overcome "methodological nationalism", the conflation of society, state and *nation* (Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2003). Again, the increasing tolerance of dual citizenship suggests that affiliations to nations may not be exclusive and monogamous but overlapping and plural.

Transnational perspectives on cross-border societal formations relate to the concepts of fields and spaces. While the former connotes the systemic dimensions of societal formations, the latter refers to associations and life-worlds. The notion of fields refers to the inner logic of social action of functionally differentiated realms. Although Pierre Bourdieu's notion of fields points towards the internal logic of systems, such as the economy, polity, science or law, transnational approaches do not presume an evolutionary and linear logic in a trend towards a functionally differentiated world society. The notion of transnational social fields is much more concerned with issues of agency and diverse social formations. In contrast, the notion of space denotes the spatial dimension of social life (Faist/Özveren 2004; Pries 2001). Transnational social spaces are not synonymous with concepts such as "network society" which postulate a trend towards societal life as a "space of flows" (Castells 1996). Undoubtedly, the intensity and velocity of the transfer of goods, capital, and ideas across borders has increased. And so has, in less spectacular rates of increase, cross-border migration. However, the dynamics of migration cannot be understood without considering the life worlds of persons, and the social and symbolic ties they entertain across regions of origin, destination and onward mobility.

Social space in particular has been neglected for several decades in the social sciences (Faist 2004b). In globalist or cosmopolitan approaches time definitively trumps place. The now often-used description of the world as a "space of flows" are creative reformulations of Marx's and Engels' famous dictum on capitalism: "all that is solid melts into air". The latter statement is still the clearest expression of the claim that there is an annihilation of space by time (Marx/Engels 1972 [1918]). Systems theory argues that migration can be substituted by routines (cf. Stichweh 2005). The core argument is that functional differentiation leads to the disappearance of social space and to the diminishing relevance of face-to-face communication in social systems. In a way, it is the end of geography. The counter-argument is equally simple but based on empirical evidence: social geographers have firmly established that face-to-face contact is the main functional reason for the spatial clustering of knowledge and skills. This is exactly why nowadays there is great fanfare about clusters of excellence in academia, such as Oxbridge in the UK, or clusters of growth in industry, such as the Rhine Valley or Shanghai. Other examples are international financial centres in places like New York, London or Frankfurt (see, for example, Thrift 1996). We observe a spatial clustering of practical knowledge, tacit knowledge and scientific knowledge. This trend is tied to production processes, which require simultaneous inputs and feedbacks (Sassen 2006: 72). Social spaces expand and direct contacts

grow as technological possibilities grow, and the short-term and even long-term mobility of persons certainly does not decline but has steadily increased. It is not only true in the world of business but also in the life-worlds of migrants, and new telecommunications that technology is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, face-to-face contact. It appears that information is still an "experience good" and that face-to-face contact still helps to build the trust needed to close deals (Rauch 2001), or to build reciprocity and solidarity in kinship groups. This example indicates that spaces of flows – not only those of persons but also of goods – are embedded in spaces of places. In other words, intensive and continuous cross-border flows of persons, ideas and goods do not necessarily result in a debordered world.

Flows are tied to the experience of place(s). The production of space can be considered a dialectical process. On the one hand, globalisation allows a deplacing from concrete territorial places – space of flows. On the other hand, global flows have to be anchored locally in specific places – space of places. Space is conceived as a relational process of structuring relative positions of social and symbolic ties between social actors, social resources and goods inherent in social ties, and the connection of these ties to places. On a meso- or associational level – the main focus of transnational approaches – the dialectics of flows and places goes hand in hand with the possibility for transfer of resources in space. Financial capital, for example, is distinctly more mobile than social capital. It is therefore often seen as the prototype of a global good. In contrast, social capital, such as networks of solidarity and trust, are place-bound, local assets, which can only be rendered mobile across space by the social ties in kinship groups, organisations, communities, which connect distinct places. Any conceptualisation of space across borders would therefore depend on the type of ties and (social) goods to be exchanged. At the interstices of the space of flows and space of places are processes of glocalisation. Glocalisation then means, first, that the local is produced – to a large extent – on the global or transnational level. Secondly, the local is also important in reconfiguring place. An empirical example of this approach is transnational social spaces. The concept of transnational social spaces probes into the question of by what principles geographical propinquity, which implies the embeddedness of ties in place, is supplemented or transformed by transnational flows.

Ultimately, these analyses have to be reconnected to macro-level analysis in the realm of systems or fields. On a macro-level, the reconfiguration of social space is visible, for example, in the political realm. In a process of "unbundling" territoriality (Ruggie 1993), various types of functional regimes have come to intersect territorially-defined nation-states. Such institutions include common markets, border-crossing political communities and inter- and supranational organisations. Non-territorial functional space-as-flows and territorial nation-states as space-of-places are the grids wherein international or global society is anchored. Such ruptures render the conventional distinction between internal and

external increasingly problematic because there are various tiers for making collectively binding decisions. It also calls into question the concept of state sovereignty as an expression of a single fixed viewpoint and the research strategy of 'methodological nationalism', which takes for granted national states as container-like units, defined by the congruence of a fixed state territory, an intergenerational political community and a legitimate state authority. In its stead, multi-layered systems of rule, such as the European Union, demand a multi-perspective framework.

Types of Transnational Social Spaces

The reality of transnational social spaces made up of migrants indicates, first, that migration and re-migration may not be definite, irrevocable and irreversible decisions – transnational lives in themselves may become a strategy of survival and betterment. Also, transnational webs include relatively immobile persons and collectives. Secondly, even those migrants who have settled for a considerable time outside the original countries of origin, frequently maintain strong transnational links. Thirdly, these links can be of a more informal nature, such as intra-household or family ties, or they can be institutionalised, such as political parties maintaining branches in various countries of immigration and emigration.

Under propitious conditions transnational social spaces find a fertile breeding ground. Favourable conditions for the reproduction of transnational ties include (1) modern technologies such as satellite or cable TV, instant mass communication, personal communication bridging long distances via telephone and fax, mass affordable short-term long-distance travel, (2) liberal state policies, such as poly-ethnic rights and anti-discrimination policies, or the opposite (3) cultural discrimination and socio-economic exclusion of migrants in immigration states, and (4) changing emigration state policies which reach out to migrants living abroad for remittances, investment, and political support.

There are three stylised types of transnational social spaces: small groups, particularly kinship systems; issue networks; and transnational organisations or associations.

(1) Formalised transboundary relations within *small groups* like households and wider kinship systems, are representative of many migrants. Families may live apart because one or more members work abroad as contract workers (like the former 'guestworkers' in Germany) or as employees of multinational companies. Small household and family groups have a strong sense of belonging to a common home. A classic example of such relations are transnational families, who conceive of themselves as both an economic unit and a unit of solidarity and who keep, besides their main house, a kind of shadow household in another country. Economic assets are mostly transferred from abroad to those who con-

tinue to run the household 'back home'. It is estimated that a vast amount of financial remittances are transferred within such small groups of kinship systems.

(2) Transnational issue networks are sets of ties between persons and organisations in which information and services are exchanged for the purpose of achieving a common goal. Linkage patterns may concatenate into advocacy networks (Keck/Sikkink 1998), business networks, or scientists' networks. These issue-specific networks engage in areas such as human rights and environmental protection. While issue networks have a long tradition in the realm of human rights, and are making steady progress in ecology, they are also emerging among migrants who have moved from the so-called third countries to the European Union (EU). Among the immigrant and citizenship associations are, for example, the European Citizenship Action Service (ECAS), and the Migration Policy Group (MPG). The latter network includes the British NGO Justice, the Immigration Lawyers Practitioners' Association and the Dutch Standing Group of Experts on Immigration and Asylum. Some of these networks – usually headed by non-migrant EU citizens – have succeeded in bringing issues such as discrimination onto the agendas of Intergovernmental Conferences (IGC), and, ultimately, into the Treaty of Maastricht (1997).

(3) Transnational organisations: an early type of transnational organisation – interstate non-governmental organisations (INGOS) – developed out of issue networks like the Red Cross, Amnesty International and Greenpeace. At the other extreme there are organisations which are based in one specific country but whose sphere of influence extends abroad, as with the ethno-nationalist Tamil Tigers which seek an autonomous Tamil state on the territory of contemporary Sri Lanka. Transnational enterprises constitute a further type of cross-border organisation. These businesses are differentiated transboundary organisations with an extremely detailed internal division of labour.

Transnational social spaces have cultural, political and economic aspects. Syncretist cultural practices – for example, music styles, language diffusion and mixing – and hybrid identities – such as German-Turkish or French-Algerian – are phenomena that tend to accompany processes of transnational migration. Although such phenomena may range from evanescent and temporary to more enduring and stable patterns over time, their observable existence has implications for the self-conception of individuals and groups, and for the definition of these same actors by others. How intensive this trend really is remains a matter of dispute. In principle, the idea of transnational cultural diffusion and syncretism implies the cross-border movement of people, symbols, practices, texts – all of which help to establish a pattern of common cultural beliefs across borders and patterns of reciprocal transactions between separate places, whereby cultural ideas in one place influence those in another.

Transnational migrant culture cannot be seen as baggage or a template, not as something to be figuratively packed and unpacked, uprooted (assimilationists) and transplanted from one national context to another (cultural pluralists and

multiculturalists). Transnational cultures are cross-border mixes, which not only involve novel elements but also "hardware" found in national or local cultures from regions of origin and destination. Syncretist identities and practices do not imply a diaspora consciousness. Nor do these mixing identities necessarily denote a successful stage in the transition from one collective identity to another, such as the prototypical development: Sicilian → Italian → Italian-American → US-American. Rather, it is an outcome of transnational ties and often segmented cultural communities that do refer to a successful synthesis in some cases – such as hip-hop musicians among the cultural elite. Also, there may be religious hybridity, mixing a Protestant attitude of an individualist relationship to God with Islam (Roy 2004). On an organisational level, it is sometimes religious communities called by some observers as Islamist, such as Milli Görüş – an organisation originating in Turkey with branches all over Europe – which have moved more than Islamic organisations supported by the Turkish state to a Christian-type model of religious activity. For example, they have given the Imam a more prominent role than in traditional "folk Islam", more akin to Christian pastors. Quite important, syncretism and migrant incorporation are not necessarily opposite processes. For example, while many Chinese migrants in Canada may be incorporated socio-economically, they may engage in syncretist cultural practices related to both Canada and their home region.

In the political realm, over the last few decades more than half of all sovereign states have come to tolerate dual or multiple citizenship for various reasons (Faist 2007b; Faist/Kivisto 2007). This is astonishing when one considers that a few decades ago citizenship and political loyalty to a state were still considered inseparable. Dual citizenship could be conceived of as the political foundation of the transnational experience, enabling transnational migrants and their children to lead multiple lives across borders. There has been a push towards tolerating dual nationality from both ends, from immigration and emigration countries, albeit for somewhat different reasons. In immigration countries it has been the spread of an equal rights perspective, advanced by considerations of gender equity and equal political freedom for all residents, which has provided the momentum towards increasing tolerance. Categories of persons to which tolerance has been shown have continued to grow, starting from stateless persons, those not allowed to renounce their nationality that is, not released from their original citizenship, and, finally, spouses and children in bi-national marriages. In emigration countries, the reasons for increasing tolerance often have been pronounced in more instrumental ways. For instance, representatives of political regimes have attempted to forge continuous links to expatriates living abroad.

While political transnationalisation is not a new phenomenon, the transnational activists of today, unlike those of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, are not comprised solely of professionals. A major difference between today and the turn of the 20th century may be that today, in addition to nationalist activists or diasporists, ethnic business persons and their associates, there is

probably a greater proportion of groups concerned with human rights and fundamental rights issues. Transnational activists are not merely internationally oriented cosmopolitans but rather need a firm grounding in local or national contexts. In order to inquire into the rootedness of transnational political actors, it is necessary to distinguish the organisational form their activities take: First, there are transnationally active non-government organisations (NGOs), such as cultural organisations; diasporic organisations; and organisations founded by political exiles and dissidents with the intention of overturning authoritarian regimes in their country of origin. Secondly, there are also genuinely transnational NGOs or international NGOs (INGOs), in which migrant activists operate, such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International (Tarrow 1998).

Methodology: "Spaces inbetween" Associations and National States

Most empirical studies on the process of forming and reproducing transnational social spaces – transnationalisation – focus on association and organisations (cf. Moja 2005). Such studies need to be complemented by those looking at the "spaces inbetween associations", that is transactions criss-crossing multiple associations, networks forming within associations, and non-organised engagement. For example, village cultural associations of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia nowadays also function as an arena for businesspersons planning to invest in China (Hong Liu 1998). In such cases, associations function as platforms for persons who are participating in other social groups as well, an instance of cross-cutting social circles (cf. Simmel 1955).

Methodologically, the exhortation of transnational approaches to "follow the flow of persons, money, ideas and so forth" has not really been taken very seriously, contrary to most announcements. A more systematic network approach, not only in the metaphorical sense is necessary. Taking multi-sited fieldwork seriously – that is, simultaneous research in locations – would mean to follow financial or other transactions in tracing lateral connectivities to other immigration and emigration regions. A case at hand is a five-year study meticulously tracing transactions involving persons, groups and organisations in the case of networks of Ghanaian migrants located in Amsterdam back to locations in Ghana and in other regions of the world (Mazzucato 2008). Such a methodological approach does not presume concepts of world society which presuppose too much unity and systemic differentiation. In sum, exploring transnational connectivities through multi-sited fieldwork enables us to look at the great variety of societal forms – associations, small groups, networks of associations (issue networks) and informal social networks. In particular, it allows us to trace the combination of a high degree of local clustering with a relatively low average path distance between nodes and hubs, which are located in different national states.

Networks in the "spaces inbetween" and within associations can be built around various categorical distinctions, such as ethnicity, race, gender, schooling, professional training, political affiliation, and sexual preference. Ethnicity constitutes a particularly vexing issue in transnational studies. On the one hand a transnational approach should be able to overcome the "ethnic" bias inherent in much migration scholarship. The fallacy is to label migrants immediately by means of "ethnic" or "national" categories. Often scholars presuppose prematurely that categories such as Turks, Brazilians and so forth matter a lot, since they do in public discourse. On the other hand, methods should be able to trace actually existing ethnic social formations, such as networks of reciprocity, which are of great importance, for example, in informal transfer systems of financial remittances. Yet ethnic networks may be complemented by networks in the financial sector which are not ethnically based at all. For example, informal remittance networks extending from Manchester, UK to Lahore in Pakistan rely on intermediaries or financial brokers in Dubai (Ballard 2005). In such cases we may speak of network of networks characterised by overlapping categories. In essence, a network approach means to turn the issue of the importance of ethnicity into an empirical question.

Transnational agents, such as groups, associations, organisations, and diasporas, cannot be treated as unitary actors if one wants to understand the tensions inherent in transnational social formations. Certainly, the opportunities for transnational agents have changed in the process of globalisation, not only for migrant-based collectives (cf. Evans 2000). Because of the apparent increase in interconnectedness through long-distance communication, facilitated face-to-face communication and interaction through travel and interaction, and the diffusion of ideas and knowledge, social life extending across the borders of states has become more dense and extensive. The spaces "inbetween" states have multiplied. Some of the cherished concepts of migration research need to be questioned because they may not be adequate to capture more fluid life-styles, modes of action, and collective behaviour. The lives of migrants are not necessarily characterised by one-time settlement and commitment to one society or associations and groups in one society. Therefore, dichotomous distinctions such as "origin" vs. "destination" and "emigration" vs. "immigration" no longer hold, if only because many traditional emigration countries have become both transit and immigration countries. Turkey is a typical example. Less obviously, other dichotomies such as "temporary vs. permanent" or "labour migrant vs. refugee" also no longer hold if the goal is to map trajectories of mobile populations. One first step has been a renewed interest in the notion of social space. This has implied, among other things, the need to conceptualize migration beyond its demographic construction as "flows" and "stocks" of people and to look at the "inbetween places." Nonetheless, overcoming unhelpful binary conceptual oppositions does not mean occluding political conflicts in policy fields such as migration and development.

Venues for Research – The Example of Transnationalisation and Development

Public debate and research on the relationship between migration & development has increased considerably over the past years. To be more precise, it has experienced yet another climax after two previous ones, in the 1960s and 1980s. From a simple cost-benefit point of view the basic idea has always been that the flow of emigrants and the loss of brains are partly or wholly compensated by a reverse flow of money, ideas and knowledge. Yet there is very little systematic thought given to what is recently "new". A transnational approach means looking at the emergence of a new transnational agent in development discourse – intermittently called "migrants", "diaspora", or "transnational community". In the eyes of some international organisations, states and development agencies they have turned into development agents. Increasingly, the cross-border ties of geographically mobile persons and collectives have been moved to the centre of attention. And national states, local governments, inter- and supranational organisations and development agencies seek to co-opt and establish ties to such agents, who are engaged in sustained and continuous cross-border relationships on a personal, collective and organisational level. Also, and this is crucial for any kind of scientific endeavour, the emergence of this new type of development agent can be tackled by means of a decidedly transnational methodology just sketched. Only then can we hope to look at what is usually called "development" in both North and South, and what the different agents involved understand by "development", hence one may use the plural "development(s)". Development is a decidedly normative term and may be of little value analytically. However, its main purpose for this discussion is that it concentrates academic and public debates on the conflicting and evolving notions of what different agents understand as leading a "good life".

Various agents have repositioned themselves locally in the global changes over the past decades. Both public policies and rhetoric have changed. A prominent example of the transformed political semantics is the discursive and institutional changes the People's Republic of China has implemented. Discursively, the slogan to "serve the country" (*wei guo fuwu*) has replaced the previous motto of "return to serve" (*huiguo fuwu*) (Cheng Xi in Nyíri 2001: 637). Such rhetoric has been complemented by various public policy changes. Examples are easy to spot, including adaptations through mechanisms such as dual citizenship for emigrants and immigrants, voting rights for absentees, tax incentives for citizens abroad, and cooptation of migrant organisations by local, regional and state governments for development cooperation. Instead of permanent return migration, temporary returns, visits and other forms of transactions have moved to the centre of attention. Thus, in recent years the notion of migrants' return as an asset of development has been complemented by the idea that even if there is no eventual return, the commitment of migrants living abroad could be tapped, not only,

for example, through hometown associations but also through informal "diaspora knowledge networks" (Meyer 2006). These are networks of scientists and R&D personnel, business networks, and networks of professionals working for multinational companies (Kuznetsov 2006). States, development agencies and international organisations try to support the circulatory mobility of persons involved. The keyword is "temporary return": An example is the Migration and Development in Africa (MIDA) program of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), which send migrants as experts back to their countries of origin for short periods of time (cf. Kapur/McHale 2005). And, of course, governments try to tap into the activities of hometown associations. A prominent example is the Mexican *tres-por-uno* (3x1) program, in which each "migradollar" sent by migrants from abroad is complemented by three dollars from various governmental levels. More recently, banks have joined the fray and announced 4x1 programs. The examples given suggest that states and organisations have started to build programs based on the obligations and commitments felt by migrants towards "home country" institutions.

Much of the semantics focuses on community. The two most fashionable terms are diaspora and transnational communities. There is an interesting difference: diaspora is used frequently in the development discourse, and refers to individuals dispersed all over the globe, while the term transnational community is found more often in the transnationalist literature. Both terminologies refer to "communities without propinquity" (Faist 2000b): Such communities are not primarily built upon geographical closeness but on a series of social and symbolic ties which connect ethnic, religious and professional diasporas. Yet the notions of diaspora and transnational community need to be unbundled and even rejected in order to get closer to a systematic analysis. Rogers Brubaker cogently observed that the "universalisation of the diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of the diaspora" (Brubaker 2005: 3). In recent decades there has been a telling change of meaning. First, in the classical meaning diaspora referred to forced migration and violent dispersal, nowadays it denotes any kind of migration, hence the talk of labour diaspora, trade diaspora, business diaspora, and refugee diasporas. Secondly, in a classical sense diaspora implied a return to an imagined or real homeland. Nowadays, this simply means some sort of sustained ties back to the home country, and in post-modern usage even lateral ties – that is, ties not only from emigration to one immigration country but connectivity all over the globe. Thirdly, in the old meaning diaspora referred to various forms of diaspora segregation in the immigration country, but in the new meaning a sort of culturally pluralist boundary maintenance in the host country. While these are interesting shifts in meaning, the term diaspora – as well as transnational community – is too restrictive a term. It imagines a rather homogeneous cross-border social formation. It repeats the same mistake as much migration scholarship which assumes rather homogenous national, ethnic or religious groupings. In sum, in a transnational approach terms such as "community" and "diaspora" do

play a role. Nonetheless, they should not be used in a conceptually inflationary manner because this leads to an essentialisation of these categories.

The newest wave of the migration-development nexus raises a couple of challenges to transnational approaches:

Incorporation and Development

So far, incorporation and development studies are disjointed, even in transnational studies. Studies either take the perspective of the country or region, in which immigrants live, and deal from a transnational angle with issues of incorporation into labour markets, housing, education and cultural pluralism, but also social security, state security, wage differentials, and so forth. Or studies deal with the effects of transnational ties on home countries, villages, formations from which migrants originate, such as demographic dynamics, remittance flows, and cultural impacts and often involve an analysis of transnational flows. The former studies, preoccupied with effects on immigration regions, have entered into a dialogue with assimilation and multiculturalism perspectives, and the latter, focusing on emigration regions, with development studies. Yet the two areas are still awkward dance partners. For example, studies have found in the case of immigrants from Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Colombia in the USA that transnational immigrant organisations' members are older, better-established, and possess above-average levels of education (Portes et al. 2007). This could be interpreted, depending on one's conceptual predisposition, as transnationalism and assimilation not being opposites, or as a strong transnational orientation indicating a specific path of incorporation.

However, if not carried onwards, such discussions miss the essence of a transnational approach. From such a perspective incorporation in national polities of immigration is one of several dimensions, the other being emigration countries and transnational social formations themselves. This is clearly visible in two-way flows. From an integrated South-North-South perspective one has to look not only at remittances as North-South transfers but also at potential "reverse remittances." There are indeed empirical findings of "reverse remittances" or two way flows: They can be important especially at the beginning stages of migration of persons or groups, for example to help undocumented migrants to get papers and thus to legalize their stay. In this particular case reverse remittances may be indicative of an immigrant incorporation policy which externalises the costs of integration. Yet such support structures only function if there are cross border formations, consisting of various elements, such as kinship groups or brokers.

It is questionable whether terms such as immigrant integration or incorporation are able to capture how two-way flows shape the associational life connecting emigration and immigration regions. They are valid perspectives, of course, centring on regions of destination and origin. Nonetheless, the in-between trans-

actions constitute social facts *sui generis*. Yet we have not yet found an appropriate terminology to deal with these social facts. For example, migrant associations in immigration regions cannot be neatly categorised into those concerned with social integration and those interested in development cooperation. It is thus not surprising that local governments in some European countries have started to link incorporation, development and migration policies. This opens up new ways of thinking about the link between incorporation and development: Not only may those best incorporated be most active in migrant organisations dealing with development (a result which is not really surprising) but development cooperation can also be seen as incorporation – yet the sphere is not restricted then to immigration states but extends to regions of origin. In Spanish metropolitan areas such as Madrid and Barcelona, for example, there has been a marked shift by local governments to not just support co-development but to tie incorporation in Spain to development abroad. Co-operation between local authorities and migrants is then directed not only at development in the countries of origin but also seen as a means to foster incorporation in Spain. The questions which arise are: Is this an example of co-optation of migrant organisations by local state agencies, or do we see collaboration between migrant associations and state power? What are the functions of local cooperation for migration control or management? Why do we see the triangulation of development, migration control and incorporation in countries which have only recently emerged as major receiving countries, such as Spain? And, ultimately, given the pluri-locality of incorporation in multiple sites in Spain and abroad: incorporation into what? In addition, it stands to reason why the combination of development, migration control and incorporation now and the motives behind it? In the end, the issue of co-development on the local level and the plurality of agents involved suggest that we need to pay more attention to different layers of statehood to understand the triangulation. After all, it is the national state which is explicitly engaged in migration control, while at the local level issues of incorporation achieve a prime importance.

Public Policy, Politics and Inequality

Many studies look positively at remittances – financial, knowledge and social – because they may reduce poverty or even eradicate it and contribute to economic growth. However, there is almost no discussion of the mechanisms of how this may work – it is almost as if an "invisible hand" transforms remittances into poverty reduction and economic growth. Needless to say, this is a very myopic view of the public policy relevance of remittances. If they tie transnational migration to global social inequality, then remittances must be examined in their relevance for social policy. Seen in this way, they do not constitute explicit social policies, of course, but they form a basis for fostering social solidarity among citizens.

There is, first, an interesting nexus between remittances, social policy and development with remittances constituting a sort of intervening variable because they are an expression of the diffuse solidarity and generalised reciprocity upon which any kind of social policy has to be built. Secondly, only by integrating transnational migrants and their associations into policy circuits on various governance levels can such potentials be realised. At the very least, we need to analyse the social policy potential inherent in transnational flows with respect to state agencies on various levels, non-governmental organisations and economic organisations such as firms.

Therefore, the crucial policy question is how to fit remittances into universal social policies. How can remittances be factored into what a recent publication by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) calls "developmental welfare"? Social policy and social rights are not something that might merely evolve after a certain level of development has been reached. Rather "social policy is a key instrument for economic and social development" (UNRISD 2007: 2). Since there is no simple remittance-development-nexus, we need to look at policies which can forge social solidarity and are thus based on social citizenship across the borders of national states (Faist 2007c). All the great theorists of societal membership – from Aristotle, Cicero, J.S. Mill, Hannah Arendt, T.H. Marshall – have agreed that in order to participate fully in public life, persons need to be in a certain socio-economic and political position – in Marshall's tradition we may call it social citizenship; more recently the term "capabilities" has been introduced by Amartya Sen to capture the same thought (Marshall 1950; Sen 1999).

However, for remittances to play a role in social policy, one has to consider the obvious difficulties involved in the exchange of financial flows (cf. Guarnizo 2003). For various reasons, macro-political agents such as governments and international organisations have tried to control such flows. States in the North, the USA in particular, have tried to redirect flows through the *hawala* and *hindi* systems to the formal banking system. Officially, this has been part of the effort of states to gain political control over resource flows after 9/11 in the "war against terrorism". From a state control point of view, remittances transferred through informal channels exemplify the transgressive behaviour of migrants, not only their entrepreneurial spirit; remittances do not go to countries as such but to particular households, villages and regions, and emigration states try to get control of the money. For international organisations, remittances are one of the instances in which the control over development finance is at stake. The World Bank and the regional development banks, such as the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank give loans to poor countries. The profit made comes from the small margin of interest rates imposed. However, in the aftermath of structural adjustment programs, and above all alternative sources for credit (e.g. China in Africa), more and more developing countries seem to be less and less interested in development finance issued with all the strings attached,

such as the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights, scaling down social subsidies. China imposes none of these stifling conditions. As a result, the World Bank issues fewer loans and thus the volume of transactions decreases. This state of affairs constitutes indeed a challenge to the mandate of the World Bank. A transnational perspective must take into account the frictions and sometimes even the political conflicts caused by the efforts to control financial remittances.

With respect to all forms of remittances, whether financial, human capital or social, the issue of their use for purposes such as social and economic welfare points towards a deeper question. They signal different and often divergent visions around the notion of development. If one uses the notion of development, the questions are: what kind of development, whose development and for whom? Is there a congruence of development visions of diaspora groups on the one hand and development agencies on the other hand? Do transfers imply transformations? The cooperation and sometimes cooptation of migrant associations by development agencies and local governments raises the issue of who sets the standards for the goals to be achieved. Listening to the voices of migrants and communities affected by migration may involve re-defining the goals and indicators of development to focus on human well-being rather than monetary wealth. Yet it would be naïve to ascribe an emphasis on community and equality to migrant agency, and more instrumental aims to development agencies, governments of national states and international organisations.

Transnationalisation through Coupling Migration Control and Development Aid

Paradoxically, restrictive migration policies may be conducive to financial remittances and the maintenance of transnational kinship groups. Contemporary international borders are much more akin to sieves than to medieval stone walls. Their principal function is to protect the integrity of the socio-economic, demographic and cultural integrity of the population which lies behind them. One important measure is to filter unacceptable or illegitimate migrants and welcome those who increase the competitiveness of the economy. The hewers of wood and the drawers of water are implicitly "wanted but not welcome" (Zolberg 1987). By contrast, those regarded as highly skilled migrants who transmit knowledge and foreign investments are not only wanted but also quite welcome. The migration-development link is usually mentioned in its function of reducing the propensities for migration to Europe. Coupled with such controls are policies making development aid to states in the European periphery conditional upon their willingness to control undocumented migration (Faist/Ette 2007). In other words, emigration countries need to show their willingness to control illegal migration to immigration countries in order to get development aid. A good example for such conditionality is Morocco, which partly depends on the EU for financial contributions.

Transnational Concepts and the Concept of the Transnational

Not all "national" concepts can or should be "transnationalised". It is very nebulous what terms such as "transnational citizenship" could mean. Sometimes the term is used to connote the membership of migrants to local communities (Fitzgerald 2004). However, it then does not have a legal referent. Citizenship usually connotes equal political freedom, equal rights of full members, and affiliation to a politically-bounded group (Faist 2007b). A very lose definition of citizenship as transnational does not help analytical work. On the level of national states it is therefore more precise to speak of dual or multiple citizenships. "And on the level of supra-state polities such as European Union citizenship, we find that several layers of citizenship are nested within each other – regional, national and European. In this case the term nested citizenship is appropriate" (Faist 2001). Therefore, we are better off speaking of transnational membership when discussing the involvement of geographically mobile persons in local communities in two or more countries. The situation may be different when talking about transnational civil society. Civil society and rule of law or even democratic statehood are mutually constitutive: Civil society is usually held to be a sphere distinct from "market" and "state", and as such can only be thought of in terms of basic human and civil rights guaranteed by state structures. Migrant organisations may be part of groups active in the civil sphere (Faist 2000b: chapter 9).

The difficulties involved in transnationalising concepts such as citizenship and civil society points towards a larger *problématique*. Too often the term "trans" means only overcoming unhelpful binary oppositions. And indeed, from a transnational angle oppositions such as emigrant and immigrant can partly be dissolved in the concept of a transnational migrant. Also, as mentioned above, there is no necessary opposition between transnational ties and the incorporation of geographically mobile persons in different and distinct local and national civil, economic and political spheres. However, it should not be forgotten that "trans" does not simply imply going beyond, namely beyond conflicts created by the very transnationality of ties and social structures. For example, there are numerous documented instances of conflicts between development visions of hometown associations on the one hand and those remaining in the locales of origin on the other hand. While the former may see stipends for bright students for study abroad as an appropriate tool of development, the latter may be interested in the improvement of local infrastructures (for examples, see Waldinger 2006).

Conclusion: Bringing Legitimation Back in

Transnational approaches offer a counter-balance to macro-oriented, top-down approaches of globalisation, world society and world polity theory. Although they are less integrated theoretically than these three broad groups of approaches,

they offer much-needed heuristic tools to call into question the unrealistic notions of these other cross border theories in at least two respects. First, transnational approaches occupy the conceptual space inbetween "container" social sciences fraught by problems such as methodological territorialism and methodological nationalism on the one hand and world society and world polity theories on the other hand (on related but differing concepts such as "cosmopolitanism", see Beck/Sznaider 2006). Transnational approaches perform this function because they emphasise the tension between space as place and space as flows. Although the boundaries of many national institutions, including the national states themselves, are rapidly changing, binary oppositions are not going to dissolve. If one is interested in emergent structures of world society or world polity, one has to take very seriously the nexus between local and global models and look at how they shape each other. Doing so requires attention to cross border agency. This means allowing for both tendencies towards homogeneity and heterogeneity, incorporation and disintegration of societal formations across the globe. Second, globalisation and world society approaches usually do not pose the central question any political sociology has to put at its centre – the problem of legitimacy of social orders and social systems. Issues of legitimate social order, here shown in an exemplary way regarding the migration-development nexus, are at the root of social change and transformation in any kind of societal formation.

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