



***Political Transnationalism.
Mobilizing and participating in different polities: Empirical research
strategies and normative implications***

Third Term WORKSHOP

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Badia Fiesolana, seminar room 2

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Aims and objectives:

Political transnationalism has to be studied within a triangular constellation involving transnational groups with external political affiliations to (at least) one country and residential affiliations to another one, as well as these two countries' political institutions.

Political transnationalism involves institutional arrangements, individual affiliations as well as collective action:

- overlapping legal statuses, rights and obligations between two countries (dual citizenship or external quasi-citizenship status for ethnic kin groups or former nationals);
- government policies attempting to control or to engage external populations (emigrants or kin groups);
- subjectively felt dual political affiliations among individual migrants or members of kin groups;
- formal individual political participation (e.g. through external voting);
- collective political mobilization of transnational groups involving an international target, a home state, or a state of residence through transnational campaigns (e.g. Kurds and Ocalan campaign)
- collective mobilization across borders of pro-migrant or pro-minority actors in order to support a claim for transnational status and rights (e.g. EU-targeted campaigns such as migreurop against camps in Europe).

One important research question concerns the extent of participation and mobilization among transnational groups. The status and rights of “second country nationals” in Europe (i.e. EU citizens residing in other member states) is a particularly interesting case of strong transnational rights but low levels of participation and mobilization. US studies such as Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003) suggest more broadly that only a few emerging transnational elites participate politically back home and only in a limited way and in specific locations.

Political sociologists have recently turned to the transnational mobilization of migrants and solidarity movements. At the EU-level, the fit between national action repertoires and claims and the EU rules of the game benefited some collective actors and hampered others. The challenges of finding common frames of action and organizing transnational campaigns may also depend on the actual identity and resources of national NGO actors. Several studies underscored the capacity of certain migrant groups to draw on “transnational” or “translocal” resources and adapt to different opportunity structures thereby suggesting that the country of origin also influenced the determinants of collective action in Europe.

Transnationalism in the form of the use of external resources to influence a domestic situation – Keck and Sikkink’s “boomerang effect”— can be risky. This is the case of Muslims who draw upon “foreign” resources or seek foreign help (e.g. the case of Danish Muslims who went to the Middle East to get support against the publication of the cartoons portraying the prophet Mohammed). In the country of settlement, migrants are generally expected to assimilate or integrate and transnational activity may be viewed as a threat (especially in the post-9/11 context). The securitization of immigrant (and specifically Muslim) integration or of external relations between kin states and ethnic minorities may also affect the toleration and attractiveness of transnational statuses, specifically of dual nationality and various forms of quasi-external citizenship (such as the Turkish pink card or the Hungarian Status Law).

Transnational citizenship rights and political participation raise normative concerns whether individuals who reside permanently outside the jurisdiction should still be able to influence decisions and laws. One objection against broader transnational participation is that external groups tend to be misinformed and more radical in their views about politics in the “homeland” (Benedict Anderson’s long-distance nationalism hypothesis) and will thus often have a negative influence on domestic politics. This hypothesis contrasts with alternative findings that could be labelled the “democratic remittance” hypothesis, according to which migrants who become transnationally active are likely to export democratic experiences gathered in a country of settlement toward their countries of origin.

The other objection is a principled one from the perspective of democratic theory that those who are not subjected to the laws should not be represented in their making. This argument may be challenged on several grounds. One is that some states do attempt to impose citizenship obligations, such as taxation and military service, on external populations and therefore also ought to grant them corresponding political rights. The other objections challenge the exclusive use of subjection as a criterion for claims to citizenship status and rights and argues that the boundaries of political communities can extend beyond the territorial jurisdiction of states.

The workshop will discuss both the empirical and normative hypotheses about the impact and legitimacy of transnational political participation.

Format:

The workshop will bring together EUI researchers and post-docs with scholars who have been working in this field to discuss these issues based on both on-going and completed research projects.

The format will involve paper presentations, a comment by a discussant, and general discussion. Presenters will be asked to send their outline in advance. Interested researchers should send an abstract by **April 1st** to Professors Bauböck and Guiraudon.

Some references:

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Guiraudon, Virginie, 2001, Weak weapons of the weak? Transnational mobilization around migration in the European Union, in Imig, Doug and Tarrow, Sidney, *Contentious Europeans – Protest and Politics in an Emerging Polity*, Boston: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001: 163-183.

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Soysal, Yasemin. 1994. *The Limits of Citizenship. Migrants and Post-National membership in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Strudel Sylvie. 2002, « Les citoyens européens aux urnes : les usages ambigus de l'article 8B du traité de Maastricht », *Revue internationale de politiques comparée*, n° Pratiques de la citoyenneté européenne, 9/1 : 47-63