

The future of the welfare state: paths of social policy innovation between constraints and opportunities

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The family as a nation-state project in a global context: Implications for »citizenship« and social welfare

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The family as a nation-state project in a global context: Implications for »citizenship« and social welfare

While social policy scholars have showed that welfare states treat the family as a nation-state project, migration scholars have described the transnational family as a welfare project spanning across borders. By bringing these generally discrete research realms together, new ways to approach »citizenship« and social welfare at the intersection of national welfare states and global migration are revealed. Drawing on the insights from critical social policy and transnational migration research, three possible research fields considering social welfare from a transnational perspective are outlined.

Welfare state solutions rely upon certain anticipations about their citizens' real and desired living circumstances. Citizens are then anticipated to be national citizens living their life oriented towards and anchored within the nation-state. However, studies of contemporary society have illuminated other patterns of life that do not fit with nation-state anticipations. These are life patterns that we might understand against the backdrop of what we denote globalization. Many people do not live their life oriented towards or anchored in a single nation-state. On the contrary, a growing number of people maintain strong and enduring social and symbolic ties across nation-state borders, anchoring their everyday life and social welfare in two or more nation-states. This implies that there is a discrepancy between the functioning of national social policies and people's lives. This discrepancy has consequences for the social welfare among welfare state inhabitants, and poses a challenge of growing significance to academic research and political debates. While the significance of the field is growing, it is not evident how it is best approached. In this article I employ specific theoretical perspectives approaching the field from two separate directions, and I argue that the intersection of these perspectives might be a fruitful way to approach citizenship and social welfare in people's everyday life in a globalizing world.

For my purpose I combine the conceptual as well as the empirically grounded discussions within two research areas: social policy and migration. I make use of social policy research that studies social policy in its societal context. Here analyses applying a geopolitical (or territorial) perspective show how social policy shapes national citizens. These studies even propose an understanding of social policy as a social dimension of the nation-state. Further, analyses applying a gender sensitive approach illuminate different consequences of different state-family relationships for social relations within the family. Within migration research I rely on social anthropological research conducted from a transnational perspective. Here research describes how migrants establish and live their lives oriented towards two or more states. Transnational actors create multiple and simultaneous identities of belonging that might be conceptualized as a form of »citizenship« anchored in two or more states.

While social policy and migration research tend to live separate lives, studies within each area conducted from the distinct perspectives taken up here have their roots in the mid-1980s. In their empirical descriptions and conceptual developments, these veins of research challenge previously established descriptions and concepts. Here I shall rely on and combine these perspectives in order to examine whether they can help us to formulate new questions about contemporary society. The central question of this article is whether we are not obliged to depart from habitual ways of interpreting and understanding society and begin to study such phenomena as citizenship and integration in a new manner in order to understand contemporary processes of social inclusion and exclusion.

Social welfare might be studied not only from different theoretical perspectives, but also with different empirical focuses. In this article I have limited welfare to care giving and taking. Most

care is given and received within the family, and the family is given particular focus. I relate to family in two distinct ways: as an institution that is expected to perform certain care functions and as a set of social relations (Daly 2000). The family is in part viewed as an institution that fulfils certain functions with regard to care for children and the sick and elderly. Which functions the family fulfils and how these are organized have consequences for the family as a set of social relations between family members. This regards both gender and generational relations. In addition, which functions the family fulfils and how these are organized reflects overall dominant societal norms and values. However, while comparative social policy research sheds light on »national« family patterns, transnational migration research illuminates how the »transnational family« as an institution expected to perform certain functions and as a set of social relations is negotiated between different sets of norms and values. By bringing together the knowledge from these two separate research realms, I shall suggest how we might formulate questions about social welfare, integration and citizenship rights and obligations at the intersection of the national and the transnational.

I first describe the family as a nation-state project and the transnational family as a welfare project. Next I contextualize these perspectives to show how they came about. Here I also describe how we might conceptualize social policy as a social dimension of the nation-state and why this stands in conflict with the transnational family. Finally I reflect upon the meaning of citizenship, integration and social welfare from the perspective of families in a global context.

The family as a nation-state project

There is a growing body of literature that examines the relation between social policy and family patterns in cross-national perspective. This literature demonstrates that social policy relies upon certain expectations about family constellation and functioning, and how it supports the establishment and maintenance of precisely these family constellations and functions. This means that certain family patterns might be identified within certain policy contexts (e.g. Daly 2000; Daly and Rake 2003; Knijn and Kremer 1997; Knijn and Komter 2004a; Kremer 2002, 2007).

The nature of the welfare state – whether social democratic, corporatist or liberal oriented – appears to be related to patterns of family formation and solidarity (Knijn and Komter 2004b: xiv).

The family is here studied in part as it is constituted in relation to its societal context and in part as it is constituted in the relations between family members. The societal context then refers to explicit and implicit expectations about the family that are identified through the deconstruction of national social insurance schemes and public social services. These are studies of citizenship that refrain from reducing citizenship to a relation between the nation-state and its inhabitants as a homogeneous mass. Instead, this research vein unambiguously regards how welfare states categorize people by dealing differently with different groups, and hence function to produce and reproduce inequality between different groups of the population.

Explicit and implicit expectations about the family are deconstructed by illuminating whether the social policy is centred on a breadwinner or a dual-earner family, and what function the family is anticipated to have with regard to care of children, sick, elderly, and other family members who are unable to care for themselves. As the breadwinner family is expected to contain a male who is wage-working outside the family and a female who is working unwaged within the family, this family is in general also expected to take a large caring responsibility. If social policy is centred on a dual-earner family with two adult wage-workers, this family is anticipated to be in need of care services. It can roughly be said that welfare states that centre on a bread-winner family where women are anticipated to do unwaged work within the family do not have incentives to establish

public caring services to the same extent as welfare states centring on a dual-earner family. How the family is constituted as an institution expected to perform certain functions within such different societal contexts has consequences for how gender and generational relations are structured into hierarchical orders within families.

Though welfare state social policy is a central focal point in these analyses, social policies are not understood as the sole explanatory variable of transnational variation. These analyses also regard the norms and values in which social policies are embedded. It is underscored that the varied nation-state social policy outcome must be interpreted in its specific societal context. Moreover, to the extent that the analyses consider not only how different institutional circumstances such as the availability of child and elderly care services outside the household as well as labour market conditions for women underpin certain sets of family constellations, but also how norms and values are shaped and reshaped depending on the claims made among individual and collective actors, these analyses place themselves within what has been denoted the *cultural turn* within welfare state research (see also Oorschot et al. 2008).

Overall, this means that we can by and large identify national patterns regarding the family as an institution expected to perform certain functions and as a set of social relations. This is also how we might understand welfare state membership as an overt republican citizenship, i.e. a membership that involves comprehensive obligations regarding how we are expected to live our lives outside and inside families. If we consider these obligations against the backdrop that many families live their lives oriented towards, and anchored in, two or more nation-states, we realize that this inevitably must cause conflicts between different sets of obligations. Families living their lives oriented towards and anchored in two or more countries can be described as *transnational families*.

Transnational families as a welfare project

There is an extensive body of literature on families within social anthropological migration research. Among analysts applying a transnational perspective, the term »transnational families« has been established almost as a concept. In the introductory chapter to the anthology *The transnational family*, Deborah Fahy Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela (2002: 3) have defined this as:

’Transnational families’ are defined here as families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders.

Transnational families are sometimes denoted as divided families but refer to, in spite of the territorial distance that can be both extensive and enduring, family units with strong ties among the family members. Understanding of this phenomenon has given rise to descriptions of families in terms of *transnational mothering* (Parreñas 2001, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001), *transnational fathering* (Parreñas 2005, 2008), *transnational grannies* (Plaza 2000), *astronaut families* (Skeldon 1995; Ong 1999; Waters 2002) and *parachute or satellite kids* (Waters 2003a, 2003b; Zhou 1998; Orellana et al. 2001). Family members in different geographical locations are linked up within transnational family systems. In this way they connect different places over time and space (presenting a very tangible aspect of globalization time-space compression). This is also how different family constellations and different norms and values about families are associated. The transnational family might be in conflict with both legal definitions as well as popular notions about what a family is. Discrepancies between legal definitions and how the family actually lives might for instance cause delays in family reunification. Discrepancies between different definitions might also cause confusion with regard to economic and social responsibilities within the »family«. Instead of something that is easily defined, the transnational family varies

significantly as an institution expected to perform certain functions, as a set of social relations, and as a specific set of family members across different local and transnational contexts.

The transnational family spans across state borders and across different sets of norms and values rooted within different welfare systems. Within different welfare systems, rights and obligations regarding family welfare are conceptualized and practiced in different ways. This means that different expectations about the family as an institution and as a set of social relations meet within and across transnational families. When we analytically approach the interface between different welfare systems within a transnational family, we must realise that these welfare systems might constitute fundamentally different welfare regime types. Hence, to consider welfare systems only in terms of different welfare states, as has been implicitly discussed in the previous section, is therefore insufficient for the purposes of the discussion conducted here.

Descriptions and analyses of welfare regimes, as for instance presented in Gøsta Esping-Andersen's (1990) classic study *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*, are studies of welfare *state* regimes. Government intervention and labour market relations are here central to the analysis. Studies within this research direction have produced a substantial amount of indispensable knowledge about various aspects of welfare states, but because of its analytical focus it is also limited to the OECD context, where the state structures are relatively stable and the labour market has reached a certain degree of formalisation (Gough et al. 2004). However, transnational families live their lives oriented towards and anchored in welfare systems not only within but also outside the OECD context. Welfare systems beyond the OECD context rely on social networks, faith-based organizations, and business networks that have a significant impact on the welfare protection and maintenance among the population living their life anchored in these contexts. If we accurately seek to understand welfare in these contexts, these kinds of informal welfare systems ought not be disregarded. Accounting for such aspects in the analysis implies shifting the analytical focus away ...

... from a legal discourse about rights and entitlements which sees them only existing in a statutory sense with formal sanctions to ensure the fulfilment of correlative duties. Rather we are adding the possibility that for poor people in poor countries, meaningful rights and correlative duties may be found through *informal* community arrangements. Thus we offer a more sociological rather than only a legal discourse about rights (Gough et al. 2004: 6).

By way of this extension of the understanding of welfare systems, we can make a rough distinction among three different welfare regime types in the world: welfare state regimes, security regimes and insecurity regimes. The core features of *the welfare state regime* are, as already mentioned, a stable state structure and formalised labour market relations. Economic and social resources are re-distributed in varied patterns and degrees by way of government intervention. *The security regime* embraces welfare systems that rely on different forms of informal arrangements within civil society: the family or the community. Though welfare is distributed through hierarchical relations in unjustified patterns, these systems are significant for the maintenance of welfare in certain localities. *Insecurity regimes* refer to marginalised, dangerous and deprived parts of the world where »welfare« often means nothing more than day-by-day survival. Instead of informal arrangements, survival is here distributed through volatile and unpredictable power alliances (Gough et al. 2004).

Transnational families build their welfare between and through these essentially different regime types. It is noteworthy that while membership in welfare state systems in principle does not go beyond the welfare state borders and boundaries, informal arrangements are not to the same extent bearers of territorial and normative markers. The transnational family might in fact be viewed as an

informal welfare system in itself (Eastmond and Åkesson 2007). This system is then characterized by informal arrangements in which welfare is generated and distributed within and through hierarchically patterned social relations. Yet membership in such welfare systems brings about a welfare surplus that we are obliged to regard (Gough et al. 2004).

This means that an interface between two or more welfare systems is established within the transnational family. These welfare systems might be either different public welfare state systems or more informal arrangements organized within and through families, networks of families, or other networks. Different welfare systems rely on different sets of rights and obligations among their members. Just as we can extend the meaning of welfare systems to include informal arrangements, we can also extend the meaning of citizenship to include membership in such welfare systems. In this way we might consider the contact between different sets of »citizenship« rights and obligations within transnational families. This implies that the meaning of »citizenship« is shifted away from understanding it as an exclusive towards an overlapping membership (Bauböck 2003). Overlapping membership refers to simultaneous affiliations in two or more nation-states and challenges political theory to ...

... go beyond a narrow state-centred approach by considering political communities and systems of rights that emerge at levels of governance above or below those of independent states or that cut across international borders (Bauböck 2003: 704).

Recent research relying on newer critical perspectives is engaged in how we accurately might understand and reflect upon citizenship, integration and social welfare as constituted among and within families who live their lives in a global context. Since our way of reflecting upon these issues has by and large developed within nation-state frames, globalization and »global sociology« tend to profoundly challenge established perspectives (cf. Yeates 2001: 19). The long-established perspectives have contributed a knowledge production of huge value for our understanding of citizenship, integration and social welfare. However, they are bearers of inherent limitations when it comes to individual and collective actors living their lives oriented towards and anchored in two or more nation-states. In order to avoid bewilderment about what these newer perspectives are about, I shall devote the next two sections to clarifying what is new about them.

Social policy as a social dimension of nation building

The use of the geopolitical, or territorial, perspective within recent social policy and welfare state research has proliferated. These studies describe social policy as a social dimension of nation building. This implies that social policy serves to shape and enforce the nation in that it supports some ways of living and hinders others. British Professor John Clarke (2005: 412) has formulated it as:

Welfare states seek to produce a nation – a People. They attempt to reinforce or enforce certain ‘ways of life’; they regulate forms of being and behaviour; they classify and categorise the population (and they deal differently with its segments); and they manage the relationships between the public and private realms.

The geopolitical perspective is typically used in analysis of nation building and state formation. Under analytical focus are tensions between power concentrations at different societal levels such as the regional, national and supranational levels, as well as processes of centralization and de-centralization of political power. Concentration of power in a certain level is understood as due to nation building: the mobilization of an identity in common and a sense of »we-ness« in the population. This might be grounded in a common language, a common history or a common ethnic identity. Recently this geopolitical understanding of nation building and state formation has been

crossed with welfare state research in which social solidarity in general, and across classes in particular, has traditionally been acknowledged as the explanatory variable for welfare state development. While it was previously recognized that the welfare state originated after the consolidation of the nation-state, the intersection of the two realms of nation-state and welfare state research has brought about an understanding of the welfare state as consolidating the nation-state. Social policy might in this way be understood both as a »social dimension« of the nation-state as well as a »territorial dimension« of the welfare state. And interestingly enough, this intellectual cross-fertilisation occurred simultaneously in both disciplinary approaches.

Within social policy research this has brought about an awareness of the nation-state in welfare state analysis, which is mirrored in book titles such as *Forming nation, framing welfare* (Lewis 1998). Within geopolitical research, processes of Europeanization and regionalization have received particular attention, but analyses of welfare state development from this intersectional perspective also exist. This has led to book titles such as *The territorial politics of welfare* (McEwen and Moreno 2005) and *The boundaries of welfare. European integration and the new spatial politics of social protection* (Ferrera 2005). Overall, the empirical analyses indicate that the interaction between social policy and nation building is complex, and that factors such as institutional context, socioeconomic factors and historical experiences interact in different ways in different contexts.

The more theoretical efforts within this field integrate theories of nation building and state formation as proposed by Stein Rokkan with theories of citizenship offered by Thomas Humphrey Marshall. Nation building and state formation as described by Rokkan (1999) is a two-way process that involves on the one hand a strengthening of what is considered as belonging, and on the other hand the differentiation and exclusion of what is considered as not belonging. Marshall (1950) describes the formation of national citizenship similarly.¹ The process is two-way in that when internal bonds are being strengthened, this also means that nation-state and citizenship external boundaries are being established and strengthened. Processes of inclusion and exclusion are in this way two sides of the same coin.

The Italian political scientist Maurizio Ferrera (2005) has developed a model for the analysis of the role of social rights in this two-way process in the European context. He studies welfare state developments in historical perspectives, as well as contemporary processes of Europeanization and regionalization. Ferrera integrates and develops the conceptual frameworks of nation building and social solidarity as proposed by Rokkan and Marshall, arguing that internal bonding through external boundary building generates social solidarity.² This means not only that social rights played an important role in stabilizing the nation-state in a historical perspective, but also that nation building, state formation, and, at a later stage, redistributive welfare systems have a lock-in effect on citizens. In this line of arguing, Ferrera (2005: 45) states that ...

People's life chances were anchored by weaving social rights into the fabric of citizenship. The right to belong and the right to options ceased to be solely a matter of spontaneous ligatures, individual preferences, and personal abilities and started to be upheld by an entitlement to (a modicum of) material resources.

¹ Rokkan operates with the concepts of *external closure* and *internal differentiation*, and Marshall with the concepts of *fusion* and *separation* (see Rokkan 1999 and Marshall 1950).

² In his analysis, Ferrera uses the concepts *bounding* and *bonding* that he has developed from the conceptual discussions by Rokkan and Marshall. *Bounding* refers to boundary-building in terms of demarcation between territories and people, and *bonding* to the creation of a we-ness among insiders. Internal bonding through external bounding is understood to generate social solidarity (Ferrera 2005).

In his analysis, Ferrera shows how social rights have contributed to boundary building of citizenship in both more tangible legal and territorial senses, as well as in more intangible ways in that outsiders are distinguished from insiders due to non-formal criteria such as a we-ness among insiders. The lock-in effects appear because the stronger the internal bonds are, the higher the cost to leave the system is (for instance by migration).³ However, while Ferrera is primarily focused on different social insurances, by using gender-sensitive research we can enlarge the focus to consider how these function to structure gender and generational relations in hierarchical patterns of power. Citizenship is then regarded as something that embraces relations both outside and inside the family, i.e. citizenship rights and obligations in the relation between the state and the family, and the family as a set of gender and generational relations. In sum, this means that people live their lives anchored in a welfare state context, not only through an economic but also a social anchoring. Families are established and maintained in relation to expectations in the surrounding society, and this is how more or less national family patterns emerge. In addition, bringing in the cultural link, this is also how we might understand certain national patterns of claims making with regard to social services such as caring facilities (cf. Kremer 2002, 2007). Hence, this constitutes a possibility to move towards a gender-sensitive relational approach in the study of the social dimension of nation building and we-ness.

This state-centred approach in the study of social policy can be traced to the mid-1980s, and the anthology *Bringing the state back in* (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985) might be pointed out as a milestone in this development. The title indicates that the state should not be taken for granted. Instead, social policy analysis should consider the state as an organization and a potential actor that might be understood in relation to the surrounding society. In brief, the authors urge their readers to discontinue treating the state as an independent variable, and instead study it as a social structure that is dependent on its context. The transnational perspective emerged at about this same time. Even though the state-centred and transnational approaches are results of developments within disconnected research communities, there are epistemological links between these developments. They are both grounded in a critique of taking the state for granted, but while the state-centred approach argues for critical analyses of how state structures vary in a comparative perspective, the transnational perspective underscores that the society in which people live their lives does not necessarily correspond to that of a nation-state.

The origins of the transnational perspective

The transnational perspective within migration research has its origin among social-anthropologically trained scholars who began to follow their informants from the »context of origin« to the »destination context« during the 1980s. They then extended their empirical field of inquiry to embrace two nation-state contexts, and this is how understandings about people living their lives oriented towards and anchored in two or more nation-states came about. Existing analytical tools did not apply to these new understandings, and the transnational perspective emerged due to this lack (Glick Schiller 1992). Transnational migration might involve inter-state commuting, families dispersed in two or more countries, or strong and enduring symbolic ties of loyalty across state borders (Faist 2000). More than on new empirical findings, the emergence of the transnational perspective relies on new understandings of already existing findings (Foner 1999), and it challenges not only earlier understandings of international migration, but also understandings of for instance society, citizenship, and integration.

Theories about transnational migration are disparate but unified in that they seek to explain empirical descriptions of individual and collective actors organizing their lives towards and within two or more nation-states. This challenges earlier descriptions of migration as a single and

³ This reasoning is inspired by the classic study *Exit, voice and loyalty* by Albert O. Hirschman (1970).

unidirectional movement from a country of emigration to a country of immigration in which the »immigrant« is anticipated to assimilate. By contrast, the transnational perspective underscores migration as a *process*, and social and symbolic ties to two or more countries might be both strong and enduring. These ties across state borders sometimes reach such a scope and degree of institutionalization that they are discussed in terms of transnational social fields or spaces (e.g. Glick-Schiller et al. 1992, 1994; Faist 2000). Transnational social spaces smooth the process of migration and are in that sense both consequences of as well as motors for further migration.

Transnational social spaces consist of combinations of sustained social and symbolic ties, their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in multiple states (Faist 2000: 199).

The prevalence of transnational social spaces is connected to the global flow of people, commodities, ideas, capital and much more, and makes up a part of what we denote globalization, but its purview is much more limited in that it refers to phenomena that are anchored in two or more nation-states (Faist 2000). This is sometimes referred to as »globalization from below« (e.g. Pries 1999). Understanding the linkages between different parts of the world encompassed by transnational social spaces challenges popular notions of home countries and of migrants as up-rooted. By contrast, here identities of belonging oriented toward and integration within two or more nation-state contexts are underscored.

The reality of transnational social spaces indicates, first, that migration and re-migration are not definite, irrevocable, and irreversible decisions. Transnational lives in themselves may become a strategy of betterment. Second, even those migrants and refugees who have settled for a considerable time outside the country of origin frequently entertain strong transnational links. Third, to varying degrees activities in transnational social spaces escape the control of the nation-states involved (Faist 2000: 200).

This means that it is inaccurate to limit the empirical field of research to a single nation-state context when we ask questions about identities of belonging and social welfare among and within transnational families. If we equate society with a single nation-state context, integration will not only be the same as incorporation into a single state, but strong ties to another state context will be conceptualized as a threat to »integration«. This is among other things illustrated by the resistance among many countries towards dual (legal) citizenship (Faist 2007). However, empirical descriptions of transnational migration illustrate that the fact of the matter is contrary: the stronger the ties to the »context of origin«, the stronger the ties to the »destination context« tend to be. Apparently, a kind of positive feed-back process occurs when migrants maintain and sustain their position within social networks across state borders. Hence the different sites in which transnational families live their lives anchored in must be added to the analysis. This is what has been called a multi-sited methodology, and implies that social change in the different places across state borders are accounted for in the analysis (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

Knowledge about transnational livelihoods is urgent for politicians as well as practitioners whose field of occupation is related to issues such as citizenship, integration and social welfare. In order to enable advancements of this knowledge we must depart from the habit of equating society to a nation-state and of regarding integration as synonymous with incorporation into a single nation-state context. However, to depart from this habit, which embodies what is sometimes called methodological nationalism (e.g. Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, Glick Schiller 2008), is a demanding task.

Conclusion: Social welfare at the interface of different welfare systems

The ultimate question of this article is how we might advance our knowledge about social welfare among families living their everyday lives oriented towards and anchored in two or more nation-states. The above discussion has proposed that this might involve fundamentally different welfare systems with different sets of »citizenship« rights and obligations. While welfare state systems are linked to a state structure with a defined territorial reach, this is not the case for informal welfare systems. Instead, these welfare systems rely on civil society and social networks within and across state borders. Our knowledge about these social phenomena and their consequences for welfare systems as well as for welfare is limited. The question is: which theoretical and methodological considerations are relevant when we seek to advance our knowledge about social welfare among individual and collective actors living their lives between and through different welfare systems with different relations both *to* their members and *between* the members? In this concluding discussion I shall outline three possible research directions drawing on insights from the intersection of social policy and migration research.

Firstly, the above discussion constitutes an incentive for academic research and national politics to depart from assumptions about people living their lives oriented towards and anchored in a single nation-state. Secondly, it constitutes an incentive to regard welfare state solutions as normative, not to say »cultural«, and consider the implications of such mono-cultural social policies in plural societies. Thirdly, understanding that national welfare state solutions are interrelated with the globalization of the labour market highlights the knowledge gap about how national welfare state solutions are interrelated with social needs and welfare in other countries.

That is, firstly, the above discussion prepares for a departure from what Ulrich Beck (2000) has denoted *container theory*. Not only social policies, but basically the whole knowledge base on which social policies rely, assumes that people live their lives oriented towards and anchored in only one nation-state. That is how living conditions such as housing, income and unemployment are measured within the frames of national statistics. It is obvious that these measures do not tell a whole lot about transnational livelihoods.⁴ Systematic knowledge that accounts for how people actually live their lives is not only underdeveloped, but in fact national statistics are so well rooted that it seems hard to imagine inquiries of living conditions beyond this kind of (container) measure.

What complicates the matter is that in order to inquire into transnational living conditions, we must regard the different transnational contexts as they manifest themselves in people's lives. These vary among different localities. People do not live their lives foremost in different nation-states, but in different localities that might be located within different nation-states and connected by and through transnational social spaces. It is against the backdrop of these kinds of empirical descriptions that the term *translocalities* has emerged. Hence, it appears more relevant to consider different localities, as within the tradition of urban sociology (see e.g. Brenner 1999, 2004; Smith 2001). This also means that national social policy is not interesting as such, but rather its consequences in different localities. For instance, Harriss and Shaw (2006, 2009) have studied how British family law has influenced family patterns among British-Pakistani transnational families. Probably this influence is different if we consider for instance British-Turkish transnational families, and it might also come out differently depending on the locality in Turkey to which the family is connected (c.f. Englbrektsson 1978).

The second research direction that I would like to indicate concerns welfare state solutions and social policies as cultural artefacts. The fact that we in different welfare states can identify certain

⁴ Showing how the collection of national statistics in Scandinavia emerged together with the development of national social insurances, Stein Kuhnle (1996) has argued that national statistics actually played a part in nation building.

standardized family patterns indicates that welfare states in some aspects might be regarded as being »mono-cultural«. However, processes of globalization such as migration (Held et al. 1999) have contributed to a significant increase of foreign-born residents within national welfare states. This means that welfare states must increasingly accommodate diversity. While the vocabulary of integration politics and multiculturalism steers our thinking toward assuming that integration equates that the minority should fit into the majority norms and values, the transnational perspective opens up new prospects.

Empirical research has argued that the prevalence of transnational social spaces enables societies to accommodate diversity because they allow (transnational) integration without (single-sided national) assimilation (Amiriaux 2000). However, while our knowledge within this field of inquiry is limited overall, it is particularly so with regard to transnational social welfare systems. Hence, the tension between welfare state »mono-cultural« solutions and individual and collective transnational strategies for »alternative welfare« is an urgent field of inquiry. What role does the (transnational) civil society play for the welfare among transnational actors, and what is the interaction between the state-governed welfare system and the informal (transnational) welfare arrangements? What are the tensions, how do they vary between different localities, and how do they affect the welfare of the people? This requires analytical focuses that regard both local and transnational strategies in relation to their different contexts.

Finally, the connection between critical social policy research and transnational migration research constitutes an incentive to consider national welfare state solutions from a transnational perspective. This implies reflections about the fact that national welfare state solutions exert influence on people's lives even beyond welfare state borders.

Research about the feminization of global labour migration is about to proliferate. In particular, this research considers women who migrate from poor parts of the world to take up domestic work in wealthier parts of the world. Sometimes this is studied in terms of global care chains, referring to the fact that women in poor countries leave their children behind in order to care for the children and homes in richer countries so that the women in these countries can take up waged work outside the family. The children left behind are taken care of by fathers, family members and sometimes paid maids (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parreñas 2005; Lutz 2008; Yeats 2009). Connecting the global migration of domestic workers to different welfare state solutions indicates how we can for instance understand that a relatively high proportion of women in Italy are able to have waged work outside the family though there are no child caring facilities to speak of (e.g. Daly and Rake 2003); in Italy the number of migrant domestic workers is relatively high (Lister et al. 2007, Williams and Gavana 2008). However, while the global migration of domestic workers has (at least to some extent) been connected to the deficiency of caring facilities in certain welfare state solutions, this matter has on the whole not given rise to reflections upon national welfare state responsibilities for deficiencies of care in poor parts of the world. However, the linkage between social policy and migration research makes this possible. Hence we might for instance consider how the Italian welfare state solutions are interconnected with social needs and welfare in certain villages in Romania and Ukraine (Piperno 2007). Piperno (2007) has called this »transnational welfare« since the Italian solution is dependent on female labour from other countries. She also raises the question of what responsibility the Italian welfare state has to provide these women with correct child caring facilities – even though their children reside in other countries. This is how we might apply a transnational perspective to national welfare states and their social responsibility.

We live in a globalized society. When we seek to understand social rights and obligations we are pressed to consider the links between localities in different nation-state contexts and what meaning this has in people's everyday lives. I have argued that an approach that combines the insights from

critical social policy and transnational migration research enables this. Our knowledge about people's transnational living conditions, the meaning of civil society for transnational social protection, and the welfare state in transnational perspective is limited. With this article I want to shed light on and underscore the political topicality and research potential of social welfare at the intersection of the national and global.

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