

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Transnational Lives, Mobility and Gender

Lisbon (Portugal), 20-21 May 2010

Convened by:

Marzia Grassi

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

1. Executive summary

The ESF Exploratory Workshop Transnational Lives, Mobility and Gender took place at the Institute of Social Sciences- University of Lisbon, Portugal from 19th to 21st May.

There were 12 invited participants who attended the workshop along with the European Science Foundation representative of the, Professor Luisa Lima. Unfortunately one delegate from Germany was unable to attend due to a last minute illness but she was replaced, also last minute, by a delegate from Italy.

Participants came from five separate ESF member countries as well as, one African scholar from Senegal.

The workshop offered large representation from countries with different experiences of research on movement of people and gender from different disciplinary points of view.

Regarding the gender rate we have to stress that it was quite difficult to observe the gender parity in the group of delegates. Unfortunately, this is not a surprise considering the theme of the workshop: male scholars are not represented because the gender approach is rather confused with a female/feminist approach also in academies. In this sense the presence of two male scholars in a group of thirteen is not considered a bad result. This is a very transversal gender question which has been stressed in the final discussion in the workshop. We conclude that gender identity is mostly considered like a “secondary” identity by social sciences scholars.

Scholars came from a large range of disciplines, including development economics, sociology, anthropology, geography, educational sciences, African studies and social policy. Besides the majority of the participants had multi-disciplinary backgrounds, so the aim of the workshop to bring together international scholars from different disciplines interested in cutting-edge research on transnational living, gender and migration has been largely reached.

The very interesting theoretical discussion during the two days of the workshop aimed to analyze how transnationalism affects the gender human behavior of individuals in movement and its repercussions on family ties as well as in their participation in the development of the countries involved.

The discussion sought to build a network of experts, from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives, in this research area, with the objective to identify questions for a further research international research project on the effects of migration on gender and development nexus in contemporary Europe.

Individual delegate presentations were followed by large ‘brain-storming’ sessions involving all participants in a well-informed and considerably high-quality discussion.

Professor Luisa Lima, the expert delegate on behalf of the European Science Foundation offered some useful information on future funding schemes which might be applicable to this project. Everybody stressed the excellent contribution that Professor Luisa Lima offered during the two days of our meeting: she was always attending as a dynamic participant in the discussion clarifying many questions that emerged mostly in the case of Italian delegates for the limited access in this country to the applications to European Programmes and projects. This situation, unknown to the convenor till now, may hinder the participation of Italian delegates in a possible long-term advanced European research project on the theme of this workshop. The review of the multidisciplinary state of the art on methodologies about collection of data on migration to Europe stress the operability of the gender approach as an analytical tool to understand the transnational division of work and its social effects in contemporary Europe. The Italian delegate's participation has been crucial to this discussion and their participation is very important in the long term networking for research conference enlarged to more European and not European countries that is a medium term possibility to which everybody agreed.

The sessions on first day focused different case studies of migration from Africa to Europe, whilst the second day focused on migratory movement of people and transnational lives in Latin America and inside Europe. The very diversified range of geographical places in which delegates showed the ways to work around the same theoretical framework with different methodologies and current projects allow to conclude that gender approach is crucial in studying the complexity of the organization of transnational lives in current global society and institutions.

As we can see, in the final programme below, large space has been given to the discussion of the presentations. In the second day the final discussion occupied most of the afternoon.

During the entire workshop there were also many opportunities to socialize and to discuss network building in a more informal way. This happened not only during the breaks of the workshop but also during three meal times, in the two days. The last day finished with a conference dinner in the centre of the historical town and with a social after dinner drink in a characteristic place where we all were able to appreciate the warm hospitality of Lisbon and its sights.

2. Scientific content of the event

In the first day of the workshop, after the welcome and inaugural address and the presentation of the ESF expert, the convenor, Professor Marzia Grassi opened the presentations with a short description of current research team projects ongoing at ICS-UL under her coordination. The presentation stressed how projects are grounded on a transnational perspective informed by development and migration studies around the impact of migration on individuals and their relationships within transnational families and the central place of “gender” as an analytical category. In the context of migrations from African countries (mostly PALOP countries) and Southern Europe (Portugal and Italy) the discussion points that this approach point to the necessity to refine the understanding of migrations' consequences for all family members living “apart together”. The African terrain was the geographical context considered in all presentations on the first day. Dr. Signe Arnfred underlined the importance of talking about notions of family, sexuality and gender relations in Moçambique stressing the importance to study migrations counting with the organization and culture of migrant people and origin country but also counting with the imaginary that Europeans have on African people in this area. Dr. Bruno Riccio stressed the importance of social capital for West African migrants in Italy and the main characteristics of translocal projects that both Senegalese and Ghanaians undertake which plays an important role in the interface with Italian institutions as well as being crucial in maintaining transnational connections with the homeland.

The necessity of a methodological reflection about the collection of data on movement and migration has also been stressed and discussed also in all the presentations. This is the very important contribution to the discussion kickstartded by the convenor as one of central thoughts of the workshop. Transnational approach has been interpreted in a gender vision from Senegal by the African scholar, Dr. Fatou Sarr. Dr, Sarr is a very known expert on gender in Africa and in her presentation point out the importance to move from a culturalistic approach on gender to an approach that underlines the social condition of people involved in the analysis. Considering the movement of people across countries from Africa, we discuss how this is related more with laws that with economy. Besides, it has been stressed that in gender approach it is necessary to move away from the stereotype of African women and their relationship with the institution of marriage because this is not sufficient to understand gender dynamics counting with the transnational approach.

Several ethnic groups from Africa have been represented: Senegal, Cape Verde and Equatorial Guinea has been the western African countries of origin represented in the first day papers. Cape verdean women has been represented by the work of Martina Giuffré in their importance on changes in matrifocal families due to the increasing female independent emigration from S. Antão island; Bruno Riccio stressed the importance of associations for senegalese men in Italy to manage their relationships with the family left behind; Marzia Grassi, studying capeverdean women from Santiago e São Vicente island pointed out the importance of periodic migrations to Portugal and several other european countries for the organization of transnational capeverdean families and its reproduction; Yolanda Aixelá analyzed the impact of the transnational network in Equatorial Guinea people and in the matrilinear Bubi ethnic group; Giovanna Campani focused on three groups from subsaharian Africa (senegalese, somalis and nigerians) to reveal how trajectories are differently gendered visibilizing different conditions of work in european societies (Italy, Spain and France). The discussion in the first day stressed the importance to contextualize analysis and methodologies in a transnational way considering the dynamics both in migrant's origin countries and in Europeans one's. This objective has been very well reached counting with the possibility of making comparisons during the discussion which arose from the different ethnographic relates.

The necessity to organize the contemporary society counting with people in movement across countries has been clarified with presentations of case studies from Latin America, as in the case of Laura Merla paper on the comparison of transnational care practices of migrants living in Europe and Australia.

All over the days of the workshop the importance to distinguish between political and scientific concepts has been stressed and discussed. Migration, gender and transnationalism have been interpreted in a more directed political way in the second day of the workshop in many presentations. All the presentations stressed the importance of such approach for the questioning of the European politics in the European space. The transversality of the transnational approach has been clear when the discussion on transnational family and lives and its gender impact on individuals results crucial also counting with internal migrations between european countries, as in the paper of Sam Scott, or in the presentation of Majella Kilkey pointing at the importance of qualitative collection of data on masculinity for studying transnational fathering projects and practices to identify key questions for future reserach agendas.

In the same sense the presentation of Karin Wall pointed at the centrality of the study of integration problems of immigrant women in Portugal through the analysis of female trajectories from Cape Verde, Ukraine and Brazil. In a similar way Olivia Salimbeni's paper also stress the importance of women integration in Italian society in particular in the labour market.

The theoretical discussion during the second day pointed out some new research objectives that will be underlined in the next follow up.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome

The four days of formal and informal participation in the workshop gave the opportunity to identify new research objectives to study migratory movements and the political organization of contemporary Europe. Gender and transnationalism result in an operational and transversal approach that enhance the capacity to understand how European society functions in terms of the contemporary international division of work, classes and access to resources and opportunities. The relevance of ethnographic collection of contextualized data has been also stressed and identified as a crucial methodologic framework carrying epistemologic consequences. This methodology allows marking visible specificities of the construction and negotiation of individuals sharing space, resources and affectivities in the globalized contemporary world. Stressing the lack of relevant ethnographic and contextualized case studies on migrant's dynamics in European countries the discussion underlined the necessity to collect relevant information on differences through the collection of ethnographic data in different European countries and immigrant groups to pay attention to migrant strategies to adapt themselves to the new contexts and societies. The comparison of ethnographic information on immigrant dynamics of integration and transnational participation as gendered experiences in the European multicultural society and in immigrant's home countries is crucial to allow the organization and understanding of quantitative data in this area.

Most of the time immigration has focused on the paths of immigrant integration into the receiving society. This focus needs to be challenged by the gender perspectives. Theories and political principles normally do not deal with gender differences in the process of immigrant inclusion and also rarely explore the relationship between inclusion and transnational participation. At the same time, literature on gender and

migration shows that men and women practice in a different way their contacts with the receiving society. Some studies indicate that migration produces effect on gender relations mediated by class, ethnicity, and gender ideologies.

Starting from our own work it has been discussed how both men and women feel commitment to their countries of origin and are engaged in transnational relationships that constitute part of their social and cultural participation in contemporary society.

This is particularly true for transnational families. We discussed that in the results of our research work we can identify some familiar patterns in the general grounds of transnational participation between women and men. Ethnographic results teach us about the future of immigrant inclusion and participation.

The ESF representative synthesized the follow up of the two days works in several points amongst which we can emphasize the importance to have a critical perspective on the circulating discourses and representations of the needs of the (im)migrants ; to consider how social sharing (family) practices maintain norms and identities ; how individual trajectories connect to group determinants (agency). About generalization:

Is that very much different from other places or times? Is it linked to culture or to social conditions? What are the consequences for policymaking, child protection or family support strategies? Some threats are also underlined: the fact that it constitutes a research opportunity on uncovered areas: Gender in life span perspective: children and parenting practices, elderly and intergenerational issues; Gendered social networks and the maintenance of collective identities; the “social workers” perspective (negative issues associated with the victims narrative); class determinants and the invisible upper class migration; memories and emotions; adaptation and wellbeing; consequences for children.

On these theoretical and epistemological common bases the follow up discussion that took place in the large part of the second day afternoon of the workshop established the following future activities that we agree to organize to continuing network activities on transnational lives, mobility and gender.

It is expected that the first short-term outcome is the formalization of the network and its divulgation through the webpage in which we will spread activities and results of projects of all the participants as well as their publications. The webpage will be maintained at ICS-UL supervised by Professor Grassi who compromises herself to look for grants in the next period.

The second outcome will be a collaborative publication in a specialized scientific review elaborated starting from the themes covered in the conference and to be edited by the convenor with the collaboration of another participant.

A variety of different funding mechanisms were discussed including concentrating on symposia which could draw on a broader range of sources depending on their location.

In the medium term it was thought that the best source of funding for resourcing a longer-term academic network would be the European Science Foundation's Research Networking Programme (RNP). We agree to organize a Research Conference to make possible for other scholars to join the network. In this regard we have to stress the numerous messages that the convenor received before the workshop from young scholars willing to participate in such discussion and approach. The maintenance of the short term programme (webpage) may help to facilitate this medium term goal.

4. Final programme

Wednesday 19 May 2010

Afternoon *Arrival*
 19:30 *Buffet dinner, VIP Executive Villa Rica Hotel*

Thursday 20 May 2010

09.30-9.45 **Welcome and inaugural address**
Marzia Grassi (Institute of Social Sciences, Lisbon, Portugal)

09.45-10.00 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**
Luisa Lima Standing Committee for Social Sciences (SCSS)

10.00-10.30 **Presentation 1 "Gender and African migration to Portugal"**
Marzia Grassi (Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal)

10.30-11.00 **Presentation 2 "Travelling ideas and dislocated fantasies: Notions of family, sexuality and gender in Europe/Africa relations in the 20th century"**
Signe Arnfred (Roskilde University, Denmark)

11.00-11.30 *Coffee / Tea Break*

11.30-12.00 **Presentation 3 "West African Associations in Italy: Transnational engagements, co-development and citizenship"**
Bruno Riccio (University of Bologna, Italy)

12.00-13.00 **Discussion**

13.00-14.00 *Lunch at ICS-UL*

14.00-14.30 **Presentation 1 "Migration Internationale et transformation des relations de genre dans les communautés de la moyenne vallée du fleuve Sénégal"**
Fatou Sarr (University Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal)

14.30-15.00 **Presentation 2 "The New Transnational Cape Verdean Matrifocal Families"**
Martina Giuffrè (University of Rome, Italy)

15.00-15.30 **Presentation 3 "The impact of the transnational network in the Equatorial Guinea case in a gender view"**
Yolanda Aixelà (Spanish Council for Scientific Research, Spain)

15.30-16.00 *Coffee / tea break*

16.00-18.30 **Discussion**

19.00 *Dinner at ICS-UL*

Friday 21 May 2010

09.30-10.00 **Presentation 1 "The exchange of care between migrants living in Australia and Belgium and their parents living in El Salvador: a comparative analysis"**
Laura Merla (Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal)

10.00-10.30	Presentation 2 "African diasporas and gendered trajectories" Giovanna Campani (University of Florence, Italy)
10.30-11.00	Presentation 3 "Migrant Assimilation in Europe: A Transnational Family Affair" Sam Scott (University of Bristol, United Kingdom)
11.00-11.30	<i>Coffee / Tea Break</i>
11.30-12.30	Discussion
12.30-14.00	<i>Lunch at ICS-UL</i>
14.00-14.30	Presentation 1 "Migration Trajectories of Immigrant Women in Portugal" Karin Wall (Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal)
14.30-15.00	Presentation 2 "The situation of migrant women and their integration into Italian society" Olivia Salimbeni (University of Florence, Italy)
15.00-15.30	Presentation 3 "Transnational fathering projects and practices: some evidence from the UK" Majella Kilkey (University of Hull, United Kingdom)
15.30-16.00	<i>Coffee / tea break</i>
16.00-18.30	Discussion on follow-up networking, future activities and collaboration
19.00	<i>Dinner at "Casa do Alentejo" (traditional portuguese restaurant)</i>

Saturday 22 May 2010

Morning *Departure*

5. Final list of participants

- 1) *Convenor*: Marzia GRASSI Institute of Social Sciences – University of Lisbon, Portugal
 - 2) *ESF Representative*: Luísa LIMA Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Portugal
 - 3) Yolanda AIXELÁ Spanish Council for Scientific Research, Spain
 - 4) Signe ARNFRED Institute for Society and Globalization – Roskilde University, Denmark
 - 5) Giovanna CAMPANI University of Florence, Italy
 - 6) Martina GIUFFRÈ University of Rome, Italy
 - 7) Majella KILKEY University of Hull, United Kingdom
 - 8) Laura MERLA Institute of Social Sciences – University of Lisbon, Portugal
 - 9) Bruno RICCIO University of Bollogna, Italy
 - 10) Olivia SALIMBENI University of Florence, Italy
 - 11) Fatou SARR University Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, Sénégal
 - 12) Sam SCOTT University of Bristol, United Kingdom
 - 13) Karin WALL Institute of Social Sciences – University of Lisbon, Portugal
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6. Statistical information on participants

Institutional participation by country

Denmark 1
Italy 4
Portugal 3
Sénégal 1
Spain 1
United Kingdom 2

Participation by gender

Female 10
Male 2

Participation by age

30-39:5
40-49:2
50-59:3
60+:2
