

**Call for Papers**

**3<sup>rd</sup> TransEurope Workshop in Tallinn/Estonia, September 4-5 2009**

“Transnationalization, globalization and its effects on women’s employment and family transitions”

*Globalisation, Transnationalization and Europeanization* have become central reference points for media, politicians, academics, and policy-makers to explain social change and understand social inequality in European member countries. The phenomenon of *Transnationalization* can be characterized by four interrelated transnational shifts that have intensified in the last two decades:

- First, transnationalization refers to the *globalisation and Europeanization of markets and domestic structures* and subsequent *decline in the meaning and efficacy at national borders*. It is connected with changes in laws, institutions, or practices, which make transactions in terms of commodities, labour, services and capital easier or less expensive across national borders.
- Second, transnational shifts relate to the *intensification of competition*, i.e., the notion that capital and labour are increasingly mobile. It therefore forces not only firms but also national economies and welfare regimes to continuously adjust and become internationally competitive, often entailing a turn towards more deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation.
- A third feature is the *spread of transnational networks of people and firms* linked by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as microcomputers and the Internet. These ICTs, together with modern mass media, allow faster diffusion of information and knowledge over long distances and increasingly allow people to share information, to connect and to create an instant worldwide standard of comparison and effectively render physical space and distance irrelevant.
- Fourth, transnationalization is inherently related to the *rise in the importance of markets and their dependence on random shocks*. Actors are increasingly in the hands of anonymous global markets, yet changes are more dynamic and less predictable.

As a consequence of transnationalization, *structural uncertainty* about economic and social developments has risen significantly in European. This uncertainty makes rational decision making increasingly difficult as behavioural alternatives, the possible consequences of a decision as well as the amount of information to be collected for a particular decision are becoming blurred.

However, though the consequences of transnationalization are experienced virtually by every nation, each country appears to be impacted differently. Increasing uncertainty does not affect all regions, states, organizations or individuals in the European Economic Area (EEA) in the same way but is filtered by *nation-specific institutions* such as employment relations, educational systems, national welfare state regimes, and the family. They act as a kind of ‘intervening variable’ between global macro forces and the responses at the micro level. Due to the persistence of cross-national institutional differences (‘path dependence’), life courses hence are affected differentially by transnationalization, and life chances and risks are channelled differentially towards specific social groups, resulting in cross-nationally different patterns of social inequality across the life course.

Against this general background, the TransEurope workshop aims to focus on the specific situation of European women under the influence of rising transnationalization. Earlier research has shown that globalization and transnationalization have had ambiguous consequences for women:

- On the one hand, globalization has facilitated women's entry into employment due to a rise in new and flexible job positions in the service sector. Consequently, women's employment has risen steadily in virtually any European nation throughout the last decades. Women's employment has also become more continuous: Women nowadays more often combine family and work and their employment interruptions, e.g. for family reasons, have become shorter.
- On the other hand, this *quantitative* increase in women's employment participation has not always been paralleled by simultaneous *qualitative* improvements in women's employment. At present, women are still disproportionately found in less favourable "flexible" employment forms such as part-time work, work with reduced hours, precarious self-employment or lower-paid jobs, while at the same time, they are underrepresented in higher levels of job hierarchies and executive positions. This unequal representation in employment has contributed to a still largely asymmetric share of household and care responsibilities that still can be observed in most European countries.

Though the above developments can be observed across European nations, the actual degree and quality to which women have become integrated into globalised labour markets varies significantly both *between* countries (as reflected in cross-nationally different employment rates, different representation in specific employment forms or different degrees of gender segregation) as well as *within* national contexts (as reflected in different degrees of integration in different educational or occupational groups, different economic sectors etc.).

The key aim of the workshop thus will be to reconstruct the development of women's integration into the labour market, their transitions into (job entry/re-entry), within (job mobility/occupational mobility/mobility between work forms) and out of employment (transitions into caregiving), as well as their strategies to reconcile work and family life *in different national contexts*. Contributions should deal with the development and life course consequences on women's employment and family transitions of transnationalization in at least one specific European country context. However, comparative papers are also highly welcome.

Workshop contributions should possibly provide a description of the relevant national institutional context, as well as an empirical reconstruction of relevant life course transitions, based on appropriate and up-to-date national data. In order to adequately capture both employment and family transitions, the papers should focus on women in their early or mid-career phase. Though exact definitions may differ across countries, an age window of 25-50 years may be taken as an "orientation marker". Both quantitative as well as qualitative papers are welcome.

Key questions for the workshop include:

- How do European countries resolve the tension between the established insider-outsider labour markets and the simultaneous pressure from globalisation and Europeanization forces to 'flexibly adjust' their labour?
- How have these shifts affected women's position in the labour market? Have they increasingly become integrated into the labour market and if so, in which sectors and types of employment can they be found? What characterizes their transitions into (job entry/re-entry), within (job mobility/occupational mobility/mobility between work forms) and out of employment

(transitions into caregiving)? What strategies do women employ to reconcile work and family life?

- Have globalization and transnationalization led to an equalization of gender-specific labour market chances or have they fostered a marginalization of women?
- What role do women's individual preferences play for their life course and career development?
- In how far are different groups of women differentially affected by globalization and transnationalization? Can we, for example, observe variations with regard to education, occupational class, family background or economic sector? How have these differences developed over time?
- To what extent can recommodification processes in the family system and welfare regimes be observed? If so: How do these processes affect women?
- To what extent do such processes expand social inequality both between as well as within the sexes?

Abstracts would need to be submitted to Dirk Hofaecker ([dirk.hofaecker@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:dirk.hofaecker@uni-bamberg.de)) until March 15th 2009, containing a (working) title of the proposed paper, a short outline of up to 250 words as well as contact information about (co-) authors.