

Transnationalization, Globalization and their effects on mid-career mobility transitions

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Call for Papers

Globalization, 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 *globalization and Europeanization of markets and domestic structures* and subsequent *decline in the meaning and efficacy at national borders*.
- Second, transnational shifts relate to the *intensification of competition*, i.e., the notion that capital and labor 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, liberalization and privatization.
- 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.
- 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 nations - be it in the form of *economic uncertainty* (e.g. economic precariousness of labor market position), *temporal uncertainty* (no permanent contracts) or *employment relation uncertainty* (e.g. public vs. private sector, dependent workers vs. self-employment). As shown at TransEurope Workshop I, this uncertainty has strongly affected *young people* and led to a deterioration of both their labor market chances as well as their individual family planning.

However, sociologists such as Ulrich Beck have argued that globalization and transnationalization may also lead to and deterioration of *mid-career employment*. According to these theorists, the idea of a continuous lifelong employment relationship and professional and occupational stability is increasingly coming apart due to rising flexibility demands on both nation states and employers,. Unstable and less predictable “patchwork careers” are on the rise and increasingly characterize working lives. Many social mobility researchers, on the other hand, have argued that mid-career employment patterns have remained largely stable under globalization and that flexibilization has been restricted to the boundaries of employment life (“flexibilization at the margins”).

Furthermore, nation states appear to differ in their affectedness by and accomplishment of globalization,. Increasing uncertainty is hence filtered by *nation-specific institutions* such as employment relations, education and training 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, resulting in cross-nationally varying mid-career patterns. Furthermore, cross-national differences can also be expected to arise with regards to how life chances and risks are channeled differentially towards specific social groups (such as those with lower educational attainment, lower occupational status etc.).

Against this general background, the second TransEurope workshop aims to disentangle the differential development of transnationalization and its life course consequences for mid-career employees of both sexes. Contributions should deal with the development and respective life course consequences of transnationalization **in your specific country context**. However, **comparative papers** that contrast national trends with developments in other countries are also highly welcome. Workshop contributions should possibly provide a description of the national institutional context relevant for mid-career transitions, as well as an analysis of changes in the actual employment trajectories, based on appropriate and up-to-date national micro-data. Workshop contributions can generally deal with developments for both sexes but should consider that employment interruptions due to child or elderly care make up an independent topic in TransEurope Phase III (2009). The main focus of our workshop should be on quantitative analyses, using up-to-date longitudinal data sets where possible. However, qualitative analyses are also very welcome to supplement these findings. Questions to be discussed at the workshop hence include the following:

General developments in Mid-Career Mobility under Globalization

- How have labor market mobility patterns of mid-career men and women (i.e. aged 30-55 years) developed under globalization?
- Can we in fact observe de-stabilization of long-term relationships on the labor market in the sense of an increasing prevalence of patchwork careers?
- In how far (and for whom) have processes of upward or downward labor market mobility increased (respectively decreased) under globalization?

Mid-Career Mobility and the Development of Social Inequality

- Which groups are especially exposed to increasing risks of downward mobility in their mid-careers? (e.g. men vs. women, employees with different educational attainment/occupational status, private vs. public sector employees, employees in different economic sectors)
- For which groups have opportunities expanded under globalization in the sense of better upward career chances?
- Who is faced with the risk of permanent exclusion from the labor market (e.g. through long-term unemployment)?

Country-specific “filters” of Globalization and Transnationalization

- Which nation-specific institutions in your country...
 - ...influence labor market mobility processes directly (e.g. different modes of labor market regulation, dismissal protection systems)?
 - ... mediate the consequences of labor market mobility (e.g. unemployment insurance, active labor market policies, re-qualification and lifelong learning measures)?
- In how far have these nation-specific filters contributed to the development of nation-specific mid-career mobility regimes?
- Which recent policy changes with regards to mid-career mobility can be observed in your country and how do these policy changes affect patterns of labor market mobility and social inequality?

Further questions

- Have trans-nationalization and globalization triggered the development of new kinds of labor market mobility beyond national borders? Who is affected by such types of mobility?
- Which “subjective consequences” do mobility patterns have for employees themselves, i.e. how is labor market mobility perceived by them?

Is there any “spill-over” effect of changes in labor market mobility on other spheres of life, such as personal relations and the family?