New Landscapes of Migration? Transnational Migration between Latin America, the U.S. and Europe

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Introduction

Over the last ten years, the existence of transnational connections has been widely documented by dozens of studies of migrant groups in the U.S. and new theoretical concepts and understanding have emerged. The study of transnational migration to Europe is more recent. However, to date no major comparative efforts have been undertaken to examine similarities and differences in U.S. and European experiences. Taking the point of departure that politically constructed state policies, legitimating discourses, and institutional practices are key elements through which transnational engagement, activities, and migratory practices are being constituted (Smith 2001), some variation is to be expected. In this article I trace the development and study the consequences of transnational fields of action generated by Latin American migration to the U.S. and Europe. In particular, I look at three interrelated social processes, namely the way in which transnational fields affect migrants accommodation into U.S. and various European countries; how U.S. and Europe based migrants influence economic, political, and socio-cultural development in their countries of origin; and the extent to which (and conditions under which) new forms of diasporic or transnational identifications emerge among Latin American migrants in the U.S. and Europe.

My contribution to the on-going debate on the meaning and basic features of transnational fields of action generated by migration rests on the claim that the form and conditions of movement - as well as the nature of the host societies – have a central bearing on the transnational practices migrants develop and are able to sustain. The paper is organized into four parts. I begin with an overview of approaches to migratory phenomena. From here I turn to transnational theorizing, focusing on conceptualizations of transnationalism, migrants involvement in home country development, and the enduring assymetries in relations of power. I then discuss the development and consequences of transnational fields of actions generated by Comombian, Dominican and Peruvian migration to resepctively the US and Europe. I conclude by discussing the implications of similarities and differences in US and European experiences for our thinking about migration. My reflections are based on personal and joint research carried out among Latin American migrants in the US and Europe over the last twelwe years.[1]

Old and New Approaches to Migration

Global movement – in the form of both 'economic' and refugee related migration – is commonly characterized as one of the quintessential features of the present era (Weiner 1995). It is estimated that some 150 million people currently live outside their country of birth. At about 2.5 percent of the world's population, this proportion in not that much different from earlier periods when population movements peaked. Throughout history market forces, inequality, territorial conflicts and environmental changes have led to migration of individuals and groups, often over large distances. Among the factors contributing to the growing political anxiety over migration is the liberalization of exit, first from the post-colonial world, as imperial restrictions on the movement of colonial subjects fell away, and later from former communist countries after the collapse of communism. Increased possibilities of out-migration have been coupled with greater awareness of growing disparities in living conditions between rich and poor countries, and the spread of violent conflict often in the poorest regions of the world (Zolberg 2001). Therefore, the significance of migration lies not in the fact of its global character but rather in the density, velocity and diversity of global connections, in the growing awareness of such connections, and in the growing recognition of the possibilities for activities that transcend state boundaries. Transnational connections are therefore not new although they may have

[1] My own research includes studies of US-bound and Europe bound Dominican migration (the latter compared to Moroccan migration); joint research includes a project on mobile livelihoods in Peru (carried out in collaboration with Finn Stepputat), an ongoing study of Colombian, Dominican and Peruvian transnational practices between Latin America and Europe (carried out in collaboration with Luís Guarnizo), and current participation in a larger collective research programme on 'Diaspora, Development and Conflict', coordinated by Nicholas Van Hear and myself.

been 'temporarily concealed during the recent global formation of an international society of nation states' (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002: 2-3). What is relatively new is migration theory, often said to originate in 1885 when Ravenstein wrote his influential article 'The laws of migration'. Transnational migration theory – developed and refined during the last decade – is of an even more recent date.

Due to the emphasis on the gate-keeping function of the political borders of nation states, much conventional research on international migration has had a rather quantitative orientation and focused on the demographic and economic implications of migration between different nation states (e.g. Lee 1966, for an overview see Hvidt 1975; Yans-McLaughlin 1990). Not surprisingly, migration theory developed first in the United States, since immigration coincided with the birth of American society. Here, a central topic of investigation was the effects of immigration on the receiving country, as reflected in the strong tradition of doing research on the assimilation/integration of immigrants into American or Canadian society. The integrationist approach suggests that migration research has not just been concerned with population movements, but more significantly with the construction of nation states, with particular pre-defined identities, through population movements.[2] This research is primarily concerned with the creation of, for example, new American citizens and the future development of American society, and only secondarily with the phenomenon of migration itself (Sørensen and Olwig 2002, see also Olwig 2001). This North American research tradition has had, and continues to have, a major impact on migration studies, even after conceptualizations and understandings of migration changed direction in the last decades of the twentieth century. [3] In Europe, the main research interest concerned the effects of (e)migration out of Europe until well into the latter half of the twentieth century. This changed, however, when considerable migration to Europe began and the focus shifted to the impact of immigration into Europe.[4]

The traditional and still principal focus of the sociology of (im)migration has been the socio-cultural segregation/assimilation/integration, cultural transformation, labour incorporation, and control of the arrival of newcomers to the receiving society (Gordon 1964; Brubaker 1989; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Alba and Nee 1997). The focus of this literature is on the pathways followed by immigrants seeking economic

[2] The focus on the creation of the nation state is apparent in a recent special issue of the American journal *International Migration Review*, which re-examines the integration paradigm in migration research, where DeWind and Kasinitz suggest that the central questions are: 'What sort of Americans will they [immigrants] be, and what sort of America is being created in the interaction of immigrants and natives?' (DeWind and Kasinitz 1997: 1096).

[3] For a critical historical point of view see Tilly 1990. It is only since the 1950s, when immigration to Europe became significant, that European scholars have become interested in integration research. On the specific representation of immigrants and discourses of integration in Denmark, see Schwartz 1985; Sørensen 1995.

[4] In the middle of the 20th century, Europe changed from being an old land of emigration, to becoming a major migrant receiving area, drawing in first workers, then their families, from Southern Europe and Turkey, then from Africa and the old colonies in the Caribbean, south-east Asia and Indonesia.

ascent and social acceptance in their new country; in the first part of the 20th century through processes of 'acculturation' (following the classic Chicago studies of e.g. Thomas and Znaniecki 1918, Park and Burgess 1929), in the latter part through processes of racialization/ethnitization. Westwood and Phizacklea (2000) point to the following ruptures in theory: economistic accounts of labour migration in the 1950s and 1960s, neo-Marxist interpretations in the 1970s and early 1980s, and refocused attention to households and social networks from the mid-1980s and onwards. Lost from view in these theoretizations are the web of social, economic, and political transactions and relationships that migrants maintain across national borders with their homelands and other localities of the diaspora.[5] Sociologists and other specialists on immigration are familiar with such processes as chain and return migration and the sending of remittances to relatives left behind. What appears different at the beginning of the twenty-first century is the proliferation and increasing complexity of such trans-border interactions to the point that sending and receiving areas become integrated into extended social structures, migrants involved acquire social profiles that differ from those of conventional immigrants, and transnational exchanges become integral and regular rather than exceptional among migrants. Furthermore, states of origin are playing a more active role in encouraging and formalizing cross border action by granting dual citizenship rights and introducing policies that facilitate, if not advocate, dual national membership (Basch 1994; R.C. Smith 1998; Guarnizo 1997; Roberts et al. 1999).

An important result of this new focus on migration has been that there is now much greater awareness of the significance of movement and the formation and sustaining of long-distance ties in human life and society. This has led to the emergence of new concepts, such as globalization, diaspora and transnationalism, concepts that seek to capture the mobile and spatially ruptured, yet socio-culturally interconnected nature of human life. Within the field of migration research, the concept of transnationalism moved centre stage during the 1990's and figures as a key term in a number of publications from this decade (see, e.g., Featherstone 1990; Rouse 1991; 1995; Appadurai 1991; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994; Kearney 1991, 1995, 1998; Mahler 1995, 1998; Guarnizo 1997; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Vertovec and Cohen 1999). This literature - mainly based on immigration to the United States - suggests that contemporary migrants develop transnational identities that challenge the notion of migration as involving settled populations crossing political borders in

[5] This is of course a simplification. As early as 1940, Arensberg & Kimball pointed out that Irish peasants migrating to America maintained family bonds of obligation and affection and sent remittances to relatives back home. Such studies were nevertheless exceptions from more functionalist approaches to the breaking of traditional family and cultural ties (see, e.g., Bourne 1916 [quoted in Portes 2001:185]). Several contemporary transnational studies point out that living transnationally is not new. Earlier migrants returned to their homelands, sent back significant remittances and created hometown associations much in the same way as today. What is new, however, is that new communication and transportation technologies allow for easier and more direct and intimate connections; that contemporary migrants leave countries at a more advanced state of development and nation building than in the past; and that the spread of globalization means that most contemporary migrants travel to places they have been exposed to through global media (Foner 2000, Levitt 2001).

order to establish a new home in a new nation state. Proponents of transnationalism thus argue that migrants often interact and identify with multiple nations, states, and/or communities, and that their identifications and practices contribute to the development of transnational communities or a new type of transnational social space (Rouse 1991; Fletcher 1999).

As international migration has become subject to greater control and increasing numbers of international migrants travel and live in undocumented ways, researchers have also begun to focus on the ability of migrants to negotiate the legal, social and economic barriers they encounter because of their precarious legal status. This has perhaps been most thoroughly investigated in studies of undocumented migration between Mexico and other Central American countries and the United States (see, e.g., Chavez 1991; Kearney 1991; Smith 1994; Hagan 1994; Fitzgerald 2000; Kyle 2000). Only recently have European studies of the effects of heightened migration controls on undocumented migration begun to emerge (Driessen 1998, Harding 2000, Sørensen 2000).

In a recent paper, Rogers (2000) argues that transnationalism is less than fully globalized – in terms of migrant practices as well as published research – and that there are several grounds for expecting Europe-bound transnational experiences to differ from US-bound transmigration patterns. He urges researchers to scrutinise the relations between general concepts (such as transnationalism) and their geographical origin. Does transnationalism exist in Europe and, if so, does it take a different form than in the U.S.? In what follows, I take up the challenge and compare Latin American transnational practices between the US and Europe.

Migrants, Diasporas and Transnational Engagement

As recently argued by Kennedy and Roudometof (2002), most of the academic literature on transnationalism has – based on the experiences of the so-called 'new' post-1945 immigrants into the USA – concentrated on issues related to migrants, diasporas and transnational nation-state building. Within this literature, three main themes have precipitated, namely the need to conceptualize a social, political and economic system greater than the sending and destination countries involved (Glick Schiller et al 1992; Giri 1993; Basch et al 1994; Weiner 1997; Ong 1999); 2) the close relationship between migration and development (Georges 1991, Hollifield 1992; OECD 1994; Skeldon 1997; Fletcher 1999; Portes 2001); and 3) the need to bring back into focus the enduring assymmetries of domination, inequality, racism, sexism, class conflict, and uneven development in which transnational practices are

embedded and which they sometimes even perpetuate (Lynn Doty 1996; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Mahler 1998; Foner et al 2000; Kyle 2000; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000; Pessar 2001; Smith 2001; Sørensen and Olwig 2002).

Conceptualizing Transnationalism

Transnational theorizing began its development in the early 1990s, when a group of US-based anthropologists found that the migrants among whom they worked 'had developed transnational practices that did not fit the vocabulary of social science' (Basch et al 1994). From this and similar experiences grew a critique of conventional migration theory. The argument was that this theory, informed by and in the service of the nation-state (see Kearney 1991), approaches international migrants as individuals who either depart (emigrants) or arrive (immigrants). In an attempt to overcome this split - and informed by empirical findings - researchers began to understand migrants as parts of two or more, dynamically intertwined worlds and transnational migration as 'processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Basch et al 1994: 6). Thus, sending- and receiving societies became understood as constituting one single field of analysis. Several authors also began to insist on conceptualising migration as migrancy (see Chambers 1994) - as encompassing the totality of migrants' life experiences - as opposed to conventional conceptualisations such as migrant labour.[6] Hereby, the multiple and diversified economic, social, political and cultural experiences of people whose lives span borders became the analytical focus.

Within sociology, Luís Guarnizo argued that transnationalism is constituted by a 'series of economic, socio-cultural and political practical and discursive relations that transcend the territorially bound jurisdiction of the nation-state (Guarnizo 1997: 9). Together with Michael Peter Smith he further developed the notions of 'transnationalism from below' and 'transnationalism from above' representing respectively the everyday, grounded practices and social networks of individuals and groups (cross-border activities by migrants and grassroots entrepreneurs), and the functional logics of global governance and economic activities (cross-border initiatives by governments and corporations) (Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

Portes (2001) has recently suggested conceptualizing transnationalism as only *one* form of economic, political and cultural adaptation that co-exists with other, more traditional forms. Only those economic, political and socio-cultural practices and activities that require long-term contacts across borders for their success should 'count' as transnational. Others have suggested distinguishing between the scope and

[6] The notion of migrancy has been criticised for being embedded in a specific white metropolitan world by Bauman (1998). See also Westwood and Phizacklea (2000).

intensity of transnational practices. Such practices can constitute 'core' or 'expanded activities' (Guarnizo 2000), be 'broad' or 'narrow' (Itzigsohn et al 1999) or 'comprehensive' or 'selective' in scope (Levitt 2001). Variation in dimensions of transnational practices must be extended to include the practices of those who stay behind (Levitt 2001), and should not be confined to the experience of (im)migrants but rather be seen as manifestations of broader social trends (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002).

Finally, geographers have advocated 'bringing geography back in' to discussions of transnationalism. Noticing that transnational research and discourse have become well established in the Americans and Asia Pacific but less so within Europe, Rogers (2000) argues in favour of a regional approach and suggests careful scrutiny of the relations between general concepts and their geographical origins. He concludes that transnationalism is applicable to European migration experiences, but also that there are certain characteristics that distinguishes European transnationalism from transnationalisms elsewhere.

Migration and Development

A second factor suggesting migrant transnationalism is the critical role many migrants play in the development of their home countries. Early transnational theorizing advanced the argument that migrants' blocked social mobility and lack of integration into migrant receiving nation-states explained their continuous attachment to the homelands. A common experience of Latin American migrants in the US was said to be that regardless of diverse class origins, migration was – at least initially – working class in destination. Despite the fact that people were only able to find low status work, their earnings were considerably higher than what they would have been had they stayed at home. Migrants' interpretation of social status remained bound up to home country standards. Due to migrants' transnational existence, middle class aspirations could be played out in the home country (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). The fact that transmigrants continue to use their sending community as the reference group against which they gauge their status also partly explains why they contribute to development projects in their communities of origin. This contribution affirms 'their continued membership in these transnational groups and [...]demonstrate their enhanced position within them' (Levitt 2001:11).

Contrary to this view – and from a European perspective - Østergaard-Nielsen (2001) argues that economic and political practices of migrant populations should not be reduced to a function of the opportunity structures in migrant receiving states. While more inclusive structures – which in principle allow for migrant incorporation – may exclude dialogue on homeland politics, they may also facilitate mobilization around homeland political concerns.

Is transnationalism good or bad for local development? A negative developmental impact of migration is found by various conventional analyses that point to the selective nature of migration, the lowering of local labour intensity when the most productive household members go abroad (Lipton 1980), the tendency of remittances to be insignificant among the poorest (Massey et al 1998), and that return migration is likely to be by old and unsuccessful migrants whereby skills transfers are unlikely to have any developmental effect (Collinson 1996). In addition migration may have an inflationary effect on the local economy and increase local income disparities.

In contrast, the transnational literature generally shows a positive effect of migration on development in the countries of origin.[7] Although pointing to a variety of migration-development dynamics, many studies suggest that the most important resource for the development of the Third World is people connected by transnational networks. Despite recent findings that point to limited numerical involvement of migrants in transnational activities, Portes (2001) argues that these activities remain significant because of their prospective growth and their impact on development projects in developing countries.[8] More individualised efforts have served the purpose of preventing the decline of rural communities. Many migrants do not leave in order to start a new life elsewhere but rather to better the one they already have back home (Kyle 2000). Those who remain abroad for extended periods or eventually settle there may continue to remit sums to family members back home. Even if the immediate family resettle abroad, more distant family members may be able to count on remittances in times of acute crisis (Gardner 1995).[9]

If transnational literature generally shows a positive effect of transnational migration on development, it also suggests that the institutional bridges linking migrants with their home countries do not appear overnight. As the economies of sending countries come to depend increasingly on migrant remittances, their governments must contend with the transnational concerns of a growing proportion of their citizens. Transnational theorizing has lately left its migrant- and people centred approach and begun to take state practices into account. The extraterritorial ambitions of sending governments include efforts to intensify contacts with their respective diasporas and

[7] For US-bound migration, see Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Rouse 1992; Lesinger 1992; Basch et al. 1994; Sørensen 1994; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Portes et al. 1999; van der Veer 2000. For Europe-bound migration see Soysal 1994, Anthias and Lazaridis 2000, Sørensen 1995, 1999, Østergaard-Nielsen 2001.

[8] If transnational activities are important for *national* development, they are even more vital at the *local* level. Hometown associations have served as platforms and vehicles for matching fund schemes that pool remittances with government funds and expertise, often resulting in significant improvements in local health, education, and sanitation conditions, benefiting migrant- and non-migrant households alike (M.P. Smith 2001). Towns and rural villages that are connected to hometown associations abroad tend to be better off in terms of infrastructure and access to services (Landholt 2001).

[9] One can find less positive sides to the story. For example, in some sending regions, migrants' transfer of resources has resulted in inflation of real estate prices, concentration of land tenure in the hands of families connected to migration, and increased unemployment (Fletcher 1999). In other regions, local political leaders have been the first to depart, depriving local communities of valuable social and political capital (Sørensen 1999).

involve them in various forms of national life, including the passing of dual citizenship and dual nationality laws, the granting of rights to vote in national elections and even granting migrants representation in the national legislatures (Portes 2001). Research has further shown that migrants' importance to home governments lies not only in their substantial contribution through remittances, investments and political participation, but also in their potential as political lobbyists for national interests abroad (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001, Levitt 2001).

Enduring Asymmetries

In relation to the receiving nation-states, Basch et al (1994) developed an analytical framework that sought to capture the link between culture and relations of power and domination. They argued, that while relations of domination are ultimately maintained by force, the social order is sustained by daily practice, habit, and common sense. People's thoughts, words and practices are never free of hegemonic constructions. Conceptions of hegemonic constructs must therefore transgress the limitations of earlier work and encompass concepts of race, ethnicity and nation.

From similar observations but with different theoretical implications, Michael Kearney pointed to a lack of correspondence between the borders (defined by geographic and cultural zones or spaces) and the boundaries (defined by legal spatial delimitations of nations) of the post-modern nation-state. Whereas the nation-state and nationalism were necessary conditions for the development of capitalism and modernity, the present era 'implies a blurring, a reordering of the binary cultural, social, and epistemological distinctions of the modern period' (Kearney 1991:56). Kearney then characterized the present state of the nation-state as transnational, a term he gave two meanings. In temporal terms it means post-national; in spatial terms it means new forms of organization and identity. The blurring of national borders under conditions of transnationalism creates an 'ambiguous zone', a 'border area', in which identities are 'assigned' and 'taken', 'withheld' or 'rejected'. In this approach formerly localized ethnicities may become counter-identities that in their transnationalization may take multiple forms.[10]

In contrast to Basch et al, Kearney argued, that it is the undocumented condition of 'statelessness' that foster the formation of transnational communities by freeing individuals from the regulatory control of any nation state. He states that 'migration is significant in the reconstitution of identities not only because it permits migrants to move through multiple social fields in which identity is formed, but also because it allows migrants to escape the official categories that contain identity' (Kearney 1995: 228).

[10] Kearney and other proponents of postnationalism have been criticised for suggesting that there are either nation-states or globalization (see Westwood and Phizacklea 2000).

The extent to which intensified transnational flows of people are counteracted by a multiplication, redefinition and greater enforcement of nation-states and their geopolitical borders has nevertheless been subject to divergent theses about how power works in and through the movement of people. Robin Cohen argues that while nations are 'extended and unconfined from the viewpoint of the sending areas, [...migrants] appear as minorities, often quite weak and relatively powerless minorities, in the countries in which they find themselves' (Cohen 1997: 137). Likewise, Michael Peter Smith holds that the erosion of the nation-states' boundary-setting capacities is opposed through their attempts to erase the new political spaces and 'move politics back to terrains they currently dominate' (Smith 1994: 32). The expansion of transnational migration has paradoxically resulted in 'outbursts of entrenched, essentialist nationalism in both sending and receiving locales. In receiving cities and states, movements aimed at recuperating and reifying a mythical national identity are expanding as a way to eliminate the penetration of alien "others"'. Simultaneously sending states are 're-essentializing their national identity and extending it to their nationals abroad as a way to maintain their loyalty and flow of resources 'back home'. By granting them dual citizenship, these states are encouraging transmigrants' instrumental accommodation to receiving societies, while simultaneously inhibiting their cultural assimilation and thereby promoting the preservation of their own national culture. This, in turn, further fuels nativist sentiments in receiving cities and states' (Smith 2001: 173-74).

Taking her point of departure in the receiving state, Roxanne Lynn Doty (1996) points to the 'double-writing of statecraft' in order to explain such ambiguities of state practices in regard to migration.[11] She takes the (international) boundary between the 'inside' and the 'outside' as an essential marker of a society inside which is governed by a seemingly fixed and natural central authority. Clandestine border crossings threaten this imagery, but through official regulations of the conditions of undocumented border-crossers, the state simultaneously transgresses its own foundations (the imagery of the territorially bounded society and the state as its representation) and reproduces them through this 'double-writing of statecraft'. Working in various realms (employment, education, health etc.) these practices produce difference between authentic and unauthentic national subjects, that is, produce 'internal exclusions'. Thus, Lynn Doty regards the widespread anti-immigrant sentiments as 'state-craft from below' in which 'authentic citizens' engage in governmental practices that reproduce the territorially bounded identities

[11] Lynn Doty's analysis focuses exclusively on US immigration policies. Her suggested approach, however, could easily be applied to Europe.

as natural and given.[12]

In an ethnographic study of migration related transformations in rural Bangladesh, Katy Gardner (1995) develops a 'geography of power' that includes both the power differentials between places and power relations between people. In the power between places, migration often becomes a metaphor for power and advancement, 'for all that is wrong with home'. Thus, 'power relations are increasingly expressed geographically, whereas previously they were expressed in terms of work and access to land. Places are not simply sources of income, they are also idioms for power relations, ways of declaring oneself and one's household more sophisticated, more knowledgeable, and more wealthy than others' (272). Differentiation is not only economic but also related to socio-cultural positioning: While some people have access to foreign countries and thus foreign sources of power and others do not. In the words of Doreen Massey we should reconsider the modern *time-space compression* in terms of the socially differentiated effects of mobility in order to develop a 'politics of mobility and access': 'For it does seem that mobility, and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power. It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people have more than others and that some people have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak. The time-space compression of some groups can undermine the power of others' (Massey 1994: 150).

The discussion above furnishes arguments in favour of a conceptual framework that is capable of incorporating and explaining diversity, inequality and enduring asymmetry among migrants and their transnational practices. Differences of wealth, power, class, gender and generation *within* countries and migrant groups are of importance in shaping the form and scope of transnational activities and their influence. Migrant groups are heterogeneous and in terms of 'belonging' they do not come from 'countries' but rather from specific localities. Many of their practices are therefore 'trans-local' (rather than transnational), connecting migrant groups or hometown association with specific rural or urban areas in their countries of origin.

[12] Jacqueline Hagan (1994) also treats state policies as central to the understanding of the formation of migrant survival strategies and transnational social practice. Her discussion centres around the role of networks in facilitating settlement and regulating migration; the gender specific settlement experiences; the complexity and heterogeneity of decision-making and settlement; and the evolving relations between home and host communities (Hagan 1994:152-165). Social relations, she argues, are importantly shaped by the acquisition of legal status. Legalized migrants are more likely than undocumented migrants to engage in bi-national social practices, strengthening both their social and economic ties to their host society and successful reintegration as transnationals rather than return migrants into their home communities. In Hagan's study, legal status accorded to the migrants facilitates more regular back and forth movement. My own findings suggests, however, that it is not only regularity – documented vs. undocumented life – that introduces a powerful element into migrant decision making and transnational disposition. Lack of stable labour market conditions and time-limited residence and work permits play an important role (Sørensen 1999).

Latin American Experiences

Latin American mass migration[13] was until recently primarily directed towards the United States (and immediate neighbouring countries). Concurrent with the U.S. Immigration and Control Act of 1986 and the 1990 tightening of regulations, Latin American migration to Europe, in particular southern Europe - began to increase.[14] The presence of various Latin American migrant groups in both continents allows for comparison. To provide an illustration, the migratory experiences and transnational fields of action generated by three Latin American groups are given below:

Colombian Migration

Colombians first started to arrive in significant numbers to the United States in the wake of the Second World War. The first group of Colombians was mostly formed by upper-middle class and professional people. After the 1965 US immigration reform, the social composition of the inflow included mostly middle- and working-class migrants in search of economic improvement (Chaney 1976; Cruz and Castaño 1976; Cardona et al 1980). Since the mid-1980s, a deepening political and economic crisis in Colombia, and expansion of the illicit drug trade, resulted in a migrant flow drawn from all sectors of Colombian society (Urrea-Giraldo 1982). At the present, approximately 2.5 million Colombians are estimated to live abroad (Peru Solidarity Forum 2000). Increasingly, Colombian migrants come from the middle-classes, raising the group's average education and occupational status. However, recent research among Colombian migrants points to the high levels of mutual distrust stemming from political insecurity at home and the shadow of the drug trade (Guarnizo and Diaz 1999). Colombians seldom cluster in tightly-knit communities, but become dispersed instead over the (metropolitan) areas where they settle. The major destination is New York City, where two-fifths of a US-based Colombian population estimated at three quarters of a million resides (Guarnizo et al. 1999; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993b). But southern European countries such as Spain (with 10,400 registered Colombian residents in 1999) and Italy (with 6,300) have been incorporated as new migrant destinations. Migration towards southern Europe is moreover highly feminized, with female migrants constituting the absolute majority. In Spain 72 percent of documented Colombian migrants are women.

[13] There is no universal definition of mass migration. I characterize mass migration as the point where emigration becomes a normative practice across generations and social classes and marked by the development of dynamic collectivities of co-nationals in the sites of destinations.

[14] It is estimated that Latinos will outnumber the black population of the US in the next ten years. They currently comprise some 20 million people, 12 per cent of the population and 27 per cent of the work force (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000:61). The Latin American presence in Europe is relatively small in size, and Latin American migrants seem to be either 'invisible' (e.g. in Denmark) and/or perceived as relatively 'unproblematic' (e.g. in southern Europe). Given the migratory trends from Latin America, the relative 'smallness' of Latin American migrants will probably dissipate in the forseeable future as economic and political migration from countries like Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru accelerates due to the worsening of socio-political and economic conditions there and the consolidation of already established migratory networks.

A recent study by Guarnizo and Díaz found that important sub-sectors of the Colombian economy were strongly connected to US-bound transnational migration, namely, housing, small and micro-enterprises, and family subsistence. An important line of transnational activity is the promotion and sale of housing in cities like Pereira and Cali to migrants living abroad. In a contracted local market, migrants' relatively high purchasing power has become a significant market for developers in these cities. A more common transnational activity is the creation, maintenance, and expansion of small commercial and service ventures (grocery stores, restaurants, repair services, light manufacturing) by migrants who have either returned or are sending remittances to support their businesses from abroad. These numerous enterprises dot the areas where migrants and their families live, providing services and economic activities that did not exist before mass migration took off. Yet, the more typical transnational activity, as found in other migrant societies, was the multimillion, steady flow of family remittances, which help to cover not only the family's daily subsistence needs, but also health care, housing, education and other activities, which on the aggregate contribute to the improvement of local living conditions. Often, migrants remit funds to support critical communal needs such as classroom construction, surgical equipment, road construction, and so forth.

Dominican Migration

Dominican (e)migration was severely constrained during the 30-year Trujillo dictatorship, but suddenly increased after the dictator's assassination in 1961 and the 1965 popular uprising (Hendricks 1974; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). At the time, a substantial number of opposition leaders were forcefully expatriated, first by a provisional government seeking to alleviate domestic pressures, then by long lasting political unrest. The U.S. government expeditiously issued visas to these deportees and 'cooperated at the provisional government's request, by refusing to permit the deportees to leave the United States' (Martin 1966: 347). The Dominican exodus thus began largely as a refugee flight (Sørensen 1994). Between 1961 and 1985 more than 400,000 Dominicans entered the U.S. Dominican political life nevertheless continued to be dominated by the same personalities and unresolved conflicts of the 1965 revolution. More than 3,000 were killed between 1966 and 1974 alone (Gonzalez 2000). It was not until the 1980s, after the reign of terror ended back home, that Dominican immigration to the US assumed more an economic than political character. Since then, Dominican migration has become more complex thanks to an impressive growth in the size and geographical spread of the Dominican migrant population (Sørensen 1997b, 1998a). By the end of the 1990s, approximately 10 percent of the 7 million Dominican population were residing in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1999: 12). From 1961 to the 1990s, Puerto Rico, Curacao, Venezuela and Spain became important new sites of destination.

Throughout the 1990s, migration to Spain became the springboard to other southern European countries, primarily Italy. Another entry port to Europe became the Curacao-Holland link. Interestingly, Dominican migration to Europe has been overwhelmingly female. Whereas the gender composition of US-bound migration over the years has become more or less levelled, Europe bound migration is approximately 85 percent female (Sørensen 1999a, 1999b).

Today, in the Dominican Republic, there exist literally hundreds of small and medium enterprises (including small factories, commercial establishments of different types, and financial agencies) that are founded and operated by former and current immigrants to the United States. What makes these enterprises transnational is not only that their origins are linked to migration, but that their successful functioning depends on continuing ties to the United States.[15] On their way back to the island, many of these informal exporters fill their empty suitcases with inputs needed for business such as garment designs, fabrics, and parts (Portes and Guarnizo 1991). Although on a minor scale, the suitcases of migrant entrepreneurs' wives and independently traveling women may be filled with fashion clothes, cosmetics, and household appliances that form the basis of informal 'backdoor' businesses (Sørensen 1994). Income earned through these activities may be invested in formalizing the businesses and/or the migration of other family members. Lack of access to such transnational resources may be decisive for the migration options at hand: Sørensen (1999a) found that migration of Dominican domestic workers to Spain was determined by their lack of access to New York-bound transnational networks. Still, income earned at the bottom of the European labor market and transnational political practices engaged in Europe have had tremendous effects on local communities in the Dominican Republic. Finally, Dominican political participation includes political campaigning of Dominican parties in major migrant destinations as well as election of migrants residing in the US to public office on the island.[16] As important, however, is the influence the Dominican diaspora has had on local identity politics and race relations (Guarnizo 1997), not least through domestic workers' participation in transnational migrant associations (Sørensen 1998a, 2002). Organizing with women of color from other migrant nationalities has brought race questions – to some extend neglected in the Dominican Republic – into these women's discourses and are brought back to island when they occasionally visit or return.

[15] A study of 113 such firms found that a key mechanism for capital replenishment was owners' periodic trips abroad to encourage new potential immigrant investors and expand their market, as in the case of construction, real estate, garment, and processed food firms.
[16] M.P. Smith (2001:191) reports that transnational political participation is a two-way process. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani apparently made regular trips to Santo Domingo to campaign for re-election.

Peruvian Migration

Every year, some 350,000 Peruvians leave their country, of whom 80,000 remain abroad. More than 1 million Peruvians lived abroad in the early 1990s (Altamirano 1992) and their numbers have increased ever since, to 1,480,000 in 1996 (Altamirano 1996) and an estimated 2 million or 8 percent of the population in 2000 (Peru Solidarity Forum 2000). Like with Colombian and Dominican migration, estimates are difficult, however, due to the undocumented nature of much of this migration.[17] Peruvian migration to the US goes back to the 1980s when the civil war between Sendero Luminoso (and to a lesser extent the Tupac Amaro Revolutionary Movement) and the Peruvian Armed Forces peaked, but escalated during the 1990s due to a deepening economic crisis following the effects of structural adjustments (the Fuji-shock) as well as continued political violence (Sørensen 2002; Stepputat and Sørensen 2000). It now involves sites of destinations in most parts of the world, with various European countries coming second to the United States. The presence of Peruvians in Europe, especially in Spain and Italy, is not entirely new. During the 1950s and 60s it was mostly the sons of Lima's middle and upper class families who travelled to Spain to study medicine and law at the country's universities. Since the late 1980s, however, the migration flow has been dominated by lower class women from Peru's urban barrios (mostly in Lima and the northern coast towns such as Trujillo but also highland towns such as Huancayo) who migrate in search of work (Paerregaard 2002; Tamagno 2002). In the late 1980s and early 90s many of these female immigrants began to compete over the positions that Moroccan, Philippine, Cape Verdian and Portuguese workers previously occupied as domestic servants in Spanish and Italian upper class families. More recently this immigration has been fuelled by an urgent need for imported female workers to replace middle class women who increasingly take work outside the home. In effect, Peruvians now constitute the second largest immigrant group in Spain. Together with Dominican migrants they are often 'preferred to other foreigners because they often have training or knowledge of the health professions, they behave respectfully toward the elderly and they have Spanish language skills' (Escrivá 2000).

Drawing on data dealing with Peruvian migration to the US, Spain and Japan, Paerregaard (2002) illustrates the huge span of transnational experiences in the Peruvian diaspora. At the same time he warns against understanding transnationalism as a recent phenomenon and shows how contemporary Peruvian migration often are extensions of existing rural-urban migrant networks or inversions of former international migration processes. Patron-client relationships, legitimized and reinforced by migrants' own rural-urban networks and kinship and marriage bonds, still play a crucial role as mechanisms in migrant recruitment. In all three destinations, migrants also tend to reproduce former hierarchical relations in their

[17] Including undocumented migration, the numbers may double.

search for new transnational ways of making a living. 'Maintenance' is also a central finding in Tamagno's study of Peruvian domestics in Italy (Tamagno 2002). Interestingly, Tamagno shows that distance (the longer geographical distance between a highland community and Europe than between a highland community and the jungle or the coast) seems to have strengthened family bonds between migrants and relatives left behind. Even more interestingly, her study shows how the recent violent and poverty ridden times in Peru have altered women's roles. Women have both assumed the role of heads of households and developed practices to ensure their family's subsistence, including transnational migration.

Similarities and Differences in Transnational Experiences

The historical development of mass migration from Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Peru gives evidence of a growing complexity of migration (Van Hear 1998). This complexity manifests itself in the fact that old destinations are substituted with new ones, more ore less settled groups of earlier 'economic' migrants are joined by relatives fleeing political unrest or upsurge in violent conflict (Colombia and Peru), or, as in the case of the Dominican Republic, political refugee-migration become the bridgehead for later 'economic migration. The complexity goes hand in hand with class diversification of the major migration streams, informalization (increasing numbers travel and work in undocumented ways), and feminization (a majority of Latin American migrants in Europe are women).

Historical development of mass migration from selected Latin American countries

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000-
Colombia	Economic migration of upper class and professionals to US	Economic migration of middle and working class migrants to US	Only Latin American country not experiencing negative growth rates	Political crisis Increase in middle class migration to US and Europe	Political crisis not ended
Dominican Republic	Political crisis Expatriates building bridgeheads	Migration of middle class	Economic crisis Peak of US migration Migration to other LA countries	Lower class migration Feminization Peak Europe-bound migration	Consolidation of US-based community
Peru	Middle and upper class migration to US (and Europe)	Beginning working class migration to US	Political crisis (civil war) Thousands expatriated	Economic Crisis (Fuji chock) End of political crisis Migration to other LA countries and Europe Feminization	Fall of Fujimori Political crisis Return of economic instability

Over the years, transnational fields of actions - or networks of relations between individuals and institutions - have developed between Latin American migrants and their countries of origin. Patterns observed in US-bound transnational networks have shown that the type, frequency, and scope of transnational action are strongly associated with the class position (i.e. occupation, education, income) and gender of the migrant. Specifically, well-to-do male migrants tend to control the leadership of transnational migrant associations, to be the most potentially active, and the most successful cross-border entrepreneurs (Portes and Guarnizo 1991; Guarnizo 2000). Part of the research focusing on migrant entrepreneurs have led to a tendency of using 'transnational' to refer to 'the growing number of people who have the freedom, legally and economically, to move across borders and between cultures, doing business on their way' (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000: 2). Less attention has been given to the less well-off migrants.

Are there any grounds for thinking that transnational practices connecting the Colombian, Dominican or Peruvian homelands with the Europe would differ in any way? Rogers (2000) points to two overarching differences related to the countries of reception. 1) There are important demographic differences in the European Union

and the US: Even at the current level, the EU will not replace either its total population or its working age population in the foreseeable future, whereas the US will continue to grow (6). 2) In Europe, migration has been affected by geopolitical development such as the collapse of the USSR and the further integration of the European Union. These processes have no obvious correlates in the Americas. He then goes on to suggest that the (western) European variant of transnationalism contains two varieties: one very much like the economically driven transnational migration described by the 'ethnic entrepreneur literature which also extends to social and political connections of various kinds (e.g. various Portes and Guarnizo studies referred to in the first part of this paper); and another variant more peculiar to the European Union. The second variety contains both supra-nationalism within the Union as well as transnational practices developed by non-EU nationals living within the Union. Such practices are both driven 'underground' by restrictive migration policies and targeted for interventions such as bilateral joint ventures between migrant communities and their homelands and multilateral actions to coordinate action around border controls and development aid - and reallocation of European aid to migrant-producing countries and regions, including the so called 'neighbouring countries' (Sørensen et al 2002).

I would like to approach the question from a slightly different angle by suggesting that politically constructed state policies, legitimating discourses and institutional practices are key elements through which transnational engagement, activities, and migratory practices are constituted.

Empirical evidence from Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Peru suggests that long term transnational relations are more likely to occur, and to be encouraged by sending states, when large numbers migrate. They are also easier to sustain, when large concentrations of migrants from one sending country city or region live near one another in the receiving country (Levitt 2001: 16). Within the last ten years, all three sending states have taken steps to reinforce their links with their diasporas. Dual citizenship rights were approved by Colombia in 1991, by Peru in 1994, and by the Dominican Republic in 1996. Provision for representation in the national congress of nationals living abroad has been made by Colombia and is discussed in the Dominican Republic. Peru and the Dominican Republic allow nationals to vote for presidential elections from abroad (see R.C. Smith 2001: 134).

In Latin America, however, the state is not synonymous with efficiency, formality or equality to all citizens across ethnic/racial and class divides. Apart from widespread public discourses linking the state or the public sector to inefficiency and corruption (which may have motivated people to migrate in the first place), migrants from different social classes have also experienced differences in their respective states' eagerness to 'reach out' for them. Well established transnational entrepreneurs in the

US are more likely to be approached than domestic workers in Europe. Light skinned representatives of professional associations abroad are more likely to be chosen as 'ambassadors' or political lobbyists than darker skinned clandestine migrants. The 'geography of power' or 'unequal power distribution' referred to by Gardner (1995) and Massey (1994) should therefore be extended to the analysis of sending states' transnational practices.

As regards the policies of the receiving states, a growing number of undocumented migrants' experiences of 'illegality' stand in stark contrast to the widespread 'informality' of Latin American countries. The 'indifference' and 'non-presence' of the Latin American state *vis a vis* marginalized populations makes their migration easier due to the fact that they are more or less accustomed to situations of semi-legality (living *in* squatter settlements, *off* informal small enterprises, *by* informal networks) where the informal takes predominance over the legal. As recently argued by Myrian Carbajal (2000), Latin American informality nevertheless contrasts starkly with European illegality. Whereas the concept of informality has a positive or neutral connotation in the Latin American context, the experience of illegality in Europe surprises the migrant. In contrast to Latin American states, as well as the US's relatively more 'open' attitude towards immigrants, European states enjoy a very solid national imagination and exert strict control in relation to foreigners. The US is increasingly a bilingual nation in which it is more usual to hear Spanish on the streets than English in some of the major cities (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000: 12). This is definitely the experience of the bulk of Latin American migrants I have interviewed in Europe. Apart from the fact that many ended up in Europe because they could not get a visa to the US – that is, they had to compromise with a 'second-class' migration destination – many also have the impression that it is easier to get along, using informal networks to access informal labour markets, in the US than in Europe. As one Dominican informant interviewed in Madrid put it:

> 'I don't know the United States very well but I think that the immigrants have more opportunities there, even though it has become a bit complicated there as well. They allow you to do certain things, even in an illegal manner, because the law protects you ... so the government in some ways turn a blind eye to what the immigrants are doing and allow these kinds of things ... My older brother is a dentist and he uses the skills he brought to the United States, but illegally. I am a medical doctor but in Spain they only allow me to work as a domestic.' (For a full account, see Sørensen 1999a).

It therefore seems that US- and Europe-bound transnational migration is embedded in different regional contexts and produces different migratory circumstances. If we take the contextual circumstances to include immigration regime, local contexts of opportunities and constraints as well as reception of migrants; migratory circumstances to include migrants' legal status, class, race and gender, mode of

labour incorporation and level of organization of co-national community, the following differences seems likely:

- European and U.S. immigration regimes are different: Although restricted, the U.S. has allowed continued immigration. Apart from family reunification, most European countries have been virtually closed to legal migration since the early 1970s. The new migrants in Europe are asylum seekers and refugees whose potential (or existing) transnational practices are likely to be viewed as at odds with their refugee status.
- Growing anti-immigrant feelings severely restrict migrants' integration into European countries. While the European Union, at the supra-national level, may grant rights to non-residents, be more tolerant to ethnic diversity, and offer incentives to those who organize themselves transnationally (see Levitt 2001), the fact is that the governments of more and more individual member countries have chosen to comply with the electorates' growing anti-immigrant feelings by severely constraining migrants' opportunities *vis a vis* the native populations.
- Legal status affects migrant incorporation and conditions under which to carry out transnational practices in both Europe and the U.S.. Notions of informality, clandestinity and illegality nevertheless seem to differ to have different connotations on the two continents. Migration and labor market policies – or at lest the compliance with them - seem to be more discriminatory in Europe than in the U.S..
- The class, race and gender composition of Latin American migrants in the U.S. and Europe seem to vary. Apart from the relatively few Latin American upper- and middle class migrants in Europe (for a different case, see Machado, this volume), the bulk of the new migrants apparently come from lower class and to some extent racially marginalized layers in their own societies (e.g. Andean peasants, darker skinned Dominicans from the areas bordering Haiti). Many would have preferred going to the U.S. had they had access to transnational networks there. Lack of access to such networks has determined their 'choice' of alternative destinations in Europe. The skewed sex composition of Latin American migrants in Europe – who in most European countries are predominantly female – coupled with these migrants confinement to the domestic sector, most certainly influences the types of transnational organization and action people are able to undertake.

Conclusion

Latin American migrants are located at the intersection of their country of origin and countries of destination, as they are economic, political and social actors and subjects in all the locales involved. Any inquiry into their transnational practices therefore requires us to look beyond the simple interaction between particular countries of origin and destination (e.g. transnational relations generated by U.S. based migrant entrepreneurs and specific urban areas in Latin America or transnational practices between domestic workers in Europe and specific rural areas back home), and delve into wider migratory networks. The specific locales of origin and destination provides heterogeneous contexts that need to be taken into account, for their particular conditions may result more influential in shaping transnational processes, than the national ones alone.

Latin American transnationalism has been widely documented and established itself as an'academic field of investigation'. However, the 'institutionalization' of concepts and theories has also led to criticism, not least from within the migrant communities. Critical voices from the newly established Dominican Studies Institute at New York City College have recently pointed to some limitations in the transnational perspective. Those of us who for years have described and analysed Latin American transnational experiences are criticised for having focused too much attention to the 'success histories', e.g. the well functioning networks, ethnic businesses and political participation of the middle classes. The criticism goes that even after 40 years of extensive migration to New York City, Dominicans (as a group) are still among the worst off migrant groups in the city (Hernandez and Rivera Batiz 1997). Many still live beneath the poverty line. The undocumented statuses of others prevent them from improving their livelihood conditions, let alone participate politically in the U.S. as well as their home countries. To the extent that transnationalism develops among these migrants, this orientation is seen as a problem rather than a resource. That the migrants continue to direct their economic and political activities towards their home countries means that they are not incorporated in the countries of destination and continue being 2nd class citizens (Torres Saillant 2001).

That a perspective renders paradoxes visible does not in itself disqualify it – but it does give occasion for theoretical reflection. Despite the potential for contradictions and overlappings, I will argue in favour of an analytical distinction between *transnationalism*, defined as actions and discourses facilitating participation in more than one nation state project, and *transnational practices*, defined as fields of actions carried out across and in defiance of nation state boundaries, which potentially challenge such boundaries but not necessarily transcend them. This perspective may

be further nuanced if we include in our analyses a variety of migrant destinations, e.g. Europe and the U.S., different sending countries, e.g. various Latin American countries, and different regions and these regions' incorporation into international migration streams at different historical junctures. Such a perspective would illuminate the variation in transnational networks as well as variation in the kind of transnational relationships it is possible to sustain from different social positions in different localities.

Transnational social fields contain a myriad of contradictions for both migrants and nation states. These contradictions raise issues only now beginning to be addressed within sociology, issues which need greater attention. Future research should focus more attention to comparative dimensions and regional specificities. European sociologist should pick up the gauntlet and scrutinize the extent to which increasing hostile rhetoric and contexts of reception encourage or discourage migrants' transnational engagement, activities and practices. Another intriguing question to be pursued comparatively is how effective the policies promoting migrants' transnational engagement recently passed by Latin American states are when other countries than the U.S. are taken into account? As my discussion hopefully has indicated, migrants link up with their home countries in many ways: through the livelihood and survival strategies of individuals, households and communities; through large and diverse forms of remittances; and through investments and advocacy by migrant and refugee diasporas and transnational communities that at times link up with policy initiatives of both sending and receiving states. Migration towards the U.S. or Europe, though both transnational in form, results in vastly differing realities. Only comparative research can broaden our understanding of what these differences are all about.

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