Women, Gender and Migration in Europe

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Introduction

This report is intended to provide some background information for the analysis of women migrants' and ethnic minorities strategies against social exclusion. It outlines some of the major trends and patterns related to women's migration to Europe, but it also highlights various theoretical shifts in the study of migration in general and women and gender in particular.

Due to time constraints, this report has to be extremely brief and rudimentary, but I am hoping that it will help to highlight some of the relevant issues and debates. A general discussion of migration patterns and trends within Europe will be followed by a discussion of the interface of gender and migration. I will introduce the concept of 'transnational migration' as a useful analytical tool to understand current migration phenomena. Before concluding this report with a brief exploration about women migrant organizations, I will address some relevant issues related to the debates about citizenship.

Migration Developments in Europe

General Developments and Trends

In the 'age of migration' (Castles & Miller, 1998), Europe has been influenced by the major trends in overall migration patterns: acceleration, diversification, globalization and feminization. In the context of the expansion of capital, shifting employment patterns, technological changes but also ongoing conflicts and wars, a constant flow of both labour migrants and refugees could be noticed. For a long time, labour migration was considered the primary form of migration to Europe (Kofman et al, 2000: 11). Foreign workers in various western European countries represented from 2 to 18 per cent of the total labour force by 1990, the lowest in Denmark and the highest in Switzerland (Soysal, 1994: 24). Today, however, the largest group of migrants in Europe consists of refugees and asylum-seekers.

In the 1990s. a plethora of academic writings on migration trends and patterns in Europe identified a 'new migration', which has often been traced to the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Changes related to economic conditions as well as war and conflict, such as in former Yugoslavia, resulted in millions of refugees, outnumbering any other migration in Europe since the end of the Second World War (Koser & Lutz, 1998: 2). Another factor used to characterize the 'new migration' in Europe is the fact that boundaries between sending and receiving countries have become blurred within Europe (ibid.). Especially noteworthy in this context are southern European countries, like Italy, Spain and Greece that have historically been associated with labour migration to northern European countries, like Germany, for example. However, countries within southern as well as central Europe have been receiving increasing numbers of migrants, seeking asylum and/or labour.

Some commentators argue that the profile of migrants has been changing in the sense of a grater variety of 'migrant types': highly skilled workers, unskilled workers, students, clandestine migrants and asylum seekers. The diversification of 'migrant types' party related to wider processes linked to economic and cultural globalization. Although there have existed interdependencies on a global scale for many centuries, there are a number of factors which have accelerated globalization processes in recent years: the growing significance of multi-national companies, the elimination of national barriers to trade and investment, rapid developments in transportation systems and communication technologies, such as the Internet, satellite television etc. (Phizacklea, 1998: 22).

The rise of global networks of economic and political life have had a profound effect on structures and relationships within the European Union (EU). Some authors have argued that a new flexible and cheap labour force in Europe is reflecting a dynamic relationship between global and local realities (Psimmenos, 2000: 83.). The dynamic and contradictory characteristics of global economic formations are reflected through the presence of both harmonization and liberalization principles of socio-economic activity in the EU (ibid.)

The growing participation of women has also been increasingly noted within more recent academic writings on global migration trends in general and European migration patterns in particular. Women migrants have often entered Europe as part of family re-unification schemes, but more and more women migrate on their own to

work outside their home countries. Female migrants can be found in sectors of the economy which exhibit employment growth, and especially in the service sector. A growing number of female migrants are also being exploited in the entertainment and prostitution industry (Koser & Lutz, 1998: 3).

However, as Koser and Lutz (1898) point out, the term 'new migration' should be used critically. Many aspects of recent migration patterns actually present consistent trends with past patterns. In some ways, the category 'new migration' might be more reflective of new approaches within migration studies than realities on the ground. Social scientists tend to categorise into neatly bounded units what in reality is messy and blurry. The term 'new migration' might also refer to a period in which migration is at the centre of political and popular debates within the media.

Migration has become an increasingly politically sensitive issue and debates about it are often rather polemic and divisive. Many political parties have made migration issues a focus of their political agendas, responding to popular sentiments that perceive migrants as exploiting social welfare and creating unemployment. 'New migrants', particularly asylum seekers have become the target of racist and right wing nationalist movements and activism. But even the mainstream press and political groups of the centre and even the left, use the moral panic about asylum seekers and labour migrants to gain popular backing and votes.

Despite increasingly restrictive regulations, the number of asylum seekers continues to increase. In the early 90s, only about 30 per cent of applicants were granted asylum in Europe (Soysal, 1994). Yet, the majority of those rejected remain in the country of asylum thereby becoming further marginalized and pushed into the sphere of illegality. In this context, many migrants experience various forms of social exclusion, discrimination and racism.

Southern Europe

Over the past decade, there has been a remarkable number of academic, political and journalistic writings about migration in Europe (Koser & Lutz, 1993: 1); yet, the literature on migration in the context of southern Europe is relatively scarce. Traditionally, an area associated with 'out-migration', southern Europe has more recently witnessed a major reversal of historical patterns: Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal and Cyprus have become receivers of relatively large numbers of labour and

forced migrants.[1] Italy, for example, has around one million migrants from diverse origins, including the Maghreb, Dominican Republic and the Philippines. Greece has an estimated half million migrants, half from Albania and the rest a mix from Eastern Europe and Third World countries. It is particularly important to note here that only about 70,000 migrants are legal in Greece (Anthias &Lazaridis, 2000: 2). However, one methodological problem in looking at migrants from a quantitative perspective is the fact that a large number of undocumented migrants are not included in official statistics and only allows for estimates. Despite attempts by Spain and Italy to regularize the state of foreign workers, these have been largely unsuccessful, partly due to a continual demand for unregularized labour (ibid. 3).

The reversal of historical patterns in terms of southern Europe previously being an area of out-migration has been explained in terms of its geographical location, the residual effects of African colonial influences and the inadequacies of methods of surveillance and control of migration used in southern Europe (Lazaridis, 2000: 49). Throughout southern Europe policies aimed at reducing labour market rigidities and enhancing competetiveness have been introduced. This increases the eagerness of employers to hire undocumented workers (ibid.).

The migratory flows of migrants into southern Europe consist of people fleeing their country of origin (such as Kurds and Albanians), and Third world migrants. Many of these migrants have to enter Europe illegally and they often remain undocumented. Other migrants enter on short- term work contracts or in the context of family reunification (ibid. 4). For undocumented migrants, the only possibility of work is within the informal economy, which is relatively large in southern European countries.[2] The informal sector refers to economic activities outside the legally registered formal production methods and money flows. It can take many forms ranging from underground activities to unpaid labour within a family. Clientelism facilitates the informal sector and makes labour migrants highly dependent and vulnerable to those pulling the strings. Women are also facing a highly gendered labour market, which, in practice means exploitation and even abuse working as cleaners, entertainers, nurses and sex workers.

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[1] For a detailed analysis and statistical evidence see, for example, King & Black (eds.) (1997) *Southern Europe and New Immigrations*, and Anthias & Lazaridis (eds.) (1999) *Into the Margins: Migration and Exclusion in Southern Europe.*

[2] In Greece, for example, the informal sector accounts for about 35% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and about 25 % in Italy (Iosefides 1997: 82).

Gender and Migration

Significance of Women Migrants

Until a few years ago, the interface between gender and migration was a seriously neglected area amongst both academic researchers and policy-makers. Despite the fact that much progress has been made with respect to the study of gender and migration, many questions and issues remain unanswered and need to be further explored. Overall, there has been a bias on the economic aspects of labour migration often reproducing a public/private dichotomy of husband, sphere of production waged labour versus wife, sphere of reproduction and domestic labour (Boyle & Halfacree, 1999: 1-2). Less explored are issues related to citizenship, social exclusion/inclusion and political as well as every-day strategies of female and male migrants.

The number of women migrants has grown rapidly during the past two decades. Of the 15-16 million third country nationals living in Europe, about 45% are women (Kofman et al, 2000: 1). In the post-war period, men had formed the majority of immigrants to Europe, being involved in reconstruction and fulfilling the needs of the expanding economies and labour markets. Family reunification has been the major point of entry for women migrants until recently. However, these past years more and more women have migrated independently, for economic reasons, as students or as refugees.

The significance of women in migration to Europe does not only relate to the growth in numbers, but also to their increasing contributions to economic and social life in receiving countries. Unlike the earlier literature on labour migration that tended to stress either 'push' or 'pull' factors, the 'new migration' of women has mainly been analysed in a global perspective. Aside from changes related to economic crises as well as war and conflict within the countries of origin, the changing labour markets within Europe need to be taken into account. According to Kofman et al (2000):

> The primary shift in labour demand through most of the industrialized world has been from industrial to service sector. These service sector jobs occur in gendered niches, where labour recruitment is influenced by the sexual division of labour. Women dominate some of these shortage sectors where local populations are unable to meet labour requirements such as domestic work, nursing and teaching. Thus, there has been an

increase in women migrants in particular sectors of the labour market (p. 7).

Anderson's work on female migrants in Europe (1993, 1996) gives evidence to the large scale demand for migrant domestic workers. A large number of these migrants remain undocumented and therefore, totally at the mercy of their employers. Many countries in Europe have introduced legal measures to regularize domestic work and domestic workers. In Spain, for example, there is an annual quota of migrant domestic workers of around 9000 (Phizacklea, 1998:33)

The role of migrant women as domestic workers constitutes one of the main forms and characteristics of the feminization of migration flows to Europe. In Spain and Greece domestic work is the largest area of employment for migrant women, while nearly a third of the work permits issues in Italy in 1995, were issued to domestic workers (Anderson and Phizacklea, 1997). It becomes obvious that processes related to women's liberation and emancipation are linked to the increased need for domestic workers. As Macklin points out for the context of the US: 'the grim truth is that some women's access to the high-paying, high-status professions is being facilitated through the revival of semi-indentured servitude. Put another way, one woman is exercising class and citizenship privilege to buy her way out of sex oppression' (Macklin, 1994: 4).

The problem might not necessarily be the need for domestic work *per se*, but the legal and social circumstances in which this need arises. Many women migrants remain totally at the mercy of their employers if they do not have immigration status. It is important to point out that another sector dominated by women migrants all over Europe, but particularly in southern Europe, is the sex-related sector. Here exploitation and abuse are particularly rife in a context of undocumented migration.

Transnational Migration and Gender

In recent years, there has been a growing body of literature focusing on transnational migration, moving away from the earlier paradigms of international migration (Al-Ali & Koser, 2000). A focus on 'transnational communities' has been widely heralded as an important new approach to international migration. More traditional approaches have tended to conceive international migrants as exceptions from the norm. Attention has been divided broadly between the process of migration - emphasising the

importance of geographical movement across international borders, and the product of migration - emphasising the impacts of migrants on societies in which they settle. In contrast, the transnational communities approach conceives of international migrants not as anomalies, but rather as representative of an increasingly globalised world. It has refocused attention on the utilisation by international migrants of modes of telecommunication and transport; their pooling of resources and successful exploitation of global markets, and their association with new social forms, political challenges and cultural resources generated by linkages across several geographical locations (ibid:3).

As well as uncovering some of the 'hidden' aspects of many migrants' lives, this change of emphasis also has conceptual implications. One example concerns the distinction between labour migrants and refugees. Traditionally, this distinction has been sharp, as labour migrants have been conceived as representing the economic aspect of international migration, and refugees the political aspect. This distinction has rested largely on the different motivations of each migrant to leave their home country – it is often also depicted in terms of a contrast between voluntary and involuntary migration. In contrast, transnational perspectives remove the focus from motivations for migration. They may be important in determining the extent to which a migrant develops a transnational identity or engages in transnational activities, but no ore important than any other number of important factors, such as gender, class or race. Arguably, a transnational perspective allows us to investigate whether there are any empirical differences between labour migrants and refugees, without assuming form the outset a conceptual difference (ibid.).

Despite these positive elements, transnational approaches to the study of contemporary migration have often failed to see how transnationalism itself is not a neutral space. The ways in which gender intervenes in differentiating and shaping projects, desires, practices and possibilities of movements has been generally overlooked. Indeed, migrant women and men enjoy qualitatively distinct experiences of membership in the country of immigration, as well as embodying different experiences of citizenship in their countries of origin. With few exceptions, analyses of transnationalism lack a theorisation that sheds light on gender factors and on the relations between gender, structure and agency in accounting for transnational movements. Transnational scholars, indeed, have privileged a focus on migrants' participation in nation building processes and on their political involvement across

countries, spheres in which migrant women's agency is usually quite invisible. The analysis of transnational political formations, moreover, provides a rather specific and restricted picture of transnationalism (Al-Ali & Salih, 2002).

An analysis of transnationalism should be able to show the ways in which both the gendered concept of citizenship women embody and the status they are accorded to in the host country forge or impede their movements across states. A gendered approach reveals that migrant women are not incorporated in their national political community as are the Caribbean and Filipinos described by Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc (1994) and the Dominicans analysed by Guarnizo (1994). The conditions for moving transnationally are not always available to women, or are limited or framed within a set of normative and cultural gendered rules[3]. Women's activities are also conditioned by a set of normative and cultural regulations based upon hegemonic interpretations of gender roles within both their country of settlement and that of origin. These regulations condition their activities, their identities and their likelihood of either moving across countries or staying put. For example, women are assigned duties and responsibilities in the reproductive spheres, which they are expected to carry out transnationally. Yet, the obstacles posed by social customs and normative rules might prevent them from keeping up links with what is perceived to be "back home" (Salih, 2003).

In this context, we need to grasp the concurrent action of economic changes, cultural and normative regulations, and individual strategies in understanding both migration and the gendered nature of transnational movements (see Salih, 2002a,b and Salih, 2003). For example, among the Moroccan migrant women in Italy interviewed by Salih (2003), the feeling of conducting precarious lives in the host country is a recurrent theme. For some women, migration is not an option since their migration and/or the potential to move transnationally is conditioned by hegemonic normative structures, which they have internalised. Whereas some women have partly challenged these structures, other women are not in a position to counteract the normative and socio-cultural rules they are expected to observe.

The emphasis on women's reproductive roles is often at the core of recurrent narratives on the advantages of migration displayed by politicians and demographers

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[3] For example, referring to the Middle East, Joseph has argued that women '….are recognised and addressed as citizens in the context of their positions within patriarchal structures, as subordinate mothers, wives, children or siblings' (1996:7).

in Europe[4]. Italy is a case in point. According to Salih, (2003), this discourse perceives demographic decline as a major risk for the future of the national economy and the welfare system. Politicians, economists and demographers have started to maintain that migrant families and their higher fertility rates with respect to Italian families are, and will continue to be, a major resource for the country[5]. The ageing of the Italian population constitutes a serious problem since, it is argued, older people consume less and cost the state more. Moreover, as mentioned above, demographers maintain that within 20 years or so, the demand for labour will not be covered by Italian nationals. This argument relies heavily on the fertility rates of migrant women who are expected to reproduce the labour force for the national economy and represents a shift with respect to the trend in Europe up to the 1970s when, to contain the public costs of maintenance of inactive members, it was encouraged the temporary migration of single males with a project of return (Morokvasic 1991). Secondly, the insistence on migrant families' productive and reproductive roles as resources for the economy and demography of the country suggests that, despite populist campaigns advocating the "control" of migration, to cope with the contradictions caused by globalising trends the state is urged to operate together with economic interests, requiring immigrants' labour force.[6]

It becomes obvious that narratives and experiences of transnational migration and of social and cultural changes under globalisation vary according to gender, economic possibilities and legal circumstances, and to the configurations and interplay of these factors in individuals' lives. In the case of Moroccan migrant women, it is not only the material conditions, but also the precarious nature of their status as migrants as well as the cultural and social roles attributed to them in both the society of origin and that of settlement, that impinge upon their socio-economic strategies and the construction of their social personhood within a transnational field (Salih, 2003)

Moroccan women's transnational practices in Italy differ from some accounts of transnationalism, especially in the literature produced in the United States. The latter offers images of Ticanuenses migrants who fly back to their home village in Mexico to discuss investments at week-ends and are back to their workplace in the US

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[4] See the Ocse report 1998 on ' Trends on International Migration'.
[5] See 'La Repubblica, 19 June 1998; 'Il Sole 24-Ore', 5 October 1998; 'La Repubblica' 17 January 1999.
[6] For a more detailed analysis, see Salih (2003) *Gender in Transnationalism: Home, Longing and Belonging among Moroccan Migrant Women.*

on Monday (Smith 1998), or of dual citizens, Dominican-Americans, who participate in the political life of their home country while residing in the United States (Guarnizo 1994).

Refugees, gender relations and transnationalism

There are many parallels between labour migrants and refugees with respect to gender- specific potentials of and limitations to transnationalism. In fact, a transnational approach to labour and forced migration challenges a rigid distinction between these categories. However, some factors might be added to a general gendered approach to transnational migration. Most notably, experiences during a war, losses and trauma as well as specific circumstances of flight might account for additional restrictions and limitations to the engagement in transnational practices and activities.

The pattern of wives feeling more isolated than their husbands and trying to compensate by having contact with friends and family was widespread among many Bosnian and Iraqi refugee couples I interviewed. On several occasions, I spoke to women who had been professionals in their 'home country' and found themselves stuck at home upon arrival in the receiving country. Several women described a vicious circle of being initially in shock (due to war, circumstances of flight and the separation from family and friends), insecurities related to language barriers and perceived strangeness of physical and cultural surroundings and a sense of feeling isolated.

In other cases, women proved to be more resourceful and adaptable while their husbands appeared to suffer from greater levels of isolation, loneliness and the sense of "living in limbo". This was particularly true for several Bosnian women in the Netherlands who reported that it had been much easier for them to find work than it had been for their husbands. Despite the fact that most jobs were not related to their actual professions - many Bosnian women refugees work as cleaners or nannies - they stressed that their work enabled them to leave the house, improve their language skills, get in contact with the local population and gain some financial independence and decision-making power (Al-Ali, 2002).

It comes to no surprise that many refugee women who *were* someone in their 'home country', either in terms of profession, public office or family background, think about the past with a great sense of loss and regret. Just like refugee men,

professional women suffer from lack of self-esteem and sense of frustration since, aside from all other losses, they are unable to practice their previous professions. However, some Bosnians and a small number of Iraqi women and men who were interviewed stressed their sense of new opportunities despite their hardships and losses. This was particularly true for refugees in the age group between 20-30 who might be able to acquire the kind of education or training they would not have been able to receive in their country of origin.

Similarly to the contrasting experiences of changing gender relations for women refugees, refugee men also express a broad range of attitudes and perceptions. For the majority, being a refugee has meant a break with their traditional roles as head of households and main breadwinners. Being dependent on income support or engaging in low-paid wage work different from their actual professions is often experienced as a loss in identity and "manhood". The alleged emotional attachment and commitment to a home country, like Bosnia, for example, sometimes appears to fill in the gaps within the domain of identity previously occupied by a range of factors including profession, family ties, local origins etc. In other words, ethnic, national and political identities become especially significant in light of the loss of other identifiers, traditionally associated with the "male sphere" (ibid.)

This is not to fall into the trap of reproducing a strictly defined public vs. private sphere supposedly categorising male and female domains. Refugee women also experience a great loss of identity and self-esteem when loosing their work and not being able to practise their professions. However, as has been widely demonstrated in numerous case studies, women tend to be less conscious of status deprivation because of their responsibility for maintaining household routines (Buijis, 1993: 5). Maybe even more importantly, "the home as an everyday, tangible and 'natural' conceptual unit", as Wenona Giles argues in the context of nationalist ideologies, "is frequently mapped into the intangible abstractions of nation and state" (1999: 85).

But refugee men cannot be merely characterised by their sense of loss and their sense of national belonging. In fact, many husbands living with their families abroad are much more concerned with their immediate family than political or cultural questions. Some men profess that they enjoy the time they spend with their children and are much more involved in child-care and household chores.

Acknowledging that women could gain or loose status depending on the specific migration context and cultural background (Buijis, 1993: 8), the prevailing literature appears to group migrant and refugee women in either category: those who have gained in status and importance within the family due to new economic and social responsibilities and those whose role in the family has been undermined (ibid.: 8-9). However, as findings in the context of Bosnian refugee families as well as Moroccan migrant women, gender relations and family dynamics have shifted in various directions, accounting for, empowerment and increased opportunities, as well as impediment and loss among migrant and refugee women. It should be stressed here that gender relations should not be equated with women *per se*, rather the power relations between men and women as well as the underlying notions of femininity and masculinity.

De territorialised nation-states, multiculturalism and transnationalism

Is has been argued that transnationalism questions the classical conceptualisations on which the nation-state is based. Modern citizenship is challenged in so far as transnational and international organisations and universalistic appeal to human rights constitute new arenas wherein rights are increasingly demanded and membership defined. In this context, nationality and citizenship are increasingly dis/associated, challenging the presumed principle that to be citizen one should also be a national of the country in which she or he resides. Yet, as shown in numerous studies, nation-states are far from disappearing and play crucial roles in forging and creating transnational political and economic fields (Salih, 2003).

According to Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc (1994), a new element which differentiates current transmigrants from old migrants is the extent to which the former increasingly participate in the political and social lives of two nation-states. 'Transnational social fields' are forged by and are embedded within hegemonic nation building processes taking place within and across nation-states, i.e. the state of residence and that of origin , the latter assuming the form of 'deterritorialised nation-states'. The deterritorialised nation-state is one that '….stretches beyond its geographic boundaries' and in which '.…the nation's people may live anywhere in the world and still not live outside the state. By this logic, there is no longer a diaspora because wherever its people go, their state goes too.' (1994: 269). As a matter of fact, as we shall see, nowadays several sending states are encouraging dual membership

and promoting transnational links (Salih, 2003).

It might be useful to draw a distinction between transnational activities - which can be observed and measured - and transnational capabilities, which encompass the willingness and ability of migrant groups to engage in activities that transcend national borders. Transnational activities can be classified in a variety of ways. They may include activities that are political (e.g. lobbying), economic (e.g. remittances and investment), social (e.g. promotion of the human and other rights of the transnational group within different societies) and cultural (e.g. articles in newspapers). They may take place at the individual level (e.g. through family networks), or via institutional channels (e.g. through community or international organisations). Taking the case of refugee or exile groups, while directly transnational activities might be focused on the home country, indirectly transnational activities might also include the application of pressure on the host government or international organisations for change in the home country, or indeed the promotion of the rights of the exile community itself (Al-Ali, Koser et al, 2001: 581).

At the same time, however, it is important to focus on the capabilities of migrant or exile groups to participate in activities that transcend national borders. A definition of capabilities includes the extent to which individuals and communities identify with the social, economic or political processes in their home countries, which is a prerequisite for them to engage in transnational activities (ibid. 581-2). At a more practical level, the capability of individuals, families and communities to become involved may depend on the skills and resources available to them, which in turn is influenced by factors such as length of time and opportunity structures in their countries of destination. Capabilities also centre upon the internal organisation of migrant or exile communities, and the level of motivation to maintain group solidarity. A specific area of interest is the extent to which communities in different host countries collaborate and mobilise for a common purpose, or even identify with that purpose (ibid).

A crucial structural framework within which migrants' transnational strategies are forged and within which they should be analytically contextualised relates to the politics of "integration" in the country where migrants reside, notably in the form of respect for cultural difference, rights to citizenship and to resource redistribution. For example, there is evidence to suggest that states of settlements are developing new kinds of multicultural agendas, which aims are to encourage and foster, among first

and second generation migrants, affiliations and identification with the country of origin. Migrants, as a matter of fact, are seen as viable tools in the reorganisation of capital and are crucial to reach out new markets. (see Glick-Schiller, 1999).

The ways in which migrant women and men are perceived and constructed in the national domains, and the legal, socio-economic and political tools that the state enacts to deal with their presence at the national and local levels are therefore important sites to investigate in order to highlight the qualitative difference between the transnationalism of different social groups (Salih, 2003).

A careful analysis of transnational practices should also interrogate the gendered ways in which national norms construct migrants as temporary, seasonal or illegal and unsteady workers, and, more broadly, the ways in which migrants and refugees are incorporated or excluded within their society of settlement and unfold the ways in which these conditions limit or forge transnational practices and mobility. For instance, whereas some migrants might develop transnational practices by virtue of their double citizenship, that allows them a degree of mobility and political participation between and within two countries, other migrants, are either limited or impeded from maintaining relations with their country of origin. Recently in Italy, with the coming into power of the right wing coalition leaded by Berlusconi, changes to immigration laws have been proposed which aims are to transform even long-term settled migrants into flexibile, undocumented and cash in hand workers, whose resident permit could be withdrawn in case of unemployment (Salih, 2003).

In the case of Bosnian refugees, developments in post-Dayton Bosnia as well as factors within their current country of residence shape refugees' shifting strategies and practices. A sense of political and economic security within the respective country of refuge can give rise to the confidence needed to create and maintain transnational links between households and families. The sense of security or anxiety, which arises in relation to the question of legal status of refugees plays a very big role in creating or hindering the space from which transnational practises can occur. As long as refugees are not certain about their legal status, that is their right to reside permanently in the country of refuge, they will tend to avoid anything that might jeopardise their status. In this context, it became clear that prior to recent political debates about sending Bosnians back, the Netherlands provided more secure legal conditions than the UK, thereby creating a more conducive space from which transnational practices could occur.

States of origin seem also to be more and more interested in pursuing "diasporic" policies (Smith, 1999) to foster the sense of belonging among their nationals abroad and are increasingly allowing dual nationality or dual citizenship. The crucial role of 'sending states' in forging and creating transnational political and economic fields often reflect their increasing dependency on migrants' remittances. In a world characterised by global economic restructuring, migrants' investments are essential for the viability of the sending countries' economies (Guarnizo and M.P.Smith, 1998). This is certainly the case for a country such as Morocco, overwhelmed by IMF structural adjustment policies, where the remittances of Moroccan emigrants come before the phosphate and tourist industries in the national balance of payments (Ben Ali, 1991; Bencherifa et al, 1992).

Migration and the promotion and institutionalisation of transnationalism as a key character of the lives of migrants could be seen both as a strategy of the sending states to lighten the heavy economic problems these countries have been facing and as a way to promote the sending countries' interests in Europe (Glick-Schiller, 1999). However, sending states' attitude of promoting transnational migration may be subject to heavy criticism since it is seen as reinforcing the dependence of these countries on Europe (Belguendouz, 1987).

Debates around Citizenship

The notion of citizenship has been contested historically, but debates have gained new dimensions in the European context of immigration and attempts to harmonise legal frameworks for migrants (Brubaker, 1998: 131). Debates about citizenship are related to debates about what is means, and what it ought to mean to belong to a nation-state. On one level, the nation state represents a particular way of organizing and experiencing political membership. On another level, the nation state represents an idea and, maybe more importantly, an ideal (ibid. 132).

Membership of the nation-state, according to the ideal-typical model derived from the French Revolution, should be egalitarian and democratic. At the same time, uniqueness and sacredness emerged as normative values with respect to national membership. The obvious ambiguities and contradictions reflected in the ideal of the nation state have translated into various political and legal models concerning

admission to citizenship. Within Europe, France and Germany are example of two very different approaches to citizenship and nationhood: The French state tends to formally recognize and guarantee the permanent membership of migrants to France by granting them citizenship and thereby full civil, political, and social rights., while only a small fraction of non-German immigrants to Germany will be able to obtain German citizenship.

There exists an obvious disparity between the national citizenship model and the membership of post-war migrants in European 'host countries' (Soysal, 1998: 190). Some commentators have made the case for a differentiated or multi-tier citizenship. Thomas Hammar (1986, 1990), for instance, argues that foreigners who are long-term residents of European states, and who possess substantial rights and privileges, should be given a new classification. He suggests the term *denizen.* Heisler and Heisler (1990) attribute the emergence of the denizenship status to the existence of a "mature" welfare state. They suggest that the elaborate redistribution machinery and the "ethos of equality" of the welfare state have led to the widening of the scope of citizenship in European societies (Soysal, 1998: 191). The denizenship model depicts changes in citizenship as an expansion of scope on a territorial basis: denizens acquire certain membership rights by virtue of living and working in host countries.

Other authors, such as Soysal (1994, 1998), argue for a different approach to citizenship based on "post-national" membership. As opposed to classic territorial based and nation-state bounded models, the post-national model assumes that boundaries of membership are fluid. It enables citizens to have a multiplicity of membership and takes transnational social fields and activities into account. Soysal argues that the importance of formal citizenship status has become diminished in light of the fact that non-citizens *de facto* have gained access to a wide range of social rights (Kofman et al, 2000:134). However, I concur with Kofman et al, who argue that formal citizenship status remains of crucial importance.

Gender, migration and the welfare state

The discussion about citizenship, migration and gender is closely linked to the development of welfare states in post-war Europe. Ideologically, welfare regimes are intrinsically linked to the notion of rights based on citizenship, which in turn has been equated with the membership to the national community. Implied in this notion is the fact that 'outsiders' - those not perceived as belonging to the national community -

are excluded with respect t social, economic and political rights (Kofman et al, 2000: 134).Although, migrants have been incorporated into aspects of social citizenship in a variety of ways in different European countries, women migrants are often particularly marginalized, as ethnic minorities, as people without formal citizenship rights and as women. It is not only formal and legal restrictions that might restrict women migrants' access to welfare services, often access is denied, restricted or impeded through institutional and/or individual discriminatory practices. Lack of knowledge about their social rights as well as problems concerning language and institutional know-how also restrict migrant women's access to welfare services. Paradoxically, migrant women themselves have played a significant role in upholding mainstream welfare services, especially in nursing, cleaning and catering. The use of migrant labour in the formal welfare services has been prominent in former colonial states, particularly Britain with respect to teaching, nursing and social work (Kofman et al, 2000: 149-150).

With respect to the fact that migrants have had problems to access mainstream services themselves, they have been forced to provide for their own welfare needs through the family and wider social networks, and through voluntary and community organizations(ibid.: 144) . The gap between the needs of migrant groups for welfare provision and the actual entitlements or ability to access has been addressed by migrant groups, trying to provide services for their own communities. Women play a particularly important role in these service-oriented groups, both as providers and as clients.

Women Migrant Organizations

Despite the fact that women migrants face a series of obstacles on the way of social inclusion, they should not be merely described as passive victims of discriminatory practices. Historically and in contemporary times, women migrants and women of ethnic minority background have challenged prevailing practices and notions linked to social and political exclusion. All over Europe, there has been an increase in women's organisations of refugees, asylum seekers, labour migrants and ethnic minorities. These women's groups might have links with local and/or national women's movements, but often these relationships, if existent, are characterized by unequal power relationships and political tensions. Some groups and organisations are linked

transnationally with organisations of women with similar background in other receiving countries or their countries of origin.

   Of crucial importance in both service-oriented organizations and groups focussing on political lobbying – although in reality these boundaries are blurred and many organisations engage in both – are so-called 'mediators'. Women who are more 'settled' or more secure in terms of legal status, language skills and economic conditions often emerge as advocates to the larger community. Some women are able to use their professional qualifications ands skills as doctors, teachers, interpreters etc and become service providers themselves. Others mediate between the respective community and mainstream welfare services. In some countries, such as Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherland   s, mediators have become more formalized and officially recognized by the respective states (Kofman et al, 2000: 159).

Political Activities

Many women migrants face exclusion from formal political processes in both their countries of origin as well as their country of residence. They often endure discrimination and oppression due to patriarchal social and political systems both on the state and family level. For migrant women, political rights are even more difficult to obtain than social rights. It is important to stress though that restrictions to political participation are not only due to the lack of formal political rights and official channels of political engagement within the countries of residence but are also rooted in prevailing gender ideologies and communal politics within migrant and ethnic minority communities. Liberal policies of multi-culturalism have often unwittingly played into male dominated political networks and patriarchal discourses within migrant communities.

        However, migrant women have not only challenged the further erosion of social and political rights which have been part of European harmonization policies, but they have also engaged in political struggles related to the so-called private sphere, i.e. campaigns against domestic violence, and against the dependence of women in men due to existing immigration laws. Despite a series of overlaps with concerns of local women's movements, the relationship between migrant women organisations and women's movements are often tension-ridden due to patronizing and racist attitudes of many feminists. The specific political relationships vary. however, according to the actual politics and context of women's movements. Some

feminists share a concern with racism and xenophobia and are therefore better positioned to make alliances with women of ethnic minorities.

Another area of campaigning has been the recognition of women as refugees in their own right. Current asylum conventions discriminate against women refugees as they emphasize political persecution within the public sphere. In Britain, the Refugee Women's Legal Group (RWLG) brings together refugee women, lawyers, and other political activists to point out the need to recognize gendered harm and gendered persecution as valid reasons for seeking asylum (Kofman et al, 2000: 180-181).

These are only some examples of a whole range of issues around which political campaigning and lobbying takes place. A project as the one undertaken by the study at hand is badly needed: Few studies look at organizations of migrant women and women of ethnic minorities from a local and national perspective. Indeed, the activities and strategies of women activists are often ignored in political debates about the welfare state and citizenship rights. Even more significantly, however, is the fact that hardly any research has been carried out on a transnational and comparative level. This specific project aims to bridge the gap in the existing knowledge and also aims at developing concrete policy recommendations with respect to the question of social inclusion of marginalized groups, such as migrant women and women of ethnic minorities.

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