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Transmigration and urban social work: towards a research agenda

Transmigratie en stedelijk sociaal werk: naar een onderzoeksagenda

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Many Western European countries, and especially the larger cities within these countries, are making a transition towards super-diversity. This shift towards super-diversity is also characterised by a growth of the phenomenon of transmigration, whereby people frequently move back and forth across borders. The social life of transmigrants is not only oriented towards their country of residence, but also consists of complex networks beyond boundaries. Transmigrants constantly shift between different modus operandi and between different visible and invisible, local and global networks. Many transmigrants face a high risk of social vulnerability and are overrepresented in the client population of urban social services. Although much research has been done on transmigration on the one hand, and on international social work on the other hand, the effect of transmigration on social workers and on social work practice is still under-investigated. Based on social work research in Brussels and Antwerp, the authors research the challenges transmigration poses to social work. They demonstrate that there is a difference in perspective between the translocal and transnational lives of transmigrants on the one hand versus the locally rooted practices of social workers on the other hand. Using this analysis as a springboard, they identify a number of avenues for additional inquiry in this field.

Keywords: transnationalism; translocality; transmigration; super-diversity; social work research

Veel West-Europese landen, en met name de grotere steden van deze landen, maken een transitie door naar superdiversiteit. Deze overgang naar superdiversiteit wordt ook gekenmerkt door een toename van het fenomeen van transmigratie, waarbij mensen geregeld heen en weer bewegen over grenzen heen. Het sociale leven van transmigranten is niet enkel gericht op het land waar ze verblijven, maar bestaat uit complexe netwerken voorbij deze landsgrenzen. Transmigranten wisselen voortdurend tussen verschillende modus operandi en tussen verschillende zichtbare en onzichtbare, lokale en globale netwerken. Veel transmigranten lopen een hoog risico op sociale kwetsbaarheid en zijn oververtegenwoordigd in de cliëntpopulatie van de sociale sector in de grootstad. Ondanks het feit dat er veel onderzoek gedaan is naar transmigratie enerzijds en naar internationaal sociaal werk anderzijds, blijft het effect van transmigratie op sociaal werkers en op de praktijk van het sociaal werk onderbelicht in hedendaags onderzoek. Gebaseerd op sociaal werk onderzoek in Brussel en Antwerpen, gaan de auteurs na welke uitdagingen transmigratie stelt aan sociaal werk. Ze tonen aan dat er een verschil in perspectief bestaat tussen de translokale en transnationale levens van transmigranten enerzijds versus de lokaal georiënteerde praktijken van sociaal werk organisaties anderzijds. Voortbouwend op deze analyse formuleren ze een aantal suggesties voor aanvullend onderzoek omtrent dit thema.

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Trefwoorden: transnationalisme; translokaleiteit; transmigratie; superdiversiteit; sociaal werk onderzoek

In what way are transmigrants challenging social work in today's super-diverse cities? What is the impact of transnational networks and temporality of stay on the relationship between social workers and their clients? What do we know so far, and why do we still know so little about social work with transmigrants? The article attempts to analyse the tension between the translocal and/or transnational lives of transmigrants and the locally rooted and locally oriented practices of social workers.

Therefore we first describe the growing importance of transmigration for (Western) European countries and cities in this era of super-diversity. Second, we disaggregate the catch-all term of transmigration to be of use for research on the impact of transmigration on social work. In the third section, we explore the challenges transmigrants pose to social work organisations in urban areas, based on our own explorative research in the two largest and super-diverse Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp. Finally we propose a research agenda for future research on the relationship between transmigration and social work.

Transmigration in a context of super-diversity

Most West-European countries in the twenty-first century are making a transition towards super-diversity, especially in the larger cities (Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2013; Geldof, 2013b; Vertovec, 2007). First of all this implies a quantitative shift. In the western part of Europe, urban areas continue to serve as the main destination of international migrants. The strong acceleration of migration since the Second World War, and especially since the 1990s due to globalisation and the enlargement of the EU towards the east, has confronted most West-European cities with an increasing diversity. A growing number of these cities are becoming 'majority-minority cities', where the majority of its inhabitants have roots in migration (measured as inhabitants who were born in another country, or whose mother and/or father is born abroad). Some of them might already live for decades in the city; others might just have arrived.

Furthermore, super-diversity results in an increasing diversity within the diversity. During the last two decades European societies have gone through a crucial change in their migration patterns. Half a century ago, migration towards West-European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, France or Germany was initiated by the national authorities. So-called temporary foreign workers were recruited as guest workers in a rather limited number of countries of origin. In today's era of super-diversity, migration comes from all over the world. As a consequence, Western societies and certainly majority-minority cities are characterised by an increasing diversity in nationalities and countries of origin of their inhabitants, an increase of the different languages spoken, religions practised, and so on. We also see an increasing diversity in migration motives, statuses of migrants and socio-economic positions.

Crucial characteristics of super-diversity are the increasing importance of transnational contacts and the development of transnational spaces and communities (Bauböck & Faist, 2010; Faist, Fauser, & Reisenauer, 2013; Perrin & Martiniello, 2011; Vancluysen & Van Craen, 2011; Vertovec, 2007). Many urban residents have roots in migration and are involved in networks that transcend the borders of their country of residence, or even of

Europe. It has become a commonplace that twenty-first-century migrants maintain transnational lifestyles, keeping in close touch with their regions of origin and other regions around the world in which significant others have settled. As Schrooten (2012a, p. 1795) argues, 'many migrants sustain family relations or support across national borders, contribute to socio-economic development in their homeland and/or their country of residence, participate actively in communities that span the globe, or enact their political engagement in multiple states'. The rise of world-families is part of this transnationalism (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Karraker, 2013).

The development of transnational migration, networks and families has been seen as inherent to the broader phenomenon of globalisation. In its broadest sense, globalisation refers to 'an extensive network of economic, cultural, social and political interconnections and processes which routinely transcend national boundaries' (Yeates 2002, p. 4). Transnational interaction across geographical and political borders is now strongly facilitated by the advances in transportation and in information and communication technologies and by the rapid evolution of applications for using and accessing these technologies. Various communication modes, such as mobile telephony, the Internet (including Skype and social media) and digital broadcast, have become increasingly and undeniably central for trans-border interaction (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Schrooten, 2012a).

Simultaneously, globalisation allows for and produces the development of the phenomenon of transmigration, which implies a continuous movement of people back and forth across borders and further complicates super-diverse societies. Transmigration has been described as a corollary of the changing demands of globalised capitalism, which benefits more from a supply of mobile and flexible migrants than from the permanent settlement of large groups of labour immigrants, as was the case in previous eras (Tarrus, Missaoui, & Qacha, 2013; Van Wormer, 2010). Moreover, faced with deteriorating economic and social conditions in sending as well as in receiving countries, these contemporary migrants may be further discouraged to settle permanently, or find full incorporation in their destination countries themselves undesirable (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995, p. 52). Hence, many contemporary migrants come and go, not always being sure how long they will stay in the different stopovers on their trajectories, when they will stop migrating or where they will eventually settle. They travel back and forth as permitted by money, immigration status and family and employment obligations. Transnational links and networks enable these flexible migration strategies. It is this group of mobile migrants or transmigrants that lies at the focus of this article and of our research.

Transmigration as a new context for urban social work

In order to be able to discuss the challenges of transmigration for urban social work, a definition of this term is required. The term 'transmigrants' was first coined by Nina Glick Schiller and her associates (1995), who contended that there was something qualitatively different about present-day immigrations compared with their late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century counterparts. According to Glick Schiller and her colleagues (1995, p. 51), these latter were 'forced to abandon, forget, or deny their ties to home and in subsequent generations memories of transnational connections were erased'. Although many migrants in these earlier eras tried to maintain some networks across boundaries, communication over a long distance was difficult and slow.

During the last two decades transnational connections have considerably gained in intensity and significance. The networks, activities and patterns of life of today's immigrants manifestly encompass multiple societies. To capture this novelty, Glick Schiller and her associates introduced the terms 'transmigrants' and 'transnationalism'. While the former refers to migrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state, the latter refers to the process by which migrants build social fields that link these multiple locations (Faist et al., 2013).

Thus, in their definition, the main characteristic that distinguishes transmigrants from other migrants is the fact that transmigrants' networks, activities and patterns of life encompass multiple locations. Transmigrants are defined neither by the cause of leaving their country of origin nor by the endpoint of their journey, but rather by 'the lived condition of straddling borders, whether by choice or by necessity' (Hunter, Lepley, & Nickels, 2010, p. 223). In contrast to the traditional image of migrants as people who stop shifting country boundaries after a while and reinforce their rootedness in the region of arrival, the concept of transmigrants focuses on how present-day migrants adopt a strategy of shifting between and engaging in lives in different places, countries and cultures.

This multiple international environment is integral to the life of transmigrants. Yet, when using this broad definition of transmigrants, the stage of transmigration can be experienced by a wide range of migrants. Many migrants frequently operate beyond the borders of nominally sovereign states. When conceptualising the experiences of transmigrants, it is imperative to account for diversity among different groups. For some, transmigration is a (temporary) financial necessity. For others, transmigration will only be a temporary stage in their migration process, during which they have intense interaction with their home region before they finally settle abroad. Still others will maintain those connections with the hope of returning home permanently in the near future. Finally, transmigration may be intentional or the result of failing strategies to settle in a certain country. It might imply long-term perspectives, such as is the case for diplomats, expats and religious workers, or short-time cross-border activities, such as temporary jobs or projects. Hence, transmigrants represent a diverse assembly of individuals who experience various levels of acceptance in their countries of origin and of residence. Influenced by their ethnicity, class, economic status and gender, 'transmigrants may find equality and even privilege in some areas of their life while experiencing injustice in others' (Mohan & Clark Prickett, 2010).

Transmigration is a catch-all term which must be disaggregated in various ways to be of use. If we want to analyse the impact of transmigration on social work, we need to use a more narrow definition of transmigrants. First, we keep a clear distinction between transnational contacts or lifestyle on the one hand and transmigration on the other hand. Transmigration implies serial cross-border migration, either between two countries (circular migration between the country of origin and the migration country) or more countries, as is the case with migration trajectories. Transmigration not only differs from more classical migration patterns because it is a form of multiple migrations, but also it implies a higher degree of temporality from the point of view of the migrant. Although transmigrants may settle and stop migrating at a certain moment, for many their actual intention or expectation is not to stay where they live today. Motivations for this temporality may be intrinsic (returning to the country of origin, joining relatives in another country, etc.) or extrinsic (legal barriers which only allow a temporal stay in the

country, e.g. student visa, a temporary regularisation for medical or humanitarian reasons).

Second, to explore the challenge of transmigration for social work, we refer to the international definition of social work (IFSW, 2002), which states that 'the social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being'. Therefore, we limit the scope to those transmigrants who find themselves in a vulnerable position. Not all transmigrants are in vulnerable positions or would benefit from a social work intervention. Expats or civil servants working for international institutions are mostly not very vulnerable, or they call for other professionals (lawyers, doctors, therapists, etc.) if they encounter personal problems. We agree with Furman et al. (2010, p. 5) that, as social work has always been 'the profession that has helped the poorest and most vulnerable people to adapt to major social shifts', contemporary social work should be geared toward those who have been negatively affected by globalisation. The increasing interdependence of nation-states calls for a recognition of the global scope of social problems and their impact on the daily lives of those in need. The altered global context and the changed nature of the nation-state mean that social workers will be increasingly confronted with vulnerable immigrants living transnational lives.

Although many European countries welcome highly skilled migrants, they are much less hospitable to poorly educated migrants. Whereas professional migrants 'have the human and cultural capital to take advantage of opportunities in two settings and voluntarily adapt transnational livelihood strategies' (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, p. 133), these vulnerable migrants 'are pushed into transnational lifestyles' (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007) because they cannot gain a secure economic foothold neither in their home country nor in their country of residence.

Thus, as Pries (2004, p. 31) correctly states, many transmigrants 'are not the new sovereign cosmopolitans who move freely and voluntarily between different locales, places and opportunities without problems'. On the contrary, they do not only experience the traditional problems other migrants are faced with—such as family separation, marginalisation, discrimination, downward social mobility, exploitation and social disruption (Ghorashi, 2003; Jokisch & Kyle, 2010)—but also are additionally confronted with a number of risks that are specifically related to their mobile lifestyle. Being transmigrant, the possibilities they have to solve such problems might be more limited. For example, the lack of a long-term residence can prevent transmigrants from developing strong support networks. Even more than other migrants, transmigrants often lack support and a safety net in their place of residence.

Because of their flight history and exceptional living circumstances, asylum seekers are possible transmigrants who face a number of specific risks, such as mental or physical health problems (Chantler, 2012; Hadgkiss & Renzaho, 2014). In addition, for those transmigrants who do not have a legal residence status or who are uncertain about securing their residence status, this uncertain legal status is another important potential stressor (Devillé, 2008). This is especially the case for those who often cross national borders and are thus more frequently exposed to the risk of border controls (Martinez-Brawley & Gualda, 2006). Moreover, legal status also has an impact on housing opportunities and on access to the labour market, health services, public services and social services. Many undocumented transmigrants fall between the cracks of the social safety net and therefore cannot rely on these services.

Finally, in order to analyse the impact on social work, we focus on transmigrants who have only recently—during the last five years—arrived. Research among recently arrived migrants demonstrates that the types of support required by and available to newly arrived transmigrants are importantly different from those who are well settled. Not only are many recently arrived migrants facing a poorly developed local social network, but also their transnational contacts are often limited to affective and emotional ties (Boccagni, 2010; Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008). Although these transnational ties may be resorted to for emotional support and advice, they can less easily provide for ‘practical, hands-on support and assistance’ (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 684). Furthermore, although upward social mobility contributes to an ethnic middle class, many recently arrived transmigrants still face a high risk of poverty and social vulnerability. As a consequence, they are often overrepresented in deprived neighbourhoods and in the client population of social services in most European cities.

Transmigration as a challenge for urban social work

Migrants often find themselves in a vulnerable position regarding economic and social security and are therefore likely to be in need of social welfare assistance. Research demonstrates that in Belgium, 37% of all migrants of non-European descent are at risk of poverty, compared with 12% of the native-born population (Van Haarlem, Coene, & Lusyne, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that the ethnic diversity of those asking for help at social services has strongly increased in the last decades (Geldof, 2013a). Despite this changing reality, the social sector is under-prepared for the large group of clients with roots in migration.

Transmigrancy adds even more complexity to this situation. The reality of transmigrancy presents social work practitioners in contemporary European immigration societies with important challenges. To explore these challenges, we organised two focus groups with social work organisations about their experiences with transmigrants. We selected organisations based on their location and their service user group: we looked for organisations that were based in the two main and super-diverse Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp, and whose service user group included transmigrants. We initially approached 34 social work organisations in Flanders and Brussels for an interview. In this interview, we explained our research goals and gained information about the aims and scope of these organisations, and about the range of their service user group. Not all organisations turned out to work with transmigrants as we had defined them, so we selected 15 social work organisations for the focus groups. Out of the 15 social work organisations, 9 were based in Brussels and 6 in Antwerp. The type of services they provided varied strongly, from creating opportunities to allow service users to show their artistic abilities, to offering legal, financial or social support. Some organisations worked exclusively with clients with a non-Belgian nationality, while the service users of other organisations included both Belgians and people with other nationalities.

During the interviews and the focus groups, it became clear that the growing number of transmigrants is posing new challenges to social workers. They struggle with various questions: How can social workers reach these (temporal and mobile) clients? How should they deal with transmigrants’ specific welfare needs? In what ways can they take account of the multiple international environments of their clients? How could or should they evaluate the importance of their clients’ networks across borders and include them in

their social work practice? How can they provide aftercare services to clients who are so mobile?

While transmigration is becoming an important reality for social work practice in super-diverse contexts, many social work professionals are still unfamiliar with transmigrants and are looking for suitable methods to work with this new target group (Schrooten & Lamote, 2013). Hunter and his colleagues (Hunter et al., 2010, p. 222) have argued that the context of transmigration calls for a paradigm shift. They state that in working with transmigrants, social workers 'can no longer pay attention to relationships, resources, structures, laws and history in one locale and not consider the same in another country where the systems may be informed by a significantly different world view for their clients'. The social life of transmigrants is not only oriented towards their new country of residence, but also consists of complex networks and contacts beyond boundaries. In order to provide effective social work for this unique population, social workers can no longer solely focus on local and regional problems, but should instead take into account the multiple locations that are relevant to these transmigrants' networks and activities.

For example, should budget and debt counsellors working with transmigrants consider the role and importance of remittances when developing a customised budget and action plan? Their clients' wages may be split between different family members across borders, making the actual income they dispose of, insufficient to cover their expenses (Hunter et al., 2010, p. 225). How should these social workers evaluate the necessity of the remittances and the consequences on relatives when these remittances diminish or stop?

Legal service providers may be confronted with very complex situations, arising out of differing, sometimes conflicting jurisdictions in the different countries that are of relevance to their clients. Moreover, current laws may not be adapted to the actual transnational lifestyles increasingly led by their clients (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Vuille, Bolzman, & Durrett, 2013, p. 415). For example, 'mixed-status families' (Hunter et al., 2010, p. 226), families in which family members have different legal statuses or are subjected to differing legal jurisdictions, may be faced with competing, and sometimes downright conflicting legal systems. Think of a Moroccan woman for example, divorcing her Belgian husband, and considering to move with her children to her sister in a small city across the Dutch border, 50 km from where she and her ex-husband were living. Would her ex-husband be able to accuse her of child abduction if he did not agree with her decision? And what about the different legal systems involved when mixed-status couples want to marry or divorce? Different matrimonial regimes may be applicable, depending on nationality, the location of the marriage and the place of residence of the couple. As Sportel (2011) describes in a case study on the contradictions between Dutch and Moroccan family law, the application of one or the other legal regime may have important consequences for those concerned.

Cases of domestic violence may not only be complicated by competing jurisdictions, but also by conflicting views concerning gender and family relations across borders. Sustaining transnational ties with families and communities left behind, or the need to reciprocate the support provided by these, has been identified as a motive for forced marriages involving overseas spouses (Werbner, 2007, p. 169). Family members' involvement across borders may also affect the decision-making of victims of spousal violence, when divorce would bring shame on a whole family, or when victims whose

transnational marriage has been 'sponsored' by family members, risk to lose their support as a divorce might mean the loss of residence rights (Chantler, Gangoli, & Hester, 2009).

New is also the emergence of social work organisations from countries of origin of transmigrants, which are recently recruited by local authorities in the 'destination' countries of transmigrants. An interesting case in the focus groups was the Polish organisation Barka. Barka organises support programs for homeless Middle and Eastern European migrants in Antwerp. The project started in February 2014 in Antwerp after an invitation from the municipality. Barka tries to help homeless Polish and other Central and Eastern European people who are not coping with life in Antwerp to return to their home countries, either to enter rehab treatments, go back to families, or to Barka Network programs (educational programs, community programs, creating work places and accessible housing programs) in Poland. The demand of the authorities was inspired by the activities of Barka in the Netherlands. The first homeless migrants support projects of Barka outside Poland started in 2007 in London, where they were invited to help Polish rough sleepers there. Similar projects started in Copenhagen, Dublin and Hamburg. In 2011 Barka was invited by the municipality of Utrecht in the Netherlands to work with the homeless migrants there. Nowadays Barka is active in the Netherlands in Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrecht (<http://www.barkanl.org>; <http://www.barka.org.pl/>).

It is rather unique so far that social problems of vulnerable transmigrants are not only, and perhaps not sufficiently tackled by local social organisations alone, but also require the help of social work organisations from the country of origin of the transmigrants. They are hired in to reach the groups and guide them towards regular local services and/or to rehab programs in the country of origin. Transmigration thus leads to new actors in the social field in European cities, with social work organisations developing transnational social work provisions.

As these cases and examples illustrate, the reality of transmigrancy requires an enhanced understanding of the multiple spaces inhabited by transmigrants, and of the complex legal, cultural, social and political contexts that push and pull families across national and local borders (Webster, Arenas, & Magaña, 2010, p. 208). This is a very challenging shift for social work in an urban context. One could say that the practices of most social workers are still locally rooted, whereas transmigrants constantly shift between different modus operandi and between different visible and invisible, local and global networks. They balance themselves atop the tight rope, vacillating between maintaining 'some functional sense of local "rootedness" while at the same time gaining access to opportunities that are more transnational, even global, in scope' (Simone, 2001, p. 36). Almost all transmigrants maintain social ties with people located in more than one national territory. Even so, rather than the national level, the local level is often more important for transmigrants, as their social relations are situated in specific localities, involving a network surrounding their local community of origin (Bocagni, 2010; Guarnizo & Smith, 1998; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). To grasp this perspective 'from below' it is therefore important for social workers to look at the articulation of global and local dynamics in local contexts such as neighbourhoods, homes and families (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Towards a research agenda on social work with transmigrants

Research on the impact of transmigration on social work practice is as yet scarce. Indeed, as is argued in a ground breaking edited volume on the topic, the notion of transnational social work itself is 'very, very new' and unfamiliar to most (Furman et al., 2010, p. 3). It is remarkable how little research has been done on this subject, despite a growing recognition of the global scale of social problems and of the need for internationalisation of the social work curriculum (Powell & Robison, 2007; Ramanathan & Link, 1999; Schrooten & Lamote, 2013; Stoesz, Guzzetta, & Lusk, 1999). Although much research has been done on transmigration on the one hand, and on international social work on the other hand, the effect of transmigration on social workers and on social work practice is still under-investigated (Furman et al., 2010). Moreover, as Collins (2012, p. 321) points out, 'questions of temporariness versus permanence are rarely the subject of theoretical inquiry'. Neither is the impact of this temporality on social work. We address this omission by highlighting six embryonic research themes related to social work with transmigrants.

First, and the most general, is the need for further empirical information on the growing importance of transmigration within super-diversity. The enlargement of the EU on the one hand and also organised migration from outside the EU on the other hand are contributing to the growing number of migrants moving across borders and not settling themselves definitively in their current country of residence. The social workers we interviewed also noted this growing importance of internal movements within the EU: because of the economic crisis, immigrants who initially settled in Southern-European countries increasingly move up north hoping for better opportunities and life circumstances (Schrooten, 2012b, p. 95). Social workers have thus been increasingly confronted with a clientele composed of Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians or Greeks from Moroccan, Brazilian or other origins.

Second we need further research on the specificity of the welfare needs of these transmigrants. As we discussed earlier, transmigrants will often meet the same problems and challenges as other migrants, arriving newly in another country or society and rebuilding social networks. Additionally, they are confronted with a number of risks that are related to their mobile lifestyle. These risks need to be further explored.

Third, a related research topic concerns the strategies transmigrants themselves use to cope with their welfare needs. From what kind of social networks or (self) organisations do transmigrants seek help? Our research revealed the increasing role taken up by informal immigrant associations in meeting the needs of transmigrants. These associations are often more accessible to transmigrants who are unable or unwilling to access formal social support institutions. Moreover, such associations are often willing to take on tasks that fall outside the scope of formal social work, but which nevertheless respond to real welfare needs of transmigrants. For example, such volunteers may be prepared to track down family members in case of decease, or to collect funds in order to repatriate the deceased's body to the country of origin.

On the one hand, at present, the social sector has little insight into the kind of support transmigrants find in religious institutions and migrant associations and the way these organisations relate to the formal social sector (Boujebbar et al., 2014). On the other hand, little is known about the relationship between transmigrants' translocal networks and the welfare needs they experience: What forms of translocal networks do transmigrants maintain or develop? To what extent and how do their translocal networks play a role in the creation and/or solving of welfare needs in their host localities? What kind of support do

transmigrants give to their translocal networks and what kind of resources do they receive? What other strategies do they generate to cope with their welfare needs?

Fourth, we know very little about current social work practices with these groups of transmigrants in European cities. In our explorative research on urban social work with transmigrants, social work organisations signal that the group of transmigrants is gaining importance in their daily practice. Even so, their recent arrival and the temporality make it more difficult to reach these groups, but also to develop an empowering long-term relationship with them. Still, social workers already have a great deal of experience working with travellers and Romas. It would be interesting to research to what extent these experiences can provide guidelines for working with transmigrants.

Fifth we need to explore the phenomenon of 'insourcing' of social work organisations from countries of origin to work with the transmigrants in the cities where they live today. To what extent are such new partners able to complement local social work organisations in their work with transmigrants?

Finally we consider it necessary to compare different national and urban settings in their work with transmigrants. The degree of super-diversity is expected to have an impact on the number of transmigrants in social work, but also local policy regimes will have an important influence on the possibilities social workers have to work with transmigrants. We expect large differences between cities that accept their super-diversity and develop their (social) policies starting from that reality on the one hand, and cities that are still struggling with this transition and that try to slow down the migration by minimising social service provisions for new migrants on the other hand. In order to compare, multi-sited research is crucial.

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