

TRANSNATIONALISM, IDENTITIES' DYNAMICS AND CULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION IN URBAN POST-MIGRATORY SITUATIONS

TRICUD Final International Conference

14-16 May 2014, University of Liège

Summary



The TRICUD programme (2010-2014) is a multidisciplinary research programme supported by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Wallonia-Europe Academy. TRICUD involved 3 research centres based at the Institute of Human and Social Sciences of the University of Liège: CEDEM (coordinator), CLEO and PÔLE SUD. The principal objective of the programme was to better understand how migration transforms both sending societies in the South and receiving societies in the North. Migration has also prompted the formation of transnational social spaces connecting home and destination countries. This phenomenon was observable between Belgium and firstly, the Democratic Republic of Congo and, secondly, Morocco (two strategic case-studies).

The Conference opened with a panel discussion on **Research perspectives on transnationalism and cultural diversification in Europe and beyond**. **Marco Martiniello**, Director of CEDEM and the TRICUD programme coordinator welcomed the participants at the new Espace Opera-ULG downtown. **Sonia Gsir** (in charge of the TRICUD programme coordination at CEDEM, University of Liège) welcomed and introduced her guests: **Valentina Mazzucato** (Maastricht University), **Pascal Kapagama** (University of Kinshasa), Lionel Thelen (European Research Council) and Jean-Michel Lafleur (CEDEM, University of Liège) who kindly accepted to replace Mohamed Charef (University of Agadir).



Sonia Gsir questioned the panelists about:

- the priorities in further researching transnationalism and cultural diversification in migration and post-migration societies.
- the promising approaches to address these issues
- the collaboration between researchers from Europe and Africa or other continents on these issues
- funding opportunities for research projects attempting to understand what is going on between ‘here’ and ‘there’ and in particular, the actions of the European Research Council.

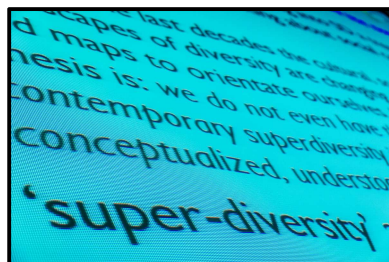


Marco Martiniello, FNRS research director and director of CEDEM, welcomed all the participants and thanked the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Wallonia-Europe Academy for their support. He explained that the TRICUD programme was a Concerted Research Action which aimed at developing a multidisciplinary research programme among three research centres of the University of Liège: CEDEM, CLEO and Pôle SUD. He also thanked Sonia Gsir for the organization of the conference.



The opening session on Transnational practices and identities was chaired by **Marc Poncelet**, Professor of Sociology and director of Pôle SUD. He introduced the first keynote speaker Steve Vertovec, the Director of Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious & Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, recalling his brilliant career and his contributions to transnational studies.

Steve Vertovec spoke about *New directions in the study of super-diversity* showing how the concept of super-diversity that he introduced in an article has been further used across various disciplines and has sometimes been interpreted and utilized in ways diverging from its initial meaning. He thus presented



a personal typology indicating how the concept was read. Finally, he questioned different interpretations and argued that social scientists are keen to find new concepts allowing them to describe the growing complexities of social dynamics.



The first session on **Transnational Families and Caregiving Practices** was chaired by **Jean-Michel Lafleur**, FNRS research tenured and associate director of CEDEM. This session was dedicated to the presentation of case studies and theoretical debates regarding these families and their transnational caregiving practices.

Firstly, **Caroline Zickgraf**, TRICUD PhD candidate and CEDEM researcher, gave a synthesis of her dissertation, which she entitled *Flexible Familyhood? Moroccan migration, transnational family practices and the malleability of social space*. Through the presentation of the “flip-side” of transnational family relations, the ambiguities of their relationships across borders were discussed in detail. The presentation gave

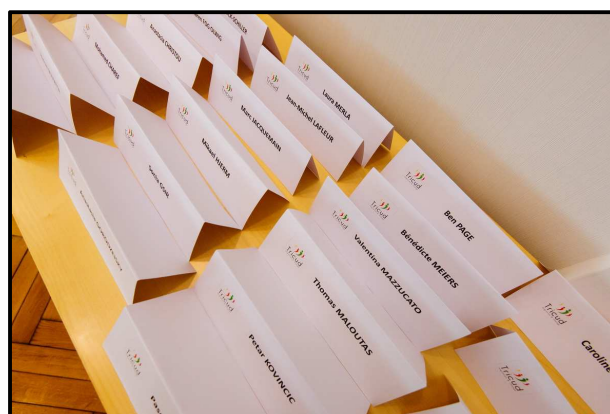
examples of the tensions that arise within transnational family practices, which in some cases lead to their cessation. The case study presented showed the added value of embracing a transnational network methodological perspective when studying such families because it allowed one to see the “bigger picture” of transnational family practices by including migrants in multiple countries as well as non-migrants. By locating these practices in the transnational social space and not within restricted geographical national borders, one was able to see that while some dyadic family relationships might fall others were sustained or even created through migration. This also showed that the geography of the family network affected how family was ‘done’ since the country of origin and destination were not the only axis of caregiving and other countries and cities were sometimes even more important when mapping these practices and relationships, calling for more multi-sited research and analyses that do not privilege a priori the host country-home country nexus in studies of transnationalism. To conclude, she mentioned that the implementation of these practices at least within this case study depended strongly on the kinship structure that influences the reciprocity and closeness among transnational family members although this can be flexible and challenged through the migration process.

Secondly, **Laura Merla**, Co-director of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Families and Sexualities (Catholic University of Louvain) gave a presentation entitled: *The Care Circulation Approach: A Framework for the Analysis of Intergenerational Solidarities*. She introduced the framework of *care circulation*, which offers a new perspective on the analysis of the mobilities of care within transnational family networks. This framework explains how migration produces care flows that are both material and non-material, multi-directional and asymmetrical. These circulations of care change throughout the life course within transnational family networks and are subject to political, cultural and social contexts of both sending and receiving societies. Additionally, Laura Merla also explained the relevance of what she entitled a *situated transnationalism* meaning that a complete analysis of transnational families should produce itself at the intersections between the individual level and the institutional contexts of both sending and receiving societies. Moreover, she highlighted the importance of bringing together transnational family studies and mainstream sociology of the family studies. This is because until now transnational families studies have gone separately from mainstream migration studies and sociology of the family. As an example of the fruitful synergies that could emerge between transnational family studies and mainstream sociological studies, she cited the example of her own framework. She therefore explained, that a circulation perspective had also been previously used in the past to describe similar dynamics in nuclear non-mobile families. Finally, she concluded by mentioning that transnational families have a clear impact on the overall notion of families and the ways in which families are constructed globally.

Thirdly, **Karen Fog Olwig**, Professor at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen, in a presentation entitled *Local and Transnational Care Relations: Relatedness and Family Practice among Au Pairs in Denmark*, highlighted how the transnational migration of young European and non-European au pairs creates new family relations that should be studied in a wider perspective that includes both the families where they work; the families in the country of origin and the

economic/social policies in both sending and receiving states. According to her, these new migrants are establishing themselves as adults of their own. Through their transnational migration, new notions of relatedness may emerge. Since au pairs share caregiving practices both with their host families and their transnational families abroad this has implications for family relations in both receiving/sending societies. She mentioned that the predominate focus on the economic side of their migration has overlooked the fact that these au pairs involve themselves in transnational family relations of their own with both their families abroad and host families, which are in turn affected by power relations and migratory status in the receiving state. Lastly, the paper has shown that au pairs experience new notions of families when working abroad, for their economic obligations in the country of origin can place a considerable pressure on them, but for those who succeed these experiences can lead to a sense of social pride within their family networks in the country of origin.

To conclude **Valentina Mazzucato**, Professor of Globalization and Development from the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (University of Maastricht) gave interesting remarks on the three presentations. These remarks could be summarized in the following four points. Firstly, the papers presented through this session made us reflect on the further use of transnationalism and how to go about studying transnational family dynamics and social phenomena in general. Secondly, all three presentations show how a transnational perspective is able to shed light on a phenomenon that otherwise would've never been discussed, for example the creation of these new "transnational family units." She mentioned that the first presentation had a strong value because it brought out the flip side of transnational practices and the ambiguities of these practices, by incorporating both migrants and non-migrants in the methodological design of the research. Lastly, she mentioned the importance of a *situated transnationalism* to take into account the institutional context of both sending and receiving societies when analyzing such practices.



The second session entitled **Trans-locality: Anchors, Mobilities and Belongings Recomposition** was chaired by **Thomas Maloutas**, Professor of Social Geography and Director, Institute of Urban & Rural Sociology, National Centre for Social Research at Harokopio University. The session was introduced by a presentation of **Bénédicte**

Meiers, TRICUD PhD candidate affiliated to the Pôle SUD. She gave an insight into doctoral research entitled “*Fils et Filles de la N’djili*”: *Sociogenèse d’une localité (post)coloniale et transmigrations. Une approche ethnographique translocale: Liège-Kinshasa-Paris-Bruxelles/ Liège-Geilenkirchen*. After that, **Ben Page** from the University College London presented his ethnographic case study in two Cameroonian villages describing how immigrants from Cameroon settled in the US undertook the construction of houses in their villages of origin. His presentation was entitled *Practising translocalism in Maryland and Awing (Cameroon): a son a brother, a father and his house in the village*. Finally, **Anastasia Christou** from the Middlesex University presented her case studies of transnational mobilities of second generation Albanians in Greece and of Eastern European Women in *Dismantling Diasporas, Rethinking Resistance & Mapping Resilience: Gender, Youth and Transnational Mobilities in the Post-Socialist Imagination*. **Pascal Kapagama**, Professor of Sociology at the University of Kinshasa, introduced the discussion.





The Opening session on Identities Dynamics and Cultural Diversification was chaired by **Marc Jacquemain**, Director of CLEO. He introduced Professor Nina Glick-Schiller, Emeritus Professor of the University of Manchester. He noted her valuable academic contributions as a pioneer in the transnationalism field.

Nina Glick-Schiller spoke about *Displacements, Global Constraints, and Transnational Futures*. She proposed five alternative analytical tools to better understand the multiplicities and racialized belongings, in particular regarding descendants of immigrants.



The third session **Cultural Diversity and Inter-ethnic Relations in European Societies** was chaired by **Hassan Bousetta** (CEDEM, University of Liège). **Petar Kovincic**, TRICUD PhD candidate (CLEO, University of Liège) presented his doctoral research on *The changing relationship between the majority population and immigrant minorities in French-speaking Belgium*. Considering inter-ethnic relations between different groups in Belgium, Petar Kovincic questioned whether or not these relationships are really becoming more “ethnicized.” To answer this question he focused on bottom-up “interculturalism” and the impact of everyday interactions on attitudes and social identity. He questioned whether or not the use of contact theory from social psychology (the idea that intergroup contact reduces anxiety) could allow us to speak about macro-sociological events. The hypothesis of this project was, provided that economic and physical security remains stable, the intensity and frequency of “groupness” will decline globally when cultural diversity increases. The following were treated as contributing factors to ethnicization: (1) increasing economic inequality; (2) labor market ethnostratification; (3) sociospatial polarization in big cities. In addition to data from the European Values Study from 1981-2009, P. Kovincic

also conducted qualitative research. The questions from the European Values Study were as follows: “On this list of various groups of people, please sort out who you would not like to have for neighbors.” “When jobs are scarce should employers give priority to the Belgians?” An analysis of the results showed that the frequency of social distance increased and decreased in ways that can be linked with insecurities during a given time period. The study concluded that the data was compatible with the hypothesis. P. Kovincic stressed that it is important to better understand the relations between social distance and opinions about immigration. In order to confirm the effect of each variable, more advanced statistical analysis is required.

In her presentation entitled *Competitive Threat, Racial Prejudice and the Rise of Anti-immigrant Sentiment in European Societies*, **Anastasia Gorodzeisky** (Post-doctoral research fellow at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, Madrid) spoke about a quantitative cross-country study aiming at providing a systematic examination of the impact of racial prejudice on the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments across European societies. The project used both ‘competitive threat’ and ‘classical racial prejudice’ models to estimate the impact on attitudes towards immigrants. The competitive threat theoretical model describes several sources of anti-immigrant sentiment. On the structural level it includes contextual characteristics of society (e.g. the size of the ‘out group population’, economic conditions, etc.). At the individual level, it includes social and economic vulnerability such as job security, education, etc. And, finally, conservative views and values (cultural and political) are also source of this negative sentiment. This model has large empirical support. It views anti-immigrant and racial prejudice as a reaction to perceived threats in various spheres. The classical prejudice model describes racial and ethnic prejudice as feelings that are socially learned and not a response to any particular threat. Finally, A. Gorodzeisky concluded that, other things being equal, the people who express racial prejudice are likely to express anti-immigrant sentiment. This means that the higher the share of a country’s population that embraces racial prejudice, the higher the anti-immigrant sentiment.

Mikael Hjerm, Professor of Sociology and Deputy Head of Department at Umea University, presented a communication based on a study designed to discover the effect of Extreme Right Parties (ERPs) on attitudes toward immigration in Europe from 2002 to 2012 and entitled *In the wake of extreme right electoral success. A cross country comparative study of anti-immigration attitudes over time*. According to M. Hjerm, there are many studies focused on explaining why these parties have emerged, but there is less research on the effects that these parties have on people’s attitudes. With data from the ESS – 2002-2012 the study used three level modeling to discover the effects between and in countries over time. ERPs do not explain country level differences and change over time. In addition, when ERP articulation is stronger there is less polarization, although it is not clear why this is the case. M. Hjerm concluded

that it is generally thought that ERPs have direct effects on anti-immigration attitudes, but at the moment this is not true. The counterfactual argument is that it's possible that without these parties we would have seen a decline in these attitudes over time, but there's no way to be sure. Also, at the present time it is not possible to measure the long-term effects of these parties. In addition, the study did not account for local representation and only included representation at the national level. M. Hjerm does not claim that ERPs are not problematic, but at the moment they are not driving anti-immigrant attitudes.

Andrea Rea, Professor of Sociology and Deputy Head of Department at the Université Libre de Bruxelles discussed the three presentations pointing that there are different ways to look at the relationships between racialization and anti-immigrant attitudes. In these types of studies it is always good to have research on the majority group, but we often only look at minority. In addition, he added the necessity to be careful to explain exactly what we are speaking about. In the first paper about attitudes towards immigrants, minorities, religions, etc., he considered that it was not always clear whom we are speaking about in these categories. He said that we have to ask ourselves if we are sure we are not speaking about national minorities who are also sometimes considered to be migrants (for example, Romanians in Hungary.) Moreover, he considered that when speaking about how prejudice is born when there is competition and direct interaction, it is important also to ask whether the upper class is less racially prejudiced. Or does it only seem this way because they can distance themselves from those with immigrant backgrounds? According to him, it is important to remember that people from the upper class have the resources to segregate themselves. If we do not take this into account during our studies we will reinforce the idea that there is strong anti-immigrant sentiment among the vulnerable without telling the whole story.

In the exchanges with audience, Nina Glick-Schiller stressed that surveys, like the ones used in this session, are what people say their attitudes are. This is important, but it is different from how people act. She said that we need data about both actions and feelings so we can see when they come together and when they diverge.



The last session **Artistic Expression and Identity Construction in Multicultural Cities** was chaired by **Sonia Gsir** (CEDEM, University of Liège). To begin, **Marco Martiniello** (CEDEM, University of Liège) presented the results of his current comparative research on *Immigrants, ethnicized minorities and the diversification of urban cultures: Comparing Naples and Liège*. He showed how music can serve the political expression of both immigrants in the case of Liège and ethnicized minorities in the case of Naples. The aim of this comparison was to understand some neighborhoods in different places, different cities (history, volume, image in terms of multiculturalism). He convincingly stressed the limitations of research on political studies for the understanding of politics in a broad sense and argued the necessity to develop research out of mainstream political sciences and sociology of politics. He also pointed out the bias of cultural studies which tend to over-interpret social fact “everything is political, nothing can be not political!”. In line with these findings, the necessity to pay attention to the symbolic dimension in social and political mobilisation processes lead him to explore the role of musical expressions in different post-migratory contexts. Sounds, objects, words in relation with ethnicity, ethnic minorities, group with migration backgrounds in physical as well as in digital spaces are part of the “fieldwork”. Three main reasons underpinned this empirical choice: (1) the distinctive power in terms of creation, reinforcement emotions, etc.; (2) universal phenomena facilitating global and comparative approaches; (3) the fact that often, music is used by racialized minorities in their struggles. The typology of political and social action of popular music which is then developed showed that music might be helpful to express social conditions (history, feelings, experiences, etc.), to carry out protests to confront the existing power (cf. literature of social movements), to change the power relations in the society, to lead conservative action (reinforce power, social values, etc.), to construct, discuss or negotiate collective identity and finally to facilitate pragmatic struggle (humanitarian concerts for instance).

His presentation was followed by a theoretical overview of **Jean-Marie Seca**, Professor of Sociology at the Université de Lorraine. His presentation, entitled *Qu'est-ce que l'interculturalité underground (rock, rap, techno)? (What is underground interculturality (rock, rap, techno)?*, explored the production of popular amplified electro music. In relation with migratory and post-migratory contexts in both home and host countries, underground interculturality is defined as a creation and reaction process. The word *underground*, as he argued, should be understood through the notions of « amateur » and « alternative » in order to describe ideas of minority, passion of fans and musical practices. The idea of weak public recognition is central and as a consequence the psychological proximity between musicians and their public. This may be related with the ambivalence of the musicians' relations to publicity and what Jean-Marie Seca considered as their suspicious towards various institutions. Their willingness to preserve authenticity, their original approach and the spirit of social protest characterize underground music. Based on a psychosociological paradigm

sometimes close to a symbolic anthropology, Jean-Marie Segal's research looked at how musical practices are a privileged space for social representations and intercultural transactions in particular in the phenomenon of « remake » which generates high mobilities of cultural components.

From the notion of « entelechy » he showed the interweaving of musical styles, generations, temporalities, narrative forms from which common representations and habitus emerge as well as hope and expectation signifying a common imaginary although competitions for the definition of society and political relations are also part of « entelechies ». In other words the esthetical versions of living together might be a way to explore opinion and attitudes patterns more or less complementary and antagonistic. Each group also holds a specific political programme for social transformations that eventually let him to explore the intrinsic factors of stylistic forms that allow such musical impact in given social situations.

Finally, in his presentation *Politisisation et dépolitisation des expressions culturelles autochtones : le cas de Fort-de-France et Toulouse (Politization and depolitizations of autochthonous cultural expressions : the case of Fort-de-France and Toulouse)*, **Lionel Arnaud**, Professor of Sociology at the Université de Toulouse questioned the “politicization of folklore”. He gave an overview of his case-studies in Haïti and France from a comparison of two cultural movements in Fort de France and in Toulouse. Two neighborhoods, *Bô Kannal* in *Fort-de-France* and *Arnaud Bernard* in Toulouse, are explored and more precisely their resistances to the French state by mobilizing cultural tools and (post)colonial resistances. He explained that both movements do not intend to be part of political approach *strictu sensu* but to “make folklores”. By doing so important process of (re)invention as well as requalification of social actions and consciousness are at work and may create informal political posture. This is the case of the political community that *Bele* and *Occitan* music reinvent at the neighborhood scale, which attracts the politics' attention. To Lionel Arnaud, attention must be paid to the moments where folklore influences politics. This statement led him to discuss the notion of politics as a universe in movement which involves several actors. The political boundaries: situation, position, activity, social groups etc. that remains to be discussed are central to studying cultural actions from below, (ongoing) multiculturalism, identity transformations or imagination and moving to political issues, etc. In both movements a politics of apoliticalism which means self-management, conviviality, solidarity but no head-to-head confrontation is observed. The relation to politics is informal, practical, it is about a different way of life and of living together, more integrated in a daily life but « diffuse », but various alliances might then be developed and sometimes end up with political activism. To sum up, music actively produces identities, socialisation, positionality and in some cases, activism. Lionel Arnaud, finally, pointed out that groups can also be victim of their

« esthetisation » when the recognition of the world of art draw individuals or communities away from the « streets » and from their initial dynamics.

The session ended by the discussion of **Fatima Zibouh**, TRICUD PhD candidate at CEDEM, in which she stressed the common characteristics of the three papers, first the social and political significations of the artistic expressions, second the centrality of “identity”, third, the interactions and interculturality processes. Musical productions do not necessary carry political significance and there is a risk for the social scientists to over interpret. She also pointed out the importance of territory and the necessity to articulate, as Marco Martiniello argued, class and race more systematically. Speakers shed light on these questions from their fieldwork and different territorial anchors.

In his concluding remarks, Marco Martiniello thanked again warmly all the participants in the TRICUD conference and pointed how the exchanges were particularly fruitful.



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