The Transnationalization of Local Citizenship. On the conceptual implications of the involvement of local citizenship in transnational social spaces

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1) Introduction
In the study of migration and migrant settlement the incorporation of migrants in the receiving society was at the centre of academic interest throughout most of the 20th century. Just as the physical movement from one place within one country towards another place in another country, social and cultural incorporation was taken to follow the same direction.

In the last decade of the century, transnational studies and approaches started to emerge in migration research questioning many of the previous assumptions through empirical investigation and theoretical reflection. Transnational practices and ties of migrants connecting places of origin and settlement were found to continuously exist, to get reinforced or emerge in the very context of migration and settlement. Transnational social spaces, i.e. dense and stable relationships of exchange, solidarity and reciprocity are not confined to the physical territorial borders. They span over two or more countries and link two or more localities, involving a reconfiguration of local-to-local relationships.

Thus the topic of this paper is the compression of social spaces cross-cutting national territories and borders. Thereby the paper intends to account for the transnational in the local (Smith 2001). It particularly focuses on the local arena which shows some particularities vis-à-vis the national level providing a basis for distinct dynamics opening venues for distinct models of membership, practice and identity, as well as for local policy and agency.
Local citizenship today is conceptualized in certain autonomy from the national level providing the basis for inclusion beyond the national level, instead of or in contradiction to it. In this respect local citizenship is open for transnational practices and identities which may not so easily be settled with national citizenship. What is more, currently local citizenship seems to become transnational itself.

In the context of co-development policies we observe transnational dynamics embracing migrants and their families, the local communities and authorities in the places of their origin as well as public authorities of the city where the migrants reside, local non-governmental organizations, and potentially individual persons and other collectives. This may strengthen local citizenship while at the same time involving it in a transnational space.

On that background I argue that we are observing the constitution of new transnational spaces or transnational spaces of new characteristics – which I describe as the transnationalization of local citizenship. Though these are empirically ephemeral phenomenon at this point in time, they pose important conceptual challenges to the study of transnationalization of and in modern societies. Where the nation state used to be considered as a container and sovereign master over territorial borders and membership, we are witnessing new dynamics potentially constituting new spatial horizons for human agency, new forms of transnationalization from below and from above, potentially changing practices, and meanings, norms and values and hence the references for social and political agency.

The structure of the paper is as follows. I will firstly address the relationship between transnationalization and cities. Here I refer to the concept of local citizenship which is particularly of importance in the face of increasing migration and diversity in cities, because it allows for reconciling local inclusion and transnational involvement. I then briefly go into the literature on migrants’ transnational practices and ties, which contribute to cities’ transnationalization. Secondly, I describe the process of transnationalization of local citizenship based on some empirical findings from my own research and some other studies. This process differs from migrant transnationalism in the sense that it draws new actors in the transnational realm. Thirdly, in order to discuss the implications of these empirical phenomenons for further conceptualization of processes of transnationalization I discuss the transnationalization of local citizenship in relation to the concept of transnational social spaces and some of its components. Finally, I end by discussing briefly whether this means that we all become part of a transnational space in the face of these developments.
2) Transnationalization and the City
Cities are the prime targets of migrants today. With growing intensity are cities today facing situations of migrants’ super-diversity (Vertovec 2006) and migrants’ transnationalism (Smith 2001). Cities are the places where most migrants live and work and they are the places where transnational practices materialize. Local citizenship is becoming of growing importance as respects membership, identity as well as social and political participation in the local arena. It allows for constituting membership below the level of the nation-state and to a certain degree independently from it; and it allows for membership of a transnational nature, i.e. simultaneous attachments to more than one place – in two different countries for example - at the same time and hence accounts for membership beyond the nation-state.

2.1 Local citizenship
Whereas membership on the national level still is very much related to national citizenship or nationality, local citizenship offers a concept to grasp dynamics on lower levels of governance and within sub-national territorial circumscriptions. Membership on sub-national levels does not necessarily coincidence with national membership. The idea of exclusive nested-ness of citizenship – making inclusion on one level dependent on inclusion on one, and only one higher as well as one and only one lower level – is being challenged by these dynamics (Bauböck 2003a)

Citizenship refers to the relationship between the citizen and the state as well as among the citizens vis-à-vis one another. It so denotes the social integration of modern societies, predominantly conceived as national societies bounded to nation-states. Citizenship can be defined in terms of membership, rights and duties within the boundaries of the political community and demarcates those being included from those subject to exclusion. However, disagreement on the substance of contemporary citizenship is widespread (Kivisto and Faist 2007: 2)

Newer discussions bring citizenship back to where it originated, to the city (Bauböck 2003a; Penninx et al. 2004a; Rogers and Tillie 2001; Tsuda 2006a). Local citizenship is meant to conceptualize social cohesion and democratic participation in the face of increasing migration and diversity in European cities (Andrew and Goldsmith 1998; García 2006; Penninx et al. 2004b: 7) Exclusion on the national level – from political participation or social rights for example, is often accompanied by inclusion on the local level. Foreign migrants often do not enjoy the rights confined to nationality of the country where they reside, but nevertheless may be granted political and social membership by local governments. Migrants may also more easily identify with their locality of residence without giving up the bounds of social and
political membership of their home country. Whereas modern statehood has brought “the city, province and the state [to] form a nested structure composed of smaller communities that are contained within larger one” (Bauböck 2003a: 140), this container thinking is increasingly questioned by local and transnational dynamics. 

Rather than denoting only a formal status, local citizenship highlights access to substantive membership, even when formally excluded, in particular from relation to national categories. Nonetheless local governments also grant formal membership for example when access to social services is legally guaranteed. Membership in the local arena also differs for different social groups and in particular for different categories of migrants. It is generally based on residence and in many instances eligibility to the status of a local citizen depends on certain criteria such as a defined period of residence in that city. In other respects, however, access may be granted on the basis of de facto sojourn applying to a person independently from her formal residence status. This is the case for basic health care and education in Spanish localities for example, which depend upon inscription in the municipal registry not allowing for cross-controlling the residence status of that person. Whereas national authorities are generally more concerned with controlling access to the territory, local authorities are more directly confronted with daily lives of persons. 

Accordingly, local citizenship seems appropriate as to conceptualize local realities which are often particularly complex and can not easily captured within clear-cut terms. Contemporary membership in local communities embraces many formal and informal aspects, cross-cutting, sometimes contradicting one another. Criteria for access to substantial social rights may be very different than those for municipal voting rights, and these vary for different social groups and categories of migrants. 

Local governments have come to play an important role in the reception and integration of migrants. Local authorities are frequently those instances which carry out national policies of integration. However, implementation does not only follow a uniform pattern. In many respects do cities have discretionary powers which may contribute to considerable variations from one to another city. The most prominent example is probably the city of Berlin which in some years accounted for more the half of the naturalization rate of the whole country (Rogers, Tillie, and Vertovec 2001: 4). Hence, local authorities may even play an important role in relation to national membership. 

On many other issues, local governments not only implement national policies, but have their own decision-making competences. In particular social services are a realm in which cities tend to have considerable space of action. This has been further expanded in many countries
across Europe in the course of decentralization policies over the last two decades (Andrew and Goldsmith 1998). Accordingly, local authorities are often engaged in the tasks of integration allowing for economic, social and sometimes even political participation. They grant access to social services, health care and education in many instances. Moreover, many localities in Europe do have advisory bodies and migration councils providing an important basis for political participation and interest articulation of migrants (Andersen 1990). What is more, even if the right to vote still is the right most strictly limited to national citizens making participation in elections generally depended upon naturalization (Rath 1990: 127), we are observing an expansion of voting rights to non-citizens in municipal elections. Apart from the fact, that European Union member states today grant local voting rights to citizens of other member states living in their localities, non-communitarian citizens are permitted active and passive suffrage on the local, sometimes even on the regional levels of government. Out of a sample of 32 European and four non-European states, Waldrauch (Waldrauch 2003) identifies 20 countries in which foreign nationals are already allowed to vote in local elections. More pronounced than elsewhere, seems this situation in the new immigration countries in Southern Europe and other world regions (Pájares 2006; Tsuda 2006b; Tsuda 2006a). Due to the relative novelty of international migration to these countries, comparably few migrants have acquired nationality there which provides the basis for full inclusion in terms of rights. Moreover, the high numbers of irregular migrants currently arriving make local attention even more urgent. And the local governments and authorities in many new immigration countries have reacted earlier to the increasing numbers of immigrants with which they saw themselves confronted most directly. In this context, the generally existing distinction between national concerns for control and regulation of migratory flows versus local preoccupation with daily lives and social cohesion were particularly remarked.

Hence, formal and substantive citizenship exists in many cities, although the content of local citizenship varies considerably in different local contexts and for different categories of migrants (Rogers, Tillie, and Vertovec 2001: 4). Local citizenship refers to (new) forms of membership, rights and practices below the national level. It responds to increasing transnational engagements of parts of the local population, contributing to the transnationalization of cities. This extends to the possibility “that local and regional levels of government are more responsive to migrants’ transnational interests and identities than institutions and actors at the independent state level “ (Bauböck 2003b: 707). In this respect, very recently we observe the immersion of local citizenship in transnational social space, promoted both by migrants and local authorities. In the following we first refer briefly to
transnationalization as a phenomenon of increasing importance, before describing in more detail some newer trends in the next section which can be described as the transnationalization of local citizenship.

2.2 Migrant transnationalism
Migration poses a challenge to conceptions of citizenship as bounded to territories and confined to nation states defining a national political community. First, international migrants often do not hold the nationality of the country where they reside and are not members of the nation in historical and cultural terms. And second, they create transnational linkages towards the country of origin. Hence, local citizenship may allow for reconciling parameters of simultaneous local and transnational inclusion and practices.

Transnational ties and practices of migrants include many different forms of political, economic, civil-societal and cultural engagements (Itzigsohn et al. 1999). Membership and activism in political parties or movements of the country of origin are one example as refers to political practices, weaker forms refer to electoral participation in the constituencies of origin (Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Levitt 2001; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003b; Smith 2001). Many studies have reported on the political campaigning of election candidates from one country among the communities residing abroad, in particularly in US’ big cities like New York, Los Angeles or Boston. At the same time, US residents also became candidates in their constituencies of origin) and migrants have mobilized in favour and against the governments of their country of origin (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003a; Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003b). In economic terms transnational businesses (Portes and Guarnizo 1991) and other broader economic activities, in particular in relation to remittances sending are well reported. Transnational social activities concerned with migrants’ needs and values exist in both residing locations for purpose of socialization and mutual help, and in locations of origin intending to improve contacts and images of the absent, for example. And in cultural respects usage of media, be it television, print, radio or the internet, as well as dance, music, literature support the maintenance and institutionalization of border-crossing identities for first generation migrants as much as for their descents (Itzigsohn et al. 1999). Hence, transnationalism from below reaches far beyond the individual, family and kinship networks. It includes business networks, political movements, and transnational migrant organizations of diverse kinds (Faist 2000).

In particular transnational community development has expanded over the last decades. In the US much research has been conducted on ‘home town associations’ based in US American cities and Latin American villages simultaneously (as an example see Levitt 2001). In Europe,
and here maybe earlier than elsewhere in France, migrant organizations became engaged in community development around the mid-1980s, and gained more visibility since the mid-1990s (Lacroix 2005: 99ff.). In France the term OSIM (Organisation de solidarité international issue de la migration) is now well established to denominate migrant associations engaged in international development. Transnational engagements of this type are strongly related to an emphasis on local development which emerged at the end of the 1980s, beginning of the 1990s. Thus, associations related to migrants offer connections to the villages of origin, constituting a “role d’interface” (Lacroix 2005: 102) between the site of origin and that of settlement. In the meantime transnational community development has been taken up by co-development approaches focusing in particular on decentralized cooperation, local development, and migrant engagement (see below).

Transnationalization has also taken shape from above. Sending states’ governments started to engage in this context, promoting migrants’ attachments and loyalties to the country, fostering remittances and economic investment and in increasing instances allowing for participation, extraterritorial voting rights and dual citizenship for their citizens living abroad (Itzigsohn 2000, see Tab. 1, p. 1132; Smith 2003).

Lesser account has been given to the sub-national levels in their employment of strategies of transnationalization. Local and regional governments however show many intents and successes in remaining connected to their fellow citizens and interact with them in many different ways. In particular the well documented case of US Mexican transnational politics, is characterized by strong regionalism on the Mexican side (Smith 2003: 473). The famous matching-fund programme tres por uno, for example, first started as a programme negotiated between the Zacatecan federal state and the federation of Zacatecan migrants in Los Angeles; only later on it had been elevated to the central government level (Goldring 2002: 937).

Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald 2006) highlighted the role of local sending governments in Mexico challenging and counteracting the central governments purposes throughout great parts of the history of Mexican migration to the US. Through legal, de facto and symbolic activities Mexican local governments followed their own interests in the management of migration, constraining, promoting and channelling it at different times. Sub-national activities have often been in overt contradiction to central governments’ interests.

As respects the side of immigration, scholars have highlighted the living conditions and opportunities provided by the particular integration policies at work. It has been argued, that countries with more restrictive and stronger assimilationist polices like Germany contributed to transnational engagements, while more liberal policies promoted stronger identifications
with the political institutions of the settling country (Koopmans and Statham 2003). Others have also seen multicultural opening space for the institutionalization of ethnic identification and transnational practices (Faist 2000: 214). Some authors also point to empirical results indicating a positive relationship between integration and transnational engagements, i.e. the economically and socially better-established are more likely to engage in transnational activities (Morawska 2003;Portes 2007).

While the rather indirect effects of modes and policies of integration are still subject to academic debate and research, explicit policies directly promoting migrant transnational engagements are currently emerging. In particular local authorities are becoming proactive in addressing migrants’ transnational engagements. In the context of development cooperation, its decentralization and its nexus with migration and migrant communities, municipalities have started to promote migrant transnationalism, potentially changing local citizenship and contributing to what I would like to describe as the transnationlization of local citizenship.

3) The transnationalization of local citizenship
In addition – but of course not independently - to migrants’ transnationalism building upon migrants’ practices and political institutionalization, there are newer dynamics additionally contributing to transnationalization from above and from below. In the context of co-development policies and practices local citizenship is becoming involved in transnational social spaces, as I would like to argue. Increasingly, dynamics of transnationalization are involving many actors and institutions, beyond migrant communities, public and non-public, of the local communities on the side of reception and of origin. These potentially embrace entire cities symbolically, discursively and in real practices. The newer debates and activities by sub-national levels on the side of reception in the promotion of migrant transnationalism may fundamentally change the structure of transnational spaces. This may also fundamentally change the horizon of local agency.

In the framework of current debates around the migration-development nexus, migrants and migrant communities are being identified as agents of development. Transnational engagements of migrants, their individual and collective contributions in form of financial remittances are attracting greatest attention. Nonetheless, the involvement of migrants in community development in the localities of origin also came into the spotlight. The promotion of such cross-border activities has been summarized by the term co-development. The notion and concept of co-development gained prominence with a French governmental report in 1997 (Naïr 1997), but had been discussed long before in France (Lacroix 2005: 226).
The report argued in favor of “another perspective on migration” linking the policies on migration flows and development cooperation efforts as a necessity and responsibility of immigration countries towards the emigration countries considering their potential losses and intended to make a contribution to stabilize migration. This concept referred to the involvement of migrant actors in development cooperation, to valorisation of small-scale projects and to a strategy of decentralization concerning the incorporation of lower levels of government and (non-governmental) actors in development cooperation including the establishment of direct relations with civil society (Naïr 1997). It is particularly related to an emphasis on local development, and at the time of its emergence to assisted voluntary return (Lacroix 2005: 100). The relationship with return is still existent, but has been supplemented by other foci since then; the emphasis on return lost its primary importance in many of the projects which are currently being implemented.

I will not enter into the many different meanings of co-development or discuss whether the concept makes sense or not or whether it has any chance to improve development cooperation and living conditions of people. I also do not reflect on whether any such project is successful. I am interested in the process of transnationalization itself, in the conceptual changes this policy and the involvement of new actors implies.

The concept and the instruments of co-development had influence in many European countries, especially in France itself, in Italy (Grillo and Riccio 2004; Piperno and Socchiero 2005) and in Spain (Fauser 2007; Giménez et al. 2006; Pacheco Medrano 2003) and term found its way into the Tampere European Council Summit Conclusions in 1999 (European Council 1999). In the meantime many local governments are intensively involved in co-development policies. These policies, however, do not only constitute a new line of public action on the side of municipal and regional public authorities. What is important and new is “the involvement of a variety of local institutions of actors ‘here’ (regional and municipal authorities, NGOs, and crucially associations, based locally in France [or other countries] but representing particular villages or clusters of villages where migrants originate, with funding from the state or the EU) and counterparts (local authorities, NGOs, village associations) ‘there’ in the South” (Grillo and Riccio 2004: 100).

In Italy local authorities started to follow such approaches in the late 1990s. There NGOs have asked for advice by migrants from countries where they had been working, and migrant organizations entered into contact with Italian regional authorities providing funding and assistance for their projects in localities of origin as well as concerning training courses for future transnational entrepreneurs in Italy (Grillo and Riccio 2004: 102ff.).
In Spain the term and concept started to be reflected in local policies from the mid 1990s onwards. In the meantime many regional and local governments have included policies of co-development in their immigration and development schemes (Aubarell, Oliván, Aragall 2003: 408ff.; (Giménez et al. 2006: 145-167). Maybe the conditions for such policies were particularly favourable in Spanish cities. Decentralized development cooperation has been an integral part of Spanish development policy and its infrastructure since the post-dictatorial democratization. Municipalities started to address issues of social exclusion in third world countries and international solidarity already in the mid 1980s. At the beginning of the 1990s, in the context of a strong 0.7%-campaign, demanding the accomplishment of the devotion of this share of public budgets to developing countries as promised in UN declarations, municipal development cooperation was formally institutionalized in many Spanish cities and towns (Ruiz Jiménez 2006). Since then, contrary to the Spanish development aid, which declined and then stagnated since 1993, local and regional expenditures are continuously growing. For 2005 these make for around 388 million Euros, 15% of the Spanish ODA. On average Latin America receives 55.5% of these funds, whereas 13.2% go to Sub-Sahara Africa (Intermón-Oxfam 2005). Today, decentralized cooperation is one of the most characterizing and dynamic features of Spanish development policy (Ruiz Jiménez 2006: 26). Moreover, at the beginning of the 1990s particular political institutions, municipal departments, and their funding lines as well as many non-governmental actors previously engaged with international solidarity re-directed and more often included into their focus the newly arriving immigrants. In Madrid and in Barcelona, for example, throughout great parts of the 1990s, measures for the reception and integration of increasing migratory inflows were financed within the frameworks of the municipal budgets for development cooperation. After having separated municipal funding lines for development and integration, since a few years the city of Madrid as well as the municipal network Fons Catalá de Cooperació al Desenvolupament also include co-development funding lines (Fauser 2007).

Based on a survey on co-development projects in different Spanish regions and cities Romero et al. identify two selection criteria: the number of migrants living in a place and the previous focuses of development cooperation. Projects concentrate on regions and localities from which great communities live in the respective Spanish cities and towns. This relationship not only relates to migrant organizations, where it seems most natural; also non-governmental organizations tend to prioritise those regions for co-development projects, where the most numerous communities come from (Giménez et al. 2006: 155). This also reflects the policy guidelines of municipalities which explicitly call for a prioritization of source regions for
migration to the respective city for development cooperation and co-development projects. Accordingly Catalan projects show a strong focus on Maghrebian and Sub-Saharan African countries from where great communities in Catalan municipalities originate. Municipal and non-governmental actors moreover report on the importance of existing experiences in a country in matters of development cooperation for further projects in matters of co-development. This implies knowledge of the local reality, existence of networks and local counter-parts etc. (Giménez et al. 2006: 156). In some instances, previous relation in matters of development cooperation and prioritization of migrant source regions seems to come closely together

“Where we have been doing development cooperation is where most migrants come to us today; now, we also make co-development projects there, in the very same localities of the migrants’ origin and together with the migrants living here”

[Interview with a representative of a major Spanish Development NGO, 2007]

Moreover, this newer focus in development policies, in some cases also contributes to new geographical foci. In the case of Fons Catalá de Cooperació al Desenvolupament, a collaborative development agency of Catalan municipalities, Africa was not in the focus of the attention before. Only with the emergence of co-development and its linkage with local migrant communities did such a focus emerge (Interview with a representative from Fons Catalá de Cooperació al Desenvolupament, 2007).

On the basis of the rather scarce available research a number of characteristics can be summarized. These however are of a very preliminary nature and further research will be needed in order to more thoroughly account for the phenomenon. To very different degrees co-development approaches and projects show the following characteristics:

- Involvement of migrant organizations
- Involvement of broader migrant communities
- Intensification of relationships between migrant organizations, migrant communities, non-governmental organizations and local authorities as well as the broader local communities on the side of reception and origin
- Strengthening and partly redirecting the focus of international cooperation towards those localities where migrants originate (municipality and non-governmental actors)
- New relationships between local authorities in receiving and origin places
- Building upon and institutionalizing new city twinnings between localities of migrant origin and reception
- Addressing classical development cooperation (economic investment, infrastructure, health care, infrastructure, vocational training etc.)
- Including projects on vocational training and capacity building carried out in the city of reception as well as of origin (in relation to voluntary return, transnational entrepreneurship and more classical development cooperation)

1 see for example Memoria 2002 Cooperación al Desarollo, Ayuntamiento de Madrid or Plá Director de Cooperació Internacional i Solidaritat 2006-2008 of the City of Barcelona
• Improving the potentials of migration (encouraging and facilitating remittance sending and collective investment)
• Engagement of local authorities in migration management, in particular on the side of reception (return, migration support, emigration, family reunification, training)

Projects of this kind bring actors and authorities on the sites of origin and settlement closely together; some of the projects are carried out on the side of reception and others are based on the side of origin; non-governmental organizations and migrant associations and communities enter or reinforce interactions and exchanges, supplemented by incorporation of local counterparts. Given the fact that migrations tend to concentrated geographically within one nation state particular transnational spaces emerge in particular cities. These dynamics draw many new actors of the local context into transnational social spaces. Not only the migrants themselves, their families and communities and the authorities in the localities of origin get involved in transnational social spaces. More and more, members and authorities in the localities of migrants’ settlement are also becoming part of it – in practices and identity and maybe also in opposition to this process. There potentially emerges a new frame of reference for local agency. This places local citizenship in transnational spaces.

4) On some crucial components of transnational social spaces
In order to reflect on the conceptual implications, I would like to discuss what I term the transnationalization of local citizenship in relation to existing conceptions of transnational social spaces and their components. Therefore, the transnationalization of local citizenship shall be related to three components relevant to the study of transnational spaces: to the question of who is a member of the transnational space, to the role of migration systems, and to the meaning of transnationalization.

Transnational spaces have been differently conceptualized. Though definitions commonly are not defined in opposition to one another, there are different perspectives on what transnationalisms or transnational social fields and spaces embrace. First of all, a perspective on transnationalism in the study of migration opens to the opportunity to acknowledge the existence of immigrant networks across national borders. Therefore transnational migration is not to be equated by movement across borders. It rather concerns the participation in networks and the existence of social relationships of persons across borders (Glick Schiller 1999: 96). Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, expl. 1994: 7) define transnationalims as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”. Itzigsohn et al. (Itzigsohn et al. 1999) asked
whether the concept should include “migrants only” in that they “[are] involved in continuous dealings between two countries”, or whether “it [does] also include people that remain in the home country” (Itzigsohn et al. 1999: 320). Thomas Faist has argued that a transnational social space is “inhabited by immigrants and refugees and immobile residents in both countries” (Faist 2000: 200). Moreover, transnational approaches generally take into account the political institutions and governments of both sides involved in the constitution of transnational spaces.

Although considerations do include not only movers, but also immobiles on both ends of the transaction most research has been conducted on the involvement of migrants, their families and the communities ‘back home’ in transnational practices and spaces. Migrations researchers have also investigated the newer policies of governments in countries of migrants’ origin in their intent to foster transnational attachments. Very little account, though, has been given to the governments and members of the societies on the other end – the receiving site. However, the processes of transnationalization of the type I describe suggest to more thoroughly consider non-migrants or immobiles as potentially being part of transnational spaces, including those on the side of reception. These may be differently involved, though.

Following Itzigsohn at al. we can distinguish transnationality in a broad and a narrow sense.

Transnationality in a ‘narrow’ sense refers to those people involved in economic, political, social or cultural practices that involve a regular movement within the geographic transnational field, a high level of institutionalization, or constant personal involvement. Transnationality in a ‘broad’ sense refers to a series of material and symbolic practices in which people engage that involve only sporadic physical movement between two countries, a low level of institutionalization, or just occasional personal involvement, but nevertheless includes both countries as reference points (Itzigsohn et al. 1999: 323).

Economic, political, civil-societal and cultural activities may then be considered broad or narrow according to their position on the continuum along these three dimensions institutionalization, participation and movement. “The sum of these practices constitutes the transnational field” (ibid.: 335), the Dominican transnational field in this case.

Membership in a transnational space is not necessarily confined to nationality, though. Broad or narrow transnationalism, strong or weak ties of social and symbolic nature (Faist 2000, Chap. 4), may be applicable to any person whether she has ever migrated or not, or hold one nationality or another.

“Overall, the concept of transnational social spaces explores the principles by which geographical propinquity, which implies the embeddedness of ties in one locality, is supplemented or transformed by transnational exchanges” (Faist 2004: 4). Propinquity then
can no longer be seen to be constituted upon physical, face-to-face exchange alone, it gets expanded in a transnational dimension towards social proximity in cross-border spaces. The ties these spaces build upon may be both social and symbolic. Whereas “social ties are a continuing series of interpersonal transactions” (Faist 2000: 101), symbolic ties “can be mobilized in the absence of earlier direct contact” (ibid.: 102). “Symbolic ties are perceived bonds, both face-to-face and indirect, to which participants attach shared meanings, memories, future expectations, and representations” (ibid.).

Hence, we can not only focus on personal movement of people, travelling frequent or only occasionally, though this is an important component, promoted by accessibility of new technologies on communication and travel. Nonetheless, I would like to point out, that involvement is an important category, which may include movement but also many other ways of maintaining intense linkages, displaying transnational practices and identifications. Local membership then changes in this process reconfiguring the ties among citizens and between them and the authorities in two or more localities, constituting new relationships of social proximity.

The pre-existence of such proximity yet is another important component in the conceptualization of transnational social spaces. According to the migration systems approach migration takes place within the frameworks of historical (often colonial), political and economic relations between particular places or countries. Early migrations often build upon such pre-existing relationships including particular treatment of the respective citizens, for example free movement or facilitated access to the territory or labour recruitment. These provide a basis for migrant transnational networks and get reinforced in this context facilitating future migration, in form of family reunification, based on kinship networks or other aspects of chain migration. Migration systems exist between two countries for example linked through (post)colonial relations like United Kingdom and today’s Common Wealth Countries where most migrants in the UK come from. However, migration systems do not only exist between nation states, they also display local characteristics. Cities and regions have particular historical and economic relationships to other cities and regions; due to this and other dynamics, migration is geographically concentrated within one country. Where migratory movements once took place due to regional labour market characteristics and specific regulations, ongoing migrations are most likely between the involved places. In the context of current co-development policies local-to-local migration systems may face additional feed-back loops. Some initiatives are building upon existing trans-local networks on the level of public authorities and city partnerships while others get newly established. In
some localities for example, authorities put a new focus on development and local
development cooperation in Africa due to African migrants, where international cooperation
so far had focused primarily on Latin America or the Middle East, like in Catalan
municipalities where migrant communities from Northern Africa and West Africa score high
in statistics. The emerging spaces provide channels for future migrations, not only implicitly
through the strengthening of ties. Many projects also very explicitly consider further
migration intending to inform about formal ways in terms of labour migration and family
reunification, or by providing capacity building and vocational training for returnees as well
as for potential migrants. Thereby municipalities also get involved in migration management.
This adds to the intents of local governments on the side of emigration to control, promote,
constrain or channel outflows depending on the case (Fitzgerald 2006). Further local
authorities are strongly engaged in the promotion of transnational attachments towards their
citizens abroad we can observe in Mexico in particular (Smith 2003). Local authorities have
particular interest in channelling out-migration of their citizens. Local-to-local relationships,
thus, potentially include new aspects of cooperation and conflict over the means and ends of
migration management.
Cities and local communities are becoming increasingly transnationalized. Transnational ties
and networks are departing from cities and arriving there “connecting localities beyond
borders across the globe” (Smith 2001: 4). In this sense M.P. Smith has use transnational
urbanism as a ‘cultural metaphor’ describing „criss-crossing circuits of communication and
cross-cutting local, translocal, and transnational social practices that ‘come together’ in
particular places at particular times” (ibid.: 5). Transnationalization is not a linear expansion
of social spaces over ever broader territories, but rather characterized by a multi-dimensional,
pluri-local and cross-cutting processes (Pries 2002). Not all transnational connections may be
described as dense and stabile spaces involving compression of social relationships across
territorial borders. Beyond a more diffuse or metaphorical transnationalization of urbanity or
in addition to it, we are observing another kind of transnationalization of local arenas.
Different actors displaying different practices get involved in one space or in a limited
number of spaces depending on where migrants originate and on the geographical focus
public authorities prioritize. These have clear geographically located points of reference or
places.

5) Final remarks: Are we all transnational now?
Scholars in transnational migrations have argued to take sociological theory beyond the
national container thinking (Faist 2000; Glick Schiller and Levitt 2004; Wimmer and Glick
Schiller 2002). In this respect it seems particularly fruitful to look at the local level from a transnational perspective in order to account for the social and political processes which are becoming more complex. These may constitute new horizons for agency.

It has been particularly pointed out that “immigrant ties can be both transnational and local” at the same time (Faist 2000: 317, italics in original). Both may even be mutually reinforcing. And increasingly this may also apply to non-migrants. Whether this means that we all are becoming transnational, remains an open question\(^2\). What is clear, however, is the dynamic character of current processes of transnationalization at the local level of which we are only starting to take notice.

Local citizenship, i.e. membership in the local community including substantive as well as formal rights and duties in the social and at points also the political sphere, is increasingly autonomous from the nation state level. Transnational practices and simultaneous membership of migrants seem more easily compatible with local identification than with requirements of national citizenship. In the context of co-development initiatives in European cities, migrant transnational practices and engagements get strengthened, while their local connectedness reinforces. Within these initiatives involved migrant organizations and communities enter into closer contact with local actors and authorities fostering their local incorporation. Hence, local citizenship might also be reinforced. The nature of this approach embracing local authorities on the side of migrants’ reception, migrant communities, and non-governmental organizations of diverse kinds, as well as civil society counter-parts, municipal administration and local governments on the side of migrants’ origin places local citizenship in transnational spaces. However, conditions will not be the same for all persons, and new forms of inclusion and exclusion will emerge in parallel.

Within these spaces public authorities and migrant groups on the receiving site to engage in the project of democratization in the origin localities, challenging local elites by anti-corruption policies are being brought together; this may connect migrants and non-migrants on both sides against restriction on migration; local government of origin and migrants abroad may collaboratively advocate for improvement of living conditions of migrants; and networks of solidarity may emerge providing potentials for closer international cooperation as well as conflict.

In order to more thoroughly conceptualize these phenomena we need to build upon existing scholarly insights on the nature of transnational social spaces. And we need to engage in empirical research to find out about the characteristics, mechanisms and actors involved, as

\(^2\) Nathan Glazer (1997) has argued that we are all multiculturalists now to emphasise what he see as the “inescapability of the phase we are going through.”
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well as the dynamics and their consequences for social and political action. Only then may we
discuss conceptual implications on a sounder basis. Appropriate methodologies accordingly
need to follow a transnational perspective and hence be multi-sited, multi-level and multi-
actor oriented. Since transnational spaces are regionally specific (Faist 2004: 3), they are
locally distinct, coming together at one end, say a city in Europe, expanding towards localities
in different countries, let’s say in Colombia, Morocco and Senegal, which are having
particular characteristics each of them. Hence, multi-city comparison within and across
countries seems especially promising in order to account for the manifold dynamics at stake.

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