



“Gender and Citizenship. Inquiries from intercultural, feminist and decolonial perspectives”

Monday, 1st - Tuesday 2nd, December 2014

TRANSNATIONALISM ACROSS GENERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Transnationalism has emerged as a core concept to describe the complex international migration flows. But how can we conceptualize the transnational experience through generations? How are the subsequent generations following migrant generation affected by transnationalism?

Although we can discuss that transnational ties and practices can have different patterns and intensities amongst generations, we cannot ignore that there is an intergenerational succession and reproduction of transnational ties, practices and patterns. Transnationalism is not a one generation phenomenon as the socialization process occurs in a transnational space which as influence and an important impact on identities and life trajectories across generations. The generational experience is not a linear process, national embedded but rather an imagined experience across borders (Levitt 2009, Anderson 1991; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001).

This paper is part of ongoing PhD project, named “Gender and generations: processes of transition to adult life of young descendants from Portuguese speaking African countries”, which adopts a comparative methodology between young descendants from PALOP and their parents in what concerns representations and transitions to adulthood. The aim is to reflect and discuss the importance to capture the complexity and plurality of transnational families adopting an intergenerational perspective. Although the importance to capture and research how transnational ties and patterns are reproduce and maintained across generations, is crucial to go further in the transnational approach in generational studies. It’s important to consider that generational transnationalism is not limited to specific practices and patterns, but are also important in the analysis of other life experiences that have impact in the different stages of development of migrant children. For example, considering the generational reproduction of legal status, adopting a transnational approach to citizenship allows recognizing the different forms and practices that go behind the national frontiers. The concept of transnational citizenship (Fox, 2005) is particular



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interesting in this case, as the majority of children of PALOP migrants, have today between 15 and 30 years, and besides have been born in Portugal, have the parent's nationality at birth. Many of them have never been in the parents' country of origin possessing a nationality of a country that they do not know at all. The notion of a transnational citizenship or nationality takes full extent in this case where transnational children and young adults most of time take the risk to live a (sub) emerging rather than emerging adulthood (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Terramishi & Suárez-Orozco, 2011).

This paper also aims to discuss the boundaries of transnational approach, going beyond the dichotomy between country of origin and migration country, has most of the transnational families interviewed have at least one member newly migrated. For one hand, most of this young adults have migrated to other European countries in the context of the Portuguese economic crises who lead to a massive youth emigration cycle in the recent years. On the other hand, some parents have recently migrated, returning to their country of origin. Their children, most of them young adults, have stayed in Portugal

The paper also aims to contribute to the discussion of how transnational experience can be very different from one generation to another and how this can cause generational differences that are significant and must be acknowledge.

Fouron, Georges, e Nina Glick Schiller. 2002. «The Generation of Identity: Redefining the. Second Generation within a Transnational Social Field». In *The Changing Face of Home: The transnational lives of the second generation*, eds. P. Levitt and M. Waters. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 168-208.

Fox, J. (2005). Unpacking "Transnational Citizenship". *Annual Review of Political Science*, 8, 171-201.

Levitt, Peggy. 2009. «Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally», [*Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35, 7](#): 1225 – 1242.



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Suárez-Orozco, M., Teranishi, R. T. & Yoshikawa, H. (2011). Growing Up in the Shadows: The Development Implications of Unauthorised Status. *Harvard Education Review*, 81 (3), 438-472.

Vertovec (2001) ‘Transnationalism and identity,’ *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (4): 57 3-82