

**Social Classifications and Inequalities:  
Ideologies of Mobility, Care and Work in  
Transnational Families**

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## **DFG Research Center (SFB) “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities”**

Whether fat or thin, male or female, young or old – people are different. Alongside their physical features, they also differ in terms of nationality and ethnicity; in their cultural preferences, lifestyles, attitudes, orientations, and philosophies; in their competencies, qualifications, and traits; and in their professions. But how do such heterogeneities lead to social inequalities? What are the social mechanisms that underlie this process? These are the questions pursued by the DFG Research Center (Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB)) “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities” at Bielefeld University, which was approved by the German Research Foundation (DFG) as “SFB 882” on May 25, 2011.

In the social sciences, research on inequality is dispersed across different research fields such as education, the labor market, equality, migration, health, or gender. One goal of the SFB is to integrate these fields, searching for common mechanisms in the emergence of inequality that can be compiled into a typology. More than fifty senior and junior researchers and the Bielefeld University Library are involved in the SFB. Along with sociologists, it brings together scholars from the Bielefeld University faculties of Business Administration and Economics, Educational Science, Health Science, and Law, as well as from the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) in Berlin and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. In addition to carrying out research, the SFB is concerned to nurture new academic talent, and therefore provides doctoral training in its own integrated Research Training Group. A data infrastructure project has also been launched to archive, prepare, and disseminate the data gathered.

## **Research Project C3 “Transnationality, the Distribution of Informal Social Security and Inequalities”**

The goal of this project is to determine the influence of transnationality, as a characteristic of heterogeneity, on the ways that migrants and their families in emigration and immigration countries access and utilize "informal" social security. The study extends across transnational spaces between Germany and Turkey, Germany and Poland, and Germany and Kazakhstan.

The question guiding the research is how transnationality influences the distribution of informal social security and resulting inequalities. Particular emphasis is given to the impact of transnationality on the use of informal services such as childcare, care of sick relatives, money transfers, assistance with integration, and job placement.

The project's focus is on three areas. First, it asks how and under what conditions transnational support strategies take shape. Second, it analyzes the reciprocal influence of migrants' informal support strategies and formal national welfare regimes. Third, it describes mechanisms that produce inequality-related effects in connection with categories such as "gender," "ethnicity," "class," "nationality," and "religion" in the field of migrants' social welfare.

To achieve these goals, the study applies a mixture of methods: interviews with selected migrants and their relatives, participant observation, expert interviews with representatives of institutions and associations, and document analyses. In line with the principle of multi-sited ethnography, data is collected in collaboration with local partners in both the immigration country and the emigration countries.

### **The Author**

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# **Social classifications and inequalities: Ideologies of mobility, care and work in transnational families**

Karolina Barglowski

## **Abstract**

Recently, social inequalities at the intersection of migration and care became a highly debated topic. This article contributes to existing literature on social inequalities in migration and care by going beyond debates about 'care drains' and 'care chains'. I argue that distinct features of social inequalities in transnational social spaces are overlooked when not taking into account the 'symbolic' dimension of care, work and migration. I investigate ways and processes of task division within transnational families, who are involved in caring for and about each other within and across borders, from the lens of social classifications, understood as systems of knowledge and perceptions which are generated in and guide social interactions. 20 interviews with migrants from Poland in Germany and 10 interviews with their significant others in Poland reveal that in transnational spaces, classifications are guided by structures of (at least) two countries, which may interrelate, producing new classifications and also reproducing older ones. I show how meanings of work and care are affected by migration, causing inequalities in access to resources and life chances alongside heterogeneities, such as ethnicity, gender and generation.

**Keywords:** Care, Social Inequalities, Transnationality, Bourdieu, Intersectionality, Social Classifications

## **1. Introduction: The migration-care-nexus**

Since the beginning of the 2000s, social scientists have pointed out that international migration is to a great extent ethnicized and gendered (Anderson 2000; Hochschild 2000). This is especially the case when it comes to care, which is generally defined as the looking after the physical and emotional wellbeing of people in need. Care is regarded as structuring migration streams from the global South and East to the global West and North, responding to care needs in immigration countries and tensed socio-economic conditions in the emigration countries (Anderson 2000; Hochschild 2000; Lutz 2011). Previous studies obtain their findings from research on different transnational spaces and with different research focus, yet they all detect an emerging global underclass at the intersection of gender and 'race'. This emerging

underclass is primarily involved in taking care of children and the elderly in the so-called 'developed' countries, often times leaving their own dependents behind (see debates on 'Euro-Orphans' and 'Global Care Chains', see also Parreñas 2001; Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2011).

In contrast to showing the risks at the intersection of care and migration, some scholars emphasize migrants' agency, either by analyzing how migrant women overcome gendered deprivation in their families by becoming economic subjects (Erel 2002; Morokvasic 2007); or how norms of parenting can be met despite geographical distance (Parreñas 2001). Lutz (2008) also indicates that care work abroad may be a stepping-stone for migrants into regular or at least less precarious employment. However there are also critical voices towards emphasizing migrant's agency. Williams (2010), for example, argues that this agency is highly constrained as it is embedded in gendered familial obligations and inequalities.

Three simultaneous processes are held to be accountable for the high relevance of migration and care for social inequalities: *First*, demographic changes in terms of aging populations and increased female labor market participation have evoked debates in 'western' societies about care gaps. *Second*, global economic disparities and new mobility opportunities made migration an option to earn income for many people around the world. *Third*, certain social groups are held to be naturally called to fulfill care tasks, mostly women who are differentiated in terms of 'race'/ethnicity (see Nakano Glenn 1992)<sup>1</sup>, calling into attention the intersection of various structures of social inequalities.

Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck (2010) present an impressive example for how these three processes that accompany debates on migration and care interlace and become a daily experience of many people in the global North and West. The authors traced a book released in a daily tabloid newspaper (*Bild-Zeitung*), in which a man presented his experience assuring care for his father. Together with his sister, he was trying to establish good care for their elderly father. In one episode of the book headlined 'The last resort', the narrator quotes his sister:

“I have to do it. You always were the great guy’, she screamed, ‘you were the man around here’. She, as a woman, had to serve this is what was expected of her. After all, that’s how it is in this family. It’s like that in every family, when it comes to nursing, it is the woman’s turn. Then she began to cry. Nothing had been solved”.

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<sup>1</sup> Kofman and Raghuram (2010) with reference to the mentioned study by Nakano Glenn (1992), state that “racialized and subordinated groups are often assigned caring roles while their own needs for care are neglected.” (ibid: 3).

The 'solution' finally arrived in the last episode, as 'An Angel from Poland': "Teresa, a petite nurse speaking broken German, gave father back his enjoyment of life on the very first day – for 1,100 Euro a month" (N.N. 2007d: 9, quoted in Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2010: 422-423). Although gendered task division change, for instance by rising rates of female employment, care tasks still are perceived by female family members to be indicative of their role. Some women though, and usually the most privileged ones, like in this example, can be freed from their 'duties' by hiring migrant women. Thereby causing new inequalities between women at the intersection of class and ethnicity/'race'.

The allocation of tasks to certain gendered and/or ethnicized groups has been studied extensively until now. Mainly the focus has been either on outcome, for example in hindered labor market participation for women, or in terms of exploitation of migrants in care sectors (Erel 2002; Kofman and Raghuram 2009; Morokvasic 2007; Parreñas 2001; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2011). The ascription of care tasks is usually investigated within the framework of nation states, or in regards to the migrant or 'ethnic' care worker (Nakano Glenn 1992). While the mechanisms underlying the task division still need empirical and conceptual attention (Knapp 2012), I argue that mechanisms of task division are even less studied in transnational social spaces with distinct forms of social inequalities (Faist 2014). Transnational social spaces connect at least two nation states and therefore are characterized by overlaps in social structures, institutions, knowledge, ideologies and discourses. People located in transnational social spaces, such as migrants and their relatives in the emigration countries, often experience differences, for instance in interpretations of 'gender' in the emigration and immigration country. Due to their positionings in and between different social contexts, actors' perspectives in transnational research face the additional challenge that meanings and perspectives may be interrelated, as 'cultural interferences or cultural overlaps are the core feature of transnational settings, because pluri-local oriented actors and collectives regularly experience a variety of meaning patterns' (Amelina 2010: 6).

I suggest tracing overlaps in interpretations and meaning patterns between emigration and immigration country from the lens of 'social classifications' as socially shared knowledge about characteristics and abilities of certain heterogeneities<sup>2</sup>, which are (re-)produced and

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<sup>2</sup> According to Diewald and Faist (2011: 4), the term "heterogeneity simply means *difference*, and does not infer social inequality as such. The heterogeneity of a society refers in principle to everything that constitutes the variety and diversity of individuals. Heterogeneities thus touch on two fundamental questions of any analysis of

guide social interactions. The concept of social classification draws on early approaches by Durkheim and Mauss and usually conveys that “[a]ll systems of knowledge, whether primitive or sophisticated, are constituted by the divisions that are drawn between kinds or sorts of thing. Distinguishing like from unlike; deciding what is to count as likeness or unlikeness; balancing the consequences of those decisions; this is how our understanding becomes an orderly affair. In proposing that those classificatory activities reproduce the pattern of social inclusions and exclusions Durkheim and Mauss were offering us a bold, unifying principle” (Bloor 1982: 267).

The concept of social classifications is often related to cognate terms, such as meaning patterns, orientations, interpretations, ‘boundary making’<sup>3</sup> or social categorizations<sup>4</sup>. I use the concept of social classifications because it is tied to the (re-)production of social inequalities through the enforcement of knowledge in social practices. Following Pierre Bourdieu, classifications are lodged in group-specific habitus, as unconscious patterns of thought, perception, and practices. Classifications, thus, can be understood as practices of sorting and grouping. They are powerful because they establish and perpetuate a ‘symbolic order’ (Bourdieu 1989), adjudicating characteristics, dispositions, and consequently societal ‘roles’ to certain ‘groups’, i.e. heterogeneities. Classifications are therefore inherently related to inequalities in access to resources and life chances.

My analysis reconstructs social classifications in the social field of care, conceptualized as all care related practices and institutions, which is transnationalized by migration streams between Poland and Germany. My aim is to indicate some modes of the emergence and the inequality structures of the transnational social field of care. Against the backdrop of the insights from the literature on migration and care, as well as the insights from household task division within clearly bound nation states, I ask how social classifications guide the task division between employment and care in transnational families.

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inequality, namely, on the one hand, who is considered to belong to the society under analysis in the first place, and on the other, between which population groups deemed relevant (within a society) should social inequalities be investigated.”

<sup>3</sup> The concept of social classifications, in that it is tied to enforcement of ‘knowledge’ in social practices, has thereby similarities to processes of ‘boundary making’ (Lamont and Molnar 2002). Yet, I use the term social classifications as it is less related to social identity formation and belonging in terms of marking boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Those are relevant processes in social life, which are though not at the chore of my analysis.

<sup>4</sup> I use the term social categorizations interchangeably with the term social classifications.

My article starts with a short overview of recent research on care, family structure and migration. I then discuss my theoretical framework, which I understand as a heuristic tool of analysis to approach transnational social inequalities. I mainly draw on the concepts of social classifications, symbolic power and intersectionality. Subsequently, I introduce the methodological foundation of the study. In closing, I discuss the classification processes in the transnational social field of care, which mainly refer to ideologies of care, employment and mobility. Classifications are embedded in the distinct structure of the Polish-German transnational social space with assumed differences in life chances.

## **2. Ideologies of care and mobility**

Ongoing public and scientific debates imply a commodification of care, yet studies indicate that most forms of care are still predominantly provided within families (Weicht 2009, Williams 2010). Whereas earlier the family tended to be essentialized as a clearly bound social unit with specific tasks and roles, recently it has become common-sense that the ‘family’ is contingent upon negotiations and established through ongoing processes of ‘doing family’ (Finch 2007). The insight that spatial proximity is not a pre-requisite for ‘doing family’ recently paved the way for a great burden of literature on ‘transnational families’ (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding 2007, Baldassar and Merla 2014). Considering the family as a (the) relevant provider of care, family scholars extensively investigate intergenerational contracts and conflicts (e.g. Bengtson and Roberts 1991), indicate that patterns of task division vary over time and context, and how the negotiation over care tasks influences relationships within families, for instance between distant and proximate siblings (for task division between siblings who reside within one country yet in different proximity to their parents see Hequembourg and Brallier 2005, Roff et al. 2007).

An early account on the transnational implications of care was provided by Clara Baldock (2000), who analyzed the negotiations of migrants’ and their ‘left-behinds’ in terms of care. She indicated that migrants are involved in ‘diasporic care’, i.e. care from abroad, drawing early attention to the multiple involvements of migrants in the emigration and immigration country. Transnational or not, the common denominator of previous literature about care is that dominant classificatory processes are related to gender. Gendered implications of care are prevalent and persistent with low variation in international comparison: women everywhere are the most prevalent care giver, although with some national variation (Bettio and Plantenga 2004).

Despite contradictory evidence from a historical perspective (Faist 2013), the discourse that spatial mobility is a trait of modernity remains prevalent. The mobile- spatially and 'mentally'- person is a dominant figure of modernity often portrayed as a traveler enabled to head out in search of a better life. The social expectation towards 'mobility' though, clearly does not embrace all persons of the world, but only the anyway privileged ones. As Jain states: "While the global 'Proletariat', the 'underdogs', the powerless and marginalized of this world have lost their hope for a 'world revolution' and a substantial improvement of their position and remain bound to local structures, the global class has already conquered the globe through the means of the nets they have casted." (2000: 1; my translation). Those who cannot or do not want to be spatially mobile- within and across borders- remain to be bound to local structures. For them, this means a marginalized position as "...local in a globalized world (...) is a sign of social deprivation and degradation" (Bauman 1998: 2-3).

Ideologies of mobility challenge care, especially in its 'hands-on' dimension (Vullnetari and King 2008), which often requires 'locality' and when it is regarded as 'living for others' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001) it seems to be contradicting contemporary expectations of 'a life of one's own' (ibid.). Therefore, it can be thought of as an arena of struggle over dependency and realization of contemporary life-scripts, for instance in terms of the social expectation towards being mobile. In a transnational perspective, individuals may be faced by overlaps of social expectations, which arise from the connection of different structures of nation states affecting those who are/were mobile and those who are not.

At this juncture, we need to keep in mind that despite contradictory claims, for instance on the level of the 'borderless' EU, not all can freely choose to fulfill contemporary life-scripts through spatial mobility and self-realization with the means of waged employment.

Based on the literature I argue that two questions require further investigation: 1) How are spatial categories interlinked with other social categories, e.g. gender, generation and ethnicity? 2) How do processes of classification work in transnational social spaces?

### **3. Approaching the transnational social field of care: theoretical and methodological considerations**

#### **3.1 Transnationality and the social field of care**

The great burden of literature on care frequently proves its gendered character (Bettio and Plantenga 2004). For most scholars the implications of females' involvement in care are hindered or limited by waged employment opportunities, economic dependency, and fewer contributions into social security systems. However, all of those mentioned implications are the *outcomes* of women's involvement in care. I suggest taking a step back and looking at the classificatory processes, i.e. the ways of perceiving and ascribing certain properties alongside heterogeneities, which can lead to systematic patterns of (asymmetric) task division. In transnational spaces, classifications are guided by structures of (at least) two countries, which may interrelate, producing new classifications and also reproducing older ones.

To overcome national bias in the analysis of task-distribution processes, I first suggest to approach all care-related practices, institutions, and ascriptions with the concept of 'social field' as developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1985). For Bourdieu, a social field is characterized by "symbolic struggles of which the different fields are the site, where what is at stake is the very representation of the social world and, in particular the hierarchy within each of the field and among the different fields" (ibid: 195). Bourdieu's conceptualization serves as a metaphor for the concatenation of field-related actions and can be understood as a microcosm with its own dynamics and inner logics. Fields are more or less autonomous and their underlying special logic is irreducible to other fields. I argue that transnational social spaces consist of different social fields, whose boundaries are fluid. Social fields are characterized by power relations, distribution of various forms of capital, as well as struggles over them. In the field of care, power relations are materialized by shared notions about what good care is and who appropriate care takers (institutions and agents) are. Those 'appropriate' ways of classifying are processed and stabilized by institutions, such as welfare regimes, and by daily practices and evolve 'symbolic power', as a power over the 'minds' of the people in the fields who believe in the natural character of classifications (Bourdieu 1989).

Fields have a double structure which consists of *illusio* and *nomos*. They represent respectively the subjective and objective structures of a given field, yet subjective and objective is not to be understood in the strict sense of 'individual' or 'true'. While *nomos* includes 'objective'

guidelines and rules of a field, they only become 'true' when people 'accept' them (*illusio*) and adopt them into practice, which are social and not individual processes. This tacit complicity with the field's rules together with the unequal positioning within fields is lodged at the level of habitus, which represents a dialectical relationship between macro-structures and micro-practices. Therefore, the social field is a battlefield over the distribution of different forms of capital and power of definitions with opportunities in accessing capital or defining the 'world' unequally distributed within and across fields.

Glick Schiller and Levitt (2002) emphasize the benefits of a social field approach, which by Bourdieu was predominantly thought as nationally bound, to studying transnational phenomena by stating that "[b]y conceptualizing transnational social fields as transcending the boundaries of nation-states, we also note that individuals within these fields are, through their everyday activities and relationships, influenced by multiple sets of laws and institutions. Their daily rhythms and activities respond not only to more than one state simultaneously but also to social institutions, such as religious groups, that exist within many states and across their borders" (ibid: 1010). The authors also acknowledge the interrelationship of different power structures in transnational social fields, which is created by actors who are linked to each other in struggles over resources and social positions (ibid: 1008). Persons located in transnational spaces thus are prone to be simultaneously affected by differing social structures and discourses engendering 'cultural interferences' which have to be negotiated and consolidated in social practices (Amelina 2010). Therefore, social classifications are tied 'symbolic power' and in transnational social spaces, embedded in the interrelation of discourses and structures of at least two nation states.

The analytical openness of the field approach allows for combining it with an understanding of transnationality as (the possibility for) multi-local social practices. It is important to note that the field of care and its boundaries cannot be presumed beforehand, but are reconstructed in the course of research, in the sense of respondents 'doing transnational fields'.

### **3.2 Inequalities in the (transnational) field of care**

Classifications are tied to notions of inequality, in that they produce opportunities and limitations alongside heterogeneities. According to Bourdieu, inequality is a trait of the whole social world, conceptualized as a social space with different social fields. A constant property of a Bourdieusian notion of social fields is the distribution of different forms, values, and quanti-

ties of capital and the struggle over them and over the power of definitions. This makes Bourdieu's understanding of inequality mainly a structural one and focused on occupation status, i.e. class, as the marker for social positioning. In overcoming class-bias or a homogenizing concept of class in inequality research, intersectional approaches draw attention to the various dynamics in which heterogeneities, such as class, ethnicity/'race', gender, age and body (and contingent more) intersect with each other. They claim that the amount and characteristics of relevant structures of inequality should not be theoretically pre-assumed, but rather reconstructed from the empirical field. Although Bourdieu discussed inequalities other than class, for instance gender, he did not integrate them into one coherent theoretical framework, but rather treated other heterogeneities than class as 'secondary variables'. This understanding may be critical, since we can observe old dichotomies disappearing and class positions becoming contingent - for example, who would be the 'winner' in social positioning- a working class 'white' man, a woman manager or a 'minority' man with university degree? Most probably, they are affected by different, yet overlapping, structures of discrimination and oppression.

At the same time tendencies towards the reconstitution of old inequalities persist as some social fields, like labor markets and care, are still segregated according to gender. Therefore, there is a need for an analytical framework that is able to capture contradictory processes and ruptures within heterogeneities. Intersectional approaches focus on such discrepant processes, showing for instance that migrant men sometimes cannot make use of their gendered domination. Accordingly, following intersectional approaches, inequalities arise from the simultaneous impact of diverse forms of power relations, structured by gender, ethnicity, class, and more (Anthias 2001, Walby et al. 2012). It is imperative to reconstruct the distinct structures and dynamics of inequality, which are salient in the social fields.

Because practices are crucial at the chore of the analytical tool of 'social classifications', I suggest to combine the field approach with a more interactional definition to inequality, than a predominantly structural one, while at the same time, it must be taken into account that there are intersecting power relations structuring social interactions. According to Tilly inequalities are "a relationship between persons or sets of persons, in which interaction generates greater advantages for one than for another." (Tilly 2000: 782). These interactions are embedded in limiting or enabling structures and legitimations of systematic asymmetries (or in Bourdieu's words symbolic power), which stabilize the symbolic order of the world that is based on a common sense about its natural character. Classifications based on naturalized assumptions

limit the scopes of action and decision making alongside heterogeneities in the transnational social field of care.

In the field of care, inequalities are mainly (re-)produced by care regimes. They manifest in certain ‘cultural narratives’ about good care and negotiations over who is a good care giver. Care regimes can thus be related to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘symbolic power’ in that they are being represented and enacted in classifications used in social interactions. Besides social interactions, one major agent enforcing legitimate ways of acting in the field of care are welfare states. Welfare states have the power of distributing formalized care options whilst reinforcing family and gender norms and structuring the ways in which care is being conducted, by whom, and with what consequences. For instance, sets of policies steer mothers’ labor market participation. The organization of policies however is also embedded in shared beliefs about gender roles and good care. In transnational social spaces, policies as well as shared beliefs about care originate from at least two nation states with interrelations between regimes (re-)producing narratives and (new) classifications.

### **3.3 A multi-sited approach to transnational care**

The research design is conceptualized as multi-sited<sup>5</sup>. This means that the nation-state is not treated to be the natural unit of reference. Rather the units of reference and the ways of life organization in terms of spatiality are being reconstructed from respondents’ narratives. Units of reference may be local or regional, but also national (Amelina 2010). The empirical grounding of the present study is migrants from Poland living in Germany and their relatives and friends, who at the time of the inquiry were located in Poland. Migration streams from Poland to Germany have a long history dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. People who migrated from Poland to Germany at various points in time are heterogeneous in terms of legal status obtained after migration, as well as in terms of class, gender, and age. The heterogeneity of the population located in Germany that has emigrated from Poland is therefore interesting for tracing care arrangements (across borders) and prevalent inequality structures from an intersectional perspective. Against the backdrop of decreased legal restrictions for those migrating between Poland and Germany, I will show how new legal conditions interrelate with care practices within and across national boundaries.

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<sup>5</sup> The present study is part of the CRC 882 „From Heterogeneities to Inequalities“, project C3 „Transnationality and the Unequal Distribution of Informal Social Protection“ funded by the DFG (German Science Foundation). For more details on data collection and analysis see (Barglowski et al., 2015b).

The data stem from 20 semi-structured interviews which were conducted in 2012 in medium-sized cities in Germany and 10 semi-structured interviews in Poland in places, where interviewees in Germany provided contacts to their relatives (see Appendix for an overview of the sample). The sampling aimed at reaching a heterogeneous sample in terms of migration time, legal status, gender, class and age and followed theoretical sampling as well as snowball sampling with multiple entry points. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim (see Barglowski et al. 2015b).

Using a matched sampling procedure, which means that respondents were asked for contacts to their significant others with, ten interviews were conducted in Poland (three female friends, two mothers, two sisters, one female cousin, one daughter, and one uncle). The interviews were semi-structured<sup>6</sup> aiming at a comprehension of the migration history and different forms of social protection, exchanged locally and/or transnationally. The interviews were analyzed with hermeneutical methods, drawing from social scientific hermeneutics (Schröer 2009, Amelina 2010). The aim was to reconstruct classifications that guide care practices in the sample. The methodology of ‘social scientific hermeneutics’ is drawing on phenomenological sociology and ‘symbolic interactionism’ (Blumer 1986). The reconstruction of intersubjective meanings and orientations is therefore at the core of the analysis with taking into account that intersubjective meanings that generate classifications are also embedded in intersectional power relations (Neckel and Sutterlüty 2010).

#### **4. Mobility, immobility and the intersection of ethnicity, gender, generation**

##### **4.1 The narrative of ‘female’ work**

Care is interrelated with waged employment. Because care is perceived as a task conducted mainly by women, it is their labor market participation which is primarily affected when one speaks of care tasks. One characteristic of migrants is that they often encounter the overlapping of different structures of the emigration and immigration country. In the field of care those differences mainly refer to gender and welfare regimes. They affect how work conducted by women and men is perceived by respondents in Germany and in Poland. While typically the German welfare regime is rooted in the traditions of a male-breadwinner model, with women either not working for wage or working part-time, the Polish welfare regime is cen-

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on the research process and data set, see <http://www.sfb882.unibielefeld.de/de/publications/data> .

tered on a dual-earner income with household tasks that are fulfilled mostly within families and by women (see Barglowski et al. 2015a). People involved in the transnational social field of care are often socialized into different gender and welfare regimes. The encounter of different regimes patterns the ways they perceive the work conducted by them as well the evaluations from their relatives located in the emigration countries. Therefore people after migration often encounter different constellations of task division and ascription of tasks to men and women, than they were socialized into in the emigration country. In terms of gender regimes this may mean that women who were used to a dual earner model with women contributing to the household's income, after migration experience that it is a common way of household task division that women involve mainly in care tasks with institutions supporting this kind of task division. Therefore I experienced during my interviews that women who before migration were employed quit their labor market participation after migration. From (feminist) researchers' perspective women quitting waged employment and involving themselves in household tasks is often interpreted as a gendered inequality, as it makes women economically dependent. Yet, I experienced during my research that some of them evaluate their freedom of not having to be involved into waged employment and care tasks simultaneously as a privilege and a 'migration success'. As Becker-Schmidt (2010) points out, the involvement into two fields makes women prone to double discrimination, in the sense that they are involved in two fields with potentially discrepant logics. Moreover, their involvement in two fields means less capacity for each field compared to a 'full' involvement into one field. The consequence of the avoidance of "double socialization" is that family members in Poland usually do not perceive their relatives in Germany as being in need of material or physical assistance, such as childcare or financial help.

Interviews with migrants in Germany and non-migrants in Poland reveal that one characteristic of the transnational social space between Poland and Germany refers to that in Germany one income is enough to lead an economically satisfying life<sup>7</sup>. One signifier for the perceived better life chances in Germany is that while in Poland women often experience the economic necessity to work for wage and take care of the household, in Germany migrants often experience that one income (usually the male income) is sufficient.

This narrative and expectation have decisive impact on the tasks people are supposed to fulfill and in turn on the spaces in which they can act and navigate. Some migrant women from Po-

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<sup>7</sup> Amelina (2011) found a similar narrative in the German-Ukrainian transnational social space.

land who are involved in care responsibilities (mainly for their children) quit their waged employment and take over household tasks after migrating to Germany. From both perspectives - the migrants and their relatives in Poland- this is perceived to be a positive characteristic of living in Germany, where women seemingly are not compelled to get involved in care *and* in earned employment.

Compared to the life situations in Poland, the possibility to quit waged employment is held to be a privilege in Germany as well as a signifier for a migration success. Those in Poland seem to be in a worse position than those in Germany as they have to work and take care of the children. This is evident in when speaking to the migrants themselves, who often say that “one income in Poland is not enough to survive.” (cf. Barglowski et al. 2015a). One mother living in Poland, whose son is living with his wife and three children in Germany, elaborates on the differences she perceives towards Poland and Germany:

„There [her son and wife in Germany] is only one person working. He is securing the livelihood of the family. And they do not have any problems; they take cars and travel on vacation, just like that. And here, you know how it is. If you have a job, you have to work, When I observe, when we are there [visiting them in Germany], then I think that you can live better there.” (Jagoda, aged 60, Poland).

The narrative of a ‘better’ life in Germany in terms of the avoidance of ‘double sociation’ has however also impact on the evaluation of women’s work, because they in this case are regarded as doing it for their ‘own enjoyment’. This fosters the devaluation of female waged work, also in those cases when they occupy ‘professions’. When asked how she splits tasks within her family, one interviewee who works as a high school teacher, elaborated on not feeling compelled to earn money:

“I connote my employment with self-fulfillment and not with the thought that I gain money for what I am doing at the end of the month. For me it is simply, working to have a satisfying life. That’s why I see the money I earn more like an addition to what my husband is earning. So we do not split tasks in a clear way, but ehm I am more involved in household tasks than he is. He does not have the time or the energy to do it, because he is leaving the house in the morning and returning back from work at 6 or 7 pm. But mostly he is taking care of buying groceries, he is doing the heavy things, taking care of the finances and the car, and I am cooking. Yes cooking, he will never learn that.” (Magda, age 35, Germany)

Magda anticipates that work is a constituent of a satisfying life, but in other realms she practices a classic gender division of tasks, and for instance she leaves the “heavy things” to be

done by her husband. The evaluation of both her husband's and her own work differ in the respect that he is seen as providing the household's financial grounding and she is working for her self-fulfillment. Naturalizing certain tasks within households, which seemingly require a gendered disposition, such as cooking, which is referred to as a task "he will never learn", fosters the reproduction of gendered task division in terms of paid and unpaid work. These classifications do not only exacerbate women's employment, in that they have to combine involvement into two social fields, but it also makes them economically dependent. This is especially true when one considers how this is attached to welfare regimes, which are based on contributions collected through waged employment. In cases of unemployment, future pensions and the absence of a breadwinner may cause precarious situations for women. Their narrative implies that one income is enough to lead an economically satisfying life in Germany and when compared to women's income in Poland, it is considered to be additional. On the other hand this division of tasks imposes men to be the main provider of a household's economic grounding, which in times of un- or underemployment causes serious effects on their health, relationships and family life.

Despite the perceived pressure on women in Poland to earn money in order to provide sufficient economic grounding for the household, this does not mean that the task division within families is more 'equal' in terms of gender. The difference lies in that working for a wage is not assumed by women in Poland to be a matter of self-fulfillment, but rather as a necessity. Nevertheless, women are the ones managing the household.

When asked how a female respondent in Poland divides tasks, she answered in the following way:

"Well we did not agree on details, if there is an uncommon situation then we try to find a solution. I think there are no problems. My husband got our daughter from the kindergarten, I was preparing lunch, he was finishing cooking the lunch, and then when I came back from work at 4 pm everything was warm. My husband waited for me, so we could eat together. Sometimes he did not wait for the soup, when the children were very hungry. But still, I always assured that we eat lunch together". (Gosia, aged 35, Poland)

The task division is so 'natural' to respondents that they do not perceive it as unequal and its naturalized character only comes to the fore in uncommon situations that require a "special arrangement". The uncommon situation in the case mentioned above was that the husband was unemployed for a period of time and therefore could 'help' his wife with taking care of the children and the meals. However, she was preparing the lunch so he could "finish" it in

the afternoon. For example, in the evening she peeled potatoes and put them into the pot and he cooked them in the following afternoon. When the husband is unemployed, it seems to be manageable for women in Poland to combine their household tasks with their jobs. When the husband is employed, assistance from others is becoming necessary. In this case usually other female family members, mostly grandmothers, are getting involved in child care and household tasks.

“If it comes to childcare or related help, such as giving the children lunch, then if I am at work until 6.30 pm, then my mother-in law, who is a really good woman, with whom we have a really good contact helps. I know I can count on her and that no harm would happen to anybody. In cases when my mother-in-law has no time, then I am asking my cousin, Ela, who is the godmother of my daughter. She would stay with her or take her for a walk, when I have some things to do.” (Gosia, aged 35, Poland)

For those female family members who get involved into care tasks, household tasks also lead to hardships related to waged employment. In the above mentioned example, the female cousin and the grandmother are substituting mothers’ care tasks in case she needs to work or has some “things to do”. The involvement of grandmothers into care work may also mean that they take early retirement in order to take care of the grandchildren. By doing so, they enable the waged work of their daughters or daughters-in-law. Jagoda, for example, quits working as a teacher and takes an early retirement to ‘free’ her daughter from child care commitments when the grandchild is born. This strategy is embedded in generational contracts, and taking care of the grandchild is tied to the expectation that her daughter will reciprocally take care of her and her husband in future times of hardship (see Bargłowski et al 2015a).

The gendered task division in terms of females’ ‘role’ to take care of family members combined with either the necessity to contribute to household’s income (in Poland) or to quit waged employment (grandmothers in Poland or mothers in Germany) elucidates by its non-contractual character how pervasive naturalizing classifications shape the scopes of possible actions for certain groups.

#### **4.2 The mobiles and the non-mobiles in the transnational social field of care**

The mobility of family members has also implications for those who do not migrate. Taking a “field of care” perspective, one can observe that non-mobiles are affected by the anticipation of future care commitments. Against the generalized expectation that spatial mobility is tied to notions of social mobility and successful life-scripts, people who are excluded from spatial

mobility may be facing de-privileged positions. Although limited access to social networks, missing economic capital, or legal restrictions are often held to be the main barriers to spatial mobility, involvement in the field of care may also hinder people from spatial mobility. Care commitments become especially hindering when relevant (future) care givers have already migrated and appear to not be available for care tasks. Some people then exclude themselves from spatial mobility. In the field of care, it is most typically women who feel committed to care. For women, especially if they perceive themselves the closest female relatives nearby, involvement in the transnational field of care becomes especially disadvantageous.

“I even do not want to migrate because of my mother. I mean my mother would remain here completely alone. There is nothing more to say, it is clear that I will stay here and take care of her if she will not be able to take care of herself anymore. (...) No my sister will not take care of my mother, I do not even take her into account, because she went away she cannot be expected to take care of it here.“ (Aniela, aged 30, Poland)

Those who have migrated are usually not considered caregivers, especially not in terms of enduring care arrangements. Thus, in order to assure care for dependents in the future, some stay in geographically proximate locations. Anticipated care commitments in the future, together with the migration of parts of a possible caring network may however lead to restrictions in life scripts, for instance when migration is considered to be a viable option to improve your life in whatever respect.

In the transnational social space between Poland and Germany, migration and earning income in the ‘West’ is a common livelihood strategy, and gained a new quality and quantity after 2004 when Poland joined the EU (White 2009). While usually scholars investigate those who migrated, interviews with those who did not migrate reveal that migration for most is an option. I experienced that all respondents perceive the possibility of migrating to Germany or other ‘Western’ countries independent from satisfaction with their economic situation. Therefore those who did not migrate legitimize their non-migration, e.g. because they ‘love’ Poland or because they are hindered by (family) commitments, such as in Aniela’s case. This becomes especially pressuring for those, who are (considered) not satisfied with their economic situation. In both cases, I could observe that those who are not mobile are regarded to be ‘stuck’ and less ‘modern’ by their ‘mobile’ relatives (for a deeper elaboration on both arguments, see Barglowski forthcoming), which often makes them natural caregiver. This seems to yield expectations towards the ‘non-mobiles’, i.e. that they are the ones supposed to be the care givers for dependent relatives in Poland. From the perspective of migrants, those who are

geographically closer will be providing care in times of future care needs. It should be noted however that those anticipations remain tacit and implicit:

„ I live in Germany, thus the probability I will go back to Poland and take care of my grandmother is very low...

I.: Who will take care of the grandmother?

The children that live nearby? Well, there are a lot... (Beata, aged 30, Germany)

“I: Who would take care of your stepmother in Poland, if she needs help?

Tadek: I will not take care. (..)

I: Who else would take care?

Tadek: I think, her children.

I: Did you talk about that?

Tadek: No, I assume they would. Yet, they already do. When I am old, then I can imagine that my sisters would take care of me. They cannot refuse that”. (Tadek, aged 65, Germany)

Here one can see how the main care responsibilities are self-evidently allocated to those who are nearby. Yet, taking into account the discrepant ideologies of care and mobility, I argue that the allocation of care tasks to those nearby is not only structured by their physical proximity, but also by their ‘inner attitude’ of being non-mobile making them self-evident care giver. Against the backdrop of the shared narrative that in Germany it is easier to earn income, those located in Germany often function as financial providers.

“Sabina: Well we have a flat there, which we rent. The rent is transferred to a bank account and if anybody needs money, my aunt or the grandmother, well then it would be passed to them. It is a bank account for emergencies. If something happens, then we are safe, my parents, the grandmother or whatever...

I: So they are safe?

Sabina: Exactly! But my grandmother has seven other children, so when anything happens, then she can be located at theirs without any problems.” (Sabina, aged 23, Germany)

Patterns of task division, which tacitly ascribe who will take care of those in need in Poland occur between those who migrated, those who provide financial resources, and those who have not migrated. From the lens of social classifications the patterns of task division occur to be embedded in ideologies of mobility and care as well as the assumed differences in socio-economic conditions in Germany and Poland.

## 5. Conclusion

This article is devoted to trace classifications in the transnational field of care, which is critical mainly for women and their waged employment. The mechanism behind the prevalence of women in care tasks is the naturalization of caring abilities and tasks, which was until now proven extensively in nationally contoured research. However, I intended to draw attention to the fact that social classifications, for instance in terms of gender, display distinct dynamics in transnational spaces. Indeed, they do not impact the ways women are perceived as caregivers, but rather their necessity to provide household income. The prevalent narrative in the Polish-German transnational space is that in Germany, one income is enough to lead an economically satisfying life, whereas in Poland two incomes are 'needed'. In Germany, this narrative influences the ways women perceive their employment, namely as a matter of self-fulfillment, whereas in Poland women face the necessity to work for wage while combining it with their household's commitments.

The main classifications structuring the field of care and the task division between care and work are related to gender posing hardships for women in combining waged employment with care commitments as well as for men, as they are imposed to secure the household's economic grounding. Female's involvement in labor markets may be evaluated as a matter of self-fulfillment against the foil of comparisons between Germany and Poland sometimes yielding a devaluation of their wage and stabilizing a gendered division of tasks.

A transnational perspective reveals that spatial mobility is a relevant classification determining the allocation of care tasks. As previous literature indicates, both spatial mobility and care are tied to notions of 'successful' life-scripts. Both care and spatial mobility however are related adversatively to social expectations towards individuals, while care seems to contradict discourses of individualization spatial mobility appears as a trait of modernity. When both individualization and mobility (in many senses, such as spatial, intellectual, cognitive and social) are realms of self-realization, the commitment of women to care may contradict their quest for self-realization as well as it often hinders spatial mobility. This is especially salient in the transnational social space between Poland and Germany, which is characterized by a long history of migration and the promise and expectation of a better life in the 'West' with most of respondents implying that one possibility to overcome deprived situations is spatial mobility. Main barriers to spatial mobility are usually referred to as limited access to networks, lacks in financial resources, or legal restrictions. I have shown that the field of care also poses (symbolic) barriers to spatial mobility. Again it is mostly women who anticipate

their role as essential caregivers, which thus excludes them from spatial mobility. On the other hand they are held to be responsible for care, which renders them immobile and spatially proximate, this expectation is often internalized by them and causing a possible 'doom loop': Firstly, they are involved in the field of care, which is a realm tied to notions of 'un-modernity', secondly and simultaneously, they are thereby often excluded from mobility, which is one way through which people are supposed to overcome deprivation.

## Appendix: Overview of the sample

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Language of Interview</b>	<b>Marital Status (Children)</b>	<b>Matched Interview in Poland</b>
Marta	35	German	Married (2)	Mother Janina, 55 Sister Aniela, 30 Friend Dorota, 30 Friend Kamila, 35
Andżelika	40	Polish	Married (3)	Uncle Tadek, 55 Cousin Basia, 25
Agnieszka	40	German	Divorced (1)	Friend Marysia, 40
Janek and Aneta	40	Polish	Married (3)	Mother Jagoda, 60
Jarek and Krysia	55, 45	Polish	Married (2)	Sister of Krysia, Mar- zena, 40
Grzesiek	55	Polish	Married (2)	Daughter Gosia, 30
Adam and Zosia	45, 40	Polish	Married (3)	
Teresa	50	German	Divorced (3)	
Danuta	45	Polish	Married (2)	
Bożena and Darek	40	Polish	Married (2)	
Mateusz	28	German	Single	
Beata	30	German	Single	
Joanna	35	German	Divorced	
Justyna and Piotr	55	Polish	Married	
Emilia	35	Polish	Married (2)	
Tadek	67	German	Divorced (1)	
Waldek	55	Polish	Widow (2)	
Markus	28	German	In a relationship	
Sabina	23	German	In a relationship	
Józef	60	Polish	Married (2)	

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