



Transnationalism

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What is it?

Transnationalism was earlier used to refer to the activities of corporations stretching across national borders. Now, scholars use the term to describe the phenomenon that results when migrant communities maintain relational connections across national borders. When migrants connect with family, friends, and other social groups in the country of their origin as well as the country of arrival, they engage in the economic, social and political well being of both nations. Transnationalism allows for a more expanded practice of citizenship by migrants in countries of origin and arrival, to the extent that citizenship relates to an active civic engagement in a community and not merely to the act of voting or having legal status. Some argue that the economic, social and cultural contributions (remittances) migrants from the Global South (i.e. 'developing nations') send to their countries of origin could aid in 'developing' these nations.

Transnationalism enables migrants to organize themselves based on their ethnic/national identity to claim rights in the country of arrival. Such organizing may result in the creation of transnational advocacy networks, where shared values, shared discourse, and information exchange allow actors across the globe to get involved on issues.

Who uses the concept?

Transnationalism is a useful concept for sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, communication studies scholars, and for those who research globalization, migration, diaspora, and activism.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

Knowledge of culturally embedded communication practices in both the country of origin and the country of settlement often allow those with transnational identities to engage more effectively in intercultural dialogue. In fact, transnationals themselves embody intercultural dialogue, serving as the link between different cultures.

What work remains?

The particular modes of and purposes for migrant transnational engagement, especially as they relate to communication, need to be better understood. Economic restructuring processes such as offshored or outsourced work, as well as online communication, contribute to transnational identity formation without having to migrate to a physical location. This is another productive site for future research.

Resources

- Wan-Ying, L. Song, H., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (2010). Localizing the global: Exploring the transnational ties that bind in new immigrant communities. *Journal of Communication*, 60, 205-229.
- Pariyadath, R. (2015). From BP To Bhopal: Migrant practices of cultural translation for equitable development in the global South. In D. Broudy, J. Klaehn & J. Winter (Eds.), *News from somewhere: A reader in communication and challenges to globalization* (pp. 243-258). Eugene, OR: Wayzgoose Press.