Intersections between Ageing and Migration: Current Trends and Challenges

Intersektionen zwischen Alter und Migration: aktuelle Trends und Herausforderungen

Intersections entre vieillissement et migration : tendances et défis actuels

Ruxandra Oana Ciobanu*, Mihaela Nedelcu**, Eva Soom Ammann***, and Karin van Holten****

1 Introduction

Migration and ageing are two of the main contemporary phenomena challenging modern societies. Although at a first glance they appear to be separate dynamics, there are multiple intersections between the demographic aging of the population and the increasing number of people migrating. Such intersections may be identified in the context of Western European societies, where demographic ageing is partially attenuated by increasing migration. The shortage of social and health care workforce furthermore leads to an increase in migrants being employed in care services for the older population. The migrant population itself is ageing, particularly visible among former "guest-workers" of the post-WW2 period, facing challenges associated to restricted welfare benefits, health disparities and specific age-related needs. Moreover, the predominant policy and research focus on migration as a phenomenon mostly occurring among younger, healthy individuals does not adequately grasp the layers of migration and patterns of mobility over the life course. People of advanced age are moving as well. Such late-in-life migrants engage in mobility for different reasons, be it to live a secure or more comfortable life, to work and send remittances back home, to provide or receive family-related care or to have access to welfare benefits or affordable care services. The objective of the special issue is to

* Université de Genève, CH-1211 Genève, oana.ciobanu@unige.ch. Ruxandra Oana Ciobanu's work on this paper has benefited from support from the Swiss Natonal Science Foundaton through the Professorship Grant "Transnatonal Ageing among Older Migrants and Natives: A Strategy to Overcome Vulnerability", grant number PP00P1_179077/1.

** Université de Neuchâtel, CH-2000 Neuchâtel, mihaela.nedelcu@unine.ch. Mihaela Nedelcu's work on this paper has benefited from support from the Swiss National Science Foundation through the nccr-on the move, IP33 "Transnational Ageing: Post-Retrement Mobilities, Transnational Lifestyles and Care Configurations".

*** Berner Fachhochschule, CH-3012 Bern, eva.soomammann@bfh.ch

**** Careum Hochschule Gesundheit, Kalaidos Fachhochschule, CH-8050 Zürich, karin.vanholten@careum-hochschule.ch

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shed light on the diversity of situations emerging at these intersections, and hence bring to the foreground multiple contemporary societal issues.

2   The ageing-migration nexus: a multi-focal perspective

The literature on older migrant populations emerged and is strengthening its position in migration studies and social gerontology beginning with the 1990s (Bolzman et al. 1996; Dietzel-Papakyriakou 1993). Initially, research on ageing and migration focused on migrants who had migrated as young people and aged in place (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2005; Baykara-Krumme 2013; Bolzman et al. 2006; Bolzman et al. 2017; Hunter 2018; Reinprecht 2006; Soom Ammann 2011). Subsequently, the research focus expanded to embrace increasing complexities resulting from the intertwining of ageing and different types of cross-border mobilities. In their pioneering work on older migrants, Warnes and Williams (2006) distinguished between four groups: affluent retirement migrants (i. e. lifestyle migrants); labour migrants who have reached old age and stay in the country of destination (i. e. ageing in place); labour migrants who return to their countries and regions of origin when they attain retirement (i. e. return migrants); and older persons who follow their children's earlier migrations (i. e. family-joining migration). This initial typology, emphasizing various dynamics within the ageing-migration nexus, has lately been diversified and expanded along with a myriad of long-term and short-term cross-border mobilities of older persons. Thus, more recent scholarship has brought into discussion new categories demonstrating the complex geographies and spatio-temporalities of the ageing-migration nexus (Sampaio et al. 2018). This complexity is further mirrored in the development of different, interdisciplinary and overlapping analytical foci. Without attempting to present an exhaustive overview, we highlight four foci that we consider most prominent in the literature and in relation to the present special issue.

First, the "vulnerability focus" underlines both ageing-in-place and mobile ageing and is related to processes of discrimination, loneliness and social exclusion (Fokkema and Naderi 2013; Victor et al. 2012). Within this focus on vulnerabilities emerging from the ageing-migration nexus, research also reflects on specific needs and insecurities of ageing in place resulting from mobilities and migration (Kobi 2008; Soom Ammann and Salis Gross 2011; Soom Ammann and van Holten 2013). Furthermore, patterns associated to late-in-life labour migration must also be situated in strategies to overcome economic vulnerabilities (Escrivà and Vianello 2016; Skornia 2014; Truong 2011). Older migrants are in particular subject to inequality regarding access to resources (Madero-Cabib and Kaeser 2016). The othering of older migrants can result in discriminations and thus add to this population's vulnerability (Torres 2015). Yet, in the Swiss case, the diversity in the native population (linguistic

regions, federalist system) may lead to increased awareness towards diversities within the older migrant population (Ciobanu 2019).

Second, the "policy focus" refers to the fact that ageing as a migrant and migrating in old age are dependent on structural conditions set by former and current policies (Bollini and Siem 1995; Ciobanu et al. 2017; Soom Ammann 2011). Furthermore, it refers to the roles that welfare states, healthcare systems and migration regimes play by enabling or limiting older people's mobilities (Ackers and Dwyer 2004; Böcker and Hunter 2017; Gehring 2017). In consequence, specifically migration patterns that involve back-and-forth mobilities may be demanding, both with respect to working and living conditions for late-in-life labour migrants (Anderson 2012; Kilkey et al. 2010), as well as for retired migrants opting for pendular mobilities (Baykara-Krumme 2013; Soom Ammann and van Holten 2013, 2014). Finding one's way through complex regulations and restrictions while being involved in two or more systems of labour, social welfare and health care entitlements can also be challenging.

Third, the "transnational focus" sheds light not only on lives and mobilities across national borders and regimes (Horn and Schweppe 2016; Soom Ammann and van Holten 2013, 2014), but also on the transnationalisation of social protection (e.g. Levitt et al. 2016; Myrczik and Franke 2019), support and care (Franke et al. 2019a; Yeates 2011). Research has particularly elaborated on how care and support is provided within transnational families (Baldassar et al. 2007; Baldassar and Merla 2014; Soom Ammann et al. 2013; Zechner 2008), and on what kind of challenges and strategies emerge with regard to (long) distance family care (Zentgraf et al. 2019). For instance, intergenerational solidarities trigger new mobility patterns of older persons, such as in the case of grandparents who provide childcare support in transnational settings (Nedelcu 2009a; Nedelcu and Wyss 2019). In addition, the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is one of the underlining dimensions of present-day transnationalism (Nedelcu 2009b, 2017; Franke et al. 2019b), enhancing new practices of "doing family" at a distance (Baldassar et al. 2016).

Fourth, the "care focus" emphazises the circulation of care not only in the context of intergenerational solidarities within transnational families (Baldassar et al. 2007; Baldassar and Merla 2014; Baldassar et al. 2016; Nedelcu and Wyss 2019), but also in the wake of old age care arrangements involving commodified care in transnational settings. These care arrangements are enabled by global inequalities and practiced within local care settings (van Holten and Soom Ammann 2016; van Holten et al. 2019). They are situated at the intersection of age, gender, class and ethnicity (van Holten et al. 2013; Schwiter et al. 2018a; Schwiter et al. 2018b). Thus, transnational dimensions involve both care for and care by migrants, and they touch upon family care as well as commodified care provided by institutions. Research on institutions may for example involve late-in-life migration to receive

care (Bender et al. 2017). It may also focus on mainstream services being challenged by migrant care needs (Mold et al. 2005; Schwarzer 2018) or providing adapted care for older migrants ageing in place (Jönson et al. 2018; Soom Ammann et al. 2019). Within the latter, there is also an emerging interest in migrant end-of-life and death (Badger et al. 2009; Hunter and Soom Ammann 2016).

Each of these perspectives brings a particular analytical dimension to the forefront. Still, their heuristic value is reinforced when combining them to reflect the vivid dynamics of the intersections between ageing and migration. These dynamics evolve along with different factors: gender norms, cultural values, health and related care needs and obligations, mobility resources, family configurations, life course events, etc.

Thus, we argue that the ageing-migration nexus must be approached from a multi-focal perspective – i e. combining several analytical lenses – that allow to observe dialectic processes that bring together older migrants and non-migrants, young-old and old-old, mobile and immobile, care providers and care receivers, welfare states and personal networks, global north and global south actors, etc.

3   How does this special issue add to a multifocal perspective on the ageing-migration nexus?

The present special issue introduces a selection of theoretical and empirical papers that contribute to better understanding the various intersections of ageing and migration. With regard to the geographical covering of the special issue, Switzerland is the main country of residence the presented papers refer to, but other national contexts such as Germany, Austria, Spain, Morocco, and – importantly – also countries of origin and their policies are addressed.

The article by Repetti and Bolzman commences this special issue by focusing on late-in-life migrations of Swiss men and women aged 65+ who leave Switzerland to live in Spain or Morocco. Based on two research fieldworks including 18 qualitative interviews, this study analyses their motivations to migrate late in life, as well as their care-related experiences in the host countries, in particular with regard to access to social protection systems. The authors show that decisions to migrate in late life are greatly motivated by economic reasons, representing a strategy to acquire better economic security, better access to health provision, and even better social integration and recognition in the host countries. Thus, Swiss pensioners are able to take advantage of global inequalities that govern economies and welfare systems of northern and southern countries in order to improve their quality of life and counteract the precariousness inherent in ageing processes. However, Repetti and Bolzman stress that this form of late-in-life migration does not represent a sustainable response to social and economic vulnerabilities of Swiss older persons. They

call for a more global reflection on future social protection reforms that take into account the increasing transnationalization of life courses, thus pointing to a crucial dimension of the ageing-migration nexus.

The contribution by Jurt and Sperisen focuses on older refugees, who upon arrival in Switzerland are expected to fulfil the same integrative duties as younger asylum seekers, which draws on the labour market and language acquisition. Supportive measures, however, are designed to address younger persons, and specific support ends at the age of 50. In reference to sociological theories of recognition, Jurt and Sperisen explore older refugees' experiences with integrative language courses and describe strategies developed to handle expectations placed on them in the absence of age group adapted supportive measures. Based on interviews with older refugees on their (non)participation in language courses, the authors shed light on how older refugees experience exclusion and how they search for alternative spaces of recognition if legal-societal recognition is refused. Such spaces of recognition may be found in the family or in religious / migrant communities. In this respect, the paper contributes to an important counter-position concerning a tendency in ageing studies to view older migrants as not willing to integrate and preferring retreat to "ethnic insulation". Such positions stem from early work empirically observing such retreat to spaces perceived as "ethnic", as e. g. put forward by the pioneering work of Dietzel-Papakyriakou (1993). The idea that migrants deliberately wish for a retreat to "ethnic" and "family" contexts when ageing is somewhat persistent, and consideration of structural factors leading to societal exclusion and thus to alternative strategies of inclusion are often underestimated. In this sense, the contribution of Jurt and Sperisen also is linked to the papers of Meier zu Verl and Torres in this special issue.

Wyss studies the migration of grandparents, who in the literature are often regarded as an immobile and left behind population, but who actually are getting involved in migration as care providers. Her research on childcare practices of migrants' parents originating in EU and non-EU countries and travelling to Switzerland for shorter or longer periods, shows how structural factors in the form of migration regimes shape different care arrangements. In addition to the migration regimes, the paper looks at how care provision emerges at the intersection between care regimes and gender norms in Switzerland, as well as family models of solidarity and cultural patterns. Relating to theories of intergenerational solidarities and care circulation within transnational families and considering the circumstances in which grandparents' visits occur, the frequency, the duration, and the type of care provided, the author distinguishes six types of care arrangements, described as (1) "intergenerational sharing and transmission", (2) "urgency troubleshooting", (3) "planned troubleshooting", (4) "substituting the mother at home", (5) "celebrating the birth of a child", and (6) "mothering the mother". Thus, this paper's contribution to the discussion on the ageing and migration nexus resides in the focus on the

active role older persons play in transnational families as caregivers for their migrant children and grandchildren.

Using a Foucauldian critical discourse analysis approach in combination with an intersectional perspective, Prieler shows how the images of migrant (live-in) care workers and people making use of around-the-clock home care services are constructed on Austrian websites of intermediary agencies. The analysis is based on a selection of 20 Viennese agency websites, following a comprehensive survey conducted in 2017. Prieler argues that the subject constructions of both those in need of and those providing care are characterized by ambivalence. Hence, she sheds light on how those in need of care are constructed as autonomous customers on the one hand, and as dependent, passive care receivers on the other. With regard to the presentation of the migrant care workers, Prieler documents how they are constructed as self-employed persons, but simultaneously as strangers that need to be controlled and supported. With reference to Foucault, Prieler points to the fact that these ambivalent subject constructions represent a part of the dispositive of 24-hour care which itself is linked to other dispositives, i. e. the ideal of home care or the security / benefit discourse within the Austrian migration regime. She shows how these ambivalent subject constructions are framed by ongoing transformations of the welfare state in the context of neo-liberal austerity and socio-political activation policies. She concludes with the argument that the ambivalence finally helps to individualize structural vulnerability risks and, thus, to (re)produce existing social power relations.

Steiner also studies migrant care workers in private households. She analyses the institutional framing of live-in arrangements that increasingly developed in Switzerland in recent years, thus bringing to the forefront of current debates on old-age care the necessity to pay attention to emerging alternatives for standard nursing care. Combining documentary analysis of relevant legal texts at cantonal, national and supranational level, on the one hand, and semi-structured interviews with different live-in care stakeholders (care workers, family members, recruitment agencies and trade unions representatives) on the other hand, the author shows that the round-the-clock model is a form of old-age care that raises critical questions. Adopting a theoretical perspective based on the sociology of legitimation, Steiner argues that the legal framing of this model results from a complex negotiation process involving various actors and different interests, which, in turn, structure the care market. In addition, she highlights the fundamental ambivalence that characterizes this model, resulting from the problematic articulation of fairness principles (regarding working conditions for live-in (migrant) care workers) with pragmatic rational arguments (cost reduction). Thus, this article finally points to the need to critically reflect on the future development of holistic, transnational and gender-sensitive solutions for long-term old-age care and support in our societies.

The contribution by Meier zu Verl addresses care provision for ageing migrants in institutional long-term care, focusing on critically assessing the professional concept of "culturally sensitive old-age care", developed and well established in commodified German long-term care settings. The paper analyses in detail an everyday basic care interaction between a resident with migrant background and medium-stage dementia and a nurse with a different migrant background. The theoretical focus of analysis is on care as practice. Meier zu Verl first elaborately displays how the professional discourse of "culturally sensitive old-age care" conceptualizes intercultural interactions in care and how nurses should handle such interactions in order to provide appropriate care and to omit discrimination. Meier zu Verl then demonstrates the complexities of putting such care interactions into practice. By referring to dementia and its consequences, specifically for language-based interaction, he illustrates that care interactions are not solely or primarily characterized by cultural diversity if migrant background is involved. He furthermore points out that "culturally sensitive care" tends to focus rather prominently on language and translation issues, while interaction in the context of dementia needs to refer to more basic dimensions of communication, which, as the author states, may be seen as culturally indifferent. Thus, the author on one hand shows that migrant background is usually not the only and often not the dominant dimension of diversity structuring care interactions. In consequence, one might state that the focus on "cultural sensitivity" as a self-standing discursive unit of reference for professional practice may be too narrow. On the other hand, Meier zu Verl shows how professional practice is based on implicit references to discursive knowledge that are subject to ad-hoc interpretations. He thus points to a sociological issue which is indeed under-researched in interactions between professionals and migrants, i. e. that "culturally sensitive" service provision is not a one-to-one application of knowledge, but an implicit, performative ad-hoc practice.

The paper by Torres explores how far the literature on older migrants is informed by racism and racialization, particularly in the context of the growth of the older migrant population, a population that has particularly experienced racial discrimination. Drawing on a scoping review of the scientific literature, Torres identifies three categories of papers: speaking about racism and racial discrimination in passing; suggesting that racism and racial discrimination may play a role, and explicitly stating that racism and racial discrimination play a role. Torres highlights a form of "racialization without racism", in other words: researchers take for granted the fact that there are races; and in some cases, they use euphemisms for racism and racial discrimination. In the conclusion of her paper, Torres stresses the importance of placing race and racialization at the centre of research on older migrants given the growth of tensions between racial and ethnic groups; making it all more relevant to understand the role race and racialization have played in the discrimination of older migrants throughout their life courses.

4   Advancing the study of intersections in ageing and migration

The papers in this special issue bring at the fore various aspects various aspects of the foci emerging in the literature and presented earlier on. The papers by Repetti and Bolzman as well as Jurt and Sperisen, while situated in two different socio-political contexts, are linked to migrants' vulnerability in old age and its relation to migration regimes. The paper by Wyss relates to the foci on transnationalism, care and policy. The three subsequent papers are related to the focus on care, particularly commodified care: migrants as care providers in an ageing society as in the paper by Prieler and respectively Steiner, and as care receivers in old age, as shown in the paper by Meyer zu Verl. In critically reflecting on how gerontology addresses older migrants and, by doing so, does (not) refer to theories of ethnic and racial in-/exclusion and discrimination, the paper by Torres stresses issues related to inequality and exclusion of older migrants. Thus, vulnerabilities due to structural and discursive exclusion of older migrants also seem to be (re)produced in age-related academic discourse.

In conclusion, by focusing on various intersections of migration and ageing, this special issue brings to the front some important research topics within the field, especially: the shortage of social and health care workforce, which contributes to the immigration of (often late-in-life) labour migrants being employed in care services for the older population; the ageing of the migrant population and their specific needs; and lastly the engagement in mobility patterns late in life either in search for a better life, for care or to provide care to family members. By illustrating the heterogeneity of old-age livelihoods shaped by migration regimes in the countries of origin and destination, accordingly legal statuses, the roles of (older) migrants as care providers or receivers, the stage in the life course when migrants are engaged in migration, as well as ethnic and racial identities shaped by daily interactions, the special issue also grasps the diversity of research agendas that need further attention in future research.

In addition, as research on the ageing-migration nexus evolves and further unfolds the diversities in the interconnectedness of individual ageing and structural conditions, this special issue contributes substantially to both migration studies and ageing studies more broadly. On one hand, the diversity of situations in the empirical reality is translated into multiple directions of research. On the other hand, as raised in the literature (Phillipson 2015; Torres 2015), a next step remains for research to focus on advancing the theoretical discussion of the migration-ageing nexus.

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