Editorial

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Editorial

The transnational interconnectedness of social work is not a new phenomenon or development. Historically, social work was engaged in and shaped by cross-border processes in many ways. However, it is only recently that social work has begun to systematically reflect upon them. One of the reasons is that the nation state is often firmly embedded in social work concepts as a frame of reference, or is used as an unquestioned background tapestry. As a result, at times it is difficult for social work to identify transnational processes, which are depicted only to a limited degree – if at all – in social work terminology, research strategies, and practice intervention.

From a historical perspective, the transnational developments and interrelations of social work have not yet been analyzed systematically. Therefore, we are pleased that TSR takes up this challenge by presenting the focus topic “Transnational Histories of Social Work and Social Welfare” in this issue. The five articles presented in this volume show the richness, as well as the importance, of a historical approach to the transnational entanglement of social work and social welfare. They cover the historical dimensions of the border-crossing interrelatedness of social work from very different angles and approaches. The topics discussed include social housing, social work education, child welfare practice, social insurance, and social security, as well as a new look at the philosophy and social work of Jane Addams. They cover different time periods, starting in the nineteenth century, and look at very different regions such as France and Belgium, the United States and Russia, China, Palestine, and Canada.

In the general article, Anoeshka Gehring continues the debate on transnational aging by examining processes of health care across borders of Dutch retirees who migrated to Spain and Turkey. She shows the various ways in which retirement migrants navigate their way through the healthcare systems to access their preferred set of healthcare provisions in the home and host state.

In addition, a book review and two “Mapping Transnationalism” reports complete the issue. In these reports, Annika Müller turns to “digital nomads” as a social figure that represents the increasing development of a location-independent style of working and living. Raluca Bejan reports from the conference organized by the Global Center for Advanced Studies on “Democracy Rising: From Insurrections to Event” which was held in Athens in 2015.

The forthcoming issue of TSR will turn to the topic “Aging in Place: Transnational Perspectives.” The following centers on “Transnational Social Work – A Border-crossing Agenda for Practice and Research.”

We wish you an insightful and inspiring read. Any feedback or comments are highly welcome. As usual, we would like to thank the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) for their financial support of this publication.

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