



TRANSNATIONAL LIVES: DOES LEGAL STATUS MATTER?

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ABSTRACT

This study is one of the few attempts to investigate the impact of migrants' residence status on their transnational behaviour. Integrometro, a large-scale migrant survey conducted in 2008-2009 in Italy, allows us to compare holders of dual nationality with those having a long or short residence permit and undocumented individuals. Variations in the strength of transnational ties are examined for four dimensions separately and simultaneously: remitting, return intention, feelings of belonging to the country of origin, and interest in the home country. Additionally, regression analyses are carried out to determine to what extent variations in transnational behaviour across the migrant groups are related to different levels of economic and socio-cultural integration and length of stay. Findings show that migrants with short residence permit and no documents are the most transnational, followed by those with long residence permit or other types of authorization; the least transnational are migrants with a dual citizenship. Part of these differences are related to duration of stay and level of integration, but differences still exist after controlling for these factors. Our findings highlight the necessity to rethink conventional migration policies in a more comprehensive and inter-related relationship between home and host countries.

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