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# **Intra-EU Mobility and Selective European Social Citizenship: Profiles of Welfare Inclusion and Exclusion in the Context of EU Social Security Coordination**

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## ***Abstract***

The recent EU enlargements have raised questions about linkages between intra-EU mobility and mobile EU citizens' access to social security rights in the context of European social security coordination. Whereas some authors discuss this nexus with reference to Borjas' welfare magnet hypothesis, this article approaches mobile Europeans' access to social security rights within the EU as an emblematic example of European citizenship. Building on a quantitative pilot survey (N = 1,400), it analyses unequal welfare opportunities for mobile EU citizens who move – permanently or temporarily – from the new to the old EU member states as profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion. Focusing on four pairs of sending and receiving countries (Bulgaria–Germany, Hungary–Austria, Estonia–Sweden and Poland–United Kingdom), this survey considered mobile Europeans' practices of accessing and porting social security rights across borders in the areas of unemployment benefits, family benefits and healthcare. The article uses regression analysis to identify profiles of mobile Europeans' welfare inclusion/exclusion as sets of social categories ('type of migration/mobility', 'employment status', 'gender', 'education', 'being married', 'having children') that draw boundaries between movers who apply for social security benefits in these areas and movers who do not. It shows that temporary movers and movers with experience of irregular employment tend to have worse welfare opportunities than do one-time movers and respondents who have been in regular employment. This finding is specified further by considering the selectivity criteria of European social security coordination system.

## **Introduction**

Freedom of movement and the social security coordination system are important pillars of supranational citizenship in the European Union (EU). However, the question of whether all mobile EU citizens should have equal access to social rights has been a subject of heated academic and political debates. Some social scientists view such equality as an indicator of an emerging cross-border social membership (Kivisto and Faist 2007), whereas political authorities and public figures often regard it as promoting 'benefit migration' – an implicit reference to Borjas' (1999) 'welfare magnet hypothesis' (Ehata et al. 2017).

Acknowledging the contentious nature of social security organization in the context of intra-EU mobility, this article provides empirical insights into mobile EU citizens' practices of

accessing social security rights as forms of ‘living’ European social citizenship. It focuses on particular facets of access to social security by mobile EU citizens who move, temporarily or permanently, from the new to the old member states. Building on a regression analysis of the empirical outcomes of a large-scale comparative survey conducted in 2015/16 in Germany, Austria, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK), it reveals linkages between mobile EU citizens’ trajectories of welfare inclusion/exclusion and the institutional selectivity of EU social security coordination.

Intra-EU mobility has been highly dynamic in the contexts of the enlargements of 2004 and 2007 and has been increasing significantly during the last two decades, with east-to-west mobility as a major factor (Favell 2008). Some two per cent of EU citizens lived in a country other than their country of origin (Zaiceva et al. 2008). Official statistics from 2013 show that 113,080 individuals from the EU-8 and EU-2 had moved to Sweden; 1,039,560 had moved to the UK; and 1,195,107 had moved to Germany, with the last two countries receiving the largest percentages (approx. 4% of the population).

The regulation of intra-EU movements has involved advancing social security coordination across the EU (in particular, Regulations 884/2004 and 987/2009), which can be approached as the emblematic example of European social citizenship, because it aims to ensure working mobile EU citizens’ equal access to all areas of social security except social assistance both in the receiving country and, upon return, the sending country. To prevent loss of entitlements accumulated earlier, they can be transferred from one country to another (‘portability’). In accordance with legislation, previous periods of insurance, work or residence accumulated in the sending country must be recognized in the receiving country and constitute claims there, and mobile individuals entitled to cash benefits in one country, such as family benefits, can receive these benefits even while living in another country. Portability, then, is “the ability to preserve, maintain and transfer vested social security rights or rights in the process of being vested” (Avato et al. 2010, 456).

In this article, we regard social security coordination within the EU as a paradigmatic example of cross-border social citizenship that is organized on national, supranational and transnational (i.e. between sending and receiving countries) levels of governance (Kivisto and Faist 2007; Soysal 1994). By approaching the nexus of intra-EU mobility and EU social security coordination as the nodal point of EU social citizenship, we interpret access to and the portability of social security rights between countries as ways for mobile EU citizens to participate in and ‘live’ – i.e. practice and experience -- European social membership that extends beyond the boundaries of nation states.

We build on a large-scale quantitative pilot survey that was conducted in 2015/16 as part of the Mobile Welfare in a Transnational Europe (TRANSWEL) project. It focused on labour mobility between each of four pairs of EU member states (Bulgaria–Germany, Hungary–Austria, Estonia–Sweden and Poland–UK) and how often mobile EU citizens from new member states applied for access to or the transfer of social security rights related to *unemployment benefits, family benefits and health insurance*, including the use of the *European Health Insurance Card* (EHIC). In addition, the survey focused on mobile EU citizens’ patterns of migration/mobility (one-time/temporary), employment (regular/irregular) and use of social security (in both sending and receiving countries). The survey involved 350 respondents in each country pair, and the data collected were integrated into a single data set (N = 1,400).

This article’s main goal is to reveal unequal welfare opportunities among mobile Europeans from the new EU member states in the context of European social citizenship. To this end, it develops the concept of ‘profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion’, which refers to *sets of social categories* (e.g. type of migration/mobility, type of employment, gender, education, family-related categories) that draw a boundary between mobile EU citizens who apply for specific types of social security and mobile EU citizens who do not. The concept of ‘profiles’ allows us to focus on the links between the interplay of these social categories and the probabilities (in quantitative terms, the odds) that respondents will apply for access to or the transfer of any of the three types of benefits (unemployment benefits, family benefits and healthcare). Thus, respondents’ application and non-application are taken, respectively, as proxies for welfare inclusion and exclusion from EU social security coordination system. This conceptualization enables us to show that mobile EU citizens who are categorized as temporary movers and/or who experience irregular employment have fewer opportunities to access or transfer social security rights.

In addressing unequal welfare opportunities among mobile Europeans, we employed a novel methodological strategy, in that the large-scale survey mentioned above considers transnational practices of mobile Europeans and, thus, avoids methodological nationalism in its research design (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Amelina and Faist 2012). The survey data contain information about mobile Europeans’ use of social security in the four pairs of sending and receiving countries – an approach more innovative than conventional quantitative methods that focus mainly on the mobility-receiving countries and neglect not only the transnational quality of mobility dynamics but also unregistered or undocumented movers (see Horvath 2012).

### **Access to Social Security Rights in the Context of Intra-EU Mobility: The State of the Art**

Two bodies of relevant literature on intra-EU mobility and EU social security must be discussed here. Studies of intra-European migration/mobility (Verwiebe et al. 2014) show that intra-EU movement is not merely one-directional, from a country of origin to a country of destination. Instead, it may exhibit different patterns that shape mobile EU citizens' practices of accessing and transferring social security rights. Engbersen et al. (2013) introduced interesting empirical findings on how mobile EU citizens' attachments to their countries of origin and destination shape patterns of movement and generate four categories of mobile EU citizens: 1) circular migrants (e.g. seasonal workers) with often weak attachments to their country of destination; 2) binationally oriented movers with strong attachments to both their country of origin and country of destination; 3) 'footloose' movers with weak attachments to their origin and destination countries; and 4) 'settlers' with weak attachments to their country of origin. Whether their attachment is weak or strong, all mobile EU citizens organize their lifeworlds multi-locally. Similar studies confirm these mobility patterns, distinguishing mobile EU citizens *oriented on returning, movers who wish to settle, temporary movers* and *global nomads* (Düvell et al. 2006). But, whereas recent studies of European mobility acknowledge this variety of mobility patterns, mobile EU citizens' forms of employment (regular/irregular) remain understudied. Only a few qualitative studies from migration research (Amelina 2017; Favell 2008) have approached different forms of irregular work and related practices of exploitation. Furthermore, the field of welfare studies tends to overlook the significance of migration/mobility patterns and employment status in research on EU social security.

The other body of relevant literature focuses on intra-EU mobility and European social security and involves two research areas. The first area (Sainsbury 2012) focuses on the impacts of different welfare systems/regimes on mobile individuals' access to social security rights and distinguishes four ideal types of European welfare regimes: social-democratic, conservative, liberal (Esping-Anderson 1990), and Mediterranean (Ferrara 1996). In addition, there are studies of new EU member states' post-communist welfare regimes (Papadopoulus et al. 2016), but because of their focus on nation states, these studies fail to reflect the supranational organization of social security (e.g. on the EU level) and the institutional selectivity criteria it involves. It also often remains unclear how the diversity of welfare systems of the sending and receiving member states may become an obstacle to accessing and transferring social security rights.

The second research area addresses these lacunas by focusing on the emergence of supranational citizenship, as laid down in the Maastricht Treaty of 1993. It is concerned

primarily with how mobile EU citizens organize access to and the portability of social security rights from one member state to another. Here, portability has been defined as “the possibility of acquiring and keeping social benefits’ entitlements and/or social rights in the event of mobility for work [or other] reasons” (d’Addio et al. 2015, 346). Differentiating various regimes of social security rights portability, researchers have highlighted that the European regime offers mobile individuals non-discriminatory access, which for EU nationals is organized in accordance with the EU’s coordination system (Avato et al. 2010; Holzmann et al. 2012). The legislative EU framework provided for the first steps towards enabling mobile EU citizens’ access to social security across borders in the 1960s; the most relevant legislative acts today are Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009. Although the normative premise is that mobile and immobile EU citizens must be treated equally, scholars have observed inequalities in welfare opportunities between mobile and immobile as well as among mobile Europeans, such as everyday discrimination, obstacles to labour market integration, a lack of information and social security, bureaucratic routines and other hurdles (Bruzelius et al. 2016; Kahanec et al. 2014). For these reasons, “[t]he problem of portability has been central to [the] EU policy agenda, as the lack of portability is perceived as an obstacle to the success of the single labour market” (d’Addio et al. 2015, 347). However, many studies in this area focus mainly on legislative aspects of EU social security (d’Addio et al. 2015) without paying attention to the institutional selectivity of EU social security coordination, and they rarely address transnational practices of accessing and using EU social security.

### **European Cross-Border Social Citizenship: Institutional Selectivity of Social Security Governance and Mobile EU Citizens’ Profiles of Welfare Inclusion/Exclusion**

To address mobile EU citizens’ practices of applying for social security benefits, as well as related welfare opportunities, as being linked to institutional selectivity criteria of European welfare organization, we propose that EU social security coordination be approached as a paradigmatic example of European cross-border social citizenship. Unlike national membership, EU social membership is not constrained by the boundaries of member states. On the contrary, it aims to provide for equal access to social security rights for mobile and immobile EU citizens; the “recognition of previous periods of insurance” accumulated in the sending country as a condition for entitlement in the receiving country; and cash benefit payments to mobile EU citizens from another country (EP 2014: 7). In this framework, ‘social membership’ in the EU is regarded as membership in a supranational community (Faist 2009; Kivisto and Faist 2007). Two conceptual elements must be considered here: i) the cross-border institutional

organization of social membership in the EU, and, in particular, the multiple and nested quality of membership layers, and ii) the participatory dimension of European social membership – that is, (im)mobile EU citizens’ practices and experiences of accessing and porting social security rights from one country to another and related (inequalities in) welfare opportunities.

The first element, the cross-border institutional organization of social membership in the EU, refers to a multitude of social memberships, on different levels of social security governance. Mobile EU citizens’ social security is simultaneously regulated on the supranational scale (see Carmel et al. 2016); on national scales of social security governance, which implement EU legislation differently; and on transnational scales of institutional cooperation between sending and receiving countries. Kivisto and Faist (2007) have referred to this as ‘nested’ EU citizenship; others have pointed to its inherent selectivity and related unequal welfare opportunities (Carmel et al. 2006; Seeleib-Kaiser 2015). In particular, Carmel et al. (2016), another TRANSWEL study, confirmed that the nested institutional organization of EU social membership contributes to unequal welfare opportunities for mobile EU citizens. Using interpretative document analysis and focusing on the implementation of the EU’s social security coordination system in the four country pairs also examined in the present study, these authors identified three main criteria of institutional selectivity that result from the interplay of supranational, national and transnational layers of welfare regulation: (1) residence requirements for mobile EU citizens; (2) employment status as crucial for the organization of contributory social security payments; and (3) operational conditions (procedural requirements, institutional complexity, administrative discretion):

(1) Social security rights can often only be accessed and ported from one country to another after extended periods of ‘habitual residency’, which may be difficult to achieve for EU citizens whose mobility is only temporary. Here, ‘sedentarism’ – that is, the naturalization of sedentary ways of life – seems to be inscribed in the institutional selectivity criteria of EU social security coordination.

(2) Most social security benefits must be vested in the country of destination and require continuous payment of contributions, which may be difficult to achieve for frequent movers and movers in irregular employment. Earning thresholds further constrain access to social security rights and make it difficult to earn entitlements for those in precarious employment.

(3) ‘Operational conditions’, administrative routines and special procedural requirements of welfare institutions may create additional barriers for temporary and irregularly employed movers. One example is the definition of the length of benefit entitlements and

related constraints for mobile EU citizens who stay in a receiving country for a very short period of time. Special procedural requirements in this regard include additional registration procedures; the expectation that mobile EU citizens will attend meetings and trainings or undergo medical tests; and the requirement of registering for a special number or card. Compounding this is that the vagueness of some regulations makes institutional selectivity criteria highly discretionary.

Carmel et al. (2016) conclude that these institutional selectivity criteria contribute to the unequal welfare opportunities among mobile EU citizens they studied, in that temporary movers, returnees and movers who have been in irregular employment are treated as exceptional cases by welfare institutions, whereas one-time movers with continuous regular employment are treated as ideal-case EU citizens.

The participatory dimension is the next relevant element of EU social citizenship that refers to mobile EU citizens' ways of 'living' cross-border, multilayered social membership. The findings of our quantitative pilot survey, presented in the next section, concern this participatory dimension, because the survey focused on mobile EU citizens' (from the four new member states mentioned earlier) formal applications for access to and the transfer of social security rights between their sending and receiving countries. To provide a better understanding of 'living' EU social membership and the related stratificational effects, our survey focused on how mobile EU citizens' application practices are linked to a variety of social categories that characterize the survey respondents (e.g. type of migration or mobility, employment status, gender, education, family status). In particular, the survey sought to determine what sets of social categories create boundaries between those of the mobile EU citizens who apply for social security benefits (in the areas of unemployment benefits, family benefits and healthcare) and those who do not. These sets of social categories are defined as *profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion*.

Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, on whose theory our heuristics of profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion is based, introduced the concept of differential inclusion in their reflections on justice and borders, suggesting that the dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion in the process of migration should be rethought: "one could say that the concept of differential inclusion points to a substitution of the binary distinction between inclusion and exclusion with continuous parametric modulations – that is, processes of filtering and selecting that refer to multiple and shifting scales, ratings and evaluations" (Mezzadra and Neilson 2012: 68). Thus, scholars who explore questions concerning justice and borders should go beyond thinking in dichotomies and

use analytical tools that are more sophisticated and allow for inclusion and exclusion to be regarded as gradual when approaching access to social or political communities for mobile individuals in cross-border settings. Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) also use the concept of differential inclusion to analyse “varying degrees of subordination, rule, discrimination and segmentation” (p. 193). Although the concept of differential inclusion was originally developed to examine the illegalization of movements from non-EU countries, processes of gradual inclusion (which presupposes the simultaneity of ‘being inside’ and ‘being outside’ a social or political community and/or membership) can be studied in the context of the nexus of intra-EU mobility and European welfare. It enables the study of cases of inclusion (access) in one area of social security (e.g. unemployment benefits) and simultaneous exclusion (no access) from another area (e.g. family benefits). Our heuristic concept of profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion refers to sets of specific social categories that distinguish those mobile EU citizens who apply from those who do not apply for access to or the transfer of their social security rights in some areas of social security. In addition, it allows us to consider that applications – treated here as proxies for welfare inclusion – may be lodged in some but not all areas of social security.

In other words, theorizing social security coordination as European social citizenship makes it possible to study the institutional organization of European social membership (e.g. the selectivity criteria of European social security governance) and the participatory dimension of ‘living’ European social membership (mobile EU citizens’ profiles of inclusion/exclusion as manifested in applications for some types of social security) as being linked to one another. Therefore, the quantitative survey that will be introduced in the next section focuses on mobile EU citizens’ applications for the three types of benefits mentioned. It allows us to show how institutional selectivity criteria of European social security governance create unequal welfare opportunities.

## **Analysis of the Nexus of Intra-EU Mobility and European Social Security: The Benefits of a Transnational Methodology**

### ***Sample and Data Collection***

The primary aim of the pilot survey was to provide quantitative insights into what categories of mobile EU citizens tend to apply for what types of social security. The survey focused on the labour mobility of EU citizens between four new member states and four old member states (Bulgaria–Germany, Hungary–Austria, Estonia–Sweden, Poland–UK). Although the data were

collected in the old (receiving) member states ( $n = 350$  in each case,  $N = 1,400$ ), the survey questions concerned both the sending and receiving countries in each case. Such a transnational approach to the analysis of mobility and social security is highly original for quantitative research, because it considers respondents' cross-border experiences of mobility, social security and employment. It allows us to avoid receiving-country bias in the analysis of mobility and social security. Furthermore, identical questionnaires were used in all four country pairs to ensure consistency of results.<sup>1</sup>

To identify potential interviewees, we used multiple snow ball sampling in the cities of Frankfurt am Main, Vienna, Stockholm, and Bath and the Bristol area. To be included in the sample, the respondents had to have had migrated from their sending country during the accession or post-accession period (from 2000 onwards) and had to be between 16 and 64 years old (working age). To ensure appropriate sample heterogeneity, we considered various types of migration/mobility (one-time, temporary) and employment (regular, irregular, mixed). Heterogeneity in terms of gender, labour market position, age and education was also regarded as relevant in approaching potential respondents. Because our analysis also involved 'hidden populations' (e.g. temporary/irregularly employed movers), the survey does not provide representative results but rather estimates general trends in the mobile EU citizens' use of social security.

The empirical results presented here were derived from an integrated set of data ( $N = 1,400$ ) from our four country pair-specific surveys. Our analysis identified country pair-spanning patterns of access and portability and built on the following key hypothesis:

- (1) Social categories such as type of migration/mobility, employment status, gender, education and family status are linked to respondents' application behaviour.

From this hypothesis two sub-hypotheses were derived:

- (1a) One-time movers are more likely to apply for social security rights and their portability than are temporary movers.
- (1b) Movers in regular employment are more likely to apply for social security rights and their portability than are movers with previous experience of irregular employment.

To identify profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion, we used logistic regression. We used maximum-likelihood estimation to measure the odds of mobile EU citizens applying for

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<sup>1</sup> The questionnaires considered differences in the national welfare systems of the sending and receiving countries. Comparability was ensured by identifying functional equivalents among the relevant types of benefits across pairs of sending and receiving countries (for an overview, see Carmel et al. 2016: 62f.).

benefits in the countries of destination and/or origin and of applying for the transfer of entitlements from one country to another.<sup>2</sup> The analysis was carried out using SPSS 22.0 We further illustrate Nagelkerke's R squared to show the explanatory potential of the models. This coefficient will be deeply flawed for hidden populations (temporary movers and movers in irregular employment) in our non-representative data set, but it gives us some idea of how important the different predictors (social categories) are within the model. The results for the portability cases must be viewed with even more caution, because imputation was conducted on the basis of a very low percentage of the already small number of respondents who had applied for the transfer of their unemployment and family benefits.

To test our hypotheses about the linkages between application practices and social categories (especially for 'status of migration/mobility' and 'status of employment'), we included several dependent and independent variables in our regression model. The dependent variable is always dichotomous (1 = yes, 0 = no) and provides information about the respondents' practices of applying for unemployment and family benefits. For health insurance a dummy variable was created to determine whether respondents had had access to health benefits within the five years prior to the survey (1 = yes) or whether there had been interruptions of more than three months (0 = no).

Several of the independent variables that serve as predictors included 'type of migration/mobility', 'employment status', 'gender', 'education level', and 'family-related categories such as 'being married' and 'having children'. The variable 'type of migration/mobility' (1 = one-time, 0 = temporary)<sup>3</sup> was created and included because it is an important category in welfare inclusion analysis; for example, temporary movers may have weaker social networks and little access to information (Engbersen et al. 2013). 'Status of employment' was another independent variable. To measure it, we asked whether the respondents had experienced periods of irregular employment within the past five years, and in which country (sending/receiving/third country), and coded the answers as a dichotomous variable as well (1 = regular, 0 = experience of irregular employment). The experience of irregular employment may indicate challenges in applying considering that many irregularly

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<sup>2</sup> Approval rates for applications were very high, so in this analysis we focused primarily on application practices.

<sup>3</sup> We are aware of the shortcomings of this dichotomous variable and use it here as a heuristic device for the logistic regression. Some movers, especially those categorized as temporary movers, may experience various patterns of movement (e.g. seasonal, circular), which cannot be considered in this paper.

employed individuals are simply unable to pay social insurance contributions. Another independent variable – and one of the major predictors of the outcome in our model – is ‘gender’, which also was coded as a dichotomous variable (female = 1, male = 0). As will be shown, application behaviour regarding specific social rights is highly gendered. ‘Education’ is yet another important independent category, because it is linked to the accumulation of information about social security. To round up the regression model, we added the family categories of ‘being married’ (1 = yes, 0 = no) and ‘having children’ (1 = yes, 0 = no). The importance of family relations in migration processes has been explored intensively (see e.g. Parreñas 2005).

Combining these different categories allowed us to compute the respondents’ practices of application with appropriate consideration of the different factors that might (or might not) be linked to the probability of applying for particular social security rights (and their portability). Application probability is taken as an indicator of profiles of welfare inclusion in the EU social security coordination system as implemented in our four country pairs, and non-application is taken as an indicator of welfare exclusion.

### **Profiles of Welfare Inclusion/Exclusion: The Significance of the ‘Type of Migration/Mobility’ and ‘Status of Employment’ in Respondents’ Applications**

#### ***Overview of the Sample and the Respondents’ Applications***

Analysis of the sample yielded some unexpected descriptive results, which are summarized in Table 1. One result is that 16.8 per cent of respondents were temporary movers. We expected this percentage to be higher, but then, contacting temporary movers was challenging because they belong to a ‘hidden population’ (Horvath 2012). The majority of respondents (70.1%) had no experience of irregular employment, and 29.9 per cent had experienced irregular employment during the past five years. Table 1 also shows that more women than men (56.3% vs. 43.7%) were interviewed during fieldwork. Only a small minority of respondents were poorly educated (9.6%), which contrasts with the popular notion of ‘benefit migration’. The percentages for moderately educated (43.7%) and highly educated (46.7%) respondents indicate that most of the respondents had received a better education, which is consistent with the finding, in EC (2017), that the education level of those engaged in intra-EU mobility is similar to the average level in the receiving countries.

Our respondents’ applications for specific welfare benefits are related to experiences of (un)employment. 75 per cent of respondents had been employed during the previous five years.

**Table 1. Descriptive Results of the Integrated Sample (N = 1400)**  
**(Source: TRANSWEL Project Survey, Winter 2016/17)**

|  | %    | N     |
|--|------|-------|
| <b>Type of migration/mobility</b>                                |      | 1,399 |
| One-time mover   | 83.2 |       |
| Temporary  | 16.8 |       |
| <b>Status of employment</b>                                      |      | 1,400 |
| Regularly employed   | 70.1 |       |
| Irregularly employed   | 29.9 |       |
| <b>Gender</b>  |      | 1,400 |
| Female   | 56.3 |       |
| Male   | 43.7 |       |
| <b>Education</b>   |      | 1,400 |
| Poorly educated  | 9.6  |       |
| Moderately educated  | 43.7 |       |
| Highly educated  | 46.7 |       |
| <b>Married</b>   |      | 1,400 |
| Yes  | 37.4 |       |
| No   | 62.6 |       |
| <b>Children under 25</b>   |      | 1,400 |
| Yes  | 47.1 |       |
| No   | 52.9 |       |
| <b>Unemployed within the last 5 years</b>                        |      | 1,400 |
| Yes  | 25.0 |       |
| No   | 75.0 |       |
| <b>Application for unemployment benefits</b>                     |      | 349   |
| Yes  | 71.3 |       |
| No   | 28.7 |       |
| <b>Application for transfer of unemployment benefits</b>         |      | 249   |
| Yes  | 5.2  |       |
| No   | 94.8 |       |
| <b>Application for family benefits</b>                           |      | 660   |
| Yes  | 71.1 |       |
| No   | 28.9 |       |
| <b>Application for transfer of family benefits</b>               |      | 469   |
| Yes  | 7.0  |       |
| No   | 93.0 |       |
| <b>Health insurance within the last 5 years (without breaks)</b> |      | 1,395 |
| Yes  | 85.9 |       |
| No   | 14.1 |       |
| <b>EHIC in the country of origin</b>                             |      | 605   |
| Yes  | 55.7 |       |
| No   | 44.3 |       |

Of those who had experienced unemployment, only 71.3 per cent stated that they had also applied for unemployment benefits, and of those, only 5.2 per cent (n = 13) had applied for the transfer of unemployment benefits from the sending to the receiving country. The finding that 47.1 per cent of respondents had children under 25 years of age was used as a filter to compute the application for family benefits (71.1%), which was similar to the response rate for

unemployment benefits. 7.0 per cent (n = 33) had applied for their family benefits to be transferred. Whereas other studies (e.g. d'Addio et al. 2015) have suggested that up to 18.5 per cent of mobile EU citizens port their benefits, our survey showed a reasonably low percentage of applications for unemployment and family benefits transfer.

85.9 per cent of respondents stated that they had enjoyed uninterrupted health coverage during the previous five years, and 14.1 per cent had had no health coverage at all or had had experienced interruptions in health coverage that lasted longer than three months. 55.7% of our respondents had received EHIC in their country of origin, which they used it in their country of destination, which shows that the rate of healthcare benefits portability in the context of EHIC is much higher than the application rates for unemployment (5.2%) and health (7.0%) benefits.

### ***Profiles of Welfare Inclusion/Exclusion in the Context of EU Social Security Coordination***

Our analysis builds on the concept of *profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion*, which are defined as *sets of social categories* that indicate the probabilities (or, in quantitative terms, odds) of being included in or excluded from social security. We operationalize mobile respondents' practices of applying as a proxy for welfare inclusion, and non-application as a proxy for welfare exclusion. These profiles indicate that the institutional selectivity of EU social security organization may have exclusionary effects, allowing us to examine how ideal images of 'desirable' EU citizens that are incorporated into institutional regulations – one-time movers in continuous regular employment – have exclusionary effects on those who do not meet institutional expectations.

Table 2 presents the profiles of inclusion and exclusion yielded by means of regression analysis. These profiles indicate not only linkages between several social categories ('type of migration/mobility', 'type of employment', 'education' and 'family status') and the respondents' applications for access and portability of social security rights but also which social categories are the most relevant in this regard. The results show that the percentages of applications for specific benefits differ significantly from those of applications for a benefits portability. Given the low percentages of applications for the portability of unemployment and family benefits, our results must be interpreted with caution, but the higher percentages of respondents who received EHIC in their country of origin reveal the quantitative importance of our focus on portability.

Table 2 shows the odds ratios for applications. An odds ratio above 1 indicates a higher probability that respondents will apply for specific social benefits, whereas an odds ratio below 1 indicates a lower probability of applying. Although these results must be interpreted with

caution as well, because the survey is a pilot survey, these preliminary findings do indicate certain trends in how practices of applying for social security rights are influenced by different social categories.

**Table 2. Logistic Regression: Mobile Respondents' Applications for Access and Transfer of Social Security Rights (Source: TRANSWEL Project Survey, Winter 2016/2017)**

|   | Application for unemployment benefits | Transfer of unemployment benefits | Application for family benefits | Transfer of family benefits | Access to health insurance | EHIC           |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Type of Migration/Mobility (1 = One-time mover) | 1,982* (0.292)                        | 1,223 (0.804)                     | 1,331 (0.268)                   | 0,191*** (0.436)            | 2,013** (0.202)            | 0,974 (0.,189) |
| Status of employment (1 = regular)              | 1,326 (0.256)                         | 0,539 (0.607)                     | 1,492 (0.210)                   | 1,346** (0.554)             | 6,615*** (0.276)           | 1,119 (0.176)  |
| Gender (1 = women)                              | 0,672 (0.269)                         | 2,535 (0.695)                     | 4,243*** (0.194)                | 0,293 (0.407)               | 1,312 (0.269)              | 1,089 (0.171)  |
| Education (Ref. = Poorly educated)              |                                       |                                   |                                 |                             |                            |                |
| Moderately educated                             | 0,591 (0.419)                         | 0,919 (0.877)                     | 0,987 (0.306)                   | 0,863 (0.758)               | 2,180** (0.235)            | 1,351 (0.294)  |
| Highly educated                                 | 0,648 (0.423)                         | 0,814 (0.895)                     | 0,742 (0.319)                   | 2,935 (0.734)               | 4,239*** (0.276)           | 2,036 (0.297)  |
| Married (1 = yes)                               | 0,680 (0.276)                         | 1,985 (0.639)                     | 1,807** (0.187)                 | 1,600 (0.442)               | 1,038 (0.203)              | 1,083 (0.197)  |
| Children (1 = yes)                              | 0,937 (0.269)                         | 0,958 (0.651)                     |                                 |                             | 0,907 (0.190)              | 0,868 (0.189)  |
| N   | 350                                   | 249                               | 660                             | 469                         | 1395                       | 605            |
| F <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)                     | 0.042                                 | 0.046                             | 0.157                           | 0.156                       | 0.261                      | 0.027          |

Notes: \* p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001; survey project TRANSWEL. Odds ratio, standard error in parentheses.

### *Unemployment Benefits: Different Profiles of Applicants for of Access and Portability*

According to our findings, some 25 per cent of respondents had experienced unemployment in the previous five years, and 71.3 per cent (n = 249) had applied for unemployment benefits, with 72.2 per cent applying in their country of destination, 22.6 per cent in their country of origin and 5.2 per cent in both countries. 5.2 per cent (n = 13) of respondents applied for the porting of unemployment benefits from their country of origin to their country of destination. In this case, we processed the data using a different filter: practices of applying for unemployment benefits were determined on the basis of the number of respondents who had experienced unemployment, whereas the percentage of those who had applied for the transfer of unemployment benefits was calculated on the basis of the number of respondents who had actually applied for unemployment benefits.

The most relevant variable for predicting the outcome of practices of applying for unemployment benefits in the model was the category of 'type of migration/mobility'. Permanent movers were 1,982 times (or 98.2%) more likely to apply than were temporary movers. Those who applied were in regular employment and were men, poorly educated and unmarried. Having children does not appear to be as important as the other predictors. Thus, the one-time migrants in our sample tend to be included in this field of social security.

It also appears that more men than women apply for unemployment benefits, so for this profile it can be concluded that temporary movers, those in irregular employment, women and married respondents tend not to apply for unemployment benefits, and that highly educated respondents do not appear to need this type of benefits. Better educated respondents who were unemployed may have had other means of securing a living and may not have needed to apply (or, as our expert interviews suggest, did not want to).

In some aspects the profiles of respondents who had applied for a transfer (n = 13) (i.e. porting of their unemployment benefits across borders) contrasted strongly with those of respondents who had only applied for access to unemployment benefits. Interestingly, respondents who had experienced irregular employment were more likely to apply for a transfer of their unemployment benefits. It seems safe to assume that most of these 13 respondents had been in regular employment and therefore had transferred their vested social security rights, and then experienced irregular employment in the country of destination. Permanent movers were also more likely to apply for a transfer. The probability of women applying for a transfer was 2,535 times (or 153.5%) higher than for men, indicating a reverse gender pattern as for applications for access to unemployment benefits. Education did not show any strong trends, but poorly educated respondents were more likely to apply for a transfer. It is worth noting that the probability that married respondents would apply for a transfer was higher than that for unmarried respondents. One-time movers with experience of irregular employment, women, poorly educated respondents and married respondents applied for a transfer. It should be noted that all 13 respondents ported their benefits from the country of origin to the country of destination.

### *Family Benefits: Different Profiles of Applicants for Access and Portability*

To analyse the practices of applying for family benefits, we used a filter question, namely whether the respondents had children under the age of 25. Of those who did (n = 660, or 47.1%), 71.3 per cent had applied for family benefits. Of these respondents with children, 9.4 per cent had applied in the country of origin, 78.8 per cent in the country of destination and 11.8 per cent in both countries. 7.0 per cent of respondents with children (n = 33) had applied for a transfer of family benefits. Of these, 87.9 per cent had applied for a transfer from their country of origin to their country of destination, and 6.1 per cent for a transfer in the other direction or in both directions.

One-time movers were 1,331 times (33.1%) more likely to apply than were temporary movers,

and respondents in continuous regular employment were more likely to apply than were those with experience of irregular employment. Women were 4,243 times (324.3%) more likely to apply than were men. Not only is this application behaviour highly gendered; in some countries (e.g. in Austria), application is even mandatory for women. Poorly educated respondents were more likely to apply. The same is true of married respondents, which suggests that married couples have a much greater responsibility to apply than do separated respondents.

The profile of those who had applied for family benefits allows us to draw conclusions about those included in and those excluded from family benefits, the latter group including temporary movers, respondents with experience of irregular employment, men, highly educated respondents and unmarried respondents.

The profile of those who had applied for a transfer differed in some respects from those who had applied for access (n = 33). Temporary movers were 80.9 per cent more likely to apply than were permanent migrants. Respondents who had been in regular employment were also more likely to apply. The category of 'gender' showed a reverse effect, in that men were 70.7 per cent more likely to apply than were women. Surprisingly, highly educated respondents were 2,935 times (193.5%) more likely to apply than were poorly educated respondents. At the same time, however, the number of poorly educated respondents who had applied was larger than that of moderately educated respondents, suggesting that the variable 'education' is an inconsistent predictor. Married respondents were also more likely to apply. In conclusion, temporary movers in continuous regular employment, poorly educated respondents, men and married respondents were more likely to apply for a transfer.

A comparison of the profiles of the respondents who had applied for family benefits and of those who had applied for a transfer reveals reversed patterns. Although temporary movers were more likely to apply for a transfer, the results for 'status of employment' are fairly similar and show no significant differences in odds ratios. 'Gender' appears to be a strong predictor, with women being more likely to apply for family benefits and men being more likely to apply for a transfer. What we did not expect was that highly educated respondents would be more likely than poorly educated respondents to apply for a transfer.

### *Differences in the Profiles of Movers with Access to Health Insurance and EHIC Applicants*

Most of the respondents (85.9%) had health coverage, with no interruptions longer than three months during the previous five years. 36.1 per cent were insured in both countries, 54.3 per cent in the country of destination, 9.3 per cent in the country of origin and 0.4 per cent in another

country. 14.1 per cent of those who had experienced interruptions in coverage that lasted more than three months had no health coverage at the time of the survey. Here, ‘type of migration/mobility’ was a relevant predictor of outcome: permanent movers were 2,013 times (101.3%) more likely to have health coverage than were temporary movers. Those who had been in regular employment were 6,615 times (561.5%) more likely to have uninterrupted health coverage than were those with experience of irregular employment, which demonstrates the importance of regular employment (the exception here was the UK, where everyone legal resident has access to the National Health Service).

Women were slightly more likely to have health coverage than were men, but the odds ratio was fairly low when compared with the other predictors. Highly educated respondents were significantly more likely to have health coverage than were the moderately and poorly educated respondents. Family-related variables played no significant role. As for health insurance and the profile of welfare inclusion/exclusion, poorly educated temporary movers with experience of irregular employment are more likely to be excluded.

Our analysis of applications for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) provides interesting findings concerning the cross-border portability of health insurance. If necessary, mobile individuals may use EHIC to access universal healthcare during temporary stays in the EU (EC 2017). EHIC can be transferred from a holder’s country of origin to another EU member state and be used there to access healthcare services in emergencies.

In our sample, we integrated two items for the filter: ‘having access to health insurance in the country of origin’ and ‘having access to health insurance in both countries’ (n = 605). Of these, 55.7 per cent had obtained EHIC in their country of origin.

The numbers of temporary movers and movers in continuous regular employment among the EHIC holders was slightly higher than those of the other groups. Women were more likely to have EHIC than men, although with very small differences in odds ratios. Only ‘education’ showed stronger differences, with poorly educated respondents being less likely to be EHIC holders than were better educated respondents. Highly educated respondents were twice as likely (103.6%) as poorly educated respondents to have applied for EHIC in their country of origin. As with access to healthcare, ‘education’ appeared to play an important role in whether or not respondents had been able to transfer health-related entitlements. We conclude that EHIC is one of the most accessible schemes available. Although EHIC is characterized by an education bias and minor differences in migration and mobility patterns (with temporary movers slightly outnumbering beneficiaries), the other categories showed no strong effects.

These findings also suggest differences in respondents’ profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion:

most movers with continuous health insurance are EU citizens with experience of regular employment, one-time movers and better educated respondents, whereas EHIC holders show no major differences in migration/mobility patterns, employment status, gender and family status, and significant differences in education level.

## **Conclusions**

The article revealed unequal welfare opportunities among mobile Europeans in the context of European social security coordination. Focusing on mobile EU citizens' applications for access to and the portability of social security rights across borders, it approached these practices as a participatory dimension of European social membership. The article built on a quantitative pilot survey that studied the nexus between intra-EU mobility and social security in four pairs of sending and receiving countries (Bulgaria–Germany, Hungary–Austria, Estonia–Sweden and Hungary–Austria).

The regression analysis confirms our hypothesis concerning mobile EU citizens' applications for social security benefits. It allows us to identify the following profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion: permanent movers and movers with no experience of irregular employment were more likely to apply for access to all three areas of social security under study, namely unemployment benefits, family benefits and health insurance. The relevance of 'employment status' was particularly noticeable in the area of health insurance, for which respondents with experience of irregular employment tended not to apply given its contributory nature. Men were more likely to apply for unemployment benefits, and women were more likely to apply for family benefits. Of the respondents' family-related characteristics, only marital status played a role, especially with regard to family benefits.

Practices of applying for a transfer of unemployment and family benefits from one country to another are difficult to interpret because of the low numbers of those applying for these benefits. However, preliminary findings indicate that our hypothesis proved to be only partly true, because movers with experience of irregular employment tended to apply for a transfer of their unemployment benefits, whereas temporary movers tended to apply for a transfer of family benefits from one to another country. According to our survey, EHIC appears to be the best implemented portability project. Almost no differences were observed between the values in social categories ('type of migration/mobility', 'employment status', etc.) except for the significance of education level: better educated respondents were more likely to be EHIC holders than were poorly educated respondents.

The profiles of welfare inclusion/exclusion we identified show how the different social categories that characterized our respondents draw a boundary between mobile EU citizens who had applied for access to some areas of social security from those who did not or could not apply (in the sending or receiving country). Here, the concept of differential inclusion comes into play: it enables us to see that the degree of inclusion (i.e. the probability of application) varied depending on specific sets of social categories, with ‘type of migration/mobility’ and ‘status of employment’ being highly significant.

Most important, the findings of our pilot survey reveal a connection between the participatory dimension of EU social citizenship and the institutional selectivity of the EU’s cross-border, multi-layered social security governance which, particularly in the context of applications for access to (but not the portability of) social security rights privileges one-time movers in continuous regular employment while disadvantaging frequent movers and those with experience of irregular employment. Thus, this article identifies a homology between the institutional selectivity of EU social citizenship and the application behaviour of mobile citizens from the new EU member states studied. It shows that despite the official EU rhetoric of equal treatment, the inherent selectivity of EU social security governance is inevitably linked to the production of unequal welfare opportunities among mobile EU citizens.

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