

## Chapter 25. Transnational families in the era of global mobility

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### <a>INTRODUCTION

Family life has often been relegated to the ‘back stage’ (Hochschild 2010: 1125) of research on globalisation and migration. This is the result of the dominance of highly individualised, economistic and gendered analyses of migration and globalisation processes (Kilkey et al. 2013b). However, a number of closely linked developments in both fields are raising awareness of the critical position that family occupies in the relationship between migration and globalisation, pushing analyses of family life to the ‘front stage’ of research. These developments include, for example: a recognition that the feminisation of migration is a key characteristic of the ‘age of migration’ (Castles and Miller 2009); that households and families as well as States and markets are embedded in globalisation processes; that social reproductive work is part of the international economy; and that the distribution of non-material resources is also a feature of globalisation (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2000; Yeates 2005).

Care, the exchange of which has been defined ‘as the “glue” of kinship and as ... constitutive of family life’ (Baldassar 2016: 20), has emerged as a central lens through which to examine the relationship between families, migration and globalisation. Two dimensions of the relationship thus emerge as particularly important. First, for many families and households in the global economic periphery, globalisation has wrought a variable combination of uneven development, economic crises, structural adjustment processes and political instability. This has produced what has been called a ‘crisis of care’ (Baldassar 2016) or a ‘crisis of social reproduction’ (Kofman and Raghuram 2015), evidenced in the inability of families and households to secure the resources required for their maintenance – physically, emotionally and socially, in the here and now and intergenerationally (see also Kilkey and Urzi 2017).

For many families, a key motive for migration is to seek relief from such crises (Kilkey and Urzi 2017; Kofman and Raghuram 2015). Migration is perceived as having the potential to provide for better livelihoods, and to thereby reduce the deficit in the ability to

care for one's household or family. This is clearly a factor in major flows of migrants such as those from Mexico to the US, from the Philippines to Europe and Asia, and from Eastern to Western Europe (Boehm 2012; Parreñas 2001; Kilkey et al. 2013a). People are not migrating simply for their own benefit, but rather as part of a larger strategy for supporting and caring for their children, parents, spouses and extended kin, and for planning for their future family life.

Second, migration may simultaneously disrupt care. Expectations that family members will be available and present, if not actually co-resident, are confounded when households and families become stretched across borders (Coe 2015). They are transformed into so-called 'global households' (Douglass 2006) and 'transnational families' (Baldassar et al. 2014) in which members are separated by distance and often for extended periods of time. Families become inserted into and produce new contexts of support, with different opportunities and constraints for the configuration of care.

In the following sections, we unpack each of these two dimensions, focusing specifically on the experiences of what have come to be termed transnational families – 'families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely "familyhood", even across national borders' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 18). As we have argued elsewhere (Baldassar et al. 2014), transnational families *per se* are not new. Throughout history there have been many and varied forms resulting from all types of mobility, including emigration and immigration, colonial expansion and exploration, and the separation of family members through entry into religious orders, the custom of apprenticeship and even the use of boarding schools (Yeates 2009). Rather, it is the pattern of migration and the context of global connectedness that families are embedded within that has been radically transformed. The availability of increasingly affordable and safer modes of travel and communication across distance has fundamentally changed the process and experience of migration. In contrast to the past, migratory moves today are more likely to be characterised by regular and frequent communication and linkages between sending and receiving areas. The concept of transnational migration emerged as an attempt at better capturing these practices and processes. 'Transnationality' (Faist et al. 2013) in this context is defined as 'a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders' (Glick Schiller et al. 1992: ix). Furthermore, the family has been identified as a key site of 'everyday transnationalism' (Vertovec 2009: 61).

The conceptual shift to a transnational framework exemplifies the ‘mobility turn’ in the social sciences (Urry 2007), a key observation of which is that increased mobility affects all our lives, and not just the people who are actually mobile (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). Thus, even family and community members who do not migrate can remain connected and active participants in social relationships stretched across time and place, without actually moving at all. In this way, the impact of *immobility* on care within families comes into view alongside that of mobility. In our current time, some people on the move are confronted with what Turner (2007) has termed the ‘immobility regime’. Motivated variously by a desire to assert their nation-State sovereignty, to protect their labour markets and welfare states, to exclude the ‘terrorist’ or racialised ‘other’ and to get (re-)elected, governments are responding to mobile populations with the policies and rhetoric of ‘closure, entrapment and containment’ (Shamir 2005: 199). Popular accounts have focused on high-profile examples such as Brexit, the suspension of Schengen during the ‘Mediterranean refugee crisis’ in 2015–16 and Donald Trump’s project to raise the wall between Mexico and the USA. Alongside these is a more generalised drift towards restrictive migration policies, which privilege some types of mobility over others. The question of where care and family relations fit in such processes is of fundamental importance (see Kilkey 2017 on this question in relation to Brexit).

Immobility is perceived by some as a ‘sign of social deprivation and degradation’ in a world in which ‘mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values’ (Bauman 1998: 2). At the same time, the capacity to choose whether to be immobile or mobile is something that those from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds would welcome in their enforced state of displacement and movement (Wilding and Gifford 2013). Extending the point to the experiences of less privileged migrants more generally, Kilkey and Palenga-Möllenneck (2016: 338) argue ‘it may even be seen as a sign of privilege’ to have a ‘freedom to choose where to be’ (Bauman 1998: 86) that emphatically includes the choice *not* to leave one’s native city, country or continent (and one’s loved ones in them) in order to assure a comfortable or even just an acceptable livelihood. Hence, the ability to be mobile or immobile can be seen as one of the main stratifying features of the contemporary global world (Ariza 2014: 95), as is access to the internet and to the information and communication technologies (ICTs) that facilitate transnational connectivity and care-giving across distance (Baldassar et al. 2016b).

### <b>Vignette 1: Remittances as Transnational Care

<quotation>Mafalda migrated to Italy in 2005, leaving her two young children in the care of her husband and her parents in Brazil. Mafalda and her husband were struggling to repay a debt, and when they heard that there was a large demand in Italy for female migrant workers in the informal elder-care sector, they thought Mafalda's migration would help them reimburse their debt. Indeed, Mafalda quickly found a job as a live-in carer with an Italian family. Despite the initial hope that her husband and children would be able to join her in Italy, Mafalda learned quickly from fellow Brazilians that family reunification was almost impossible to secure for someone with her migration and labour market status. Instead, therefore, she settled into a transnational mode of 'doing family'. Over the years, she sent regular remittances, which not only covered the family debt and helped raise her children, but also helped her husband set up a small truck company with one of his brothers next to a piece of land where the couple hoped to build a small house and settle when Mafalda finally returned home.

Mafalda considered this truck business and the piece of land as her 'return' ticket to Brazil. She also sent 'crisis remittances' when health issues arose – like when her grandfather fell off a ladder and needed surgery. Brazil provides universal public healthcare services, but of poor quality and with long waiting lists, so Mafalda's remittances allowed the family to access a private hospital. In the late 2000s, Mafalda was preparing to return home, but when the fall-out from the Global Financial Crisis began to be felt in Brazil, two of her siblings lost their jobs, and the truck business nearly collapsed. The couple had no choice but to fall into debt, and Mafalda's capacity to send remittances became crucial again, both to repay this new debt and to support the extended family. She had no choice but to remain in Italy. The Italian context, however, was not as favourable as in the early years: she was now facing downward pressure on wages as a result of both cuts to the old-age pensions of Italians and the increased

competition from a new wave of care-worker migrants from Romania.</quotation>

**<b>Vignette 2: The Importance of Mobility Rights to the Delivery of Care**

<quotation>Alexandru arrived in Italy in 2007 with his wife Maria, leaving their two children behind in Romania in the care of their grandmother. Alexandru had found it impossible to find secure work in Romania since leaving school in the early 1990s in the midst of the economic turmoil that followed the collapse of Communism there in 1989; and, like many of his co-nationals, he had worked irregularly in Italy numerous times over the preceding couple of decades. When Romania joined the EU in 2007, Italy allowed Romanians access to certain sectors of its labour market, including agricultural work, which is what Alexandru and his wife both migrated to do. While as EU citizens there was the possibility of bringing their children with them, the couple knew that it would be hard to raise their family in Italy due to the cost of living there and the long working hours. In any case, they did not expect to be in Italy for many years; their plan was to save enough money to be able to send their children to university and then return. To maximise their ability to save they took ‘live-on’ farm jobs, staying in accommodation provided by their employer and eating meals provided by his wife. While there was much that was unsatisfactory about ‘living on’, the most difficult aspect was that they were far away from the internet cafes in town, and so contact with their children was largely restricted to calls and texts via mobile phones.

At least the agricultural work was seasonal though, which, facilitated by their EU mobility rights, allowed Alexandru and his wife to return home for long periods of time each year. These extended visits home ensured they could spend regular time with their children and provide much-needed support to the care-giver grandmother, significantly alleviating the challenges of caring across distance. Each time they went back to Italy, they hoped it would be the last; but since the economic downturn following the Global Financial Crisis, wages

had deteriorated and achieving their savings target was becoming ever more of a challenge.</quotation>

While individual migrants have unique rationales for migrating, the above vignettes highlight that the decision to migrate is often a ‘micro-level enactment’ (Sassen 2010) in response to a ‘crisis of care’ in the home countries. As the vignettes indicate, such crises take different forms and intensity across time and space and in response to diverse global events. In the 1990s, the terms ‘astronaut family’ and ‘parachute children’ were introduced to describe how wealthy residents of Hong Kong were sending their children and spouses to live in perceived ‘safe havens’ while waiting for the economic and political outcomes of the return of the colony to China (Pe Pua et al. 1996). More recently, the 2008–09 Global Financial Crisis has been a key factor in both motivating and constraining migration. While the initial response to the crisis in many countries involved Keynesian-style countercyclical economic policies, neo-liberalism quickly regained its grasp and austerity became the dominant response to tackling the public debts and budget deficits ensuing from the crisis (ILO 2014). These neo-liberal policy measures, with their emphasis on individual responses and responsibilities, are having dire consequences for sustaining economic activity, livelihoods and everyday life in many parts of the world.

At the heart of austerity are deep public spending cuts, usually targeted at social policy programmes such as education, health and social welfare (Oxfam 2013), and are thus disproportionately borne by families. Ortiz and colleagues (2015) in a review of the austerity programmes of 187 countries between 2010 and 2015 found that:

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<bt><em>97 developing countries (DCs) and 35 high-income countries (HICs) are reducing or abolishing subsidies on food, fuel and agricultural inputs;

<bt><em>96 DCs and 34 HICs are reforming their wage bills by slashing or freezing wages and/or putting a cap on public sector employment;

<bt><em>68 DCs and 39 HICs are reforming their social safety nets programmes by re-targeting programmes and freezing benefit rates;

<bt><em>60 DCs and 45 HICs are reforming their pension systems by raising the retirement age and reducing tax exemptions on pensioner incomes;

<bt><em>49 DCs and 40 HICs are reforming their labour laws through weakening workers’ and union rights, making it relatively easier to hire and fire workers;

<bt><em>22 DCs and 34 HICs are reforming their health sectors by introducing user fees for services and putting a cap on the wages of health workers; and  
<bt><em>93 DCs and 45 HICs are raising consumption tax rates.</list>

A recent ILO study (2014: 120) estimates that such austerity programmes have worsened the living conditions of 123 million people in the European Union (EU), most of them women, children and the disabled. In developing countries, the situation is much more alarming, not least because countries that already had serious human development challenges prior to austerity are now engaged in excessive austerity (ibid.). It is estimated that by 2020, 6.6 billion people – 80 per cent of the world’s population – will be affected by ongoing austerity programmes, with developing countries being the hardest hit (Ortiz et al. 2015: 3).

#### <a>FAMILIES’ TRANSNATIONAL RESILIENCE STRATEGIES: OPPORTUNITIES AND COSTS FOR CARE-GIVING

As with economic production and financial capital (Smith 2013), globalisation simultaneously *pushes* and *facilitates* families and households to adopt what Kilkey and Urzi (2017: 14) term ‘transnational resilience strategies’, defined as cross-border strategies combining ‘market-, family-, community- and State-based practices designed to secure familial and household social reproduction’. As highlighted in the vignettes above, migrants seek to secure from a distance the well-being of family members ‘left behind’. Even if the positive impact of remittances on development and poverty reduction is difficult to establish, these money flows help families address major social reproductive needs such as housing, food or access to health and education (Lubambu 2014).

Remittances are part of a larger set of forms of familial support that travels across borders, including practical and emotional support (Baldassar et al. 2007). This movement of diverse supports is captured by the concept of ‘care circulation’, which is defined as ‘the reciprocal, multidirectional and asymmetrical exchange of care that fluctuates over the life course within transnational family networks subject to the political, economic, cultural and social contexts of both sending and receiving societies’ (Baldassar and Merla 2014: 22). According to Kilkey and Merla (2014), the form and intensity of this transnational care circulation, including the capacity of family members to participate in these flows, is largely dependent on the characteristics of the migration, welfare, employment and gendered care regimes of the places where family members are located. This institutional context determines in particular the need for social protection of those who move and those who ‘stay

behind’ (and here the levels of social protection offered by the State in the home and host country are central), as well as the capacity of family members to address those needs.

The austerity measures described earlier – combined with increasingly restrictive and instrumentalist migration policies limiting family reunification and permanent residency – simultaneously reinforce the importance of families as safety networks and welfare providers (potentially acting as a push factor for migration) and affect the capacity of family networks to play this role both locally and transnationally. Mobility (of money, goods, services and people) is one of the two major channels through which care is provided in transnational families (Baldassar and Merla 2014; Merla 2014; Merla and Baldassar 2016). European Freedom of Movement (EFM) rights facilitated Alexandru and Maria’s mobility back and forth between Italy and Romania, allowing for a combination of hands-on and distant care-giving for their children. EFM, however, is unique in the world in its scope (Geddes 2008); for most migrants, restrictive migration policies weigh heavily on the capacity of transnational family members to put in place care arrangements based on the temporary or long-term mobility of care-givers and/or care-receivers (for a typology of care arrangements in transnational families, see Kilkey and Merla 2014). Merla’s comparative study of Salvadoran migrants and refugees in Australia and Belgium has shown that families respond to ‘immobility’ by focusing on long-distance caring arrangements (Merla 2012, 2015). Essential to this strategy are the opportunities provided by polymedia environments (Madianou and Miller 2012), in particular the expanding ubiquity of ICTs.

## <a>GLOBALISATION, ICTS AND TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES

### <b>Vignette 3: Transnational Care through ICT-Based Co-Presence

<quotation>Katia considers herself ‘one of the lucky ones’ as, among the thousands of working holiday visa holders from Italy, she is one of the relatively few who managed to secure an employer-sponsored visa that enables her to become a permanent Australian resident. She initially decided to travel to Australia on a working holiday visa out of deep frustration that her homeland offered her no opportunities to progress in her profession. Yet, once in Australia – with a degree from a prestigious European university and an excellent command of English – Katia was ‘absolutely devastated’ to experience sub-standard

working conditions, below-award wages and even what she described as ‘subtle forms of sexual harassment’ on the seasonal agricultural work placements that were a requirement of her visa. She encountered plenty of other young people like herself, less well-educated but equally aspirational, who suffered even worse conditions of exploitation, exacerbated by the precarity of their temporary visas. Yet, now that she has finally landed a secure job that ‘is perfect for my career’ and that makes her ‘unbelievably happy’, Katia is also struggling with her responsibilities as the only daughter of ageing parents who are becoming increasingly frail back home in Italy.

While she meets the ‘balance of family test’ and could apply (albeit, at great financial cost) to bring her parents to Australia, Katia is not at all sure this is a good option, given her parents’ lack of knowledge of English and their ‘deep attachments’ to their hometown. While she considers this option, Katia maintains extensive contact with her parents through daily phone calls; Skype calls on Saturday and Sunday to her cousin’s place where her parents dutifully walk to receive the call; regular text messages to her cousin who ‘keeps an eye out’ for her parents; and a continuous WhatsApp conversation with the local Italian woman, Teresa, who has been cleaning her parents’ house for years and who Katia has recently employed to spend four hours in the home every day, tidying, making lunch and ensuring the fridge is well stocked.

While Teresa is not yet proficient with Skype, she is a capable WhatsApp user and posts regular photos of Katia’s parents, as well as the contents of the fridge and the rooms she has cleaned so that Katia feels well informed. However, Teresa is not keen to maintain this level of work, as she is herself becoming old. A care facility may not be an option for Katia’s parents, as care managers often require a local carer to be on hand (Baldassar 2016), so Katia is facing the prospect of employing a domestic worker. High on the list of employment criteria will be the ability to use ICTs so that Katia can maintain a strong sense of co-presence with her parents despite the distance.</quotation>

#### <b>Vignette 4: The Importance of ICTs in Migration and Settlement

<quotation>Moo Nee first became aware of Australia as a possible place of resettlement through a friend from his church network who contacted him by phone to say that there was a need for someone with good English skills in their growing community, someone who could help communicate with local organisations and service providers. In spite of having lived in the refugee camp on the border of Thailand and Myanmar for many years, or perhaps because of that, Moo Nee was ambivalent about applying for resettlement. He had watched his brothers and sisters apply for and accept resettlement in the US and northern Europe, but he was keen to stay close to his homeland in case return became a serious possibility. He had thus established himself as a teacher and a leader in the camp, keeping in touch with his family overseas through limited access to a mobile phone and email on the camp's few computers with internet access. It was the lure of being able to contribute something to the Karen community in Australia that prompted him to apply, as well as the sense that Australia seemed much closer to home on the map than did North America or Europe.

Moo Nee's siblings in the US put him in touch with others who had resettled in Australia, and he began to use telephone, email and word of mouth to talk to them about where he should settle, finding out more about local opportunities. Through one of these contacts he was offered and eventually accepted sponsorship from a non-governmental organisation. A few months later, Moo Nee was getting off the plane and beginning his new life. His mobile phone, already significant in helping him decide where to resettle, became an essential everyday tool. He used it not only to reconnect with his siblings in Europe and the US, but also to coordinate activities with other Karen in Australia.

In addition to his biological kin, Moo Nee's sense of family extended to include members of the Karen community organisations that he connected with on a daily basis. He was active in fundraising in Australia and sending money to the refugee camps in Thailand as well as supporting people in need in the US and Europe. Far from arriving

alone, he felt that he had brought not only his extended family but also his entire community with him to Australia. Using the telephone and an iPad to access Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype, they shared gossip and news and reflected on developments in Myanmar and Thailand. Moo Nee was also an active consumer of images of his family and friends around the world, maintaining albums of the people who were significant to him. He explained that in spite of arriving in Australia without any family members, he never felt alone or lonely. Rather, his family were constantly with him, carried around in his pocket in his mobile phone.

This continued sense of co-presence (cf. Baldassar et al. 2016) gave Moo Nee a feeling of comfort and security, contributing to his well-being during the challenging process of resettlement in a new country. He felt that he was part of a transnational family and community that, while dispersed across geographic boundaries, was nevertheless an important source of belonging, representing a group of people for whom he cared continuously through emotional and financial support, and who he felt were also caring for him through their continued updates, sharing of problems and involvement in the minutia of daily life. The upheavals of forced migration became more bearable as a consequence of his participation in this virtually co-present community.

In the time since David Harvey (1989) referred to ‘time-space compression’ as one of the factors and conditions of globalisation, new communication technologies have further transformed the ways in which people experience both time and place. In the past, families had to make do with word-of-mouth news being passed through networks of mobile kin or letters that were exchanged at regular but distant intervals (Baldassar 2016). Now, mobile phones, the internet and social media are enabling people to create a sense of ‘connected presence’ when apart, regardless of whether they are in the same neighbourhood or on opposite sides of the world (Licoppe 2004; Ling 2008). Moreover, the plethora of options has created what Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller (2012: 3) have labelled a ‘polymedia’ environment, in which the particular communication tool someone chooses to use is

‘increasingly seen to depend on social and moral questions rather than technical or economic parameters’.

The capacity for connected presence in a polymedia environment helps create a denser and more richly experienced form of transnational familyhood than was possible even a decade ago. When family members are co-resident in a household or live near each other, they are easily and apparently effortlessly able to produce a sense of familyhood through the intermittent, almost unnoticeable, daily acts of interaction and exchange that occur as a result of that physical proximity. This is the basis of the ‘family practices’ that Morgan (2011) argues constitute and produce the family. However, when families are disrupted and transformed by migration, new strategies for creating familyhood are required to alleviate the problems of distance and produce a sense of togetherness during extended periods when family members are physically apart.

The remarkable uptake of new ICTs is a clear indicator that these are seen as effective tools for maintaining relationships across time and space. The co-presence that provides the foundation of family practices and a sense of familyhood can now increasingly be produced without physical proximity, through the construction of various forms of mediated co-presence (Baldassar et al. 2016). Virtual co-presence can be established through telephone communication; co-presence by proxy can be created through symbols of a relationship such as photographs; and imagined co-presence can be produced through the persistent invoking of significant others in daily activities and thoughts (Baldassar 2008). To these, other forms of digital co-presence have since been added. Madianou (2016), for example, describes the ‘ambient’ co-presence that is produced by a polymedia environment in which interaction with distant others is always a possibility, the next chirrup of a communication device potentially only a moment away. When these are routinised in everyday activities, co-presence at a distance becomes ‘ordinary’ rather than extraordinary (Nedelcu and Wyss 2016). New media also have the potential to produce a new enactment of the family, as in the production of the ‘family imaginary’ through digital reproductions of affective relationships (Robertson et al. 2016). It is thus now possible to create a ‘transnational everyday reality’ which is ‘based on ubiquity, simultaneity and immediacy of interaction over borders’ (Nedelcu 2012: 1346). The capacity to use not only video, but also text messages, telephone and social media helps reproduce a complex social environment in which a sense of familyhood can be more readily sustained.

At the same time, significant inequalities shape the potential for families to take advantage of these communicative possibilities. A digital divide continues to separate those

who do and those who do not have access to the infrastructure and affordances of ICTs (Ragnedda and Muschert 2013). At one end of the spectrum are those whose families can afford access and have the digital literacy to easily use a broad range of technological options. At the other end are those who, due to displacement, education, physical impairment, geographic location or other factors, have their capacities to access and use ICTs severely limited. In many cases, the same family or care network contains people at both ends of the spectrum, creating new inequalities within families as well as between them. Thus, for example, in Vignette 3, Katia is an avid user of new technologies, but her ability to create a sense of continued co-presence with her parents is reliant on their support to use new technologies, something that depends on their ability to access Skype down the street and have a home-carer who can facilitate ongoing communications. For Moo Nee in Vignette 4, the capacity to feel continuously connected to his family was limited in the refugee camp, but became a central feature of his daily life after resettlement.

At first glance, the emergence of a polymedia environment appears to enable families to better continue their relationships uninterrupted in spite of migration. Indeed, this is the experience reported by some of the many women who have migrated from the Philippines to work overseas and have left their children behind with other kin or with paid carers. For women who migrated in the 1990s or earlier, one of the sacrifices made for family was the decision to leave their children in order to earn a better income to support them. The consequence was that women would return for an annual or sometimes less frequent holiday (depending on their employers' requirements and their mobility rights), only to discover that their children no longer recognised them. The visit was rarely long enough to build a close relationship, and so the mothers would have to accept that their maternal identities had been damaged by their migration. This was particularly heart-breaking for women whose migration had been prompted by their desire to provide their children with a better future out of a sense of maternal duty and desire (Parreñas 2001, 2005; Madianou and Miller 2012).

More recently, women in a similar stage of the life course have not faced such a stark choice between their maternal identities and their capacities to maintain close emotional relationships with their children. Rather, they have been able to use a combination of media to keep in touch with their children and monitor their care and well-being on a daily basis. This can include helping with homework, chatting about their friends, eating a meal at the same time, or simply sending a regular text message or a digital photo to show where they are or what they are doing. It is arguably the accumulation of these small interactions that produces the sense of familyhood, not only for those who are living transnationally but also

for families that are co-resident. That is, it is in the practices oriented towards maintaining and reproducing the family that the family is created, maintained and reproduced (Morgan 2011). Moo Nee's frequent interactions with his family and friends around the world are what create a sense of belonging to family and community in spite of his geographic distance from the people he cares for. Each photograph, text message and conversation reproduces and maintains the sense of connection on which familyhood is founded. In this way, new communication technologies provide an important tool for enacting these family practices over time and space, regardless of migration.

This is not to say that polymedia necessarily produces 'happy families'. Indeed, stories abound of the ways in which both communication and non-communication create tensions within the family network. The telephone, for example, can be an important tool for children to use when they want to complain to their migrant parents that they feel abandoned and demand their immediate return (Dreby 2006). It can also be a means for ageing parents to inflict a sense of guilt on their migrant daughters, prompting longer visits and more frequent or more permanent returns (Baldassar et al. 2007).

How communication technologies are perceived and used, and with what sorts of outcomes, varies depending on a range of factors. One of these is the position of family members in the life course (Wall and Bolzman 2014). Thus, it is the parents of young children who typically report the most anguish at leaving them behind, but who also seem to have gained the most from being able to sustain relationships across distance through synchronous video chat. Being able to interact with young children by playing games such as hide-and-seek and peekaboo, or singing songs or showing and talking about toys and books is something that could not have been imagined a generation ago (Madianou and Miller 2012). Parents and children are able to reconstruct a new form of relationship based on 'seeing' each other, without having to be physically co-present.

At other stages in the life course, communication technologies are not necessarily so helpful. For example, teenagers and young adults can find that the capacity for their parents to monitor their every move on social media is an infringement of their autonomy (Madianou and Miller 2012). They report that parental micromanagement online can be irksome and does not necessarily lead to any greater sense of emotional closeness. Yet, this in part depends on the willingness of the children to accept the parents' decision to migrate. Some children are very supportive and appreciative of what they see as their parents' sacrifice, and are enthusiastic in their use of ICTs to maintain good relationships with their parents (Menjívar and Abrego 2009). It is also clear that gender plays a role in how both parents and

children enact and perceive their communications, with fathers less likely than mothers to engage in the continual communications that might help in supporting a close emotional relationship (Parreñas 2008). In the case of ageing parents, dementia and other illnesses can make ICTs less effective in sustaining a sense of familyhood. They serve to reinforce the sense of distance and loss rather than bridging the geographic and affective distance created by migration (Baldassar et al. 2007). In the case of forced migrants, the loss of kin during the trauma of displacement is permanent, yet digital media provide new opportunities to express a family imaginary that reincorporates lost family members into the space of everyday life (Robertson et al. 2016).

Such unevenness in access and use of new communication media is particularly important to bear in mind in a context in which the increasing availability of ICTs is contributing to broader societal transformation. Specifically, ‘cybernetically speaking, technological development feeds back into how a society “thinks” about space and distance’ (Kilkey and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2016: 340). In places such as the Philippines, it facilitates a discourse on new communication media that is legitimising a gradual transformation of short-term migration into long-term transnational migration (Madianou 2016). The risk is therefore that, as virtual proximity through new communication media becomes commonplace and taken for granted, so, too, the physical absence of migrant parents begins to be considered normal, both by the migrant families themselves and in public and political discourse (Kilkey and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2016).

## <a>CONCLUSION

Processes of globalisation are central to the rapid social transformations that characterise contemporary life. Bringing family to the front stage of analyses of globalisation is imperative to understanding the inherent inequalities and unevenness of these processes, particularly given the dominance of neo-liberal economic agendas that foster unfettered markets at the expense of social welfare provisions.

While processes of globalisation have resulted in increased mobility of people as well as goods and ideas, these same processes have created sharp distinctions in both immobility and mobility freedoms. This is particularly the case for marginal groups who are, on the one hand, pushed into mobility as a strategy to secure livelihoods – and in the case of refugees, often life itself – and, on the other hand, whose mobility (and that of family and kin) is highly constrained by migration controls, which have become tougher in the ‘age of austerity’ and as nation-States assert their sovereignty in the ‘age of globalisation’ (Dauvergne 2004).

Similarly, telecommunications and internet connectivity are key drivers of globalisation, helping to ensure families can retain a sense of familyhood despite distance. Yet, these same drivers can increase inequalities for those who have limited access and capabilities, including, in particular, the elderly and disadvantaged. Interestingly, uneven access to mobility rights is not strictly defined by social class and country of origin. As this chapter makes clear, the increasing reliance on temporary migration regimes is impacting on middle-class educated migrants, particularly youth, as well as the working and underprivileged classes. Access to the internet and the capabilities to use it are increasingly becoming major factors in people's ability to participate in social and political life, not only in terms of access to information but also to family and social support and connectivity. Mobility and internet access are thus key features of globalisation that require careful policy attention at both national and transnational levels.

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