

Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care

Understanding Mobility and
Absence in Family Life

**Edited by Loretta Baldassar
and Laura Merla**

First published 2014
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group,
an informa business*

© 2014 Taylor & Francis

The right of Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark Notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Transnational families, migration and the circulation of care :
understanding mobility and absence in family life / edited by
Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla.

pages cm.—(Routledge research in transnationalism ; 29)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Intercountry marriage. 2. Families. 3. Emigration and
immigration. 4. Globalization—Social aspects. I. Baldassar, Loretta,
1965—editor of compilation. II. Merla, Laura.

HQ1032.T727 2013

306.85—dc23

2013008371

ISBN13: 978-0-415-62673-6 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-07753-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by IBT Global.

Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv

PART A Conceptualising Care Circulation

Introduction: Transnational Family Caregiving Through the Lens of Circulation	3
LORETTA BALDASSAR AND LAURA MERLA	

1 Locating Transnational Care Circulation in Migration and Family Studies	25
LORETTA BALDASSAR AND LAURA MERLA	

PART B Care Circulation: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations

2 Mapping the New Plurality of Transnational Families: A Life Course Perspective	61
KARIN WALL AND CLAUDIO BOLZMAN	
3 Care (and) Circulation Revisited: A Conceptual Map of Diversity in Transnational Parenting	78
PAOLA BONIZZONI AND PAOLO BOCCAGNI	
4 Care Circulation, Absence and Affect in Transnational Families	94
MARINA ARIZA	

Introduction

Transnational Family Caregiving Through the Lens of Circulation

Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla

'To investigate the different forms, orientations, and directions of care, one would need (...) to adopt an approach that follows longitudinally and spatially the migrant so as to capture care giving and receiving'. (Kofman 2012, 153)

In El Salvador, Yasmina, a lone mother of three children, struggled to provide for her family with a cleaning job. She both provided to, and received, financial and other forms of support from her mother Carlita and her brother Fausto, who also live in El Salvador. In addition, they all received regular remittances from Sara and Olga, Carlita's other children who live in the United States and Canada, respectively. In 2001, Yasmina accepted an invitation from her Belgium-based aunt (Carlita's sister) to migrate to Belgium, hoping to make a better living. Yasmina's son had recently migrated to Spain, and she left her two teenage daughters in the care of her mother. She travelled with a tourist visa and later became an undocumented migrant. The aunt financed her journey and provided her initial accommodation, but their relationship became difficult; Yasmina felt her aunt demanded too much in return, in the form of money and housework. When she found an undeclared job as a live-in domestic, Yasmina stayed at her aunt's only at weekends, where she also had to cook and clean, her aunt reminding her that this was the least she could do in repayment for her 'debt'. Living apart from her children was extremely painful. She remained in regular contact with her son and daughters and her mother, calling them as often as she could and exchanging practical and emotional support with them. She also sent them remittances, aimed at supporting both the children and their carer-grandmother. After two years, Yasmina was able to finance her daughters' move to Belgium. The girls travelled with Carlita, who had planned to spend three months in Belgium. The three women stayed at the aunt's house and were reunited with Yasmina on the weekends, but Carlita returned to El Salvador sooner than planned because her sister did not treat her well.

Over the next several years, Carlita regularly travelled between El Salvador and North America, dividing her time between Fausto, Olga

and Sara's households, who took in turn the role of caring for their mother, taking her to the doctor and helping her in her daily activities while receiving her help in the form of babysitting, cooking and so on. Her four children supported her financially. The child with whom Carlita resided was also in charge of keeping the others informed of her health and personal situation. But now that she has become frail, at 84 years of age, Carlita spends most of her time in the United States, where she was recently granted permanent residency. Yasmina does not send her money anymore but is ready to step in if an emergency arises. She is in regular contact with her mother, whom she phones and messages on the Internet with the assistance of her daughters. Carlita is particularly keen to hear about her granddaughters, and floods Yasmina and the girls with advice. The granddaughters also send her money when an emergency arises. Yasmina deeply regrets not being able to visit her mother and siblings. Her undocumented status and the cost of flights make it impossible for her to travel outside Belgium. But she feels highly responsible for her mother's well-being, and she actively participates in the transnational family exchanges of caregiving that creates for them a network of solidarity.

* * * *

Viviana, a retired secretary who lives in Italy with her husband Natalio, a retired bank clerk, takes her duty as grandmother seriously, and often worries about how she can be a good grandmother even to her grandchildren who live in England, and especially to those who live furthest away in Australia. For her son and daughter, both professionals, who live close by, she helps out with regular weekly child minding after school and often prepares food for them to take home. This support is especially important to her son, whose work as a medical specialist involves spending three nights a week at a clinic a day's journey away by train. The whole family comes over for lunch every Sunday, and she has the grandchildren for extended stays during the long summer holidays. These 'local' or 'proximate' children and grandchildren assist Viviana and Natalio with all manner of practical tasks, such as the upkeep of their house and car, decisions about health care and the management of their finances, accompanying them to medical appointments and providing 'hands-on' care when they get sick, like the time they both had pneumonia and needed help with cooking and cleaning. It is important for Viviana to feel she is caring 'equally' for all her children and grandchildren, and she puts great effort into maintaining an up-to-date photo display of everyone, but especially those family members living abroad. Viviana takes the time to send special gifts to her grandchildren abroad, such as scarves she has hand-knitted, jewellery and other small trinkets.

Viviana describes the family as 'very close emotionally', and it has become a ritual to Skype call the Australia- and UK-based families after Sunday lunch, when all the Italy-based family members are together. She finds it difficult to Skype at other times because she prefers to have her son or grandson nearby to set up the computer and fix the connection, which is often faulty. Although both Viviana and Natalio hate flying, mainly because they do not speak much English, they make the effort to be present for the important occasions of their 'distant kin'. They attended the wedding of their daughter in Australia and the graduation of their grandson in the UK. They much prefer, however, to gift money towards the airfares of the far-away family members so they can visit them in Italy; 'that way everyone gets to see them and they get to see everyone', Viviana explains. She justifies the money spent on their visits by pointing out that she cannot provide them with the day-to-day care that she gives her nearby family, like child minding and cooking. For their part, the Australia- and UK-based daughters phone their mother in a weekly routine, on a different day each, but they also make additional calls whenever the urge takes them. The local children phone their parents daily. The siblings stay in regular and frequent contact with each other as well, by SMS texts and occasional phone and Skype calls, which increase around birthdays and anniversaries as well as before and after visits.

The UK family visits every year at Christmas, and the children in this family are old enough to visit on their own during the summer. The Australia-based family tries to visit every two or three years. All the siblings congregated together after Natalio suffered a serious stroke. The Australian daughter stayed for two weeks to help her mother care for him, and after she returned home, the UK daughter arrived to assist for a further two weeks. The Italy-based children have also visited their siblings abroad, and the Italy-based daughter made several trips to the UK to support her sister when she required short stays in hospital. The Italy-based family members have, on occasion, elected to send a family representative to Australia to attend a special event, including a first holy communion and a special birthday. All the Italy-based grandchildren are planning extended visits to their UK aunt to improve their English. They stay in touch with their cousins by regular Facebook posts and SMS text messages. They also Skype and phone each other to organise the details of their visits. Despite this constant and regular contact, Viviana feels the absence of her far-away daughters and their families deeply. She remembers them in her nightly prayers, and they are among her first thoughts when she wakes each morning.

We chose to start this volume with two very different case studies.¹ Yasmina's family is in many ways exemplary of the situation of the female domestic

migrants featured in the care chains literature, who are subject to discrimination and deprivation of basic rights in their society of destination,² and Viviana's family, whose middle-class members occupy a much more privileged position in both home and host settings. These case studies emphasise some of the key features, as well as some of the varieties and inequalities, of the transnational family forms presented in this edited collection. They highlight, in particular, the way family members from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds care for each other through a process of asymmetrical reciprocal exchange, across and despite the distance that separates them, and the way that care *circulates* between them. These cases also exemplify the three main propositions that shape this volume. The idea that care circulates within transnational family networks is central to this book, and this chapter examines the conceptual implications of its application to the analysis of transnational families. The care circulation framework that we are advancing helps to elucidate a further objective, which is to emphasise the importance of theorising mobility and absence as common features of family life. It also provides an analytical lens that allows us to examine the full range of family forms that have, to date, been compartmentalised in the existing literature between analyses of the south-north chains of domestic and care-sector workers and studies of a broader set of transnational family relations and migration types.

With increased mobility and improvements in both travel and communication technologies, more and more people are experiencing transnational family lives. Whether pushed or pulled out of homelands in search of safe asylum, better economic futures or improved lifestyles, increasing numbers of people are separated from their family by distance and national borders. Those family members who 'stay behind' or 'stay put' (as it were) in their place of birth or ancestral homeland also become part of social relationships stretched across time and place, even though they might never actually relocate or move at all. We propose that a focus on the disparate trajectories of care circulation helps us to better understand mobility and absence in family life, so that we might theorise transnational families as contemporary family forms in their own right. Absence, in this context, refers specifically to physical absence, and each of the chapters in this volume, like the case studies above, are examples of the various ways that a sense of 'co-presence' (Urry 2003) can be maintained despite separation. Indeed, we begin with the premise that, despite being separated by distance and over time, members of transnational families maintain a sense of 'family-hood' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002a, 3), in that they continue to feel they 'belong' to a family even though they may not see each other or be physically co-present often or for extended periods of time. As Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007, 13) write, 'the resulting idea of the "transnational family" is intended to capture the growing awareness that members of families retain their sense of collectivity and kinship in spite of being spread across multiple nations'.

We wish to highlight, in particular, how the sense of belonging in transnational families is sustained by the reciprocal, though uneven, exchange of caregiving, which we argue is a key feature of the practices and processes associated with 'doing family' (Morgan, 1996). Transnational caregiving, just like caregiving in all families (whether separated by migration or not),³ binds members together in intergenerational networks of reciprocity and obligation, love and trust, that are simultaneously fraught with tension, contest and relations of unequal power.⁴ We theorise the exchange of care in families (broadly defined) as inherently reciprocal and asymmetrical, governed by the 'norm of generalised reciprocity'—the *expectation* that the giving of care must ultimately be reciprocated, although it may not be realised. A pertinent example of this norm is what family and gerontology studies refer to as the generational contract, where parents care for their young, who in turn care for them when they age (Bengtson and Achenbaum 1993).⁵ Anthropologists distinguish between various types of reciprocity, including the generalised form (Sahlins 1965; Lévi Strauss 1969), which refers to those exchanges that are not immediate and equivalent, in the sense that people give care without measuring exactly the amount they receive, but with the expectation and obligation that care will be returned to them. This said, as evident in the cases of both Yasmina and Viviana, family members often carefully monitor these exchanges, and they are governed by the multiple and constantly 'negotiated family commitments',⁶ intimate and unequal power relations and private culture (Epstein 1978) that characterise family life. As this care is given and returned at different times and to varying degrees across the life course, the care could be described as *circulating* among family members over time as well as distance.

While the flow of care is by no means even and harmonious and is subject to constant negotiation by members, of factors both internal and external to the family, we see caregiving and its management as constitutive of transnational family life (Morgan 2011b). This does not mean that families are invariably a source of support and succour. While families are valued for providing security and fulfilment, they can also produce disappointment and even trauma. The feminist, family and gender studies literatures emphasise that an analysis of caregiving activity must be sensitive to the unevenness of reciprocal exchange, including the withholding and limiting of care (Kergoat 2000).⁷ As in the case of proximate families, not all transnational family members give and receive care equally, and some—typically women—shoulder a far greater burden of care. While the circulation of care involves reciprocal exchanges between family members, both the transnational and local care burdens fall most heavily on women, who generally receive less than they give (Ryan 2007). In this context, care and the ability to exchange it can be considered a type of resource or form of social capital (Goulbourne et al 2010, Zontini & Reynolds 2007) that is unevenly distributed within families, subject to cultural notions of gender and identity roles relating to rights and obligations to care, which

intersect with, and interrelate to, the historical care regimes of the various nation-states and communities in which families reside.⁸ Here we draw on Wellman's (1988, 102) theory of network ties, which he defines as 'asymmetrically reciprocal, differing in content and intensity', including between close relationships characterised by strong ties. He warns against 'treating all units as if they had the same resources, all ties as if they were symmetrical, and the contents of all ties as if they were equivalent' (Wellman 1988, 20); only in this way can social structure be taken seriously into account, 'by studying directly how patterns of ties allocate resources in a social system' (Wellman 1988, 20).

Thus, we define care circulation as governed by 'generalised asymmetrical reciprocity' within transnational kinship networks. Far from being the private concern of family members, these caregiving exchanges are embedded in the broader political economy of migration and transnationalism. Indeed, the concept of care in feminist and gender studies is a highly politicised one, borne of the need to value the act of caring as unpaid *work* and to recognise caregiving as a fundamental, though generally invisible and unaccounted for feature of a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) (Leira and Saraceno 2006).⁹ Similarly, the unpaid and more intimate dimensions of transnational lives, in particular of 'kin-work' (di Leonardo 1984) and caregiving, are often overlooked altogether, and their role in the more 'public' political economy of migration and diaspora is regularly undervalued (Gardner & Grillo 2002).¹⁰ An analysis of transnational care circulation makes evident the links and intersections between kinship and economic and political motivations in migratory moves, highlighting the role of family and the domestic sphere in sustaining diaspora ties (Olwig 2002).¹¹ It also reveals the powerful non-economic factors that are highly influential in decision making about transnational movement and migration (e.g., Ackers & Dwyer 2002).¹² The various ethnographic case studies that comprise this volume highlight how it is primarily family relations as well as friendship networks and even the loose ties of associates—characterised by nonmarket-driven 'moral' and 'informal' economies—that represent a central motivation for migration and mobility and often comprise the infrastructures and structures (albeit informal) of transnational social fields.

Arguably, the most important literature to examine the negotiation of care within a global economic perspective, and in particular, its unequal distribution in transnational families, is the care chains literature (Hochschild 2000, 2005; Parreñas 2001b, 2005a, 2005b; Yeates 2009, 2012). This body of research specifically focuses on the commodification and political economy of care in 'south-north' female domestic labour flows, as exemplified by the case of Yasmina. Our focus in this volume is different, albeit complementary, with an emphasis on the asymmetrically reciprocal flows of caregiving located in kinship and moral economies of care. We offer a more detailed exploration of the intersections between the frameworks of care chains and care circulation in Chapter 1. Our main arguments are

summarised here by way of introduction. The care chains literature tends to focus on care exchanges between two people who are linked together along a chain of 'dyads', with care flowing in one direction in exchange for financial returns that flow in the other. The care circulation lens broadens out the trajectories of these dyadic exchanges to consider the entire network of relationships around which care flows. This broader perspective avoids the risk inherent in a focus on one-to-one relationships, which tend to ignore the 'social structural context within which dyadic ties operate' (Wellman 1988, 36; Ryan 2007). There are important synergies here with Kofman's (2012) argument for a wider framework than is afforded by the focus on care that dominates the gendered migration literatures. She points out that care is but one element of a broader set of processes of social reproduction, namely, the 'different activities undertaken throughout the life cycle to sustain and maintain households, some of which are multi-sited and multi-national'. We agree that there is a need for analytical frameworks that can better capture the intersections between different types of migration, labour and family life that are more complex than the analyses of chains of care. Kofman recommends the notion of 'global householding' as a way of highlighting how 'economic and social resources are accumulated and deployed and how different types of migration enable such resources to be embedded and disembedded across space and time'. We return to this discussion in the next chapter. Suffice it here to say that we think a care circulation lens, with its focus on the practices and processes of the asymmetrically reciprocal exchanges of transnational caregiving, offers a productive way to trace and retrace the links and connections between members across distance and time, which constitute the workings of 'global households'.

In addition to a consideration of the wider network and processes of relationships and households, the care circulation framework enables us to expand the lens of analysis of migration and caregiving to include the full variety of family types and migrations. The asymmetrical character of care circulation not only concerns intrafamilial relationships, but also the transnational family forms that contain them. There is no such thing as 'the' transnational family, understood as a uniform family form defined by constant characteristics. Transnational families are as diverse as geographically proximate families, representing a wide variety of socioeconomic, educational, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and with extremely different levels of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986), in both their home and host societies. The migration literature usually makes a distinction between them, based on class and migration status. On the one hand, there are the families of professional migrants and 'cosmopolitan' elites who 'seem to move more by choice and be in a better position to negotiate their connections, their nationalities, and benefits associated with their choice of a national residence. . . . The symbolic capital of education and language enable them to move freely, offering relatively easier access to border crossing and citizenship' (Bryceson and

Vuorela 2002a, 8).¹³ On the other hand, there are the families of refugees and economic migrants like Yasmina, who, especially if they are poorly educated with limited language skills, tend to be 'pushed into transnational lifestyles by necessity because they cannot gain a secure economic foothold in their home country' or their host society (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007, 133). These labour migrants often lack 'the human and cultural capital to take advantage of opportunities in two settings' and are subject to discrimination in their access to employment and citizenship (*ibid*).

Between these two extremes are 'middle-class' migrants and their families, like Viviana's, who have access to enough economic, social and cultural capital within their extended networks to have a relative degree of control over their mobilities and transnational relationships. Despite their growing numbers, these families have been largely unexamined. Scott (2006), for example, argues that skilled international migration has 'become a "normal" middle-class activity rather than something exclusively confined to an economic elite', but that the resultant empirical and theoretical complexities have been overlooked.¹⁴ Processes of deskilling and downward social mobility in host societies, further compounded by the current global economic crisis, make these class distinctions even more complex. These are related to the ethnostratification of labour markets, 'whereby immigrants are employed in the lowest positions, not because of a lack of qualifications but rather, among other reasons, due to the discriminatory practices of employers and the state itself' (Solé and Parella 2003, 124).¹⁵

These class and migration-type distinctions are also reflected to a large extent in the study of the mobilities of care, which to date has been divided between the more prominent global care chains research, which focuses on formal and informal migrant care workers (mainly female domestics) who leave their children behind (also referred to as the transnational mothering or parenting literatures), and the increasing research on transnational families, which examines care relations between a wider set of family members and extends the study of caregiving to all categories of migrants. To draw on Viviana's case once again, her family's mobilities represent what might be termed 'north-north' professional migration. These types of skilled migratory movements, including flows of students and graduates, have increased with globalisation in general and the current economic crisis in particular. Targeted migration, including preferences for business and professional entrants as well as labour and domestic workers, are facilitating the *mobility*, and more specifically the *circulation* (Agunias 2006), of individual workers rather than their settlement. These schemes are competing with family reunification as major sources of migrants in developed nations across the globe (Grillo 2008; Flavell et al. 2007; Hawthorne 2005), with a resulting increase in the dispersal of family members and the need for all types of families to exchange care across distance. The various types of transnational families are unequal in their access to the resources that support and sustain the transnational circulation of care, depending on their

members' positioning vis-à-vis the migration, welfare, gendered care and working-time regimes in both home and host societies (Kilkey and Merla 2013), which are in turn influenced by a series of important interrelated factors, including class, gender and ethnicity (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenberg 2011). The chapters that make up this volume offer a rich array of case studies, including analyses of the inequalities between transnational families who circulate care between developing nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia to wealthier nations in North America, Europe and Australia. There are also examples of intra- and extra-European, Australian and North American migration and care circulation, which involve the mobility of both the unskilled and working class as well as the skilled middle and aspirational classes.

We believe the exchange of care in transnational family settings takes on a special importance because of the lack of other ways to express family solidarity and belonging. Care circulation therefore provides an especially productive lens with which to examine transnational family practices and processes, and it has important analytical and methodological implications. By tracing the movement of care and monitoring the unevenness of its flows, including when it is lacking or abandoned, a focus on care circulation helps to identify all of the people who are involved in the social relationships that manage caring relationships. The resulting 'map' of caregiving actors and activity provides a detailed account of one of the central ways family relationships are constituted and maintained in transnational settings. It also brings to light the many ways family and caregiving activities intersect with the more commonly studied dimensions of migration, including economic, political, community and settlement. Mapping this caregiving activity requires an examination of the lives of family members in (and between) the various places they reside, and so begs a multi-sited methodology (Hage 2005; Falzon 2009), as well as posing the challenge of researching social and family life within the virtual world of new technologies (Miller and Slater 2000).¹⁶ Equally importantly, a focus on the circulation of care helps to highlight the involvement not only of women, the traditional carers, but also of those actors who are less visible in traditional conceptualisations of care exchange, including men, children, extended family members, fictive kin and others. It also readjusts the focus from a preoccupation with the migrant as the provider of care to acknowledge how migrants are also the receivers of care. A major aim of this volume, then, is to examine the conceptualisation of care exchanges in transnational families in terms of the framework of circulation.

The lens of circulation not only helps to capture all the actors involved in family life but also the full extent of their care activity, including practical, emotional and symbolic, that defines their membership in a family. For this reason, we apply a broad definition of both family and caregiving. In line with recent social and cultural theory, we conceptualise family, household and home as processes (both ideational and structural) in which everyday

practices of caregiving, 'emotion work' and intimacy are central (e.g., Duncombe and Marsden 1993).¹⁷ Our definition of family includes both nuclear and extended types whose members are actively engaged in family survival and maintenance, ranging from those whose involvement is extensive and constant to those whose roles are more marginal. We recognise, too, that these roles and the extent of engagement can change over time and the life-course. For this reason, our definition of caregiving includes a wide variety of care exchanges, from the direct provision of support described as 'hands on' or 'caring for' that can only be delivered when people are physically co-present, to the more emotional support of 'caring about' (Fisher and Tronto, 1990) as well as the coordination of support provided by others (Kilkey and Merla 2013), both of which can take place through virtual forms of communication and co-presence (Madianou and Miller 2012; Baldassar 2008b). We draw on the classic work on (local) families by Finch (1989a), who identified five types of caregiving or 'mutual support' that are exchanged between family members, including: economic, accommodation, personal ('hands on'), practical and child care, and emotional and moral. All these types of care can be exchanged in transnational settings but to varying degrees and subject to a variety of factors, including gender, ethnic, class and power hierarchies as well as the cultural and structural histories of welfare regimes, all of which are examined in some detail in this volume.

In applying the lens of circulation to highlight how care circulates around a wide network of friends and family, crisscrossing both local and national settings, we are not suggesting that transnational caregiving is uncomplicated and easy, or even *as* 'easy' as in situations of propinquity. Rather, our aim is to better understand the practices and processes involved, and to acknowledge that virtual forms of care exchange play an important role in a growing number of families. In other words, of fundamental importance to our argument is the view that not all caregiving has to be embodied or proximate in order to qualify as care. This said, we are not suggesting that virtual forms of care are equivalent to embodied forms, but instead that it is the quality of the relationships, rather than the form or mode of caregiving, that is important. How individuals experience and understand this quality is greatly dependent on cultural and historical context. Yet the relevant literatures tend to adopt a Western normative ideal of physical proximity for healthy caregiving relationships, a point we discuss in some detail in the following chapter. In general, as is evident in the care chains literature described earlier, researchers have assumed that in order to care for each other effectively, family members must live in close proximity (e.g., Rossi & Rossi 1990).¹⁸ Despite their growing numbers and diverse forms, transnational families tend to be stigmatised—by governments, public opinion (particularly in sending societies) as well as by some scholars—as somehow deficient or at risk, fragmented, broken and under strain (a point also made by Zentgraf and Chinchilla 2012). Nursing and gerontology studies

in particular, but also studies of family and gender more broadly, have a relatively narrow definition of care as 'hands on' and therefore dependent on physical proximity (Leira and Saraceno 2006). In part, this focus on the embodied physicality of care was an important outcome of feminist approaches within these disciplines, which sought to recognise and appreciate the extensive skills and activities that make up caregiving as a significant type of *work* and contribution made primarily by women that, as noted above, is all too often ignored (Twigg 2000; Mol 2008). Feminist political theory has since broadened this debate to consider issues such as an ethics of care and embodied citizenship (see e.g., Beasley and Bacchi 2007; Engster 2004). However, these works tend to presume proximity is essential and generally do not consider broader notions of care in transnational contexts (but see Gheaus 2011).

This ideal of proximity leads to the consequent assumption that distance and absence automatically prohibit the exchange of caregiving. This volume seeks to interrogate this scepticism and the prevailing negative notions about migration and family life by bringing together leading authorities who have each conducted fine-grained research on this issue. We invited our collaborators to respond to the following questions: Is a care circulation framework an effective way to address the theoretical, methodological and policy implications of family mobilities in our contemporary world? In the vast array of family arrangements across the globe, is it possible to imagine the transnational family as an increasingly common and distinct mode of living? Does this very argument undermine the importance of highlighting the difficulties and discontinuities of transnational family lives?

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The ideas about circulation that we are presenting in this volume are the result of a fruitful and engaging dialogue with the various contributors to this book, who were all enthusiastic about applying the notion of care circulation to their own field of research and to examine the role of absence and separation in family life. Their reflections have contributed to the development of our initial thoughts into a fresh lens through which to analyse the mobilities of care. In the following chapter (**Chapter 1, by Baldassar and Merla**), we locate the care circulation framework within the broader literature on migration and families, highlighting the synergies with related concepts such as care chains, transnationalism and circulation in migration studies, as well as the conceptual implications of applying a care circulation lens to the mobilities of care. Part B of this book comprises four chapters that examine the 'care circulation' framework and further develop it conceptually, theoretically and empirically. This examination of the migration-family care nexus highlights the importance of taking into account the structurally diverse, asymmetrical, situated and gendered ways

in which care may circulate within transnational family networks. The four chapters that make up Part C focus on the gendered experiences of absence and separation in transnational parenting and stress the importance of moving beyond the mother-child dyad as well as of challenging Western constructions of parent-child relations. Part D of this book comprises three chapters that each applies the framework of circulation to different types of migration flows and social strata, including students, the middle class and professionals. These contributions consider the impact of relative wealth and access to opportunities on the circulation of care in transnational families as well as their implications for migrant integration and settlement.

Part B begins with **Chapter 2, by Karin Wall and Claudio Bolzman**. The authors bring together the concepts of care circulation and family configuration (Widmer and Jallinoja 2008) and connect them by using the notion of *care configuration*, which they define as the family network of interdependent close persons as it relates to caregiving and support. Drawing on a wealth of ethnographic data from various migrant groups in Portugal and Switzerland, they chart the diversity of transnational families and the variety of actors involved in care circuits. Of central importance to their analysis is the application of a life-course perspective when analysing the mobilities of care, to show how actual practices, as well as the meanings and affects that are attached to them, vary to a great extent over time. The experience of physical separation and the feelings attached to having to deal with physical absence are not static, but change over time, depending not only on the objective situation of the migrant and his or her relatives, but also on subjective aspects including, among others, changes in migration and settlement projects, mutual expectations as well as the definition of self and of appropriate parenting at various stages.

Chapter 3, by Paola Bonizzoni and Paolo Boccagni, also identifies 'life-cycle' and 'time' as major variables for the study of care circulation. They provide an excellent overview of the current scholarship of transnational parenting with the aim of identifying the key themes and issues that are pertinent to the concepts of 'care' and circulation'. In doing so, the chapter identifies an important gap in the literature, namely, the experience of *caregivers* and the broader social context within which the caregiving, parenting and childhoods of transnational families take place. The authors employ the notion of care circulation to examine the ways in which the needs of children, parents and caregivers change over time in response to new circumstances, resources and opportunities, as well as constraints, giving much-needed attention, in particular, to the changing expectations, feelings and practices of children as they age.

Their contribution is followed by **Marina Ariza's Chapter 4** and her important analysis of the way diverse social spaces produce different conditions for the circulation of care. Based on a comparison of transnational mothering at various stages of the life course in Mexican and Dominican families living in the United States and Spain, this chapter highlights the

way diverse migratory and security policies have a significant impact on the prospects for family reunion and how these in turn influence the social and affective experience of distance in transnational families. Contrasting Mexican and Dominican case studies is particularly interesting, as these groups differ in terms of family structures (highly stable, with predominantly male-headed households vs. highly unstable, with a predominance of female-headed households) and migratory patterns (male-headed and undocumented to the United States vs. female-headed and documented to Spain). Ariza's fine-grained comparative analysis makes a compelling case for the importance of taking into consideration the inequalities and asymmetries of care circulation in transnational contexts, in particular as they relate to migratory policies, gender, generation and ethnicity. Concluding Part B is **Laura Merla's Chapter 5**, which addresses the implications of mobilities and care circulation for social policy by 'situating' (Kilkey and Merla 2013) the circulation of care within institutional contexts. The author discusses the interrelations between institutional contexts and the capacity to circulate care, cultural constructions of appropriate care and the negotiation of family commitments. Drawing on the experiences of Latin American migrants in Belgium and Australia, as well as on the various contributions to this book, this chapter helps better understand inequalities in the capacity to circulate care that arise from institutional contexts while highlighting that the circulation of care itself can increase the agency of transnational family members by helping them overcome obstacles to their participation in family solidarity.

Taken together, the four chapters of Part B guard against the risk of presenting a uniform and static vision of care circulation in transnational families. They also highlight how transnational caregiving must be understood not as an activity of individuals or families alone but as a function of relationships between agents and social institutions within and across both home and host settings.¹⁹ The case studies and literature review they present reveal how 'the processes of transnational caregiving are negotiated at the intersections of individual choice within what might be called micro patterns of kinship and obligation as well as within the more formal structures and infrastructures (or absence of them) of relevant services, technologies and resources at macro-state and meso-community levels' (Baldassar 2008a, 270). The macro factors that influence transnational caregiving include access to communication technologies, travel visas and health insurance, the social and migration policies governing settlement and immigrant integration including welfare services and employment and state provision of care services in both home and host countries. Meso factors include the community and voluntary associations that support (or impede) practices of transnational caregiving, the relevance of networks of co-nationals over time and the trajectories of 'community' settlement. Micro factors refer to family and personal histories and lifecycles, including the changing ways in which migration is understood. All these levels

are informed by cultural and gendered notions of appropriate care, which influence kin relations as well as community and state provisions (and vice versa). Key questions to arise from this discussion include the interconnect- edness of these 'levels', how much influence they exert on each other, how they are influenced by transnational family contexts and what particular mix of support they, in combination, provide. For instance, Merla high- lights in her chapter the transformative potential of care circulation, which not only involves the mobility of people and caring but also of moral orders and gendered care cultures, which can enter into tension with local family regimes and lead to transformations both within transnational families as well as in the societies of destination and origin.

The notion of circulation captures both the way care is exchanged between family members—the manner and form of care exchanges—and the mobilities of people, goods, ideas and services in a globalised world. Part C revisits transnational parenting and labour migration flows, the tradi- tional terrain of global care chains analysis, by challenging the dominant Western imaginary of mother–child proximity and analysing the mobilities of care beyond the mother–child dyad. The chapters in Part C underline the importance of taking into account local family structures, kinship systems and normative constructions of physical proximity. In Chapter 6, Karen Fog Olwig examines how family and kinship are constructed and reconstructed through the circulation of care in the context of Caribbean migration, and how this care circulation shapes, and is shaped by, notions of relatedness and the family networks associated with them. This chapter represents a vivid illustration of the lived experiences of migration and care and its evo- lution over the life course by giving voice to children, adults and elderly people. Through careful attention to historical and cultural contexts, the author explains how the migration of women from the lower classes is part of a system of circulation of care that is an integral and accepted aspect of family and kinship in Caribbean societies. Fog Olwig's detailed ethno- graphic account also reveals how the local population, through its partici- pation in missionary religious churches and associations, is being exposed to dominant Western ideologies concerning the fundamental importance of the *proximate* nuclear family and the *intimate* mother–child tie. These ideas about appropriate family roles and relationships are changing the way edu- cators, religious practitioners and welfare officials in the Caribbean evalu- ate transnational families. Left-behind children and stay-behind kin are being confronted with value judgments that challenge their notions about the appropriateness of migration and the absence of family members.

In Chapter 7, Miranda Poeze and Valentina Mazzucato present their study of Ghanaian transnational families, which foregrounds the chil- dren's experience of being geographically separated from their biological parents. They also highlight the importance of taking into account family norms from migrant-sending countries in order to understand how trans- national parenting may affect children left behind. The authors show that

the experience of separation is partly shaped by expectations regarding appropriate fathering and mothering in the homelands and can be facili- tated by norms such as child fostering or social parenthood, which imply certain parenting ideals that are not accepted within the dominant Western family model. Children's feelings are also influenced by the *way* care is circulated and enacted, as well as by the history of relations with parents before migration. By focusing on children and their diverse experiences, the authors show that children, while going through a range of positive and negative feelings about their parents' migration, can be active agents in shaping this relationship.

These two chapters give voice to the usually invisible actors of care cir- cuits, such as children and elderly people. As we argue in Part A of this volume, the application of a care circulation framework involves moving beyond Western-centred constructions of 'the family' as a nuclear house- hold by taking into account wider sets of relationships as well as recognis- ing the multiplicity of family forms. The chapters comprising Part C are particularly useful in shifting the focus from a concentration on parent– child and/or spousal relationships alone, to an analysis of extended family networks, which can include members related not only by blood ties but also by affinities. This is in line with the argument that researchers should not focus solely on specific dyadic relationships, but must always be aware of the ways in which these are embedded in larger networks of relationships (Widmer et al. 2008; Wellman 1988). A focus on the broader circulation of care between multiple family members helps to shift attention from women as the prime movers and victims in a transnational (market-defined) care system towards a broader view of gender relations and social reproduc- tion within transnational family caring processes. It forces us to examine the dynamics of the dialectical relationship between structure and action in this particular set of relations, and it provides a useful frame through which to revisit key concepts in the study of family, mobility and care, such as care chains.

So far, men and fathers have largely been excluded from studies of par- ent–child relations in transnational settings, and the chapters by Fresnoza- Flot and by Kilkey directly address this gap. Drawing on the framework of circulation, in Chapter 8, Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot contributes to better understanding men's experience of mobility and separation by focusing on left-behind husbands and sons of Filipino migrant women in France. The author's ethnographic work in the Philippines reveals that these two generations of men are actively involved in the local and transnational circulation of material, symbolic and affective care, although their level of engagement does vary. Key elements influencing fathers' and sons' car- ing activities include the availability of women's care in the household, the age of the children and the level of female support to male carers. These findings nuance the idea that care labour is exclusively 'feminine' in Filipino transnational families while also confirming that men's caring

is contingent on their wives, sisters and daughters. Concluding Part C is Majella Kilkey's Chapter 9, which seeks to foreground fatherly care in transnational families by examining the experiences of recent Polish migrant men in the UK through a fathering lens. The understanding and meaning of care and masculinity are transformed as care circulates between fathers and children. The data reveal the complex ways in which fathering norms around breadwinning and active/involved fathering are reworked in the context of father migration and transnational fathering, a process in many ways similar to women's redefinition of their mothering role in a migration context. This suggests that breadwinning or financial support should be acknowledged as an important dimension of care in (transnational) families. Kilkey also identifies what she calls 'counter-circulatory forces', which include the fathers' positioning as migrants in the UK labour market and their access to time and money, and more individualised factors such as the stage in the family lifecycle, the age of children and the quality of personal relationships.

As discussed earlier, one of the aims of adopting a care circulation perspective is to offer a framework that is pertinent to all types of transnational families and migrations, in order to bring together the current separation between those studies that mainly focus on domestic labour migration and transnational mothering and employ a care chains perspective, and those studies that look at wider sets of relationships and include not only economic but also skilled, professional and student migration. These particular migration flows are featured in Part D of this book. The experience of transnational family life is affecting a growing number as well as 'types' of families and north-north flows are increasingly relevant.²⁰ The current global economic crisis is likely to lead to a resurgence in emigration from European countries like Italy, Spain and Ireland, including young graduates and professionals (OECD 2012). Along with the significant migratory flows from 'south' to 'north', there are increasing 'north-north' and even 'north-south' flows (Solimano 2009). Thus, we argue that there is a growing need to better understand the transnational lives of these relative elites, some of whom are not particularly wealthy, (although they are likely to have families in the homeland who can support them), but are rich in the social and cultural capital that can enhance opportunities and life chances (Zontini 2010). Care flows concern economic migrants and refugees, as well as affluent, transnational elites, but the capacity of these various categories of migrants to circulate care across borders varies significantly. What we argue in this volume is that the asymmetrical reciprocal exchange of caregiving is a key element that constitutes family membership and facilitates a shared sense of family-hood despite absence and distance, whatever the social class or migration type involved. This does not mean that all transnational families and, within them, all family members, are equal in their capacity and level of involvement in caring circuits, even in relatively wealthy families. As noted earlier, care and the ability to exchange it is a

resource and form of social capital that is unevenly distributed within and across families.

The distribution and circulation of care as a resource is a central theme in Tracey Reynolds and Elisabetta Zontini's Chapter 10, in which they investigate the interrelations between care circulation and social and cultural capital in Italian and Caribbean families based in the UK. They highlight how inequalities in terms of gender, ethnicity, language, generation, socio-economic and migration status can affect the levels and forms of social and cultural capital related to transnational care flows. Caribbean and Italian migrants experience inequality in their access to the resources necessary for receiving and providing formal and informal care, mainly because they lack insider knowledge of the caring sector and appropriate social connections. The authors identify the existence of 'key players', 'cultural mediators' and 'cultural gatekeepers' who occupy a privileged position within Caribbean and Italian community and family networks because their professional and educational backgrounds help them develop the cultural capital needed to facilitate their access to social care resources. They show that care circulated in transnational families can function as cultural and social resources that contribute to strengthening first- and second-generation migrants' sense of belonging to their local and transnational communities and maintain bridging and bonding networks (Putnam et al. 1993) across geographical as well as generational divides. For instance, second- and third-generation migrants who regularly use new communication technologies to keep in touch with distant relatives develop lateral kin relations that would otherwise have been lost. Their detailed case studies show that transnational kin and community networks can be mobilised to support a variety of initiatives including 'return' migration and visits to the homeland as well as to access the contacts needed to create small business and transnational business ties that lead to social mobility.

The quest for social mobility is a central motivation in the migration experiences of the Indian families in Australia discussed by Supriya Singh and Anuja Cabraal in Chapter 11. The authors draw on detailed ethnographic data on the circulation of remittances to compare and contrast the perception and experiences of Indian student migrants recently arrived in Melbourne and first- and second-generation economic Indian migrants already settled there. As in Reynolds and Zontini's chapter, the authors reflect on relations between the generations to show how family ties and connections are utilised as resources and capital that circulate between home and host settings, in this case with the aim of supporting young migrants to attain the middle-class life they are accustomed to, but find increasingly difficult to maintain, in India. A key conceptual contribution of this chapter is the argument that remittances must be seen as an important form of transnational care that flow in both directions. Their contribution highlights how transnational caring is influenced by a group's migration experience, life stage and generational changes. The Indian students, in particular,

are providers but also mainly receivers of financial support—representing a two-way flow of money captured by the notion of ‘boomerang’ remittances, which challenges the prevailing view that remittances constitute a one-way flow from migrants to their home communities and families. The authors argue that an analysis of the circulation of care makes the two-way—circular—flows of remittances visible.

Interestingly, while the students and their families of origin are perhaps best defined as middle or upper middle class in India, their class position in Australia is more ambiguous because of their precarious student status, their tendency to be employed in working-class jobs in the taxi and service station industries and their difficulty in finding work in their chosen professions, even if they manage to successfully complete higher degrees. These aspirational students and their relatives use transnational mobility and the circulation of care as a resource for increasing economic, social and cultural capital that will benefit the whole family. It is expected that the student migrants will return the care they receive from their parents when they graduate, find suitable employment and become cosmopolitan elites. The authors underline how a focus on, and broader framing of, money circuits in transnational families highlight the intersections between the flow of ‘the very personal money of family remittances, the community nature of diaspora philanthropy and the migrant dimensions of foreign direct investment’. This chapter offers a particularly pertinent example of the way the moral economy of care, in this case, through the flow of remittances, is linked to the broader political economy of migrant communities and the labour market (see also Zelizer 2005a, 2005b). It is also an example of the circulation of care in contexts quite distinct from, although comparable to, the classic global domestic care chains.

Chapter 12 by Loretta Baldassar and Raelene Wilding deals with the relatively more affluent transnational families of skilled and professional migrants in Australia, who have considerable access to financial, educational, health and employment resources but cannot afford to employ domestic workers, a practice that is not generally well regarded in Australia. These families participate in global care circuits that are quite different from those defined by the commodification of chains of care. Their caregiving concerns are largely focused on ageing parents and other extended kin connections in the homeland and are met through the circulation of informal, unpaid support between members, particularly women, within the family. Their relative access to the resources they need to exchange care makes the management of distance and absence easier than in less privileged families. But juggling the demands of local and transnational family, and meeting the time pressures and financial costs of both, present important tensions and difficulties that differ according to the gender, generation and cultural notions of appropriate family roles, as well as the levels and types of care available in the home and host countries. This contribution fills a gap in the literature by addressing the relative absence

of analyses of middle-class and privileged families in transnational migration studies and by critiquing the often overly simplistic representation of women ‘in the north’.

CONCLUSION

There is an argument for considering transnational families as people practicing caregiving in deterritorialised contexts, and the framework of circulation might similarly invoke a sense of fluidity unencumbered by borders or boundaries. However, as the various chapters in this volume show, all migrants and their transnational family members are located in particular places at particular times, and their caregiving practices are variously affected by this ‘territorialisation’.²¹ As Yasmina and Viviana’s stories show, transnational families must negotiate the expectations and regulations of (at least) two nation-states, often including the complicated ‘borders’ created by language and culture. In addition, as there are very few transnational structures, and even fewer that are designed specifically to facilitate transnational caregiving (e.g., reciprocal health care agreements and access to dual citizenship), these practices are organised by the, largely informal, structures of kinship and community, in particular the sense of obligation to engage in reciprocal care exchanges. Notions of obligation are debated within families as well as more broadly within communities, both local and national, and are influenced by and in turn influence existing and historical patterns of social structures and service provision in the countries of relevance (Grillo 2008).

Migration creates transnational families by putting distance between family members. This distance is thought to create broken and fragmented family ties. If, however, we were to concentrate on the transnational social fields and the virtual (and other forms of) co-presence created by the reciprocal exchange of communication and caregiving between transnational family members, we might be better able to examine these particular family forms more objectively. In order to begin to see transnational families as destigmatised family forms, in the sense that actors increasingly ‘routinely’ live their lives ‘together across distance’ and have developed practices to deal with the challenges this poses, we need to look beyond or transcend the conceptual (as well as the actual) road block presented by the separation inherent in the migration process. Partly, this is a question of challenging normative understandings of the delivery of care being dependent on physical proximity as well as rethinking our conceptualisation of caregiving and co-presence more broadly. In this volume, we suggest that one way to better account for the dominating role that notions of distance and absence have had on our understanding of transnational family life is to highlight the asymmetrical reciprocity and inherent circularity of both migration and transnational family processes. Transnational family

exchanges, particularly those relating to caregiving, are defined by their (asymmetrical) reciprocal circularity. Further, the concept of circulation helps us to think of migration in terms of the family lifecycle as a dynamic set of processes across the life course, rather than a momentous event in time that damages family connectedness.

Care circulation can be 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. The perspective of care circulation we are advancing is purposefully quite broad and 'flexible' and is meant to point to beliefs and practices about caring embedded in relationships wider than the nuclear family, which in turn are shaped and constrained by the broader (macro) socio-structural context in transnational settings. In recognising how families actively and effectively manage distance and separation, we are not suggesting that virtual forms of caregiving can easily be equated with proximate forms nor are we advocating that governments can abandon their responsibilities to support the reunification of migrant family members. Without a doubt, managing the exchange of care across distance is difficult, time consuming, challenging, exhausting, expensive and often painful and heart-rending. On the contrary, we wish to emphasise the many factors that limit and hinder the circulation of care across time and space and that create inequalities within and between transnational families, and we underline the importance of access to the technologies and resources that facilitate communication, travel and reunification, including, importantly, rights to citizenship and residency. Our objective in underscoring absence as a common feature of family forms is to encourage the development of national and transnational policies and services that facilitate family reunification and connectedness. The chapters that comprise this collection demonstrate that it is important to stretch our understanding of common family forms to include transnational families. This volume seeks to improve knowledge and understanding about the practices and processes people employ to maintain their caregiving relationships across distance so that we can be better equipped to support them.

NOTES

1. In this chapter, we draw on data collected in several related research projects, including: (1) A comparative study of transnational care practices of Latin American migrants living in Australia and Europe, conducted by Laura Merla in 2007–2010 and financed by a Marie Curie Outgoing International Fellowship (MOIF-CT-2006–039076 transnational care). The study focused on migrants who occupy a low qualified and/or low remunerated position in Australia and Europe despite coming from a mix of working-class and professional backgrounds in their homeland. Data collection in Australia and Belgium comprised forty-four life-history interviews in the participants'

- native language and participant observation with Salvadoran migrants living in Perth, Western Australia, and Brussels, Belgium (nineteen men and twenty-five women) (cf Merla Forthcoming, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b) (2) Two ongoing research projects on transnational family networks of solidarity financed by the Belgian Federal Science Policy, the Belgian National Funds for Research and a Marie Curie Career Integration Grant conducted by Laura Merla, which analyse the processes by which family commitments are negotiated within transnational families by focusing on the experiences of Dominican and Brazilian migrants living in Belgium and their relatives living in the Dominican Republic and Brazil. This chapter reflects only the author's views. The European Community is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein. (3) The *Transnational Families* Project conducted by Loretta Baldassar, Cora Baldock and Raelene Wilding and funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) from 2000 to 2004. This study focused on transnational family and caregiving relationships and comprises more than 200 ethnographic interviews and participant observation with Australian migrants and their parents living in Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Singapore and New Zealand, as well as refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan and their kin living in transit in Iran (cf. Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding 2007). (4) The *Italian Lives* Project conducted from 2005 to 2009 and coordinated by Baldassar, also funded by the ARC, which involved the collection of approximately 170 life-history interviews and four group workshops (in which 115 individuals took part) with post-war migrants from across Western Australia (cf. Iuliano 2010). (5) The collaborative study *Australian Diasporas and Brain Gain*, funded by the ARC from 2009 to 2011, on which Baldassar was a chief investigator. This project examined diasporas in Australia and their transnational connections using a widely administered survey (total 2,355 responses), focus groups and interviews (cf. Baldassar & Pyke Forthcoming; Baldassar et al. 2012; Ben Mosche et al 2012).
2. See, for instance, Hochschild 2000, 2003, Parreñas 2001a, 2001b, 2005a, 2005b.
3. For geographically proximate kin networks, see, for instance, Attias-Donfut et al. 2002; Godbout and Charbonneau 1996; Finch 1989a; Bonvalet and Ortalda 2006, Coenen-Huter et al. 1994.
4. See, for example, Al-Ali 2002; Boccagni 2012a; Olwig 2002; Le Gall 2009; Zontini and Reynolds 2007.
5. See also Nydegger 1991; Finch and Mason 1991, 1993; Grundy 2005.
6. Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding (2007) developed this concept based on the notion of commitment in the work of Finch and Mason (1993).
7. See also Michel 1978; Cresson and Gadrey 2004; Lapeyre and Le Feuvre 2004; Damamme and Paperman 2009.
8. See also Kilkey and Merla, 2013; Baldassar, Wilding and Baldock 2007; Baldassar 2008a.
9. See also Waring 1999; Chadeau and Fouquet 1981.
10. See also Sharpe 2001; Baldassar and Gabaccia 2011.
11. See also Goulbourne et al. 2010; Shain 2007; Escriva and Skinner 2008.
12. Drawing on analyses of the Tongan diaspora, Cowling (1990), for example, discusses 'family networks', in which key family members facilitate movement of kin and remittance as 'custodians' and 'brokers', while Evans (1996: 119) refers to the 'dispersed household'. See also Lee 2003; Conway & Potter 2009; Baldassar 2007a; King and Williams 2000.
13. For a discussion of migrant elites, see Bullock and Paik 2009; Amit 2007; Coles and Fetcher 2008.
14. See also Conradson and Latham 2005; Abel 2013.

15. See also Constable et al. 2004; Martens and Verhoeven 2006.
16. Relevant here is the growing research on Human Computer Interaction; see, for example, Ames et al. 2010; Cao et al. 2010; Judge et al. 2010; Kirk et al. 2010.
17. See also Attias-Donfut et al. 2002; Cieraad 2006; Miller 2001; Maushart 2002; Walsh 2008; Goulbourne et al. 2010. This discussion is linked to the so-called 'emotional turn' in the social sciences and the growing literature on emotions and migration (Svašek and Skrbiš 2007b). Our own work on the topic (Merla and Baldassar 2010a; Baldassar 2007a, 2008b) explores the relationship between rational economic and emotional caregiving motivations for migration.
18. See also Lin and Rogerson 1995; Joseph and Hallman 1985; Bonvalet and Ogg 2006a.
19. See Baldassar 2007a; Kilkey and Merla 2013; Merla 2012a.
20. For example, regional flows within the recently expanded/enlarged European Union (Kilkey et al. 2013a; Williams 2007; Erel 2012). See also Khoo et al. 2011 for European migration to Australia.
21. Kilkey and Merla (2013) refer to this as 'situating transnational families care-arrangements'.

1 Locating Transnational Care Circulation in Migration and Family Studies

Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla

'... we need more research on the portability of care as a concept.'
(Huang, Thang and Toyota 2012a, 131)

As stated in the Introduction to this volume, we define care circulation 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. The framework of care circulation we are advancing draws on broad definitions of both family and care, including beliefs and practices about caring embedded in relationships wider than the nuclear family, which in turn are shaped by the broader socio-structural contexts in which families operate transnationally. In proposing a broad conceptualisation of care, it is not our intention to downplay the gendered and political aspects of the uneven nature of care exchanges. Some family members—especially women—carry a far greater care burden than others, and not everyone receives care equally. The lens of circulation allows us to acknowledge and examine the ways in which all family members, both migrants and 'non'-migrants, participate in a variety of caregiving activities and exchanges over time. This apparently private and domestic set of caregiving activities is a fundamental feature of transnational family life, intimately connected to those dimensions assumed to be more public and formal, including economic, political and social endeavours. The increasing mobility and profound impact of new communication technologies on our ability to care across distance and to manage absence in family life makes an analysis of 'the portability of care' a fundamental topic of our contemporary lives.

Building on the Introduction, this chapter serves to locate the framework of care circulation in the broader body of research on migration, transnationalism and the family. We begin with a discussion of the synergies and variances between the frameworks of care circulation and care chains in an effort to draw together and examine the full range of transnational families. To date, those families that are involved in global care chains,