

Laura Merla - Université catholique de Louvain



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Transfam research program

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Research projects

The **Transnational Care project**, financed under the EU FP6 Program from 2007 to 2010 explored and compared the impact of distance on the experiences of Salvadoran migrants living in Europe and Australia who cared for ageing, disabled parents in their home countries. This work addressed the questions of their motivation and capacity to contribute to the financial, practical, emotional and personal care of their elderly parents back home and investigated the structural constraints that shape the forms of this type of care-giving.

The ongoing **Transnational Family Networks project** financed under the EU FP7 Program studies the extent to which transnational adult migrants living in Belgium are able to exchange care and support with their geographically distant parents, and the specific role that intra-familial dynamics play in the exchange of care between adult migrants from the Dominican Republic and Brazil, their siblings and their parents.

The TRANSFAM research program is coordinated by Dr **Laura Merla**.



Scientific collaboration

Loretta Baldassar (University of Western Australia)
Majella Kilkey (University of Sheffield)

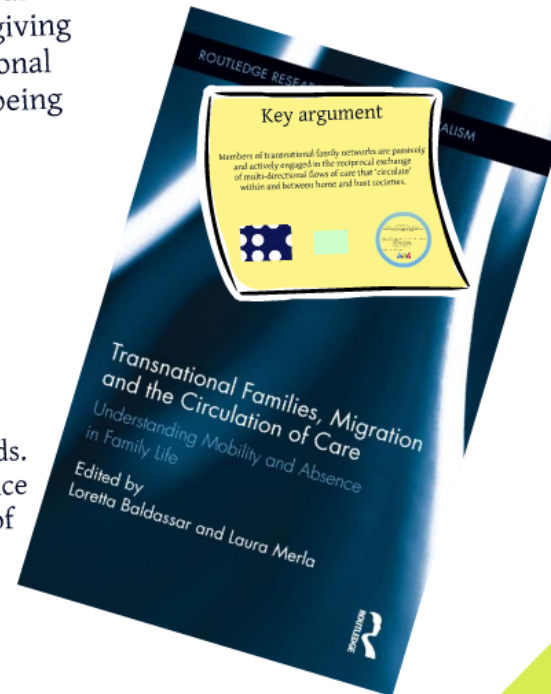


Transnational families

A kinship group whose members (including quasi- and fictive- kin) are connected through reciprocal caregiving relations across distance and national borders and who share a sense of being part of a family

Caregiving

Might be thought of as the activity that traces and re-traces the links and connections between members across distance and time, and between households. This trajectory of caregiving across distance both defines and sustains the members of transnational families.



Key argument

Members of transnational family networks are passively and actively engaged in the reciprocal exchange of multi-directional flows of care that 'circulate' within and between home and host societies.



Age of care	Direct remittances	Overseas care	Local care	Domestic care
Home care	High	High	High	High
Transnational care	High	High	High	High
Overseas care	High	High	High	High
Local care	High	High	High	High
Domestic care	High	High	High	High

Care circulation
the reciprocal, multidirectional and asymmetrical
exchange of care that fluctuates over the life-cycle within
transnational family networks

Caregiving in the form of goods and services flows - circulates -
within family networks:

- horizontally and vertically,
- both upwards and downwards
- over the family/life-cycle

Inequalities and Power relations





Type of care	Direct provision with physical co-presence	Co-ordination from a distance	Direct provision without physical co-presence	Delegation
Personal care	visits: <i>tourist, duty, special, routine</i>	Communication technologies <i>letters, cards, telephone, email, fax, SMS</i> <i>skype</i>	N/A	From complete withdrawal to 'caring about' Cf 'dormant' family members (Bonvalet & Ogg 2006)
Practical support				
Emotional support				
Financial support				
Accommodation				

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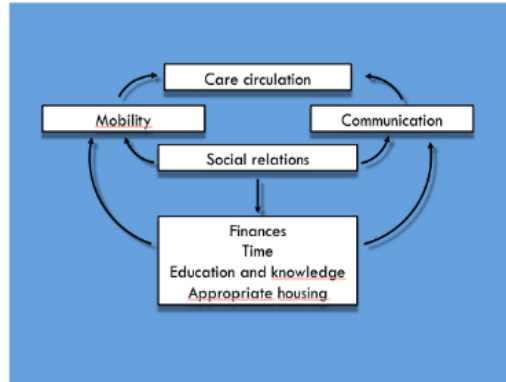
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Inequalities and Power relations



'Situated' transnationalism



Institutions and relevant parameters

Migration regime

Gendered care regime

Welfare regime



Social employment regime
Prattis, G.

Transport

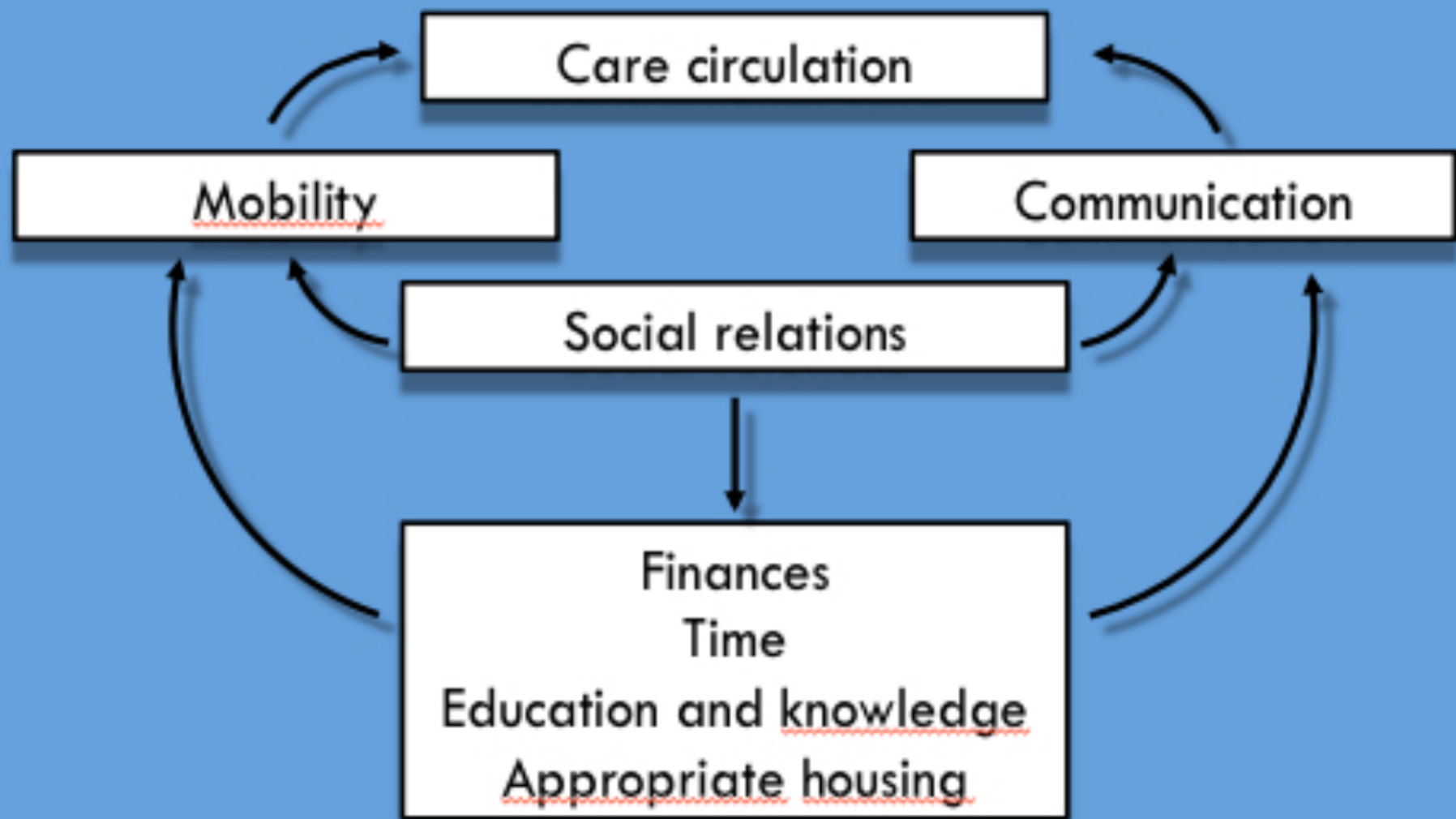


Communication



Banking





Institutions and relevant parameters

Migration regime

Gendered care regime

Welfare regime



Social employment
regime Prieto, fc

Transport

Communication

Banking



Exit/entry/residency rights

Insertion in the labour market
and access to social security

Overall approach to migration



Right to 'time to care'



Right to receive care



Gendered care cultures

Quality of social entitlements



Portability rules



Segmented, ethno-stratified
labour market



Employment quality

- wages
- stability
- work-family articulation

Conclusion

Bring together migration and family studies

References

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Thank you

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