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Presentation

“Doing family” in and through space: towards a multilocal habitus?¹

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Mots-clés : doing family, migration, multilocality, habitus, divorce.

I. A constructivist and relational approach to family and space

Today, mobility (whether spatial, social, or relational) has largely become a normative imperative impacting various spheres of life, including family life (Urry, 2007; Mincke/Montulet, 2018). This is reflected in particular through the diversification of family configurations, which challenges Western constructions of residentiality and sedentary life. The fact that the administration of populations by European nation-states has largely relied on the assignment to a single place of residence (Duchêne-Lacroix, 2013), has played a foundational role in the institutionalisation of a “classical” model of the family, whose members are bound by physical co-presence and surrounded by the boundaries of the land and private house that they inhabit (see also Bonvalet, 1997; Morgan, 2011). However, this Wes-

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tern model of a stable and sedentary nuclear family, associated to a unique place of residence, is gradually losing its importance. There is a growing recognition of the diversity of family forms, which are more mobile and simultaneously or sequentially associated to various places of residence, such as : divorced families, reconstituted families, non-cohabiting couples... With this perspective, since the 1980s, a new definition of the family has emerged in social sciences based on a relational conception of space that conceives the family as a

particular social network, frequently multi-local, extended across different places of residence and centered around reliable relationships between one or more generations (Schier *et al.*, 2015:442; see also Widmer/Jallinoja, 2008).

New fields of research focusing on family networks and the practices of these multilocal families are thus gradually emerging in various social science disciplines. These include studies of multigenerational multilocal families, transnational families – defined by Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela (2002:3) as «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», multilocal families in which one or more members work off-site (e.a Nowicka, 2007; Vincent-Geslin/Kaufmann, 2012), or divorced and/or recomposed families, characterised by the «geographical separation of children and parents, for a certain period of time, between different places of residence and different spaces» (Schier *et al.*, 2015:442). Belonging to a family group is no longer self-evident in this context, but rather appears to be something that individuals must work on. This is emphasised with the concept of “doing family” developed by David Morgan (1996, 2011), who proposes to define families not by who they are, but by what they do – that is, the routines and “family practices” individuals engage in on a daily basis to build and maintain their family relationships.

This constructed, dynamic and process-oriented nature of family relations and belonging is further approached in research on transnational families, where the “doing family” approach is largely dominant, and where geographical distance makes these dimensions particularly visible to both actors and researchers. According to Bryceson and Vuorela (2002), “doing family” in a transnational context includes a work of “relativisation” (in the sense of being in a relationship) through which people establish, maintain or break relational ties with specific family members. Relativisation «involves the selective formation of emotional and material family attachments based on temporal, spatial and needs-related considerations» (Bryceson/Vuorela, 2002:14). While much of this literature has highlighted the importance of practices and communication carried out “at a distance” via the use of information and communication technologies (Baldassar/Nedel-

cu/Merla/Wilding, 2016; Madianou/Miller, 2013), it does not neglect the material dimensions of “doing family”, in particular those related to housing. Among others, Fog Olwig (2002) emphasises the key role played by the family home, which has been, and continues to be, a center of social, economic, and emotional attachment for transnational families. In this perspective, family gatherings, such as weddings, are experienced as an opportunity to reaffirm the place that everyone occupies in this “home” (both in a material and symbolic sense), to compare everyone’s actual contribution to the economy of this globalised household, and to address the delicate question of the right to own all or part of this family inheritance when elders pass away. These works refer to the socio-anthropological notion of the “house-*domus*” (Bonnin, 1999:23), which materialises through three levels:

that of the localised capital it represents, possessed or not by the occupant himself, that of the livable space, functionalised, as a necessary instrument of daily and festive, repetitive or exceptional domestic practices, finally that of the symbolic and identity expression of which it is the support (rather collective identities in some of its spaces, more individual in others).

Therefore, individuals who “do family” also “do” with space (Stock, 2012; Morgan, 2020). Space can be seen as a dynamic figure, connected with actions and constantly created and lived by individuals who deploy tactics and strategies to arrange it, distance themselves from it, delimit it, encompass it, and position themselves in relation to it. It thus appears «as a condition and a resource for action» (Stock, 2007:1) but also as a product of action (Löw, 2015:viii), being the result of social processes, practices and interactions between individuals and things (Massey, 2005). Space thus acts as an intermediary between the social and the material (Remy, 2015) in the sense that individuals who are in movement in their social and family relationships exchange goods, ideas, and symbols through it (Weichhart, 2015). Nevertheless, this does not mean to understand members of a physically mobile family as individuals frequenting isolated, scattered and disconnected islets (such as the house, places of activity, the workplace, *etc.*). Rather, we adopt a relativistic viewpoint in this special issue, inspired by the works of Martina Löw (2015), who invites us to consider that space can be lived in parallel as both unitary and plural, interconnected and mobile. Space is thus defined as «a process during which elements linked by various relationships form ever new and mutually overlapping spaces. This interlocking relationship is organised by means of movement (flows)» (Löw, 2015:112). Through insularised socialisation and contacts in the virtual spaces created by new media platforms, «space is no longer experienced simply as a continuous environment, but also as an ephemeral, interconnected and immaterial dimension» (*Ibid.*:113). The representation of this relational space is reflected in multilocality studies, through the concept of the archi-

pelisation of people’s living spaces (Duchêne-Lacroix, 2010). Indeed, this archipelago articulates both stable and immobile anchorages (routines, expectations, strong ties) and mobile, immaterial spaces, within which people, objects and ideas travel, ensuring a continuity between one another (Schier *et al.*, 2015). Individuals can thus feel a tension between objectively normed territories and their own spatial experience (di Méo, 2012). Inhabiting is no longer limited to housing, but extends through the various spaces individuals journey through (Bonvalet/Gotman/Grafmeyer, 1999). The place of residence appears here as one space among others (spaces for work, consumption, leisure, tourism, *etc.*) (Stock, 2006). The meaning of this relational space is thus constructed in relation to other spaces but also «through the social relations [...] that take place there or target it as an explicit stake» (Lenel, 2018:11).

Analysing “doing family” in and through space thus seems particularly fruitful, in that it re-interrogates key themes in the sociology of the family and, more broadly, of social ties, and requires a new conceptual vocabulary that gives an accurate account of the evolutions in progress.

II. Studying “doing family” in the context of residential mobility

This special issue contributes to this vast project by focusing on two types of family configurations (which are themselves multi-faceted): migrant and/or transnational families (articles by Kotman, Damery, and Jaeger), and separated or divorced families where children live alternately, and more or less equally, in their father’s and mother’s homes (articles by Schlinzig, Winther/Larsen, and Merla/Nobels). In so doing, we bring into dialogue two fields of study (transnational families/multilocal families) that have largely been developed separately. The first has been mainly embedded in the sociology of migration with a focus on family forms that cross “national” borders, while the second has been more influenced by social geography and the sociology of space and has focused primarily on multilocality within state borders. However, the articles in this issue have many points in common, attesting to the proximity between these two fields. They all examine “doing family” from an interactionist and relational perspective, which places at the center of the analysis the micro-practices that unfold in everyday life, documented through qualitative methods. They also differ from dominant approaches in their respective fields by paying particular attention to the points of view and experiences of children and young adults within these family configurations, sometimes by giving them a central place, sometimes by offering them a place in the analysis alongside their parents. The sense of belonging is at the heart of these works and is approached through various practices. These consist, for example, in “creating” one’s own family – including outside blood ties – or, on the contrary, maintaining in the eyes of others an apparent conformity with the “traditional” family.

They also consist in creating an “us” at the crossroads of several households, in establishing a social and spatial anchorage and creating continuities “here” and “there”, or in juggling with sometimes contradictory repertoires... These articles talk about objects that are “parked” or “in transit”, siblings who “share and are shared”, “multireferentiality”, and “odorisation” practices... In so doing, they shed light on experiences, practices, and issues that have so far not been all that visible and propose a new vocabulary that updates the analytical frameworks of contemporary family sociology.

In this presentation, we have chosen to highlight three themes that emerge transversally from the different articles, that allow us to build conceptual bridges between the two fields, and that further advance the deconstruction of the classical conceptualisation of the link between family and space: (1) the multiplicity of frames of reference “doing family” is materialised through; (2) the multiplicity and complementarity of the forms of co-presence that underpin the sense of belonging; and (3) the place of power relations in the structuring of both practices and family’s relationship to space. We build on these three themes to re-interrogate the notion of habitus, and to propose an original contribution through the notion of “multilocal habitus” to capture the specificity of “doing family” in a context of residential mobility.

III. From a “transnational” habitus to a “multilocal” habitus

The families discussed in this thematic dossier, which are in turn transnational, divorced and recomposed, expatriate, or chosen on the basis of affinity, have in common living in and between several places of residence, located at a national or international level, and therefore have a multilocal or transnational lifestyle. These lifestyles invite us to consider, rather than single, isolated places, the relationships that unfold “here”, “there” and “between” them (Schier *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the families presented in this dossier depart from the classic frameworks for thinking about the family. These families are mobile and deployed across several places. Because of their mobility and their inclusion in this relational space, the individuals who make them up combine multiple statuses, roles and family orders. Moreover, their members must implement specific practices in order to create, nurture and maintain a sense of belonging that loses its self-evidence, “doing family” in a context where physical proximity and face-to-face interactions are episodic or intermittent.

This theme is evident in the literature on transnational families. This field of study has indeed been built through specifically challenging the idea that migration to “another” society is in itself an insurmountable obstacle to maintaining ties and belonging to one’s family and society of origin. It has thus developed a substantial body of work on the practices people engage in to “deal with” mobility, absence, and distance, and within sometimes

very distinct contexts of reference. But that goes too far for multilocal families whose members travel, within the same country, between rules, roots and ways of doing things that differ from one home to another (Wentzel Winter, 2015). By living both here and there, individuals thus cross, incorporate and juggle with a multiplicity of frames of reference. As Laura Merla (2018:54) points out in relation to children living in shared physical custody, «As they learn to move from one house to the other and engage in virtual forms of co-presence that blur the distinction between “here” and “there”, girls and boys are continuously exposed to, co-creating, and also challenging different norms, visions, rules and practices that equip them with a large repertoire of action-schemes and habits. These in turn guide them in how they embody, enact, and (re)produce gender in specific interactional contexts» – a situation that calls for rethinking the concept of *habitus* (see, in particular, Bourdieu, 1979, 1997; Lahire, 2003).

International migration and transnationalism studies have played a pioneering role in this regard, particularly, as Mihaela Nedelcu (2010) points out, by proposing a cosmopolitical interpretation of international migration and by exploring the mechanisms through which migrants develop a transnational universe of life on a daily basis. Just as we consider relational space as forming a “whole” composed of a “here”, a “there” and an “in-between”, this work goes beyond methodological nationalism (Wimmer/Glick Schiller, 2002) and

replaces the disjunctive “either... or” postulate with the “both/and” principle. In this logic of “additive inclusion”, plural and inclusive belongings are possible and realities and dynamics that appear contradictory coexist (Nedelcu, 2010:53).

Hence the different expressions that appear in transnational studies, such as “glocalisation” (Robertson, 1994; Roudometof, 2005), “denationalisation” (Sassen, 2003), “mobility turn” (Urry, 2008) «placing the accent on hybridity, double belongings and allegiances, identity fluidity, deterritorialisation of practices, and existence in an in-between» (Nedelcu, 2010:52). This perspective has led to a conceptualisation of transnational experience through the notion of “transnational habitus” (Guarnizo, 1997; Vertovec, 2009).

Bourdieu defined *habitus* (1979) as a system of “durable and transformable” dispositions acting as principles that generate and organise practices and representations. In his view, the first experiences and social origins of individuals shape their “way of being” in the world through a process – most often unconscious – of internalising exteriority. The notion of *habitus* expresses this process of internalisation of dispositions, assimilated by individuals in the long term, and which enable them to orientate themselves in the social world. The *habitus* thus shapes inclinations to think, perceive and act in a certain way. It is therefore a product of socialisation

which tends to reproduce acquired patterns in the face of habitual situations. However, it is not fixed and can therefore also innovate in new situations (Hilgers, 2009). In the context of transnational studies, this innovative transformation is particularly evident, as the socialisation of individuals takes place and is anchored in transnational ways of life and generates ways of doing and acting that, in the long run, incorporate the transnational dimension. The notion of “transnational habitus” thus sheds light on this transnational experience by capturing

how dual orientations are formed and manifested and through which mechanisms migrants manage multiplicity and develop transnational and cosmopolitan (emotional, analytical, creative, communicative and functional) competencies (Nedelcu, 2010:56)².

Zontini and Reynolds (2018:43) have recently proposed the notion of a «transnational family habitus», defined as «a structured set of values, ways of thinking and “being” within the family built up over time through family socialisation, practices and cultural traditions that transcend national boundaries» (Zontini/Reynolds, 2018:423) to capture how transnational family relationships shape the ways of “being in the world” of young people from migrant families in Britain. For the young people they interviewed, this habitus translates into a “normalised” vision of a “deterritorialised” family marked by episodes of presence and absence and is underpinned by practices. These include, maintaining forms of material or virtual presence, participating in important rituals such as weddings or end-of-year celebrations, or more mundane practices such as greeting family members getting off the plane. These young people must also learn to cope with sometimes contradictory frames of reference. They must thus learn to inhabit different worlds (home/host country; but also, for example, school and home). This implies, among other things, knowing how to transition effortlessly between them and thus learning to manage one’s own presence in different places and to use each place to meet different needs. The focus here is therefore primarily on the practices and routines of “doing family” in a transnational context, which nurture a sense of belonging and shape a specific habitus in young people. These practices and routines are also at the heart of Nedelcu’s (2010, 2012) work on the transnational habitus, which focuses on relationships maintained at a distance via information and communication technologies, and spotlights not so much how a habitus may be transmitted to the youngest by their family group, but processes of continuous socialisation that involve several generations, including adults who acquire new dispositions in this context.

² For a review of the literature, see in particular CARLSON S., SCHNEICKERT C., 2021; ZONTINI E., REYNOLDS T., 2018.

Without, however, mobilising the notion of (transnational) habitus, the articles in this dossier shed new and complementary light on socialisation and the formation of a specific habitus in the context of “doing family” in residential mobility. We will now show how they allow us to go beyond the existing dichotomy between transnationalism and multilocality, by focusing on three transversal sub-themes.

A. Multiple frames of reference

The first transversal theme is the multiplicity of social contexts and orders that family members are facing, due to their mobility and inclusion in more than one space.

The articles in this dossier emphasise the multiplicity of affiliations and frames of reference through which individuals travel as a result of their mobile lives and their enrolment in and between several places. They also testify to the practices individuals develop in order to juggle between the here and there, the local and the global (the global being understood here as the relational space, the archipelago connecting the different places they live in) and on “how to” live in between, in a connected space.

In her article on the experience of local and transnational family relations of two mother-child dyads (one Kosovar, the other Ghanaian) living in Switzerland, Ursina Jaeger questions the impact of space – and the multiplicity of social orders resulting from a multiple inclusion in that space – on the practices of “doing family”. For the author, these practices of “doing family” are always a matter of negotiation and refer to particular regulations, cultures and moral orders, which multiply and add up when mobile individuals cross multiple and sometimes divergent frames of reference. The innovative conceptual lens of multireferentiality that Ursina Jaeger mobilises facilitates analysis of the contingency of social orders (the fact that those social orders may be thought and felt differently in different places) and the simultaneous negotiation of divergent social orders in one same situation. As a result, the author shows that while family belonging may remain the same beyond geographical borders, how it is performed and the relationship that results from it may change. Thus, the simultaneity of social orders and their inherent contradictions offer mobile actors more room for manoeuvre, allowing them to negotiate family practices and adapt their power of action. The author shows how family relationships can change when they are transferred to a new cultural framework containing other expectations and prescriptions. This is the case of Rose who moves from a framed and controlled practice of motherhood in Switzerland to a relationship with her daughter that emphasises freedom and autonomy in Ghana. The multiplicity of frames of reference and dynamics that take place in a “relational space” is also addressed in Nora Kottman’s article. The author sheds light on how German expatriate families living in an upmarket district

of Tokyo navigate between different registers of the family and on the tensions that arise between how they “perform family” in their country of residence and the codes of their country of origin. Nora Kottman shows how these German families deal with what Ursina Jaeger calls the “multireferentiality” that emerges from this expatriate lifestyle. That is, trying to fit in their expatriate community in Japan by projecting an image of a “traditional” family, even if that does not necessarily correspond to who they are and what they do in their home country.

Ida Wentzel Winther and Steen Nepper Larsen’s article, Laura Merla and Bérengère Nobels’ article and Tino Schlinzig’s article all deal with separated/divorced families whose children travel between two homes in Denmark, Belgium and Germany. They highlight the entanglement of scales of “doing family” in and through space – both at the local level of each home and at the more global level of the family group – as well as the social orders specific to each home in and between which children navigate – which are, notably, delimited by objects and olfactory universes of their own. Based on a long ethnographic study of Danish families, Ida Wentzel Winther and Steen Nepper Larsen’s article highlights in particular how children of separated parents living in recomposed families “share families” and siblings that are not limited to a single place and whose composition is continuously changing. In other words, children in these recomposed families belong in part to several households and relational subsets, which requires them to adapt not only to a multiplicity of codes and scripts but also to “re-configuring” themselves depending on who is present, who arrives and who leaves. In addition to looking at the practices children develop as a result of being shared and sharing, the authors question the extent to which children transgress their singularity (their “I”) by constantly being part of a shared universe.

Together, these articles explicitly or implicitly bring to the fore ways of “being in the world” specifically linked to the experience of a family life marked by multireferentiality and multilocality – whether or not it crosses national borders.

B. Co-presence and belonging

The creation and maintenance of a sense of belonging through various forms of co-presence is our second transversal theme. Loretta Baldassar’s (2008) work with Italians in Australia has shown that migrants cope with the absence of their family members «through sensual contact and co-presence, in other words, through “feeling” the presence of people and places involving all of the five senses» (Baldassar, 2008:252). This work has played a pioneering role in complexifying the notion of co-presence in a family context (Merla/Papanikolaou, 2021). Indeed, the author distinguishes four types of co-presence enabling families separated in space and

time to establish relationships and maintain a sense of unity. First, virtual co-presence is constructed through the sense of hearing during telephone calls and through sight for interlocutors using webcams. Second, co-presence by proxy is achieved through objects or persons that remind one another of an absent family member. This is experienced through the five senses because these objects or persons can be touched, heard, smelled, *etc.* Third, imagined co-presence is experienced by thinking about an absent person. And fourth, physical co-presence, which remains the «gold standard» (Baldassar, 2008:252) because it is the only one that allows to fully experience the other directly, through all five senses. In her discussion of this typology, Marie-Kristin Döbler (2018:14) emphasises that being present physically or indirectly (such as through an object) is not in itself sufficient to qualify as “co-presence”. She considers that being present «mentally» (2018:19), *i.e.* by consciously paying attention to the other, is constitutive of all forms of co-presence and is central to individuals’ perceiving and experiencing “being together”. Moreover, creating and maintaining co-presence requires sharing knowledge based on common experiences with others, perpetually reconstituted through interaction and communication.

The articles in this dossier echo the dimensions of co-presence and shared knowledge described above, as they shed light on how children and adults who are – temporarily – living apart maintain family ties and a sense of belonging. The texts by Tino Schlinzig, Laura Merla and Bérengère Nobels, and by Ida Wentzel Winther and Steen Nepper Larsen focus on the sensory and material dimensions of “doing family” within the different household that children of separated parents regularly travel between. Tino Schlinzig demonstrates that smells may be considered and mobilised as a medium for creating a sense of belonging and cohesion within multilocal families. Smells, perceived as shared knowledge between members of a place of residence, define a local family identity and stabilise a local social order, specific to each household. Children alternating homes following parental separation identify with the odours of a place and feel they belong there. The author also points out that it is possible to identify an individual by his or her smell and thus distinguish him or her from others. Furthermore, children take certain objects with them from one place to another. Those objects, imbued with the odour characteristic of each home, help to establish bonds between places of residence and between spatially dispersed family members, nurturing a sense of “inter-spatial” belonging. This evokes and recalls absent people or places, making them present in thought (Baldassar, 2008). That presence may be desired or, on the contrary, rejected. For example, the scent of a different laundry product that children take with them when they arrive at their mother’s house after a week with their father evokes the symbolic presence of the ex-partner and leads one of the mothers Tino Schlinzig met to wash all the clothes in order to get rid of that pre-

sence/absence. Spraying a cuddly toy with her perfume also helps in recalling a mothers' presence in the various places her child lives in. The author makes these practices of odourisation (such as perfuming a cushion a child takes with her or him) or deodorisation (such as washing clothes to change aromas) tangible. These practices keep the family members the child has just left present by proxy (a presence by proxy that may be desired by the parent who is being left), and supports, or hinders, the child's reincorporation in the living space he or she is returns to. In the same vein, based on a study of materiality, Laura Merla and Bérengère Nobels explore how young people use the objects surrounding them, on the one hand, to distinguish each dwelling and shape a familiar world on a local scale, and, on the other hand, to link those different dwellings, create continuity in the experience of mobility, and form a coherent whole, a "lived space". Although it does not address "co-presence" as such, this article contributes to understanding it. Indeed, the authors distinguish between objects left "parked" in a family environment before moving to the other home and objects "in transit" children embark with them when they move. It might be said that through the five senses, the first type of object makes the presence of the absent child felt by proxy, reminding those who reside permanently in each living space of that child's place in the family. The unpacking and installation – or not – of the second type of objects also helps in establishing the child's symbolic place and in providing a particular coloration to his or her physical presence. The authors show that these practices help children to (re)integrate and position themselves within the home as being "in transit", "waiting" to leave for another place, or on the contrary, as "permanent" residents. The authors also shed light on the fact that children alternate material environments, specific to each home, in which they do not always have similar objects. Following Tino Schlinzig's concept of smells as shared knowledge, we could extend this concept to objects in the home, the use of which would reinforce identification with the living space and family residing there permanently. Ida Wentzel Winther and Steen Nepper Larsen's text also provides an insight into how co-presence – whether physical or by proxy – is generated through the materiality and sharing of children's belongings between their homes to create bonding in blended families. According to the authors, sharing a home brings quasi-siblings closer together because being physically co-present under the same roof nurtures more intense relationships. The distribution of children's personal belongings between their different living spaces also establishes links between these spaces and helps them feel at home in more than one place. Parents also play a role in this process, for example when they divide objects and places (such as a personal room) equally between children in a spirit of sharing, to give each one a place that will be maintained by proxy through the days of absence.

The three texts that feature migrants are more concerned with “doing family” outside the places of residence and in a transnational family context. They emphasise the importance of sharing a common experience in physical co-presence while being mentally present. For example, Shannon Damery demonstrates how young adult migrants facing discrimination in the Belgian public space develop a sense of belonging and anchoring in their city of residence (Brussels here). This is done by relying on a “voluntary family” composed of members they share a common goal with (acquiring recognition, for example through a residence permit) and a common experience of marginalisation. This membership group also resembles a family in that it enrolls them in a system of rights and duties, providing support and resources while fostering a sense of obligation to its members. These “voluntary families”, notably coming from associative sectors, provide them with both a social and spatial anchorage. Indeed, within the premises of these associations in the heart of Brussels, these young people take ownership of a place they feel safe and at peace in. In the same vein, Nora Kottman points out that German families in Tokyo define themselves as members of the expatriate community when they share common living conditions, exchange advice and help each other. They also connect their family life in Japan and their long-distance family ties by remaining “present” in their country of origin. Indeed, they keep their own house in Germany and stay there when visiting their family members. This place of residence also ensures their presence by proxy, as it signals that they maintain a link with “here” while being “there” and thus still consider themselves members of their family group despite the distance. Ties are also maintained with the family in Germany via a virtual co-presence, consisting of online exchanges. The author also reveals the negative impact of restrictions linked to the Covid 19 health crisis on family practices and the feeling of geographical distance. Indeed, travel bans and the interruption of postal services prevented families from deploying physical or proxy co-presence, thus making the separation more difficult to live.

Collectively, these articles thus emphasise the importance of considering the sensory and material dimension of “doing family” and the sharing of common knowledge and experiences when analysing the processes involved in creating, maintaining and sustaining family belonging. Furthermore, they shed light on the skills, dispositions, practices, routines, in short, on the ways of being, doing and acting – the *habitus* – of members of multilocal and transnational families.

C. Power relations structuring the relationship between family and space

The third theme concerns the power relations at play in structuring the relationship between family and space. Indeed, although the plurality of family forms is now recognised, the nuclear, residential (immobile) and

heterosexual family largely remains the referential and normative framework that inspires legislation, public policies (Bonizzoni, 2018; Merla/Izaguirre/Murru, 2021; Sarolea/Merla, 2020) and, more broadly, societal organisations. Focusing on the two main manifestations of family practices across plural spaces, namely separated multilocal families and transnational families, this special issue highlights both how power relations between family members are reorganised, and how these practices come into contact with and challenge the dominant normative framework.

First, the literature on separated families has long focused on parental conflicts and power relations that play out judicially and economically post-separation and how these sometimes-unequal relations shape the everyday practices of families, particularly in terms of gender inequalities in this context (Struffolino/Bernardi/Larenza, 2020). More recently, social scientists have also focused on parents' agency, particularly in relation to single-parent families, and the strategies they develop to resist and exist in a society that marginalises them (Murru, 2017, 2020; Wagener, 2019). However, as Marek Tesar (2014, 2016) points out, the study of power relations in the family still tends to see and present children as powerless beings, in the grip of their parents' decisions and authority. The work of Merla & Nobels and Winther & Larsen in this issue – but also in their previous research (Merla/Nobels, 2019; Wentzel Winther, 2015) – challenges this vision of the passive child by studying the different ways in which children living in shared physical custody become autonomous and participate in the renegotiation of roles, territories and expectations. In their article, Merla & Nobels study the symbolic, functional, identity and affective significance children attribute to their daily lives objects. By focusing on objects “in transit” and those “in parking”, they highlight how children are actors in the construction of a sense of “home” and their “multilocal inhabiting” through the mobilisation of objects that facilitate their transition from one house to another, or support their existence in the different living spaces. Moreover, their research emphasises that these practices are exercised in a structural context marked by the weight of material, spatial and temporal conditions, as well as by the educational and ideological framework provided by parents. Children nevertheless manage to create opportunities and margins of manoeuvre, develop strategies and negotiate their place and practices. In a similar vein, Winther & Larsen show how each person's time of presence or transit influences the place and degree of power of different members of families wherein children “share and are shared”, including in the development of specific family practices. For example, there is a difference in status and scope of action available to a stepmother or stepchild from a blended couple who live in one house all the time, compared to a half-brother/stepbrother or half-sister/stepdaughter from a previous union who does not live there all the time and transits between different locations. More broadly, Winther

& Larsen accentuate the mental load for children in blended families of constantly having to reconfigure, regroup or readjust (for example, to each person's mood) to who is present in each place, who is arriving, who is leaving and who is returning. Finally, in this issue, Schlinzig examines how odours are mobilised or impose the absence/presence of different members of a separated family and shows that children and parents find themselves in asymmetrical positions of power in this relationship to odours. In particular, the latter indeed have the power to actively shape olfactory differences, to fix the olfactory definition of the family and, in so doing, to establish and stabilise group cohesion.

Secondly, power relations are a key theme in migration research, particularly with regard to the study of migrants' agency, autonomy (Mezzadra, 2010) and resistance practices (Stierl, 2019). This scholarship also stresses that they are confronted with powerful structures, institutions and bureaucracies (see for instance, Merla/Smit, 2020; Orsini *et al.*, 2021). In addition, the transnational families literature has focused on the weight of family relationships in structuring the lived experience of migrants (Kilkey/Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2016; Vuckovic Juros, 2021). In this special issue, Damery, Jaeger, and Kottman each contribute to this angle of approach by highlighting different ways of doing family and combining with, or autonomising oneself from, various power relations. These works also show that migration sometimes represents a setting in which dominant normative roles are reinforced. In particular, Kottman explores how the gender contract of male breadwinner and female caretaker is reinforced in a German expatriate community in an upmarket Tokyo neighbourhood. In parallel, Damery's article explores how the very definition of the family may be a source of tension in the migration pathways of adolescents and young adults. Indeed, the legislative and normative framework of the host country determines under what conditions it is in the child's best interest to be regrouped with or separated from his or her family (understood in the sense of a nuclear family). However, the researcher demonstrates that limiting the definition of family in political discourse and public policy can materially limit the places where migrants can create a sense of belonging, reinforcing the sense of marginalisation of those who do not fit the pre-established vision of family and its possible members. In particular, she discusses the cases of young people who are removed from their solidarity groups (created within peer groups in the host country) to be “entrusted” to legally recognised family members with whom they do not, in fact, have a sense of belonging. Finally, Jaeger analyses how being physically present in different places influences the ways intra-family power relations materialise. This is exemplified by issues around financial status (being considered “rich” in the country of origin through contributing to the needs of different members, but living as “poor” in the host country where the purchasing power is greatly diminished) and

in, for example, the practice of motherhood (reinforcing control and security in the host country for fear of having one's children taken away, versus promoting freedom and empowerment in the home country where that fear does not exist).

Paying attention to the spatial dimension of doing family, especially when one leaves the classical residential framework, thus makes it possible to highlight how everyday family practices are constructed through a (re)negotiation of power relations between different individuals, but also by resisting and developing new ways of being that question and destabilise the dominant structures organising “doing family” in society. Highlighting power relations also contributes to the discussion of habitus initiated in the two previous themes. This discussion can hardly ignore social inequalities and the resources and capitals that are needed for “doing family” in the context of residential mobility, and derive from/are generated by socialisation to that lifestyle. Zontini and Reynolds (2018), mentioned above, have shown that the formation of a transnational family habitus, and the possibility of capitalising on that habitus to mobilise and/or access economic or social resources – for example, to set up a transnational business or make multilingualism a cultural advantage – bring gender, age, class and ethnic inequalities into play. In particular, they note that migrants from working-class backgrounds face obstacles to maintaining transnational practices that hinder the formation a transnational family habitus. They also note that the multilingualism of young people of Asian or African origin tends to devalue them, whereas it represents an asset for “white” migrants who speak a European language considered prestigious. In the same way, multilocal families – in this case, separated or divorced – are traversed by power relationships and inequalities both between one another and within them. These influence the formation of their habitus and the benefits their members may derive from it, for example in the form of “mobility” capital (Kaufmann/Widmer, 2005; Merla, 2018)³. They are also subject to certain form of stigma, as evidenced by the abundance of work questioning the (negative) effects of this lifestyle for the children and adults involved (Zartler, 2021) – a questioning that is also strongly present in early work on transnational motherhood and its media treatment (Juozeliūnienė/Budginaitė, 2018).

IV. “Multilocal habitus”: definition and scope

Together, the articles in this special issue explicitly or implicitly bring to the fore ways of “being in the world” specific to the experience of a family life marked by multireferentiality and multilocality – whether or not it crosses national borders. By drawing three transversal common threads, we

³ That capital is defined as «how entities access and appropriate a capacity for socio-spatial mobility» (KAUFMANN V., BERGMAN M. M., JOYE D., 2004, p.750).

have demonstrated in this introduction that “doing family” in this context requires the development of specific skills and practices, and helps to shape a habitus that we will describe as “plural” in the sense of Bernard Lahire (2003). This “multilocal” habitus constitutes sets of potentially contradictory habits, patterns and dispositions, constructed in a multilocal family context. They are shaped by the experience of multiple referential frameworks and help social actors navigating between and dealing with them. They also help to define the contours of family and family inclusion at local and global levels – “here”, “there”, and “in-between” – through various forms of co-presence, and multisensorial, symbolic, virtual and material practices, which produce common knowledge and experiences.

We have chosen to describe these habitus as “multilocal”, not in order to establish the importance of one field of research (multilocal) over another (transnational), but because the multilocal scale represents the lowest common denominator of the different family forms that develop in the context of residential mobility. For, as Cédric Duchêne-Lacroix and Pascal Maeder (2013:10) remind us, «the multilocal approach to human activity is not limited to a geographical scale of dispersion of places», and is therefore found in the analysis of local, regional and transnational phenomena. The notion of multilocal habitus therefore makes it possible to build on a notion, that of transnational habitus, constructed from the specific experience of migrants, and go beyond it to contribute to a decompartmentalised sociology of the family “on the move”. In doing so, it also contributes to «de-demonising distance in mobile family lives» (Baldassar, 2016), and to de-stigmatising these family forms by underlining the importance of studying the new forms of socialisation they deploy.

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