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Introduction to the special issue "Transnational care: Families confronting borders"

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Abstract

In this article, we introduce the key themes of our Special Issue on "Transnational care: families confronting borders". Central to this collection is the question of how family relations and solidarities are impacted by the current scenario of closed borders and increasingly restrictive migration regimes. This question is examined more specifically through the lens of care dynamics within transnational families and their (re-) configurations across diverse contexts marked by "immobilizing regimes of migration". We begin by presenting a brief overview of key concepts in the transnational families and caregiving literature that provides a foundation for the diverse cases explored in the articles, including refugees and asylum seekers in Germany and Finland, Polish facing Brexit in the UK, Latin American migrants transiting through Mexico, and restrictionist drifts in migration policies in Australia, Belgium and the UK. Drawing on this rich work, we identify two policy tools; namely temporality and exclusion, which appear to be particularly salient features of immobilizing regimes of migration that significantly influence care-related mobilities. We conclude with a discussion of how immobilizing regimes are putting transnational family solidarities in crisis, including in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, gripping the globe at the time of writing.

Key words: care circulation, migration, regimes of mobility, refugees, covid-19 pandemic, transnational families

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1. Introduction: Transnational families confronting borders

Notwithstanding the border closures occurring at the time of writing (April 2020) in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, people are increasingly confronted with what has been termed the 'immobility regime' (Turner 2007). Motivated variously by a desire to assert their nation-state sovereignty, to protect their labour markets and welfare states, to exclude the 'terrorist' or racialized 'other', and to get (re-)elected, governments are responding to mobile populations (including the potentially mobile), with the policies and rhetoric of "closure, entrapment and containment" (Shamir 2005: 199). Popular accounts have focused on high profile examples, including: the suspension of Schengen in 2015 during the so-called 'European migrant crisis'[1], and the closure of the Greece-Turkey border to refugees in Spring 2020; Trump's electoral promise to raise the wall between Mexico and USA, and his subsequent deployment of US troops in Autumn 2019 to 'protect' the border; and the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU), entailing the cessation of free movement of people between the UK and the remaining EU countries. Occurring alongside those dramatic cases is a more generalized drift towards restrictive migration policies (de Haas, Natter & Vezzoli 2018), which privilege some types of mobility over others in the national interest of the receiving country.

In this Special Issue[2], we ask: Where do care and family relations fit in such processes? This is a question of fundamental importance that is often overlooked in analyses of the 'immobility regime'.

Family relations and solidarities have been recognized as playing a central role in all stages of people's migration journeys, from the development of migratory plans, to processes of long-term settlement, often punctuated by return visits, and eventually for some, repatriation. Research has shown that members of transnational families remain connected across space and time through their engagement in care-related processes and practices, subject to their positioning within the political, economic, cultural and social contexts of their place(s) of residence. These exchanges can function as informal sources of social protection, and simultaneously place a heavy burden on the shoulders of migrants and their relatives, especially when faced with restrictive migration policies that limit their capacity to access and mobilize the resources that allow them to meet their (transnational) family duties, including, in particular, mobility (Baldassar et al. 2014).

In this Special Issue, we present a set of articles that collectively examines the implications for the circulation of care across borders among migrant and refugee family networks in the context of what Merla, Kilkey and Baldassar, in their contribution, refer to as 'immobilizing regimes of migration':

1 We employ the commonly used term 'European migrant crisis', but we acknowledge that it is a complex and value-laden term, which risks privileging the perspective of European societies over origin regions in the Middle East and Africa, suggests a short-term emergency rather than an on-going, protracted and possibly endemic, scenario, and fails to capture the intersection between the 'migrant crisis' and other current 'crises' (e.g. economic, social, security).

2 The Special Issue emerges from a Joint Session organised by the editors between RC 31 Migration & RC 06 Family Research at the 2018 ISA World Congress of Sociology, Toronto, Canada.

> the combination of state immigration policies around migrants' entry, settlement and social, economic and political incorporation, as well as hegemonic constructions of migrants and migration. These immobilizing regimes block the physical mobility of some, while granting highly conditional mobility to others, resulting in situations of enforced and permanent temporariness and ontological insecurity. These have immobilizing consequences for the trajectories of transnational care circulation over time, in particular the capacity for short-term visits, long-term re/expatriation and circular mobility within family networks (e.g. flying kin) (pg. 15-16).

The contributions to this volume examine a range of contexts, including countries such as Germany (Amelina & Bause) and Finland (Näre), which implemented a string of fast-paced changes to their refugee and asylum policies following the large number of refugee arrivals in 2015-16 from Syria and the wider Middle East. Many of the new arrivals came as individuals, with their family members dispersed throughout countries of origin and countries of transit, potentially posing significant challenges for the maintenance of familial relationships and solidarities. Other articles focus on border contexts that have become highly politicized in recent years, including the border between the UK and the EU, which following 'Brexit,' will be governed by a new migration regime from 1st January 2021, with implications for the transnational family rights of EU citizen migrants in the UK (Radziwinowiczówna, Rosińska & Kloc-Nowak). Another border that is also carefully examined in this Special Issue is that separating the USA and Mexico. As the last stage of the migration corridor from the Global South to the USA, not only has the border itself become increasingly securitized, but border control practices have been pushed further south into Mexico. The result is that those transiting through the country face the risk of detention and deportation, and their (transnational) care capacities are severely challenged (Willers). Finally, the remaining articles focus on contexts characterized by a more generalized restrictionist drift in migration policies, including Australia, the UK and Belgium (Brandhorst; Merla, Kilkey & Baldassar).

Examining the implications for how transnational families (re-)configure care arrangements across this range of contexts, the Special Issue seeks to contribute to a research agenda that illuminates and problematizes the marginalization of care within migration regimes. In this Introduction we begin by providing a brief overview of the transnational families and caregiving literature, in which the contributions to this Special Issue are grounded, to provide a context for the discussion – and articles - that follow, which explore the heuristic value of the notion of 'immobilizing regimes of migration'.

2. Transnational families caring across borders: Key concepts

Today, transnational families are classically defined 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" (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002: 18). The idea that migrants could sustain a family life across distance and national borders, however, was quite revolutionary at the time this

definition was published. The now flourishing field of transnational family scholarship finds its roots in, and has contributed to further develop, a major turn in migration studies, namely, the 'transnational turn'. This transition point was spurred on by the seminal work of anthropologists Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc who, in the late 1990s, challenged the dominant representation of migrants as "uprooted" from their country of origin. Until then, "the movement out of homeland states, and in particular the resulting distance between family members, was understood to rupture and inhibit continued connections to people and place. Migration was understood as unidirectional – from sending to receiving country – as well as final, culminating in settlement" (Baldassar et al. 2014:160). Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc were amongst the first scholars to draw attention to the fact that family members regularly engage in transnational practices across national borders. This led them to propose a reconceptualization of migrants as "transmigrants" who maintain multiple links and connections with their home societies (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton-Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller, Basch & Szanton-Blanc 1992; Glick Schiller, Basch & Szanton-Blanc 1995). *Transnationalism* in this context is defined as "a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Glick Schiller, Basch & Szanton-Blanc 1992: ix).

The familial transnational practices that comprise these social fields, however, were largely neglected in the mainstream transnationalism scholarship that emerged in the early 2000s. Indeed, most scholars considered familial practices as 'weak' forms of transnational engagement, as compared to cultural, political, or economic transnational dynamics taking place in the 'public' sphere (Gardner & Grillo 2002; Legall 2005). In this context, feminist scholarship has played a key role in bringing family to the front stage, through its focus on 'transnational motherhood' (Parreñas 2000). This term was coined by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila (1997) to capture the alternative constructions of motherhood that migrant women actively create when leaving their children 'back home' in order to work abroad as nannies, housekeepers and care workers. Subsequent studies of female migrant domestic workers' experiences of transnational motherhood located them in a broader economic and political context of exploitation – an international division of reproductive labour (Parreñas 2000), known as *Global Care Chains* (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2004; Hochschild 2000). These chains of care involve the juggling of care responsibilities and paid employment, and typically comprise female carers in the Global South who look after the children of women who migrate to the Global North, who in turn work as carers so that women there may take up paid employment. As we have noted elsewhere (Baldassar et al. 2014: 102), this conceptualization of care flows as unidirectional - between the Global North and the Global South - was linked to the idea that migration involves the displacement or diversion (Parreñas 2003) of motherly love (from one's own child to the child of one's affluent employers' children, or elderly kin). This notion of a displacement of love led Hochschild (2005) to conceptualise a care drain "as women who normally care for the young, the old and the sick in their own poor countries move to care for the young, the old, and the sick in rich countries, whether as maids and nannies or as day-care and nursing-home aides" (p. 35).

In parallel, another (not mutually exclusive) strand of scholarship on transnationalism and families developed in the early 2000's, which is the focus of this Special Issue. This strand, mainly referred to as the 'transnational families literature', embraces a wide definition of the family including inter- and intra-generational relationships beyond nuclear families (Baldassar et al. 2014; Crespi, Meda & Merla 2018; Mazzucato 2013). It covers a range of themes, such as transnational aged care (Horn 2019), transnational parenthood (Carling, Menjívar & Schmalzbauer 2012), including fathering (Kilkey, Plomien & Perrons 2013; Fresnoza-Flot 2014), sibling relationships (Lee & Pacini-Ketchabaw 2011; Baldassar & Brandhorst 2020), family reunification (Drotbhom 2018), social mobility (Oso & Suárez-Grimalt 2018), transnational social protection (Bilecen et al. 2019), and the wellbeing of left-behind children and elders (Haagsman & Mazzucato 2020). While the themes in the 'transnational families literature' are broader than the specific focus on the political economy of transnational mothering, both strands feature the key role played by care in the maintenance of family relationships across distance and national borders (e.g. Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding 2007; Barglowski, Krzyzowski & Swiatek 2015; Bonizzoni 2018; Fog Olwig 2014; Huang, Thang & Toyota 2012; Leifsen & Tymczuk 2012; Merla 2015; Kordasiewicz, Radziwinowiczówna & Kloc-Nowak 2018; Reynolds & Zontini 2014). This focus on caring across distance has been conceptually and methodologically ground-breaking in two key ways. Firstly, it has facilitated the analysis of the set of micro processes and practices that comprise transnational family life, including the importance of examining emotionality and imaginaries. Secondly, in doing so, it has challenged the normative notion of care as requiring physical co-presence, also evident in the dominant theorisation of the Global Care Chains perspective, through the notions of 'transnational care' and 'care circulation'.

2.1 Transnational care

Early work on the concept of "transnational care" was pioneered by Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding (2007) in their analysis of the ways in which adult migrants in Perth, Western Australia, manage to care for their ageing parents across vast distances. Drawing on Finch and Mason's (1993) analysis of the negotiation of family obligations to provide care and support in proximate British families, and their broad definition of care as involving physical, financial, emotional, and practical support, as well as accommodation, Baldassar and her colleagues conceptualized transnational caregiving as a set of practices governed by a dialectic of capacity, cultural obligation and negotiated family commitments. As we outline elsewhere (Merla, Kilkey & Baldassar 2020 fc), this work was extended by Baldassar and Merla, who identified a set of resources (or capabilities) supporting transnational family members' capacity to provide –and receive– care, including mobility, communication, social relations, time, money, knowledge and appropriate housing (Merla 2012; Merla & Baldassar 2011). In 2014, they proposed a new conceptualization of care flows as *care circulation* (Baldassar & Merla 2014), defined as "the reciprocal, multidirectional and asymmetrical exchange of care that fluctuates over the life course within transnational family networks subject to the political, economic, cultural and social contexts of both sending and receiving societies" (Baldassar & Merla 2014: 22).

2.2 *Practices of transnational care*

Over the years, this body of literature simultaneously engaged in two complementary projects. The first features the "practices of transnational care" and comprises a detailed examination of the activities in which migrants and their relatives engage to circulate care on a daily basis, including episodes of 'crisis' and emergency, throughout the life-course (Wall & Bolzman 2014), the family cultures and dynamics in which these practices are embedded (Ahlin & Sen 2019), and the resources and tools they mobilise for this purpose, including information and communication technologies (ICTs). The involvement in the 'circulation of care' of various members of transnational family networks takes several forms, which require different types of resources (Kilkey & Merla 2014): direct provision in situations of physical co-presence (for instance, during visits in the home or host country); direct provision from a distance via the use of ICTs; coordination from a distance, and delegation to a third person or entity (proxy) – in which the person who 'delegates' the provision of a particular type of support stays informed and can (physically) step in if the need arises. Embodied ways to deliver care in situations of physical co-presence thus co-exist with long-distance care practices, supported by other forms of co-presence, including virtual – or digital (Baldassar et al. 2016; Cuban 2019; Francisco 2015).

The proliferation and accessibility of communication affordances such as the internet, smartphones and social media has created an environment of polymedia (Madianou & Miller 2012), which connects family members across distance through a wide range of tools that can be used separately or in combination. According to Nedelcu and Wyss (2016: 210), this can lead to 'omnipresent co-presence', especially when computers or smartphones are turned on and connected all day, giving people the possibility of interacting at any moment. Notwithstanding the opportunities afforded by such technological developments, there are constraints in their capacity to substitute for proximate co-presence in transnational families. Time differences, for example, remain difficult to negotiate, affecting the frequency, spontaneity and responsiveness of virtual communications (Wilding 2006; Ryan et al. 2014). ICTs can become a tool of family tensions and conflicts, weakening rather than strengthening transnational ties, at least temporarily (Bacigalupe & Cámara 2012; Baldassar 2008). Riak Akeui (2005) for example, observes that some African refugees in the USA disconnected their phones to avoid pressure to remit from kin 'back home', when they themselves were in precarious low paid employment. Moreover, access to the internet and to the ICTs that facilitate transnational connectivity and care-giving across distance is one of the main stratifying features of the contemporary global world (Ragnedda & Muschert 2013). In some cases, the same family or care network contains people at both ends of the digital divide, creating new inequalities within families, as well as between them (Baldassar et al. 2018). These are not only based on income and geographical inequalities, but are also related to generational differences. Thus, as Merla, Kilkey and Baldassar argue in their contribution to this Special Issue '[I]t is important, therefore, not to conceive distant and proximate care as either or scenarios; rather, over-time, and in the life of any one family network, they each play a particular, and complementary, role in the trajectories of transnational care circulation' (pg.4).

2.3 Situated transnationalism

Examining care practices in transnational families, the transnational care scholarship also engaged in unravelling how these practices are shaped by a "situated transnationalism" (Kilkey & Merla 2014). This refers to the institutional contexts and national and international policies and regulations that both facilitate and constrain, shape and reshape, the practices of transnational care (see also Merla 2014). This project exposes inequalities and power dynamics within and across transnational families (Amelina 2017; Dreby & Atkins 2010; Gonzálves Torralbo 2016), and ultimately raises the question of how governments and policy makers can recognize and support those families (Degavre & Merla 2016; COFACE 2012; Böcker & Hunter 2017). Indeed, the transnational care literature combines anthropological and sociological perspectives with a social policy lens to emphasise the institutional contexts that help shape the circulation of care among families across borders. The notion of situated transnationalism is central to this project. Drawing on Merla and Baldassar's (2011) work on the resources required for transnational caregiving, and informed further by comparative welfare state theory (Esping-Andersen 1990), situated transnationalism focuses on the relevant arrangements in migration, welfare, and gendered care and working-time regimes of the countries of origin and of destination, through which those resources are partially derived. It also highlights the importance of policies that affect the availability and affordability of cross-border transport, and of policies that influence the quality and accessibility of telecommunications infrastructure, including ICTs. These various regimes and regulations intersect to create contexts that facilitate or hinder the circulation of care within different types of transnational families and across *all* social categories.

While the circulation of care in all migrant families is mediated by the regimes and regulations outlined above, the impact of these is highly differentiated. Building on the concept of 'stratified reproduction' (Colen 1995), researchers have examined the role migration policies in particular play in shaping the opportunities afforded to migrants to form and reshape their families and households, as well as to maintain links with their kin across national boundaries, that is, to 'socially reproduce' (Bonizzoni 2012; 2015; Kraler 2010; Kilkey and Urzi 2017; Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Menjívar 2012). Central here has been Lydia Morris' (2003) observation that migration management processes allocate differential rights and entitlements, especially at the migration-welfare nexus, to different categories of migrants, resulting in a hierarchy of stratified rights or 'civic stratification'. Moreover, hierarchies based on migrant category are inflected with other axes of differentiation, including gender, nationality, class, age and occupation (Kofman et al. 2011; Ariza 2014). Here, we come full circle to migrant care workers; a group often treated as the paradigmatic case in research on 'stratified reproduction'. Thus, research highlights that their transnational care responsibilities are largely unrecognised within migration and welfare regimes, generating inequalities between migrants and non-migrants, and especially among the women who are most engaged in transnational care-giving (Degavre & Merla 2016; Williams 2018).

3. Immobilizing regimes of migration

Having reviewed the key conceptual developments in scholarship on transnational families caring across borders, in the remaining sections of this Introduction, we turn to examine what the articles included in the Special Issue reveal about the policy shifts that are contributing to the creation 'of immobilizing regimes of migration' in respect to care-related mobilities. While these take on various forms, two policy tools seem particularly salient drivers of change: the tools of temporality and exclusion. We then provide a brief overview of each of the papers before concluding with a discussion of how immobilizing regimes are putting transnational family solidarities in crisis.

3.1 Temporal tools

Long preoccupied with the spatial, the temporal dimension of migration is increasingly of interest to migration researchers (Cwerner 2001; King et al. 2006; Collins and Shubin 2015; Robertson & Ho 2016; Mavroudi, Page & Christou 2017; Robertson 2019; Kilkey & Ryan 2020). Examining transnational families specifically, Catie Coe's (2015) reapplication of the notion of 'entrainment' (borrowed from biology) highlights the temporal aspects of care and mobility entanglements in transnational family solidarities. In her ethnographic accounts of transnational Caribbean families, Coe shows how migrants' life-stage progressions need to be entrained alongside the lives of members of their extended family support networks, and are often 'disrupted' in time as a result (for example, delayed childbirth, having to forgo nursing a parent, or having to forgo a migration opportunity in order to care). These temporal disruptions to normative life stages are impacted by migrant mobilities. Migratory movements, when analysed 'in time', feature temporal disjunctures as roles and obligations have to be orchestrated across distance, often in the form of kin and fictive-kin replacements and proxies (Coe 2015). However, as Coe, and others (e.g. Robertson 2019) argue, the regimes that govern migrant mobilities also cause and exacerbate such temporal disjunctures. A number of the articles in this Special Issue echo this observation, highlighting the temporal tools in operation within immobilizing regimes of migration.

Merla, Kilkey and Baldassar draw on the concept of 'chronopolitics' (Fabian 1983) to capture the array of interconnected temporal devices employed by governments to immobilize some, while sharply conditioning the mobility of others. Such devices include the 'speeding up' of migration rule changes so that the ground is always shifting for migrants in terms of their rights and entitlements. Lena Näre, in her article, for example, estimates that between its inception in 2004 and the time of writing in 2019, the Finnish Aliens Act has been amended 78 times: 13 times in 2015 alone during the height of the so-called 'European migrant crisis'; and the vast majority of those 78 changes were significant, rather than small technical amendments. Such changes can set migrants' temporal transnational care strategies 'back in time', as we see in the case of Saliha from Morocco living in Belgium (in Merla, Kilkey and Baldassar, this issue). Saliha's accumulation of time for eligibility to Belgian citizenship is almost wiped-out because she unwittingly retrospectively contravenes a new legal rule, while on an earlier visit to

Morocco to care for her sick mother. The result is devastating because her plans to sponsor her children to join her in Belgium before they exceed the age limit become unrealisable. In this case, the 'speeding up' of rule changes exacerbates the pre-existing risks formed at the nexus within migration policies between institutional time and biographical time, of having rights 'time out' based on norms and expectations of the life course and the timing and pattern of transitions within it, such as the transition from childhood (dependence) to adulthood (independence).

Still other devices aim to 'slow down' migrants' lives, often putting them on hold interminably. Robertson (2019) refers to this process as 'indentured temporality' – "specific forms of suspension or delay in migrants' desired or intended trajectories" (pg. 179). The extension of waiting periods for family reunification, access to welfare provisions and citizenship are highlighted variously in the articles by Näre, Merla, Kilkey and Baldassar and Amelina and Bause. As Näre argues, when we take transnational intergenerational care as our focus, we see that "*waiting* should not only be considered from an individual perspective, but also from a family-based perspective ...[highlighting] the diverse effects that waiting has on both children and adults". And, as a result, an exploration of time and waiting must be applied to the practices and processes of transnational family life in general, and to the circulation of care among social network relationships, the solidarities within which may be tested by prolonged separation without opportunities for proximate co-presence. Is it too cynical to suspect that the imposition of protracted waiting periods for family reunification in particular is based, at least in part, on the assumption that transnational family ties will weaken with time, and so demand will lessen? There is an interesting parallel with the extension of waiting times in access to social rights as part of welfare reform. Cox (1998) for example argues in respect of sickness benefits that increased waiting days are designed to discourage applications. This is certainly the case with the now '30 year plus' waiting period for the non-contributory parent visa in Australia, which is longer than the life expectancy of most would-be parent migrant applicants (see Merla, Kilkey & Baldassar).

'Permanent temporariness' (Carciotto 2018) has become a pervasive feature of migration regimes. This has been observed particularly for labour migration, hence Castles' (2006) question whether the post-WWII guest worker model is being 'resurrected'. As the articles in this Special Issue demonstrate, permanent temporariness is a chronopolitical device increasingly applied to other migration streams beyond that of labour, including refugees (Amelina & Bause) and (family) visitors (Merla, Kilkey & Baldassar). Permanent temporariness, however, is not only experienced at destination. As Suzanne Willers, in her article shows, it has become an endemic feature of the lives of Central American women in transit through Mexico. Prevented by migration enforcement measures from moving forward on their journey to the USA, women, who have often left some of their children behind to protect them from the risks of the migration journey, become trapped in spaces of temporary settlement, or 'enclaves' (Turner 2007), in which economic and social resources are limited, with implications for their capacity to maintain transnational family solidarity.

3.2 *Exclusion tools*

The articles across this Special Issue also reveal tools of exclusion employed in immobilizing regimes of migration in respect of care-related mobilities. Informed by the analytical approach developed by Clasen and Clegg (2007) to capture the levers used by welfare states to loosen and tighten access to social rights, which have been subsequently applied to labour migration rights (Shutes 2016) and then to family-related migration rights (Kilkey 2017), we can identify tools of *categorical* exclusion and of *circumstantial* exclusion.

Categorical exclusions restrict the 'categorical gateways' (Clasen and Clegg 2007: 172) governing the conditions of mobility and the concomitant set of entry, residence, economic and social rights. Migrant categories are not static; they may change as a result of periods of debate, political, economic or social shifts, or specific moments of crisis, whether social, political and / or economic. For example, the UK recently extended the visas of all non-European Economic Area healthcare professionals to assist with the current Covid 19 pandemic, thus releasing thousands from often protracted visa processes[3], and Portugal temporarily granted migrants and asylum seekers full citizenship rights in order to guarantee their access to health services.[4] In contrast, the Australian government urged New Zealanders holding temporary visas and who cannot support themselves or access government schemes, to go 'home'- a call most likely to affect workers on precarious contracts[5].

The articles included here reveal certain categories of migrants who are increasingly prone to exclusion. Humanitarian migrants are particularly vulnerable as we see in the European (Amelina & Bause; Näre) and USA (Willers) contexts, where those seeking refuge encounter containment and deportation, blocking their claims for entry, and constraining possibilities for solidarity with transnational families. In the former, the so-called 'European migration crisis' has exacerbated the exclusion of humanitarian migrants, and in the latter, the election of Donald Trump as President has been an important factor in shifting border-control discourse and practices. Humanitarian migrants, however, are also increasingly 'unwanted' as a result of the domination of an instrumentalist logic in migration policy, in which the maximisation of the nation's economic competitiveness prevails in determining the categorical gateways of mobility. States are embroiled in a 'global race for talent' (Boucher 2016), selecting those perceived to contribute the most economically – the highly skilled, entrepreneurs, innovators and investors; as well as those believed to drain the economy the least – the richest and the most self-sufficient. Migrant categories other than humanitarian migrants are also increasingly excluded as a result. In particular, older people, who are considered beyond working age, confront exclusion, especially in family reunification channels

3 Between December 2017 and March 2018, 1500 visa applications from doctors with job offers were refused in the UK as a result of a cap on the number of Tier 2 (High Skilled) visas (see https://www.bmj.com/content/361/bmj.k2362)

4 https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/portugal-grants-migrants-and-asylum-seekers-full-citizenship-rights-during-covid-19/

5 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/413481/covid-19-australia-urges-new-zealanders-without-support-to-return-home

(Radziwinowiczówna, Rosińska & Kloc-Nowak; Merla, Kilkey & Baldassar). As simultaneously providers and receivers of care, the categorical exclusion of aged family members constrains the transnational circulation of care, and particularly opportunities for proximate care, within family networks.

Circumstantial exclusions narrow the criteria governing eligibility to mobility and related rights. Nationality is one such circumstance. Brandhorst, for example, highlights Australia's policy of designating some countries of origin – in this case, Vietnam - as 'high risk' of over-staying when deciding on family visitor visas. In Germany, in the evolving context of the 'European migration crisis', as Amelina and Bause evidence, nationality operates in evermore complex ways to determine which legal status those seeking refuge are accorded. In turn, legal status stratifies access to, as well as the conditions of, family reunification, which are also impacted by social rights in the domains of welfare, housing, health, labour market and education – rights which can be converted into resources to be circulated across borders (e.g., in the form of remittances).

3.3 Brief overview of articles

Together this collection of articles builds up a set of empirical data and analysis to highlight how care and family relations are impacted by what we call the "immobilizing regimes of migration". These mostly micro experiences of caring and intimate relations are under-researched and yet it is imperative they inform our research and policy agendas.

The contribution by Anna Amelina and Niklaas Bause analyses the forms of care and social protection that forced-migrants in Germany exchange with their families in Syria and Afghanistan during and after the 'long summer of 2015'. The authors build on social protection research and transnational care studies to introduce the concept of 'care and protection assemblages', to explore how these transnational families manage "the simultaneity of solidarity and inequality experiences" in their efforts to safeguard each other's wellbeing. In addition to the circulation of remittances, which always take on a stark significance in refugee families, the authors discuss the careful way emotions are managed when opportunities for physical visits (and personal and practical care) are extremely curtailed. This juxtaposition of practices of (cross-border) solidarity despite their desperate experiences of exclusion reflects what they call the "inherent dialectic between the state's care (*humanitarian obligations*) and protection arrangements (*securitization of migration and asylum governance*).

Lena Näre's contribution also examines transnational refugee families, care practices, with a focus on the lives of male asylum seekers from Iraq and Afghanistan in Finland in 2017–2019. She proposes the notion of 'bureaucratic bordering' – within nation states and beyond – to highlight the "devastating impact on intimate relations" that the resultant bureaucratically induced waiting exerts. "Bureaucratic bordering refers to the ways in which mobility is controlled and managed through administrative and bureaucratic practices", which render borders unstable, constantly redrawn by new restrictions and regulations that play havoc with time. The article also critiques the common assumption that fathers abandon their families when they migrate, to highlight how the extended waiting, rather than the physical separation alone, leads to family separation. The importance of understanding how to work the system, both financially and

administratively (through its paperwork), emerged as a differentiating factor among families.

That bureaucratic induced waiting can expose families to violence, and extended waiting can deteriorate the intimate relations within the transnational family, is also clearly illustrated in the contribution by Susanne Willers, which features the experience of women and children asylum seekers in the southern Mexican town of Tapachula in 2018 and earlier. Due to violence along migration routes, a lack of financial and administrative resources to secure their mobility, and increasingly restrictive anti-immigration measures, many women are constrained to 'wait' in southern Mexico. In this situation, accessing formal rights through refugee protection status in Mexico becomes an important survival strategy. However, this process of legalizing their immigration status requires time, knowledge, and the provision of care by other family members. Findings highlight processes of re-victimization due to segmented labour markets and other aspects of structural and gender-based violence that impact women's agency during this process.

The contribution by Agnieszka Radziwinowiczówna, Weronika Kloc-Nowak and Anna Rosińska interrogates the impact of Brexit on Polish migrants' care intentions concerning their ageing parents in Poland. It highlights how individuals respond to the unknown and uncertain futures created within this policy vacuum that threatens the possibilities for reunification with aged parents in the UK. Conceiving Brexit as a 'natural experiment' "to study how relatively abruptly enacted 'immobility regimes' influence the everyday lives of EU citizens", their findings point to the likely unevenness in how the curtailment of rights will be experienced, with those on low incomes, mainly women, predicted to be particularly impacted. They also find a dualizing effect of the Brexit uncertainty, with some pushed to bring forward family reunification plans before the change in rules, while others use Brexit as a 'discursive construction' to alleviate their involvement in direct care provision.

Complementing Radziwinowiczówna and colleagues' focus on the perspectives of adult children, Rosa Brandhorst's contribution features the views of older migrants. She proposes a 'regimes-of-mobility-and-welfare' approach to compare and contrast three types of older transnational migrants in Australia: labour migrants and refugees who arrived in their younger years, and retirement migrants. Her analysis highlights how the state's welfare regime is increasingly linked to its mobility regime, because the rights to social welfare and long-term care are often linked to citizenship. As a result, opportunities for transnational care are differentiated according to the individual migrant's legal and socioeconomic status in Australia and the position of their country of origin in the global geopolitical hierarchy.

Finally, the article by the editors, Laura Merla, Majella Kilkey and Loretta Baldassar, sets out an agenda for their notion of immobilizing regimes through a discussion of the impact of restrictionist migration policies on people's capacity to care cross borders. They focus on opportunities and constraints in delivering proximate care (through visits, repatriations and family migration), which are often downplayed in analyses of transnational family relations given the emphasis on caring across distance. Through an exploration of three quite different cases - involving India and the UK, China and Australia, and Morocco and Belgium - they review the central relevance of proximate care

and the ways it is intertwined with distant forms of care to make a strong case for the need to safeguard mobility rights.

4. Conclusion: Are transnational family solidarities in crisis?

Across the articles included in this Special Issue, the authors evidence how temporal and exclusionary tools, which contribute to constituting immobilizing regimes of migration, pose considerable challenges to transnational family solidarities, particularly, but not solely, those that require physical proximity. While not losing sight of such structural processes, the papers also provide evidence of the coping strategies migrants and their transnational families develop to deal with, and adapt to, these challenges. Included among these are: the important work of gathering and circulating information to plan and organize individual and family mobility, and to try to secure access to a refugee status (Willers) or family reunification (Näre); mobilizing ICTs to provide and receive care across distance (Brandhorst) and focusing on long-distance forms of care (Amelina & Bause); adapting or changing the timing of one's caring plans to anticipate mobility restrictions (Radziwinowiczówna, Kloc-Nowak & Rosińska); re-configuring care arrangements for those who are immobilized (Merla, Kilkey & Baldassar); and mobilising semiformal sources of care and social protection (Amelina & Bause).

Both in respect of the challenges confronted and the coping strategies developed, taken collectively, the articles also sound a cautionary note around the unevenness of experiences, with intersecting social divisions such as nationality, migrant status, financial resources, access to ICTs, age, health-status and life-course stage playing an important mediating role. Such unevenness is also clearly impacting the effect of the Covid-19 2020 pandemic on transnational family solidarities. In many countries around the world we are currently witnessing how migrants are disproportionately concentrated in working environments, including the care sector, where health and safety guidance is difficult to enforce, putting their health at risk. Those unable to work are disproportionately excluded from the unprecedented social protection measures introduced by many governments to compensate for lost income, jeopardizing their own livelihoods as well as those of their transnational family members. Others are forced to return to their home countries, often to places with fragile and under-resourced health systems. The widespread closure of international borders and cessation of air travel will have untold implications in the short- and medium-term for the mobility rights and capacities of transnational families. At the same time, with physical proximity severely constrained in the context of widespread physical distancing measures, many aspects of economic and social life have gone digital, and nationally-locked-down families, now separated by the 'coronavirus crisis', adopt the communication affordances so familiar in transnational-family contexts, to stay in touch and care for each other (Fuchs 2020, Merla 2020, Baldassar & Krzyzowski 2020). In this sense, the 'crisis' may provide an unexpected opportunity for dialogue between family sociologists and scholars of transnational families.

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Information in German

Deutscher Titel

Einführung in das Sonderheft „Transnationale Pflege: Familien vor Grenzen“

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel stellen werden die Schlüsselthemen unseres Sonderhefts zum Thema „Transnationale Pflege: Familien vor Grenzen“ vor. Im Mittelpunkt dieser Zusammenstellung steht die Frage, wie Familien- und Solidaritätsbeziehungen durch aktuell geschlossene Grenzen und zunehmend restriktiverer Migrationsregime beeinflusst werden. Diese Frage wird insbesondere unter dem Blickwinkel der Betreuungsdynamik innerhalb transnationaler Familien und ihrer (Re-)Konfigurationen in verschiedenen Kontexten untersucht, die durch „immobilisierende Migrationsregime“ gekennzeichnet sind. Es wird mit einer kurzen Übersicht über Schlüsselkonzepte in der transnationalen Famillien- und Betreuungsliteratur begonnen, die eine Grundlage für die in den verschiedenen Artikeln untersuchten Fallbeispiele bildet, darunter Flüchtlinge und Asylsuchende in Deutschland und Finnland, Polen, die mit dem Brexit in Großbritannien konfrontiert sind, lateinamerikanische Migranten im Transit durch Mexiko und restriktive Tendenzen in der Migrationspolitik in Australien, Belgien und in Großbritannien. Auf der Grundlage dieser umfangreichen Untersuchungen wurden zwei politische Instrumente identifizieren, nämlich Zeitlichkeit und Ausgrenzung, die besonders hervorstechende Eigenschaften immobilisierender Migrationsregime zu sein scheinen, die die Mobilität in der Pflege erheblich beeinflussen. Abschließend wird diskutiert, wie immobilisierende Regime transnationale Familiensolidaritäten in eine Krise stürzen, auch im Zusammenhang mit der Covid-19-Pandemie, die zum Zeitpunkt des Verfassens dieses Artikels die Welt in ihrem Griff hat.

Schlagwörter: Zirkulation von Pflege, Migration, Mobilitätsregime, Flüchtlinge, Covid-19-Pandemie, transnationale Familien

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