



Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life (Routledge Research in Transnationalism)

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Without denying the difficulties that confront migrants and their distant kin, this volume highlights the agency of family members in transnational processes of care, in an effort to acknowledge the transnational family as an increasingly common family form and to question the predominantly negative conceptualisations of this type of family. It re-conceptualises transnational care as a set of activities that circulates between home and host countries - across generations - and fluctuates over the life course, going beyond a focus on mother-child relationships to include multidirectional exchanges across generations and between genders. It highlights, in particular, how the sense of belonging in transnational families is sustained by the reciprocal, though uneven, exchange of caregiving, which binds members together in intergenerational networks of reciprocity and obligation, love and trust that are simultaneously fraught with tension, contest and relations of unequal power. The chapters that make up this volume cover a rich array of ethnographic case studies including analyses of transnational families who circulate care between developing nations in Africa, Latin America and Asia to wealthier nations in North America, Europe and Australia. There are also examples of intra- and extra- European, Australian and North American migration, which involve the mobility of both the unskilled and working class as well as the skilled middle and aspirational classes.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Baldassar and Merla break new intellectual ground in this eminently readable and provocative book extending understanding of the nature of mobility and absence in contemporary family life. The essays ambitiously examine the intricate ways family members – including mothers and children, fathers and elders, those who move and those who stay – care for each other through processes of reciprocal exchange, across and despite distance. Theoretically brilliant and ethnographically rich, *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care* is one of the most bold and exciting works to emerge in transnational studies in some years."

- Sarah Lamb, Brandeis University, Anthropology, Author of *Aging and the Indian Diaspora: Cosmopolitan Families in India and Abroad*

"This is a wide-ranging and compelling study of migrant families coping with the practical and emotional difficulties of living and working across borders in communities which may be many thousands of miles apart. Modern ways of communicating (Skype, Facebook, YouTube and the like) may help, but of crucial importance are their social relationships, tried and tested in the past, but which now face the new challenges of caring transnationally."

- Ralph Grillo, University of Sussex

"This new book on care circulation and transnational family relationships expands the concept of family in contemporary societies. The stimulating selection of chapters combines a theorisation of transnational family practices with empirical studies, opening up new understandings of care, support socialisation over the life course across borders. The collection represents an important shift in focus from a Western notion of the nuclear family to a notion of social community involving kin and affinities within transnational settings – communities made possible through virtual technology on a global scale. The volume's central contribution will necessitate a widening of social and family policy taking into consideration consequences of global mobility."

- Ulla Björnberg (Gothenburg University)

About the Author

Loretta Baldassar is Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Western Australia and Adjunct Principal Research Fellow, School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University.

Laura Merla is a sociologist and Deputy Director of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Families and Sexualities (CIRFASE) at the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium).

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