

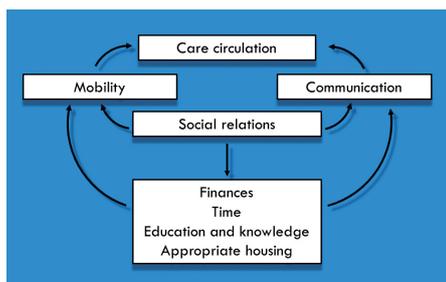
# TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY NETWORKS: caregiving arrangements in migrant families



*With globalization and the acceleration of migratory flows, an increasing number of people experience family life across geographical borders. Affordable travel and new communication technologies have led to the development of transnational families, that is, families with members who live in different countries and continue to care for, and about each other across distance. Today, migrants exchange financial, practical and emotional support with their distant children, siblings, and aging parents, sometimes on a daily basis. Articulating local working lives and transnational family obligations is a major challenge for these families. The TRANSFAM research program developed by CIRFASE, the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Families and Sexualities located at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL, Belgium) aims at better understanding this social phenomenon, and identify key obstacles to the maintenance of transnational family solidarity.*

## RESOURCES FOR TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY SOLIDARITY

Members of transnational families must be able to communicate together and travel when necessary. In order to do so, they need a series of resources, such as social relations, money, time, or education and knowledge.



## THE ROLE OF POLICIES

These resources are in part constituted within the local contexts of both home and host societies. Policies regulating transport, communication and banking are of course highly relevant here. Also relevant are migration policies, which define entry/exit rights and migrants insertion in the labour market; policies governing their access to social security; and, of course, work-family balance policies including access to the right to take time to care in a transnational context. Within the EU, third-country nationals and intra-European migrants are unequal in their capacity to

participate in these transnational caring circuits, depending on their migratory status and situation in the labour market.

## THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY LIFE

The idea that distance automatically disrupts family relationships and relieves migrants from their obligations to care remains extremely powerful. Within the political sphere, there is a

widespread lack of acknowledgement of the existence of transnational families, of the continued role that migrants play in the transnational circulation of family solidarity, and of the support they in turn receive from their distant relatives. In a context of demographic change and labour shortages, designing national and EU policies and regulations that facilitate transnational family connections within and outside the EU will not only respond to the specific needs of these families, but also increase EU competitiveness.



Learn more about this project on: <http://www.uclouvain.be/transfam>

For further information, please contact:

Laura Merla, Project coordinator

Ph: +32 10 474210 • Email: [laura.merla@uclouvain.be](mailto:laura.merla@uclouvain.be)

