



Transnational Families in Europe

Care, Inequalities and Wellbeing

This interdisciplinary research project will investigate the relationships between care, inequalities and wellbeing among different generations of transnational families in the UK, Spain, France and Sweden.

Research team

The project consortium comprises an interdisciplinary team of professors and early career researchers based at the University of Reading, University of Leeds, UK, University of A Coruña (UDC), Spain, University of Aix Marseille and CNRS, France and Malmö University, Sweden. It is co-ordinated by Professor Ruth Evans, University of Reading. We will work closely with partner organisations in each country and will draw on the expertise of strategic Advisory Group members.

Background

The COVID-19 crisis has brought into stark relief the care deficits many European countries are confronting as ageing societies, with low-paid women migrants often filling gaps in formal care provision, while their own caring responsibilities for kin are often overlooked. Demographic shifts due to population ageing and increased international migration are leading to major changes in the provision of care, social protection and intergenerational responsibilities. These transformations may exacerbate existing inequalities facing migrant families with care needs.

The study will provide unique insights into how family care practices are negotiated between and within different generations of transnational families in Europe, while also considering their family ties in countries of origin. We will capture the health, economic, social and emotional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transnational families, including changing intergenerational caring responsibilities and mobility strategies.

We will explore the impacts of care on younger, middle and older generations' wellbeing and opportunities and how paid and unpaid work is shaped by intersecting inequalities of gender, age and generation,

disability, race, ethnicity, socio-economic and legal status. We will include a specific focus on young caregiving and how this affects children's wellbeing, education and opportunities. The project will also explore how language barriers may perpetuate inequalities facing transnational carers and how younger generations support older family members as they navigate bureaucratic legal and administrative systems.

Key research questions

1. How are 'proximate' and 'distant' caring responsibilities negotiated between different generations of transnational families and what caring roles do children undertake?
2. What are the health, economic, social and emotional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transnational families?
3. How does unpaid family care affect the relational wellbeing, education and employment opportunities of different generations in transnational families?
4. How do caring responsibilities and arrangements affect children's wellbeing, education and opportunities?
5. How do intersecting inequalities of gender, age and generation, ethnicity, race, socio-economic and legal status shape carers' and families' opportunities and access to social protection (healthcare, education, welfare, social care)?
6. What language barriers do different generations face and how is multilingualism used as a resource to navigate systems for accessing support?
7. In what ways can policy and practice support the care, wellbeing and equality of different generations?

Research methods

We will use a multi-sited family-focused ethnographic and participatory action research methodology, which is appropriate for exploring the complexity of care, inequalities and wellbeing in transnational families. We will work with peer researchers and practitioners to shape the design, data collection, analysis, co-production of outputs and dissemination.

We will select a diverse sample of 100 migrant transnational families of different ethnicities and varying legal statuses (25 in each country). 20-30 case study families will be chosen for in-depth ethnographic research. Where possible, we will explore onward migration and compare differing entitlements to social protection.

We will conduct interviews with 65 practitioners and strategic stakeholders (10-16 in each country) working with migrants in health and social care, education, integration, language learning, voluntary and community sector to explore their perspectives.

Ethical issues

The research conforms to the ethical protocols of the national funding organisations and the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth. Ethical approval will be sought from institutional research ethics committees before fieldwork commences.

Dissemination and societal impact

The study will provide a valuable evidence-base to inform the work of policymakers and practitioners at local, regional, national and international scales, as well as researchers and academics. It will directly influence policy and support for young and adult carers and transnational families. Research outputs include a Report, Policy Briefs, accessible Toolkits and/or Training Materials designed to support the wellbeing and equality of young and adult carers and transnational family members, alongside academic journal articles.

Regional dissemination workshops will be held with participants, local authority stakeholders and regional representatives to share the findings and discuss how to take forward the recommendations. An international Symposium will share the findings with researchers, policymakers and practitioners and the dataset will be archived for researchers' future use.

Timetable

Start	End	Phase of research
June 2021	January 2022	Preparation
January 2022	June 2022	Data collection with whole sample
January 2022	September 2022	Ethnography with case study families
January 2022	May 2023	Data analysis
August 2021	June 2024	Writing outputs
July 2023	December 2023	Feedback and co-production of outputs
December 2023	June 2024	Dissemination

Funders

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Contact

Professor Ruth Evans or Dr. Grady Walker

Department of Geography and Environmental Science
University of Reading, Whiteknights, PO Box 227
Reading RG6 6AB, UK; Tel.: +44 (0)118 378 7755
Email: r.evans@reading.ac.uk | g.walker@reading.ac.uk
Twitter: [@DrRuth_Evans](https://twitter.com/DrRuth_Evans) [#TransnationalFamilies](https://twitter.com/TransnationalFamilies)

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