Chapter 4
Digital Parenting and Transnational Migration: Cultural and Emotional Drives for Digital Media Use

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Introduction

Objects such as smartphones or tablets are still recent in our lives, when compared to traditional media, meanwhile readapted to the digital shift. Research is paying increasingly attention to how these devices are conquering space and time in young children's lives, in families' interactions and parenting daily practices (e.g. Castro & Ponte, 2019; Elias & Sulkin, 2017; Mascheroni et al., 2018; Ponte et al., 2017). However, still little research privileges a longitudinal approach to capture changes and relate causal effects with consequences in the family's environment and processes (Lev et al., 2018).

This article is part of a longitudinal study with 18 Portuguese families and pays particular attention to a group of five families for their transnational and migrant characteristics, as their perspectives are missing in national research on digital parenting (granting and mediating access and use of digital media).

These are families crossed by the intricacies of migration, the rapidly changing media ecology, the effects of globalisation, the diverse configuration of family structure, and the patterns of digital media use. Our aim is to contribute with a socio-constructivist standpoint based on qualitative data collected with these families, over the past 3 years, and answering to two questions: How are migration and spatial mobility affecting digital media appropriation and parental mediation in families with young children? In which ways is parental mediation intersecting with the cultural and emotional significance of digital media in the management of these families' lives, whether for helping cultural adaption/preservation or strengthen emotional bonds?

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Parenting the Digital in Migrant and Transnational Families

Literature supports that parental mediation and families' decisions regarding digital media can be tense and emotional. At stake is the calculation between what represents good parenting and what are the best choices for the child's development (Zaman et al., 2016; Clark, 2011). To meet these concerns, ultimately, parents reveal three different approaches regarding digital media: (1) a positive and enabling attitude towards technological possibilities, which is embraced in family's daily lives; (2) weighing the pros and cons of digital media with the aim of balancing family's on/offline time; (3) resisting and postponing digital media, preferring to have the family members engaged in non-digital activities and interactions.

Nevertheless, typifying parental mediation is not always this straightforward, as we have to consider the development of the ecological environment of family's life in which interconnections between settings and events happen (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

For Clark (2014), social class, ethical principles, and concerns shape parents' actions towards the management of digital media in the family context. Parents tend to fall under one of two contrasting principles concerning the management of access and use of digital media: *ethic of expressive empowerment*, in which families embrace the empowering potential of technologies to cultivate children's education and self-development—a response to an increasingly competitive society and more common in upper and middle class families with high education background; and *ethic of respectful connectedness*—attitudes that guide the use of digital media as a way for spending time together 'as a family' (more common among lower income families). Paus-Hasebrink et al. (2019) enhance that in the latter, children's media usage can be a way of compensating everyday life shortcomings, acting as providers of good examples, information and entertainment.

Meanwhile, parents who are avoiders and more restrictive can just control children's exposure to digital media to a certain degree since older siblings, the extended family, and school also play a very influent role in this process of media adoption.

Each family and child are different, as well as their motivations and attitudes towards digital media. In times of deep mediatisation (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2017), new cohorts are embracing parenthood, and new frames guide their parenting principles and behaviours. The child displays a recognised agency and a voice that influences family's decisions. Also, the relations and interactions between family members became increasingly mediated and moulded by screens (Oswell, 2013) for the past 20 years (see Ponte et al., 2019). Digital media are part of families' everyday practices, (inter)actions (e.g. family conversations occurring via multiple platforms or video calling with relatives through WhatsApp), and characterise the modern way of 'doing family' (Morgan, 2011). Family is understood beyond the structure to which individuals belong. It includes the relational practices, in which family members enact, in the fluidity of their everyday life (Assmann, 2018) (e.g. waking up, daily meals, shared activities, playing and leisure).

In the case of families touched by migration flows, digital media's affordances offer and expand possibilities to: (i) communicate and participate in family's daily routines (Ponte et al., 2017); (ii) foster connectedness and bridging physical distance, as proved by Gonzalez and Katz (2016); (iii) assimilate cultural and linguistic aspects of the 'outward' society, while also supporting family's unity and preserving the cultural heritage of the 'inward' society, as Elias and Lemish (2008) substantiate.

A holistic picture of how internal and external factors influence family's lives over time in their relation to digital media (Zaman et al., 2016) (e.g. acquisition of new devices, changes in family composition, changes in family routines) is only achievable using a longitudinal design where changes and continuities can manifest.

Structural, social, technological and economic transformations, in which technology adoption, employment, and migration are dimensions of that change, do have a great influence in the lives of modern families (Sefton-Green et al., 2016). We focus our gaze in the families that represent the "intersection of the global movements of people and cultures" (Livingstone, 2018, p. x), that is the group of migrant and transnational families.

By migrant and transnational families, we consider the families that face similar challenges, namely to adapt to a new country, culture, language, educational and social system of a host country (Shih, 2015). What distinguishes the transnational families is the fact that family members (children, mum or dad) may be physically separated in different nation states (Schmalzbauer, 2004).

The Context: Portugal at the Intersection of Global Movement of People

From the mid-1980s onwards with the entrance in the European Economic Community (EEC), Portugal saw a diversification of its (in and out) migratory flows. Marked by the colonial past and its historical, cultural and economic connections (Baganha et al., 2004), the main immigration came from Lusophone Africa (47%), followed by the European Union (30%), Asia (4%) and Brazil (11%), according to Góis and Marques (2018). Thorough the 1990s is remarkable the growth of immigrants from China and Pakistan, countries with which Portugal had no historical or economic ties. In the 2000s the Ukrainian, Romanian, Moldovan or Russian migrants were at the top of immigration statistics in Portugal—as legal barriers to mobility were progressively dismantled in Eastern Europe (Baganha et al., 2009).

Historically, Portugal is a country of emigration, having an expressive diaspora particularly in the US, Western Europe and Canada. In the recent decades, Portuguese emigration developed into a more diversified geography to include other European and non-European destinations (Marques, 2010), such as Asian countries and former colonies namely, Angola, Brazil and Mozambique (Santos, 2013). From the beginning of the twenty-first century, Portugal became one of the European countries with the highest rate of an exodus of highly qualified people leaving the

country as a result of the economic crisis, the lack of employment opportunities, low wages, and as a result of increased investments in educational qualification (Gomes, 2015). When Portugal began its economic recovery, in 2016, migratory flows to Portugal increased again, in particular coming from Brazil, following the Brazilian political and economic crisis (França & Padilla, 2018).

The Longitudinal Study 'iTec Families': Aims, Methods and Ethics

iTec Families is an ongoing study, initiated in June 2017 with 18 Portuguese families with children aged from zero to eight (age at the beginning of the study) with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of how digital incorporation and mediation is (re)configured in the domestic setting over time.

To address this, a qualitative approach, using ethnographic and participatory strategies is being privileged: in-depth interviews with parents to gain a grounded angle of family media processes and to unveil (in)consistencies and changes (domestic scenario, perceptions, mediation, and practices); observant participation, creative (drawings, play), ludic (games), and visual strategies (images) to engage and reach children's voices, motivations and practices, prioritising their protection and participation rights in research (e.g. anonymisation of data, use of pseudonyms, collection of pictures and videos without showing the child's face, and the respect for the right of the child to not participate in research tasks).

An informed consent was signed before the first interview and is negotiated before each visit to the family and with children before research tasks that involve their participation.

The recruitment process aimed to reach as much diversity in families as possible in terms of family's composition, SES or ethnicity, and children's gender and age.

Fieldwork has been a reflexive and evolving exercise in which the parents proved to be important allies, opening their home and intimacy, giving their time, helping building rapport with the children, and acting as field collaborators, in particular with pre-verbal toddlers.

Five families, crossed by a migrant and transnational experience, are analysed here (Table 4.1): one is a single child family, three have two children, and one has four children. A total of seven children are aged between zero and eight. In this group of families, we could not achieve a gender balance among children. Thus, we have one girl and six boys—one child was born during the study. Two families live in Portugal, one lives apart (mother and children live in Portugal and the father works and lives in Angola), and two live in the UK. Two fathers are from Cape-Vert and other two from Brazil. In two families, parents are aged 35 and over and in three families, parents are aged below 35. Family names were replaced by pseudonyms:

Table 4.1 Transnational families

Family name	Household composition	Education (parents)	Country of birth	Country where they live
Freitas	Mum, Dad 2 boys, born in 2014 and 2018	Mum: Higher Education (HE) Dad: HE	Dad: Brazil Mum: Portugal Children: Portugal	Portugal
Guimarães	Mum, Stepfather* 1 boy, born in 2016	Mum: HE Dad: Secondary school	Dad: Cape Vert Stepfather: Brazil Mum: Portugal Child: Portugal	Portugal *Stepfathers' daughter (born in 2016) lives in Brazil with the mother
Henriques	Mum, Dad 1 boy, born in 2004; 1 girl, born in 2010	Mum: HE Dad: HE	Portugal	Portugal and Angola
Sousa	Mum, Dad 2 boys, born in 2010 and 1997	Mum: HE Dad: Secondary school	Mum: Mozambique Dad: Angola Older child: Germany; Younger child: Portugal	UK
Teixeira	Mum, Dad 2 boys, born in 2013 and 2015 2 girls, born in 2007 and 2009	Mum: HE Dad: Secondary school	Mum: Portugal Dad: dual nationality: Cape Verdean and Portuguese Boys: United Kingdom (UK) Girl: UK	UK

Source: iTec Families Study

The five families are different in terms of their structure (un/married, living together apart, nuclear, blended), composition (number of family members), age of the children, nationality and the country they live in.

Families' socio-economic status also differs. One family experiences more precarious and temporary/part-time jobs and one mother is unemployed. Mothers have higher academic qualifications than fathers, who have more unqualified jobs.

So far, between three and five visits have been made, depending on the availability of the family, and in between visits we keep in touch via mobile phone.

Data analysis is a dynamic process as part of becoming more familiar with the data as new information is added, and new insights emerge from the dialogue between different theories and concepts. To organise the information and identifying themes and relationships among the data, we have been privileging thematic analysis. To minimise the influence of the researcher, the findings have been put under scrutiny in conferences, other academic and community events, and to blind review.

Some of the provisional findings are presented and discussed in the following section.

Digital Parenting and Digital Media Management at the Intersection of Transnational and Migration Flows

Families' accounts offer perspectives on the management of digital media in their daily lives, crossed by the challenges of geographical movements and its social, cultural and emotional peculiarities. To answer the research questions this analysis and discussion is organised under two topics: (i) The appropriation and mediation of digital media considering characteristics of migration and mobility of the families; (ii) the intersection of parental mediation with the emotional and cultural meaning of digital media to adapt to a new culture or to preserve a sense of identity with the country left behind.

Digital Media Appropriation and Mediation

The five families use different approaches to digital media in terms of appropriation and mediation.

Family Henriques (nuclear family that lives apart) reveals motivations strongly attached to their migratory condition in line with what is sustained by Gonzalez and Katz (2016), that is to maintain emotional ties and participate of family life: "I'm always with them on Skype for dinnertime. And I help my daughter with her homework" (father). Besides the migration factor, the family stimulates children to use technology to develop skills like solving technical problems or learning English. These two abilities are highly valued by the parents, as key competencies to succeed professionally (*ethics of expressive empowerment*).

On the opposite side, family Freitas is very influenced by a digital-free nostalgic feeling. Parents postpone and avoid as much as possible their son's interactions with digital media—"he doesn't watch TV every day at home"—they privilege instead, "books, spending time outdoors together, and listening to music on the radio during dinnertime". Nevertheless, this avoiding attitude is challenged by external factors: at school, where the son watches cartoons on television; at grandparent's house (mother's family), where with grandfather's help, the boy gave his first steps watching videos on YouTube; and with his aunt, the two bond and have fun taking selfies with Snapchat.

For both families living in the UK, although not all members have a personal smartphone (just parents and older siblings), the feeling of being far from the extended family exacerbates a sense of isolation and insecurity that is fulfilled by affordances enabled by communication-based devices:

"Here (in the UK), it's just the four of us. I'm always concerned with our safety. The older one knows it's very important for me to receive a call or a text, just assuring me that he's ok" (Mum, Family Sousa).

Family Guimarães also proves that their son's screen time is an emotional and tense challenge as the child spends time with cousins, at grandparents', at school or when he goes to his dad house (they are separated):

"I don't want him to be left behind other children his age, but I uphold that balance is the best path. However, I know that his dad uses game consoles and TV to babysit him, which I don't approve, and I think we have to come to an agreement about rules". (Mum, family Guimarães)

There are differences in terms of mediation and in the relation the family develops with digital media. For family Teixeira, in particular the television is a way to spend time together (*ethic of respectful connectedness*):

"We have four children and we don't have much money. So, the kid who gets more stars (ranking system in a board) for getting household tasks done during the week can choose the movies we'll watch on Sunday. We spend Sunday in our pyjamas around the television". (Mum, family Teixeira)

In terms of brokering digital risks, the Family Sousa counts with the technological expertise and the critical perspective of Sérgio, the older son, to mediate his younger brother, Simão:

"He [Simão] watches YouTube on the Smart TV. That way I can easily keep an eye on what is watching. I don't like some YouTubers and I explain to him that some behaviours and language are not appropriate. He respects what we tell him and his big brother opinion". (Mum, family Sousa)

Besides helping his parents in mediation decisions and mentoring his younger brother, Sérgio shares two concerns: "the type of people he may meet online" and "game addiction". To other parents he leaves some advice: "restricting just creates more problems", and "just consulting PEGI[1] is not enough. Parents need to research about the content and the game's community."

Digital media appropriation and mediation is a process that changes over time, as the child grows older or as new events create different dynamics inside the family. For instance, despite the avoiding attitude of family Freitas, in the second visit the mother recognised that Francisco (the 5 years old son) is becoming digitally more autonomous: "he already knows how to open Spotify on the computer".

Family Henriques is starting to deal with their daughter's (now, aged nine) claims for more digital autonomy and participation. The girl wants to have a profile in the video-sharing social networking Tik Tok, because her friends are also using it and she is feeling left out. Parents are giving it a though "to weigh the pros and cons and set some rules" before they agree on that. In the case of family Guimarães, the mother observes that Guilherme's (with 3 years and a half) interest for cartoons and animated movies is recent and very much related with the moment his stepfather moved in with them, in the past year: "I once showed him Snow White on TV, via YouTube, and now he enjoys watching cartoons on TV." Guilherme used to watch

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[1]Pan European Game Information or PEGI is a European content rating system for electronic games, and other entertainment programs for computers or other platforms.

role-playing videos starred by children or music video clips on the mother's tablet or smartphone.

Except for families Freitas and Guimarães, whose children do not possess their own personal device, the five other children have their own tablet (these ownerships were prior to the study). Each family has rules that they adapt accordingly to situations or child's behaviour (e.g. to avoid boredom, used to reward or punish a behaviour). Families Henriques and Teixeira use technical strategies to block unapproved content: "I get a notification on my e-mail with everything they do on the tablet" (Mum, family Teixeira). Screen time is a big concern for Freitas and Guimarães families. Both families use communication-based Apps to talk with family living in Brazil, but the parents are the ones who do the call. In the case of family Henriques, whose dad is living in Angola, Helena "knows how to call me on Skype since she was very young [before age six, when the family was recruited], I taught her."

Digital Media as Drives for Cultural and Emotional Management

While parents are in between managing their adjustment to a new culture (outward) and keeping in touch with the inward culture, for their children—who were born or are growing in a different country—keeping in touch with parent's culture and being in touch with an outward culture can be a very complex exercise.

Depending on the migration characteristics of the family/family member, the five families offer different scenarios that are worth of looking into its idiosyncrasies.

The balance between the adaption to a new culture and the preservation of the culture of birth is less noticeable among the families that live in Portugal, in which just one of the parents is a migrant.

The examples of family Freitas and family Guimarães provide some clues. In both families, video calls are regular practices for the fathers to keep in touch with the family left behind. They use it to strengthen ties and have a sense of physical proximity. However, these affordances do not seem to have the same importance for the younger ones. Families report that they "feel curiosity, but do no interact much" (Mum, Family Freitas). Francisco (at the time aged 4) simply stared at the camera. These reactions may have to do with the age of the child: "I believe he doesn't understand much what is going on" (Family Freitas). In family Guimarães, communication difficulties may have to do with language differences, as the mum explains: "he doesn't understand his (stepfather's) daughter talking to him in Portuguese Brazilian. She speaks very quickly".

The fathers emigrated from Cape Vert and Brazil stimulate their children's contact with their left behind culture by co-viewing music, cartoons and contents from their inward culture, usually on YouTube. The children do not resist to such

acculturation, they incorporate the language (mixing words from two countries) and the contents in their internet searches and digital activities.

To shrink the distance, family Freitas revealed that grandparents, in Brazil, purchased better smartphones, so they can make more often video calls with their grandchildren, creating bonds and simulating emotional closeness with them.

For family Henriques, communication and internet-based technologies have a major role for the family, also narrowing the distance and facilitating the father's participation in everyday-shared practices as referred previously, during meals or helping studying. They value the easiness it enables to reach each other whenever needed. Digital presence "gives the sense that dad is here", adds Helena. The use of digital media in this family is very much related with emotional motivations, and not so much for cultural adaptation/preservation.

Among the families living in the UK, there are different levels of cultural adaption/preservation: a) the parents and the older children, who emigrated during childhood/adolescence; and b) the children that emigrated while babies or were already born in parents' outward country.

Parents and older children feel in-between cultures. The children left behind friends with whom most of the bonds fade over time. In their daily lives they use digital media to create a balance between the inward and outward cultures: "At dinnertime we watch the UK news, and afterwards we watch the Portuguese news" (Family Sousa). To keep in touch with family and friends they use Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and regular mobile phone calls.

In the case of younger children who were born or grew up most of their life in the outward society it is more difficult for parents to stimulate their connection with the Portuguese language and culture. And it gets even more challenging when they enter in the educational system, are included in the peer group, and build friendships. The children from the families we interviewed in the UK spoke in English most of the time and Portuguese is their second language. This situation may impact in keeping in touch with the left-behind family and maintaining these long-distance ties, driving to a disconnection with left-behind family and cultural heritage. Nonetheless, young generations can be very helpful assisting parents in their adaptation process to a new language and culture. In these two families, the contents children watch are part of the UK culture, namely YouTubers, soap operas, idols, or music. However, as happens with children living in Portugal or elsewhere, they enjoy watching cartoons that are also a world phenomenon, strongly connected to YouTube's increasing power as a digital entertainment provider for children (e.g. PJ Masks, Paw Patrol, Pegga Pig).

Summary and Final Thoughts

The voices of families marked by migrant and transnational flows are missing in national research on digital parenting—granting access and mediating use of digital media—and on what digital media affords in terms of emotional and cultural connectedness between the inward and outward culture.

The five households presented here are part of an ongoing longitudinal study and represent the realities lived by families crossed by the experience of geographical distance and mobility, and changes crossed by time.

The data captured in different moments of their lives provide information on (i) how in these families experience digital media appropriation and mediation at home; and (ii) how digital media represents an emotional and cultural drive to preserve cultural heritage, foster connectedness with the relatives left behind, and supporting adaptation to the host country.

Although these are preliminary findings, we would like to highlight that depending on parenting values, digital media imprints different experiences for the families, in which children have different levels of digital autonomy and digital motivations: sense of closeness, leisure, security, empowerment, emotional support or family's together time.

In the cases where only one parent is a migrant, the cultural baggage models children's digital experiences: long-distance video calls, and influencing the contents watched. Nevertheless, the level of adaptation and preservation of new or former cultures is closely related with being aware of to whom this matters and why, when we consider two generations experiencing different spectrums of migration. As parents' roots are grounded in another country, digital media are important means of communication and information that help them assimilate the new culture, without losing their emotional support and cultural connectedness with the inward country.

In the case of the children, the ones who were born or arrived into a host country at a very young age, the dialogue between the inward and outward society is more complicated, as the parents' outward country is theirs inward country. They have, however, an important role as facilitators of parents' adaptation to a new language and culture.

Cross analysing these five families, the two research questions are very entwined. Nevertheless, all families recognise the added value that digital media brought to foster communication and connection in and over borders in a cheap and interactive manner (when compared to previous generations of e/immigrants). It also revealed how always-connected devices brought new possibilities for children to access multiculturalism just a click away, facilitated by video calls and YouTube.

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