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Transnational and Mixed Families: Key Issues and Emerging Trends

Stefania Giada Meda and Isabella Crespi

Introduction

The theme of migration as a family event has become pivotal in sociological literature, with the result that a number of aspects hitherto only implicit in the general interpretation of migratory trends have now emerged (Kofman 2004; Kraler et al. 2010). Family relationships are able to act as a bridge between individual migrants and their new context; conversely, they could result in a closed network of relationships that

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S. Giada Meda (✉)
Family Studies and Research University Centre, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Milan, Italy

I. Crespi
Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, University of Macerata, Macerata, Italy

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then may become a fortress, rather than a bridge, in which dialogue and interaction will eventually dissipate.

In this chapter, we seek to frame the key issues that emerge in studies on transnational and mixed families: two family types characterized by the need to thematize differences (culture, gender, generation) both within their borders, and vis-à-vis the outside world. Basing ourselves on literary reviews, we shall highlight the characteristics of these families, and the challenges and transformations that they are facing in the contemporary world.

The Transnational Families Perspective

While the transnational families' phenomenon is not new—throughout time there have been many different forms of human mobility and family separation—the concept of transnational family (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Carling et al. 2012) has provided, since the beginning of the last decade, a convincing interpretation of the complex intersection between family and migration. Bryceson and Vuorela define transnational families '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, i.e. "familyhood", even across national borders' (2002: 3). This classical definition indicates the difficulties and opportunities of keeping together affective bonds and caregiving responsibilities while operating across different cultural and geographical worlds.

Further research-based developments of the notion of transnational families were proposed a few years later by Baldassar et al. (2007), and Baldassar and Merla (2014a, b) who were especially concerned with the concepts of transnational care and care circulation. Care, in this perspective, is seen as one of the central processes (practices and performances) maintaining and sustaining family relationships and identity, and it circulates reciprocally—though unevenly—among family members over time and distance. This lens allows us to 'capture all the actors involved in family life' (Baldassar et al. 2014: 159) as well as the full extent of family care dynamics.[1]

The care circulation perspective, moreover, helps address four broad fields of enquiry related to transnational families (Baldassar et al. 2014), such as: (1) a conceptualization of transnational families that would

minimize the ethnocentric bias of Westernized definition of the family; (2) the ways individuals and families manage their sense of 'familyhood' across space and time; (3) methodological strategies and tools that can capture the complex nature of these families; and (4) the relation between family, migration, and policy.

The transnational families' perspective intersects migration, family, and policy studies (Baldassar et al. 2014: 150). It draws on family research to encompass a broader definition of family that challenges the Western definition that is of a physically co-present heterosexual nuclear family. It takes into account the interactions between migration flows and policies in migrants' receiving countries, and as such, this approach exceeds the study of migration per se, so as to encompass both those who relocate, and those who do not, and the way they relate to each other in a broader relational and political-economical context. In particular, while referring to the idea of mobility, this perspective breaks away from the word 'migration', which tends to carry class connotations and is 'applied more readily to people that are considered economically or politically deprived and seek betterment of their circumstances' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 7). In fact, transnational are all families leading transnational lives, including those who are generally not seen as migrants, such as the élites working in the higher echelons of transnational companies and highly qualified people who move across Europe towards EU institutional, academic, or professional positions[2] (cf. the 'brain drain' phenomenon), but also along other North-North, South-North and even North-South flows (such as 'expatriates' working in 'foreign service' of various kinds, e.g. EU, UN, and development cooperation organizations).

With the transnational families' approach the focus of the analysis shifts from the individual to the family. While thematizing and dealing with family ties, meanings, roles, and identities across national borders and taking into account processes and complex relational scenarios, this approach enhances the 'meso' level, but also refers to and connects other social actors at different levels, such as the civil society and the State, and the various ways in which all these actors articulate and impact on one another (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Baldassar 2008). In fact, as recalled by Mazzucato (2013), we should consider that in some cases transnational family arrangements are the result of migration policies in receiving countries, which makes it difficult for families to migrate together.

In addition, this perspective takes into consideration time, as well as spatiality. In the literature, transnational families are sometimes referred to as multi-local or multi-sited families, or families living in spatial separation, thus giving emphasis to the experience of spatial dispersion. Yet the notion of transnational families draws attention also to the temporal dimension because 'one's emotional and material needs are strongly linked to stages of the individual life cycle albeit individuals vary in the intensity with which they experience and express these needs. Interaction with other family members directed at realizing one's own need of fulfilment and contributing to the need of fulfilment of other family members must be seen over time and in relation to the spatial distribution of transnational family members' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 14). Time impacts on the decision-making process of transnational families: often the choice to relocate (or not) is linked to a particular threshold, such as completing the children's schooling, caring for elderly parents, or planning one's career. Thus, the family life cycle heavily influences any decision made by a mobile individual or group. Even after an individual or group of family members has relocated, the questions will be if and how familial ties will be maintained between those who relocated and those who were left behind. Here the foundational axis of the family relationship—gender and generation, become important since 'the age and gender of absent members can strongly influence the nature and degree of contact that is pursued by both sides' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 14). Furthermore, as highlighted by several authors, with time—and in particular with the transition from the first to the second generation—transnational contacts weaken substantially. This might be due partly to the lack of physical daily interaction, but also to the progressive cultural distance between generations and language barriers that may arise over time. It is, indeed, with time and with the passing of the generations that the most profound changes within the transnational families are produced (Kwak 2003; Phinney et al. 2000).

Doing Family Across Geographical Distance

Living apart but maintaining a sense of unity is one of the challenges faced by transnational families. The care circulation approach has shown how people maintain a sense of 'familyhood' by providing care for each

other across different countries and even continents, with fluid patterns of mobility and more or less prolonged periods of proximity (as in the case of adult children going back to their country of origin to take care of their elderly parents during holidays, or grandparents moving in temporarily with their adult children at the birth of their grandchildren), or forms of care other than physical care (as in the case of remittances, etc.).

How these families maintain a sense of belonging and identity is also supplemented by the way people manage communications and virtual interactions (Wilding 2006). The most recent literature has explored the many ways contemporary transnational families are increasingly able to be virtually co-present on a daily basis (Baldassar 2016). Madianou and Miller's (2012) polymedia thesis and the related research have for instance 'demonstrated how mobile phones, as part of a wider environment of converging technologies, are becoming integral to the way family relationships are performed and experienced' (Madianou 2014: 668). The proliferation of information and communications technology (ICT) and different media environments impacts enormously on living-apart family members. Access, affordability and media literacy are preconditions for people to use ICT to keep up with their families across the world (Madianou 2014: 670). But transnational families are confronted with three divides—transnational, generational, and occupational (Madianou 2014)—that contribute to the diversity in the use of ICT. Some members of a transnational family might be better connected than others (as, for instance, the older generation of Filipino migrant mothers studied by Madianou 2014), but their left-behind not-so-well connected children may be more confident in the use of new technologies. Yet there is the third, occupational divide, which according to status, determines the variability with which migrants can access ICT (again, referring to the case of the Filipino families in the UK studied by Madianou (2014), live-in domestic workers had less access to ICT than Filipino migrants working as nurses).

The proliferation of new technologies, especially smartphones, gives families more chances to be co-present at least virtually ('always on') and becomes constitutive of the relationship itself, but this does not necessarily determine the success of the transnational relationships. As Madianou and Miller (2012) demonstrated for the mother-child relationship, 'three factors played a role in determining the success or not of transnational

communication: the age of the child during the parents' migration; the quality of the pre-existing relationship; and finally, the media that were available during that early period of separation' (Madianou 2014: 667). These factors remain relevant with the arrival of smartphones. In other words, ICT and converging media environments (polymedia) can enhance already existing relationships, but will not help overcome pre-existing or other relational problems.

Gender and Generations in the Light of the Transnational Families Approach

After migration, a number of changes may produce new, original configurations of social relationships and affective bonds, as well as economic and cultural exchanges. Relationships, roles, and individual identities within the family end up redefined. At the same time the presence, within the national borders of a State, of families or members of families of different ethnic and cultural origins, challenges the static notion of the modern State-nation, and is likely to have repercussions also on the receiving society, which in turn will end up transformed by the presence of migrants coming from different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

The concept of a transnational social field (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) indicates that subjective identities and the negotiations to build them take place within a space containing values and practices belonging to both one's nationality and the host country. When two or more different cultural and normative models are put face-to-face, as occurs with transnational multi-sited families, the possible outcomes are many and very nuanced in terms of management of cultural identity and practices: some families are likely to be influenced by the habits and values of the receiving society, while others may be less prone to cultural influences, to the extent of a total closure. In this process, it is also important to recognize the role played by different social actors, including those external to the family—such as the State, the receiving society, and so on.

Transnational families face challenges, negotiations, and changes in many domains. Some of these processes take place within the symbolic boundaries of the family, on what we may call the 'internal front', while

others occur outside those symbolic boundaries, on the 'external front' with society. Keeping this distinction as an analytical frame for studying transnational families may help shed light on some specificities of the phenomenon. In addition, this book focuses on two particular aspects: gender and intergenerational relations. Indeed, there are many topics that cut across the main theme of transnational families—such as class or religion, just to name two—but the editors decided to focus on gender and generations as they represent the two main relational axes that define a family (Donati 2006, 2013).

Several authors have focused on gender difference (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001; Pessar and Mahler 2003) with regards to family migration. Whether the migrant is male or female does indeed make a great difference in terms of reconfiguration of family roles and forms, power dynamics, and strategies put in place in order to maximize the benefits of mobility (Yeoh et al. 2005). Gender differences affect not only the migrants, but also have repercussions on the members of the family who are left behind. For instance, it may happen that a wife left behind has to go to live with her in-laws and her husband's extended family, thus setting up a new family form where roles and power dynamics are readjusted (OECD 2008). In other cases, following the migration of their husbands, women left behind start heading their households, with greater responsibilities and a higher degree of vulnerability, yet enjoying more freedom than before. Transnational marriages may alter the relationships within the couples, as discussed by Charsley (2005), regarding the husband's challenged sense of masculinity in transnational marriages, and George (2000), who shows how women find themselves overburdened with gendered expectations from their countries of origin while being the main breadwinners in the new country.

Moreover, reflections concerning gender in transnational family setups intersect necessarily the way intergenerational relations are carried out across geographical distance. Much of the earliest literature focused particularly on the mother-child relationship in relation to so-called 'care-drained' transnational family forms (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2005; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2012; Peng and Wong 2016), where women from poor countries leave their families behind to care for children and the elderly in rich countries. Many studies focused on how left-behind children

deal with intimacy at a distance, as in the case of the Philippines (Parreñas 2005). The early findings showed that the left-behind children were often better off economically than the children of non-migrants, while transnational mothering had a negative impact on their emotional wellbeing. However, most of these studies were biased by the ethnocentric assumption that the biological mother is the main and most important caregiver, and that the Western nuclear family model was the most suitable for child development. Recent studies, thanks also to the care circulation approach, have challenged these early assumptions (Baldassar et al. 2016). They have shown that many countries from which migrants originate have different norms guiding family structures and relationships, including child fostering, where one's biological child is given for an indefinite period to be raised by another person, which is practiced in many parts of Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Mazzucato 2008, 2013).

With the emigration of the middle-aged 'sandwich' generation the focus also concerns the wellbeing of the elderly parents left behind. Again, the care circulation framing has highlighted how both men and women arrange for caregiving to their elderly in different parts of the world: Italian migrants, for instance, are more likely to exchange frequent visits and offer practical support with their kin back home, than other nationalities (Baldassar 2006; Merla and Baldassar 2011). The care circulation approach also shows that exchanges of family care are *multidirectional* across generations and between genders. A typical example is given by Baldassar when she illustrates the case of recent young Italian professional immigrants to Australia: 'given their early stage in the family life cycle (most are just married) and given the early stage in their migration process (just settled), recent Italian migrants commonly receive financial assistance from their parents to purchase expensive investments like homes and cars or to fund their visits home' (Baldassar 2006: 5), but at the same time they manage to keep up with frequent communications with their kin back in Italy, provide emotional support, and assist their parents with home maintenance during their visits. Siblings are also part of this network of care, as they, for instance, look after their migrant brothers and sisters' business in the country of origin. Interestingly, Baldassar and Merla's (2014a, b) care circulation framework offers a way of tracing or mapping the multiple and multidirectional care exchanges (plus the specific dimension of care) that

characterize transnational family relations throughout the life course. This approach is also able to identify the asymmetries and inequalities, both within and external to (context-related) transnational families, in the capacity to circulate care over time. By focusing on care, it is also possible to thematize the ambivalences embedded in family relations, as in the case of family members who interrupt communication and support to their kin because they are not able to provide for them.

In short, the greater breadth of the care circulation framework applied to the study of transnational families is particularly appropriate for capturing the vast diversity of human mobility: to rephrase Tolstoy's famous quote, Happy families are all alike; every *transnational* family is *transnational* in its own way.

Mixed Families: Between Cultures and Kinship Relationships

One of the most socially significant consequences of migration processes and the meeting of different cultures is the progressive increase in the number of *mixed marriages* (*or couples*). There are many expressions used in the literature to convey the multiple aspects of mixed families in their various forms. The complexity inherent to a description of the mixed family is evident from the emblematic use of the language; English uses various terms to refer to married and non-married mixed couples: interethnic, interfaith, bi-national, bilingual, interracial, and so on.

In the English-speaking world, the term intermarriage covers different types of mixed unions: bi-national marriages, which refer to partners coming from different countries; interfaith marriages, when partners belong to different religions; interethnic marriages, when the couple come from different ethnic backgrounds; and interracial marriages when they are each of a different race (Cottrell 1990; Luke and Luke 1998). In the French context, the idea of the mixité/métissage within the couple is given greater emphasis than the mixing per se (Tico 1998; Varro 2003).

Looking at statistical data, mixed marriages involving citizens and spouses of foreign nationality have grown significantly over the past decades. These unions have long been considered important indicators of

the social integration of immigrants, as well as potential factors of social and cultural change. However, what characteristics have we seen of this phenomenon in Europe over recent decades? Data from two EU surveys estimated the percentage of persons in mixed marriages in 30 European countries in recent years. Their findings determined that across Europe, for the period 2008–2010, on average one in twelve married persons was in a mixed marriage (Lanzieri 2012).[3]

This is due to a number of factors, as explained by Kraler et al. (2010): the diversification of European societies due to the growth of immigrant populations and intermarriage of citizens with a native-born background with partners often holding a foreign nationality; the increasing mobility among Western European populations, partly as a result of globalized educational and career trajectories, partly as a result of the rise of long-distance tourism and the growth of short-term business related travel; and finally, the proliferation of globalized marriage markets and associated institutions such as internet dating or professional marriage agencies specializing in brokering marriages between citizens of various Asian countries or Eastern Europe and citizens of industrialized countries. Couples and families from different racial/ethnic,[4] language, and faith backgrounds and their 'mixed' children are increasingly visible in the public eye in the European context (Schuh 2008; Lanzieri 2012).

Mixed couples are referred to by a vast array of expressions and categorizations reflecting an equally wide spectrum of possible unions. Sociologists and other social scientists focused on examining endogamy/exogamy in marriages (marrying within/outside one's own group) and homogamy/heterogamy (marrying with someone close/far in status) with respect to socio/economic status, religion and race/ethnicity/nationality (Kalmijn 1998). It is the intermarriage along the racial/ethnic/national divide that has particularly increased its incidence during the last century in several countries around the world (especially in those that experienced colonization in the past and migration in recent times).

In this section we aim at analyzing *mixed families* (interethnic/interracial marriages, when the two partners of the couple come from different ethnic/racial backgrounds), focusing on the concept of 'ethnic group'; this is important because it considers, on the one hand, ethnic identity and, on the other, ethnicity. In fact, while 'ethnicity' refers to the objective features of ethnic

belonging, such as geographic origin, language, race, and physical traits, 'ethnic identity' denotes the awareness of belonging to some given ethnic groups and the importance people place on this aspect of their identity.

On the basis of these considerations, it is assumed that culture, religion, race, and ethnic group are the criteria used to compare the differences between the partners of a mixed couple when these differences are perceived as socially relevant (Fenaroli and Panari 2006; Varro 2012). Thus, the personal qualities that modify the relationship of a so-called 'mixed' couple should always be considered as closely interrelated with the cultural construction of similarity and difference, which defines the degree of compatibility between different groups from a social and collective perspective (Philippe et al. 1998). This approach, however, only provides an explanation of this phenomenon from an external perspective.

We decided to use the term 'mixed', in order to make use of the fact that the specificities of the 'mixedness' have to be made clear when discussing the parents and their families in this book, rather than capturing them under one encompassing categorical qualifier. 'Mixed', while reflecting official census terminology is also in common usage among the mixed couples and individuals themselves, as well as by others (Ali 2003; Luke and Luke 1998; Filhon and Varro 2005). 'Mixing' allows us to signal the dynamic and relational processes in which all of a family's members are actively involved. Although we recognize the limitations of these terms—'mixed', 'mixing' and 'mixedness'—for now, we feel that they best denote our intentions.

Research into mixed relationships originally stemmed from the field of study interested in migration, immigration, race, and ethnicity (predating the paradigm shift brought about by the formalization of the concept of transnationalism), which has strongly influenced the research agenda, thus explaining an early dominant focus on ethnicity, integration, and race relations (Cottrell 1990; Caballero et al. 2007; Voas 2008).

A mixed couple can be considered the union of two people in which the partners have different cultural/ethnic backgrounds (Guyaux et al. 1992; Tico 1998). When a mixed couple gets together, both partners 'virtually travel' from their countries of origin in order to enter a relationship with someone from another country and, most importantly, another culture. In most cases, looking at European data, one partner has physi-

cally left his/her country of origin while the other partner is a citizen of the hosting country (Phoenix and Owen 2000; Schuh 2008).

Being in a mixed couple, in fact, involves the awareness of being permeated with difference. This means keeping one's own cultural identity while acknowledging that the other partner comes from a different historical, ethnic, and cultural background, and this needs to be valued; it entails the possibility of incorporating different cultural models without eliminating the differences.

Mixing Cultures in Families: Negotiating the Differences

From a social viewpoint, these unions encounter a variety of reactions and attitudes. Some people consider them an example of integration, the sign of a multicultural society's increasing receptiveness to foreigners; others focus on the flexible identities of those engaging on this path and their ability to establish bonds with people from different cultural universes.

The partners in a mixed couple try to find a space where differences can be reconciled by continual symbolic construction and redefinition of their identity. In order to do this, each partner is invited by the other (more or less implicitly) to symbolically 'migrate' from their culture of origin in order to establish ties with a person who 'comes' from a different cultural background. This process may (or may not) be shared, and becomes conflictual if one of the two refuses to accept/does not understand the other's culture.

Therefore, according to Bertolani (2002), on the whole, negotiation means implementing four different strategies:

- Expansion of the possible. This process implies a conscious departure from personal habits and traditions, which does not mean abandoning one's cultural standards but assigning them a relative importance. The partners' cultural universes are considered as a source of enrichment, something that makes their relationship more dynamic and encourages them to be more open and receptive to each other. Choices are

made by selecting the best cultural opportunities that may give the couple a certain degree of comfort.

- Mediation. Openness to dialogue, respect, and receptivity to difference are the typical elements of this strategy. The individual or the whole family, in agreement with the other partner, chooses certain behaviours as they go along. Both partners, regarding their relationship as paramount, give up their own positions to find a middle ground; sometimes, family decisions may prove to be a halfway compromise between the partner's cultural preferences and one's own.
- Cultural affirmation. This technique leads partners to uphold totally the distinctive traits of their own cultures, as they are considered essential principles of their own history and identity. Within this framework, cultural differences might cause tensions, contrasts, conflict, and antagonism or, contrarily, produce a clear distribution of power where one culture unquestionably dominates the other and where the yielding partner does not use any retaliatory mechanism in order to preserve the relationship.
- Assimilation. In this case, there is the presumption that culture is based on some precise ideas, meanings, and behaviours, with a tendency to minimize complexity. One partner's aim is to penetrate the culture of the other, that being the culture of the social context in which they live, in order to alleviate the sense of 'diversity' and prevent any form of discrimination against the family.

Negotiating differences within intercultural couples appears to be the outcome of a strong and continuous commitment to finding new rules and definitions. Negotiation is synonymous with compromise, awareness of possible conflicts, and openness to dialogue, even when partners have completely opposing ideas. Cultural differences may be successfully negotiated by developing a mutual awareness of the deep meaning of each other's cultures, thus helping to achieve a certain neutrality and do away with the underlying complexity that hinders problem solving.

Therefore, living in a mixed family is a challenge that implies that the couple, the families of origin, and the broadest social context should find a way to combine differences and negotiate cultural aspects. Mixed families seem to be a micro example of what it means to live in a multicultural

society nowadays at the macro level. Differences and similarities are played out every day in the life course of the couple and their families, requiring the entire family group (including previous generations) to redefine the overall arrangement of their cultural balance: it becomes necessary to rethink relational dynamics (Scabini and Rossi 2008; Therrien and Le Gall 2012), but especially to reconsider the hierarchies of values, both at an individual and at a family level, due to the different cultural belonging of the partners (Crespi 2016).

This aspect is particularly effective with the birth of a child. If a couple's relationship is related to the interpersonal sphere, the partners can still gloss over the importance of the difference between some particular cultural and ethnic aspects. The birth of a child causes the reshaping of the family's organization and the definition of new dynamics with regards to those differences that both partners had already mediated within their relationship, such as language and religion (Phoenix and Owen 2000; Arweck and Nesbitt 2010). The ability to deal with cultural differences can thus turn into a challenge for the couple. In order to deal with and make sense of their differences with respect to their children, partners are required to bring their negotiation strategy back into play (Phoenix and Husain 2007). In this way, they will guarantee their children access to their respective cultures and provide them with the support they need to build their own identity.

The dynamics of mixed families are based on a continuous negotiation of the partners' historical and cultural differences (Caballero et al. 2007; Barn and Harman 2006). Success could be considered as the ability to base family relationships on dialogue, exchange, respect for the other, and negotiation of interethnic differences. They also require the creation of a new family culture, able to turn difference into a valuable asset, which helps promote open minds and acceptance of the other. This regards the choice of their children's upbringing and the values to be transmitted to future generations. The negotiation of differences between internal and external requirements in mixed families is the outcome of a redefinition of the partners' identity and relationships so that both can jointly work out new rules and specific paradigms for their family.

Conclusions

In conclusion, what we have taken into consideration here are relocated and mixed families together, as they both can be framed in the transnational households' perspective. One interesting analytical distinction resides in the front on which these two types of families have to manage cultural diversity.

The challenges and negotiations that take place on the internal front include the need (or opportunity) to redefine traditional roles of the nuclear or extended family, which may result in changes or 'contamination' with respect to gender or generations. In the transnational perspective, these processes not only involve relocated members (or the non-native partner in the case of mixed couples), but also those left behind (or the native partner in the case of mixed couples), who have to reorganize family configurations, roles, and tasks, with particular regard to identities, power dynamics, and exchange of care.

Challenges and negotiations, however, also necessarily take place externally; that is, in the ways relocated and mixed families interact with the receiving society. The interactions and necessary adjustments on the external side (with the receiving society) also have repercussions on the inside of the intra-family relations. Think, for example, of those situations where school-age children master the language of the adopted society better than their parents, and are therefore called to be the family's interpreters and mediators, especially vis-à-vis the local institutions and services.

In particular, mixed families are characterized by cultural differences within their borders, and their members are called to manage these differences and give meaning to their own experience as a couple and as a family. This is particularly the case with the birth of the children; that is, when the dimension of the future must be (re)connected with the past (the origins, the different lineages from which the parents come). Also, transnational families are faced with two fronts where differences must be handled simultaneously: the external front of constant negotiation with the receiving society for those who relocated, but also a front which is internal to the domestic sphere (family identity) because of the inevitable

exposure to cultural difference imposed by mobility, or the absence of certain family figures, that can transform gender and generation roles, practices, and expectations.

Notes

1. Drawing on Finch and Mason's (1993) model of family support, five aspects of care are considered: financial and material, practical, emotional and moral, personal care, and accommodation.
2. Being a EU citizen or not has a strong impact and influence on the existence and formation of transnational families. EU citizens can enjoy freedom to cross borders within the EU (restrictions may be incurred, however, with Brexit) but this limits the possibility of keeping records and assessing how many transnational families are currently present in Europe. For non-EU citizens, there is a number of conditions that influence choices and ways in which transnational families live their family life.
3. In this report, mixed marriages are defined as those in which one partner is a native-born and the other was born abroad. Thus, marriages between foreign-born persons from different countries are not considered as mixed here. Further, by focusing on marriages, unmarried partnerships are not included.
4. We would like to remind the reader that in the US context the term 'race' is used in literature while in the European framework the term race is not anymore used for historical and political reasons. We do not want to enter the debate and use both terms considering the mainstreaming literature across the two continents.

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