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An Integral Approach to Well-Being in Transnational Families: A Brief Proposal for Best Practices

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Abstract: Although the study of migration has shifted its focus from an individual perspective (on those who emigrate) to also include their integration networks in the country of destination, it is also necessary to consider the dynamics with their families in the country of origin. With an integral focus on the analysis of Portuguese transnational families, this paper aims to reflect on how the connection between those who emigrate and those who stay can promote greater resilience, presenting best practices for interventions among these dynamics and generations. Using a post-positivist paradigm and semi-structured interviews, we developed a qualitative approach with three exploratory studies: (1) Portuguese young adults living abroad (N = 22); (2) parental figures living in Portugal with adult children living abroad (N = 20); and (3) experts in the fields of academic and psychosocial work with similar people (N = 8). The data were analyzed using *N-Vivo* software (ed.11 and 14). The general results lead us to reflect on the dynamics of relationships, where digital and face-to-face spaces participate simultaneously, even though there are different challenges and ways of using digital means. We also found a change in expectations regarding the norms and values perceived by this generation of emigrants, which leads us to consider the importance of intercultural values since transnational families greatly increase transculturality, which can promote resilience among these groups. The data also alert us to the need to train intervention professionals in multidisciplinary areas, always taking the cultural context into account.

Keywords: migrations; interculturality; cultural psychology; transnational families; best practices

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1. Introduction

The family group is, across the entire life cycle, an important influence that must be considered in individual and group development, providing resources and challenges to the various elements that form them (Albert and Ferring 2018). This observation invites us to reflect systemically on family groups and social contexts, but also on how we can understand resilience in these contexts.

It is important to emphasize that the family group is not a static system, so understanding it fully implies understanding it simply as a reality that is under permanent reconstruction in time and space (Barros 2023a). Many processes of (re)composition accompany this group, but also the individuals who make it up and who adapt and modify roles in order to promote adjustment and well-being, both individually and for the group (Relvas and Alarcão 2007). As such, it is a group with self-organizing norms but with obvious transformations taking place dynamically (Dias 2011). These dynamic changes over the course of the life cycle make the family a differentiated group, with specific interactions and interdependencies, but which is assumed, at all stages of the life cycle, to be a source of learning and social support in the face of the challenges of a specific context (Coimbra et al. 2013; Leme et al. 2016).

These personal dynamics must, therefore, be considered in a multi-systemic context (Rodrigues 2013), and all stages should be considered as transversal, from childhood to adulthood and throughout the aging process, with different roles and (re)formulations of the family structure (Martins and Szymanski 2004). This is why the whole family has to be understood not only in light of the diversity of its composition but also through the lens of the multiple valences that intervene in a diverse set of expectations, norms and behaviors (e.g., in a family we can have parental, conjugal and fraternal figures in interaction), being transformative agents of a collective trajectory with different powers, pressures and challenges (Martins and Szymanski 2004).

In this context, resilience is seen as a central process for the integral development of family members (Barros 2023b; Leme et al. 2016; Walsh and McGoldrick 2013), especially in a context that can create new elements of perceived presence and affection, such as migration, which sets family self-organization and interactions between social systems new challenges in terms of expectations and relations (Bronfenbrenner 2005).

1.1. Migration and Families

Several authors (e.g., Fonseca et al. 2005) emphasize the fact that the role of the family in the migration process has rarely been considered by theorists from the different sciences dedicated to migration, which has contributed to a stereotype of the migrant being installed in theories explaining the process of migration and focusing on how structural factors typically influence the individual, who is seen as the decision-making agent in the migration process. According to various authors (Baker and Benjamin 1997; Boyd and Grieco 2003; de Jong et al. 2002), families have been given a new lease of life in migration research, coming to be recognized as major decision-makers in the migration process, so any in-depth understanding of the phenomenon must take it "as part of a wider set of group strategies aimed at sustaining and improving socio-economic conditions" (Massey 1990, p. 4).

For a longer or shorter period, the (transnational) family group stands out as an effective social support system for its members that is unique, being an agglomeration of resources and capitals that cooperate for personal and interpersonal well-being (Leme et al. 2016; Oliveira 2007; Villas-Boas et al. 2017). This group can create the necessary groundwork for the consecutive expansion of socialization networks in which the individual is influenced by the immediate network of relationships and the more distant/indirect network of relationships (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 1986, 2005; Giddens 2014). Also, it is a reference group which, in different ways, shows its impact as a key element in character development, as well as in intergenerational learning, with the learning of roles and ways of living through bonding processes (Relvas and Alarcão 2007).

At the beginning of this century, there was more emphasis on migration studies focusing on transnational family networks and how those who emigrate experience and organize their lives and care between countries (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Instead of a perspective centered on the individual migratory experience, exploratory studies have begun to focus on the multifaceted relationships, covering social, political, cultural and economic domains that link emigrants to their countries of origin (Levitt 2001; Mazzucato et al. 2004). These studies, with a strong focus on care, have analyzed the effects of migration on different family members: those who emigrate and those who remain in the country of origin.

Curiously, one of the results that has been most pointed out is that it is not transnational family life as such, involving challenged geographical space, that leads to lower emotional well-being. Some authors (Barros 2023b; Dito et al. 2017; Donato and Duncan 2011; Fan et al. 2010; Mazzucato et al. 2015; Nobles 2011; Wen and Lin 2012) tell us that the characteristics of the family members, highlighting aspects such as their salary, legal status in the destination country, perception of inclusion, availability to give/receive help, the type of distant parenting and the school and family environment of the children left behind, make all the difference in the study of well-being.

With the rise of digital and face-to-face communication, there is also an attempt to understand the role played by space-time in transnational families (Baykara-Krumme and Fokkema 2019; Mateia 2018) and how this communication behavior mitigates the impact of the difficulties and challenges of geographical distance, allowing adaptation in the various family contexts and rituals—in their daily forms, celebrations or traditions (Barros 2023a). Furthermore, this alerts us to the growing differences that give rise to conflicts and ambivalence, both in the context of the family group—their perceptions/expectations of care and presence—and the shared values and social norms that can bring generations together to build their trajectory together (Albert and Ferring 2018; Barros et al. 2023).

In this sense, studies on transnational families must continue to look for cumulative evidence that points to the convergence of results and thus promotes a greater understanding of the dynamics that involve these families' resilience in time and space.

1.2. Importance of Culture and Resilience for Best Practices in Transnational Families

A preliminary point is to recognize that the human capacity for resilience has evolved over many generations through the intervention and interaction of cultures, families and individuals (Ungar 2008; Walsh 2020). Individual resilience is deeply embedded in the legacies of cultural evolution transmitted in the form of ideas and practices that influence individuals' experiences in various ways, in parenting, conjugality, language, education and community expectations (Garrido et al. 2011; Hanenberg 2018; Walsh 2020).

Furthermore, the importance of recognizing that how resilience is understood and expressed varies significantly between socio-cultural contexts has been highlighted since resilience can only be defined in context (Pickren 2014). As such, it is impossible to equate resilience with pre-existing attributes since it is often characterized by context-specific and culture-specific goals and processes that give it a specific meaning (Panter-Brick 2015).

Using Ungar's (2008) work as an example, the author explored resilience across cultures and emphasized that even if we consider resilience as a human adaptive process, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that adaptation is always a process that has a time, place and social context. The same author defines resilience as the ability of individuals to acquire and manage sustainable, healthy resources, including opportunities to experience well-being, and as a condition in which individuals, families the surrounding community and all cultural systems provide these resources and healthy experiences in meaningful ways (Coimbra 2008).

In more recent years, intercultural and global societies have become the norm and ask for a deeper recognition of the role of culture in the lives of individuals (Hanenberg 2018). Migrants often have a different understanding of social relations and obligations and bring with them approaches to health, education, and relationships that are significantly different from those of their destination/host countries (Castles 2010). However, these specific cultural practices can act as sources of support for migrants.

These differences in migrants' practices and beliefs have been approached by the social sciences as problematic and creating fragilities. There is still a lack of an approach that focuses on the cultural resources that migrants carry with them that enable them to deal with the world, help them adapt to a new society and enrich their destination country. All these factors have important implications for understanding resilience in migrants, as they create a continuum of perceived integration, well-being or, on the other hand, isolation/disintegration, which influences how the migration project is analyzed (Beiser 2005). Nonetheless, it may be more useful to use a family approach (rather than an individual approach), as it can be a unit that promotes a reflection on the time-space in which resilience can develop (Barros 2023b).

Coping strategies to keep the family in balance can be varied, but always aim to manage crises in which any of the family members are involved (Antonovsky and Sourani 1988; Barros 2023b). This means that the forms of family resilience vary according to the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which the family lives (Hawley 2000). Furthermore, resilience is not an immutable construct in which there is a set of qualities that some family

dynamics have and others do not. Rather, it can be understood as a path that families—collectively and considering its members concerning the group as a whole—often take in coping with challenges, and it is important to view it through the 'lens' of a process and resource that emerges over time and with different challenges (Hawley 2000).

An important challenge for transnational families is to develop constructive practices in the face of the cultural differences they experience in the societies of the destinations of those who have emigrated. Integrating personal and family belief systems, as well as the dynamism and fluidity of culture, incorporating the 'new' as part of knowledge (Hermans and Kempen 1998), turns out to be a source of resilience as it allows cultural identity to adapt and adjust according to the needs of psychosocial negotiation and integration (Barros et al. 2023; Pickren 2014; Silberberg 2001).

1.3. Portugal: A Specific and Transversal Case

According to Neto (2003), cross-cultural psychology should seek to integrate the knowledge and values of different cultures, endeavoring to relate them in the social sciences, making contexts transferable if properly situated. In his terms: "A more universal psychology will thus be generated that will be valid for a wider range of cultures" (Neto 2003, p. 15). In this way, we invite the reader to take a closer look at the specific case of Portuguese transnational families, recognizing the important role of identifying transversal behaviors in the psychosocial sciences and the specific contexts that influences intergenerational relationships (Albert and Ferring 2018; Baykara-Krumme and Fokkema 2019).

Portugal has a strong socio-cultural context in migratory movements, which take on different shapes within general contexts over time. In contemporary times, with a particular focus on the second half of the 20th century, the impact of migration on family relationships is different depending on the destination country (Garcia 1998), determined above all by the geographical distance from the country of origin. When it comes to intercontinental migrations, such as the case of Portuguese who emigrate to Brazil and Canada, these can involve a new construction of reality and an association with local communities that lead them to choose the country as the place where they will establish roots and build social and family dynamics with the following generations. Although this is also true of intra-European migration, the easier access to the country of origin, the continuity of shuttle movements and the migration of only part of the family nucleus contribute to these migrants maintaining close relations with the country of origin, increasing the family connection in this context (Neto 2019).

In the second decade of the current century, we can see that the broader trends of experiencing transnational dynamics are accompanying Portuguese reality, but there has also been a clear change in the profile of migrants, especially after the 'Brain Drain' phenomenon, after which emigrants have a different social capital, with most emigrants having higher/specialized education and different life expectations (Gomes et al. 2015). In this new perspective on migration, there is a clear differentiation in terms of the integration of young emigrants in the countries of destination, where they tend to look for places to live based on integration in labour and personal well-being (Gomes et al. 2015; Barros 2023a).

Furthermore, there is a growing focus on connection to the family group in the country of origin, boosted by communication technologies (Baldassar et al. 2016). The increase in space with the interaction between the digital and the face-to-face has improved the possibilities of well-being, but also of ambivalence in these family dynamics (Barros 2023a; Barros et al. 2023) considering that there may be different expectations of earnings, well-being, gender roles or even the perception of what family care roles should be.

Santos et al. (2024) point out the importance of gender when analyzing these dynamics of transnational family contact since Portuguese emigrant women, in their studies, tend to perceive more obligation to support their other family members. However, the more integrated they are in the destination countries—regardless of the time abroad—the better well-being they tend to report. However, family dynamics do not always have a more functional aspect combined with an affective one; both can coexist with greater or lesser

intensity depending on the perception of belonging, forming relational patterns between solidarity, ambivalence and conflict that coexist throughout the life cycle (Barros et al. 2023; Santos et al. 2024).

When addressing the impact of transnational experience on ascendant relatives living in Portugal with emigrant children, we observe that integration into the surrounding communities, training in the use of new communication technologies and a greater perception of physical well-being tend to be facilitators in building a circular dynamic of care and presence (Barros et al. 2024).

Based on the fluidity of transnational family dynamics, the challenges to the adaptation and resilience of its various members and the different perceptions of cultural impact, this paper aims to analyze the integral recommendations/best practices that emerge from studies with transnational Portuguese family members.

2. Materials and Methods

Using a qualitative approach, the aim is to analyze narratives, anchored in the literature and focused on the social transfer of knowledge among social agents. In this way, we intend to contribute to a process of interpretation of human and social interaction to which we will add knowledge (Charmaz 2009; Ratner 2002). To study the perception of experiences, meanings and expectations from a constructivist perspective, we opted for a post-positivist paradigm (Birks and Mills 2011; Charmaz 2006) with a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews (Charmaz 2009; Guerra 2006) with three samples of a total of $N = 50$ participants.

2.1. Participants

To triangulate data to integrally explore best practices for intervention with transnational families, three studies were carried out. The studies were sequential, following a post-constructivist logic in which we added perspectives and knowledge at the different stages of the study.

Study 1: Portuguese young adults living abroad ($N = 22$):

The participants in this study were young Portuguese adult migrants ($N = 22$). According to their self-identification, most of them were female ($n = 17$), and some were male ($n = 5$). Their ages ranged between 23 and 33 years ($M = 28.90$; $SD = 2.44$), and they had lived outside Portugal between 2 and 14 years ($M = 4.81$; $SD = 2.83$).

All of them were from mainland Portugal and emigrated to European and Schengen Area countries, with at least one parent residing in Portugal. Data were collected in the year of 2019.

Study 2: Parental figures living in Portugal with adult children living abroad ($N = 20$):

The participants in this study were parental figures living in Portugal with adult children who had emigrated ($N = 20$). According to their self-identification, most of them were female ($N = 16$), and some were male ($N = 4$). Their ages ranged between 48 and 76 years ($M = 60.83$; $SD = 9.15$). Data were collected between the last quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023.

Study 3: Experts in the fields of academic and psychosocial work who actively work with the well-being and integration of transnational families ($N = 8$).

Among the experts interviewed were people from academia and community interventions in the fields of social sciences and culture ($n = 2$), psychology and social intervention ($n = 3$), family and migration studies ($n = 3$) and human geography ($n = 1$). Data were collected in 2022.

2.2. Instruments

A semi-structured interview script was developed, with a common core of research purposes, but adapted for the participants in Study 1 and Study 2, to include the concrete needs of each group (e.g., to consider emigration from the perspectives of those who go and those who stay, as well as the adjustment that results).

Each script was previously tested for its perception and clarity with researchers with similar profiles through focus groups and individual interviews to ensure its suitability.

The script is divided into thematic blocks, preceded by an initial presentation section. The thematic blocks were (i) characterization of the family (e.g., *who are the people you identify as close/nuclear family members?*); (ii) migration experience, well-being and motivations (e.g., *what has been most beneficial for you in this migration process?*); (iii) maintaining emotional relationships (e.g., *what means do you use to communicate?*); (iv) intergenerational support network (e.g., *do you give any support to your familial figures?*); and (v) transmission of values between generations (e.g., *can you give me concrete examples of what you share with your family members?*). Lastly, a block of questions was presented to collect their main best practices/recommendations for well-being and adaptation for those who emigrated and those who stayed in their country of origin. An informed consent form and a socio-demographic questionnaire were first collected.

For Study 3, open-ended interviews were used, in which the participants reflected on the blocks of the instruments presented above for Studies 1 and 2, allowing for a co-design and adaptation of the instruments as well as the collection of best practices that we analyzed together in this triangulation of data.

2.3. Procedures and Data Analysis

Under the ethical principles of the research, with the approval of the Ethics Committee of the two institutions where the studies were carried out, in line with the code of the American Psychological Association (2018), all the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and later destroyed, and the names of the participants and sensitive data were changed to ensure confidentiality.

With the support of Portuguese communities abroad, parish councils/municipalities/parishes in Portugal, the media, emigrant associations and the creation of a website and social networks for the research project, the study was publicized to recruit participants.

N in all the studies was determined by the theoretical saturation of the data and the fact that it is a convenience sample, constructed concurrently with a data analysis that allows the data to be interrelated to conclude the perceived collection (Charmaz 2008).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and some by video call, with the explicit mention of comfort for the participants. This option allowed us to interview people in a (inter)national space, which would not have been possible in person. In both cases, the identity and confidentiality of the participants were guaranteed. The average duration of each interview was between 50 and 90 min.

Since data collection and analysis are simultaneous when analyzing dynamic social relationships (Braun and Clarke 2006), we first approached the interviews (separately in each study) by zooming in on the data (reading, re-reading, making the data intimate) to proceed with the analysis in units of meaning. First, open coding: this allowed for the creation and verification of categories with central concepts; then, axial coding: where we analyzed the relationships between categories and identified best practices that emerged from the data in each study. Finally, bringing together the data from all the studies, we carried out selective coding: this allowed us to theoretically saturate the central categories (on best intervention practices) to regroup and relate the coding so that new social data could emerge.

To avoid bias in the analysis (Charmaz 2006), the first author of the study carried out the data analysis and shared their perspective with the research team, who were involved as consultants, giving reflexivity to a constructivist perspective. *N-Vivo* (ed. 11 and 14. Lumivero/QSR International, Denver, CO, USA) software was used.

3. Results and Discussion

To present, relate and discuss the many narratives, we have chosen to simultaneously present and discuss the results.

The data indicated the need to think about three areas of best practices and recommendations.

3.1. Affection and Dynamics between the Digital and the Face-to-Face

All the participants suggested that there is a need to think about the affections and dynamics of their family between digital and face-to-face communication. Transnational families cannot exist in the same geographical territory, but when digital and face-to-face presence are combined, we have a reinvention of family relationships.

All the participants in Study 1 and Study 2 (emigrants and parental figures in their origin country) reported that their presence and participation in the family are frequent and intense at all times. Daily, celebratory or occasional family rituals are experienced in person and digitally, in turn changing the classic view that geographical proximity reflects the ability and willingness to interact, which is in line with the latest approaches to transnational families, which refer to the importance of a hybrid connection for contact and care between family members in different countries and between different generations (Baldassar and Merla 2014; Baldassar et al. 2016; Barros 2023a). Simultaneously, both sub-groups indicate that their family presence has improved in terms of well-being and connectedness compared to before migration, but there is also the potential for conflict or ambivalence in those relationships, with a need to adjust not only to the social context but also to their families (Albert and Ferring 2018). This is illustrated by an extract from a daughter, Marta: "We're always there, whether it's on the screen [of the smartphone] or in person. The chance to set boundaries has helped to improve my relationship with my parents but it is a new dynamic process".

Furthermore, sons and daughters (interviewed in the pre-COVID period) tend to consider that parental figures do not have sufficient digital literacy for online safety. To understand this issue, we asked parents (in the post-COVID period, with an exponential increase in digital use) how well trained they were in online tools (e.g., use of antivirus and sensibilization about phishing scams) and showed their unfamiliarity with the problems inherent in online security. This is evident in the interview with one mother, Maria: "I don't worry too much about it [online security] because if I don't agree with something I switch off the device and it doesn't affect me anymore".

Some of the experts (Study 3) also recommended addressing issues inherent to sociodemographic variables, in which older people and those with less formal education should be prioritized when it comes to acquiring digital skills. These findings corroborate the data presented and the literature in this field (e.g., Ganito 2018).

Although we cannot make a comparison between behaviors in the sample, it is worth noting that in both studies (1 and 2), the female participants emphasized the importance of affection and emotional care, while the men tended to emphasize the functional side of support. Although this study does not have a representative sample, we are interested in reflecting on these data in the light of migration theories that emphasize gender as a variable that can change the type of presence/connection that is perceived (e.g., Santos et al. 2024) or even the need for visibility in terms of female migration since care is circular and intersectional (Christou and Kofman 2022).

Based on these data, the first best practice is to try to guarantee digital access to communication, both for those who have emigrated and those who stay in their country of origin. This will certainly reduce the risk of isolation and the maintenance of dynamics, as well as increase the potential for communication with other networks of people who support these individuals. It also seems important to develop transversal digital training programs for the use (and safety) of digital means for all, with a focus on the most vulnerable populations.

3.2. Norms and Values in Light of Integration

The changes in the perception of what each person considers to be norms/values and expectations about their lives or society lead to a relationship that, although reported by

all to be more appropriate, tends to have marked aspects of conflict and ambivalence—which is in line with more recent findings of authors in the field (Albert and Ferring 2018; Lowenstein 2007).

The intercultural experience of young adult emigrants (Study 1) leads to new systemic social constructions of "who am I and who is the other". The sons and daughters show total cohesion in their perception of family life with their parents in their country of origin (e.g., caring responsibilities if someone falls ill). At the same time, they indicate that their parents tend to have a more conservative view of social inclusion, and migration, or even a more conservative view of work, not considering the balance between personal and work life.

Meanwhile, the parental figures indicate that they do not agree on some situations with their emigrant children (e.g., they do not accept that their children do not want to return to live in Portugal) but indicate that they learn a lot from the intercultural and open experience they have learned from contact with their migrant children. As a mother, Diana tells us the following:

> "I'm not convinced that she doesn't want to come back when things are better at her job [. . . but] I felt that when my daughter came back to visit me, she was a different person, much more mature, developed, without so many fears and worries, which was something my daughter always had, and I partly passed that on to her. I then began to change my insecure way of looking at things and accept her friends, who seemed so different to me, but it was good for both of us to grow up".

It also seems important to emphasize the role of gender in norms and values. Around a third of the participants in Study 1 reported being overwhelmed by gender expectations, which led them to have a lower perception of understanding and belonging concerning their parents/family in Portugal. This fits in with the importance of considering the intersectionality between gender and migratory status, which can influence the well-being of migrant women (Christou and Kofman 2022).

Thus, in line with the author Ramos (2013), we point to the need to consider as an important practice the development of individual competencies that allow harmonious social interactions between individuals and cultures and that promote an attitude of decentration. This allows values and norms to become more flexible so that skills and personal characteristics are no longer presented as definitive and universal, thus avoiding intolerant and discriminatory behavior.

3.3. Cross-Disciplinary Intervention

Since the needs of a family are multidimensional—whether for each member or part/all of the group—there are numerous challenges to its resilience in the sociocultural context. This is especially evident when there is a negotiation for adaptation and integration in migration (Pickren 2014) and more connecting or isolating tendencies emerge (Barros et al. 2023).

All the experts (Study 3) indicated that the support given to members of transnational families should be adequate and that collaborators in the various social/health areas should be sensitized to (a) language aspects; (b) the rules/laws of each country where these members live; (c) the social expectations of the context; and (d) the dynamics between digital and face-to-face communication with people living in different countries. As we can see in the words of Joana (area of family support): "The difficulties of aging are very different when we have children close to us or far away, and this must not be forgotten when we request the support of other family members who, in this case, are in another country", as well as Sara (area of psychology), who tells us that "it is impossible not to consider gender, age, financial or linguistic skills intersectionally when looking for appropriate intervention", which points to the need to consider vulnerabilities in context (Santos et al. 2024).

The last best practice is to seek professional and integral support for transnational families. If family members are finding it difficult to cope with the challenges of living in

different countries or even the challenges of everyday life, it is necessary to seek professional support that integrates not only the individual/local context but also the transnational relational dynamics. It is important that psychologists, educators, social workers, medical staff and all other intervention professionals be aware of human and material resources that may be different from those in "mainstream" situations. Those professionals need to consider cultural and concrete aspects of each country's experience to add strength to the general knowledge in their fields.

This recommendation, which corroborates some of the literature in the field (see Dito et al. 2017; Donato and Duncan 2011; Mazzucato et al. 2015; Fan et al. 2010; Wen and Lin 2012), highlights the role of culture and more inclusive and better-informed institutions that can develop new strengths in schools, in perceptions of family expectations roles and in community support services.

3.4. Limitations and Suggestions for the Future

In these studies, the content was approached sequentially, and the data from each study informed the next. However, it would have been desirable to study the perspectives of members of the same family, that is, those of emigrants and related parental figures, which was not possible due to the difficulty of simultaneous adherence by members of the same family. This led us to opt for elements that integrate the perspectives of different generations in Portuguese families in an attempt to transpose theoretical and practical knowledge to be developed in future studies.

As suggestions for future studies, considering the qualitative nature of this and the idea of developing practical suggestions for interventions, we believe that transnational families would benefit from large-scale studies focusing on Portuguese contexts.

4. Conclusions

Portugal has a long history of emigration, with a recent change in emigration patterns (with the brain drain, for example). This has also accompanied an increase in digital contexts and perceptions of well-being in families. Being the country with the highest emigration rate in the European Union, this article can be viewed as an introduction to reflections on sustainable practices in other social contexts.

Communication is the cornerstone of well-being between individuals from any family group, even more so when it comes to a transnational context where norms and values are widely challenged, with a transculturality that contributes to flexibility and values that are increasingly open to the changing world. An example of this is the different perceptions of how two different generations see work–life balance. As indicated in the literature and verified in the data, there is a strong possibility of increased cohesion and support for adjustments to all elements. Meanwhile, there is the possibility of conflict or ambivalence in such diverse experiences.

The challenges for transnational families are, from the start, the communication and presence that shape these dynamics, emphasizing the importance of digital ways to create presence and accompaniment throughout the migratory project—whether from the perspective of 'those who are going or those who are staying'.

Since a family is a social group that not only influences its members but also their context, we also tried to identify possibilities for the development of best practices so that these members can receive adequate psychosocial support. We emphasized the importance of the sensitivity of the various social, psychological, educational and health professionals in supporting these heterogeneous groups. We believe that resilience and well-being can only be developed in these contexts through the inclusion of an intercultural and integral vision.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available since they constitute an excerpt of research in Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Studies, with ethical protection of participants' interviews, but general data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. It has to state that at this research the transcribed interviews are available in Portuguese.

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