



Care: new challenges arising from transnational dynamics

Inês Guerra & Carlos Barros

To cite this article: Inês Guerra & Carlos Barros (2026) Care: new challenges arising from transnational dynamics, *Social Work Education*, 45:3, 691-703, DOI: [10.1080/02615479.2025.2525992](https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2025.2525992)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2025.2525992>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 07 Jul 2025.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 134



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



Citing articles: 1 [View citing articles](#)



This article has been awarded the Centre for Open Science 'Open Data' badge.



This article has been awarded the Centre for Open Science 'Open Materials' badge.

Care: new challenges arising from transnational dynamics

Inês Guerra ^a and Carlos Barros ^{a,b}

^aResearch Centre for Psychological, Family and Social Wellbeing (CRC-W), Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisboa, Portugal; ^bResearch Centre for Communication and Culture (CECC), Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisboa, Portugal

ABSTRACT

Care and support are central determinants of social work. However, the needs and specificities for an integral perception of this assistance need to be drawn in the context of a globalizing society and increasingly evident macro and micro contextual phenomena. By taking care of aging people in the context of Portuguese transnational families as an example, this paper aims to be a space of dialogue between challenges and possible answers in an attempt to reflect on the main issues of care in transnational families. The main results/reflections emphasize the need to broaden educational training to recognize care as inherently interdisciplinary and rooted in cross-cultural knowledge. Digital communication technologies play a crucial role in enabling care that transcends geographical boundaries, improving both the quality of interactions with care-related elements and social responses.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 6 May 2024

Accepted 18 June 2025

KEYWORDS

social changes; ageing; transnational families; Cross-cultural adaptation; Social behavior; Transnational social work; care; Digital Communication

1. Introduction

Even though the increase in average life expectancy is a sign of social evolution, it is important to recognize that new challenges are emerging for which societies were unprepared, especially in Western societies (Albert & Ferring, 2018; Bengston et al., 2005). The challenges include: *a*) the sustainability of social protection systems, due to a smaller working population, making it difficult to maintain protection systems; *b*) the need to rethink social typologies that is, existing social responses or idealize new solutions that are in fact for people who live longer, with more autonomy, favoring their permanence in the environment where they have always lived and belonged; *c*) lifestyle changes to live longer and healthier lives; *d*) the effects of longevity on family income, due to increased care costs between generations; and *e*) the fulfillment of fundamental rights and ageism (Doetsch et al., 2017; Oliveira, 2008). However, the commitment to awareness of the appropriate use of space, services and respective accessibility enhances the quantity and quality of social support in the face of aging (Doetsch et al., 2017). Furthermore, in addition to the challenges mentioned above, it is important to emphasize the importance of addressing transnational challenges, as they are a central element in the

CONTACT Carlos Barros  cbarros@ucp.pt  Research Centre for Psychological, Family and Social Wellbeing (CRC-W), Research Centre for Communication and Culture (CECC), Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisboa 1649-023, Portugal

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

current debate. This includes issues arising from care relationships and social support systems that extend beyond national borders, and how people can live interconnected (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Bryceson, 2019).

For all these reasons, it is believed to be necessary to reflect on social work from a transnational perspective, reflecting on the main challenges facing professionals and an increasingly aging population, since it is necessary to identify challenges and suggest solutions that suit intercultural social needs.

1.1. Care in (transnational) context

For Papadaniel and collaborators (2009), care arises as a response to current social situations of suffering. The main aim of social support is to help people build and rebuild their social ties, and it can therefore be understood as an instance of socialization. Support practices are uncertain and are gradually invented and recreated in the context of the practice of social workers. These practices are difficult to define for those involved in the field, as they are unable to define their content a priori. The concept of accompaniment takes us back to a pragmatic conception of action, based on concrete cases to which those involved constantly refer. The methodology of accompaniment is built on experience in the field, which allows for great freedom of intervention. Papadaniel et al. (2009) also adds that accompaniment practices arise from intolerable social situations and are one of the responses to the various problems presented. Some of these counseling practices are individual initiatives and are part of deeper devices and institutions.

According to the author, the device guides action and is situated between the institutions/structure and what emerges, which is the space where practices are constructed. It is important to note that in Social Work, devices can be a set of practices, norms, structures and instruments designed and organized to intervene in specific social situations, which can include public policies, social projects, care methodologies and techniques that guide the intervention of professionals.

In this sense, the professionals must adopt a logic of individualized intervention based on the uniqueness of users (Branco, 2008), understanding the person as a whole, identifying the singularities that make them up, and their life trajectory, which makes them an integral being (Barros & Hanenberg, 2024). Establishing and sustaining a relationship based on trust and empathy is fundamental to this understanding (Peng, 2024).

Nevertheless, with increasingly globalized societies, marked by migration and transnational relational dynamics, social work is acquiring new forms as an academic area in constant reconstruction with the needs that emerge from cross-cultural well-being and integration issues (Köngeter et al., 2015; Schrooten, 2021).

With a stronger scientific expression since the beginning of the 21st century, international social work has emerged as the practice and study of social work that transcends national borders, allowing for the expansion of cross-cultural thinking, since it focuses on global issues and the interconnection of social problems in different cultures and countries (Midgley & Tang, 2001). It involves the practice of social work principles and practices in an international context, addressing issues such as poverty, human rights, social justice and community development on a global scale (Furman et al., 2010; Midgley & Tang, 2001). This perspective challenges the traditional view of social work,

which typically assumes that migrants sever ties with their home countries and follow a linear path of acculturation and assimilation.

Some fundamental aspects of international social work have been described (Midgley & Tang, 2001), and have progressively evolved over the last few years (please see: Furman et al., 2010; Gray, 2005; Healy & Thomas, 2020): being: *i*) a global perspective, which recognizes that social issues such as migration and inequality are global and interconnected; *ii*) increased cultural competencies, which requires sensitivity to cultural differences and approaches adapted to diverse populations; *iii*) collaboration and advocacy, which involves working with local organizations and governments to promote social change and improve well-being; *iv*) a human rights focus, which promotes and protects human rights following frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; *v*) a sustainable development perspective: It engages with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address issues such as poverty, health and education; and *vi*) the research-education connection, as it contributes to research on international issues and educates future social workers on global challenges.

It is therefore important to consider that international social work focuses on comparisons and collaborations between countries, and that is essential to develop and understand the transnational social work perspective, which in turn focuses on cross-border dynamics and the ongoing connections that individuals and communities maintain across national borders. In this context, reflecting on care that takes on unique characteristics is important, as it introduces the dimension of distance. Distance is, in fact, a very relevant factor when it comes to support or care provision (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Bryceson, 2019).

To offer a more coherent analytical outline, it is important to describe the main challenges that transnationals face concerning specific areas of intervention. Noteworthy examples include: *i*) space and technology, i.e. using digital technologies to overcome spatial barriers (Baldassar et al., 2016); *ii*) system diversity and information exchange, which is the need to understand and communicate between different social service systems (Schrooten, 2021); *iii*) cultural aspects and values, i.e. the importance of addressing cultural differences both in the local context and between generations of these families (Androff & Mathis, 2021; Schrooten, 2021). Furthermore, *iv*) the fluidity and circulation of care, in which we highlight that the roles and practices of technicians and beneficiaries change and transform with the care that circulates across borders (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Barros & Hanenberg, 2024; Bryceson, 2019).

The transnational approach recognizes that individuals and communities maintain enduring ties and identities that span national boundaries. It emphasizes the complex, interconnected and multifaceted nature of social work practice in a globalized world and the perception of structures of care and well-being in different countries (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Schrooten, 2021).

To answer this challenge of ‘global accompanying’, the authors Baldassar and Merla (2014) developed the concept of care circulation, which reflects the fluidity of care between members of transnational families very well. Asymmetrically, crossing generations, countries and care expectations, this challenge combines other important social variables such as gender, age, socio-professional status and the use of resources between different countries. The intersectionality of the care of the many variables makes us consider several essential aspects that are central in human interaction. Firstly, consider that these are groups with geographical distance and reinvention of the space for

intervention and care by the various members (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Barros & Hanenberg, 2024; Schrooten, 2021).

The physical separation between family members due to migration can make accompaniment more complex and challenging, especially when the social service intervention is based on a face-to-face relationship, and it is essential to understand transnational care with characteristics that have a hybrid form between face-to-face and digital (Baldassar et al., 2016; Barros, 2023; Barros et al., 2024).

Cultural and social differences in each country/society also impact access to services and resources. Thus, members of transnational families may find it difficult to access local services and resources due to a lack of knowledge about each country's specific systems and policies, making it even more challenging (Androff & Mathis, 2021; Jofre-Monseny et al., 2016). In this sense, we highlight the emotional and psychosocial challenges that migration and separation between family members can add, which can lead to anxiety, loneliness and other health concerns, possibly requiring emotional and psychosocial support to cope with the distance (Neto, 2019).

Overall, accompanying transnational families presents a series of complex challenges that require a sensitive, culturally competent and collaborative approach on the part of all social professionals, which involves the idea of integrating the norms and values of users and different countries into best intervention practices (Barros & Hanenberg, 2024).

Social workers supporting transnational families must understand the situation of the individual and their family in order to provide an appropriate response; they must also be proactive and creative in resolving social issues that arise in different contexts. This specialized support requires practitioners to be entrepreneurial when building innovative and creative responses. It is also important to consider the need for greater participation in planning responses that are properly framed in cross-cultural contexts (Bryceson, 2019).

Barros and collaborators (2023, 2024, 2025) point out that supporting transnational families in Portugal can have different challenges depending on whether they are on or off the European continent, as there is free movement of people, goods and services, with European policies that protect the common space. The fact that families are on different continents, where distances are much longer and even the time zone can be different, as well as the legislative basis, can make it difficult to support and contact family members.

For all interdisciplinary practitioners, especially social workers, it is a challenge to rethink the current forms of support for these families. Portugal is an aging country, with many elderly people in institutions whose adult children have emigrated. The distance involved adds complexity to the assistance provided.

1.2. Ageing in Portugal: a case study for reflection

Botelho and Branco (2022) pointed out that 'ageing is a dynamic process that confers vulnerability and signals finitude, and the distinction between ageing and chronic illness is difficult but partly possible and desirable' (p. 42). According to Harper (2010), it can be analyzed from a social point of view, as an opportunity, since longevity is a civilizational achievement and an indicator of development. In the same way of thinking, Walker (2008) adds that aging is also an indicator of social and economic progress. Additionally, the author considers that the increase in average life

expectancy has been the success of transformations in science and public policy. Furthermore, the large increase in the elderly population is having a significant impact, particularly on health systems, in terms of economic, scientific, technological and cultural development (Barbosa, 2015).

Given the significant increase in specialized support needs, social workers and technicians in interdisciplinary teams have been challenged to rethink the social support provided to this population. Social support must treat people individually in accordance with their individual relationships, affections, history and biography (Astier, 2015; Astier & Duvoux, 2006). According to Astier and Duvoux (2006), there is an attention to the other person as a unique individual and the need for personalized treatment. The logic of action has changed from target groups (or groups) at risk to one that is more focused on individuality, on the person as a singular being (Astier & Duvoux, 2006). As a result, there is a need to consider the person's living conditions and particularities/singularities when designing the social aid that is proposed.

Although the aging phenomenon is global, the situation in Portugal stands out as a particularly relevant area for research. According to the PORDATA database (2022), Portugal is getting older. In 1960, there were 708,569 people aged 65 or over; in 2021, the figure rose to 2,424,122 people aged 65 or over. The rate of births went from 24.1 per cent in 1960 to around 7.7 per cent in 2021. Average life expectancy rose from 67.1 years in 1970 to 80.7 years in 2020.

Currently Portugal is the oldest countries in the European Union and there is a forecast in 2050 it should effectively be the oldest in the EU (INE, 2020). This may be the result from the conjugation of two causes: the decrease in the birth rate and the increase in the average life expectancy of populations (INE, 2020).

The key factor that alerts us to the difference in the Portuguese context is a socio-historical context characterized by the systematic emigration of people of active age (Gomes et al., 2015; Pires et al., 2022). However, the new migratory profiles that followed the *Brain Drain* in the last decade, have modified the patterns of support between generations (Gomes et al., 2015), since the expectations of return (caring for more elderly people) seem to have changed substantially (Barros, 2023), making it more important to understand how the entire family social group can be united to give it more resilience in the psychosocial approach to care (Barros & Hanenberg, 2024).

In percentage terms, in 2022, the resident population in Portugal was constituted of 12.9% of young people, 63.1% of people of working age and 24.0% of the elderly. Estimates indicate that the number of people who left Portugal to reside abroad for a period equal to or greater than one year (permanent emigrants) reached a total of 30,954 people (25,079 in 2021, corresponding to an annual rate of change of + 23.4%), of which 64.6% were male and 35.4% female (INE, 2023).

In light of the above, the aging population in Portugal is a political and social issue with very specific and worrying contours, which require specific intervention. In Portugal, many elderly people are attending social centers, which accompany the elderly person, but also their transnational family, as they are a point of communication and support at a distance. Thus, the current aging of the Portuguese population requires a renewed reflection that responds to families that are far away and at the same time to the elderly who remain in Portugal.

Considering that social interaction is multifaceted and integrates problems and solutions, this paper aims to be a space of dialogue between challenges and possible answers to reflect on the main issues of care in transnational families.

2. Reflection and discussion

2.1. Challenges that require new answers

Support for transnational families—just with adult generations in interaction—can be analyzed from different perspectives: the perspective of family members who are far away but want to be close to their relatives: especially the ascendants in the country of origin who are in concrete needs of the aging process (Albert & Ferring, 2018). These families often feel that they can't be there at a time when close family support is needed. This impossibility can be accentuated by a lower availability for mobility due to professional commitments, but above all by the distance to which they are subject. The fact that they can't be close and accompany their relatives generates anxiety and uncertainty in the decisions they make to ensure the utmost well-being of their relatives (Jofre-Monseny et al., 2016; Neto, 2019), which justifies the need for a new way of conception of services and care.

From a social services perspective, many of these families are accompanied by social workers and some psychologists as part of their service in social institutions, such as ERPI in Portugal (Residential Structures for the Elderly), home care, social centers, and day centers. As well as having to accompany the people they care for within the scope of their social response, these professionals have the dual challenge of accompanying the users' families. They often mediate between the responses, needs, family and user (Guerra, 2019). On the other hand, the distance makes it difficult to get a contextual understanding of the family member's social and health situation. Social workers often have to mediate between service users, their families and social structures to respond to the needs that arise (Furman & Negi, 2007).

Nevertheless, from the users' perspective, who feel more vulnerable (and for this reason need support from some social organizations), the fact that the family is distant can generate feelings of loneliness or even insecurity about their situation (Guerra, 2019).

In a global macrosystemic context, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced social services to rethink their social support practices. Previously, social support meant that there had to be a face-to-face relationship. The pandemic forced social workers to provide social support at a distance because they had to protect the population they were working with. On the other, families were also forced to accompany their relatives from a distance, which brought several consequences. With this global context, social work realized that it would also be possible to carry out social accompaniment via online platforms or by telephone (Mishna et al., 2021).

2.2. Future directions (for now)

Being a member of a transnational family redefines the way in which each person in the family group understands the idea of the 'other' in their lives, inserting them into a systemic framework that can foster behaviors of inclusion or exclusion

(Barros et al., 2024; Neto, 2019). The same happens with social workers, who have to reframe their perception of the family network in which the person they are assisting belongs—be it due to cultural diversity, geographical distance, belonging to families with more or less community-based behaviors, or even access to digital means.

Therefore, it is important to discuss how transnationality can (and should) influence specific practices in social work. Schrooten (2021) alerts us to the need for a culturally competent intervention that integrates the realities of the various countries involved and the specific regions where these people live, going beyond the beliefs, values and norms of a predominant culture to provide ground for transdisciplinary thinking.

Transnational social work researchers (e.g. Boccagni, 2015; Schrooten, 2021) warn of the problems of a ‘generic’ approach to social work only embedded in a cultural reality when a cross-cultural and cross-countries strategy is needed.

With the undeniable advance of communication technologies, which create more space for interaction between members of transnational families, boosting the frequency and intensity of contact and support (Baldassar et al., 2016; Barros et al., 2024), they also increase the number of structures and resources that social workers can turn to obtain a more comprehensive solution to the user’s needs.

Consider the example of elderly people who are institutionalized and have family descendants who have emigrated: these family members can provide support and be present by telephone or digital means, often organized by the staff. Although this was already a relatively well-known process in transnational cases, the pandemic had a certain impact as it accelerated a process with the massive use of online platforms by the population and institutions, enabling interaction not only between transnational families, but also between practitioners trying to negotiate common well-being (Banks et al., 2020).

The growing connection and digital communication between carers, users and families is in itself a significant facilitator of social work. However, it is necessary to address the even greater challenges regarding the needs of the cared-for person as an individual element in a context (Branco, 2008; Schrooten, 2021). Perceptions of aging and the need for support (e.g. including digital literacy) are increasing according to the globalized context in which all players interact (Barros & Hanenberg, 2024). Therefore, the use of technologies of communication is a huge opportunity to social intervention, but there are some barriers to use, both by users and institutions, such as the difficulties of use by users or the lack of access to technologies or the internet, which can be simultaneously a challenge for the technicians and a problem to the infrastructures (Barros et al., 2024; Walsh, 2020).

Although this approach is new in the Portuguese context, previous interdisciplinary studies (e.g. Barros & Ganito, 2024; Barros et al., 2024), which looked at parents of Portuguese emigrants, found that digital technologies play a central role in maintaining contact and providing support to older generations. These authors also referred to the need for digital literacy for a balanced digital ecosystem. In other words, vulnerabilities are also reflected in the digital world, as people with lower socio-cultural levels tend to be more exposed to risk (e.g. digital fraud) and do not know how to use basic tools. Thus, the importance of community workers in training older people in digital use is highlighted, offering useful tips for application in the social work profession.

This search for diverse and multifaceted interaction is more challenging, but also more empowering for the role of social teams, as it requires continuous training, whether formal or informal, making each of the technicians more sensitive and closer to the intercultural realities that shape the world. At the same time, it can also be a way of recognizing the impact of transnational social work, which aims to integrate the ‘generic’ support that guides the area, but enhancing their integrative profile of multifaceted knowledge (Androff & Mathis, 2021; Jofre-Monseny et al., 2016) and care as a circulation concept which can be downwards or upwards, trying to work with the generation gap resulting for the geographical distance (Baldassar & Merla, 2014).

2.3. Training strategies for social workers

Training strategies for social workers in transnational family care require a deep understanding of transnational contexts and the development of relevant knowledge and skills (Pulman & Fenge, 2024; Schrooten, 2021). Both pre- and post-qualification training should be significantly improved to ensure high-quality preparation for social workers entering this field. Professionals need to understand why different generations with different perspectives and objectives have a common ground of interactions and support (Baldassar & Merla, 2014).

They must recognize the connections between these individual concerns and the macro and micro-level forces that shape the transnational care phenomenon in a multifaced perception of the family as a multichallenged group (Barros & Hanenberg, 2024), where the person’s dynamic with the surrounding social network (in their own country or another country) interferes, but also the interaction with services that can help to overcome challenges (Baldassar & Merla, 2014).

For these reasons, the challenges of integrating global and cross-cultural perspectives into social work programme *curriculums* must be addressed, as noted in the literature.

Curriculum design in social work should integrate transnational perspectives by including specific modules or courses on transnational care. These courses could address topics such as global migration patterns, global care chains, and the role of technology in maintaining long-distance care relationships (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). Content such as the impact of migration on family dynamics, the policies and practices that shape transnational care, and comparative analysis of care systems in different countries are essential to help students understand how transnational care is intertwined with the foundations of social work (e.g. Debruyne et al., 2023; Schrooten, 2021; Webster et al., 2010). This approach can be strengthened by incorporating global perspectives into core disciplines such as human behavior in social contexts and public policy analysis. Integrating case studies and real-life narratives is another effective strategy. Studies based on the experiences of migrant carers, transnational families and refugees provide practical contexts to complement theory, highlighting the challenges and resilience associated with care networks (Parreñas, 2005). This resource allows students to analyze the intersections of social status, gender, race and migration, promoting culturally sensitive interventions. Critical analysis of concrete cases can enrich students’ understanding and strengthen their capacity to respond in practice. Guest lectures and intercultural partnerships further enhance the training of future professionals. Inviting experts, politicians, or people directly involved in transnational care provides access to

different perspectives. Collaboration with international programmes or social work organizations offers opportunities such as virtual classrooms, discussions with colleagues from other countries on the challenges of transnational care, partnerships with NGOs linked to migrant communities, and field visits that simulate real care scenarios.

The use of technology in global learning is also crucial. Digital tools such as virtual exchange platforms, webinars and online resources allow students to connect with professionals and communities from different geographical contexts. Meanwhile, digital storytelling effectively documents and explores transnational care experiences, fostering a deeper and more engaging understanding of these dynamics (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004; Ganito, 2018).

In addition, policy and advocacy training are essential to prepare students for larger-scale interventions. This component should emphasize critical analysis of policies that affect migrant carers, including labor immigration laws, family reunification and global labor rights (Yeates, 2009). Skills such as defending inclusive policies, challenging inequalities in care provision and promoting human rights justice are essential for the development of conscious and active professionals.

Experiential learning through internships and field placements is a practical approach that links theory and practice. Partnerships with local organizations and global agencies allow students to experience the context of transnational care first-hand, providing insights into the systemic, interpersonal and cultural factors that shape it. Critical reflection on these experiences helps to consolidate learning.

Finally, it is important to encourage critical reflection and examination of the ethical implications associated with transnational care. Issues such as the emotional costs of care work, power imbalances in global care chains, and the responsibilities of home and host countries deserve attention (Hochschild, 2012). Activities such as reflective journals, group discussions and the development of position papers encourage students to examine values and prejudices and prepare them for ethical and culturally sensitive practice.

In summary, a broader global perspective that questions borders and boundaries is essential, with a specific sensibilization for cross-cultural dynamics that can promote better comprehension of the *Other* (Ramos, 2013).

3. Conclusions

Social work needs to keep in line with the natural needs of a globalizing society with constant micro- and macro-social challenges. A good example is precisely the consideration of the intersection between support for the aging of people with migrant descendants and transnational networks.

Transnational families add immediate challenges to intervention, whether with institutionalized or not, more or less close families, as well as adjusting social measures, since communication technologies (and distance) are now interacting as constant variables in this search for comprehensive support.

This transnational awareness in future (or current) social workers will enable a deeper understanding of person-society complexities, as well as increasing sensitivity to the specific needs of these people, offering appropriate and 'tailored' support.

Best practices in this area emphasize the need for intercultural and transdisciplinary thinking that is open to new ways of helping to 'see the other' as a whole. A clear example

was the pandemic situation. Although it is a specific emergency context, it has underlined the need for quick adjustment of social interaction, and social workers must be at the forefront of these changes to promote the dignity of each person.

To conclude, this reflection leads us to believe that including the concepts of transnational families in bachelor's/master's degree curricula in the areas of social work can enrich future professionals' understanding of human mobility/migration, global systemic interactions, as well as the urgent need to consider the multiple interactions within the family group. Updating curricula should guarantee the necessary scientific training and practical and methodological preparation to intervene with this group of people. In this context, where the intervention of social workers is essential, it has become indispensable for universities to be able to contribute with training that responds to this emerging reality, with the capacity to innovate methodologies and intervention practices in order to provide effective support to the needs felt by transnational families.

The aim is to provide support that involves families, social workers and users with the aim of improving or maintaining the well-being and support provided so far.

It is therefore necessary nowadays to innovate and rethink an area of intervention that is so significant for Social Work and for current and future social workers.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The second author receives research support under the general employment contract between the institution Universidade Católica Portuguesa and the national funding body Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

ORCID

Inês Guerra  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2558-2591>

Carlos Barros  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5498-068X>

Ethics

No ethical approval was required for this theoretical article.

Open scholarship



This article has earned the Center for Open Science badges for Open Data and Open Materials through Open Practices Disclosure. The data and materials are openly accessible at <https://re3data.org>

References

- Albert, I., & Ferring, D. (2018). Characteristics and determinants of intergenerational financial transfers within families using mixed care for elderly people. *Drustvena Istrazivanja*, 27(1), 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.5559/di.27.1.01>
- Androff, D., & Mathis, C. (2021). Human rights-based social work practice with immigrants and asylum seekers in a legal service organization. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 7(2), 178–188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-021-00197-7>
- Astier, I. (2015). *Les nouvelles règles du social*. Puf.
- Astier, I., & Duvoux, N. (2006). L'institution de la dignité dans la société contemporaine; réflexions à partir du cas français [The institution of dignity in contemporary society: reflections based on the French case]. In *La société biographique: Une injonction à vivre dignement* (pp. 15–31). L'Harmattan.
- Baldassar, L., & Merla, L. (2014). Introduction: Transnational family caregiving through the lens of circulation. In L. Baldassar & L. Merla (Eds.), *Transnational families, migration and the circulation of care: Understanding mobility and absence in family life* (pp. 3–24). Routledge.
- Baldassar, L., Nedelcu, M., Merla, L., & Wilding, R. (2016). ICT-based co-presence in transnational families and communities: Challenging the premise of face-to-face proximity in sustaining relationships. *Global Networks*, 16(2), 133–144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12108>
- Banks, S., Cai, T., de Jonge, E., Shears, J., Shum, M., Sobočan, A. M., Strom, K., Truell, R., Úriz, M. J., & Weinberg, M. (2020). Practising ethically during COVID-19: Social work challenges and responses. *International Social Work*, 63(5), 569–583. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872820949614>
- Barbosa, C. M. O. (2015). Políticas públicas locais para o envelhecimento: O caso de Portugal e da Suécia [Local public policies for ageing: The case of Portugal and Sweden]. *EXEDRA: Revista Científica*, 2, 152–172. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6495853>
- Barros, C. (2023). Connection in transnational families. Face-to-face and digital spaces in Portuguese emigrants. *Trends in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43076-023-00309-4>
- Barros, C. (2025). *Entre Fronteiras e Gerações. Jovens Emigrantes e Famílias* [Between borders and generations. Young emigrants and families]. UCP Editora. <https://doi.org/10.34632/9789725411025>
- Barros, C., & Ganito, C. (2024). Navigating ageing in transnational families: The role of digital technologies. *HIC International, Conference Paper. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-76818-711>
- Barros, C., & Hanenberg, P. (2024). An integral approach to well-being in transnational families: A brief proposal for best practices. *Social Sciences*, 13(3), 131. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13030131>
- Barros, C., Hanenberg, P., & Santos, A. S. (2024). Reframing relational space. Migration from the perspective of those 'who stay'. *Human Arenas*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-024-00403-8>
- Bengston, V. L., Putney, N. M., & Johnson, M. (2005). The problem of theory in gerontology today. In M. L. Johnson (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of age and ageing* (pp. 3–20). Cambridge University Press.
- Boccagni, P. (2015). Burden, blessing or both? On the mixed role of transnational ties in migrant informal social support. *International Sociology*, 30(3), 250–268. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580915570508>
- Botelho, A., & Branco, J. (2022). Declínio Funcional e fragilidade [Functional decline and fragility]. In H. Canhão, A. Gil, P. Barros, & J. Branco (Eds.), *Desafios do Envelhecimento para a Saúde, Economia e a Sociedade* (pp. 41–52). Princípia Editora.
- Branco, F. (2008). Acção Social, Individação e Cidadania. A construção do acompanhamento social no contexto do Estado Social activo. *Cidades, Comunidades e Territórios*, (17), 81–91. <http://hdl.handle.net/10071/3321>

- Bryceson, D. F. (2019). Transnational families negotiating migration and care life cycles across nation-state borders. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(16), 3042–3064. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1547017>
- Chamberlain, M., & Leydesdorff, S. (2004). Transnational families: Memories and narratives. *Global Networks*, 4(3), 227–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2004.00090.x>
- Debruyne, P., Van Acker, K., Geldof, D., & Schrooten, M. (2023). Transnational dynamics of family reunification: reassembling social work with refugees in Belgium. In *Migration and Social Work* (pp. 95–111). Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781447361831.ch006>.
- Doetsch, J., Pilot, E., Santana, P., & Krafft, T. (2017). Potential barriers in healthcare access of the elderly population influenced by the economic crisis and the troika agreement: A qualitative case study in Lisbon, Portugal. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 16(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-017-0679-7>
- Furman, R., & Negi, N. J. (2007). Social work practice with transnational Latino populations. *International Social Work*, 50(1), 107–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872807072500>
- Furman, R., Negi, N. J., & Salvador, R. B. (2010). An introduction to transnational social work. In N. Nalini Junko & F. Rich (Eds.), *Transnational social work practice* (pp. 3–19). Columbia University Press.
- Ganito, C. (2018). Gendering old age: The role of mobile phones in the experience of aging for women. In Z. Jia & S. Gavriel (Eds.), *Human Aspects of IT for the Aged Population. Acceptance, Communication and Participation: 4th International Conference, ITAP 2018, Held as Part of HCI International 2018, Las Vegas, NV, USA, July 15 -20, 2018, Proceedings, Part I 4* (pp. 40–51). Springer International Publishing.
- Gomes, M. R., Lopes, J. T., Vaz, H., Cerdeira, L., Ganga, R., Machado, M. L., Magalhães, D., Cabrito, B., Patrocínio, T., Silva, S., Brites, R., & Peixoto, P. (2015). *Fuga de cérebros: Retratos da emigração portuguesa qualificada* [Brain drain: Portraits of skilled Portuguese emigration]. Bertrand Editora.
- Gray, M. (2005). Dilemmas of international social work: Paradoxical processes in indigenisation, universalism and imperialism. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 14(3), 231–238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2397.2005.00363.x>
- Guerra, I. (2019). *O que é o caso social? Estudo sobre a construção do caso social em contexto hospitalar* [What is a social case? A study on the construction of the social case in a hospital context]. UCP Editora.
- Harper, S. (2010). The capacity of social security and health care institutions to adapt to an ageing world. *International Social Security Review*, 63(3–4), 177–196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-246X.2010.01374.x>
- Healy, L. M., & Thomas, R. L. (2020). *International social work: Professional action in an inter-dependent world*. Oxford University Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The outsourced self: What happens when we pay others to live our lives for us*. Metropolitan Books.
- INE. (2020). *Projeções de População Residente - 2018–2080. Resident population projections*. Retrieved September 12, 2024, from https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_destaques&DESTAQUESdest_boui=406534255&DESTAQUESmodo=2&xlang=pt
- INE. (2023). *Estatísticas demográficas 2022. Demographic statistics 2022*. Retrieved September 15, 2024, from <https://www.ine.pt/xurl/pub/280978178>
- Jofre-Monseny, J., Sorribas-Navarro, P., & Vázquez-Grenno, J. (2016). Immigration and local spending in social services: Evidence from a massive immigration wave. *International Tax and Public Finance*, 23(6), 1004–1029. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-016-9399-y>
- Königter, S., Altissimo, A., Jakoby-Herz, A., & Schröer, W. (2015). Child and youth welfare in globalized societies: Migration in child and youth care – A transnational curriculum for social work courses. *Transnational Social Review*, 5(1), 73–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2014.997086>
- Midgley, J., & Tang, K. L. (2001). Introduction: Social policy, economic growth and developmental welfare. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 10(4), 244–252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2397.00180>

- Mishna, F., Milne, E., Bogo, M., & Pereira, L. F. (2021). Responding to COVID-19: New trends in social workers' use of information and communication technology. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 49(4), 484–494. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-020-00780-x>
- Neto, F. (2019). Acculturation, adaptation and saudade among Portuguese migrants. *The Journal of Psychology*, 153(7), 667–679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2019.1590298>
- Oliveira, B. (2008). *Psicologia do envelhecimento e do idoso*. Livpsic/Legis Editora.
- Papadaniél, Y., Rossi, I., & Foucart, J. (2009). *Accompagnement: le lien social sous tension. Lectures, Les revues*. De Boeck Supérieur. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-pensee-plurielle-2009-3.htm>
- Parreñas, R. S. (2005). *Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford University Press.
- Peng, L. (2024). Social empathy: How social work educators perceive and intend to engage in social justice. *Social Work Education*, 43(2), 442–458. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2022.2112561>
- Pires, R. P., Vidigal, I., Pereira, C., Azevedo, J., & Veiga, C. M. (2022). *Emigração Portuguesa 2022: Relatório Estatístico. Observatório da Emigração e Rede Migra*. CIES-Iscte. <http://hdl.handle.net/10071/27896>
- PORDATA. (2022). *Esperança de Vida e Mortes em Portugal* [Life expectancy and deaths in Portugal] Retrieved December 6, 2022, from <https://www.pordata.pt/subtema/portugal/esperanca+de+vida+e+mortes-32>
- Pulman, A., & Fenge, L. A. (2024). Building capacity for social care research – ways of improving research skills for social workers. *Social Work Education*, 43(1), 60–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2023.2221276>
- Ramos, N. (2013). *Interculturalidade(s) e Mobilidade(s) no espaço europeu: Viver e comunicar entre culturas* [Interculturality(ies) and mobility(ies) in Europe: living and communicating between cultures]. *The overarching issues of the European space*. Ed. Faculdade Letras Universidade do Porto. <https://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/12349.pdf>
- Schrooten, M. (2021). Transnational social work: Challenging and crossing borders and boundaries. *Journal of Social Work*, 21(5), 1163–1181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017320949389>
- Schrooten, M. (2021). Transnational social work: Challenging and crossing borders and boundaries. *Journal of Social Work*, 21(5), 1163–1181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017320949389>
- Walker, A. (2008). Commentary: The emergence and application of active aging in Europe. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 21(1), 75–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420802529986>
- Walsh, F. (2020). Loss and resilience in the time of COVID-19: Meaning making, hope, and transcendence. *Family Process*, 59(3), 898–911. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12588>
- Webster, S. K., Arenas, A. T., & Magaña, S. (2010). Incorporating transnational social work into the curriculum. In N. Nalini Junko & F. Rich (Eds.), *Transnational social work practice* (pp. 205–221). Columbia University Press.
- Yeates, N. (2009). *Globalizing care economies and migrant workers: Explorations in global care chains*. Palgrave Macmillan.