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Unpacking 'family troubles', care and relationality across time and space

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Children's Geographies

Editorial for Special Section:

'Family troubles', care and relationality across time and space

Title: Unpacking 'family troubles', care and relationality across time and space

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Abstract (150 words)
Despite significant work on family geographies in recent years, geographers have paid less attention to changes and challenges that may be considered 'family troubles' in diverse contexts. Through this editorial and the special section, we unpack time-space dynamics of 'family troubles' in diverse contexts, with a particular focus on care and relationality. Our discussion foregrounds ambiguities and tensions surrounding geographical proximity and propinguity, material-emotional responses, and diverse meanings of 'family', 'home' and belonging in the context of troubling changes in family lives, intergenerational relations and practices of care. We seek to establish an agenda for future geographical work and interdisciplinary dialogue on 'family troubles', vulnerabilities and social suffering in contexts of (troubling) changes and diversity. Such analyses are crucial in our efforts to envision a more relational understanding of our 'being-in-the-world', underpinned by care ethics and support for differentially positioned family members throughout the lifecourse and across generations.

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Requested order of papers in special section

1. Gottzén, L. and Sandberg, L. 2017. Creating safe atmospheres? Children's experiences of grandparents' affective and spatial responses to domestic violence, *Children's Geographies*, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1406896.

2. Turner, N. and Almack, K. 2017. Troubling meanings of family and competing moral imperatives in the family lives of young people with a parent who is at the end of life, *Children's Geographies*, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1350633.

3. Driscoll, J. 2018. Strangers and estrangement: young people's renegotiations of birth and foster family relationships as they transition out of care and the implications for the state as parent, *Children's Geographies*, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1422209.

4. Davies, H. 2017. Embodied and sensory encounters: death, bereavement and remembering in children's family and personal lives, *Children's Geographies*, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1392482.

5. Tu, M. 2017. The transnational one-child generation: family relationships and overseas aspiration between China and the UK, *Children's Geographies*, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1393499

6. Mas Giralt, R. 2018. Bereavement from afar: transnationalgrieving and the emotional geographies of migration, *Children's Geographies*, DOI:10.1080/14733285.2018.1447087.

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Unpacking 'family troubles', care and relationality across time and space

Introduction

While there has been significant work on family geographies, parenting and place in recent years (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Hall, 2016; 2018; Jupp and Gallagher, 2013; Tarrant and Hall, 2019), geographers have paid less attention to the particular dynamics of changes and challenges that may be considered 'family troubles' and the pressures that these circumstances may place on children, young people and family relations in diverse households, cultural contexts and institutional settings. As Tarrant and Hall (2019, p.4) observe, "Everyday processes of family conflict, trouble and disrupture currently occupy a marginal place in the geographic literature about family". This editorial and special section seek to unpack and critically analyse time-space dynamics of 'family troubles' in diverse contexts, with a particular focus on care and relationality. In so doing, we seek to establish an agenda for future geographical work and interdisciplinary dialogue on 'family troubles', vulnerabilities and social suffering in contexts of (troubling) changes and diversity. We argue that time-space analyses of 'family troubles' provide novel contributions to geographies of children, youth and families, as well as geographies of care, migration, gender, intergenerationality, intersectional and lifecourse approaches. Such analyses foreground ambiguities and tensions surrounding geographical proximity and propinguity, material-emotional responses, and diverse meanings of 'family', 'home' and belonging in the context of troubling changes in family lives, intergenerational relations and practices of care.

The ongoing 'family troubles' project, led by family sociologists, Jane Ribbens McCarthy, Val Gillies and Carol-Ann Hooper, has explored conceptual and policy understandings of 'family troubles', and 'troubling families' (see Ribbens McCarthy, Gillies and Hooper, 2018; Ribbens McCarthy and Gillies, 2018). As Ribbens McCarthy, Gillies and Hooper (2019 in press) summarise, the theme of the original Symposium in 2010 was "intended to recognise the 'normality' and 'ordinariness' of changes and challenges in the family lives of children and young people, which might sometimes be welcome but might often be experienced as (remarkable or unremarkable) family troubles". This led to an edited collection which sought to "normalise troubles" and "trouble the normal" (ibid). Ribbens McCarthy et al. (2013, p.14) defined 'family troubles' in terms of "unexpected disruptions and/or ... disruptive changes, and/or … a chronic failure of life to live up to expectations". The project poses pertinent questions of:

> whether, or how far, difficult or painful events constitute a general feature of family lives, how troubled and troubling families perhaps normalise their lives, and when 'changes' and 'troubles' may be considered to become 'harm', and by whom? And how do 'family' discourses and practices, along with idealisations of 'childhood', re/create and feed into such divisions and dilemmas? (Ribbens McCarthy, Gillies and Hooper, 2018, p.153).

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This special section provides fresh perspectives on a diverse range of 'family troubles' which shape young people's family lives and connections to others *across time and space*. We seek to locate this work not only within the fields of family sociology, social policy and social work practice, but also build on the growing body of research on family geographies and care (McKie et al, 2002; Bowlby et al, 2010; Evans and Becker, 2009; Evans, 2012; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Hall, 2016), geographies of childhood and youth, age and intergenerationality (Brannen et al, 2000; Hopkins and Pain, 2007; Vanderbeck, 2007; Tarrant, 2010; Valentine, Holloway and Jayne, 2010; Vanderbeck and Worth, 2015; Evans, 2015). Through our geographical-sociological collaboration, we seek to place greater emphasis than has hitherto been the case on the importance of place, space, temporality and emotions to conceptualisations and understandings of young people's family lives and intergenerational relations in potentially 'troubling' contexts of change and diversity. Such issues become even more complex in the context of migration and differing cultural values and expectations of childhood, 'family' and constructions of care (Evans, 2011a; Raghuram, 2016; 2019).

We also seek to respond to broader calls to challenge binary characterisations (Ribbens McCarthy et al, 2018;Twum-Danso Imoh Bourdillon and Meichsner, 2019) and 'trouble' disciplinary boundaries in order to advance interdisciplinary understandings of contemporary family lives, while acknowledging unequal power geometries of knowledge production in a postcolonial, globalised world (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012; Connell, 2006; Philipps, 2018). In particular, Evans (2019) has highlighted the need to trouble Majority-Minority world binaries about 'family struggles' and recognise commonalities, while carefully situating the process of knowledge production and paying close attention to differing meanings of 'family'. Further, Ribbens McCarthy and Gillies (2018) call for the development of inter-cultural dialogue about the boundary between 'normal' family troubles, and troubles that are troubling - potentially 'harmful', particularly to children – in ways that might be seen to require intervention. Such inter-cultural dialogue seeks to go beyond 'facile universalism' and 'lazy relativism' (Jullien, 2014) while recognising neo-colonial power dynamics and inequalities.

In this piece, we give an overview of recent literature on time-space practices of care and relationality and relate this to meanings of 'family troubles' and ('troubling') changes in young people's family lives. We draw out pertinent cross-cutting themes from the papers in the special section, focusing on the ambiguity of co-presence and distance (geographical, physical, virtual, emotional), temporal and spatial dynamics of materiality, bereavement and memorialisation, and moral meanings of 'family', 'home' and belonging in the context of challenging 'family troubles'.

Troubling 'family', 'family troubles' and 'troubling families'

As noted earlier, the 'family troubles' project seeks to trouble binary characterisations of 'ordinary' and 'troubling' families. Ribbens McCarthy et al (2019 in press) highlight the ways that family studies in the UK context have become siloed between a binary of 'the mainstream', implicitly understood as 'ordinary' family lives, and 'the problematic' aspects of family lives regarded as of interest to social policy experts, professionals and practitioners. Indeed, the term 'troubled families' has become a key feature of UK social policy on families

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in recent years, defining 'troubled' in categorical ways (ibid; Crossley, 2016). In contrast, the 'family troubles' project seeks to question such binary categorisations, including troubling the notion of 'family' itself.

Significant debates within sociology have problematised the term 'family', finding new ways of thinking about the meanings and discourses associated with the term in everyday life, as well as its powerful ideological resonances in policy and practice (Edwards, Ribbens McCarthy and Gillies, 2012; Ribbens McCarthy, 2012a; Morgan 2011). A consensus seems to have emerged that retaining the term is helpful since 'family' still matters in people's everyday lives, despite social and demographic variations, and it carries significant public political resonance (Hall, 2018; Ribbens McCarthy et al, 2019 in press).

Work on 'family troubles' and young people's relational vulnerabilities is limited within geographies of children, youth and families, reflecting a wider tendency within the discipline of geography to focus on the everyday lives of 'ordinary' families in the context of educational, community and neighbourhood spaces and/or austere times (Tarrant and Hall, 2019; Hall, 2018). Indeed, Holloway, Holt and Mills (2018) observe that there appears a tendency for geographers who explore affect and emotions, and geographers of children, youth and families more generally, to embrace positive emotions such as, "enchantments, vitalism and hopefulness" and to shy away from exploring challenging emotional geographies of social suffering, frailty and vulnerabilities (p.7). The authors suggest that this tendency may be linked to a continued optimistic attachment to notions of children as competent social actors, to the futurity of childhood or reduced interest in overtly political-economic issues.

This reluctance to engage with troubling emotions within the sub-discipline of geographies of children, youth and families may also be linked to a conceptual and methodological focus on children and young people as *individual* social actors, with less attention paid to relationality. Indeed, 'families' sometimes appears to be tacked on to the sub-disciplinary label as rather an afterthought. The fourth International Geographies of Children, Youth and Families conference held in San Diego in 2015, for example, did not initially include families in the advertised title, and panel sessions on families have been few and far between in this series of biannual conferences. Valentine (2008), Harker and Martin (2012) and Hall (2018) among others have recognised that a focus on 'family', including the challenges 'ordinary' families face in austerity, has largely been 'absent' in geographical work, with family lives remaining rather 'unrepresented', although geographers have led the development of a growing body of research on young caregiving and diverse family relations in the Majority world (Day, 2017; Evans, 2012; Evans and Thomas, 2009; Robson, 2004; see next section). The limited attention to young people's family lives in geography contrasts to a much longer heritage of exploring notions of 'family', family relations and practices within sociology (Fink, 2013; Morgan, 2011; Ribbens McCarthy et al, 2019 in press).

Recent interdisciplinary work among sociologists and geographers, including a forthcoming special issue of *Gender, Place & Culture* on the theme of 'Everyday geographies of family: feminist approaches and interdisciplinary conversations', is however helping to redress this balance (Edwards, 2019; Evans, 2019; Morgan, 2019; Tarrant and Hall, 2019). This interdisciplinary dialogue is also demonstrated in the range of disciplinary backgrounds of

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contributors to this special section and the wide range of papers presented at the interdisciplinary Symposium on 'Family Troubles: Care and Change in Diverse Contexts' we convened in Reading in 2015. We see the project to explore 'family troubles' and 'troubling families' conceptually and within policy as crucial in enabling a greater focus on the family lives of children and young people who experience (particularly troubling) changes and challenges that may (or may not) lead to negative outcomes or necessitate formal care interventions, while keeping in view the complexities, ambivalences and 'ordinariness' of such changes and challenges. Bringing a geographical lens to this project enables a greater emphasis on the temporalities and spatialities of 'doing family' in diverse, challenging contexts of change.

Time-space practices of care

Geographical research exploring time-space dynamics of care in young people's family lives represents an exception to the relatively limited attention paid to family relations within geography and is becoming a growing field of work within the wider care literature (Bowlby, 2012; Evans, 2012; Hall, 2016; Horton and Pyer, 2017). Recent literature on care and children, youth and families conducted predominantly in the Minority world has explored moral geographies of family and everyday austerity (Hall, 2016; 2018; Pimlott-Wilson and Hall, 2017); the reproduction of social, emotional and cultural capital among young people with socio-emotional difficulties (Holt, Bowlby and Lea, 2013); caring relations in diverse migration contexts (Erel, 2013; Evans, 2011a; Drammeh, 2019; Gupta, 2019; Wells, 2017); child protection (de Leeuw, 2017); orphanage spaces (Disney, 2017) and other institutional care settings for children and youth (Schliehe and Crowley, 2017).

In our own work as well as that of others, there has been a particularly fruitful engagement between geographies of care and geographies of children, youth and families in the Majority world, with a particular focus on what may regarded as 'family troubles' from a Minority worldview - young caregiving and intergenerational relations within families and communities affected by HIV, disability and family deaths (Ansell et al, 2011; Day, 2017; Day and Evans, 2015; Evans, 2011b; 2012; 2014; 2017; Evans and Becker, 2009; 2019; Ribbens McCarthy et al, 2018; Robson, 2004; Robson et al, 2006). Children's and young people's roles as 'carers' for parents and relatives affected by chronic illness and disability are often regarded as 'troubling' and perhaps constituting a need for support and intervention in the Minority world. This is most notable in the UK, where 'young carers' have been recognised as a specific category of vulnerable children, with accompanying legal rights, targeted interventions and opportunities for peer support(Evans and Becker, 2009). In many African countries and likely elsewhere in the Majority world, children's caring roles are often regarded as a 'normal' part of the socialisation process, arising from children's reciprocal responsibilities to their families and communities. Furthermore, caregiving children and youth are rarely specifically targeted for NGO or social welfare interventions (Day, 2017; Robson, 2004; see also Evans and Becker, 2019 for global comparisons). A cross-cultural lens thus poses further questions about what constitutes 'normal' caregiving and when this may become harmful to children's and young people's wellbeing, highlighting the need for careful analysis of cultural constructions of care.

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Bowlby et al's (2010) framework of *caringscapes/ carescapes* focuses on the temporal-spatial patterning of informal caring relations, practices and mobilities that are relevant to an individual's caring trajectory over the lifecourse (caringscapes) and the wider landscape of resources relevant to care, including formal care and support as well as transport, housing and other local infrastructures provided through public and private institutions (carescapes). This framework draws attention to time-space practices of care that go beyond a focus on dyadic caring relationships evident in some of the sociological and social policy literature on care. Although it was originally developed from an adult-centred view of caregiving, in which children were seen primarily as recipients of care (Bowlby, 2017), the framework has been adopted in diverse contexts in which children and young people are doing the caring, placing them at the centre of caringscapes/ carescapes (Evans, 2012; Haugen, 2007). This often challenges adult-child and generational hierarchies as well as idealised constructions of childhood as a 'care-free' period of innocence, with implications for young people's routines and embodied rhythms of everyday life, as well as their educational outcomes and other socially expected lifecourse transitions (Evans, 2012).

While research on care by, for, and among, children provides a window onto family relations in diverse cultural contexts and institutional settings, what is missing is an analysis of care, in all its complexity, within particularly 'troubling' family circumstances, where 'good care' may be absent or placed under severe pressure and may lead to concerns for children's and young people's present and future wellbeing. Work on caregiving children has started to explore some of the tensions between culturally appropriate care work and 'harmful' child labour (Evans and Skovdal, 2015), but there are many other 'troubling' family circumstances which may harm young people that warrant further critical attention, including domestic violence, abuse, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, to name a few (see also Driscoll, 2018; Gottzén, 2017; Gottzén and Sandberg, 2017; Mannay, 2013; Keogh et al, 2013; Valentine et al, 2010; Wilson, 2013).

Relationality

Recent conceptualisations of relationality within geographical literature highlight the spatialities and temporalities of relational space in young people's, 'family' and intimate lives. Hall (2018, p.5) for example, draws on Morrison et al's (2012, p.513) understanding of relational space as, "relations and spaces *between* and among individuals, groups and objects". This approach is combined with Massey's (1991, p.24) notion of relational space as the, "politics and spaces created by the 'geographical stretching-out of social relations', the spaces produced (and power, inequality and difference therein) as a result of the changing socio-material constitution of everyday life (technology, mobility, communication)".

Tronto's (1993; 2013) feminist ethic of care has also been influential in theorising caring relations and geographical work on diverse caring relations (Horton and Pyer, 2017; Raghuram, 2016; 2019), including in our own work (Evans and Becker, 2009; Evans and Thomas, 2009; Evans, 2014; Skovdal and Evans, 2017). "Care-giving", the third aspect of Tronto's interconnected care process, involves the "direct meeting of needs for care",

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involving physical work and "almost always requires that care-givers come in contact with the objects of care" (Tronto 1993, p.107). *Proximity* is therefore often regarded as necessary in order for care-giving to take place, although geographers have been critical of this assumption (Barnett and Land 2007; Massey 2004).

As Ribbens McCarthy and Gillies (2018, p.233) observe, care is theorised always to be a feature of relationships, "produced inter-subjectively in relation, and through practice" (Raghuram, 2016, p.515). Care ethics, underpinned by an acknowledgement of the centrality of relationality, vulnerabilities and the human capacity for suffering, have also provided a fruitful way of theorising family responses to death (Evans et al, 2016; Ribbens McCarthy, 2012b). As Horton and Pyer (2017) highlight, thinking with the concept of the ethic of care can enable a focus on not just immediate caring arrangements, but also on how an approach informed by care might "enlighten our entire way of collective and individual being" (Milligan and Wiles, 2010, p.743; Sevenhuijsen, 1998).

Gergen's (2009) understanding of relationality, developed from a cultural psychology perspective, offers a somewhat deeper understanding of the integral place of human relationships to our being-in-the-world than relational approaches that are often implied (but rarely explicitly theorised) by social studies of childhood and youth, intersectionality, lifecourse approaches, care ethics and feminist notions of 'relational autonomy'. Gergen highlights the harm caused by a sense of self as fundamentally independent in our everyday lives, which he characterises as, "the deadening weight we acquire through the discourse of a bounded self" (2009, p.5). His vision of "relational being" seeks to "recognise a world that is not within persons but within their relationships, and that ultimately erases the traditional boundaries of separation" (p.5).

In Ruth's, Jane's and Sophie's cross-cultural endeavours to interpret relationality and care in diverse family contexts in Senegal and China, we grapple with how best to conceptualise relationality, whether through feminist care ethics, Gergen's 'relational being', or the philosophical notion of *Ubuntu*, a concept originating in South Africa, but found in many African languages, that encompasses a complex understanding of relational personhood (Nel, 2008; Ribbens McCarthy and Gillies, 2018). This profoundly relational understanding of social life in which community and individuality are valued and mutually constituted (Eze, 2008) emphasises the profound connectedness of human existence and centrality of co-presence in shared family, intimate, and community life. Our research in urban Senegal has provided further insight into the crucial importance of family and community solidarity and how this shapes emotional and material experiences (Evans et al, 2017a; Ribbens McCarthy et al, 2018).

The co-constitutive nature of relational space, in which personhood, family relations, embodiment, emotional connections and materialities are woven together is particularly relevant to the papers in this collection, as we discuss below.

Introducing the collection

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The papers in this special section highlight the centrality and complexity of relational time-space caring practices in understanding 'family troubles' in diverse global contexts, which are shaped not only by the intersection of age, generation, gender and ethnicity, but also by power geometries at a range of spatial scales. The papers illustrate the powerful, often emotive discourses and moral understandings of 'family' in different cultural and institutional settings (Turner and Almack, 2017; Driscoll, 2018; Mas Giralt, 2018; Tu, 2017) and explore the (potentially troubling or troubled) changes, caring practices, and intergenerational relations that shape children's and young people's family lives (Davies, 2017; Gottzén and Sandberg, 2017). These include young people's and grandparents' relationships and 'safe atmospheres' in the context of domestic violence (Gottzén and Sandberg), moral geographies of family care at the end of life (Turner and Almack), young people's renegotiation of birth and foster family relationships in transitions from foster care (Driscoll), children's understandings of death and memorialisation (Davies), intergenerational care between migrant youth and their parents stretched across space (Tu) and transnational grieving (Mas Giralt).

All of the papers, to varying degrees, trouble meanings of 'family' and what constitutes 'good care' (Tronto, 1993). Nicola Turner and Kathryn Almack's (2019) analysis of young people's experiences of caring for a parent at the end of life reveals the significance of *moral* understandings of family relations, with young people articulating their expectations and views of how family relationships *should* be performed. The authors show how such moral understandings may result in feelings of being personally diminished if their 'family' does not meet these criteria. This highlights the ways that 'family' is practised, performed and displayed to others (Finch, 2007; Morgan, 2011; see also Tarrant, 2016) through the telling of "moral tales". While young caregiving in the context of chronic illness and disability has been widely acknowledged as enabling the development of closer family bonds (Evans and Becker, 2009), Turner and Almack highlight the implications of family members' refusal to "be there" in times of trouble. Young people associated a lack of geographical proximity with a failure to recognise care needs and indeed a rejection of the 'family project', which may threaten young people's ontological security.

As Morgan (2019, p.5) notes, family practices are "boundary practices… defining who are family members, who belongs and how one belongs and the importance or unimportance of physical distance when it comes to reaffirming those ties". Further, although not confined to the home, Morgan regards family practices to be bound up with the emotional dimensions of homespace, although these are rarely remarked upon (2019, p.4; see Evans, 2011a for an exception). In both Turner and Almack's (2017) and Lucas Gottzén and Linn Sandberg's (2017) papers, geographical proximity to homespace is seen to enable affective 'closeness' or propinquity between family members. Gottzén and Sandberg's paper, with its focus on intergenerational relations in the context of domestic violence, however, also provides a nuanced account of the relation between spatial and relational *movements*. Supporting children exposed to violence (and other vulnerable children) is both a spatial process (where individuals move between different sites) and an affective and relational process, where siding and aligning with the child is important in order to create safety, a sense of 'home' and belonging. Grandparents who are 'on their side', relationally aligning themselves with children, can be seen as engaging in a spatial-affective-relational "homing

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device" in order to create safe atmospheres for children experiencing 'troubling' homespaces. 'Safety' and 'safe atmostpheres', then, can be seen as both *spatial* (physically moving away from, distancing and providing protection from violence and abuse) and *affective* (the importance of feeling protected at home and so on).

'Troubling' family relationships emerge as a key theme in Jenny Driscoll's (2018) paper on young people's experiences of multiple foster care placements, which arouse challenging emotions of loss, separation and rejection. In order to feel at home and create 'family-like' relationships, children need to be treated as one of the foster parents' own children, which includes the promise of an ongoing and long-term relationship. Indeed, the significance of supportive adults in separated or reconstituted families, social workers and other professionals and sibling relationships, sustained over time, to young people's present and future lifecourse transitions cannot be overemphasised. The paper contrasts to Turner and Almack's and Gottzén and Sandberg's emphasis on geographical proximity and co-presence in the 'here and now' - the need for family members to "be there" at times of troubles. Driscoll's paper suggests that relationality and belonging for young people making the transition from foster care is not simply (or always) an issue of "being there" (that is, present caregiving), but that feeling 'at home' and being accepted as part of a 'family' are also future-oriented and significant to young people's imagined future trajectories.

Driscoll's (2018) evidence about the development of self-reliance strategies as a negative response to neglect, lack of love and the loss of ontological security is an important counter-argument to the often positive portrayal of young people's resilience in coping with 'troubling' family circumstances. As Driscoll observes, there is a danger that vulnerability may become overlooked when childhood studies are "replete with examples of young people as socially competent agents, with little space for alternatives" (Tisdall and Punch, 2012, p.259; Holloway et al, 2018). The paper also highlights the broader point that *belonging* and *homeliness* (and perhaps even *homespace*) are characterised not only by complex spatialities, but also different temporalities, where past events and future trajectories are significant for present affective family life. This is also evident in Mas Giralt's (2018) and Tu's (2017) papers, and to a lesser extent, in Gottzén and Sandberg's (2017) study.

As Tarrant and Hall (2019, p.4) observe, "home-making and unmaking, relationship maintenance and dissolution are distinctly geographical" processes that invoke public/private dichotomies. Hayley Davies' (2017) paper emphasizes the role of homespace and intricate interweaving of emotions and materiality in encounters with death and remembering deceased family members and pets. Mementoes and keepsakes of loved ones become sensorial tools of remembering (as in Marcel Proust's 'madeleine moment') and reveal how smells, sounds, body language and so on are ways of creating *sensory affinity*. Davies' paper also demonstrates how material, spatial and embodied processes are just as important for children, who may be perceived as vulnerable (in this case, following a bereavement), as discursive processes (such as talking about the deceased). A further point Davies makes is that a family death is often regarded as something located firmly in the private sphere and the young people interviewed wished to control to whom and how they spoke about this experience. This not only raises a methodological issue about what interviewees will disclose

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when researching 'sensitive topics' (Evans et al, 2017b), but also a substantive point concerning the view of family relationships as private/personal - and potentially shaming, as Turner and Almack (2017) highlight.

The co-shaping of materiality and emotions are also demonstrated in the rather different context discussed by Mengwei Tu (2017) of one-child Chinese young migrants' relationships of care and support with parents 'back home' in China, which are delicately balanced with aspirations in the UK. Tu explores how experiences of migration and kinship ties to China are accompanied by emotional struggles, pain and a number of compromises. The interwoven nature of financial and emotional care is evident here in adult children's perceptions of parental financial support from China as 'care'. The second aspect of Tronto's (1993, p.106) interconnected care process, "taking care of" is relevant here; it involves "assuming some responsibility for the identified need and determining how to respond to it". Tronto considers providing money for care more a form of "taking care of" a person's needs rather than the more direct "care-giving" aspect, which is often assumed to require geographical proximity (see also Evans, 2014). Tu's (2017) paper and our own work in East and West Africa has highlighted however the deeply interwoven nature of financial support and emotional care for children and adult family members, shaped by specific cultural constructions of care and often an implicit intergenerational contract.

Further, while the one-child Chinese young adult migrants are perhaps not as 'troubled' as other migrants in more precarious circumstances or children living in 'troubling' vulnerable situations, migration nevertheless entails a complex process of emotional, financial, geographical and temporal splitting and separation between establishing themselves in the UK and maintaining their filial obligations in China. Tu (2017) suggests that this may come at considerable cost, since it challenges (or 'troubles') moral understandings of 'family', intergenerational relations, as well as young migrants' own wellbeing.

Indeed, the ambiguity of the migration project in Tu's (2017) paper brings to the fore notions of proximity and propinquity, co-presence and absence, themes which are also taken up in Rosa Mas Giralt's (2018) paper. While Davies' (2017) and Turner and Almack's (2017) papers focus on geographies of grieving at the relatively micro-scale of the home, Mas Giralt's (2018) paper explores transnational bereavement across space. It focuses on middle generation Latin American migrants' transnational grieving processes after experiencing the death of a parent. Through this, Mas Giralt provides insight into another - compelling - facet of the migration process, furthering understandings of migrants' complex emotional worlds (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015). While emotions evoked through the migration process have often been characterized as reflecting a melancholic state, whereby a migrant feels estranged in the settlement country and mourns the loss of the relationships they enjoyed 'back home' in their country of origin, Mas Giralt shows how grieving at a distance provides a further layer of complexity to migrants' emotional experiences.

Similarly to other papers in the collection and the wider geographical literature on care (Barnett and Land, 2007), Mas Giralt's (2018) paper challenges assumptions that geographical proximity and co-presence are needed for propinquity and emotional care.

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Emotional family ties are maintained and continue to affect the emotional wellbeing of migrants who live at considerable distance, both geographically, and potentially in terms of the temporality of the migration process, from family members in other countries and continents. Not being able to travel back 'home' to be present for the dying parent and being unable to participate in the funeral may be particularly troubling for migrants, bringing difficult feelings of guilt, anger and ambivalence regarding the migration project. As Boccagni and Baldassar (2015, p.76) observe, migrants' emotional experience is often characterised by "(emotional) ambivalence", with a simultaneous "attraction and hope for the better life conditions achievable abroad, alongside the anxiety and distress that meeting these expectations entails", as well as changing attitudes towards the homeland over time. Such conflicting emotions and efforts to maintaining continuing bonds with the deceased may be even more troubling when experiencing a family death at a distance, as Ruth's recent research with migrants in the UK has also shown (Evans, forthcoming).

Mas Giralt's (2018) paper also illustrates a broader point raised by this collection of papers, that the focus on 'family troubles', in this case, on experiences of death and bereavement, helps us understand spatial relationships (here: the diasporic experience and transnational family relations) in novel and more nuanced ways. As shown in Turner and Almack's, Gottzén and Sandberg's and Davies' papers, 'family troubles' and care may foster closer affective family ties that help to create a sense of ontological security in young people's lives and continuing bonds with the deceased, but such 'troubles' may also be accompanied by ambiguity, distancing and re-producing boundaries that define who and what constitutes 'family' (Driscoll, Mas Giralt, Tu).

Furthermore, Mas Giralt's (2018) and Gottzén and Sandberg's (2017) papers, and to some extent Driscoll's (2018) paper, provide insight into the complexity and the significance of co-presence or spatial separation in the context of 'family troubles'. While co-presence is often viewed in positive terms in the literature on care and relationality, with virtual contact presented as second best, the papers make clear the positive value of spatial separation from 'troubling' family relationships - distance may be crucial for emotional wellbeing. Mas Giralt (2018), for example, discusses 'the geographical cure', while Gottzén and Sandberg (2017) show the positive value for children of being away from sites in which violence and anger are being enacted. Similarly, Driscoll (2018) demonstrates how young people seek to manage birth family relationships and only share what they are comfortable with family members in the light of previously conflictual or harmful relationships.

Concluding thoughts

This editorial and special section offer fresh perspectives on a diverse range of 'family troubles' which shape young people's family lives and connections to others *across time and space.* We hope that these contributions will help to set an agenda for future geographical work and interdisciplinary dialogue on 'family troubles', vulnerabilities and social suffering in contexts of (troubling) changes and diversity. Analysing relational time-space dynamics of 'family troubles' and care in diverse global contexts is crucial in our efforts to envision a more relational understanding of our 'being-in-the-world' (Gergen, 2009), underpinned by care

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ethics (Tronto, 2013) and support for differentially positioned family members throughout the lifecourse and across generations (Ribbens McCarthy, 2013).

Endnote

1. The papers in this special section were originally presented at an international interdisciplinary Symposium, 'Family Troubles: Care and Change in Diverse Contexts' on 16 September 2015, University of Reading, Reading, UK. The Symposium was organised by Ruth Evans, Jane Ribbens McCarthy and Sophia Bowlby and was funded by the RGS-IBG Geographies of Children, Youth and Families Research Group, the University of Reading and the Open University and co-sponsored by the British Sociological Association (BSA) Families and Relationships Study Group, the BSA Death, Dying and Bereavement Study Group and the Association for the Study of Death and Society (ASDS).

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