Synthesis Research Design for
"**Mixed and Transnational Families**" (WP9)

Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece

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1. State of the Art Literature Review on Thematic Work Package

1.1. Transnational Families

In the early 1990s a different approach to studying migration has developed within the social sciences. A set of key texts in anthropology opened the discussion on the need of reconceptualising international migration and introduced the concept of "transnationalism" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994; Vertovec and Cohen, 1999b; 1999c). The new analytical framework is grounded in an understanding of migration as a multi-sited social space experienced simultaneously by communities across borders. The concept of space in this paradigm is understood as encompassing transterritorial locations rather than in the physical meaning of place. Transnationalism offers a framework of analysis alternative to previous migration theories that approach the migration phenomena as limited to integration or assimilation in the receiving societies. Migrants are thus conceptualised as "transmigrants" rather than simply emigrants or immigrants and their experiences are analysed through the prism of multiple attachments rather than linearly as a one-way movement from sending to receiving societies (Schiller et al., 1992a). They forge life strategies through simultaneous positioning in several social (and territorial) locations. Main fields of study within the paradigm of transnationalism concern: transnational migrant networks, transnational political activity, transnational citizenship, remittances, transnational family. Transmigrants "develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political – that span borders." (Schiller et al. 1992a: ix). Transnationalism thus influenced a new reading of individual migrants, migrant communities and also of migrant families. The concept affected a shift from the traditional understanding of families as units based on co-residency at the same place to ones that are spatially dispersed and fragmented. Members of transnational families maintain transborder kinship relations to sustain livelihoods that span over two or more states - "… transnational processes are located within the life experience of individuals and families…" (Schiller et al. 1995: 50).

The topic of transnational and mixed families was neglected until the late 1990s and, although in recent years rich literature has begun to develop, it is still not well theorised and conceptualised. Most of the studies dealing with issues of mixed and transnational families are empirical and contextual, rather than theoretical. Concepts of diasporic space and transnational

processes and gender theories help to analyse aspects of transnational family life. According to the early authors of transnationalism, the family emerges as a basic structure of the transnational relationships, with remittances and assistance circulating mainly with the nuclear or the extended families (Glick-Schiller, N and Fouron, G, 2001: 51). According to the same authors, family in itself, and the need of its support, becomes a factor triggering migration. They also claim that migration has the effect of widening family networks as migrants locate all possible relatives able to help in the process of migration (Glick-Schiller, N and Fouron, G, 2001: 61).

So far only few studies have dealt with the characteristics of transnational kinship groups and families, especially in the European context. Main topics of research dealing with transnational and mixed families so far have been: transnational partnering (Pribilsky, 2004, see also Gambaurd, 2000; Sorensen, 2005), transnational motherhood (Erel, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; LARG, 2005; Parreñas, 2001) and transnational childhood (Parreñas, 2005; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Attention in these studies is focused on separations between family members, couples and parents and their children left behind. Those studies are interested in the gendered aspects of transnational family life and transnational parenting. Some of these studies indicate that in the case of families with migrant mothers, couples seem to be under more strain (Pribilsky, 2004; Gambaurd, 2000). These studies pay attention to a new type of parent – the "transnational mother."

There are two general approaches to the study of transnational families – the one stressing the negative and the other the positive and constructive aspects of transnational family life. The literature on global care chains highlights some negative sides of transnational family life (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Hochschild, 2003). These authors argue that the global transfer of care work from poor to rich countries, associated with transfer of emotional resources, leaves poor countries in a situation of "care drain" and effects negatively the children left behind.

Other authors, however, tend to stress the positive aspects of transnational family life, by studying the ways and practices of maintenance and reproduction of transnational families across space (Baldassar, 2001; Bryceson and Vourela, 2002; Burholt, 2004; Mason, 2004; Wilding, 2006; Reynolds, 2006; Zontini, 2004a, 2006a). Studies of the same trend also study the types of resources that circulate within transnational families (Reynolds and Zontini, 2006; Zontini, 2006a). The very existence of transnational families rests on kin ties being kept alive and maintained, in spite of great distances and prolonged separations. Two concepts of "frontiering" and "relativizing" have recently been advanced to study transnational family life (Bryceson and Vourela, 2002). "Frontiering" refers to "the ways and means transnational family members use to create familial space and network ties

in a terrain where connections of affinity are relatively sparse" (Bryceson and Vourela, 2002: 11). "Relativizing" refers to the ways "individuals establish, maintain or curtail relational ties with specific family members" (Bryceson and Vourela, 2002: 14). In general these studies pay attention to the importance of transnational kin and caring work. E. Zontini summarises the relevance of the concepts of "productive work", "kin work" and "caring work" for the study of transnational family dynamics and the role of women within this domain (Zontini, 2004: 1116-1119). Productive work regards the involvement of migrant women in the economic support of their families. Kin work regards the role of women in maintaining transnational familial relations and kin ties. Caring work involves the tasks related to looking after the young, the elderly and the sick. Studies dealing with the care work domain are interested in the ways in which caring tasks are being carried out across geographical distance (Baldassar and Baldock, 2000; Goulbourne and Chamberlain, 2001; Reynolds and Zontini, 2006; Zontini, 2006a). These authors focus on the experiences of established migrant groups such as Italians in Australia and the United Kingdom (Baldassar and Baldock, 2000; Zontini, 2006a), Caribbeans in Britain (Goulbourne and Chamberlain, 2001; Reynolds, 2005) and Europeans across the European Union (Ackers and Stalford, 2004), showing that transnational family living does not affect only recently arrived migrants but extends to subsequent generations as well (Zontini, 2006a). The focus has been on caring work that occurs both between and within generations. Work on transnational families thus aims to study the new ways of articulating family relationships as a result of migration and the changes that are produced by migration on the structure of the family, its functions and the gender roles within it.

1.2. Mixed Families

Researchers use a wide spectrum of terms to refer to marital unions composed of partners coming from different religions, ethnicities or countries: mixed marriages, intercultural families, cross-ethnic intermarriages, cross-cultural marriages or intermarriages (Breger, R., Hill, R., 1998a). Mixed families are one of the main areas where migration generated intercultural relations are manifested and many of the respective studies are investigation of the relationship between intermarriage and cultural diversity. Social scientists thus turn attention to mixed families to gain valuable insight into the nature of inter-group relations. Mixed marriages are most often investigated as a measure of social distance, assimilation and inter-group harmony – in other words they become the focus of studies that are interested in processes of cultural adaptation, levels of integration of various minority and immigrant groups as well as the nature of power relations between different states and cultures.

The field of intermarriage relations and dynamics has traditionally been the focus of US scholarship but is ever more attracting the attention of scholars working in Europe and other continents. Scholars have been interested in the various types of intermarriages: interethnic, interfaith, intercultural or interracial. Studies on intermarriage focus on the demographic characteristics of individuals in intergroup unions and their intersection with the cultural and structural factors influencing intermarriage. Other scholars are interested in the racial and gender variables of intermarriages and the specific societal and cultural contexts that allow or obstruct such unions and within which they are maintained. A number of scholars have turned their attention to studies of Western and non-Western partners (Cottrel-Baker, 1990) providing very interesting accounts of western women following their husbands in Pakistan (Khan, 1998), in Palestine (Roer-Strier, Ezra, 2006) or in Japan and Nigeria (Imamura, 1990). Another volume of research draws attention to the importance of governmental policies in the intermarriage field in influencing negative discourses towards foreigners and intercultural marriage (Berger, 1998; Roer-Strier, Ezra, 2006). A distinct aspect of many studies is the investigation of attitudes towards mixed marriages as induced by different societal factors (Jakobson, Johnson, 2006; Jakobson, Heaton, 2008; Johnson, Jacobson, 2005). Some studies deal with the levels of inter-group marriage in specific societal contexts as an indication of the levels of racial, inter-ethnic, respectively religious integration (Jacobson, Heaton, 2008). Other scholars examine patterns of intermarriage by occupation to map out patterns of social relations and "distances" between the various groups of given society. (Jakobson, Heaton, 2008).

The two dominant theoretical paradigms regarding the processes of cultural adaptation in intermarriage perceive intermarriage as assimilation and acculturation. According to the first theory intermarriage is a form of assimilation into the culture of the dominant group (Gordon, 1964). The opposing theory of acculturation claims that intermarriage does not necessarily lead to loss of ethnic or cultural identity and is the consequence of cultural mix and social tolerance (Cohen, 1988). Some authors prefer the term "mutual acculturation" referring to the mutuality of the process of cultural adaptation that affects both partners coming from the minority and the dominating culture (Falicov, 1995). One stream of research perceives intermarriage as challenging norms of endogamy and posing problems and risks for families and society as a whole (Ata, 2000; Breger-Hill, 1998a; Johnson-Warren, 1994). These authors also point that mixed families experience higher tensions and social sanctions than the endogamous ones (Thode-Arora, 1999; Bacas, 2002). Other researchers stress the positive potentials of intermarriage focusing on the greater degree of tolerance and respect found in intermarriages and the greater opportunities for learning and growth for children (Breger-Hill 1998a; Ho, 1990). Higher degrees of interethnic, interfaith and interracial intermarriages

are perceived as identifiers of positive changes in respectively interethnic, interfaith and interracial relations and the shortening of interethnic, interfaith and interracial distances.

Analysis of intermarriage dynamics identifies two general sets of factors that affect inter-group marriage with individual preferences operating within their broad parameters. Opportunity structures such as segregation, geographical isolation and local marriage markets, defined by the opportunity to meet through education, work and places of informal socializing are identified as important prerequisites for intermarriage. These refer to opportunities for mix between individuals from different cultural, religious, ethnic backgrounds. The study of the amount of opportunity structures available at any specific societal context is often conducted through the examination of intermarriage in different contexts. Segregation within regions, income and educational differences between groups within a particular society, previous animosities and language and cultural differences are usually accounted as factors contributing to high homogamy rates in particular society (Jacobson, Heaton, 2008: 146). The so called "third-party" influences such as group identification, group sanctions and religion play important role in the complex processes encouraging or discouraging intermarriage management (Kalmjin, 1998). Cultural factors fall in this group and refer to the social and cultural distances between the various cultural groups, their mutual images and the general openness of the host society to cultural heterogeneity (Klein, 2001; Muhsam, H, 1990). Other scholars study intermarriages as the outcome of the relationship between ascriptive criteria (social background, race, ethnicity) and achieved qualities criteria (such as education) in determining social positions in specific societies (Qian, Zhenchao, 1997).

Empirical case studies in intercultural marriage put the patterns of cultural adaptation of spouses into several categories: assimilated cultural adaptation, ambivalent cultural adaptation and bicultural adaptation pattern (Roer-Strier, Ezra, 2006). Studies of intermarriages are associated with investigations of levels of respectively: endogamy, exogamy, homogamy, hypergamy. Such studies are interested in the correlations between ethnic/racial endogamy and social/educational homogamy as well as the correlations between sex, race, ethnicity and hypergamy in specific societies. For many authors intermarriage is an indicator of the degree of assimilation of minority group members. Some also suggest that increase of positive attitudes to intermarriage might indicate potential shift in social distance that racial/ethnic, cultural groups maintain toward each other. Increase in intermarriage is seen as sign of diminishing of the structural and cultural differences between majority/minority groups. According to other authors, intermarriage depends substantially on ethnicity, education, regional racial compositions. Authors also claim that racial boundaries to

intermarriage are still more difficult to cross than other such as national origin or religion (Douglas, G, Yancey, 2004).

Some of the criticisms to present day scholarship on intermarriages involve an attack to the static approaches that do not take into account a reality in which many cross-cultural couples live in more than one country and adopt multiple adaptation strategies. Critics also point that usually little attention is being paid to the cultural adaptation strategies of the partners belonging to the host or dominant group. Other criticisms to current analytical discourses of intermarriage claim that mixed families are to be accounted as more than a measure of race or inter-ethnic relations in a given society, but as an engine of social change (Goldstein, 1999; Yancey and Yancey, 1997). Certain historical research for example turned attention to intermarriage as both cause and consequence of structures of social mobility (Lynch, 1998). So far the influence of the power relations and hierarchies of different states and cultures over mixed families and their management has also received little attention (Roer-Strier, Ezra Dina Ben, 2006).

2. Topic Area of Research

2.1. Goal of the research

The first part of the study will provide a theoretical discussion of the literature on gender, ethnic and racial power relations within the family. In the central stage of the research, different transnational and ethnically mixed families will be selected as respondents for obtaining original empirical data. The research will focus on racialized and gendered conflicts and tensions in the family, as well as positive intercultural exchanges and hybrid practices that arise in the course of couple's / family's everyday life in relation to issues of identity, belonging, power, language, and children's upbringing. These family practices will be critically assessed against the background of family and migration policies (including family reunification, domestic violence) that reinforce and legitimize informal racialized and gendered practices within mixed or transnational families. At the same time, however, the potential of mixed or transnational families to become sites of intercultural interaction and to produce hybrid identities will be examined. The results of the field work will be used to produce a research report which will (a) analyse from a gendered perspective the tensions and possibilities engendered in mixed and transnational families, and (b) include theoretical and policy implications for understanding mixed and transnational families as 'enabling', hybrid spaces of intercultural interaction.

2.2. Objectives

• To undertake research on the intersections between gender, migration and the family, with particular emphasis on relations between members of mixed and transnational families.

• To study the gender dynamics of mixed and transnational families in specific national settings, motivation for spouse selection, family relations and changing gender relations within the family as well as the families' position in a broader social context.

• To study the mixed families as meeting point of different religions and cultures and explore zones of contacts and congruence, and of conflicts and tensions from gender and ethnic relations perspective,

• To explore the consequences of mixed family environs for the children

• To assess family and migration policies that reinforce and legitimise gendered and racialized practices among the families composed of a migrant and native/local partner

• To develop an alternative framework to the dominant conceptualization of family national and racial "purity" for understanding mixed and transnational families situated among multiple influences of geographical mobility.

3. Basic Outline

3.1. Basic premises and concepts

Providing a synthesis of the scholarship on transnational migration, Levitt and Schiler distinguish the literature on transnational families as one of the four distinct traditions developed in the field (Levitt, Glick-Schiller, 2004). We believe that the examination of the relationship between migration and family (transnational or mixed) should be based on contextualized definition of the family that differs, depending on the socio-cultural contexts and traditions and involves respectively different power relations of gender, age and generation.

Important line of investigation in the field of transnational families might be the study of family remittances as indicative of transnational family relations. The social regulation regime that shapes exchanges is based on ideologies of kinship, gender and inter-generational relations which in

turn are part of broader social and cultural processes. Therefore, the study of the social meaning of family remittances as expression of claim of membership in a family or social network is important.

Other lines of investigation may involve the gendered differences in power and status that characterise and are being maintained or changed as result of transnational family life or as result of formation of mixed families. The collection of empirical data about the living arrangements, the finances, the generational reproduction and the care work in the everyday lives of transnational families or mixed families might be a good basis for conduct of such investigations.

The experiences of parents, children and the elderly and more particularly of the social dimensions of transnational parenthood and the social costs involved in transnational family life will also be studied.

The relationship between host and home country contexts and transnational family life and networks is also important. The study of normative regimes with regard to gender (in societies of origin and destination) as well as the study of the existing immigration/integration and labour policies as well as emigration policies might be of great relevance for understanding the dynamics of transnational family life.

The basic concepts the research will be focusing on therefore are:

(1) gender relations,

(2) transformation of the traditional gender roles, and negotiations in family matters,

(3) integration processes through marriage to the host society.

3.2. Basic research questions

Research questions for mixed families

I.	Background on family characteristics
II.	History of relationship
III.	Contacts and experience of mixed families with the official institutions
IV.	Intercultural aspects of mixed family life
V.	Gendered dynamics in mixed family life

Research questions for transnational families

I.   Background on family characteristics:

II.   Contacts and experience with the official institutions:

III.   Aspects of transnational family life:

IV.   Gendered dynamics in transnational family life

3.3. National case studies

3.3.1. Bulgaria:

Mixed families: the research will focus on mixed families consisting of a Bulgarian woman and a man from Middle Eastern Muslim country (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Iran). A few interviews with families where male partner is from a Western European country will be added to provide a different perspective. All together 8-10 families residing in Sofia will be interviewed.

Transnational families: the Bulgarian team will interview those family members who have stayed behind in the home country and are relying on remittances sent by the partner who has emigrated. 7-8 interviews with respondents most likely residing in small towns or villages will be made. If possible, the team will try to contact and interview partners of few women who have emigrated to Greece and will be interviewed by the Greek team, but the majority of respondents will be partners (men and women) of people, who emigrated from Bulgaria for economic reasons and who support their families from abroad.

3.3.2. Greece:

Mixed families: the Greek team will focus mainly on mixed couples with one spouse of Greek nationality and one spouse of non-EU nationality (mainly from Albania, ex-Soviet Union and Balkan countries).

Transnational families: the Greek case will study female live-in domestic workers (8 to 10 interviews) from Albania, former Soviet Union and Bulgaria.

3.3.3. Turkey:

Mixed families: 8 to 10 mixed families with children will be interviewed in Istanbul (Istanbul with the population of 11 million has the potential to capture the exceptional diversity of respondents). The team will focus on the mixed families consisting of a Turkish male partner and a female partner from one of the Soviet Union successor states (most likely Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan). Such families/couples are the most common and typical mixed family type in Turkey.

Transnational families: interviews with 8 to 10 women from the former Soviet Union, who live in Istanbul and working in the domestic care work.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Data collection

The interviews with respondents: a combination of biographical and semi-standardized interviews will be employed for the purposes of the study. In order to obtain more detailed information about the inter-family relations, the study will put qualitative approach ahead of the quantitative one. The biographical interviews will first give the respondents an opportunity to present the story of their lives through autobiographic narrative, after which the interviewer will use a semi-standardised questionnaire to gain additional data important for the topic of the work package. Semi-standardized interviews will be combined with additional questions in a free dialogue when appropriate if seen as relevant by the interviewer in individual cases.

Mixed families: Interviews will be taken (predominantly) in Istanbul, Athens and Sofia. 8-10 families will be interviewed by each team. Researchers will talk only with the couples and not with their children and parents (or other people with whom they share the household). The interviews will be conducted with both male and female partners separately – in the different rooms of the house at the same time. If possible, male interviewers will interview male respondents and women interviewers will interview women. The sampling strategy that will be allocated to this process is purposive quota sampling reached by snowball technique. The particular focus will be on the middle and lower middle class families, who are working in blue or white-collar jobs and living with moderate means.

Transnational families: The interviews will be conducted person to person, without any other people present. If it is possible, no interpreters will be used. In Greece and Turkey, where the research will focus on domestic workers, interviews will be held either in the employer's house (if privacy can be achieved) or on Sundays or other day, when the respondent is free from work obligations. Interviews will be taken predominantly in Istanbul and Athens. In Bulgaria, where family members who have stayed at home will be interviewed, the interviews will be taken at their homes or another suitable place in their hometowns. The interviews will be taken in few selected small towns or villages with high concentration of transnational families.

<u>Focus groups</u>: 5 focus groups are foreseen (5-6 participants; two researchers). One focus group will include members of transnational families, while four will include different groups of members of mixed families (local women, local men, foreign women, foreign men). Fees will be foreseen for the participants to compensate them for the loss of a daily wage. Participants of focus groups must be different from those who participated in the interviews, but should have similar demographic characteristics. The focus groups discussions will last from one to two hours. The main aim of focus groups will be to check and test the results of the individual interviews.

4.2. Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis will be done by the two main researchers on the basis of the research questions and an outline that will be finalized during the second meeting of the thematic team (in Sofia in October 2009).

The analytical report, based on the information collected during the fieldwork, will:

• analyse from a gendered perspective the intercultural dynamics in mixed and transnational families, including the racialized and gendered conflicts / tensions in the family and the positive intercultural exchanges that arise in the family's everyday life in relation to issues of identity, belonging, power, language, and upbringing of children.

• the established family practices will be critically assessed against the background of family and migration policies in the case study countries to examine how they reinforce and legitimize informal racialized and gendered practices within mixed or transnational families.

• include theoretical and policy implications for understanding mixed and transnational families as spaces of intercultural interaction.

4.3. Time frame of research

• October – November '08: Theoretical overview of the literature on gender, ethnic and religious relations within the mixed families

• December '08 – January '09: Overall guidelines and plan for work; Design of interview questionnaire and interview guidelines; Design of focus groups questionnaire; Focus groups guidelines

• February – June '09: Field work – Collection of individual and family interviews

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• July – September '09: Transcription of interviews; Focus groups; Transcription of focus groups

• October '09: Thematic workshops with partners meeting to discuss preliminary fieldwork results and empirical findings, and decide upon the overall common framework and categories of analysis to be applied.

• October '09 – February '10: Draft Country Reports and Revised/Final Country Reports

• March – May '10: Draft Thematic Report

• June '10: Final Thematic Report

5. Research Team per Partner

5.1. Bulgaria:

International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations

Researchers: Georgeta Nazarska, Marko Hajdinjak

Interviewers: Georgeta Nazarska, Marko Hajdinjak

5.2. Greece:

Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Center for Gender Studies

Researchers: Annie Kavvadia, Maria Stratigaki

Interviewers: Annie Kavvadia, Alexandros Delistathis

Transcription of interviews: Voula Touri

5.3. Turkey:

Bilkent University, Department of Political Science

Researchers: Dilek Cindoglu (coordinator), Saime Ozcurumez (researcher)

Research assistant: Nazli Senses

Interviewers: Tolga Bolukbasi, Adnan Boynukara

6. Background Reading

6.1. Transnational Families

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