The family has come into sharp focus in recent sociolinguistic inquiry, spearheaded by the burgeoning field of “Family Language Policy”. While the name was originally coined by Luykx (2003) in her study of family language policy and gender socialization in bilingual Aymara households, it was through the now classic article by King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008) that it gained currency in the establishment of a key field of scholarship. This field did not evolve in a vacuum, yet its clear profile in scientific inquiry is witnessed by the myriad of publications bearing the title of family language policy. The importance of investigating family language policies is clearly articulated in King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008: 907): “they shape children’s developmental trajectories, connect in significant ways with children’s formal school success, and collectively determine the maintenance and future status of minority languages”. Today the study of family language policy (hereafter FLP) has indeed become a catalyst in promoting the sociolinguistic inquiry of language practices and policies in multilingual transnational families, although not all such studies actually refer to themselves as studies of FLP (Lanza and Lexander 2019). Emanating from the field of language policy, FLP was originally narrowly defined as “explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among family members” (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008: 907), with a firm anchoring onto the decision-making processes families undertake in the home and how these may relate to child language learning outcomes. Inspired by Spolsky’s (2009) tripartite model of language policy, attention has been given to language ideologies, language practices and language management in the family with Spolsky (2012) himself referring to the family as “the critical domain” of language policy.

While firmly rooted in language policy research in its incipient days, FLP research initially defined its purview in relation to work on child language acquisition, pointing out the need to assess the impact of language ideologies on language use to the child, such as the one-person–one-language policy, and how this impacted the child’s language development. Currently, however, studies of FLP encompass not only investigations of actual policies in the home but also language practices, in other words, not only “explicit and overt planning” but also implicit

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and covert language practices, including literacy (Curdt-Christiansen 2013). This is an approach that is along the lines of contemporary language policy research (cf. Hult and Johnson 2015; Tollefson and Pérez-Milans 2018) through which language practices may be seen as de facto grassroots language policy (King and Lanza 2019a). As King and Fogle (2013: 172) state, “FLP addresses child language learning and use as functions of parental ideologies, decision-making and strategies concerning languages and literacies, as well as the broader social and cultural context of family life.” Accordingly, underlying language ideologies have been investigated through the study of family language practices in multilingual transcultural families (see Curdt-Christiansen and Huang this vol.) and in educational environments (see Mary and Young this vol.). Whereas earlier FLP studies attempted to “draw clear causal links across ideologies, practices, and outcomes” (King 2016: 731), more recent work focuses on meaning-making, experiences, agency, and identity constructions in transnational families (Zhu and Li 2016; King and Lanza 2019a; Li and Zhu 2019; Purkarthofer and Steien 2019; Smith-Christmas 2019). Hence in the course of about ten years, we have witnessed the establishment, transformation and shift in focus of a field of inquiry that can provide an important key to understanding the role language plays for family members, not only in regards to children’s language development by the time they enter into the educational system of a society, but also in the construction of a family’s identity, including both children and adults.

There are reviews of research on FLP that highlight various factors contributing to, and impacting, family language policy (see for example, Caldas 2012; Curdt-Christiansen 2018; Lanza and Lexander 2019; Curdt-Christiansen and Jing Huang this vol.). The goal of this chapter is rather to provide an overview of the development of the field of “family language policy” and its theoretical perspectives, tracing its epistemological roots from the early 20th century and onward to the flourishing field of inquiry in the new millennium. This involves crossing disciplinary borders to encompass research on child language acquisition, bilingual upbringing, language socialization, and language maintenance and shift – all of which have contributed to FLP as we know it today. We also aim to present a critical approach to the field with an eye to its future.

In the following, we first give an overview of the roots of the study of FLP in child bilingual acquisition research (section 2), covering both psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic scholarship. Subsequently, we document the growth of the field from 2008 to the present, presenting an overview of publications, indicating the diversity of populations and languages studied (section 3), and finally before concluding (section 5), we provide an overview of relevant theoretical perspectives and critical approaches to the field as it has developed thus far (section 4), in the hope of paving the path for future innovative and socially grounded approaches to the study of multilingual transnational families.
2 Foundations: The family in research on home language development

Home language maintenance and development pinpoints the family as the primary social and affective unit for the language-learning child. However, in any study of family language policies and practices, an important question to address is actually how one may define family. In an article on family studies published 20 years ago, Holstein and Gubrium (1999: 3) open by stating “The question ‘What is family?’ is still controversial”. Twenty years later, this question is still controversial or at least debatable in today’s highly connected society. Holstein and Gubrium (1999: 5) proposed a social constructionist approach and argued for the importance of analyzing the family as “interpretive practice”, positing that “[t]his view of interpretive practice is quite different from the conventional vision of family as a group or object to be described and explained”. This is in line with shifts that have taken place in sociological understandings of family from traditional approaches that see “the family as a social institution governed by rigid moral conventions to an idea of family and wider personal life as diverse sets of practices” (Chambers 2012: 33). Correspondingly, while the home may be the locus of the family and the hub for language maintenance and development, the complexity of the notion of family is accentuated by the different types of family with some as transcultural families resulting from immigration and transnational movement, while others are from intercultural marriages and bonds; some are recently established, and others have existed for generations. Globalization only serves to intensify the encounters of different traditions, values and languages of the various members of the family (Lanza and Li 2016). We return to the complexity of families in sections 3 and 4 below (see also Palviainen this vol.), and now turn to the development of the field of FLP.

In a commentary to a special issue on multilingual transcultural families (Lanza and Li 2016), King (2016) points out the historical context of FLP research anchoring it within a long line of research traditions, by sketching various phases in its development. These may be summarized as follows:
1. Classic diary studies by linguist parents
2. Bilingual language acquisition studies focused on central psycholinguistic questions
3. A turn to a more sociolinguistic approach: the establishment of FLP as a field of inquiry
4. A turn to include a more diverse range of family types, languages, and contexts
5. A focus on globally dispersed, transnational, multilingual populations, and ever-greater heterogeneity and adaptability in research methods.

While phase 3 marks the discernible onset of what is now called FLP (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008), phases 4 and 5 are in progress, addressing researchers’ increasing
awareness of, and concern for, the shortcomings of earlier studies of FLP. In this section, we examine in particular the roots of FLP, that is, phases 1 and 2, as well as the impact of other closely related established fields, namely those of language socialization and language maintenance and shift, in the turn to sociolinguistic approaches to the family in phase 3. FLP initially took issue with studies of child bilingual acquisition and second language learning, posing questions regarding the impact of language policy on language learning. FLP differs, however, from more psycholinguistically oriented investigations of childhood bilingualism: “rather than targeting the child, the emphasis of FLP is on the balance between and use of languages within the family unit” (King and Fogle 2013: 172).

In the first phase of FLP, the role of the family and social life is highlighted. Classic diary studies on bilingual children have provided important insights into the study of bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) and early second language learning in a home context. Indeed, the very first documented study of FLP in a bilingual family is Ronjat’s (1913) carefully detailed account of his son Louis’ bilingual acquisition of French and German through age 4;10, with a French-speaking father and German-speaking mother, living in France. Ronjat was advised by linguist Maurice Grammont to employ what is referred to as the One person–One language (“une personne, une langue”) method or policy, the impact of which is still studied today (for example, Döpke 1992; Palviainen and Boyd 2013; Venables, Eisenchlas, and Schalley 2014). Louis’ father spoke only French to him in the home while his mother kept to German, and as predicted by Grammont, the child developed both languages and kept them separated. Another relevant diary study is Leopold’s (1939–1949) four volumes focusing on his daughter Hildegarde’s simultaneous acquisition of English and German in the US, also using the One person–One language policy. In Leopold’s work there is more emphasis on meticulous descriptions of the child’s linguistic forms; however, language use in the family receives due attention. His claim that the young child exposed to two languages from birth does not learn bilingually but rather welds the dual presentation into one unified system would come to have a strong impact on child language scholars in the years to come (cf. Lanza [1997] 2004: 18–23).

In the second phase of FLP, the family took on a backstage role in the study of bilingual and multilingual acquisition in developmental psycholinguistics, which subsequently dominated research on bilingual and multilingual acquisition in children. During this second phase, a focus was on the language-internal and individual cognitive mechanisms at play in the acquisition process (cf. Volterra and Taeschner 1978), and what was called “input” was not seen as relevant for studying the bilingual child’s purported transition to language differentiation from a stage in which the two languages were welded, a claim forwarded by Leopold (1939–1949). The interaction between the two languages, or language mixing, was at the heart of the one system vs. two system hypothesis of bilingual acquisition. Lanza (1992, [1997] 2004) took a sociolinguistic and discourse analytic approach in order to
address this classic psycholinguistic question concerning early language differen-
tiation, arguing for the importance of studying parent–child interaction in evaluating
the child’s language mixing and positing that the question of *one system or two* was
not the right question to ask in regards to language mixing. The theoretical perspec-
tive employed was that of language socialization (cf. Duranti, Ochs, and Schieffelin
2011), which is at the very foundation of FLP work today. Children are socialized to
use language and socialization occurs through the use of language. That is, lan-
guage learning and socialization go hand in hand, and this occurs within interac-
tional contexts, as socialization is an interactive process, with the child as an active
agent (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986).

While developmental psycholinguistics moved away from the one system vs.
two system hypothesis with studies validating the separate development of two lan-
guages morphologically and syntactically (Genesee 1989; Meisel 1989; De Houwer
1990), an interest in the role of input in BFLA gradually evolved. It took time, how-
ever, before the claim was accepted that quantity or quality of linguistic input
might be relevant to the course of language acquisition (Snow 2014: 117). Today is-
ssues concerning input and experience in bilingual acquisition have received in-
creasing attention with a focus on variation in input and the effect on language
acquisition (Grüter and Paradis 2014; Unsworth 2013). The family per se has not
been in focus, rather the quantity of input in each language and the quality of that
input defined and measured as various factors such as the variety of speakers pro-
viding language input, and the types of activities for which the language is used.
Nonetheless the importance of the family in bilingual development was clearly ar-
ticulated in Carroll (2017) in her appeal to developmental psycholinguists to con-
sider language socialization; she states that “the realities of bilingual family life are
complex and patterns of language use in the home, including patterns of parental
language use (studied via recordings), merit detailed examination” (Carroll 2017:
8). Although developmental psycholinguistics gave impetus to the onset of FLP re-
search, it appears that there is mutual impact across both fields. As noted by Quay
and Montanari (2016: 37), “The trend to study BFLA as part of FLP is expected to
increase awareness that the varied learning environments in which bilingual chil-
dren are raised in the home in the early years and outside the home in child care
facilities and educational institutions strongly affect their language and academic
learning”.

Hence two different approaches contribute to the study of the bilingual/multilin-
gual child in the family, as noted in the second phase of FLP: developmental psycho-
linguistics and sociolinguistics. Both have distinct theoretical and methodological
origins and distinct analytical foci. And within sociolinguistics, we see the impact of
research in both language socialization, and language maintenance and shift, as we
turn to phase 3. Each of these approaches has distinct origins and foci. As Ochs and
Schieffelin (2011: 1) state, “language socialization research integrates discourse and
ethnographic methods to capture the social structurings and cultural interpretations
of semiotic forms, practices, and ideologies that inform novices’ practical engagements with others”. Thus anchored in anthropology, this research views cultural beliefs linked to child-rearing practices in the interactional process of language socialization (cf. Okita 2002). Studying this requires an analysis over time and hence ethnographic methods. The family is a “community of practice” (Wenger 1998), a social unit that has its norms for speaking, acting and believing and hence “provides a focus on praxis, the cornerstone for language socialization” (Lanza 2007: 47). The sociology of language and the seminal work of Joshua Fishman (1991) are the driving forces behind the study of language maintenance and shift in communities, including work on heritage languages (e.g. Döpke 1992; Higgins 2019) and encompassing a variety of research methods. Fishman himself pointed out that it is the micro-level of face-to-face interaction and social life within the intimate family that plays a decisive role for language maintenance and language shift.

Hence various research traditions have contributed to the field of FLP, as we know it today. It has, as noted above, its origins in language policy research yet has discernible influence in current studies from research traditions investigating both language socialization, and language maintenance and shift (see for example Caldas and Caron-Caldas 2000; Tannenbaum and Howie 2002). Moreover, the child’s agency in socialization, language maintenance and shift, and language policy in the family has also received increasing attention in studies of multilingual families (Gafaranga 2010; Kheirkhah and Cekaite 2017; see Smith Christmas this vol.).

3 The establishment of family language policy (FLP) as a field of inquiry

FLP as a field of inquiry bearing this name dates back to King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry’s (2008) seminal article, as noted above, and the ever-growing interest in family language policies and practices is demonstrated by an increasing number of publications, including books (for example, Fogle 2012; Schwartz and Verschik 2013; Smith-Christmas 2016; Macalister and Mirvahedi 2017) in addition to overview articles in handbooks, anthologies, and encyclopedias (Curdt-Christiansen 2018; King and Fogle 2016; Smith-Christmas 2017; Lanza and Lexander 2019). There has also been a rise in the number of special issues of journals that have focused on family language practices and policies (Curdt-Christiansen and Lanza 2018a; Higgins 2019; King and Lanza 2019a; Lanza and Curdt-Christiansen 2018; Lanza and Li 2016; Li 2012). The individual studies in these contributions illustrate on the whole the myriad of methods used in research to document family language policies and practices, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methods: large scale language use
surveys, online questionnaires, interviews, language portraits, focus group conversations, ethnography, diaries, and interactional analyses of video recordings.

To trace the development of the field, Figure 1 presents an overview of the growing number of publications self-identifying as studies of “family language policy”. While there are still many studies that deal with what may be considered the scope of FLP and yet are not entitled “family language policy”, in our overviews we focus exclusively on those studies purporting to be FLP. In order to get an overview of these publications, we utilized the search engine Oria, which covers the well-stocked university and research libraries of Norway, yielding results such as books, articles, magazines, music, movies and online resources. Our focus was on books, special issues of journals, and journal articles. Our search criteria required the mention of family language policy in the title or abstract of the named work. We took 2008 as a point of departure given the publication of King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008), and set May 2019, the time of writing of this chapter, as the end cutoff point. As we see in Figure 1, there has been an increase over time of publications with various degrees of intensity over the past decade.

![Figure 1: Number of FLP publications per year January 2008 – May 2019 (N = 164).](image)

1 https://www.oria.no.
2 We thank Research Assistant Mari J. Wikhaug Andersen for her indispensable assistance in finding and documenting all of the relevant FLP studies and for constructing the figures and table.
In tracing these publications over time, one may discern shifts in focus in FLP research, as noted by King and Lanza (2019b). Initial research questions aimed to discern the link between explicit planning and parental language use, and language learning outcomes in multilingual children, similar to the call to action in King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008). More recent studies, however, focus on (1) language as a means through which multilingual adults and children define themselves and their families; (2) globally dispersed, transnational or multilingual populations beyond the traditional, two-parent family; and (3) research methods that attend to meaning-making in interaction as well as the broader context. In other words, referring back to King’s (2016) phases in the development of FLP, we see that FLP studies have moved into phases 4 and 5. The field has increasingly seen the need to probe the impact of a diversity of family configurations, going beyond traditional understandings of the nuclear family to investigate, for example, adoptive families (Fogle 2012), families with co-located grandparents (Ruby 2012), and LGBT families (see Goldberg and Allen 2012) in various contexts. The complexity of parenting is clearly illustrated in Coetzee (2018) who emphasizes the processes of “family making” across households. She documented the socialization of two young boys born to adolescent mothers living in socio-economically marginalized neighborhoods in Cape Town in a multilingual South African community. In contrast to the home environment typically portrayed in FLP studies, these children’s young parents do not live together, but rather with their respective extended families and the children.

An overview of the FLP literature published between 2008 and 2019 indicates a diversity of geographical locations reported as the context for the individual study (Figure 2) and the languages investigated (Table 1). While Figure 1 lists all of the studies self-designated as FLP studies, including overviews and theoretical discussions, Figure 2 is more narrowly focused on actual empirical studies. It should be noted that some publications were based on data collected in more than one country. In such cases, each country was counted separately. Smith-Christmas (2017: 18) justly pointed out that “there is a dearth of research situated within Africa or the Middle East (apart from Israel)”, and this we see clearly in Figure 2. In fact, Figure 2 illustrates that most studies, although not all, address FLP in what may be referred to as “WEIRD” countries (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic; Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010). We may ask: What about low-status languages in economically marginalized societies, as well as indigenous and endangered language communities? And what about such languages in diaspora in “WEIRD” locations? There is clearly a need to examine FLP in light of sociopolitical parameters. This opens the discussion for critical approaches to the study of FLP, to which we return in 4.2 below.

The language most often represented in the empirical studies covered in Figure 2 is English ($N = 82$). A wide variety of languages, however, is addressed in the surveyed FLP studies from 2008 to 2019, as noted in Table 1. While this list does not provide any information on how the individual languages were paired in particular
geographical locations nor how they ranked in a sociolinguistic hierarchy in the specified geographical location, it nonetheless indicates a representation of speakers of languages usually associated with certain geographical locations from across the globe. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the terms that are used to account for the languages used at home. For example, Curdt-Christiansen (2016), in her study of language ideologies and practices of three multilingual families in Singapore, distinguishes between Hokkien and Mandarin as opposed to employing the cover term Chinese, used in turn in her 2009 study on the languages used by Chinese parents in Quebec, Canada (Curdt-Christiansen 2009).

Figure 2: Overview of the number of FLP publications by country ($N = 146$).
The use of named languages, as illustrated in Table 1, also brings into question the extent to which FLP engages with current sociolinguistic theorizing concerning the nature of language and language in practice, with an emphasis on the multilingual speaker’s linguistic repertoire and engagement with translanguaging. We return to this in section 4.2 below.

Table 1: An overview of languages (as named by researchers in their own studies) investigated in FLP studies (2008–2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Latvian</th>
<th>Russian</th>
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<td>Albanian</td>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec</td>
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<td>American Sign Language</td>
<td>Hakka</td>
<td>Lokaa</td>
<td>Scottish Gaelic</td>
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<td>Amharic</td>
<td>Haryanvi</td>
<td>Luganda</td>
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<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
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<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Malacca Portuguese Creole</td>
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<td>Ibibio</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
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<td>Catalan</td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>Tagalog/Visayan</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
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<td>Taiwanese</td>
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<td>Marwari</td>
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<td>Ndebele</td>
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<td>Efik</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>New Zealand Sign Language</td>
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<td>Nigerian Pidgin</td>
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<td>Judeo-Spanish</td>
<td>‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i</td>
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<td>Filipino</td>
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<td>Putonghua</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
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<td>German</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Qur‘anic Arabic</td>
<td>Zapotec</td>
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4 Theoretical perspectives and critical approaches to the field

FLP research has, as noted above, followed developments in the field of language policy and planning through its shift in focus from explicit planning in relation to language use in the family to including bottom up language policies through practices. We may evaluate to what extent other current theoretical perspectives may contribute to enhancing the field.

There are two broad processes of change in the transformation of current sociolinguistic research on multilingualism, as pointed out by Martin-Jones and Martin (2017: 1), including (1) “broad epistemological shifts in the field of sociolinguistics to ethnographic and critical approaches”; and (2) “increasing focus on the study of the social, cultural and linguistic changes ushered in by globalization”. These changes encompass the escalation of transnational population movements, the introduction of new communication technologies and their intensified use, and changes taking place in the political and economic landscape of different regions of the world. All of these factors will impact on families and their linguistic heritage, with current scholarship in the field demonstrating the turbulence of contemporary globalization. For example, Gallo and Hornberger’s (2017) three-year ethnographic study traces the experiences of an eight-year-old girl following her father’s deportation from the US, and poignantly illustrates how she engages with FLP within her routine daily interactions, shadowed by the threat of deportation.

More generally, recent language-related scholarship has attended to certain developments in the social sciences – for example, decoloniality (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel 2007; Mignolo and Walsh 2018), epistemologies of the South (Santos 2018), and southern theory (Connell 2014) – which challenge not only well-received concepts about language and language use, but also foundational epistemological and ontological assumptions behind the elaboration and reception of these concepts. Heugh and Stroud (2019), for example, propose a southern lens through which multilingualisms can be better understood. Pointing to the limitations of northern literature to account for multilingual practices of peoples from the Global South (including those in diaspora), Heugh and Stroud (2019: 7) suggest that “careful listening to the voices of people of the south and close observation of their agency and indeed ownership of linguistic citizenship, indicate that attempts to define and delimit the nature, variability and scholarship of multilingualisms found in some enthusiastic northern literature are misplaced”. Another pivotal contribution to redressing the imbalance between northern and southern perspectives in sociolinguistics is Milani and Lazar’s (2017) special issue on discourse, gender, and sexuality. An important consequence of such approaches is also the expressed engagement with southern literature. How this impacts FLP will be discussed below.
In the following, we delineate some theoretical perspectives and critical approaches that address the changes outlined above, and illustrate how these perspectives and approaches may play out in family multilingualism research.

4.1 The complexity of family across time and space

As pointed out in 1, the notion of family is indeed complex as is communication within families. Growing transnationalism is an earmark of contemporary society with families often making many moves across geographical spaces. FLP studies tend to capture a family’s policies and practices at any given point in time, while these are indeed dynamic and change over time. Hence there is a need to trace transnational families’ policies and practices across time, as emphasized by Hirsch and Lee (2018). Decisions about language policies in the home may be rooted in visions to return to the home country or to make a future move, for whatever reason. The family can be conceptualized as a dynamic temporal body and FLP should be analyzed accordingly.

Technological advances have greatly transformed communication with social media allowing transnational families to be multi-sited, or “stretched” (Porter et al. 2018), and yet interact intimately. Research on multilingual transnational families has shown increasing attention to the interface between language use and media use, that is, how families are constructed through multilingual language practices “in contexts of transmigration, social media and technology saturation, and hypermobility” (King and Lanza 2019b: 2). Nonetheless, this interest has so far not brought about a substantial body of research on how linguistic practices in interpersonal mediated communication affect family language policy and practices in transcultural families. A number of investigations from digital anthropology and media studies have zoomed in on the transnational family to study how the use of media shapes the migration experience and contributes to the management of interpersonal relationships. For example, in work on transnational family communication, Madianou and Miller (2012) introduced the term polymedia to highlight the impact of a variety of media technologies on particular interpersonal relationships (see Lanza and Lexander 2019, for an overview of work on digitally mediated language practices in multilingual families; see also Palviainen this vol.).

Digital communication opens up a wide vista for the study of family language practices and inherent family language policies across space. At the same time, such mediated communication forces us to rethink theoretical conceptions of the family as a space, particularly in regards to other digital and online media, for example, online news media’s representations of families in periods of intensified migration. Lanza (2020) points to a salient debate in the Norwegian media prompted by an article published in a national newspaper concerning the poor school success of children with a particular immigrant background. This led to a
prominent Labor party politician advocating in the media that parents speak Norwegian in the family and not their home language. The idea that politicians could regulate language use in the home is against all Norwegian traditions, as Lanza (2020) points out. Political pressure on family language policies ensued in the following months after the politician’s profiled remarks. This incident calls into question the very notion of the family as a private space.

In classic sociolinguistic theorizing, the family has been considered a private domain, a cluster of settings and relationships affecting language choice (Fishman 1991). However, as scholars working on space have maintained, space is constantly negotiated between various social actors having different discursive power, material constraints, and spatial practices (Lefebvre 1991; Massey 2005). As such, the family can be conceptualized as a space along the private–public continuum of arenas of social life. The notion of the family as a “space” has been advanced in applied linguistics – as a space for language learning (Canagarajah 2013) and a potential safe space for the family’s language learning and use, especially important for children (Purkarthofer 2019). Mediatized discourses on migrant families have thrust the family into the public eye, and hence to be constructed as a public space that can be commented upon, accepted and/or rejected. However, the family is also negotiated as a public space in online media by parents themselves, especially through online blogging (Lanza 2018a). The media of parenting websites, online discussion forums, and blogs are a growing setting for exchanging experiences and advice on raising children, with so-called ‘Mommy blogging’ as a specific type of social media usage that is a common and growing phenomenon. Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2017) take up intensive parenting in the digital age and note that “sharenting”, that is, sharing parenting experiences, has become ever more digital, visible, and scrutinized. FLP has been conceptualized as an important element of good parenting, yet there is a scarcity of studies addressing the multitude of online blogs/vlogs and online parental forums that focus on the raising of children multilingually (but see Bello-Rodzen 2016; Piller and Gerber 2018). A close look at the many multilingual parenting online blogs reveals that several offer consultancy services in addition to advice to families aiming to raise their children bilingually/multilingually. Furthermore, an innovative study of the “language consultant” as “a new professional service for multilingual families” in expat situations (Daussa and Limacher-Riebold 2018) illustrates how FLP can and has become a commodity in late modernity, similar to online parenting blogs offering services for families. Hence the family can be negotiated as a public space open for scrutiny and amenable to change, as advised by public actors. In some cases, families are constructed as public space by the media while in other cases, families actually choose to go public.
4.2 Critical approaches to family multilingualism

While there is increasing attention to mobility and linguistic diversity resulting in widespread multilingualism in a European and North American context, there is a growing interest and need to draw attention to Southern experiences of multilingualism, mobility and diversity (cf. Léglise 2017; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh 2012). This was also documented in Figure 2 above. Discourses of multilingualism have been circulating in Africa, Asia and Latin America for the past century or more and have been appropriated into Northern debates in Europe and North America and then returned, reconfigured, to Southern contexts (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2012; Connell 2014). Dialogue between northern and southern conceptions and practices of multilingualism is paramount for advancing the field of multilingualism (see Kerfoot and Hyltenstam 2017; Guilherme and Souza 2019) and this includes the field of FLP.

Lomeu Gomes (2018) points out how many of the studies of FLP build ostensively on Spolsky’s seminal work on language policy and planning (for example, Spolsky 2004, 2009). While this model has elucidated many interesting aspects of FLP predominantly in the global North, it falls short in addressing important issues relevant for the global South. Following Santos (2018), the global South refers not only to the geographical South, whose populations have had the weight of domination from the global North, but also areas in the global North where certain groups of people struggle against oppression and injustice. Lomeu Gomes (2018: 51) proposes “a decolonial approach to family multilingualism” in order to advance the study of FLP theoretically by moving beyond theoretical frameworks that can be understood as “Western-centric, canonic epistemologies”. Accordingly, such a critical approach to family multilingualism may provide a more robust theoretical framework to anchor social categorizations (such as class), and shed light on various migratory trajectories across the North and South. Such an approach may unpack the discursive reproduction of how gender, race/ethnicity and social class are hierarchized in intercultural encounters of parents from the global South living in the global North (Lomeu Gomes forthcoming). Moreover, it may reveal the affective dimensions of being othered as people attempt to make sense of themselves as belonging to and constructing multilingual families (cf. Tannenbaum and Yitzhaki 2016).

A decolonial approach to family multilingualism would also challenge canonic understandings of central concepts such as family, language and policy, which are often taken for granted in various studies. While the notion of family is gaining increased attention in FLP studies, the very conceptualization of language so central to current sociolinguistic thinking (for example, “metrolingualism”, Pennycook and Otsuji 2015; “translanguaging”, García and Li 2014; Li 2018; for a critical discussion about “home language”, see Eisenchlas and Schalley this vol.) has not received sufficient attention, as noted above in regards to Table 1 in which named languages are listed as more or less autonomous systems that can be separated into discrete
units and counted. Multilingual families seem, however, to orient to named languages while their activity is indeed translanguaging. There is a tension between the purported need to maintain names for languages, as in the fight for language rights of endangered languages, and the need to acknowledge the fluid borders of named languages. Nonetheless, FLP has the potential to contribute to the theory of language by engaging in the theoretical debates of named languages.

A critical approach to the study of *policy* and the extent to which certain practices can be conceived of as management (or policy) involves a tension in “the blurred distinction between the concepts of language practices and language management” (Curdt-Christiansen and Lanza 2018b: 126). As noted above, in researching contemporary multilingualism, Martin-Jones and Martin (2017) call for critical and ethnographic perspectives. Our understanding of the relationship between policy and practice can be enhanced through more ethnographic perspectives and interactional analyses revealing actual language practices in the family.

Many FLP studies are in fact already engaging in these critical discussions and debates that go beyond the impact of Spolsky’s model, as Lomeu Gomes (2018) points out. Pertinent examples that draw on concepts and debates from critical research traditions include Revis’ (2016) employment of a Bourdieusian framework to analyze child agency in FLP, and Nandi’s (2018) use of the Foucauldian concept of governmentality to examine the language practices of parents. While drawing on the works of Bourdieu and Foucault yields a necessary development in FLP, these dialogues remain within the Eurocentric canon of critical research (see Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Santos 2018). In order to capture the social reality of contemporary multilingualism, the study of multilingual families needs to draw on Southern perspectives and realities of multilingualism and not only those of the global North.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we initially presented an overview of the foundations and development of the field of family language policy, drawing on King’s (2016) phases of its historical context. We then highlighted the scholarship in the field since the publication of King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008), which marks the beginning of the field identifying itself as “Family Language Policy”. Finally, we raised theoretical issues relevant for the sociolinguistics of globalization, and culminated our discussion in a presentation of a critical approach to the study of family multilingualism.

Research on FLP has demonstrated that family matters, not only for the multilingual child’s language development, as revealed in earlier studies, but also for the family’s identity and meaning-making. The family is embedded in society as the context for home language development and maintenance with discourses on transnational families and heritage languages (Smith-Christmas 2019) potentially
playing a significant role for promoting or dissuading multilingualism through heritage language maintenance.

While FLP acted as a magnet to attract scholars to give more serious attention to the family in sociolinguistic scholarship, time will tell whether the name will prevail as an index to the field in future studies of multilingual families’ policies and practices, or whether the field as initially proposed will “splinter”, which King (2016: 731) foresees as potential. Although many current studies do not use the term family language policy, they have been motivated by the wave of sociolinguistic studies focusing on the family and home language maintenance. Returning to the foundations of FLP research, the call for attention to the family as having explanatory value in developmental psycholinguistics may in fact be seen as an impact of the field since its development. Hence a potential future sixth phase in King’s taxonomy of phases in the development of FLP (see section 2) may witness a returned focus to the impact of FLP on child language learning outcomes. In order to effectively study and understand the multilingual child’s language development, we need to draw on insights from both FLP and multilingual acquisition research, both sociolinguistic and developmental psycholinguistic approaches (Lanza 2018b). A socially real study of FLP, however, must draw on the perspectives of a critical approach to family multilingualism. Indeed, the evolving complexity of the field of FLP in the past decade bears witness to the complexities of families in the new millennium and the dynamic nature of home language maintenance and development as manifested in family language policies and practices.

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