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Irma

BUDGINAITĖ-MAČKINĖ

Adult children and their parents in
Lithuania in the context of
migration: intergenerational
solidarity and personal networks

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Irma

BUDGINAITĖ-MAČKINĖ

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1. INTRODUCTION

Lithuania, like many other Eastern and Central European countries, is experiencing extensive demographic change. As the life expectancy of the population increases, so does the need for care and assistance in old age. At the same time, due to the country's relatively low birth rate, the number of horizontal family ties is decreasing (Kanopienė, 2014). As societies age and family configurations become more heterogeneous, the question arises: who will take care of aging family members?

Since Lithuania's accession to the EU in 2004, this question has gained particular importance in the national context. The increasing geographical distance between family members due to the high mobility of Lithuania's population has prompted reflection on the impact of such changes on intergenerational relationships. It also invites analysis of the strength of family ties and expectations of support from personal networks, in order to determine who is likely to assume responsibility for the care of aging parents, and upon whom families with migration experience can rely in case of need.

Questions connected with the care of aging family members have received the attention of both social scientists and policy makers in European countries for several decades (Albert & Ferring, 2018). Given the heterogeneity of intergenerational family structures, researchers are increasingly analysing sustainability, continuity and change in family relationships (Schenk & Dykstra, 2012), as well as the strength of normative attitudes concerning children's responsibility towards aging parents, and the extent of filial support and care for the elderly (Chambers, 2006). These aspects are especially relevant in countries where social services for the elderly are less developed (Kuvikova et al., 2011; Popescu, 2011) and the organisation of elderly care is seen as the primary responsibility of the family (Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, 2013; Matonytė et al., 2019; Žalimienė et al., 2019).

Despite the reorganisation and gradual decentralisation of the social care system in Lithuania (Žalimienė & Lazutka, 2009), the most suitable services are considered insufficiently widely available. As research shows, the choice of caring for an elderly relative at home is motivated not only by a sense of duty on the part of adult children, but also by such factors as a distrust of institutional care and the cost of formal care services, among others (Junevičienė, 2018).

The need for research into the strength of filial norms and the prospects for family support of aging family members is even more acute in Lithuania and other Eastern and Central European countries than it is in Western Europe. This is not only due to the fact that care services are relatively less well developed in these countries, but also due to the intensity of demographic changes occurring there (Bauer & Österle, 2016) and the increasing mobility of people. Lithuania continues to stand out among EU countries as having one of the lowest net migration rates. It is estimated that since 1990 Lithuania's population has decreased by more than 710,000 due to international migration (EMN, 2020). According to official statistics, the young working population is the most mobile. Some migrants had already started families before they travel abroad, leaving behind a partner and children in Lithuania (Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2016). Most still have family members (parents, brothers or sisters, other relatives) in Lithuania.

The great distances between family members may be seen as one of the reasons for the weakening of family ties (Kiilo, Kasearu & Kutsar, 2016). In the academic literature, geographical proximity has long been considered one of the key aspects upon which the ability of family members to provide mutual assistance depends (Szydlík, 2016). Correspondingly, the high level of geographical mobility among Lithuania's population is identified as one of the factors impeding the care of aging family members (Zimmer et al., 2014). In light of the increasing geographical distance between the family members due to this mobility, it is important to assess the strength of family ties and expectations of support from personal networks.

In recognising that support and its reciprocity depend not only on opportunities (e.g. geographical proximity) but also on normative attitudes towards family responsibilities among adult children (as well as their parents and siblings) (Roberts, Richards & Bengtson, 1991; Rossi & Rossi, 1990), it is important to analyse the norms of filial responsibility towards aging parents. Studies on the international migration of Eastern and Central European populations suggest that the migration experience may change both the attitudes of adult children living abroad, and of their parents living in the country of origin, when compared with their peers (Krzyżowski, 2014).

Siblings and other family members who remain in the country of origin are often seen as the potential primary care givers (Kordasiewicz et al., 2017). Research shows that the expected “care deficit” in these countries (Erel, 2012) can also be compensated for by other relatives (Reisenauer, 2018) or by individuals unrelated by blood ties (Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020). Geographical distance, even within a country, can play a significant factor in deciding who will help parents in need of care (Kordasiewicz et al., 2017). Informal care can also be met by those parents in need of care moving in with their adult children who are living abroad (Bauer & Österle, 2016) or by regular visits from adult children (Pustulka, 2012).

An aging demographic and high population mobility are widely regarded in the academic literature as threats to the care of aging family members (Knodel et al., 2000; Zimmer et al., 2014). Despite this, the impact of international and internal migration on intergenerational solidarity has long received insufficient academic attention in Lithuania and other Eastern and Central European countries (Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, 2015). This lack of attention can partly be attributed to the social and demographic characteristics of the mobile population. Following the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, the young working-age population made up the majority of those who moved from Eastern and Central Europe to other EU countries. Given their relatively young age, questions relating to the care of their parents in old age appeared to be a matter

of future concern, rather than an issue for the present (Kordasiewicz et al., 2017). Over the last 15 years, it is likely that the majority of these parents have approached retirement age. Those Lithuanians who left when they were relatively young may now have reached middle age; in addition, middle-aged Lithuanians are also relatively mobile. Even if their parents do not currently need help, anxiety about the (potentially) deteriorating health of their parents may, in the future, become more widespread among Lithuanians abroad. Furthermore, Lithuanian citizens whose relatives live abroad may also be more likely to worry about (future) care obligations. All these issues are analysed in the dissertation.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The dissertation relies on the intergenerational solidarity approach to analyse the family ties of the Lithuanian population in the context of migration (Bengtson, 2001; Silverstein et al., 2010; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). This approach allows the study of family cohesion and helps to reveal “manifested and latent forms of family solidarity” (Buténaitė, 2015).

According to the intergenerational solidarity approach, relationships between generations (adult children–parents) and relations within generations (siblings) are analysed as dyadic relationships between individuals embedded within the family and the wider network of personal relations (Szydlik, 2008). The intergenerational solidary approach, as suggested by Bengtson and colleagues, focuses on six dimensions: 1) *normative solidarity*, which reveals attitudes towards social norms in relation to filial obligations; 2) *emotional solidarity*, characterised by the intensity of emotional closeness or emotional distance; 3) *consensus solidarity*, i.e. the degree of similarity in opinions and beliefs between generations and within generations; 4) *associational solidarity*, expressed in terms of the frequency of contact and its nature; 5) *functional solidarity*, which refers to the flows of practical, financial and emotional assistance

between generations; 6) *structural solidarity*, i.e. opportunities for and barriers to family members meeting and communicating – including the number of vertical and horizontal family ties, geographical proximity, physical capacity to communicate, time, etc. (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Roberts et al., 1991). Given the complexity of family life, these dimensions are analysed together and used to derive a typology of intergenerational solidarity (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997).

In this dissertation, the intergenerational solidarity approach is combined with the concept of personal networks (Milardo, 1988, 1992; Milardo & Wellman, 1992; Wellman & Wellman, 1992) and with theoretical insights from a configurational analysis perspective (Widmer & Jallinoja, 2008). Personal networks are considered to consist of individuals (*alters*) whom the individual (*ego*) deems important and close (Milardo & Wellman, 1992) for social, emotional, or symbolic reasons (Widmer et al., 2018). These concepts are used to analyse the structure of personal networks as well as expectations of support from significant persons in the case of elderly care.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach was chosen after having analysed the research questionnaires of the international research projects ‘Value of Children – Intergenerational Solidarity’ (VOC-IS) and ‘Gender and Generations Programme’ (GGP), and the results of the research carried out on the basis on them. Compared with the research that has so far been conducted in Lithuania, the dissertation’s research methodology has been expanded to take in a number of additional aspects. Specifically, the methodological novelty of the dissertation is characterised by the following:

- 1) To determine the attitudes of Lithuania’s population towards filial obligations, the study of intergenerational relationships between family members was complemented with an analysis of the general support for *filial norms* within Lithuanian society. The methodological

instrument from the GGP survey, based on the intergenerational solidarity approach proposed by Bengtson and co-authors, was selected to collect data on normative attitudes. The analysis of filial norms was supplemented by two socio-psychological indicators from the VOC-IS survey (Schwarz et al., 2001): the *invested support* indicator initially developed by Rossi and Rossi (1990), which allows the assessment of the readiness of adult children to support their parents when they become elderly, and the *filial anxiety* indicator developed by Cicirelli (1988).

2) The analysis of the *functional dimension* of intergenerational solidarity has been extended to include not only practical assistance (measured in the previous study) but also aspects of financial and emotional assistance. To measure these aspects, an adapted version of the questionnaire block 'Social Support' (Schwarz et al., 2001), from the international VOC-IS study mentioned above, was used.

3) The analysis of intergenerational solidarity was complemented by a study of personal networks (previously, intergenerational solidarity and personal networks have been analysed in separate studies);

4) The analysis of personal networks was supplemented with a question about expectations of support from each member of the network in the context of caring for elderly parents. The use of this question about support expectations has made it possible to assess the potential for members of a personal network to assume or share filial responsibilities;

5) The dissertation study reveals how support expectations with regard to personal networks, as well as the typology of intergenerational relationships, filial norms, invested support and filial anxiety indicators are expressed in the context of migration.

6) The study brings to light the importance of the dimension of gender in relation to support expectations within personal networks and intergenerational solidarity, as well as invested support and filial anxiety indicators.

The empirical part of the dissertation is based on the results of an analysis of two surveys carried out in Lithuania during 2018. The surveys were conducted together with a group of family sociologists belonging to the Department of Sociology, while implementing the project ‘Global migration and the Lithuanian family: family practices, circulation of care and return strategies’ (2017–2019, S-MIP-17-117, led by Prof. Dr. Irena Juozeliūnienė). As a doctoral student, the author of the dissertation contributed to the preparation of the project application, and from October 2017 until December 2019 was a member of the research team. One of the activities for which the author of the dissertation was responsible was coordinating the preparation of the survey questionnaires.

The first survey is an Omnibus-type representative survey of the Lithuanian population, conducted by Baltic Research in June 2018 on behalf of Vilnius University (N = 1,005). The second survey is a quota survey of persons with direct experience of international migration, conducted in August 2018 (N = 406). The latter survey was conducted by applying quota sampling to interview members of the Lithuanian population who had lived abroad for at least six months after 1990, while their underaged children remained in Lithuania (N = 306); as well as members of the Lithuanian population who had experience of living abroad while their (elderly) parents in need of care remained in Lithuania (N = 100).

International migration experience was defined as living abroad for a period of at least six months. This was chosen to ensure the comparability of the data with that of the previous study, ‘Emigration and Family: Challenges, Family Resources, and Ways of Coping with Difficulties’, carried out by a group of family sociologists from Vilnius University between 2012 and 2014. As a general rule, in statistics at national and international level a (long-term) migrant is currently considered to be a person living in another country for at least 12 months.

To analyse filial norms, an index of adult children’s responsibility towards their elderly parents was established. This enabled the level

of familialism in Lithuania to be assessed. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used to analyse invested support and filial anxiety, and to determine the factors that affect them. Latent cluster analysis was used to classify intergenerational relationships into a typology of intergenerational solidarity. Inferential statistics methods were used to analyse the relationships between sociodemographic and family traits, migration experience, and the family relationship types identified. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used to analyse the networks of significant individuals (in terms of their characteristics and support expectations) and the factors explaining the variations between them.

4. NOVELTY OF THE DISSERTATION

The scientific novelty of the dissertation relates primarily to the *research subject*. A review of the academic literature analysing intergenerational solidarity in Eastern and Central European countries and family ties in the context of migration, reveals that many academic studies focus on transnational motherhood or parenthood and the impact of migration on underaged children who remain in the country of origin (e.g., Lutz & Palenga-Möllenberg, 2012). The experiences of older family members are usually discussed through the prism of support providers (e.g., Pantea, 2012) rather than as beneficiaries.

As in other Eastern and Central European countries, Lithuanian researchers have so far paid more attention to the issues of motherhood and parenthood (e.g., Juozeliūnienė & Leonavičiūtė, 2009) and the experiences of children from transnational families (e.g., Malinauskas, 2008). The relationships between adult children abroad and their (aging) parents in Lithuania, as well as other transnational family ties, have, by comparison, received less attention.

With regard to this perspective, it is possible to distinguish a number of publications prepared on the basis of three research projects that ran (almost) parallel. Mikulionienė (2013, 2014) analysed intergenerational communication in the context of migration.

Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė (2014, 2015, 2017) analysed solidarity between generations from the perspective of elderly persons in Lithuania who had adult children abroad. Juozeliūnienė and co-authors analysed relationships within the Lithuanian population as family resources in the context of migration situations, as well as the embeddedness of these relationships in the broader context of social relationships (Juozeliūnienė et al., 2014, 2018; Tureikytė, 2015). Questions relating to the care of elderly family members in the context of migration (including normative solidarity) in Lithuania have so far been analysed only from the perspective of elderly parents, mainly using the data collected during the survey of the Lithuanian population (aged 65 and older) with at least one adult child abroad (N = 305) conducted in 2013 (Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, 2014, 2015) and qualitative study that complemented it (Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, 2017).

The scientific novelty of the dissertation also relates to the *under-exploration of the dimensions of intergenerational solidarity*, both abroad and in Lithuania. When exploring intergenerational solidarity in the context of the mobility of populations from Eastern and Central Europe, researchers usually focus on communication between family members living abroad and older people who remain in the country of origin (mostly aged 60 or 65 and over). Normative solidarity is analysed less frequently than other dimensions of intergenerational solidarity, and the analysis of adult children's responsibilities towards their own (elderly) parents is limited to the analysis of general filial attitudes (e.g. Krzyżowski, 2014; Mureşan & Hărăguş, 2015), while individual readiness to support parents is generally not considered.

A number of studies in Lithuania have analysed specific aspects of intergenerational solidarity separately; namely, *structural solidarity* (Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, 2011; Maslauskaitė, 2011); *intergenerational solidarity types* (Juozeliūnienė et al., 2014; Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2016; Tureikytė, 2015); and *filial norms* (Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, 2014, 2015; Kraniauskienė, 2013; Žalimienė et al., 2019). Family relationships, as important resources in the case of migration, were analysed by Tureikytė (2015) in the context of the

aforementioned research project, ‘Emigration and Family: Challenges, Family Resources, and Ways of Coping with Difficulties’. In the context of migration, family and kinship relations were also analysed by Juozeliūnienė and Budginaitė (2016); and by Juozeliūnienė, Budginaitė and Bielevičiūtė (2018), after having performed a secondary analysis of the survey data. So far, however, the structural dimension of intergenerational solidarity, intergenerational solidarity types and filial norms (in the particular context of migration) have not yet been addressed together in a single study.

The dissertation also complements *typological studies of intergenerational solidarity*, both in Lithuania and elsewhere in Eastern and Central Europe. In Lithuania, intergenerational solidarity types have been analysed only on the basis of the aforementioned study, ‘Emigration and Family: Challenges, Family Resources, and Ways of Coping with Difficulties’ (Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2016; Tureikytė, 2015). Furthermore, only one of the publications prepared on the basis of this project analysed the types of intergenerational solidarity within the general Lithuanian population (Juozeliūnienė et al., 2014). This was based on an analysis of family and kinship relations together, and made no comparison between the typologies of family relationships in Lithuanian families with and without migration experience. Elsewhere in Eastern and Central Europe, intergenerational solidarity types have been analysed in Poland and Estonia, based on the international VOC-IS study (e.g., Nauck, 2015). This study was limited to information about three generations gathered from a women’s perspective, and without considering the aspect of migration. Thus, this dissertation contributes to the development of typological studies of intergenerational solidarity in the context of migration in Eastern and Central Europe.

The dissertation contributes to the development of joint research on internal and international migration, and also to research on return migration. When analysing intergenerational solidarity and family responsibilities (at a distance), it is also important to keep in mind

internal migration. Geographical distance, even within a single country, can be significant factor when it comes to deciding who will support parents in need of care (Kordasiewicz et al., 2017). Despite this, in Lithuania, internal migration remains a little-analysed issue (Ubarevičienė, 2016). Thus, the dissertation contributes to the development of (joint) research on internal and international migration in Lithuania. In addition, the quota survey of Lithuanians with direct migration experience analysed in the dissertation focuses on mobile people currently living in Lithuania. Therefore, in addition to analysing indicators of intergenerational solidarity and expectations of support within the personal networks of Lithuanian citizens with direct experience of international migration, the dissertation also contributes to the development of research into return migration – a research strand in which the discussion of family and personal relationships has so far been very limited.

The analysis of intergenerational solidarity is supplemented by an analysis of *filial norms*, as previous intergenerational solidarity studies in Lithuania have not analysed the relationship between intergenerational solidarity types and attitudes towards filial responsibilities. The dissertation extends its study of normative solidarity by complementing it with the indicators of *invested support* and *filial anxiety*. As mentioned previously, these indicators are used in international research studies, and have been adapted in the dissertation for use in the analysis of families with migration experience. Studies of normative solidarity are usually limited to exploring general filial norms. Questions about individuals' readiness to help their parents are usually excluded. This is considered one of the shortcomings of existing intergenerational solidarity research (see Rossi & Rossi, 1990). The dissertation aims to overcome this limitation by including the aforementioned indicator of *invested support* (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). The indicator of *filial anxiety*, proposed by Cicirelli (1988) and also employed in this study, has not been included in previous research studies on family relationships in

Lithuania, nor has it been applied to migration research outside Lithuania.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation relates also to its exploration of the *connections between intergenerational solidarity and personal networks*. Intergenerational solidarity, and the types of intergenerational solidarity have been analysed in Lithuania by Tureikytė (2015), while personal networks in the context of migration have been analysed by Butėnaitė (2015). In the dissertation, the analysis of intergenerational solidarity between adult children and their parents, and of solidarity between siblings, is complemented by a study of personal networks in order to determine the place of family members within them, as well as the expectations support that exist towards personal networks in the context of care for elderly parents.

The dissertation pays special attention to the *gender dimension*. Gender can be linked to the expression of filial norms, the readiness of individuals to help their parents, and concerns about (future) parental care, as well as to types of intergenerational solidarity and expectations of support from personal networks in the context of migration. Previous research has revealed the unique role of mothers (Tureikytė, 2015; Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2016) and different types of assistance to families with migration experience, depending on the gender of the family member remaining in Lithuania (Juozeliūnienė et al., 2018). The dissertation deepens this dimension by analysing not only expectations of support (relating to care for the elderly) from personal networks, and intergenerational solidarity in the context of migration, but also by researching filial norms, individuals' readiness to help their parents, and filial anxiety.

5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The **aim of the dissertation** is to determine the potential support for family members in old age in Lithuania in the context of migration. This is achieved by analysing intergenerational solidarity and personal networks.

The *level of potential support* is revealed via four aspects. First, the strength of *filial norms* (the stronger the support for familialism, the greater the potential for support). Second, the *structure of family relationships* and their *geography* (the larger family of origin and the smaller the geographical distance between them, the greater the opportunities to provide support to one another). Third, the nature of the dominant *intergenerational solidarity types* (the fewer detached family ties, the greater the potential for support). Fourth, the *support expectations* towards kin and non-kin belonging to personal networks (the larger the share of the Lithuanian population who have individuals in their personal networks on whom they can rely if elderly parents require care, the greater the potential for support).

In order to achieve the aforementioned aim, the following **objectives** were set:

1) to determine the strength of attitudes towards filial norms in Lithuania; the level of anxiety regarding the future care needs of elderly parents; and individuals' readiness to support them, depending on the geography of family ties and migration experience within the family;

2) to assess potential support for the aging parents by determining the dominant types of intergenerational solidarity in Lithuania and establishing a typology of intergenerational solidarity among those in Lithuania's population with direct experience of international migration;

3) to examine the support expectations and the potential use of personal networks for parental care; and

4) to determine how gender affects intergenerational solidarity and personal networks in the context of migration, in terms of potential support for elderly parents in Lithuania.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation consists of three chapters. The **first chapter** reviews the theoretical ideas applied in research on intergenerational solidarity

and personal networks, that are relevant to the analysis of these aspects in the context of the mobility of Lithuania's population.

The **second chapter** presents the theoretical assumptions used to formulate the research hypothesis, and describes the research methodology.

The **third chapter** of the dissertation presents the results of the empirical research. The first part of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of intergenerational solidarity. After reviewing the structure and geography of family ties, the author of the dissertation describes the results of the research into filial norms in Lithuania; the level of anxiety regarding the future care needs of parents; and individuals' readiness to support their parents in the event that such a need arises in the future. The analysis of these aspects among the general population of Lithuania is supplemented by an analysis of attitudes towards filial norms, filial anxiety and invested support among those within the population who have direct experience of international migration. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, latent class analysis is used to determine the dominant types of intergenerational solidarity within the Lithuania's general population and to establish a typology of intergenerational relationships within the Lithuanian population with direct experience of migration. The last section in this part of the dissertation is devoted to analysing the relationship patterns and current levels of support, both between generations and within generations, and according to geographical distance, to ascertain potential for support to family members in old age.

The second part of the third chapter focuses on an analysis of networks of significant people, in order to reveal the potential of these networks to provide care for parents in old age, depending on the geography of the network of significant people, and on migration experiences within Lithuania's population. This chapter of the dissertation presents the features identified in the networks of significant persons within the population in Lithuania that has experience of migration, and reveals the role of gender in the expression of indicators in the network of significant persons.

Both the first and second parts of the third chapter end with a summary of the research results, linking them with the theoretical assumptions and research hypotheses, as well as with insights from the academic literature on intergenerational solidarity and personal networks in various contexts, to reveal the specifics of the Lithuanian case, and the specifics of return migration.

The dissertation ends with the **conclusions, bibliography and appendices.**

7. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account the high level of mobility among Lithuania's population, this dissertation seeks to determine the potential for the support of aging family members in Lithuania in the context of migration. This was achieved by analysing intergenerational solidarity and the expectations of support from personal networks, to assess whether and to what extent family, kin and non-kin relationships could be activated, depending on geographical distance and changing parental care needs.

Through the analysis of intergenerational solidarity and personal networks, the dissertation identifies a high level of potential support for aging family members in Lithuania in the context of migration. The level of potential support was revealed through four aspects: strong filial norms regarding obligations towards the older generation; the structure of family ties and their geography; the nature of the predominant intergenerational solidarity types in Lithuania; and the expectations of support (connected with the envisaged need for parental care) towards kin and non-kin included in personal networks. The study also revealed the importance of the dimension of gender in the expression of intergenerational solidarity, as well in higher expectations of support from the women included in personal networks than from the men. The following conclusions of the dissertation are structured according to these aspects.

1. The results of the empirical research reveal a high potential for support for elderly parents, taking into account strong filial norms, a high level of readiness to help parents, and a low level of anxiety about the future care needs of elderly parents:
 - 1.1. Based on the results of the analysis of data from a representative survey, in general, Lithuania's population firmly adheres to filial norms and considers caring for (elderly) parents to be the duty of adult children. The responsibility of adult children for their parents can be considered a social norm in Lithuania, as acceptance of filial norms within Lithuania's population does not depend on individual or family traits.
 - 1.2. The low level of anxiety regarding the future care needs of elderly parents, and the high level of readiness to support them in the future, indicate that the population of Lithuania feels prepared to face various difficulties if their parents require care in the future, and (expected) care obligations rarely are considered worrying.
 - 1.3. Lithuanians with family members living abroad feel less willing to support their parents, and are slightly more concerned about (expected) caring responsibilities than the country's general population. They are also slightly less likely to agree that adult children are responsible for taking care of their elderly parents. This shows that the experience of migration within a Lithuanian family changes its attitudes in relation to filial obligations, and affects the readiness of adult children to support their parents.
2. The analysis of the structure and geography of family ties reveals that within both the general population and in families with experience of migration, family members often choose to live relatively close to each other. Given that geographical proximity is one of the main aspects on which the ability of family members to provide mutual assistance depends, one can expect a more

intensive flow of support in the event of a future need for parental care:

- 2.1. The majority of Lithuania's population lives relatively close to their parents (within the same city or district), and a significant share live with their parents. Although most Lithuanians live relatively far away from siblings, a large portion of them maintain good relations. Among those who do not have siblings, a greater proportion live with their parent(s). These factors provide a favourable structure of opportunities to activate support for parents if the need for care arises.
- 2.2. Like the rest of Lithuania's population, Lithuanian citizens with experience of international migration who have returned from abroad to live in Lithuania, tend to live close to their parents and to other members of their family of origin. A similar share of returnees live together with their mother and/or father as in the general population of Lithuania. On the one hand, this may show that close ties with the members of the family of origin are maintained regardless of geographical distance; on the other hand, it may indicate that emigrants who maintain close ties with family are more likely to return to the country of origin.
3. The analysis of intergenerational solidarity types reveals a high potential for support to family members, given the low prevalence of detached relationship type. The predominant types of intergenerational solidarity also indicate the maintenance of close ties, both within the general population and in families with experience of migration:
 - 3.1. Data from the representative survey of the Lithuanian population indicates that the dominant types of relationship with the family of origin (parents, brothers and sisters) are *intimate, but distant* and *tight-knit*. *Detached* and *obligatory* relationship types are less common. This shows that close ties with the family of origin are prevalent in Lithuania,

regardless of the geographical distance between family members, and that families are linked by intensive support flows that are based on emotional closeness rather than on the obligatory nature of the ties.

- 3.2. The intensity of family solidarity *between* generations differs from that *within* generations. Lithuanian citizens maintain their most intense relationships with their parents (the *tight-knit* relationship type predominates). On a horizontal level, most family relationships are emotionally close, but are maintained at a distance (the predominant type is *intimate, but distant*). This shows that flows of help between adult children and their parents are more intensive and offer high potential for support if/when the need for parental care arises. Meanwhile, maintaining close relationships with siblings at a distance indicates that these ties can potentially be activated in case of need.
- 3.3. A typological analysis of intergenerational solidarity between the Lithuanian citizens with direct experience of migration who have returned from abroad and their parents and siblings reveals the dominance of the *tight-knit* relationship type. This shows great potential for support if/when parental care needs arise, as family members are not only linked by close relationships, but live relatively close and help each other regularly. The *intimate, but distant* relationship type comes second, but is much less widespread than *tight-knit* relationships. In the third place according to popularity are *detached* ties, while in the fourth place, the *intimate, but different* relationship type was discovered while carrying out latent class analysis.
- 3.4. The new relationship type mentioned above – *intimate, but different* – has not previously appeared in the academic literature. It was named in this way by the author of the dissertation to take account of the fact that such relationships are characterised by all the dimensions of intergenerational

solidarity except for a similarity of opinions. This relationship type is not found in the general Lithuanian population, and is typical only of Lithuanians with direct experience of migration, especially in relation to their relationships with their mothers and fathers. This indicates the formation of new family relationship type in the context of migration.

- 3.5. When carrying out latent class analysis to establish the typology of relationships among families with direct experience of migration, the *obligatory* relationship type was not found. This type of relationship, which indicates that family ties are maintained and support is provided regardless of low emotional closeness and low similarity of opinion, was found only among the general population. Both the lack of *obligatory* relations and the low prevalence of *detached* ties indicate that most families with experience of migration remain close, regardless of geographical distance.
4. The analysis of personal networks and expectations of support from these networks in the context of migration revealed that individuals with migration experience in the family have larger personal networks, and the geography of their personal ties is more diverse:
 - 4.1. Data from the representative survey shows that the personal networks of Lithuania's population are relatively small. On average, they consist of 3–4 persons (average 3.95; standard deviation 2.395) and are geographically close (most live in the same household or in the same city or district). Personal networks are dominated by family members, while more distant kin and non-blood-related individuals are less likely to be considered significant persons by members of the Lithuanian population. Lithuanian citizens consider themselves most likely to rely on members of the family of procreation and family of origin, if/when the need arise to take care of elderly parent(s). Those who have no one to rely

on usually have fewer family members in their personal networks. With the exception of cohabitants, on whom members of Lithuania's population would rely first and foremost if/when their parents required care, the geography of other significant persons is not an important criterion when choosing who could potentially help to take care of elderly parents. One in four significant persons living abroad was considered potentially able to assume or share responsibilities for parental care. This indicates the maintenance of close family ties, regardless of geographical distance.

- 4.2. Lithuanian citizens affected by international migration through their family, rather than via a personal migration experience (i.e. those with family members living abroad) on average named 4–5 persons as significant (average 4.49; standard deviation 2.288). Despite slightly larger personal networks, the analysis of support expectations with respect to the network revealed that, in terms of composition, the networks of Lithuanians with family members living abroad do not differ significantly from those without, and that family-related individuals dominate their personal networks. Nevertheless, the geography of their personal ties differs. Compared with the general population, the networks of such individuals are more diverse: cohabitants compose a smaller share of these personal networks; a larger number of significant persons live in another city, another part of Lithuania, or abroad. This indicates that Lithuanians with mobile family members maintain close ties regardless of geographical distance, and have more diverse networks of potential support.
- 4.3. The personal networks of Lithuanians with direct experience of international migration are larger than those of both the general population, and of the portion of the population who have at least one family member abroad. On average, when

asked about their personal networks, Lithuanians with direct experience of migration indicated 5 significant persons (average – 5.19, standard deviation – 2.539). As with the other groups, family ties predominate in their personal networks, and individuals considered significant often live relatively close by. If/when the need for care of elderly parents arises, individuals with direct migration experience would mainly count on the family of procreation and family of origin for support. When choosing who could potentially help to take care of their elderly parents, these individuals more often name people living in the same household as them. In general, however, the geography of significant people who could potentially help is more diverse when compared with the general population.

5. The nature of intergenerational solidarity between adult children and their parents, as well as expectations of support from personal networks, are structured in a gendered way. Women within a personal network are seen as offering the greater potential to help with elderly care, especially when they are connected by family ties:
 - 5.1. The adult female population of Lithuania, regardless of their migration experience, tend to maintain closer ties with parents and siblings than do men. The closest ties, regardless of gender and migratory experience, are maintained with mothers.
 - 5.2. Women belonging to personal networks are slightly more likely than men to be identified as individuals who could help to take care of elderly parents if/when such a need arises. Of those surveyed, women indicated more often than men that they would have no one else to rely on if their parents needed care in the future.

In addition to contributing to the sum of empirical knowledge on the subject matter, the dissertation also contributes to furthering

research in the field of intergenerational relationships in Lithuania. The typological design of the intergenerational solidarity research used in the dissertation allows the dominant types of intergenerational solidarity to be distinguished. It also reveals a complexity in family ties that cannot be seen when analysing only individual dimensions of intergenerational solidarity or their interrelationships. The typological analysis of intergenerational solidarity thus provides an opportunity to reveal levels of family cohesion, as well as active and latent forms of solidarity.

By complementing this analysis of intergenerational solidarity types with an analysis of filial norms, filial anxiety and invested support, the dissertation overcomes some of the limitations of previous intergenerational solidarity studies, and reveals how migratory experiences can affect both individuals' attitudes towards filial obligations, and their personal readiness to provide support. Combining an analysis of intergenerational solidarity with the concept of personal networks has helped to reveal how family ties are 'embedded' in a broader social network. It also enables comparisons to be made between expectations of support from blood-related and from unrelated individuals. It confirms the importance of family ties in taking care of elderly parents in the context of migration, and reveals that closeness and support are structured in a gendered manner.

8. POSITIONS DEFENDED

- The experience of migration adjusts attitudes among Lithuania's population towards filial obligations and readiness to support elderly parents in the future.
- The high level of support for familialism and dominant forms of intergenerational solidarity in Lithuania, characterised by the close relationships, are associated with greater preparedness to care for elderly parents.

- The experience of migration has contributed to the emergence in Lithuania of a new type of relationship ties – *intimate, but different*.
- Experience of migration expands personal networks, which are a significant potential source of support in taking care of elderly parents in Lithuania.
- The nature of the relationship between adult children and their parents and expectations of support regarding the care of elderly parents are related to the dimension of gender.

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