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## **Does Adult Children Migration Lower the Level of Intergenerational Solidarity? Evidence from Lithuanian Transnational Families**

*Abstract:* Within the context of high filial norms and a limited formal care system for the elderly in Lithuania the paper examines the effects of adult children migration on intergenerational solidarity from elderly parents left behind perspective. More specifically, we analyze if changed geographic proximity as a result of adult children migration has crucial effects on the associational, affectual and functional dimensions of solidarity or it is (also) being predicted by other individual and familial factors. The analysis is based on a quantitative survey of elderly parents (N = 305) with at least one migrant child. The results suggest that even if adult children migration has some negative impact for associational solidarity (and to a certain extent, for affectual one), in a way it is being compensated with positive impact on functional solidarity in terms of financial support. While greater geographic proximity as a result of adult children migration is the crucial factor of associational solidarity and determines some forms of functional solidarity, the affectual dimension of solidarity is being shaped by other familial and individual predictors.

*Keywords:* migration, elderly parents, intergenerational solidarity, predictors of intergenerational solidarity.

### **Introduction**

Due to increased migration and mobility, a growing number of transnational families has become a common feature of the contemporary society. Likewise Poland (Krzyżowski & Mucha 2013), Lithuania has experienced significant demographic changes over the last decades and the numbers of transnational families have increased. It is estimated that from the restoration of independence in 1990 to 2011 more than one sixth of the Lithuanian population has emigrated; and the net migration rate per 1000 inhabitants is the highest in the EU (Sipavičienė 2013). The emigration processes have accelerated after the accession to the EU that allowed free movement of citizens within the Member States. The main destination countries still remain the UK and Ireland, more popular are becoming the Scandinavian countries (especially Norway) and Germany (Statistics Lithuania 2015). The difference between migrants by gender is insignificant, and their age structure is young (the highest proportion of migrants comprise age group from 15–34). Yet the proportions of those aged 35 to 50 are also relatively high (Statistics Lithuania 2015).

The increased migration flows coincide with rapid population ageing in Lithuania. As the share of older people is increasing the sustainability of the welfare state and

provision of support within the family network needs to be reconsidered. The problem of availability of familial networks to elderly parents is exacerbated by low fertility rates which narrow the horizontal networks of potential care providers.

Despite the severe consequences of these demographic processes, the issue of migration effects on the intergenerational relationships has not received enough attention nor in Lithuania neither in the other Baltic states. From one point of view Lithuania can be an example of the consequences of migration in the context of limited formal support system for the elderly. Also, it represents a case where the norms of filial responsibility are strong (Gedvilaite-Kordušienė 2013; Kraniauskienė 2013). Within this context the absence of potential care providers may be experienced by elderly parents more painfully compared to countries with better developed formal care systems in which the obligation to care for older parents is not so strong. This makes Lithuania an interesting case to explore the predictors of intergenerational solidarity within the context of migration. The study aims to answer if changed geographic proximity as a result of adult children migration has a crucial effect on intergenerational solidarity or it is (also) being predicted by other individual and familial factors. In the light of intergenerational solidarity approach, we explore the predictors of associational, affectual and functional dimensions of solidarity. In this way the study aims to contribute to the lack of knowledge on significant factors shaping intergenerational relationships across the borders in the under-researched area of Eastern Europe and focuses on those who stay behind, namely elderly parents in Lithuania who have migrant adult children.

Broadly defined, transnational families live at least part of the time geographically dispersed and spend periods of time in separate countries (Zechner 2008). In this article we apply a definition of transnational families proposed by Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 3): “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders.” The definition of transnationalism employed here includes both the aspect of social relationships, as well as practices, and considers the variety of consequences of migration: “The diverse complex of the social relationships and practices developing at a distance (and of the identifications underpinning them), through which migrants exert a significant, provable and reciprocal influence on non-migrants in the countries of origin” (Boccagni 2012: 120).

### **Theoretical Approaches on Intergenerational Relationships: Solidarity, Conflict and Ambivalence**

The concepts of solidarity, conflict and ambivalence are among the most common in theoretical literature focusing on intergenerational relationships. The solidarity approach, elaborated by Bengtson and colleagues, is used in this article in order to distinguish different dimensions of intergenerational relationships that might be affected by adult children migration. The essence of solidarity approach, according to

Bengston (2001), is an attempt to reveal the nature of the bonds of cohesion that hold family members together. The model of intergenerational solidarity is comprised by six conceptual dimensions: associational solidarity (the frequency and patterns of interaction among family members), affectual solidarity (the type and degree of positive sentiments about family members), consensual solidarity (the degree of agreement on values, attitudes and beliefs), functional solidarity (the exchange of support and assistance), normative solidarity (the perception of standards of the familial solidarity) and the structural solidarity (the number, type and geographic proximity of family members) (Bengston, Richards, & Roberts 1991: 18).

Even if the solidarity model is advantageous as it incorporates the behavioural as well as emotional and normative elements, it is worth mentioning the critical responses and alternative theoretical approaches, especially in the case of families functioning over the borders. The most of critique of solidarity approach was diverted towards a considerable emphasis on positive feelings and emotions (Hammarström 2005; Lüscher, Pillemer 1998; Connidis, McMullin 2002). The authors who incorporated the concept of conflict provided the evidence of asymmetries and disbalances in intergenerational relationships (Silverstein, Chen, & Heller 1996; Szydlic 2005). The authors of solidarity approach replied to the critique recognising the importance of conflict. They argue that each dimension of solidarity model represents dialectics: intimacy and distance (affectual solidarity), agreement and dissent (consensual solidarity), etc. (Bengston et al. 2002).

Finally, the concept of ambivalence was introduced as an advantageous model for the studies of intergenerational relationships. According to the founders of ambivalence approach (Lüscher & Pillemer 1998; Connidis & McMullin 2002), the interpretation of intergenerational relationships based only on solidarity or conflict approaches is too narrow frame to reveal complex relationships in the family. Lüscher and Pillemer (1998: 416) define intergenerational ambivalence as “contradictions in relationships between parents and adult offspring that cannot be reconciled.” Connidis and McMullin (2002: 559), similarly, conceptualized the ambivalence as “structurally created contradictions that are experienced by individuals in their interaction with others.” Furthermore, the authors admit that the possibilities to overcome ambivalent situations depend on structural factors, such as class, age, race, ethnicity, gender (Connidis and McMullin 2002). Bengston and his colleagues (2002: 575), however, acknowledged that ambivalence, solidarity and conflict are not competing approaches to study family relationships, but rather a complementary lens through which to look at family relationships.

In the light of these concepts, this study measures the effects of the structural solidarity (changed geographic proximity) on the associational, affectual and functional dimensions of solidarity. We have chosen to focus on these three dimensions of solidarity due to several reasons. First of all, they are mostly effected by migration. Secondly, these dimensions of solidarity might highlight pivotal issues for social policies in origin and destination countries. Distance has a crucial role when we speak about one of substantial functions of the family such as care (Zechner 2008). Yet at this point it is important to distinguish between different aspects of care: “caring for”

and “caring about” (Reynolds & Zontini 2006; de Winter, Koelet, & de Valk 2013). “Caring for” refers to hands-on care giving on a personal level, while “caring about” encompasses keeping contact and emotional support and refers to emotional functions related to sociability, advice, comfort and self-validation (Reynolds & Zontini 2006; de Winter, Koelet, & de Valk 2013).

“Caring about” family members seems to assume crucial importance in the context of migration and transnational families (Reynolds & Zontini 2006). Associational dimension of solidarity and two types of functional solidarity (emotional and financial) is an expression of “caring about” which may be carried out in transnational space. Frequency of intergenerational contacts (associational solidarity) is an essential element of care relations and is often used as an indicator of the strength of intergenerational exchange and potential support for older people (Tomassini et al. 2003). At the same time, lack of contacts may indicate tensions or ambivalent feelings in the family and may serve as an indicator of needs to receive care and support from non-familial networks. Even if the affectual solidarity is not care relationships *per se*, it is closely related to support as it reflects the overall satisfaction of relationships. Functional solidarity indicates the actual flows of support or the lack of support within the family. Researchers recognize at least five types of informal support provision towards elderly parents: economic (financial and material); housing and practical assistance in the household; personal care; emotional support; and cognitive support (Attias-Donfut 2003). In this study we investigate two types of functional support which may be easily provided in transnational families—emotional and financial. In general, caring can be considered a core of processes associated with “doing family” (Krzyżowski & Mucha 2013) and transnational caregiving (the same as caregiving in any family) binds a family together into intergenerational networks of reciprocity (Baldassar & Merla 2013).

### Literature Review:

#### the Predictors of Associational, Affectual and Functional Dimensions of Solidarity

The dimensions of intergenerational solidarity are being shaped by variety of the individual and familial determinants including both characteristics of children and parents (Bengtson, Richards, & Roberts 1991). However, with few exceptions (de Winter, Koelet, & de Valk 2013), most of the quantitative studies have focused on non-transnational families while determining the significant predictors of intergenerational solidarity. The next section examines significant predictors of associational, affectual and functional dimensions of solidarity with specific focus on the impact of geographic proximity (transnational) for intergenerational relationships.

#### Predictors of Associational Solidarity

The founders of intergenerational solidarity theory emphasize that geographic proximity is the strongest predictor of intergenerational association (Roberts, Bengtson, & Richards 1991). There is a vast amount of literature on the interlink between distance

and intergenerational contacts within a national-state. However, crossing the borders creates more complicated circumstances to maintain intergenerational contacts (for example, structural obstacles such as costs of the telephone calls, flights, etc.). Therefore, in transnational space geographic distance in most cases should have greater impact on intergenerational contacts than geographic distance within a nation-state.

To sum up the literature on the effects of geographic proximity on intergenerational contacts within transnational space, few research directions can be distinguished. One direction of research focuses on maintaining transnational contacts as part of transnational activities (Hiebert & Ley 2006; Snel et al. 2006; Waldinger 2007). The findings of these studies, mainly conducted with non-European immigrants who live in the USA, Canada and Netherlands, are contradictory. Some researchers suggest that the greater part of immigrants maintain transnational contacts (Hiebert & Ley 2006; Snel et al. 2006). Other studies reveal that in some cases transnational contacts are not being maintained. For example, Waldinger (2007) study shows that a large percentage of Latino immigrants residing in the USA do not call home, even though making long-distance calls is easy and relatively inexpensive, and only a small proportion of adult children use e-mail to contact friends and family members.

Another direction of research observes the correlation between transnationalism and the frequency of contacts and usually finds it to be negative (Fong, Cao, & Chan 2010; Antman 2013; de Winter, Koelet, & de Valk 2013). Of the greatest relevance to our research is de Winter, Koelet and de Valk (2013) study in which European transnational families and Belgian families are compared for the extent of intergenerational contacts. More specifically, the focus is on intergenerational contacts between migrants and their mothers. The results suggest strong effects of geographic distance on face-to-face contacts and milder effects on telephone contacts in European transnational families.

Regarding other predictors, there is solid evidence that interaction patterns vary by gender of children and parents, finding that more frequent contacts are more common between mother-daughter dyad (Hagestad, 1984; Rossi & Rossi 1990; Fokkema, ter Bekke, & Dykstra 2008). Marital status, educational level and type of settlement of parents also have been found to influence this dimension of solidarity. A combination of parents' characteristics such as divorced or separated, more highly educated, living in an urban settings is related with lower levels of associational solidarity (Roberts, Bengston, & Richards 1991). Compared with divorce, widowhood, on the contrary, was found to increase the level of intergenerational contacts (Rossi & Rossi 1990; Barrett & Lynch 1999) or has less negative effect on intergenerational contacts (Albertini & Saraceno 2007). Age and health of older parents have only indirect influence on the associational solidarity. Older parents with worse health are more likely to report living with a child and higher levels of intergenerational association (Roberts, Bengston, & Richards 1991). Number of children also constrains the frequency of intergenerational contacts. More children imply more overall contact and less per child (Fokkema, ter Bekke, & Dykstra 2008).

Along with characteristics of parents, some characteristics of children, such as socio-economic and marital statuses also shape intergenerational contacts.

Higher education is associated with lower frequency of contacts because more highly educated children usually live further away from their parents (Fokkema, ter Bekke, & Dykstra 2008; Lawton, Silverstein & Bengston 1994). The research findings on the effects of children's marital status are mixed. Some researchers have not found any negative effects of a child's divorce on intergenerational contacts (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 2006), while others suggest that child's divorce is less favorable for associational solidarity (Kaljimin 2006).

### Predictors of Affectual Solidarity

Gender of children and parents usually are the priority predictors to explain the affectual dimension of solidarity in societies. Closer relationships are usually being found between mothers and daughters (Rossi & Rossi 1990), although other researchers also find more tensions between mother-daughter dyads compared to other intergenerational networks (Fingerman 1997; Willson, Shuey, & Elder 2003; Pillemer & Suitor 2002, van Gaalen & Dykstra 2006).

Age of children and parents is admitted to be another important predictors of affectual solidarity (Roberts, Bengston, & Richards 1991). Intergenerational affection is found to be higher during child's adult years and, accordingly, during parents' older age (Rossi & Rossi 1990).

There is no doubt that an emotional content is an inseparable part of transnational relationships (Skrbiš 2008), yet there is a notable lack of quantitative data on the effects of migration on the affectual solidarity. A few qualitative studies which include the emotional dimension in the research of intergenerational relationships across the borders suggest that migration is not an obstacle to sustain close family ties (Baldassar 2007b, 2008; Goulbourne & Chamberlain 2001). Some qualitative studies provide evidence that namely visits home—practices having symbolic and practical significance—allows to maintain close transnational kin relationships (Mason 2003).

### Predictors of Functional Solidarity

The researchers agree that most of the non-European and European immigrants feel strong obligation to care for their relatives and develop transnational long-distance care strategies (Spitzer, Neufeld, Harrison, Hughes, & Stewart 2003; King & Vullnetari 2009; Baldassar 2007a; Baldock 2000). These mostly qualitative studies reveal different forms of support flows in the transnational space: financial (remittances, presents), personal (during visits), and emotional (via telephone, video-tapes, visits of friends, etc.). Quantitative studies on transnational support mostly focus on the economic consequences for the family members who stay behind and show that international migration usually promotes the financial welfare of migrants, who are then able to remit more to parents in their origin countries (Lucas & Stark, 1985, Rapoport & Docquier 2005). Thus, better financial status of migrant chil-

dren seems to be a predictor of provided financial support for those who stay behind.

The studies conducted with transnational families from Central and Eastern Europe find intensive flows of support between family members in origin and destination countries (Piperno 2015; Krzyżowski & Mucha, 2013; Krzyżowski 2012; Zechner 2008). Because of specific cultural context (such as strong normative filial expectations) and deficiencies of formal welfare system for the elderly in these countries, the migrant children face the necessity to establish compensatory care strategies. Flavia Piperno (2015) study with Romanian and Ukrainian female migrants residing in Italy and their family members back home reveals variety of strategies the families find to compensate the care drain. Nevertheless, the author concludes that the compensatory strategies are insufficient and care shortage for the left behind children and elderly parents persist. Łukasz Krzyżowski (2012) study with transnational Polish families (within two transnational social spaces: Polish-Icelandic and Polish-Austrian) shows that migration itself is a strategy to ensure social security of extended family. Furthermore, the data illustrates circulation of support in transnational families. Elderly parents are not only the receivers of support from migrant children, but they usually compensate their migrant children by helping them. Minna Zechner (2008) research is exceptional as it discloses the strategies how care is practiced within relatively short geographic distance—adult children residing in Finland and their elderly parents in Estonia. The author finds evidence that within such distance intensive care requiring face-to-face contacts is provided (“caring for”) and emphasizes difficulties when caring activities are performed over two systems so social policies (Zechner 2008).

Along with geographic proximity, gender, age, socio-economic, marital and health statuses of children and parents determine functional solidarity. Gender is found to be a significant predictor determining provision of personal care and emotional support. Care for elderly parents is usually being provided by daughters or daughters of law (Post 1990; Walker, Pratt, & Eddy 1995); and stronger flows of emotional support are also found to circulate among mothers and daughters (Rossi & Rossi 1990). Parents usually provide more support for their adult children in their early adulthood; in turn adult children tend to support their parents in their elderly age (Rossi & Rossi 1990, Settersten 2005). The studies examining the interlink between socio-economic status and functional solidarity indicate that family members who have higher income and education are more likely to provide financial support to members who lack financial recourses (Hoyert 1989; 1991). Married parents are more likely to provide support for their children than widowed or divorced, but the later ones are more likely to receive support from their children (Rossi & Rossi 1990). However, the opposite pattern was found for marital status of children: single children, especially daughters, tend to provide more financial support compared to married ones (Hoyert 1989). Some studies suggest that health status is a significant predictor of functional solidarity. Elderly parents who have poor health receive more support, and contrarily, worse health status of children may prevent flows of support from children (Kaufman & Uhlenberg 1998).

## Hyphotheses

Based on the literature review and on specific research question on the predictors of intergenerational solidarity in transnational families, we can formulate few hypotheses. First, we expect that elderly parents will have less associational solidarity with migrant children compared to non-migrant. Considering that migration inevitably changes the opportunities for face-to-face contacts, we have chosen to measure the impact only on virtual contacts which in the age of technologies may be easily kept in transnational space. Thus we formulate the first hypothesis that greater geographic proximity lowers the level of associational solidarity, but has no crucial effect on affectual and functional dimensions of solidarity (H1). Other factor found to have significant impact on all dimensions of intergenerational solidarity discussed above is gender of children and parents. We expect that higher levels of intergenerational solidarity will be more common for mother-daughter dyad compared to mother-son dyad (H2.1), and for father-daughter dyad compared to father-son dyad (H2.2). We also expect that older age of children is increasing the level of affectual solidarity (H3.1); and older age of elderly parents is increasing the level of functional solidarity (H3.2).

A set of hypotheses on the impact of socio-economic status assume that higher educational status of parents and children lowers the level of associational solidarity (H4.1), higher socio-economic status of children and parents increases the level of *provided* functional support (H4.2), while lower socio-economic status of children and parents increases the level of *received* functional support (H4.3). The following set of hypotheses is related to marital status of children and parents. We predict that widowed parents will have higher level of associational solidarity than married ones (H5.1), also that divorced or widowed parents are more likely to receive functional support from their children (H5.2). Regarding the marital status of children, we expect that single children will provide more financial support than married ones (H5.3). Finally, we expect that worse health of elderly parents leads to higher levels of associational and functional solidarity (H6).

## Data and Methods

This study is based on a representative survey of elderly parents (aged over 60) who have at least one migrant child. The survey was done in 2013 by the “Baltic Surveys” Ltd. The survey sampling was based on data from a national representative survey (the Omnibus) which identified the households of elderly parents with at least one migrant child (residing abroad for at least half a year). Subsequently, the quota sampling procedure was followed and the survey of elderly parents was conducted. 305 elderly parents were interviewed, of which 29,2% were men and 70,8% women. More than half of the elderly parents (61%) had both migrant and non-migrant children; and the rest of respondents had the only child or all children living abroad.

The respondents were recording data about each of their children (up to 8 children), thus the function *Varstocases* was used. This allowed us to convert the data

from “wide” to “long.” The outcome ( $N = 663$  children) allowed us to measure the impact of geographic proximity on the analyzed dimensions of intergenerational solidarity and the effects of other individual and familial predictors. The variable of geographic proximity included three categories: children living in close proximity in Lithuania (children living in the same municipality), children living in distant proximity in Lithuania (children living in other city / municipality) and children living abroad. Children living in the same household with elderly parents ( $N = 55$ ) were excluded from the analysis. Thus the total number of cases included into analysis was 608.

Based on previous findings on the gendered nature of intergenerational relationships in Lithuania (*Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė 2011*), we have constructed the models of regression separately for women (elderly mothers) and men (elderly fathers). The dependent variable in the model of the associational dimension of solidarity was frequent virtual contacts<sup>1</sup>—once per week or more frequently (coded as 1). The impact of significant predictors on the affectual dimension of solidarity was measured by means of a model with the evaluation of relationships<sup>2</sup> as the dependent variable. Very good evaluation of relationships was coded as 1. The predictors of the functional dimension of solidarity were measured by means of models on received/provided emotional support<sup>3</sup> with frequently provided/received emotional support coded as 1. Within the models on received financial support,<sup>4</sup> a regularly or few times per year received financial support was coded as 1. As the number of cases for men who provided financial support<sup>5</sup> for children was not enough to run the logistic regression, we constructed the model on financial support provided by women for their adult children ( $N = 128$ ).

Independent variables included in the models of logistic regression comprise characteristics of children (gender, age, education, partnerships status, marital status, financial status, and geographic proximity) and characteristics of parents (age, marital status, number of children, education, health, financial status, type of settlement, living arrangement). Our purpose was to find the significant predictors which increase the level of the intergenerational solidarity. Thus we elaborated the final models of

<sup>1</sup> Associational solidarity was measured by the following question: “How often do you meet your children? (1—at least once per week or more often, 2—a few times per month, 3—once per month, 4—once per 3 months, 5—once per 6 months, 6—once per year or less often, 7—do not meet).”

<sup>2</sup> Affectual solidarity was measured by the following question: “How would you evaluate your relationships with your children? Please indicate if your relationships are... (1—very good, 2—rather good, 3—neither good nor bad, 4—rather bad, 5—very bad).”

<sup>3</sup> Received emotional support was measured by the following question: “Over the last 12 months, have you talked with him/her about your personal experiences and feelings? If yes, how often? (1—never, 2—often, 3—sometimes, 4—rarely); provided emotional support: Over the last 12 months, have your children talked with you about their personal experiences and feelings? If yes, how often? (1—never, 2—often, 3—sometimes, 4—rarely).”

<sup>4</sup> Received financial support was measured by the following question: “Have you or your partner/spouse received financial support (in cash or in other way) from your children over the last 12 months? If yes, how often? (1—never over the last 12 months, 2—regularly (monthly, every second month), 2—few times per year, 3—once per year, 9—do not know, no answer).”

<sup>5</sup> Provided financial support was measured by the following question: “Have you or your partner/spouse provided financial support (in cash or in other form) for your children (including support for grandchildren) over 12 last months? If yes, how often? (1—never over last 12 months, 2—regularly (monthly; every second month), 3—a few times per year, 4—once per year, 9—do not know, no answer) “.

logistic regression with only significant independent variables. The results of logistic regression are provided in [Tables 1–6](#).

## Results

### The Predictors of Associational Dimension of Solidarity

The results of logistic regression provide evidence that geographic proximity is the main predictor of associational solidarity. This variable accounts for 64,8% of variance for men and 72,3% for women. The chances to have frequent contacts are significantly higher with non-migrant children in comparison with migrant children ([Table 1](#)). However, geographic proximity has a rather different impact for men's contacts in comparison with women. While for women the odds of having frequent contacts with non-migrant children living in close proximity are 5 times higher compared with migrant children, for men the odds are up to 23 times higher.

The gender of children does not have significant impact on men's contacts with children but significantly predicts women's contacts. This might be related to the fact that the majority of men in the sample were married (63,4%) and their wives might have been more active in kin-keeping practices. For women, the odds to have frequent contacts with daughters are up to 50% higher than with sons. This finding goes in line with the results of other surveys conducted in Lithuania. For example, the first wave of Gender and Generations Survey (GGS, N = 10016) revealed higher levels of the associational (and also affectual) dimensions of solidarity between mother-daughter dyads compared to mother-son dyads ([Maslauskaitė 2011](#); [Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė 2011](#)). These results are not exceptional within the context of findings from international surveys ([Hagestad 1984](#); [Rossi & Rossi 1990](#)) and are related to the traditional female role of being a “keen keeper.”

Both for men and women, good or average health of parents increases the odds of frequent contacts with children in comparison with bad health of parents. Also, this result is in relevance to the previous findings which suggest that a higher health status increases the levels of solidarity ([Rossi & Rossi, 1990](#)). Some indicators of socio-economic status, such as education and financial status of parents,<sup>6</sup> also have impact on frequent virtual contacts. A significant difference was revealed through the comparison of the tertiary and university education groups among men and secondary/lower and university groups among women. In both cases a lower level of education implies lower odds of frequent contacts with children. The financial status of parents'

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<sup>6</sup> Financial status of elderly parents was measured by means of the following question: “Which one of these statements most adequately describes your financial status (or the financial status of your family/household)? (1—we cannot even afford to buy enough food, 2—we have enough money for food but can hardly afford clothes, 3—we have enough money for food and clothes, plus some extra for saving but that is not enough to afford something bigger (e. g. a TV or refrigerator), 4—we have enough money for some bigger things (e. g. a TV or refrigerator, etc.) but we cannot afford to buy highly expensive possessions (e. g. an apartment or villa, etc.), 5—we can afford to buy whatever we wish).” The statements 1 or 2 were assigned to Low financial status, statement 3 to Average financial status and statements 4 or 5 to High financial status.

Table 1  
**Significant Predictors of Frequent Virtual Contacts for Men and Women**

	MEN		WOMEN	
	B	Exp B	B	Exp B
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Men	n.	n.	-0.79***	0.46
Women	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Geographic proximity</b>				
Close proximity LT	3.12**	22.57	1.61***	4.99
Distant proximity LT	1.24**	3.46	1.77***	5.87
Abroad	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS</b>				
<b>Health</b>				
Good	1.39**	4.01	1.08**	2.94
Neither good nor poor	0.98*	2.66	n.	1.75
Bad	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Education</b>				
Secondary or lower	n.	0.43	-0.95**	0.39
Tertiary	-1.41*	0.24	n.	0.44
University	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Financial status of a household</b>				
Low	n.	n.	-0.85*	0.43
Average	n.	n.	-0.82*	0.44
Higher	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Constant</b>	-0.78	0.46	1.84***	6.29
<b>Cases included into analysis</b>	165		429	
<b>Overall percentage</b>	70.9		74.4	
-2 Log likelihood	184.85		434.39	
Cox & Snell R Square	0.16		0.16	
Nagelkerke R Square	0.22		0.22	

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001, n.—not significant.

household is significant only for women. Lower levels of financial wealth are related to lower odds of frequent communication. It implies that a better socio-economic position of elderly parents (in terms of education and financial status) leads to more frequent contacts. These findings are somewhat different from previous research but goes in line to some studies which include the impact of socio-economic status in transnational families (*de Winter, Koelet, & de Valk 2013*).

Other characteristics of children, such as age, education, partnership status, marital status,<sup>7</sup> financial status<sup>8</sup> were not significant. The age, marital status, number of

<sup>7</sup> In all models of regression the age of children was compared between three groups: 18–29, 30–39, 40+; education was compared between secondary or lower, tertiary and university; marital status between married, divorced/ separated, single; partnership status between those who had a partner and did not have a partner.

<sup>8</sup> The financial status of children was measured by the following question: “Could you please evaluate material well-being of your children (and his/her family) who live apart from you? Please, indicate if his/her financial situation is...(1—very good, 2—rather good, 3—neither bad nor good (average), 4—rather bad).” The model of regression was used to compare three groups: very good, good, average and low.

children, type of settlement and living arrangement<sup>9</sup> of parents also appeared to have no significant impact on the frequent contacts.

### **The Predictors of Affectual Dimension of Solidarity**

The results of logistic regression reveal different effects of geographic proximity for mothers and fathers (Table 2). We found that geographic proximity, which is the main predictor of frequent contacts, had no significant impact on men's very good evaluation of relationships with their children. But for women, a significant relationship at the lowest level of significance was found through comparison between two groups: non-migrant children living in a distant proximity and migrant children. The odds of having a very close relationship with non-migrant children living in distant proximity are almost twice higher compared with children living abroad. These findings that significant relationship was found only for women and only at the lowest level of significance are not exceptional in the context of previous (mostly ethnographic) surveys which revealed that close relationships can be maintained across borders (Baldassar 2007b).

Considering that geographic proximity is not the crucial predictor of affectual dimension of solidarity, we find other significant factors such as gender and financial status of children, type of settlement and marital status of parents. Both for men and for women, the odds of keeping close relationships with sons are significantly lower in comparison with daughters.

Very good financial status of children increases the odds of good relationships almost 5 times for men and almost 4 times for women. This is consistent with the above discussed finding that higher socioeconomic status might be predictive of higher level of solidarity. In comparison with the residents of cities, men and women who live in rural areas and towns have lower chances of having very good relationships with their children. Marital status of parents has a significant effect only for men. The odds of having frequent contacts are lower for widowers compared with married fathers, which is probably also related to gender differences, namely, the central role of women in kin-keeping.

Other characteristics of children (age, education, partnerships status, marital status of children) and parents (age, number of children, education, financial status, type of settlement, living arrangement) had no significant impact on high level of affectual solidarity.

### **The Predictors of Functional Dimension of Solidarity**

#### *Predictors of Emotional Support*

Again, the results of logistic regression suggest that geographic proximity has no significant effect either on received (Table 3) or on provided (Table 4) emotional

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<sup>9</sup> In all models of logistic regression the age of parents was compared between the groups of 60–64, 65–69 and 70+; marital status between the groups of widows/widowers, divorced/separated and married; number of children between those who have one child, two children, three or more; type of settlement between rural areas (up to 2000), towns (2000–100000), cities (100000+); living arrangement between living with spouses/partners, living with other people and living alone.

Table 2

**Significant Predictors of Very Good Evaluation of Relationships for Men and Women**

	MEN		WOMEN	
	B	Exp B	B	Exp B
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Men	-0.79*	0.46	-0.50**	0.61
Women	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Geographic proximity</b>				
Close proximity LT	n.	n.	n.	1.01
Distant proximity LT	n.	n.	0.63*	1.88
Abroad	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Financial situation</b>				
Very good	1.68**	5.37	1.39***	3.97
Good	n.	1.04	n.	1.53
Average and low	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS</b>				
<b>Marital status</b>				
Widowers/widows	-1.01*	0.34	n.	n.
Divorced/separated	n.	0.41	n.	n.
Married	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Health</b>				
Good	n.	n.	1.06**	2.89
Neither good nor poor	n.	n.	n.	1.85
Bad	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Type of settlement</b>				
Rural (up to 2000)	-1.13**	0.32	-0.50*	0.61
Towns (2000–100000)	-1.04**	0.35	-0.60*	0.55
Cities (100000+)	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Constant</b>	0.79	2.19	-0.46	0.63
<b>Cases included into analysis</b>	161	429		
<b>Overall percentage</b>	68.3		63.6	
-2 Log likelihood	188.72		547.59	
Cox & Snell R Square	0.19		0.10	
Nagelkerke R Square	0.25		0.14	

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001; n.—not significant.

support and there are other significant factors which predict the flows of emotional support more adequately. *Gender of children*, both for men and women, significantly predicts chances of *receiving* frequent emotional support. A finding on a greater likelihood of receiving this kind of support from daughters compared with sons has become a classic of sociological research. With the predictors of provided emotional support being controlled, gender of children seemed to significantly predict the odds of sharing personal experiences and feelings among women only. Women appeared more likely to provide emotional support for daughters compared to sons. Again, this is in accordance with a long tradition of findings on stronger emotional bonds between mothers and daughters (Hagestad 1984; Rossi & Rossi 1990). *Age of children* was found to be a significant predictor of the received emotional support among men. Fathers

with young (aged from 18 to 29) children had 7 times higher chances of receiving and nearly 9 times higher chances of providing emotional support. A plausible explanation might be that this age is a crucial, transitional stage of the life-course when a person is reaching adulthood and coming to social and personal maturity. Considering a greater likelihood of women providing emotional support, the finding that the age of children has no significant impact on this kind of support among women is rather unexpected. However, at this point of analysis it is quite difficult to explain this result.

Table 3  
Significant Predictors of Frequently Received Emotional Support

	MEN		WOMEN	
	B	Exp B	B	Exp B
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Men	-1.17**	0.31	-0.56**	0.57
Women	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Age</b>				
18–29	1.94***	6.97	n.	n.
30–39	n.	1.95	n.	n.
40+	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Education</b>				
University	n.	2.22	0.74**	2.10
Tertiary	1.01*	2.76	n.	1.57
Secondary or lower	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS</b>				
<b>Marital status</b>				
Widowers/widows	n.	n.	0.51*	1.67
Divorced/separated	n.	n.	0.67**	1.95
Married	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Constant</b>	-2.07***	0.13	-1.18***	0.31
<b>Cases included into analysis</b>	184	479		
<b>Overall percentage</b>	77.7		68.3	
-2 Log likelihood	170.31		564.89	
Cox & Snell R Square	0.15		0.06	
Nagelkerke R Square	0.23		0.08	

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , n.—not significant.

Higher education was found to predict higher odds of frequently received emotional support both among men and women and higher odds of frequently provided emotional support among women. Another factor identified as a predictor of frequently provided emotional support among men is health status.<sup>10</sup> Elderly parents with a good or average subjective evaluation of their health displayed almost 6 times higher odds of providing emotional support for their children on regular basis. This

<sup>10</sup> Health status was measured by means of the question: "How is your health in general? (1—very good, 2—good, 3—neither good nor bad (average), 4—bad, 5—very bad)." In the model of logistic regression the variable was recoded as follows: answers 1 and 2 were assigned to Good health status, 3 to Average health status, 4 and 5 to Bad health status.

Table 4  
**Significant Predictors of Frequently Provided Emotional Support**

	MEN		WOMEN	
	B	Exp B	B	Exp B
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Men	n.	n.	-0.76***	0.47
Women	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Age</b>				
18–29	2.16***	8.65	n.	n.
30–39	n.	1.94	n.	n.
40+	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Education</b>				
University	n.	n.	0.57**	1.77
Tertiary	n.	n.	n.	1.20
Secondary or lower	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS</b>				
Widows	n.	n.	n.	0.89
Divorced/separated	n.	n.	0.63*	1.89
Married	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Health</b>				
Good	1.73*	5.64	n.	n.
Neither good nor poor	1.79*	5.96	n.	n.
Bad	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Constant</b>	-3.54***	0.03	-1.01***	0.36
<b>Cases included into analysis</b>	184		479	
<b>Overall percentage</b>	78.3		73.9	
-2 Log likelihood	175.01		521.57	
Cox & Snell R Square	0.149		0.05	
Nagelkerke R Square	0.22		0.08	

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001, n.—not significant.

finding is also in line with previous research, yet, interestingly enough, it applies only to men. Marital status was found to be significant among women only. The odds of receiving emotional support from their children were almost twice higher among widows and divorced/separated mothers compared with the married ones. Widows and divorced/separated mothers without partners are very likely to be in need for more emotional support from their children.

Other independent variables included into the models of logistic regression, such as partnership status, marital status, financial status of children, also age, number of children, education, financial status, type of settlement and living arrangement of parents had no predictive value as to frequently received and provided emotional support.

#### *Predictors of Financial Support*

Geographical proximity was found to be the main predictor of received (Table 5) and provided (Table 6) financial support. Men's chances are lower to receive financial

support from non-migrant children living in close proximity compared to migrant children. Women have lower chances to receive financial support both from non-migrant children living in close and distant proximity. Accordingly, women have almost 3 times higher chances of providing financial support for their non-migrant children. The only other significant predictors on received and provided financial support for women are living arrangement (women who live alone have lower chances of receiving financial support compared to women living with partners or (and) other people) and marital status of children (women are more likely to provide financial support for their single children compared to married ones). The last finding might be interlinked to younger age of single children when financial support is needed.

Table 5  
Significant Predictors of Received Financial Support

	MEN		WOMEN	
	B	Exp B	B	Exp B
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN</b>				
<b>Geographic proximity</b>				
Close proximity LT	-1.92**	0.15	-1.56***	0.21
Distant proximity LT	n.	2.25	-1.16***	0.31
Abroad	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Financial situation</b>				
Very good	2.15***	8.54	n.	n.
Good	n.	4.69	n.	n.
Average and low	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS</b>				
<b>Age</b>				
60–64	-1.14*	0.32	n.	n.
65–69	n.	1.50	n.	n.
70+	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Education</b>				
Secondary or lower	n.	0.43	n.	n.
Tertiary	1.45**	4.26	n.	n.
University	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Type of settlement</b>				
Rural (up to 2000)	-1.52**	0.32	n.	n.
Towns (2000–100000)	n.	0.11	n.	n.
Cities (100000+)	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Living arrangement</b>				
Alone	n.	n.	-0.74***	0.48
With a partner or (and) other people	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Constant</b>	-1.14	0.32	0.90***	2.45
<b>Cases included into analysis</b>	157		425	
<b>Overall percentage</b>	70.9		64.2	
-2 Log likelihood	166.82		534.87	
Cox & Snell R Square	0.28		0.12	
Nagelkerke R Square	0.37		0.16	

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001, n.—not significant.

Table 6  
**Significant Predictors of Provided Financial Support by Women**

	B	Exp B
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN</b>		
<b>Geographic proximity</b>		
Close proximity LT	0.98***	2.67
Distant proximity LT	0.96***	2.61
Abroad	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	-0.85***	0.43
Divorced/separated	n.	0.58
Single	Ref.	Ref.
<b>Constant</b>	-0.55*	0.58
<b>Cases included into analysis</b>	422	
<b>Overall percentage</b>	71.6	
-2 Log likelihood	494.06	
Cox & Snell R Square	.06	
Nagelkerke R Square	.08	

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001, n.—not significant.

Along with geographic proximity, other significant predictors of received financial support for men are their age, education, type of settlement and financial status of children. Men are more likely to receive financial support in their older age (70 and older), compared with younger (60–64). The chances for men with tertiary education to receive financial support are 4 times higher compared to higher level of education. Men living in rural areas are also less likely to receive financial support compared to men living in cities. Very good financial status of children increases fathers' chances of receiving financial support almost 9 times.

Thus our study suggests that, in the context of Lithuanian transnational families, the significant predictors of intergenerational solidarity are geographic proximity, gender of children and parents, age of children, socio-economic factors (financial status, education of children and parents), marital, health statuses, living arrangement and type of settlement of parents. However, the results suggest that in the context of transnationalism some of the predictors have other effects found in non-transnational families.

## Discussion

Based on intergenerational solidarity approach, this study analyses the predictors of associational, affectual and functional solidarity. We aimed to answer if adult children migration is the crucial predictor of intergenerational solidarity or there are (also) other individual and familial factors shaping intergenerational relationships in transnational families. The results only partially verify the first hypothesis on a rather crucial effect of migration on associational solidarity and no effects on affectual and functional dimensions of solidarity (H1). We found that geographic proximity is the

main predictor of associational solidarity and adult children migration indeed lowers the chances of frequent virtual contacts, but the effect is rather stronger for men (compared with women). However, our research revealed some milder effects of migration on the affectual solidarity. Migration has some minimal negative effect on mothers' evaluation of relationships with their migrant children (at the lowest level of significance). In terms of functional solidarity, we found no significant impact of geographic proximity on provided and received emotional support, but it is the main predictor of received and provided financial support. Greater geographic proximity as a result of migration increases the chances of *received* financial support for women and men. Contrarily, financial support is more likely being *provided* for non-migrant children living at close and distant proximity. Thus, the results suggest that even if adult children migration has some negative impact for associational solidarity (and to a certain extent, for affectual one), in a way it is being compensated with positive impact on functional solidarity in terms of financial support.

Along with geographic proximity, we found other individual and familial factors differently affecting the intergenerational solidarity with mothers and fathers. The second hypothesis predicted that higher levels of intergenerational solidarity will be more common for mother-daughter dyad than for mother-son dyad (H2.1); and for father-daughter dyad compared to father-son dyad (H2.2). The results verify the first statement of hypothesis and only partially verify the second statement. For fathers this pattern applies only on the associational solidarity and on received emotional support. Considering that the background of present-day relationships between adult children and their elderly parents have been build in Soviet times, it is worth mentioning that Lithuania stands out as one of the countries with the most traditional gender culture among the Central and Eastern European countries during this period (Maslauskaitė 2011), what can explain the results on traditionally stronger bonds between mothers and daughters.

When controlling the age factor, we expected that older age of children will increase the level of affectual solidarity (H3.1). Yet the results do not prove the hypothesis. We found an opposite effect: younger age of children associates with higher level of received and provided emotional support, but only for fathers. The second hypothesis on the impact of age predicted that older age of elderly parents will increase the level of functional solidarity (H3.2). We can verify this hypothesis only partially. Unexpected, older age of parents increases the level of functional solidarity only for men and only in terms of received financial support.

The results do not verify the hypothesis predicting that higher educational status of parents and children lowers the level of associational solidarity (H4.1). Contrarily, we found that higher educational status of elderly parents leads to more frequent contacts. These results were also confirmed in some other studies on transnational contacts (de Winter, Koelet, & de Valk, 2013). The results only partially prove that higher socio-economic status of children/parents increases the level of provided functional support (H4.2), and the lower socio-economic status of children/parents increases the level of received functional support (H4.3). The results confirm that higher education attainment of children implies higher levels of provided (and also received) emotional

support (for fathers and mothers); while better financial status of children associates with higher level of received financial support for fathers (this partially verifies the H4.2 hypothesis). However, the educational status of fathers' has an opposite impact on received financial support, implying that fathers with lower education are more likely to receive financial support (this partially proves the H4.3 hypothesis).

The results do not provide evidence on the hypothesis predicting that widowhood of parents increases the level of associational solidarity (H5.1). Contrarily, we found that widowers have lower chances of frequent contacts (this predictor was relevant only for men). This finding calls for special attention for father-child bonds which in Lithuanian context was found to be weaker, especially in the post-divorce cases (Maslauskaitė 2011; Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė 2011). The results only partially prove the hypothesis on a higher level of received functional support by divorced or widowed parents (H5.2), because the predictor of marital status of parents is relevant only for mothers and only in terms of emotional support. We can predict that widows and divorced/separated mothers will receive more emotional support from their children compared to married ones. However, we found some prove on a hypothesis predicting the significant impact of children's marital status on received financial support (H5.3). Single children are more likely to receive financial support from their mothers, but this predictor is not relevant for fathers.

Finally, we predicted that worse health of elderly parents leads to higher levels of associational and functional solidarity (H6). The results proved an opposite impact of health status of parents. We found that worse health status of parents lowers the level of associational solidarity and provided emotional support for their children. Type of settlement was not included into hypothesis due to contradicting results by the previous research. We found that elderly parents living in less numerous settlements have lower chances of high level of affectual solidarity compared to inhabitants of the largest cities. The same trend was found for fathers in terms of received financial support.

We can conclude that while geographic proximity is the crucial factor of associational solidarity and determines some forms of functional solidarity in transnational families, affectual dimension of solidarity is being shaped by other predictors (such as gender of children and parents), differently affecting fathers and mothers. The results suggest that predictors of intergenerational solidarity in transnational families are context-sensitive and may have an opposite effect compared to ones found in non-transnational families. In this way the article contributes to the quantitative research of intergenerational solidarity by disclosing the effects of migration and revealing other individual and familial factors of cohesion in transnational families. Based on the results on rarer contacts over the distance, we could raise a hypothesis that this could be an indicator of tensions or ambivalent situations between elderly parents and adult children. This opens avenues for further research testing how conflict and ambivalence manifest in transnational families.

It is clear that migration in combination with other demographic processes (rapid population ageing and low fertility rates) in Lithuania will continue shaping population structure, which challenges the reliance mostly on familial networks in old

age. At the same time, the results of the research suggest that despite the distance, intergenerational solidarity is being maintained in transnational families. These facts suggest two directions for social policy: development of formal care system for the elderly who stay behind, and measures allowing to maintain intergenerational solidarity in transnational space. Based on the results on the negative effects of migration for intergenerational contacts, the measures compensating long distance calls or promoting the usage of Internet in older groups of society would be beneficial for sustaining intergenerational contacts over the distance. If elderly parents who stay behind are in need of care, social policies in destination and origin countries could help migrants in the process of caring. Caring for those left behind overcome one system of social security, what challenges the need for transnational welfare system (Zechner 2008).

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