Chapter 3.2.

TRANSNATIONAL DISPLAYS OF PARENTING AND CARING FOR ELDERLY PARENTS

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Introduction

Transnational family studies tell us that experiencing migration leads individuals to reorganize family configurations, family relationships, and care arrangements (see Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002; Baldassar and Merla, 2014; Crespi et al., 2018). Family researchers explore relationships between parents and children (see, for example, Hondagneur-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2005), adult migrant children and their elderly parents living in the country of origin (Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding, 2007; Zehner, 2008), extended family and wider kinship (Reisenauer, 2018). Academic studies highlight structural changes and fluidity of relationships within the caregiving triangle and examine caregivers' socio-demographic profiles (Akesson et al., 2012; Bonizzoni, 2012; Bonizzoni and Boccagni, 2014; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012). Moreover, researchers point out that exchanges of care are situated within institutional and cultural contexts (see Merla, 2014).

Various research studies of transnational family life show that circulation of care within cross-border family networks plays a crucial role in maintaining the sense of 'familyhood'. Examining how care circulates among family members on one hand, and between family and extended kin networks on the other, the researchers – starting with Baldassar and Merla (2014) – conceptualize care as a multidirectional process and refer to the 'care circulation' framework. In order to examine transnational family structures and networks beyond the nuclear, co-residential, two-generation households, the researchers rely on the 'family configurational' approach formulated by Widmer (2010; Widmer and Jallinoja, 2008). Researchers are used to examining long-distance relationships within transnational families through the lens of 'intergenerational solidarity' approach (Bengtson and Schrader, 1982; Bengtson and Roberts, 1991; Silverstein et al., 2010), or through the 'life course' perspective emphasizing transnational family transitions experienced by individuals (see Bernardi, 2011; Wall and Bolzman, 2014; Kobayashi and Preston, 2007).

The field of family sociology witnessed the rise of the dynamic perspective that aims to capture family practices. Following Morgan's (1996) ideas, Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) coined the terms 'relativising' and 'frontiering' to refer to different ways of reorganizing and reaffirming family arrangements across borders, while Mason's (2004) analysis of how individuals manage kinship relations over long distances focused on the physical co-presence ('the visits'). Morgan's (2011) ideas about 'doing families' have been applied in the context of family practices across borders and cultures by bi-national families and their pre-existing families (Brahic, 2015). Finch's (2007) concept of 'displaying family' was tested and extended by Seymour and Walsh (2013) to study migrant family life and community connectedness as well as cross-border displays in maintaining transnational intergenerational relations (Walsh, 2015; 2018). Given this chapter's focus on parenting and caring for elderly parents across borders, we are interested in the findings of the mentioned authors how migrant families bridge (physical) distance by means of transnational communication, visiting, and receiving. We are also interested to learn about the outcomes of their analysis of 'tools' as well as 'enablers/ interferences' of displays and 'family-like displays'.

In our previous study of migrant families, funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (2012–2014), we carried out a multi-level analysis of family and close kin relationships of the Lithuanian population (Juozeliūnienė and Seymour, 2015; Juozeliūnienė, Budginaitė and Bielevičiūtė, 2018). By invoking the intergenerational solidarity perspective (Bengtson, 2001; Silverstein, Bengtson and Lawton, 1997) we explored how 'embeddedness' (Smart, 2007) manifested itself through vertical and horizontal ties with family members, close kin, friends, and acquaintances, and how the migratory experience transformed these ties into intensive and meaningful relations. Analysis of the Lithuanian data drawn from the 'Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations' (VOC-IR)[102] study showed that family and close kin relationships significantly vary across the 'opportunity', 'closeness' and 'support' kinship relations indices and represent different levels of familial unity. We distinguished between three levels of unity that, in turn, determined different strategies underpinning the workings of transnational family networks. Moreover, we found that transnational support was distributed in a clearly gendered way.

In our recent research study (2017-2019), we have extended and expanded the previous project in order to analyze cross-border parenting

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102 On 'Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations' study (VOC-IR) see Nauck, B. and D. Klaus (2007); Nauck, B. (2012); Trommsdorff, G. and B. Nauck (2005).

and caring for elderly parents living in Lithuania. Our aim was to go beyond the well-researched, multi-faceted processes of care negotiation and circulation typology as well as structural reach. We suggested that an expanded study would benefit from complementing our analysis with the 'family practices' approach, as formulated by Morgan (2011) and elaborated by Finch (2007). Drawing on Morgan's ideas about the impact actions of a single person have on the nexus of interconnecting relationships in families (Morgan, 2019: 7) and by incorporating Finch's idea of 'display', we examine how transnational family members and close significant persons carry out a set of actions to demonstrate to each other and others that they are a family that works.

Drawing on the findings presented by Reynolds and Zontinni (2014) in their analysis of the ways in which migrants establish new relations in destination countries, as well as on Walsh's (2015; 2018) studies of how 'family displays' contribute to the creation of 'family-like' relationships between emigrants and co-resident non-kin, we took into consideration that fluidity of transnational family relationships and practices may result in open-ended networks of family configurations. Family members may be still at the heart of the network, but other significant persons and other relationships (including non-conventional ones) may be invoked for parenting dependent children and caring for elderly parents across borders. We elaborated the ideas of 'relativizing within transnational family' (Bryceson and Vuorella, 2002: 14–16) to examine how relationships between parents-children-caregivers based on caring become 'family-like' in terms of the commitment and support levels they display (Almack, 2011). Following the family practices approach, we suggested that every time a family member, relative or a close person does something – whether it's offering advice, providing assistance to parents or adult children in the processes of transnational parenting/ caring – that family configuration is reconstructed and reaffirmed.

As far as we know, the qualitative methodology was successfully applied to perform a transnational family practices research. In this chapter we present our findings from the quantitative, quota-based study[103] (N = 304) of three types of transnational families: mother-away and father-away with under-aged children living in Lithuania and adult child-away with elderly parents needing care living in Lithuania. The study was carried out in 2018 as a part of the research project on migrant families financed

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103 In this chapter we focus on three family types (N = 304), but the overall quantitative quota study (N = 406) includes four family types (mother-away, father-away, both parents-away, and adult children-away with elderly parents needing care in Lithuania).

by the Research Council of Lithuania (2017-2019). We focused on testing how the concept of 'display' could be applied to the quantitative analysis of transnational parenting and caring for elderly parents. More specifically, how are displays of mothering/ fathering and adult children caring for elderly parents performed across borders? What methods do migrants use and how often they perform these activities? What are the tools of display? What are the enablers/ interferences of transnational displays? How could gendered strategies of parenting and caring for elderly parents be described? In addition, we draw on the quantitative data to disclose how the concept of 'display' can be usefully applied to study transnational relationships within the 'caregiving triangle'.

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the results of a quantitative, quota-based study carried out in August 2018. Although the study looked at four types of families (N = 406) – mother-away, father-away, both parents-away, and adult child-away with parents needing care and residing in Lithuania – we focus on three types of families (N = 304): those with mother-away (N = 100), father-away (N = 104), and adult child-away (N = 100)[104].

To identify the displays of transnational parenting and caring for elderly parents, we used a questionnaire consisting of 7 multiple-choice questions (5 questions were directed at respondents with children under 18 years old and 2 at respondents with elderly parents needing care) and 6 more open-ended questions (3 for each group). We present these questions, along with some commentary below, in accordance with the logic of sub-sections.

Transnational displays of parenting. The first goal of the study was to establish how do transnational families display fatherhood/ motherhood. We asked respondents with minor children (under 18) living in Lithuania after the emigration of one of their parents (N = 204) an open-ended question: *'How did you usually display attention to your child/ children in Lithuania after you moved abroad?'*. We have encoded the answers provided by respondents using the Excel application. To find out who are significant others involved in transnational caring for dependent children, we asked the respondents, *'With whom did your child(ren) live in Lithuania while you were abroad? Who was responsible for their care? If the child(ren) lived in more than one place during this period, please indicate who has been responsible*

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104 As some of the respondents selected to represent mother-away and father-away families also had elderly parent needing care, the total number of adult children-away families was higher (N = 121) than the size of a quota sample for this group (N = 100).

for their care?' The respondents could answer this question by naming all the involved individuals by the type of relationship indicated on a response card[105]. In total, 204 survey respondents mentioned 276 caregivers. The answer to this question was analyzed in two ways. *First*, we studied who are the designated caregivers grouping them into respondent's family of orientation (siblings, parents, relatives), respondent's family of procreation (children, partner/ spouse) and non-kin (friends, acquaintances, neighbors and ex-spouse). We counted the number of caregivers belonging to each group and the share of caregivers in each group from the total number of caregivers (see Table 1). *Second*, we analyzed how many caregivers (single caregiver, two caregivers or three caregivers) each respondent chose to care for their child(ren). We counted number of respondents who choose each type of caregiving arrangement and then counted the share of respondents in each type from the total number of respondents.

The quantitative research was also designed to help us identify how caregivers participate in family-like displays. To understand this aspect, we used the question, *'Please describe how did the person caring for your child(ren) help you stay in touch with the child(ren) while you lived abroad?'* The next question, *'Did the person caring for your child(ren) while you lived abroad undertook the following...?'*, allows respondents to select multiple options from a list of typical activities:

1) ...encouraged you to call the child(ren);
2) ...encouraged the child(ren) to call you;
3) ...talked to the child(ren) about you or your life;
4) ...asked you for advice/ briefed you about how the child(ren) are doing;
5) ...encouraged you to return and visit the child(ren);
6) ...encouraged the child(ren) to visit you abroad;
7) ...encouraged you to wire the child(ren) regular remittances;
8) ...encouraged you to send the child(ren) a package, buy them gifts'[106].

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105 The card included these answer choices (the respondents could check multiple options): '1) Your spouse/ partner; 2) Your daughter(s); 3) Your son(s); 4) Your mother; 5) Your father; 6) Your sister(s); 7) Your brother(s); 8) Your friends/ acquaintances; 9) The mother of your spouse/ partner; 10) The father of your spouse/ partner; 11) Friends/ acquaintances of your spouse/ partner; 12) Relatives of your mother; 13) Relatives of your father; 14) Friends/ acquaintances of your mother; 15) Friends/ acquaintances of your father; 16) Other – who? (Please explain)'. The answer choices 1 through 15 were used by re-encoding them into more general categories depending on the question type. The 16th option was not chosen.

106 There were two more answer choices, not shown to the survey participants, used to record responses where none of the multiple-choice options matched respondent's answer or (s)he declined to answer the question: *'0) The person(s) caring for the child(ren) never did any of the above; 9) (Ignore) The respondent does not know, declined to answer'*.

Finally, to identify what factors enable/ interfere with transnational displays of parenting dependent children, we asked two further open-ended questions: *'Please describe what factors facilitated caring for the child(ren) after you left Lithuania? List three, most important factors'*. And *'Please describe what factors interfered with arranging proper childcare after you left Lithuania? List three, most important factors'*. We instructed canvassers administering the survey to record spontaneous responses to these questions and then used descriptive statistical methods to perform general and gender-based analysis of the collected responses.

Transnational displays of caring for elderly parents. To examine the set of actions adult migrant children perform to demonstrate to their elderly parents and others that they are a family, we included in the study an open-ended question aimed at the respondents with elderly parents needing care living in Lithuania (N = 121) *'How did you usually display attention to your elderly parent(s) in Lithuania after you moved abroad?'* The answers to this open-ended question were coded using the MAXQDA software programme. To identify key people involved in transnational caring for elderly parents, we further asked the respondents *'Who cared for your parent(s) when you lived abroad?'*. Survey participants could indicate whether there were caregivers for both parents or for one of them, by choosing from a list of relation types presented on a separate card[107]. In total, 121 survey respondents mentioned 194 caregivers[108]. The answer to this question was analyzed in two ways. *First*, we studied who are the designated caregivers grouping them into respondent's family of orientation (siblings, parent's spouse/ partner, parent's relatives), respondent's family of procreation (children, partner/ spouse, partner/ spouse's relatives) and non-kin (friends, acquaintances, neighbors, professionals and/ or for-hire caregivers, as well as care institution staff), as well as identified the cases where the respondent himself/ herself continued to take care of their parent(s) while living abroad. We counted the number of caregivers belonging to each group and the share of caregivers in each group from the

107 The card included these answer choices (the respondents could check multiple options): *'1) Your spouse/ partner; 2) Your daughter(s); 3) Your son(s); 4) The current spouse/ partner of your mother; 5) The current spouse/ partner of your father; 6) Your sister(s); 7) Your brother(s); 8) Your friends/ acquaintances; 9) The mother of your spouse/ partner; 10) The father of your spouse/ partner; 11) Friends/ acquaintances of your spouse/ partner; 12) Relatives of your mother; 13) Relatives of your father; 14) Friends/ acquaintances of your mother; 15) Friends/ acquaintances of your father; 16) Neighbors of your parents; 17) You yourself; 18) Paid care and/ or custody professionals; 19) Other individuals, for a fee; 20) Parents (one of the parents) at the time live(d) in a managed care facility; 21) Other – who? (Please explain)'*. The answer choices 1 through 20 were used by re-encoding them into more general categories depending on the question type. The 21st option was not chosen.

108 In addition, two respondents indicated that they were taking care of their parent(s) themselves.

total number of caregivers (see Table 2). *Second*, we analyzed how many caregivers (single caregiver, two caregivers, three or four caregivers) each respondent chose. We counted number of respondents who chose each type of caregiving arrangement and then counted the share of respondents in each type from the total number of respondents.

To examine how and through which activities caregivers performed displays of caring for elderly parents, we designed the survey questionnaire to include the question, *'How did the caregiver caring for your parent(s) help you to stay in touch with them while you lived abroad? Did the caregiver(s) caring for your parents engage in the following activities while you lived abroad…?'*, the possible answers choices consisted of the following caregiver(s) activities:

1) … encouraged you to call your parents (or one of the parents);
2) … encouraged your parent(s) to call you;
3) … talked to your parent(s) about you, your life;
4) … talked to you/ briefed you on how your parent(s) are doing;
5) … encouraged you to pay a visit to your parent(s);
6) … encouraged your parent(s) to visit you;
7) … encouraged you to wire your parent(s) regular remittances;
8) … encouraged you to send parent(s) a package, buy them gifts'[109].

Finally, to understand the factors enabling/ interfering with transnational caring for elderly parents, we asked two additional, open-ended questions: *'Please describe what factors facilitated caring for your parent(s) after you left Lithuania? List three, most important factors'* and *'Please describe what factors interfered with arranging proper parental care after you left Lithuania? List three, most important factors'*. We further instructed survey administrators to record spontaneous responses from survey participants and then used descriptive statistical methods to perform general and gender-based analysis of the collected responses.

In the following chapters, we focus on transnational parenting displays. We then present the results of the analysis on transnational caring for elderly parents displays. And lastly, we discuss the gendered ways of displays and finish it with conclusions.

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109 There were two more answer choices, not shown to the survey participants, used to record responses where none of the multiple-choice options matched respondent's answer or (s)he declined to answer the question: *'0) The person(s) caring for the parent(s) has never done any of the above; 9) (Ignore) The respondent does not know, declined to answer'*.

Transnational Displays of Parenting

How are Mothering/ Fathering Displays Done across Borders?

The data shows that the respondents performed transnational displays of mothering/ fathering through the following activity types: (1) parents communicated with their children and caregivers utilizing modern technologies. More specifically, they engaged in 'inquiry-control talks', 'intimate conversations' and 'visual displays'; (2) parents organized 'live' meetings with their children; (3) provided financial and in-kind assistance to those residing in Lithuania; (4) involved 'significant others' to create a child-friendly environment; (5) named their activities using container categories to demonstrate to the wider audience that they fulfill parental commitments to their children.

Cross-border communication. The data shows that transnational displays of parenting are usually done by engaging in 'inquiry-control talks' and 'visual displays': 79% of the respondents indicated that while living abroad they communicated with family members online, and 6% communicated by sharing photos and/ or videos describing how their day went. Online communication involves a wide range of tools: phones, Skype, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Viber apps, writing emails and texting. Some respondents indicated that they stick to one predominant communication channel, while others admitted to making use of various options: they stayed in touch via Skype and phone; made calls via Viber, Skype apps and chatted via Facebook; wrote emails and chatted via Facebook (Messenger), Viber; Texted on Facebook, Viber and made video calls. The insights from our study support the findings of many other researchers (e.g., see Baldassar and Merla, 2014; Walsh, 2015) that, among migrants, communicating online is the most popular way of conveying to family members and the wider audience that they are family and it works.

We established that displays of parenting through 'inquiry-control talks' and 'visual displays' are geared towards two types of audiences – children and their caregivers (spouses, grandmothers, grandfathers, etc.). Online conversations with both audiences (children and their caregivers) typically combined inquiries about daily life (for example, 'I was inquiring how is it going') and commands (for example, 'I urged my husband to engage with the children'; 'I wanted to know if the children help my mother').

It should be noted that displays of parenting towards children are not limited to these 'inquiry-control talks,' they are also complemented by 'intimate conversations' used by parents to signal their love and affection and reassure the child(ren) that they will soon return home (for example, 'I

always say to my child that I missed her, love her, and hug her'). During these conversations, parents displayed emotional closeness to their children and together with them engaged in planning the future: they discussed where and how to spend the holidays, how to organize a household life once the parents are back. In other words, parents primarily perform activities that signal their care for the children. Such activities reaffirm that – even when they are away – the parents still manage to shoulder their responsibility of caring for the children prescribed by the moral imperative of 'good parenting'.

Live meetings. A fraction of parents (17%) combined displays of transnational fathering/ mothering online with meeting their children in person. We distinguished several types of live meetings: (1) visiting – parents return to Lithuania to see their children; (2) receiving – parents host children in a foreign country; (3) parents and children attend family celebrations together; (4) parents plan family vacations and spend them together with children; (5) parents plan tourist trips and take their kids with them. The respondents noted that while technological advances made it possible to perform and display family across borders virtually, long-distance communication continues to be a poor substitute for in person meetings. Such meetings allow parents to 'snuggle' with their children, 'hug and kiss' them, and physically engage in routine family activities.

Assisting children/ elderly parents living in Lithuania *financially/ in-kind* is another popular form of displaying family (37%). The departed parents stated that they make regular remittances, send home gifts, parcels with clothes, toys, shoes, and sweets.

Obviously, concerns of the departed parents go beyond ensuring the material welfare of their children. Social and psychological safety of their children also looms large on the mind of migrant parents, leading them to *mobilize significant others* and involve them in caring for the children in Lithuania (2%). To create a safe environment for their children, departed parents mobilize both – individuals related by blood ties and outsiders like teachers, neighbors, and friends. The data from our study shows that in order to understand transnational parenting practices it's important to go beyond the concepts already established by other researchers – like the 'caregiving triangle' consisting of parents, children, and caregivers – and examine the immediate child-friendly environment constructed by parents departing abroad. Designated guardians and individuals from child's immediate environment engage in childcare activities, that can be studied as *family-like* activities.

Finally, we have identified a case where a father displayed parenting by naming his activities as paying 'accountable attention' (the term used

by the respondent himself) to the child. This term is a container category summarizing the totality of normative responsibilities ascribed to 'good fathering'. The respondent in question listed a whole list of activities such as regular online communication, regular visits to Lithuania, inquiring about the child's educational achievements, supporting the child financially, congratulating the child with the birthday, arranging holidays together, and so on. This way, he conveys to the wider audience (researchers, readers of the study, etc.) that he is aware of responsibilities placed on a 'good father' and he meets these responsibilities regardless of the geographical distance separating him and the child. The results of our study showed how parental responsibilities assigned by the social constructs of 'adult' and 'child' (Ribbens McCarthey et al., 2000) can manifest themselves in displays of transnational parenting.

Who is a Designated Caregiver(s)?

We sought to establish, whom do migrant parents designate to act as caregivers for children remaining in Lithuania. Who do children live with? Do caregivers happen to be members of the family of procreation or orientation? How do individuals bound by kinship, friendship, acquaintance ties become involved in childcare? We also wanted to find out, whether it is beneficial to analyze solely the practices performed by formally assigned caregivers, or should we expand the boundaries of the 'parents-children-caregivers' triangle and consider a group of interrelated individuals mobilized by parents to create a child-friendly environment? In order to answer the latter question, we asked how many people are designated to be caregivers (e.g. whether the responsibility is assigned to a single individual or a network of them).

The analysis of the survey data showed that parents leaving the country had clear preferences about whom to trust with childcare. Migrant parents, who took part in this survey (N = 204) identified 276 significant persons, who took care of their child(ren) while one of the parents lived abroad (see Table 1 below). The most common arrangement in Lithuania is for children to move in with relatives related by kinship ties. Parents living abroad strive to establish a safe and trusted living environment for their children, leading them to rely on the family of procreation (52%). They turn to their spouses/ partners and their senior children – daughter(s) and son(s). The responsibility for providing the child(ren) with living quarters by and large falls on the shoulders of the family of orientation (45%). Departing parents typically asked for help their parents (especially mothers), siblings (especially sisters), and other relatives. A small

proportion of survey respondents reported that, for the duration of their absence, their child(ren) stayed with individuals who were unrelated by blood (2%): these were friends/ acquaintances, neighbors and ex-spouses. This way, we can see that the respondents put most trust into individuals related by kinship ties, at least when it comes to finding living quarters for their child(ren).

Table 1. Children caregivers by a relationship type

Relationship type	Number (percentage)	Caregivers	Number
Respondent's family of orientation	124 (45%)	Siblings	17
		Parents	105
		Relatives	2
Respondent's family of procreation	145 (53%)	Children	7
		Partner/ spouse	138
Non-kin	7 (2%)	Friends, acquaintances	4
		Neighbors	1
		Ex-spouse	2

Source: Quota survey data, mother-away and father away families (N = 276 designated caregivers).

We have identified two types of care-giving arrangements, based on where the remaining child lives and who performs core child-caring activities: instrumental, financial and emotional. Under the first arrangement, custodial activities were clearly and perpetually assigned to specific individuals; under the second one, there was no strict distribution of custodial activities, with caregivers assuming these activities on a case by case basis.

In studying cases where the child's custody was perpetually assigned, we sought to determine whether departing parents are inclined to delegate the child's custody to a single individual or prefer to recruit multiple permanent custodians and establish a custody network for the child. The analysis has revealed that parents tend to delegate the responsibility for the child to a single person related to them by kinship ties (38%). The most popular caregivers were respondents' spouses/ partners, mothers, daughters, sisters or brothers. A small share of respondents delegated care of their child(ren) to single individuals who were not related to them by kinship ties (2%), for example, to friends/ acquaintances and an ex-spouse.

The results of the quota-based study showed that, when parents leave the country, childcare responsibilities can be assumed by two or three permanently assigned caregivers. When parents delegate the custody of a child to multiple individuals, the custodians almost exclusively are immediate family members and relatives. More specifically, when parents designate two caregivers, they typically are respondents' mother and father. However, the groups of two (16%) and three (1%) caregivers may include the respondent's spouse/ partner, siblings, children, and parents' relatives as well.
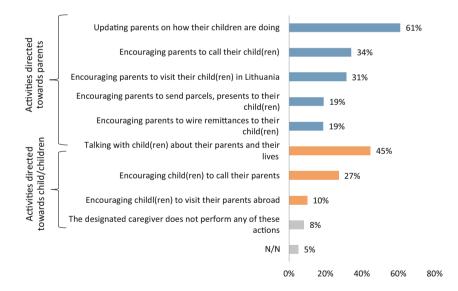
In instances where departing parents have failed to designate one or more permanent custodians, we found that custodian activities were distributed among groups of individuals who could be both – related by blood ties or be unrelated. Moreover, a person sharing household with the child did not necessarily provide him/ her all the necessary assistance. For example, we identified the case where the child lived with the respondent's friends/ acquaintances, who provided day-to-day care, but the child sought emotional support from his mother living separately. In another case, the children remaining in Lithuania lived with the respondent's spouse/ partner, who provided day-to-day care and managed financial issues, while the respondent's sister, brother and parental relatives supported the children emotionally. In yet another example a child moved in with a neighbor, however performed his daily chores himself. Additionally, he had to deal with financial issues independently and turned to friends/ acquaintances for emotional support.
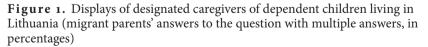
In short, departing parents usually appoint a permanent custodian to take care of the child, who provides all-around childcare, but children living in the home country can also find themselves without permanent custodians and instead turn for support to friends and acquaintances. Usually the role of caregivers is assumed by the child's immediate family circle, relatives. However, on some occasions parents also reach out to and distribute the custody of the child among non-family members; these individuals may or may not be related to each other.

How are Displays of Care-giving Done across Borders?

According to the migrant parents surveyed (N = 204), displays of caring for a child are performed by designated caregivers as two-sided activities, focused on parents and their children respectively. We have noticed that caregivers' activities are dominated by parents-oriented displays, although child-oriented displays also play an important part in the 'caregiving triangle' ensuring the viability of transnational family ties.

Parent-oriented displays performed by caregivers. We highlight three main and two supplementary activities caregivers utilize to perform their displays. Once parents are abroad, the caregivers (1) communicate with parents online, where they talk about routine activities, share stories and discuss issues encountered by the children. Caregivers collaborate with parents to devise solutions to identified problems; (2) they observe the dynamics of parent-child communication and, where appropriate, encourage parents to call/ write to their children, inquire about their lives; (3) they monitor the child's well-being and encourage parents to return to Lithuania to visit the children. It's much less frequent to see caregivers regulate the sending of (4) remittances, or (5) gifts and parcels. These questions are usually left up to parents to decide. Caregiving displays focus on reminding parents abroad about their responsibilities towards the children and encourage parents to fulfill the duties of 'good parenting', regardless of the geographical distance. In doing so, caregivers convey to parents that they perform child caring duties delegated to them.

Figure 1. Displays of designated caregivers of dependent children living in Lithuania (migrant parents' answers to the question with multiple answers, in percentages)

Source: Quota survey data, mother-away and father-away families (N = 204 respondents).

Child-oriented displays performed by the caregivers employ a very similar repertoire of activities: they (1) talk to children about their absent parents and their lives; (2) encourage children to call their parents; and (3) encourage children to visit them. However, it is important to emphasize that parent-oriented displays are performed more frequently than child-oriented ones. Moreover, child-oriented activities are often performed to convey somewhat different meanings. Namely, caregivers convey to children that they are responsible for preserving the quality of family relationships making them – in the absence of parents – 'family keepers'.

We sought to examine whether caregivers unrelated to parents and children by kinship ties engage in *family-like* displays. We identified 5 cases of non-kin caregivers. In four of these cases, all caregivers performed core childcare activities classifiable as *family-like* displays. More specifically, three of the custodians performed one-directional (parent-oriented) displays of care-giving, while one custodian performed bi-directional displays, as detailed in Figure 1. We also came across instances where the designated non-kin caregivers did not perform any *family-like* displays but instead provided the children remaining in Lithuania with living quarters.

Enablers and Interferences of Transnational Parenting

The study has revealed factors facilitating and hindering displays of transnational parenting. We have identified the following display enablers: (1) having appropriate technology (computer, Skype app) or access to it and possessing the necessary skills to use it. Technology facilitates virtual check-ins and helps parents to perform parenting displays despite the distance; it also allows parents to transfer money quickly and for a small fee; (2) the size of the significant others network (both of individuals related by blood ties and unrelated individuals) as well as the quality of relationships with significant persons, such as strong commitments, firm friendship ties, enable parents to invoke close people in child-friendly activities and help to maintain continuous communication with children remaining in Lithuania. For example, the respondents indicated that 'my wife was not alone, my mother helped her', 'my kind parents, sister, and grandfather calmed me down and reassured me that the children are coping well with my absence'; (3) Flexible work schedule, ability to take sufficient paid leave time, straightforward and simple paperwork, adjacent time zones were mentioned as enablers of parenting displays; Finally, (4) the quality of relationships with the caregiver and collaborative spirit ensured the successful parenting displays.

Interferences hindering displays of parenting included: (1) the lack of communication technologies or necessary skills to use them; (2) disagreements between respondents and significant persons (whether related or unrelated by kinship ties) and tightness of bonds between these individuals. For example, some respondents cited discordant pre-departure relationships with 'the father of the child, ex-in-laws', 'disagreement between my parents and my wife' and 'angry neighbors' as hindrances. They also recount stories of 'the ex-spouse often coming over drunk and causing scenes', 'neighbors meddling in family's internal affairs' and admit that they were unable to resolve these situations due to a geographical distance; (3) parenting displays are complicated by work-related issues: be it inflexible schedules, long working hours, time zone differences, short vacations or the necessity to work during holiday seasons. Live meetings were difficult to arrange due to emigration requirements and paperwork; (4) some respondents reported difficulties in displaying family to stem from inability to control their emotional state. More specifically, having left their children behind, the parents felt constant anxiety about their children, missed them, doubted their decision to leave, came under stress due to their inability to control the custody of their children remotely. All these factors inhibited the quality of conversations with the children and caregivers and introduced tensions in these relationships.

Transnational Displays of Caring for Elderly Parents

How are Transnational Daughter/ Son Displays Done?

Our analysis shows that displays performed by adult migrant children are done by five core cross-border activities. These include (1) regularly staying in touch using technologies; (2) financially supporting their parents; (3) visiting the parents; (4) asserting themselves as 'good daughters/ sons' and (5) bringing together significant individuals to create a friendly environment for elderly parents living in Lithuania.

Cross-border communication involves phone and – to a lesser degree – online conversations (mainly Skype-based) (85%). Almost a half of the surveyed adult migrant children (49%) saw providing financial assistance (e.g. 'sending money') and in-kind support (e.g. sending 'gifts', 'remedies', 'medicine', 'parcels') to their elderly parents as a way of signaling their continuing commitment towards their elderly parents despite their physical absence. Visiting elderly parents in Lithuania (29%) was the third most popular activity used to show care for their elderly parent(s). It is worth noting that face to face meetings between adult migrant children and their

elderly parents occur almost exclusively within Lithuania and not abroad, something that could be explained by parents' mature age and infirm health.

Going through answers to open-ended questions, we found that adult children could display caring for elderly parents in Lithuania by asserting themselves as 'good daughters/ sons' and listing care giving activities in order to demonstrate to a wider audience that they fulfill commitments to their parents. For example, adult children stated that: 'I cared about them and did not stop loving them'.

References to 'caring about, loving' parents were accompanied by efforts to create a friendly environment for the elderly parents by mobilizing the support of other individuals (3%): adult migrant children stated that they communicated with and relied on their friends, sisters as well as spouses/ partners to care for their elderly parents. They called the network of trusted individuals and asked them to check on how their parents are doing. By invoking the support of significant individuals (the ones related by kinship ties and unrelated ones), the adult children conveyed to their parents and other close people that they continue performing activities dictated by the moral imperative of adult children caring for their elderly parents.

Who is a Designated Caregiver(s)?

Our quantitative study examined how adult children living abroad choose caregivers for their elderly parents in Lithuania and where do designated caregivers land in terms of kin/ non-kin relations. We also investigated whether care-giving activities are delegated to a single person, or whether networks of significant others mobilized to provide care for the elderly parent(s). In the latter case, we enquired into composition and size of such networks.

Adult migrant children surveyed (N = 121) mentioned 194 caregivers, who took care of their elderly parent(s) in Lithuania, after the adult child moved abroad, two adult children mentioned that they continued providing care themselves. Classifying caregivers by kin/ non-kin ties, we see that adult children rely primarily on individuals related to them by blood to create a safe and caring environment for their elderly parents (see Table 2). The largest share of the caregivers belonged to respondent's family of origin (46%), mainly siblings, maternal/ paternal relatives and spouses/ partners. A smaller proportion of the caregivers named by the respondents belonged to family of procreation (29%): the respondents primarily named their spouses/ partners and, in a few cases, their children as designated caregivers. These responses indicate the continuing importance of kinship ties in delegating caretaking responsibilities in the home country.

Table 2. Elderly parent caregivers

Relationship type	Number (percentage)	Caregivers	Number
Respondent's family of orientation	90 (46%)	Siblings	62
		Parent's spouse/ partner	13
		Parent's relatives	15
Respondent's family of procreation	56 (29%)	Children	23
		Partner/ spouse	32
		Partner/ spouse's relatives	1
Non-kin	48 (25%)	Friends, acquaintances	3
		Neighbors	5
		Professionals and/ or for-hire caregivers	37
		Care institution	3

Source: Quota survey data, adult child away families (N = 194 designated caregivers). In addition to 194 designated caregivers, two respondents indicated that they took care of their parents themselves.

Our analysis also confirms that transnational family relationships and practices may result in open-ended networks of family configurations. This is demonstrated by the relatively strong presence of individuals not related by blood ties among designated caregivers (25%). The primary non-kin caregivers are professional care specialists and for-hire caretakers. Very few survey participants reported relying on family friends, acquaintances and/ or neighbors as primary caregivers for their elderly parents.

In regard to those respondents who stated that they continued looking after their parents (specifically mothers) themselves, even after moving abroad, such response may indicate the lack of available network of kin and non-kin related persons to be addressed to meet the need (when the adult migrant child is the sole caregiver). Otherwise, this choice of adult migrant children could also stem from a personal preference to remain actively involved in caring for parents remotely with some care-giving responsibilities delegated to others (that is, adult migrant child is one of the several designated caregivers). A closer look at the size and composition of the caregiver networks provides an insight into how children construct a network of individuals taking care of their parents,

how intergenerational relationships manifest in care-giving activities and how such arrangements create opportunities for unrelated individuals to participate in *family-like* displays.

The results of our survey have revealed that most of the adult migrant children surveyed (54%) mentioned a single responsible person, 33% referred to two persons; 11% referred to three designated caregivers; while very few (3%) caregiver networks involved four people.

The composition of caregiver networks with a single individual confirms the importance of kinship ties: kin are designated twice as often (37%) compared to non-kin (17%) as the sole caregiver for elderly parent(s).

Although care for elderly remains primarily an internal family matter, in the context of migration it can also happen that the sole responsibility for caring was placed with non-kin relations (19%) or the responsibility was split between kin and non-kin relations (16%). Caregiver networks that involve non-kin are generally small, composed of a single (non-kin) or two (kin and non-kin) caregivers. These non-kin care-giving networks offer an opportunity of performing *family-like* displays.

How Parent(s) Caregivers' Displays across Borders are Done?

Our examination of designated caregiver displays showed that caregivers perform activities directed at two audiences – adult migrant children abroad and elderly parents in Lithuania. By doing so, caregivers convey to the adult children and to their elderly parent(s) that these activities constitute caring for elderly parents across borders.

According to the adult migrant children surveyed (N=121), caregiver displays are more often directed towards adult migrant children than towards elderly parent(s). We have identified core activities in caregiver displays facing adult migrant children. Most of the caregivers (1) have conversations with adult children about their elderly parents' lives; (2) encourage children to visit their parents; (3) encourage them to make calls and/ or (4) wire their parents remittances; (5) only few of the designated caregivers encourage adult migrant children to send parcels and presents (see Figure 2).

As Figure 2 shows, activities in caregiver displays facing elderly parent(s) mostly include (1) talks to elderly parents about their adult children's lives. Relatively few of caregivers (2) encourage parents to call their offspring and fewer still (3) suggest visiting them abroad. In general, the data suggests that the caregivers are mostly engaged in reminding adult children of their responsibilities towards their elderly parents.

To examine how non-kin caregiving persons are engaged in *family-like* relationships, we have filtered responses to focus on networks of caregivers
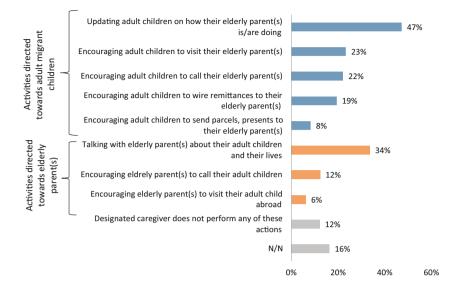
Figure 2. Displays of designated caregivers for elderly parents needing care
and living in Lithuania (adult migrant children's answers to the question with
multiple answers, in percentages)

Source: Quota survey data, adult child away families (N = 121 respondents).

consisting of non-kin relations and have analyzed their repertoire of caring
displays.

Looking specifically into caregiver networks composed solely of non-kin
relations we highlighted 23 caregiving arrangements that involved either a
sole or several non-kin caregivers. Out of the 23 cases, only 11 reported
being involved in at least one of the five core activities mentioned above.
More specifically, the displays performed by this group were mostly one-
directional (5 adult child-oriented and 3 elderly parent-oriented displays),
with a small minority (3) engaging in two-directional displays.

Enablers and Interferences of Transnational Displays
of Caring for Elderly Parents

When we asked the adult children, what factors enabled and interfered
with displaying care for their elderly parents living in Lithuania, they
mentioned the availability of caregivers, personal features of the designated
caregivers and the quality of their relationships with caregivers. More
specifically, the adult children stated that (1) both, kin and non-kin

caregivers might act as enablers or interfere the displays. Referring to kin, respondents mentioned their sisters, brothers, spouses, daughters, sons, parent's spouse, spouse's parent(s), aunts, friends, neighbors, among others, while referring to non-kin the surveyed adult migrant children mentioned professional caregivers at the care institutions, for-hire caregivers as main caring persons; (2) personal character of caregiver and/ or the way they are committed to fulfill their duties are important factors enabling or interfering caregiving displays. For example, adult migrants noted that 'the selflessness of the people caring for my mother' acted as interference of displays. In terms of interferences, (3) the respondents mentioned tense relationships with the network of caregivers, such as having an 'ambitious and arrogant sister' or a 'drinking brother' causing trouble as biggest hindrances to caring displays. Finally, (4) parents' (un)willingness to accept help in general, and in some specific situations to move from own home to another home or a care facility for the elderly was noted as notable factor enabling/ interfering cross-border caring displays. The respondents gave examples of parents' unwillingness 'to move to a managed care facility', 'to go to the hospital', or 'wishing to continue living in their own house' as interfering factors, while parents' willingness to collaborate with adult children and caregivers (e.g. parents were described as 'not capricious', 'don't get depressed') were deemed to be the enablers of cross-border caring displays.

This data led us to conclude that displays of caring for parent(s) performed by adult migrant children depend not only on the negotiated relations with caregivers but also on the negotiations with their elderly parents. Our data shows that the adult child-elderly parent(s)-caregiver relational 'triangle' forms a fluid process of re-negotiating caring commitments requiring all stakeholders to engage in a dialogue.
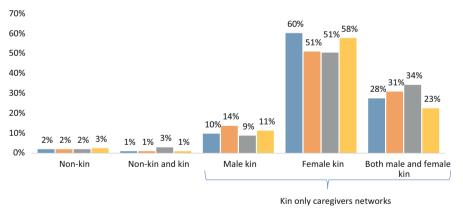
The Gendered Ways of Displays

Data drawn from empirical studies led some researchers of transnational families to hypothesize that cross-border family practices pave the way for a convergence of gender roles. For example, Tolstokorova (2019: 147) argues that 'migrancy and transnationalism can 'spur a process of gender convergence of family roles' and lead towards homogenization of their performance'. Looking at our study data on family displays from a gender perspective, we aimed to examine how gender issues play into transnational displays of mothering/ fathering, daughter/ son, and/ or caregiver. We also wanted to understand what role gender aspects play in the process of selecting caregivers and arranging care in the home country.

The Gendered Ways of Transnational Displays of Parenting

Our analysis has revealed that transnational displays of mothering and fathering are gendered. Although transnational mothers and fathers use similar communication channels to stay in touch with the children living in Lithuania, the content of their communication differed. Displays of mothering are more frequently performed through engaging in 'inquiry-control' talks, while those of fathering through 'intimate conversations'. In other words, departed mothers not only show to the child that they 'love and miss them', but also take interest in daily practicalities of the child's life, they seek to 'uncover, resolve, and control' the daily problems children encounter. By contrast, fathers communicating with their children usually aim to reaffirm their emotional connection with their children – 'I'm your father, I miss you, and I will come back to you'.

We were also interested in understanding how the gender of the audience of display affected caregivers' behavior within the 'caregiving triangle'. In other words, do caregiver displays performed to mothers differed from those performed to fathers? The analysis of the survey data revealed gender-specific discrepancies in the way the caregivers communicate with parents abroad: mothers are more often encouraged to return to Lithuania to visit their children, while fathers are more often asked to phone their children. Such gender-specific differences in the caregiver displays may be

Figure 3. Kinship and gender of designated caregivers for dependent children by 1) instrumental, 2) financial, 3) emotional support and 4) living place (in percentages)

Source: Quota survey data, mother-away and father-away families (N = 204 respondents).

shaped by different moral obligations inherent in the social constructs of a 'good mother' and a 'good father'. For example, one could interpret this difference as holding mothers up to a higher normative childcare standard, which plays out in this particular case as caregiver's insistence on mother's responsibilities extending beyond merely staying in touch with children by the means of technology and requiring her to find time for visiting the children in Lithuania and meeting them in person. Meanwhile, to demonstrate and reaffirm one's father role it is enough to call the child and stay in touch with him/ her virtually.

We have also noticed a number of gender-based differences to designating childcare in mother-away and father-away families. The difference manifests itself in terms of who is assigned to care for the child(ren), in whose household they live, who cares for them daily, supports them financially and emotionally (see Figure 3). In cases where departing parents designate a single person to act as a custodian of the child, departing mothers preferred to delegate the care of the child(ren) to their mothers (16%), departing fathers – to their spouse or partner (43%). When the custody of a child is delegated to multiple individuals, departing mothers typically set up child custody networks that involve both – relatives and non-relatives. For example, the custody can be entrusted to parents; parents and siblings; spouse/ partner and parents; one's siblings and older children; solely older children; friends/ acquaintances; an ex-spouse; a neighbor. By contrast, departing fathers usually designate one main custodian of the child (a spouse or partner). Less frequently, the custody is delegated to multiple people, e.g. spouse/ partner and relatives.
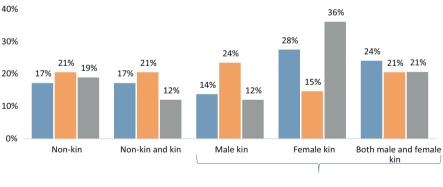
It's interesting to note that we have not found a single case of a father designating solely other men to act as custodians. Instead, fathers relied on either women or, both – women and men, to perform this role. Meanwhile, departing mothers often chose to leave the custody of the child with other women. For example, when respondents delegated childcare to their older children, usually daughters or, both – daughters and sons were chosen as custodians; when respondents chose to leave the custody with their siblings, dependent children would usually stay with respondents' sisters. We found only one instance where the child's custody was delegated to a brother of a departing individual. In summary, parents living abroad usually designate caregivers based on the female line.

The Gendered Ways of Transnational Displays of Caring
for Elderly Parents

The transnational displays of caring for elderly parents performed by the adult daughters and sons are fairly similar by gender when it comes to the tools they employ. Adult children, regardless of their gender, use the same communication technologies to stay in touch with their elderly parents living in Lithuania. The content of communication is also similar. This data partially supports the hypothesis that transnational lifestyles lead to a convergence in gender-specific caring practices.

When looking for gender-specific displays performed by the caregivers of the elderly parents, we noted that in performing displays oriented toward adult sons, the caregivers more frequently encouraged them to visit or call their parents. Such variation in caregiver displays may be interpreted as a sign that sons living abroad more often need to be reminded of their elderly parents remaining in the home country, encouraged to call and/ or visit them. Daughters hear fewer such encouragements. We assume that they are more willing to take responsibility of caring for their elderly parents and need fewer reminders about their moral obligations to the parents.

Gender differences become much more pronounced when it comes to making care arrangements and designating caregivers in the home country. The gendered strategies manifest themselves in two ways. 1) The adult migrant children more readily select female family members and relatives

Figure 4. Kinship and gender of designed caregivers for 1) both parents,
2) fathers and 3) mothers (in percentages)

Source: Quota survey data, adult child away families (N = 121 respondents).

than male ones to be caregivers for the elderly. For example, 28% of all caregivers' networks were composed solely of female relatives versus 16% composed solely of male relatives. 2) Adult migrant children organize care networks differently depending on the parent's gender. The data presented in Figure 4 revealed that when the person in the need of care is an elderly father, male family members and relatives are more likely to become involved in caregiving activities. By contrast, when the person needing care is an elderly mother or both parents, designated caregivers are more likely to be female. In cases where the adult migrant children designate caregivers for their mothers, differently from father-only or both parents arrangements, they more often recruit non-kin relations or mobilize mixed caregiving networks consisting of kin and non-kin people.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we incorporated Finch's idea of 'display' to examine how migrant parents, adult migrant children, and close significant persons perform a set of actions to show to each other and the society at large that they perform activities signaling their commitment to family members staying behind in the home country. By doing so, they convey that these are family-doing activities.

Unlike the studies conducted by other family sociologists relying on qualitative methods, we sought to demonstrate that the concept of 'display' could be applied to analyze transnational practices of parenting and caring for elderly parents in a quantitative way. We draw on the data from a quota-based survey to understand how parents, adult children and designated caregivers reaffirm transnational family relations and maintain family unity across borders.

Our insights confirm the findings of other family sociology studies – transnational displays of mothering/ fathering and those of adult children caring for their parents are performed through online communication, live meetings, and providing financial/ in-kind assistance to family members remaining in the home country. At the same time, we noticed that migrants could perform displays by creating a friendly environment for those staying behind. For this purpose, parents and adult children mobilize open-ended networks of significant persons who then become involved in family-like displays. This observation helps to extend the understanding of the 'caregiving triangle' to include significant people drawn from a broader social environment who might be related by kin ties or not. Although our data indicates that kinship ties play a critical role in delegating

caregiving responsibilities within the home country, we also observed diverse cases of migrants recruiting non-kin individuals into transnational care arrangements. Such extended 'caregiving triangles' might designate caregivers with permanent or temporary, full or partial custody.

Analyzing the caregiver displays we found that they involve two-sided activities, namely, towards those who emigrated (parents, adult children) and towards those staying behind in Lithuania (dependant children, elderly parents). Two-sided caregiving displays carry somewhat different meanings, more specifically, those oriented towards emigrated individuals convey the message that caregivers are doing caring things delegated to them, while those oriented towards family members remaining in the home country emphasize that caregivers hold certain family-like responsibilities and are tasked with caring for and preserving family relationships across-borders. It is important to note, that transnational displays of caring are highly dependent on the quality of relationships between all affected individuals and on negotiations taking place within care networks, whose aim is usually to find a solution satisfying all parties.

Although some family sociologists suggest that transnational familial practices may lead to a convergence of gender roles, our analysis has revealed that transnational displays of parenting and caring for elderly parents continue to be highly gendered. True, migrant mothers and fathers, daughters and sons employ the same tools of transnational displays, but the actual content of their displays reveals stark differences between genders. The organization of care in the home country and the selection of designated caregivers are also far from being equal for women and men, with main responsibilities usually being delegated to women, especially for parent-away families.

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