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Migration Matters: Insights into Intergenerational Solidarity Patterns in Europe

Ronny König, Bettina Isengard, and Marc Szydlik

Introduction

Intergenerational transfers of money, time, and space are important manifestations of functional solidarity in contemporary societies. Especially in times of societal crises and withdrawal of the welfare state, intergenerational support is an important characteristic of family relationships. Although previous research has intensively analyzed intergenerational solidarity (for an overview, see Szydlik 2016), research on the influence of migration on family support is still very rare. This is because prior studies have primarily addressed the causes and consequences of intergenerational solidarity among native populations, whereas the population of foreign origin has often been neglected or attention has been limited to specific (ethnic) populations, mainly single countries (see, for example, Warnes 2010 or Baykara-Krumme 2008).

R. König (✉) • B. Isengard • M. Szydlik
Institute of Sociology, University of Zurich, Zürich, Switzerland

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However, experiences caused by migration as well as the situation in the host country can affect intergenerational relations significantly. Against the background of contemporary multi-ethnic and transnational societies, the question of whether or not differences in intergenerational relations exist between native and migrant groups is particularly crucial. We address therefore this research gap and investigate all three forms of functional solidarity, namely money, time, and space. Along with different types of solidarity, we have also taken the direction of support into account and considered bottom-up and top-down relations across three generations.

Background and Hypotheses

In general, families are an important source of support across the whole life course (Bengtson 2001). Despite the consequences of demographic changes, the relations and bonds between familial generations remain impressively strong (for an overview, see Szydlik 2016). To reveal different intergenerational support patterns, in this study we have focused exclusively on functional solidarity, which includes the giving and taking of money, time, and space (Bengtson and Roberts 1991). To understand and explain differences in the extent of familial cohesion and support, we have employed a general theoretical model that offers explanations for various aspects of intergenerational solidarity (see Szydlik 2016: 20). According to the theoretical assumptions, intergenerational relations in general and functional solidarity in particular can be explained by different structures at different levels. At the micro level, individual opportunities and needs are crucial in explaining functional solidarity. At the meso level, family structures as well as cultural-contextual differences at the macro level are also likely to influence solidarity substantially.

In theorizing about intergenerational solidarity within migrant families, scholars have postulated various causes and consequences of migration (see Baykara-Krumme 2008) that would suggest two contrasting views (McDonald 2011; Nauck 2007). The first approach, the so-called solidarity thesis, assumes a higher level of cohesion in families with a migration background. Cultural differences in family norms between the

countries of origin and the host countries are supposed to cause migrant family generations to be more closely connected and depend more on each other. In addition, stronger cohesion and solidarity in migrant families can also be seen as a reaction to specific experiences that are connected with the immigration process (see Dumon 1989). Following this assumption, more intense mutual family support can also evolve as a means of compensating for lost contacts with former friends, neighbours, and other relatives from the country of origin or a lack of relationships in the host country.

By contrast, the cultural-conflict thesis assumes that relationships in migrant families are weakened owing to the experiences of the migration process and the subsequent situation in the host country (see Park 1964). In line with this perspective, Portes and Zhou (2005:, 85) claim: 'Growing up in an immigrant family has always been difficult, as individuals are torn by conflicting social and cultural demands, while they face the challenge of entry into an unfamiliar and frequently hostile world.' Because of this, migrant families are assumed to have a greater potential to experience intergenerational and intercultural conflict (Merz et al. 2009), which affects family relations.

Further theoretical and empirical insights can be anticipated on the basis of the drift, strain, and safe-haven hypotheses (Szydlik 2016). According to the drift hypothesis, growing up in different countries as well as migration experiences can lead to family generations 'drifting apart' to some degree, which would lead to less solidarity. The strain hypothesis argues that stressful situations can lead to estrangement and conflict, which in turn can also reduce solidarity. However, according to the safe-haven hypothesis, migrants are likely to maintain stronger family bonds. As living in a new society often goes along with cultural discrepancies between the country of origin and the host country as well as huge challenges, insecurities, and even discrimination, migrants might have a more pronounced need for a close family circle as a 'safe haven' in an unfamiliar environment.

The empirical research with regard to the influence of migration on intergenerational solidarity is still scarce and has yielded quite mixed results (Baykara-Krumme 2008; de Valk and Schans 2008; Nauck 2007; Nosaka and Chasiotis 2005). Hereby, the sole exception is a recent study

by Bordone and de Valk (2016) that focuses on intergenerational support between natives and migrants in contemporary Europe. Although this research investigates different kinds of solidarity (e.g. practical support, grandparenting, and contacts), the measurement of the migrated population is also limited. Research on single countries and specific ethnic groups suggests that intergenerational cohesion within migrant families is not very different from that of the native population (for Germany, see Baykara-Krumme 2008; Schimany et al. 2012). However, when focusing on specific dimensions such as money, time, and space as well as on different directions of support, previous findings indicate that the effect of migration is less unequivocal. Glick and van Hook (2002), for instance, have shown that variations in the extent of co-residence between ethnic groups disappear when controlling for the economic situation of individuals and families as well as for specific characteristics driven by the migration process (e.g. duration of stay). By contrast, other studies show that co-residence is more likely within migrated families (e.g. Baykara-Krumme 2008; König 2016; Isengard and Szydlik 2012; Szydlik 2016). With regard to bottom-up transfers, previous research indicates that migrants are much more likely to transfer money to their older parents (see, for example, Deindl and Brandt 2011). With this kind of remittance (e.g. Poirine 2006), migrants tend to help their parents and maintain the relationship by sending money back home, yet there are no clear differences in top-down monetary support between native and migrant families (König 2016). Conversely, whereas bottom-up support such as time-related help is less common among migrant families (Deindl and Brandt 2011; Szydlik 2016), grandparenting seems to occur more often among migrants (Bordone and de Valk 2016). Further empirical results for several kinds of functional solidarity are inconclusive and inconsistent with regard to migration as well (see, for example, Laditka and Laditka 2001; Lee and Aytac 1998).

In line with the theoretical approach to family change put forward by Kağıtçıbaşı (1996), one would furthermore expect differences within migrant families depending on their geographical origin. For this reason, many migrant groups from non-Western countries might be traditionally more connected and their family relations could depend more on having socio-economic necessities provided to them. Although migration to

Europe makes it easier to meet economic needs and family relations become more independent, the links between necessity and familial closeness are less clear. Dutch studies have indicated stronger attitudes towards filial obligations among ethnic groups, although their actual intergenerational support was not necessarily stronger (Schans and de Valk 2012). Phalet and Güngör (2009) reported a shift in values towards weaker commitments with regard to family support among Turkish migrants, and Bordone and de Valk (2016) indicated a higher involvement of migrants in caring for grandchildren depending on their geographical origin.

In addition, migrants from less-developed countries are usually confronted with non-traditional and pluralized family forms (e.g. non-married couples, single parents, or same-sex couples, which differ from those consisting of one man and one woman, with children, where the male is the primary provider and ultimate authority) embedded in more or less well-established welfare-state systems. Several studies have made note of country-specific differences with regard to family support and the influence of public expenditures and social inequality. As intergenerational support not only depends on economic necessities but is also based on norms and values (Fuligni et al. 1999), emotional links and support behaviour within migrated families might continue in their new country of residence (Kağıtçıbaşı 2005). However, theories on immigrant assimilation suggest that, over time, migrants adopt the attitudes and behaviour of the hosting society (Gordon 1964). Nevertheless, in regard to family issues, the adaptation process might take a longer period of time (Lesthaeghe and Axinn 2002). In this context, previous findings show that the duration of stay in the host country does not affect the likelihood of grandparenting among migrant families. At the same time, caring for close relatives seems to decline over time as does the time required for integration (Bordone and de Valk 2016).

Along with differences between migrants and native families within the same countries, differences between European countries with respect to migration are also worth considering. To gain an understanding of such country differences in particular, Kağıtçıbaşı (1996) provides a theoretical approach that offers a framework for understanding systematic variations in family relations depending on different socio-economic and

cultural backgrounds. These assumptions generally follow the collectivism–individualism dimension on the culture index developed by Hofstede (1984, 2001) and distinguishes between family systems that focus more on the individual (separateness) and those that stress the collective (relatedness). Furthermore, it links the family system to the social context in which one grows up. For example, in countries with weak public services, families depend more on each other and have to provide essential support more often (Kağıtçıbaşı 1996). This theoretical framework might therefore help to understand family relations in migrant families as well as differences in family ties across Europe. Here, the country-specific proportion of migrants can be regarded as an aggregated form of the individual situation in terms of the degree of intergenerational solidarity and can likewise be understood as an indirect means of identifying host countries and their ability to integrate foreigners.

Data and Methods

Our empirical analyses are based on pooled data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), which is a multidisciplinary and cross-national dataset. For the analyses, we included the first interview with each family respondent, who were at least 50 years old, conducted in one of the waves in 2004–2005, 2006–2007 or 2013. The 17 European countries that are included in our sample are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden.

Given how we chose to focus on different types of functional solidarity including the two directions of transfer (bottom-up and top-down), our analyses are based on three subsamples. With regard to bottom-up solidarity, our first sample includes respondent–parent dyads who do not share the same household (over 97 per cent). Generally speaking, top-down support focuses on respondent–adult child dyads (second subsample), whereas time-related transfers (grandchild care) are restricted to those dyads with at least one grandchild (third subsample). The dependent variables are support of money, time, and space. The main forms of

support from the respondents to their parents are transfers of money and time. Support for adult children is primarily provided by money, grandchild care, and space. Monetary transfers address the question of whether or not there was a financial transfer (directly with money or a material gift amounting to 250 euros or more) to (a) parents and/or (b) adult children within the past 12 months. Time transfers comprise (a) practical support such as help with household chores and care for parents as well as (b) grandchild care, both of which were provided at least weekly within the last 12 months. Finally, the provision of space is defined by co-residence, which means that the adult child lives in the parental household.

In line with previous research, individual migration is operationalised by birth in a different country and/or not possessing citizenship of the country in which the person currently lives. According to this definition, approximately 10 per cent of the surveyed respondents have a migration background. Given the existence of different historical, social, political and economic circumstances, this situation varies considerably across European countries, ranging from only 2 per cent in Italy and Poland up to almost 17 per cent in Germany and Switzerland, 22 per cent in Estonia and 36 per cent in Luxembourg.

To capture the broad complexity of migration, it seemed necessary to consider several additional approaches that go beyond the simple yes and no of migration. This includes the distinction between whether a foreign-born person is naturalized in the host country or still possesses foreign citizenship. The comparatively few respondents with foreign citizenship who were born in the host country (0.3 per cent) were excluded, as the data do not allow identification of the country in which those persons were socialised. We also considered the duration of stay in the host country by capturing the age at migration measured by three categories: childhood (under the age of 18 years), early adulthood (18–35 years) and later adulthood (over 35 years). In addition, we also included the country of origin for all foreign-born and the citizenship for non-naturalized respondents. In both cases, we classified their origin on the basis of (a) EU-15 (which refers to the member countries prior to the accession of 10 further countries in May 2004) and (b) non-EU-15 countries (for a detailed overview of European country mapping, see OECD 2004). Moreover, to

assess the role of multi-ethnic families on intergenerational solidarity, for those respondents living in partnerships we also considered the influence of the migration status of their partners. To explain country-specific differences, we included the distribution of foreigners as a percentage of the entire population. This indicator consists of people who might have been born in their host country but still have the nationality of their country of origin. It was drawn from the OECD (2016) and refers to the year of each interview.

Furthermore, to explain functional solidarity against the background of migration, various explanatory variables were also included. To capture divergent opportunities and needs, we considered the educational level and income situation of the respondents as well as their employment, age, health and partnership. To explain bottom-up support, we included the health and partnership status of the respondents' parents, which might affect the necessity for support. For top-down solidarity, along with the respondents' characteristics we also considered the partnership and employment status of the adult child as well as their parental status, differentiated by the age of the youngest child. Meso-level influences that can be defined as family structures are also important. For this reason, we included the number of the respondents' siblings for bottom-up transfers and—for all models—the number of their children and the gender relation of the dyads. In addition, geographical distance between the generations was considered. Finally, contextual characteristics that capture variations over time at the macro level were taken into account by including dummy variables with regard to the SHARE wave.

To analyse different determinants of functional solidarity for the two directions of transfer, we reshaped the data in regard to the potential receiver of respondents' support; in our case, this was (a) the respondents' parents and (b) the respondents' children. Given non-independence between observations, the hierarchical data structure violates basic regression assumptions and might result in inaccurate significance values as well as biased standard errors. Therefore, we have analyzed the influence of migration on different forms of functional solidarity by estimating multilevel logistic regressions (see, for example, Rabe-Hesketh and

Skrondal 2008) for each transfer direction, transfer type, and migration indicator separately.

Empirical Results

By focusing on the extent of intergenerational solidarity between native and migrant families in Europe (Fig. 14.1), several differences and similarities can be observed. In general, both migrants and natives support their adult children more frequently than their elderly parents. However, a more detailed view reveals variations in functional solidarity caused by migration. Whereas natives are more likely to provide personal assistance to their parents such as help or care (14 per cent vs. 7 per cent), migrants are more likely to support older generations with financial assistance (9 per cent vs. 2 per cent). With regard to top-down solidarity, the results suggest only a few differences in the three types of functional solidarity between natives and migrants.

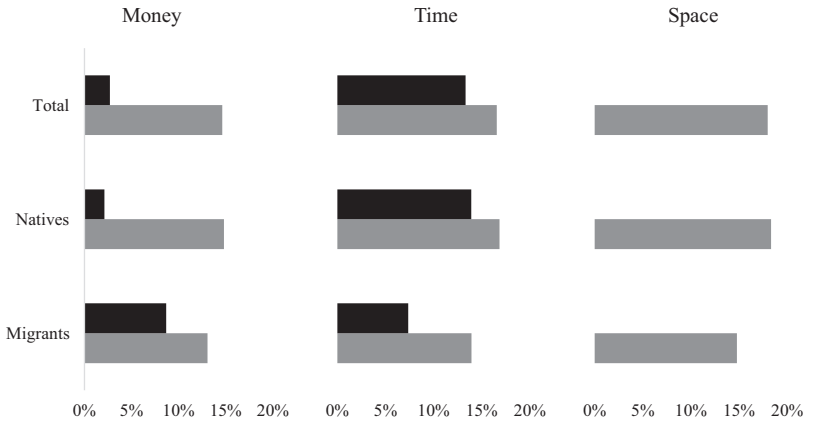

Fig. 14.1 Functional solidarity and migration in Europe (Source: SHARE, wave 1 (2004–2005, release 5.0.0), wave 2 (2006–2007, release 5.0.0) and wave 5 (2013, release 5.0.0), weighted, ■ 17,695 respondent-parent dyads, ■ 99,463 (56,709 time) respondent-child dyads, Time: at least weekly help and/or care to parents and/or grandchild care to children, our own calculations)

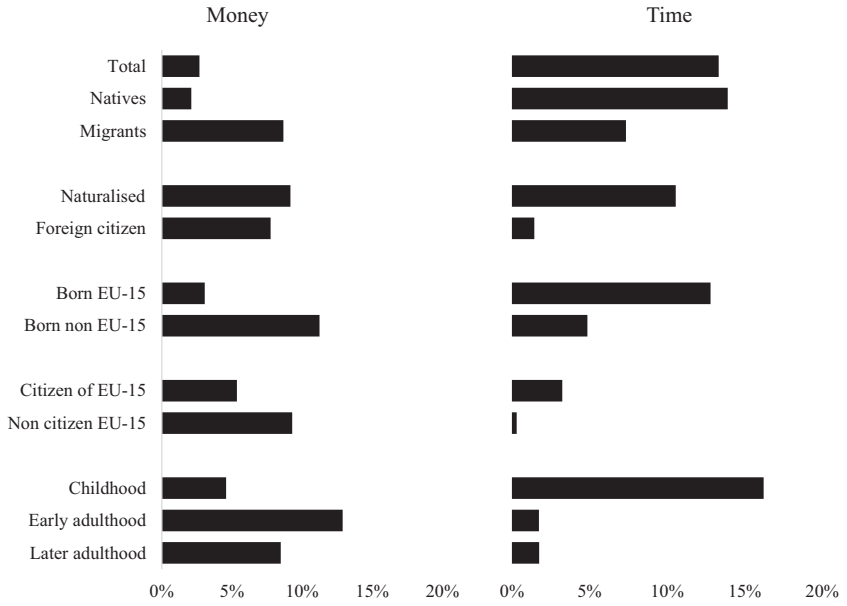

Fig. 14.2 Bottom-up solidarity and migration in Europe (Source: SHARE, wave 1 (2004–2005, release 5.0.0), wave 2 (2006–2007, release 5.0.0) and wave 5 (2013, release 5.0.0), weighted, 17,695 respondent-parent dyads, our own calculations)

When complexity of migration is considered, clear differences in the extent of functional solidarity between generations within the group of immigrants become apparent. With regard to bottom-up solidarity (Fig. 14.2), the higher proportion of monetary support for parents among migrants appears to be limited to the group of non-EU-(15)-born migrants. Furthermore, migrants who migrated in early adulthood (18–35 years) support their elderly parents more often financially than migrants who moved either during their childhood or even in later adulthood. Although natives support their elderly parents with regular help and care more often than migrants do, we can also see differences among migrants as a group. Those respondents who were naturalized in their host country, were born in the EU-15, or migrated during their childhood provide support more frequently by comparison.

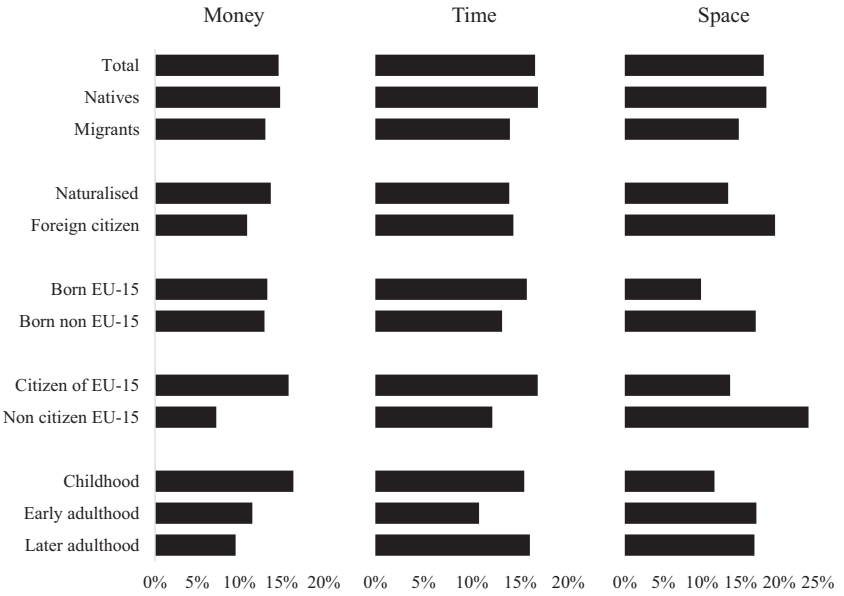

Fig. 14.3 Top-down solidarity and migration in Europe (Source: SHARE, wave 1 (2004–2005, release 5.0.0), wave 2 (2006–2007, release 5.0.0) and wave 5 (2013, release 5.0.0), weighted, 99,463 (56,709 time) respondent-child dyads, our own calculations)

The results for top-down solidarity (Fig. 14.3) emphasize that migrants who hold a citizenship outside the EU-15 countries provide monetary support and regular grandchild care less often. Conversely, co-residence is more common among foreign citizens from non-European countries. However, the age at which migration took place also seems to affect top-down solidarity. Respondents who migrated in their early childhood particularly often support their adult children with money, which might allow those children to leave their parental home somewhat earlier than it is the case for children who parents migrated in adulthood. Moreover, grandparenting among foreign-born migrants seems to be more common if they migrated either during childhood or in later adulthood and might depend in part on their own experiences growing up with or without grandparents. Here, both missing and experienced grandparents during the own childhood seem to be important for their own role as grandparents.

To explain which indicators might cause differences in functional solidarity between natives and migrants as well as among migrants, we have estimated multilevel logistic regressions including indicators at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Table 14.1 shows the basic model for each transfer direction and type without including any migration indicator.

Table 14.1 Multivariate analyses of different types of functional solidarity

	Bottom-up		Top-down		
	Money	Time	Money	Grandchild care	Space
Respondents' characteristics					
Education, max. (low)					
Medium	2.41***	1.53**	1.95***	1.25***	0.80***
High	5.68***	1.92***	4.35***	1.52***	0.64***
Income (with some difficulty)					
With great difficulty	0.70	0.79	0.49***	0.91	0.86***
Fairly easily	1.16	1.15*	2.06***	1.03	0.84***
Easily	1.69**	1.41**	5.41***	1.13**	0.61***
Employed	1.49*	0.84	1.52***	0.51***	1.38***
Age	0.76***	1.47***	0.68***	0.65***	0.59***
Health (good)					
Excellent	0.88	1.88***	1.12	1.17**	1.07
Very good	0.70**	1.36***	1.05	1.12*	1.01
Fair	0.82	1.14	0.87**	0.79***	1.11*
Poor	0.92	0.29***	0.82**	0.49***	1.17*
Partner	0.81	1.06	1.08	1.63***	1.29***
Parent's characteristics					
Health (good)					
Very good	0.64	0.47***			
Fair	0.97	0.57***			
Poor	2.20***	1.82***			
Very poor	2.49***	6.44***			
Partner	0.54***	0.37***			
Child's characteristics					
Partner			0.74***	0.89**	0.05***
Labour force status (full-time)					
Part-time			1.41***	1.13**	1.70***
Unemployed			2.75***	0.65***	2.71***
In education			3.15***	0.84	4.76***
Other			1.16**	0.53***	2.42***

(*continued*)

Table 14.1 (continued)

	Bottom-up		Top-down		
	Money	Time	Money	Grandchild care	Space
Child (youngest: none)					
<6 years			1.35***		0.25***
<13 years			1.09	0.54***	0.22***
<18 years			0.86***	0.10***	0.25***
Adult			0.66***	0.03***	0.29***
Family characteristics					
Number of respondents' siblings (one)					
None	2.12***	1.92***			
Two	0.83	0.74**			
Three and more	0.88	0.66**			
Number of respondents' children (one)					
None	1.36	1.59***			
Two	0.64*	0.95	0.55***	0.66***	0.78***
Three and more	0.53**	0.66***	0.23***	0.32***	0.59***
Relation (mother–daughter)					
Mother–son	1.02	0.22***	0.82***	0.43***	1.50***
Father–daughter	0.25***	0.44***	1.41***	0.57***	0.87***
Father–son	0.70	0.18***	1.04	0.24***	1.31***
Geographical distance	1.49***	0.30***	1.10***	0.40***	
Context characteristics					
Wave (2004/5)					
2006/7	0.86	0.44***	0.86***	1.18***	1.06
2013	0.77	0.62***	0.86**	1.41***	1.04
n (parents/children)	17,695	17,695	99,463	56,709	99,463
n (respondents)	14,135	14,135	45,801	31,846	45,801
n (countries)	17	17	17	17	17

Source: SHARE, wave 1 (2004–2005, release 5.0.0), wave 2 (2006–2007, release 5.0.0) and wave 5 (2013, release 5.0.0), multilevel logistic regressions, odds ratios, robust standard errors, all metric variables standardised, our own calculations

Significance levels: ***$p \leq 0.01$, **$p \leq 0.05$, *$p \leq 0.10$

The findings confirm empirically established transfer patterns in that individual (economic) opportunities as well as the needs of both giver and receiver play an important role in explaining intergenerational support and cohesion. However, family structures matter too. Respondents

(must) support their elderly parents more often if no alternative exists, such as close relatives in the form of siblings. Conversely, respondents in parental roles have to spread their support among all of their children. Furthermore, the geographical distance between the generations informs the kind of intergenerational solidarity. Whereas relatives who live close to one another are supported physically by help such as care or grandparenting more often, those who live further away benefit primarily from money, which can be transferred over great distances more easily.

In addition to individual and familial circumstances, migration plays a role in explaining different patterns of functional solidarity (see Table 14.2). Overall, the results confirm that differences and similarities between natives and migrants depend on the type of support as well as the transfer direction. In this respect, migrants provide financial

Table 14.2 Multivariate analysis of different types of functional solidarity and migration

	Bottom-up		Top-down		
	Money	Time	Money	Grandchild care	Space
Migration characteristics					
Migrant	5.69***	0.88	0.68***	1.07	1.16***
Migration status (native)					
Citizen, but foreign birth	6.11***	1.10	0.84	1.07	1.08
No citizen and foreign birth	4.66***	0.45	0.41***	0.93	1.19
Migration country (native)					
EU-15	1.15	1.19	0.73	1.20	0.86
Outside EU-15	10.58***	0.70	0.62***	0.96	1.38***
Migration citizenship (native)					
Citizen, but foreign birth	6.23***	1.12	0.84	1.08	1.13
EU-15	2.14	0.79	0.52**	1.20	0.92
Outside EU-15	9.17***	0.18**	0.27***	0.88	1.74***
Migration time (native)					
Childhood	3.40***	1.51**	0.87	1.05	1.06
Early adulthood	8.55***	0.42	0.58***	0.99	1.33***
Medium/late adulthood	5.91***	0.43	0.47***	1.01	0.92

(*continued*)

Table 14.2 (continued)

	Bottom-up		Top-down		
	Money	Time	Money	Grandchild care	Space
Migration of couple (no couple)					
Both natives	1.94***	0.96	0.90	0.62***	0.83**
Respondent migrated	1.65	1.52	0.93	1.13	0.89
Partner migrated	3.65***	0.99	0.93	1.23	0.71**
Couple migrated	8.55***	0.48	0.56**	0.83	1.55***
Missing	2.09***	0.99	0.94	1.06	1.27***
Migration of couple (no couple)					
Both natives	1.93***	0.95	0.89	0.62***	0.84*
Respondent or partner migrated	2.51**	1.33	0.92	1.17	0.81
Couple migrated, different origin	2.05	0.26*	0.56	0.76	2.11***
Couple migrated, same origin	9.99***	0.57	0.54***	0.87	1.43***
Missing	2.14***	0.99	0.92	1.06	1.27***
% Population (foreign)	0.92	1.07	0.54***	0.94**	0.66***

Source: SHARE, wave 1 (2004–2005, release 5.0.0), wave 2 (2006–2007, release 5.0.0) and wave 5 (2013, release 5.0.0), OECD (2016), multilevel logistic regressions (separate, for each migration indicator) under control of all variables mentioned in Table 14.1, odds ratios, robust standard errors, all metric variables standardised, our own calculations

Significance levels: ***$p \leq 0.01$, **$p \leq 0.05$, *$p \leq 0.10$

assistance more often to their elderly parents (bottom-up) but less often to their own adult children (top-down) than natives. Moreover, although co-residence is more frequent within migrant families, there are no differences between immigrants and natives in the extent of time support observable when controlling for socio-demographic as well as socio-economic characteristics.

Yet the results make clear that one should consider the complexity of migration and not generalise its influence on functional solidarity. For example, the more frequent monetary support to elderly parents among migrants is demonstrated exclusively by those of non-EU-15 origin or citizenship, while the rare financial support among migrants to their younger generations (top-down) does vary according to citizenship.

However, the greater frequency of co-residing children among migrants only concerns those families who are born outside the European Union. Although the prevalence of regular time-related help does not vary between immigrants and natives, there are some differences along citizenship lines in the way elderly parents are cared for or helped. For instance, non-EU-15 citizens who are probably separated from their parents by a greater geographical distance are less able to support them personally.

We can also observe that differences among migrants depend on life-course stages and immigration circumstances. Children, whose parents migrated in early adulthood, live with their parents significantly longer than children whose parents migrated at a different age. However, the greater number of financial transfers to elderly parents among migrants does not depend on their duration of stay in the host country. By contrast, those migrants who migrated in childhood (probably with their parents) are more likely to care for their parents in old age.

The migration background of the entire household for respondents who live in partnerships and therefore the multi-ethnicity or inter-ethnicity of families also plays also a role in explaining intergenerational support. The previous findings that migrants provide financial support to their elderly parents more often and their adult children less frequently appears to be intensified if the respondents as well as their partners are both foreigners who have migrated from the same country. Whereas time-related help such as caring (bottom-up) and grandparenting (top-down) do not vary much when the migration background of the respondents' partners is taken into account, co-residence is more common in families in which both parents have migrated, regardless of their country of origin. To conclude, inter-ethnic couples provide more often monetary assistance to their own parents (remittances) but less often to their own children. Simultaneously, co-residence with adult children is more common in migrated families, regardless of their constitution (inter-ethnic and multi-ethnic). Furthermore, mixed couples that means that only one partner migrated, differs not so strongly from the native population in contrast to families in which both partners migrated. There is only a significant difference between native and multi-ethnic couples regarding monetary bottom-up transfers. In those families, older parents are more often supported with cash than in native families.

Finally, the country-specific context in which the family resides affects their intergenerational behaviour. So, for instance, in terms of top-down solidarity we can observe less frequent intergenerational transfers (money, grandchild care and space) in countries with a higher percentage of migrants. By contrast, the country-specific distribution of foreigners does not seem to significantly affect the individual transfer behaviour for bottom-up, and probably depends more on the individual situation of needs and opportunities in general and the geographical distance in particular.

Conclusions

The empirical analyses show overall that European families are strongly connected by intergenerational support and cohesion. However, by taking the experience of migration into account, the study reveals striking differences not only between migrants and natives but also especially among migrants as a group. The analyses show that families with a migration background are connected more strongly by financial bottom-up transfers and spatial top-down transfers, whereas natives seem to provide financial help to their younger generations more frequently. And yet there are no distinct differences between natives and migrants with regard to time-related help and grandchild care. In this sense, the cultural–geographical origin of the migrant, the duration of stay in the host country as well as the point during the life cycle at which and with whom migration took place are also important characteristics in understanding various patterns of intergenerational solidarity between natives and migrants as well as among migrants as a group.

In addition, a migration background of the entire household further strengthens the ratio of needs and opportunities of the giver and receiver but still varies between inter-ethnic and multi-ethnic families. While multi-ethnic families behave overall more like native couples, inter-ethnic couples differ strongly in terms of intergenerational solidarity. It seems that the native part within mixed couples can ‘compensate’ for migration-specific differences in the transfers behaviour and enforce more strongly the values and norms of the host country. One exception seems to be financial transfers. Remittances are an important way to support family

members across national borders. Therefore, in multi-ethnic as well as in inter-ethnic families, transfers of money are an important way to support older parents, who (still) live in the home country.

To put it succinctly, migration matters. Theoretical reasoning and empirical investigations should therefore closely address the specifics of intergenerational solidarity patterns of migrants and their families by considering individual needs and opportunities, family structures, cultural contexts, and family norms. In so doing, it is essential to determine the influence of migration on intergenerational solidarity from various perspectives by addressing different forms of solidarity, diverse directions of support as well as heterogeneous groups of migrants. Although the present contribution does reveal some clear differences between natives and migrants in European societies, one has to bear in mind that the data is limited to a specific population (50+) and the intergenerational transfer behaviour of that population.

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