

Chapter 10

Older Parents in Romania as a Resource for their Migrant Adult Children



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10.1 Introduction

Relations and support between parents and children continue throughout their lives, even after children have reached adulthood and established families of their own, as the paradigm of intergenerational solidarity shows (see Bengtson and Roberts 1991). One of the core dimensions of intergenerational solidarity is structural solidarity, which refers to opportunities for transfers between parents and children, and geographical proximity is a main element here. However, the increasing mobility and spatial distance between family members as a result of international migration have called for reconsideration of the role of geographical proximity in intergenerational relations. Studies on transnational families prove that bonds and interaction between members of family generations continue to exist even across national borders.

Since migration is usually a strategy with which to help family members in home countries, research into transnational families most often approaches the flows of care from migrants towards family members who have remained in their origin countries, be they children or parents. However, the solidarity paradigm sees mutual interaction and bonds between family generations stretching throughout the life course, with both downward and upward support (Bengtson and Roberts 1991; Bengtson 2001; Szydlik 2016). In this line of thought, we investigate in this chapter the flows of downward solidarity, from older parents living ‘back home’ in Romania to their migrant adult children. In our approach we combine the solidarity paradigm with specificities brought by literature which address issues of geographical distance, mobility, and transnationalism (Baldassar et al. 2007; Kilkey and Merla 2014).

Intergenerational exchanges continue to exist across borders but have some particular features. Key characteristics include the distinction between support with

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copresence and support from a distance (Baldassar et al. 2007) and the emergence of a new way in which support is provided, which is through coordination and delegation to a third person (Kilkey and Merla 2014). Provision of support with physical copresence happens during visits, and support in the form of personal, hands-on care could be provided/received only in such situations.

Intergenerational relations in national contexts have been extensively studied under the solidarity paradigm, making use of two international surveys: the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). Big, nationally representative samples allowed very detailed investigation into family relations, but elements of transnationalism were not captured. SHARE data allowed the introduction of *migrant status* into analysis but referred to (older) persons who have a migrant background, without transnational aspects (see, for instance, Bordone and de Valk 2016; Szydlik 2016). On the other hand, much of the literature on transnational families relies on qualitative research.

In recent decades, Romania has faced massive migration, being nowadays one of the most important Eastern European countries of origin. Consequently, research into Romanian transnational families has developed. This chapter distinguishes from other approaches in several ways: it brings the transnational element into the study of intergenerational solidarity, focuses on older parents in home country, approaches downward solidarity in the transnational context, and brings the quantitative approach into the study of transnational families. We approach the dimension of functional solidarity and investigate how opportunities and needs of both parents and (migrant) adult children, their family structure and contextual factors (Szydlik 2016) influence downward (from parents to children) provision of support. We work with the data collected through a national survey of 1506 persons aged 60 and over with at least one child abroad, as part of the project entitled “Intergenerational solidarity in the context of work migration abroad. The situation of elderly left at home”.

The paper is structured as follows: the next section addresses the multidimensional character of intergenerational solidarity and the specific features of intergenerational care when parents and their adult children live across national borders, as well as factors that may enhance or hinder intergenerational exchanges. Data and statistical methods for analysis are presented next, followed by results of logistic regression models for distinct types of downward support (financial and assistance in the form of time). We end our paper by acknowledging that functional solidarity towards migrant children is conditioned mainly by parents’ health and age, as well as the family structures of both generations and the accessibility of the migration country for visits. The daily character of certain support, such as care for grandchildren or help with household activities, is replaced by the occasional character of visits.

10.2 Theoretical Considerations

Of the various definitions given to the concept of *generation*, this chapter dwells on family generations at the micro-level, which describes family lineage such as grandparents, parents, (adult) children and grandchildren. Specifically, within the

theoretical framework of intergenerational solidarity, we focus on the (elderly) parent–(adult) child dyad, which is translated as a family relationship between two succeeding family generations. Intergenerational family relations are seen as forms of behaviour that occur along with the expectation of rewards, results of altruistic or caring preference, and consequences of sharing social norms and values (Bawin-Legros and Stassen 2002; Bianchi et al. 2006), or commitments negotiated between family members rather than cultural predispositions (Finch and Mason 1993: 59). When linked to family generations, the concept of intergenerational solidarity describes how cohesion and family integration systems operate (Bengtson and Schrader 1982; Mangen et al. 1988) when “children reach adulthood and establish careers and families of their own” (Bengtson and Roberts 1991: 896). In other words, it “refers to bonds and interactions between family members of different generations” (Szydlik 2016: 15).

The theoretical construct of intergenerational solidarity is used “as a means to characterize the behavioural and emotional dimensions of interaction, cohesion, sentiment and support between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, over the course of long-term relationships” (Bengtson 2001: 8). The original model of intergenerational solidarity contains six dimensions, five of which refer to behavioural, affective and cognitive aspects of the parent–child relation: associational (common activities), affective (emotional closeness), consensual (similarity or agreement in beliefs and values), functional (exchange of support in various forms), and normative (perceptions of obligations and expectations in respect of intergenerational connections). The sixth dimension, structural solidarity, refers to opportunities for transfers between parents and children (Bengtson and Roberts 1991). A recent adaptation of Bengtson’s conceptualisation was proposed by Szydlik (2016), who considers that not only structural solidarity but also normative and consensual dimensions reflect the potential for intergenerational solidarity, while functional, affectual and associational dimensions reflect actual solidarity.

Functional solidarity comprises monetary transfers (financial assistance), assistance in the form of time, and co-residence (sharing the same household) (Szydlik 2016). Assistance in the form of time may take various forms, from offering advice and practical help around the household to providing personal care to the frail elderly. Affectual solidarity describes emotional bonds or emotional closeness of the relationship. Associational solidarity refers to shared activities and interaction, with meeting in person being the closest form of contact.

Transnational families or multi-sited families are defined as “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002: 3). In transnational family literature, the focus is on the reconfigurations of parent–child relationships imposed by the absence of geographical proximity. Therefore, a key distinction is between support with copresence and support from a distance (Baldassar et al. 2007). Kilkey and Merla (2014) develop this distinction into a typology of ways in which support is provided in transnational families: direct provision with physical copresence, direct provision at a distance, coordination, and delegation of support to a third person. Communication and travel technologies are the key channels through which inter-

generational solidarity is performed (Baldassar 2014; Merla 2015). Provision of support with physical copresence happens during visits, and support in the form of personal, hands-on care could be provided/received only in such situations.

Studies show that members of multi-sited families are involved in the same types of kin relationships as those of families whose members are in spatial proximity (Baldassar et al. 2007; Wilding 2006). The link between geographical distance and support is not to be considered dichotomous, but rather more complex due to other related factors such as the complexity of tasks or constraints and limits determined by own country-specific regulations. The current migratory context, characterised by free movement within EU borders, provides both transnational migrants and family members 'back home' with better opportunities to get in touch and to support each other. Expansion and increasing affordability of information and communication technology (ICT) allow migrants to maintain a relationship of uninterrupted contact and to develop ordinary copresence routines with family members in home countries (Nedelcu and Wyss 2016).

Beyond the taxonomy of intergenerational solidarity, authors have proposed different theoretical models with the goal of explaining intergenerational solidarity. Szydlik (2016) proposed a model with four conditional factors for solidarity, namely opportunity, need, family and contextual-cultural structures, with three levels of analysis: individual, familial and societal. Intergenerational relations involve the parent and child, both with opportunity and need structures. This relationship is embedded in a familial and societal context. Opportunity structures refer to the opportunities or resources for intergenerational solidarity, such as the residential proximity of family members, occupational status (availability of time to offer support) and economic status (availability of financial resources). The need structure indicates the need for intergenerational solidarity, which can be a result of health, financial or emotional problems. At the family level, the history of events (such as divorces) may shape intergenerational solidarity, as well as family composition (the number of siblings) or family norms. Cultural-contextual structures refer to the societal conditions under which intergenerational relations take place, such as the economic and tax system, the welfare state and the labour and housing market.

Research under the paradigm of intergenerational solidarity, especially making use of the internationally comparative SHARE data, showed how the above-mentioned conditional factors act across Europe. Albertini et al. (2007) showed that having grandchildren, higher wealth and education, living with a partner and being a woman make the social support towards adult children more likely. As to downward financial support, the same authors found that younger age, better health, higher wealth and education, being in employment, living with a partner and being male increase the likelihood of such help. Regarding cultural-contextual structures, results show that intergenerational transfers vary by welfare states. Transfers from parents to children are less frequent but more intense in weak welfare states, such as the Southern European countries, than in strong welfare states, such as the Nordic ones (Albertini et al. 2007). Szydlik (2016) found similar results regarding welfare states for transfers from children to parents, too.

When it comes to the transnational care process, visits are at its core, encompassing a multitude of meanings and motivations. In this respect, Baldassar et al. (2007) developed a typology of visits: routine visits, usually undertaken by migrants or their parents on a common basis with the purpose of achieving employment duties or investment responsibilities; crisis visits, when there is a specific need to care for a distant family member, and involving provision of hands-on, personal care; duty and ritual visits, in order to attend life-cycle events such as weddings, funerals and special events; special (purpose) visits, for being there in the final stages of terminal illness of a close family member, for the birth of a child, or to relieve migrant homesickness; and tourist visits, in order to discover the adopted homelands of their migrant kin. Their results show that the quantity and regularity of visits of parents to migrant children are important for maintaining emotional closeness and for care with copresence. Furthermore, their results show that mothers undertake visits more often than do fathers, widowed mothers have more autonomy and time to travel, and their travel expenses are often paid by migrant children. One frequent form of support when visiting their adult children is that of grandchild care (Baldock 2003). In this way, the elderly free the children from the expenses of childcare and offer them the opportunity to work and maintain their long integration process abroad.

Examples of support from parents to migrant children which are not related to visits abroad include caring for any financial and administrative matters of the migrant, such as managing bank accounts that migrants had retained in their homeland, paying bills, looking after a property that belonged to their migrant children, and even giving their daughters instant advice on recipes or how to deal with a new born baby (Baldock 2003). Baldassar et al. (2007) report in their findings that parents most often provide practical support such as the renewal of a migrant's driving licence or passport in the home country, forwarding mail, looking after property and bank accounts, and keeping in touch with friends on behalf of migrants.

As a particular form of care that does not require face-to-face contact, economic support is a widespread practice among multigenerational family units living in spatial separation. Throughout the life course, material support may consist of money transfers, gifts and inheritance (Baldassar et al. 2007; Finch 1989). Money flows towards kin are considered one of the most important forms of intergenerational family support, especially in the context of migration (Singh 1997; Singh and Bhandari 2012; Singh and Cabraal 2014). In a translocal context, literature shows that intergenerational material support is mostly downward, with elderly parents being the main providers and adult children the recipients (Finch 1989). When adult children migrate to other countries, the direction of financial transfers usually reverses (Thorogood 1987; Finch 1989). Remittances from children towards their parents have various meanings depending on the well-being and financial status of both senders and recipients (Baldassar et al. 2007). When remittances are "a matter of choice and practicality" in the form of gifts or loans, substantial economic support is provided by ageing parents (Baldassar et al. 2007: 86). In the case of Romania, migrant adult children are more likely to provide financial assistance for their parents back home than are non-migrants or internal migrants (Zimmer et al. 2014). Downward material support is less provided in the context of migration but

is strongly associated with other multidirectional forms of succour (Földes 2016). Regarding factors that intensify this support, authors have mentioned (material) resources of the parent and, in a transnational context, the motivation of migration: when it is motivated by career or lifestyle choices and not by economic need (Szydlik 2008; Baldassar 2007). Regarding downward intergenerational support in general, it has been shown that in the first stages of migration, parents tend to support migrant children more than do children; moreover, remittances are lacking in that particular moment (Wall and Bolzman 2014).

The aim of our paper is to investigate the functional solidarity that flows from parents to their migrant adult children, which takes the form of direct support, be it in situations of copresence (during visits abroad) or from a distance, and the factors that might favour or hinder such downward intergenerational solidarity. Even if Kilkey and Merla (2014) emphasised that care in transnational families is not restricted to direct support, their typology that includes coordination and delegation towards a third person refers to the flows of solidarity from migrants to their family members in home countries. Applying this typology to downward intergenerational solidarity, from parents to their migrant children, we retain only the first two ways of providing support: direct with copresence and direct from a distance.

Hărăguș and Telegdi-Csetri (2018) found that the overlapping of different forms of solidarity becomes more straightforward in transnational families. Communication and mobility are transnational practices themselves, and they are also means of the exchange of care across borders (Merla 2015). In other words, associational solidarity (contact) in transnational families stands out through its potential for other forms of solidarity, and certain forms of practical support (grandchild care) require face-to-face contact during visits. That is why we first address parents' visits abroad, not in their instance as associational solidarity but as structural solidarity: opportunities for transfers between parents and their migrant children.

10.3 Research Hypotheses

Adopting the theoretical model proposed by Szydlik (2016) for intergenerational relations in general, we expect the respective conditional factors to act in similar ways to those of family members living in the same country. In line with the results of previous studies discussed in the section above, we expect *better opportunities of the parents (younger age, good health, and better material situation) to favour both the potential for the downward direct transfer of support with copresence and the support itself, during visits or from a distance (i)*. We also expect *higher needs amongst migrant children to increase the downward transfer of support (ii)*.

Different family structures may mean various levels of requests for assistance in the form of time, be they for grandchild care in the home country (for the parents)

or the presence or absence of the partner for the migrant child. Therefore, we expect *a more complex family structure in the home country (existence of other adult children) to make direct support, with or without copresence abroad, less likely, but a more complex family structure of the migrant child (in the destination country) to make support more likely (iii)*. In terms of gender, we expect *downward transnational intergenerational support to be offered by women rather than by men (iv)*.

We consider the country of migration to be one indicator of contextual structures, and by “country” we capture diverse realities. Firstly, it is the specificity of Romanian migration that is oriented towards Latin countries, often in jobs of personal care (*badanta*) and domestic work. Secondly, it is the welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1996; Leibfried 1992) in which the adult children live, which refers to the entitlement to benefits and services in areas related to health, income, housing and education, and to the portability of social entitlements across borders (Kilkey and Merla 2014: 217). Thirdly, it is the geographical distance and the availability and affordability of travel. We expect *migrant children residing in countries wherein such benefits offered by the state are low (e.g. liberal and Southern European countries) to resort mostly to direct support with copresence from their parents (v)*.

Direct support from a distance may take the form of managing the property left behind or the construction of a new one, thus maintaining a strong connection with the country of origin. Therefore, we expect *parents with a better opportunity structure to be more likely to provide this type of support, especially to more recent migrants (vi)*.

Financial support in transnational families is most often discussed in terms of remittances towards family members in the home country, but we saw in the above section that the reverse, i.e. financial support from parents to migrant children, exists, too. We expect *the financial downward support to be associated with better parent opportunities and higher migrant child needs (not working), as well as with recent migration overseas to settle in (vii)*.

10.4 Method

10.4.1 Data

We work with the data collected through a national survey of 1506 persons aged 60 and over with at least one child abroad, conducted under the project entitled “Intergenerational solidarity in the context of work migration abroad. The situation of elderly left at home”. The sample was stratified by the development region and size of settlement; inside each stratum, localities were randomly selected. To identify possible respondents in selected localities we used local informants. The survey was conducted during July–October 2016.

10.4.2 *Indicators*

The survey questionnaire accounted for two forms of support from parents during visits abroad: help with household tasks and grandchild care, and for four forms of support that parents may provide in the home country for their adult children abroad: taking care of the empty house, supervision of a new building site, managing a business, and paying taxes for the migrant child. Financial support included money transfers and support in kind (such as food and household items).

The independent variables that we use are indicators of the four conditional factors for intergenerational solidarity as identified by Szydlik (2016): opportunities (of the parents), needs (of the adult child), family structure (of both parent and child) and contextual factors.

For the needs structure of the migrant child we consider characteristics of his/her position in the labour market and his/her ability to find childcare arrangements, expressed through the activity status: working or not working, with a third category of parents not knowing information about the child's activity status.

Opportunities of the parents are indicated through their self-rated health status (bad, fair, good), their age group (below 65 years, 65–69 years and above 70 years), and their ability to make ends meet (easy; nor easy, neither with difficulty; with difficulty).

For the family structure of the migrant child we used his/her partnership status (with or without a partner) and parity (childless or with children), and for the family structure of the parent we introduced the living arrangements (alone, with partner only, with other family members) and whether all children emigrated or there are others who remained in Romania. We also have a variable referring to gender combinations: mother–daughter, mother–son, father–daughter, and father–son.

For the contextual dimension, we used the type of settlement of the parent (rural, small or large urban area) and the country of migration for the child. While five countries represented 75% of the cases (Italy, Spain, Germany, the UK, France), we chose to group the destination countries according to the existing welfare system in six groups: Northern Europe, Continental Europe, Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus), Liberal Europe (the UK and Ireland), Liberal Overseas (the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand) and Others. This typology uses the concept of welfare regimes of Esping-Andersen (1990) but amended with the Mediterranean group (see Leibfried 1992; Ferrera 1996).

10.4.3 *Analytic Approach*

The questionnaire registered intergenerational solidarity between the parent in Romania and every migrant child. However, to apply the chosen theoretical model (Szydlik 2016), we need to know certain characteristics of the support receiver (the child). Seventy per cent of the respondents had only one migrant child but for the

remaining cases we chose only one child for the analysis, namely the one with whom intergenerational solidarity was the most intense (considering both upward and downward functional and emotional solidarity). We are aware that in this way we have overestimated the existing intergenerational exchanges, but we consider this not to alter the aim of our investigation, which is how opportunities and needs, family structures and contextual factors shape the existing intergenerational solidarity.

Visits between migrants and their parents are forms of associational intergenerational solidarity, but when the geographical distance intervenes, and some forms of support require copresence, visits stand up in respect of their potential for intergenerational solidarity. Visits are the precondition for certain forms of solidarity. That is why we first addressed parents' visits to their migrant children and then the instrumental direct support in situations of copresence.

We conduct our investigation using binary logistic regressions. We first model the likelihood of parents' visits abroad in the last year and then the likelihood of the elderly offering assistance in the form of time (household help or care for the grandchildren). For support provided from a distance, we have constructed a composed dependent variable that includes all four practical activities, as well as a dependent variable that includes money transfers or in-kind support.

10.5 Results

10.5.1 *Descriptive*

From the initial sample of 1506 persons we excluded those with missing information on the dependent or any of the independent variables. This resulted in a working sample of 1427 individuals.

From Table 10.1 we can see that 43.6% of the respondents had visited their migrant child during the last year. While abroad, almost half (48.9%) provided grandchild care and more than half (56.9%) helped with household chores. Considering any of these forms, more than two thirds (69.1%) provided a form of support during their visits abroad.

Percentages of older parents offering support from a distance are visibly smaller, especially in the case of financial transfers (money or in kind). Such transfers from elderly parents could be seen as a way of expressing parental responsibility. Therefore, in this particular context, offerings in money or in kind can be translated as gifts rather than as material support. Considering any type of assistance in the form of time offered in the home country (taking care of the empty house, supervision of a new building site, managing a business, and paying taxes for the migrant child) we can see that 23.5% of the respondents were involved in such downward functional solidarity. Percentages for financial support, be it money or in kind, are even smaller: 13.5%. However, if we look at any form of downward functional soli-

Table 10.1 Frequencies of distinct types of downward functional solidarity

	Yes		No		N
Visits to migrant child	622	43.6%	805	56.4%	1427
Support with co-presence	430	69.1%	192	30.9%	622
Grandchild care	304	48.9%	318	51.1%	622
Household help	354	56.9%	268	43.1%	622
Support from a distance (in form of time)	335	23.5%	1092	76.5%	1427
Taking care of the empty house	315	22.1%	1112	77.9%	1427
Supervision of a new building site	102	7.1%	1325	92.9%	1427
Managing a business for the migrant child	14	1.0%	1413	99.0%	1427
Paying taxes for the migrant child	315	22.1%	1112	77.9%	1427
Support from a distance – financial support	193	13.5%	1234	86.5%	1427
Money	151	10.6%	1276	89.4%	1427
In kind	61	4.3%	1366	95.7%	1427
Any (during visits, from a distance in form of time or financial)	757	53.0%	670	47.0%	1427

Source: Database *Intergenerational solidarity in the context of work migration abroad. The situation of elderly left at home*, author's calculations

durability over the last year, we can see that more than half (53%) of the older parents in Romania provided some form of support to their migrant children.

10.5.2 Multivariate

As we expected, bad health and very old age (70+ years) decrease the likelihood of parents visiting their migrant children (Table 10.2, Model 1), by 29% and 52% respectively. The presence of other adult children in the country or living with more family members than the partner might mean increased responsibilities for daily tasks and requirements for older parents' time and, consequently, a lower likelihood of travelling abroad. On the other hand, the absence of other family members of the migrant child (the partner) makes travelling abroad less likely, too. Regarding gender combinations, an important indicator of the family structure, we found that women are more mobile than men: mothers are 77% more likely to visit their migrant daughters than are fathers. Parents residing in rural settlements are almost 50% less likely to travel abroad than are those from big urban areas, and, as expected, travelling overseas is less likely to happen than in Europe. The longer the time since migration, the higher the likelihood of visiting.

During visits, parents are often involved in different forms of intergenerational support, such as housekeeping or childrearing. Our results (Table 10.2, Model 4) show that variables linked with parents' opportunity structure or their family structure (age, health status, living arrangements or the existence of other children in the country) do not show an effect anymore, since parents are already selected through visits. However, direct support to migrant children is more likely when they have

Table 10.2 Results of logistic regression models for downward functional solidarity

Categories	Frequencies	Visits		Practical support from a distance		Financial or material support		Practical support with co-presence		
		B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio	Frequencies	B	Odds Ratio
Health status										
Good	431		1		1		1	203		1
Neither good, nor bad	620	-0.139	0.870	0.000	1.000	-0.125	0.882	272	0.125	1.134
Bad	376	-0.338 *	0.713	-0.357	*	-0.330	0.719	147	-0.334	0.716
Age group										
Below 65	555		1		1		1	244		1
65-69	360	-0.062	0.940	0.154	1.166	0.035	1.036	177	0.149	1.160
70+	512	-0.740 ***	0.477	0.005	1.005	-0.591	***	201	-0.402	0.669
Able to make ends meet										
Difficult	497	-0.294 *	0.745	-0.096	0.909	-0.510	**	188	-0.365	0.694
Neither difficult, nor easy	569	-0.055	0.946	-0.047	0.954	0.300	1.350	249	0.141	1.151
Easy	361		1		1		1	185		1
Has other children living in Romania										
Other children living in Romania	938		1		1		1	370		1
All children are migrants	489	0.276 **	1.318	0.342	**	0.161	1.174	252	0.140	1.150
Living arrangement										
Alone	391		1		1		1	209		1
With partner only	560	-0.128	0.880	0.041	1.042	0.523	**	272	0.227	1.255
Other	476	-0.843 ***	0.430	0.133	1.142	-0.218	0.804	141	0.077	1.080

(continued)

Table 10.2 (continued)

Categories	Frequencies	Visits		Practical support from a distance		Financial or material support		Practical support with co-presence		
		B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio	B	Odds Ratio	Frequencies	B	Odds Ratio
Child's partner status										
With partner	1104		1		1		1	523		1
Without partner	323	-0.535 **	0.586	-0.086	0.918	0.714	***	99	0.177	1.193
Child has children										
Has children	1006		1		1		1	460		1
Without children	421	-0.085	0.919	-0.372 **	0.689	-0.406	*	162	-0.823 ***	0.439
Gender combination										
Father-daughter	284		1		1		1	120		1
Father-son	259	-0.245	0.783	0.101	1.106	0.433	*	93	-0.474	0.622
Mother-daughter	465	0.571 **	1.770	-0.405 **	0.667	-0.171		248	0.414	1.513
Mother-son	419	-0.091	0.913	-0.055	0.946	0.168		161	0.560 *	1.751
Type of settlement										
Rural	734	-0.665 ***	0.514	0.330	1.392 **	-0.389	*	235	-0.219	0.803
Small urban	316	0.136	1.146	-0.163	0.849	0.208		178	-0.049	0.953
Big urban	377		1		1		1	209		1
Child's activity status										
Not working	56		1		1		1	25		1
Working	1025	0.530	1.699	0.074	1.077	0.086		487	-0.136	0.873
Parent does not know the status	346	-0.187	0.829	-0.256	0.774	0.226		110	-1.021 *	0.360
Country of migration										
South Europe	643		1		1		1	287		1
North Europe	29	0.543	1.721	-0.967	0.380	-0.314		16	-0.460	0.631

Categories	Visits		Practical support from a distance		Financial or material support		Practical support with co-presence	
	Frequencies	B	Odds Ratio	B	B	Odds Ratio	Frequencies	Odds Ratio
Liberal Europe	179	-0.118	0.889	-0.347	0.124	1.133	58	-0.028
Continental Europe	449	0.153	1.165	-0.543	-0.367	0.693	198	-0.189
Overseas /liberal countries	105	-0.599	0.549	-0.740	-0.861	0.423	53	-1.112
Other	22	-0.310	0.734	0.061	0.303	1.353	10	-0.552
Period in destination country (years)								
		0.137	***	-0.018	0.015	1.015		0.021
Visit duration								
Short							380	1
Long (>1 month)							242	4.504
Model chi-square		395.047, df = 24, p < 0.001		64.315, df = 24, p < 0.001	100.202, df = 24, p < 0.001		108.016, df = 24, p < 0.001	
Nagelkerke R Square		0.324 (32.4%)		0.066 (6%)	0.124 (12.4%)		0.225 (25.5%)	

Source: Database *Intergenerational solidarity in the context of work migration abroad. The situation of elderly left at home*, author's calculations

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.1

children. Mothers are more likely to visit their daughters than are fathers and, once abroad, mothers are more likely to provide household help or childcare to their sons, compared with fathers helping daughters. Migrants from overseas countries are less likely to be visited by their parents and less likely to receive practical help during visits than are migrants in Southern Europe. Duration of the visit is highly associated with the provision of help: stays longer than 1 month significantly increase the likelihood of downward intergenerational practical help.

The two remaining regression models (Models 2 and 3) need to be treated more carefully, since the power of explanation of variation in the outcome is lower than in the previous ones. In spite of this statistical technicality, the results presented here are worthy of further explanations. For transnational families, practical support or assistance in the form of time along with material support, both in kind and in cash, are important forms of intergenerational solidarity at a distance.

Assistance in the form of time from a distance depends on the opportunity structure of parents: bad health decreases the likelihood by 30%. Family structure plays a role, too: parents with all of their children as migrants are more likely to provide this form of support, and parents are more likely to help when the migrant child has his/her own children. Regarding gender combinations, this time we found that fathers are more likely to provide help than are mothers. Another specificity of this type of support concerns the higher odds for the parents who live in rural settlements than in big urban areas.

Not only are overseas countries less affordable to visit, but migrants in these countries are also usually permanent. Therefore, it is not a surprise that downward support from a distance, linked with a possible future return in Romania, is less likely to be exchanged transnationally. In fact, it appears that this kind of help from a distance is characteristic rather of parents with children migrated in Southern Europe.

The opportunity structure of parents matters for financial downward support, too: very old age (70+ years) and inability to make ends meet decrease the likelihood of this support by 45% and 40% respectively. Migrant children's needs (not working) do not show any effect. Family structure appears to play a key role: parents who live with their partner are 69% more likely to help, and two times more likely when the migrant child has no partner of his/her own. Parents in rural settlements are less likely to offer financial or material support than are parents living in big urban areas. Regarding the country of migration, parents are less likely to help children residing in Continental Europe or overseas than in Southern Europe.

Our results indicate that parents' opportunity structure is of significant importance. Good health and younger age are indispensable requirements to provide help to others. This applies to intergenerational functional solidarity in general, but when travelling long distances abroad is involved, their importance is even greater. The parental financial situation (ability to make ends meet) appears to matter only when financial and material downward transfers are considered. We believe that for visits abroad, and consequently for help in situations of copresence, adult children might cover the travel costs of parents who cannot afford by themselves. The indicator that we have used for migrant children's needs, occupational status, did not show any

effect on downward functional solidarity. Summarising, our hypothesis in respect of parents' opportunity structure is confirmed, while the one regarding children's needs is not confirmed.

Indicators of family structure influence all types of support investigated. When there is no other adult child in Romania, there are no competing demands for parents' time. Consequently, it is more likely that the parent will visit the migrant child or provide him/her with help from a distance. In a comparable way we interpret the living arrangements of the parent: living with other family members besides the partner could mean time limitations and, therefore, a lower likelihood of visits abroad. These considerations indicate that the hypothesis in respect of how downward support is negatively influenced by a complex family structure in the home country is confirmed.

Indicators of migrant children's family structure (partner or children) also reflect the need for support from parents: it is more likely that a parent will visit a migrant child who has a partner and, once abroad, it is more likely that a parent will provide instrumental support when (probably young) grandchildren are present. On the contrary, downward financial support is more likely when the migrant child does not have a partner and, therefore, fewer financial resources and higher needs for support. Consequently, and as expected, a more complex family structure of the migrant child increases the likelihood of support from parents.

Regarding gender combinations, our results sustain the gendered provision of intergenerational support: the mother–daughter combination is the most common for the flows of downward functional solidarity, as in the case of upward support, from children to parents. Not only do mothers usually travel for long stays abroad, but once in the destination country, they also provide more help than do fathers. However, the responsibility for provisioning practical help from a distance is more likely to be taken by fathers than by mothers. This includes taking care of the empty house, supervision of a new building site, managing a business, and paying taxes for the migrant child. Actually, this result strengthens the gendered division of intergenerational care: women (mothers) are involved in more intense support activities (travelling abroad and practical support with copresence), while fathers are involved in less demanding or more masculine activities, such as paying taxes or supervision of a new building site.

When compared with visits/support with copresence or financial or material help, practical support from a distance has some particularities. Unlike visits or financial support, this form of help is widely practised in rural areas. This evidence confirms that help from a distance consists of activities linked with migrants' plans of returning to Romania, and temporary or circulatory migration is common for rural settlements (Sandu 2005; Anghel 2009). Moreover, temporary migration is triggered by financial reasons and family members of migrants in rural settlements rely on remittances (Anghel 2009), so it is no surprise that they do not visit their migrant children and do not help them financially.

A constant result regarding the contextual indicator – country of emigration – is that parents provide the least support to their children living overseas, compared with the reference category of Southern European countries. On the one hand, this

result can be explained by the negative influence that great geographical distance may have on opportunities for family solidarity. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that Romanian migration overseas has its own particularities, different from migration towards Western and Southern Europe (Culic 2010). In this case, emotional support could be more important than less needed hands-on and financial support.

10.6 Conclusions and Discussions

Migration is most often a strategy with which to help family members in the home country but flows of support are not exclusively from migrants. Migration does not disrupt intergenerational relations and, even if they suffer certain mutations, they remain mutual and multidirectional (Baldassar et al. 2007). Older parents who remained in their home country continue to care for their migrant children and their families. In the digital society of today, through a sense of copresence from a distance, older parents can even perform the grandparental role from a distance (Baldassar and Merla 2014; Nedelcu and Wyss 2016; Nedelcu 2017). Some forms of support, particularly grandchild care, require physical copresence, which, in the case of transnational families, happens during visits. Elderly members of transnational families thus become involved in international mobility so as to provide support to their migrant children. Some other forms of support do not require international mobility and can be offered from a distance.

From the multiple dimensions of intergenerational solidarity, we have investigated the flows of functional solidarity from parents to their migrant children, an aspect less studied in the literature. We confined our analysis to direct downward support, be it from a distance or with copresence, and the factors that may enhance or weaken these intergenerational exchanges.

Our results show that parents' good health and younger age are indispensable for provision of support to their migrant children, especially when it involves travelling abroad. Migrants' needs appear to matter less. However, we limited the indicators of children's need structure to occupational status only (working/not working), which represents one limitation of our study. More detailed information on children's occupation and its link with the duration of migration and the welfare regime in the destination country might have shed more light on the role of children's needs for intergenerational support.

Romanians have a powerful sense of duty towards their family members: different national surveys have revealed that they strongly rely on family support in the form of grandparents taking care of the grandchildren, of parents' financial help offered to their adult children or even of parents' adaptation of their own life so as to help their children, when the latter need it. This holds true when adult children migrate, too. The types of support vary by different personal characteristics (described here in terms of opportunities and needs), by family structures and by contextual factors. These variables also describe migration itself. Visits abroad and

direct instrumental support with copresence are rather associated with long-term or permanent migration, indicated here by a more complex family structure of the migrant in the destination country. Direct help from a distance (such as taking care of the empty house or paying taxes, supervision of a new building site), connected with return intentions of migrants, is specific to rural areas, unlike other forms of support. This is in line with the temporary character of migration from rural areas acknowledged in the literature (Sandu 2005; Anghel 2009).

Migration from Romania is generally driven by financial reasons and different reports show that regular remittances towards family members in the country reach an impressive amount. According to the World Bank (2016), Romania was the third remittance recipient country in Europe and more than half of Romanians from Spain sent money constantly to their family members left behind (not necessarily parents) (Toth 2009). Many studies of transnational family life show that migrants provide other forms of support, too, and new ways in which help and care are provided emerge, such as coordination and delegation towards another person. However, migration does not interrupt downward intergenerational solidarity, from parents to their adult children, which has been shown to function in national contexts. When their health status and age allow them, parents continue to be providers of support, even across borders. Downward functional solidarity may have lost its daily character due to geographical distance, but it continues to exist.

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