

Chapter 11

Zero Generation Grandparents Caring for Their Grandchildren in Switzerland. The Diversity of Transnational Care Arrangements among EU and Non-EU Migrant Families



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11.1 Introduction

Along with contemporary demographic changes (in particular ageing-related processes and decreasing fertility rates), in combination with the strong transformations of family functioning and structures (increasing labor participation of women/mothers, dual-earner families, new family forms, etc.), there is a renewed scientific interest in the availability and involvement of grandparents as caregivers and support providers in downward generations (Attias-Donfut et al. 2005; Hank and Buber 2009; Silverstein and Marengo 2001, among others). Such scholarship shows that, in general, grandparents are much concerned with their grandchildren's life and education, playing a crucial role as emotional, moral and practical support providers. More specifically, it points towards the important contribution of grandparents in childcare, especially in the case of preschool children; which represents a complementary resource to formal institutional services developed to meet increasing needs due to the growing participation of women in the labour market.

At the same time, in the context of increased and diversified mobilities and patterns of migration, 'doing family' processes (Morgan 1996) occur within a transnational space and family relationships in migration represent a main focus of transnational studies (Vertovec 2009). The traditional understanding of intergenerational solidarities "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) thus expands over space and borders. Within the last two decades, transnational family research has shown that these solidarities inhabit

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various and complex forms of care circulation in which both migrant and non-migrant populations play an active role (Baldassar et al. 2007).

In particular, elderly migrants' parents, first observed as 'orphan pensioners' left behind (King and Vullnetari 2006), have become central in recent scholarship which argues that they are active carers and support providers for their children and grandchildren. Within the multigenerational frame of transnational care circulation, transnational grandparenting is the most prominent form of solidarity performed by them in a migratory context. Grandparents play a key role as they are in charge of raising and caring for their grandchildren who are left behind (Moran-Taylor 2008) or those born abroad and sent back in their youngest years to the home country (Da 2003). They also participate in transnational family solidarity by entering in back-and-forth mobilities to care for their grandchildren in host countries (Nedelcu 2007, 2009).

Based on ongoing qualitative research, this paper puts a specific focus on this category of mobile grandparents – that we have called elsewhere *the Zero Generation* (G0) (Nedelcu 2007, 2009) – to deepen the existing knowledge of G0 transnational grandparenting. Precisely, it describes the various patterns through which G0 grandparenting takes shape in situations of physical copresence within their descendants' family in Switzerland. Moreover, by taking into account a diversity of countries from which G0 grandparents originate, it explores the impact that the two-circle Swiss migratory policy, distinguishing EU from non-EU nationals, has on these patterns.

After a brief review and discussion of existing literature on G0 grandparenting, we argue why Switzerland is a heuristically interesting case in point for our study. In addition, a short methodological account explains the design of the research and describes how the target population was selected, as well as its variation, along with EU and non-EU countries of origin. Then, we systematically describe and explain the specific characteristics of G0 grandparenting patterns that we define as G0 care arrangements (G0-A). These patterns – that we have called *Family support in Childbirth circumstances*, *Troubleshooting in occasional need of childcare*, *Full and permanent childcare and family support* and *Intergenerational sharing and transmission* – reflect the essence of the care provided by G0 grandparents in physical copresence. A comparative lens applied to these patterns allows us to bring forth the existing variations within the studied population, in particular with regard to the EU / non-EU divide.

11.2 The G0 Grandparents as Actors in Transnational Circulation of Care: Literature Review and Paper Contribution

The existing scholarship on transnational families points to the fact that transnational family relationships unfold in diverse copresence settings, described by Baldassar (2008) as physical, virtual, by proxy and imagined. Although ICTs-mediated copresence expands the possibilities of doing and being together in

dispersed families (see for instance Madianou and Miller 2012; Nedelcu and Wyss 2016), face-to-face contextualized copresence has remained the ‘gold standard’ for family care circulation (Baldassar et al. 2016). Indeed, physical copresence is still the only possibility of providing practical and personal support in general and child-care in particular (Baldassar 2007).

G0 grandparenting is about this kind of situation, in which grandparents visit their children and grandchildren in the country of destination and live together in the same household for short or long periods. The existing studies show that these ‘seniors on the move’ (Treas and Mazumdar 2004) are transnational grandparents who mobilize various resources to engage in regular back-and-forth mobilities between origin and host countries, and act as childcarers in copresence situations (Da 2003; King et al. 2014; Nedelcu 2007, 2009; Treas and Mazumdar 2004).

This scholarship underlines some prominent findings. It states that childbirth is generally the family event that mobilizes G0 grandparents to help the mother in the first weeks after childbirth or to provide childcare when she returns to work or study (Horn 2017; Lie 2010; Xie and Xia 2011). They also travel abroad at any time when childcare is required in the family’s routine, and in rare cases they move and live durably in the host country (Nedelcu 2007; Treas and Mazumdar 2004; King et al. 2014). Sometimes, as in the case of Caribbean-born grandmothers in Britain, they play the role of ‘international flying grannies’, traveling to the many countries where their children live to offer temporary childcare services (Plaza 2000). Their contribution as childcare providers has different impacts within migrant families, especially with regard to professional integration, helping migrant women to reconcile work and family life and continue their professional careers (Da 2003); and more generally migrant couples in protecting their ‘job security and financial stability’ (Xie and Xia 2011: 388). Moreover, grandparents act as culture and family values transmitters (Da 2003; Lie 2010; Nedelcu 2007, 2009; Treas and Mazumdar 2004), thus participating in a more diffuse process of transnational socialization (Nedelcu 2009, 2012).

These studies, although they suggest a high complexity and variations within G0 grandparenting patterns, do not examine the diversity of these patterns by systematically addressing variability of G0 visits and sojourns in migrant families along with their timing, the content and the meaning of the care provided by G0 grandparents in copresence situations. It should be added that transnational family scholars have up until now tended to address the diversity of migrants’ visits to their parents left behind in the countries of origin (Baldassar et al. 2007), and not the opposite. Arguing that these visits embrace different meanings and objectives, Baldassar (2008) has distinguished five types: *crisis visits* (in response to a sudden need for practical or emotional care, related to serious illness or death); *duty and ritual visits* (related to family rituals and celebrations); *routine visits* (regular and frequent migrants’ visits to the country of origin for professional reasons); *special visits* (rather scarce, and thus exceptional); and *tourist visits* (in which migrants connect leisure and holidays with filial duty towards their parents). However, there is no similar contribution to the understanding of G0 visits in the migrants’ country of destination.

In addition, previous studies were usually related to specific contexts and case studies. In general, they focus on the dyadic composition of one country of origin and one host country (that do not include Switzerland). Amongst the G0 populations already investigated are those moving from China to Australia (Da 2003), from Romania to Canada (Nedelcu 2007, 2009) or from Peru to Spain (Horn 2017). Sometimes, these studies simultaneously look at more than one country of origin, for example from China and Bangladesh to the UK and, in so doing show up the differences between grandparenting in the two communities (Lie 2010). Moreover, they focus on grandparents' mobilities from non-occidental to developed countries. As a result, they do not allow an understanding of how conditions related to the countries of origin can influence and enable different types of visits and different ways of grandparenting in copresence. Nevertheless, as transnational family scholarship suggests, transnational care arrangements are shaped by different resources at micro/individual, meso/relational and macro/institutional levels (Kilkey and Merla 2014). On this latter institutional level, these authors point towards the particular role of the specific migration regime of each country and, within this and *inter alia*, to the rights of entry and residence of migrants and members of their families. Some studies on G0 grandparenting emphasize in particular the importance of *visa application procedures* (Horn 2017; Vullnetari and King 2008), as well as ascendant family reunification policies (Nedelcu 2007), that regulate, by facilitating or impeding, the international mobility of migrants' parents. This suggests that variation in grandparenting patterns could be better understood by taking into account migration policy as a structuring factor.

In light of the previous observations, this paper aims at filling the gaps highlighted above. It offers an overall view of the diversity of G0 visits in their migrant children's households and related grandparenting practices and meanings. Moreover, it allows a comprehensive understanding of these G0-A in the Swiss case, which is heuristically interesting with regard to its specific migration regime that discriminates entry and residence in the country between EU and non-EU nationals.

11.3 Swiss Context, Fieldwork and Methodological Considerations

11.3.1 *Swiss Migratory Regime and Target Population of the Study*

In Switzerland, according to the Federal Statistical Office (OFS 2015), 25% of grandparents (most often grandmothers) look after one or more of their grandchildren aged from 0 to 12 years old on a regular basis. At the same time, Höpflinger et al. (2006) showed that 37.3% of teenagers in Switzerland have their grandparents living abroad, which suggest that migrant families are disadvantaged from being able to benefit from the informal support provided by grandparents. Schlanser

(2011) who pointed out that migrant families use more intensively formal childcare than Swiss families corroborates this observation. These findings pose the question of G0 grandparenting in Switzerland as a case in point to explore under which conditions migrant families can mobilize informal support transnationally, and how they combine it (or not) with local informal and formal childcare.

In addition, one should consider the specific migration landscape shaped by Swiss migratory policy and its evolution in the last decades. As a result of successive migration waves and the transformation of the Swiss immigration regime that has taken place over time, a third of the Swiss population comes from a migration background (Piguet 2013). Moreover, the migrant population is for two thirds represented by EU-nationals, while one third comes from non-EU countries, the so-called “third countries” within the immigration law. This reality is the reflection of a ‘two-circle’ migration policy, in which EU-migrants’ mobility is regulated by the Free Circulation Agreement, while non-EU migrants are subject to the restrictions of Federal Immigration Law. In particular, that means that G0 grandparents’ mobility is conditioned by their belonging to one of these two categories. EU-nationals can freely move, enter and sojourn for 3 months, as well as establish as permanent residents (under certain economic conditions). On the other hand, non-EU nationals are, with a few exceptions, subject to entry visas and limited stays and the possibility of family reunification is for them dramatically difficult.

In this context, the target population of our study consists of migrant families in Switzerland with one or more children in preschool age whose G0 grandparents come and live temporarily in their households to provide on-hand childcare. Reflecting the ‘two-circle’ migration policy, we have distinguished two groups of migrants originating from EU and non-EU-countries. The first group includes Germany, France and Italy (as bordering countries), Portugal (Southern Europe) and Romania (recently adhered country to the EU). The other group concerns North-Africa (Algeria and Morocco) and Brazil. In addition, we have also considered a maximal differentiation within family forms themselves, including mixed families and single parent families.

11.3.2 Methodology

By adopting a comprehensive qualitative approach, we have conducted semi-structured interviews with the migrant adult and, when possible with his/her G0 parent, i.e. *the related mobile senior*. From 62 individual interviews, 40 were conducted with migrants (23 from EU and 17 from non-EU countries) and 22 with the G0 mobile parent (14 EU and 8 non-EU countries). The lower number of interviews with the senior generation is due to the difficulty of coordinating interview timing with the scarce and short sojourns of some G0 grandparents. The interviews were led between February 2016 and August 2017 by native speaker research assistants in French, Portuguese, German, Italian and Arabic, mostly in urban areas in the cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel, Vaud, Zurich and Ticino.

With regard to our respondents' social profiles, the migrants are mostly women (32/40). On average, they are in their thirties (between 28 and 42 years old) and have 1 to 5 children aged between a few months to 18 years old. While the EU and Brazilian migrant women are all established in the labor market (with jobs as varied as shopkeeper, lawyer, opera singer, physician, nurse or academic), the North-African ones are mostly stay-at-home mothers (even though they acquired higher education degrees prior to their arrival in Switzerland).¹ The interviewed G0 grandparents are also mostly women, and with some rare exceptions grandfathers who plays a G0 role. The G0 grandmothers are between 52 to 73 years old. They are out of the labor market, as retirees after a more or less long working life or as stay-at-home mothers with adult children away from home. Apart from those living in Switzerland, they often have other grandchildren in their home country (from 1 to 8). Sometimes, they also have children and grandchildren scattered around the world, and play a G0 role for them as well. Not surprisingly, G0 childcare follows a mother-daughter pattern, women's mothers being more involved in this kind of solidarity.

11.4 G0 Childcare Arrangements as Transnational Grandparenting Patterns in Migrant Families

In order to observe the variations of transnational G0 grandparenting patterns, we define the notion of *G0 care arrangement* with regard to (1) the time-related organization of the G0 grandparents' visits in Switzerland (frequency, length and triggering family life-cycle events); and (2) the care provided during these visits and the intrinsic substance of grandparenting in such copresence situations.

On this basis, we have put in evidence four types of G0-A:

1. Family support in childbirth circumstances, with two variants: *Mothering the mother* and *Celebrating the birth of a child*
2. Troubleshooting in temporary need for childcare, with two variants: *Urgency Troubleshooting* and *Planned Troubleshooting*;
3. Full and permanent childcare and family support, where G0 grandmothers act as *Mother's substitutes at home*;
4. Intergenerational sharing and transmission, where the main purpose of the G0 visits is *Doing, enjoying and being together*

These G0-A types can appear when several minimum conditions are met. On the migrants' side, a need for childcare help and the wish to welcome their parents to stay in their home for this purpose. On the G0 grandparents' side, the capacity and will to move and to care. These conditions can be impeded by different factors, of an administrative, relational or individual nature, which generate a kind of *deprivation G0-A* representing non-care situations. Although one would imagine such situations must happen frequently we will not take them into account in this paper.

¹ This situation occurs for several reasons: diploma and qualifications recognition, childbirth series, lack of language skills and/or Islamic foulard.

11.4.1 *Family Support in Childbirth Circumstances*

Childbirths are special events for which G0 grandparents come to Switzerland. But, according to the primary meaning that families give to this mobilization, we observe two variants in this G0-A: *Mothering the mother* and *Celebrating the birth of a child*.

Mothers (and sometimes mothers-in-law) of migrant women arrive shortly before or, most often, just after delivery to give support during the 4–8 weeks of the perinatal period. Often, a first childbirth is the trigger event for G0 grandmothers' mobility and then this type of G0-A is repeated at (almost all) following childbirths. In such G0-A which we have called *Mothering the mother*, migrant women are the recipients of special kindness and care. First, their G0 mothers pay particular attention to diet and cook traditional dishes culturally conceived to improve strength and favor breast-feeding. Then, they will also take on domestic chores to preserve their daughters from suffering from inevitable fatigue and sleep-deprivation after giving birth. Finally, they care for the grandchildren in different ways, by providing practical advice and effective hands-on care for the newborn and looking after the eldest children. The case of Samia, an Algerian woman, is a typical example:

My parents arrived five weeks before delivery and returned three weeks after. [...] My mother looked after the eldest during the three days I was at the hospital. And when I returned home, she did everything. I simply had to take care of my baby.[...] I could rest, I could sleep whenever I felt tired... without having to cook and take care of my older children. My mother got them ready for school and my father accompanied them each morning. [...] Both managed everything. They knew what they had to do and just did it. [...] I didn't have to worry about the others; I just had to care for myself and my baby. At the hospital, I was offered daily homecare, I said 'no, I don't need it; I have my mother at home'. [...] It was the same when I gave birth to my two older sons in Algeria, when I was at my parents' home for forty days. [...] Here too, I needed at least my mother with me, and she was here! (Samia, Algerian woman, 34 y.o., married, 3 children, restaurant co-manager)

Brazilian women have reported quite similar cultural habits and practices, as in the case of one G0 grandmother who describes her presence at her daughter's side as a self-evident fact an expression of 'Brazilian family morality'. She also depicts this moment of her own transition to grand-motherhood as full of unmissable emotion and happiness:

When my daughter gave birth to her first child, it was clear to me that I should offer my help. I was very excited at the idea of seeing my first granddaughter, and I knew that my presence would bring a lot of comfort to my daughter. When one is about to have a first child, a Brazilian mother – who is traditionally very close (to her daughter) – will be present. When my daughter went into hospital, I waited in front of the door of the delivery room; and I was able to see my granddaughter a few minutes after she was born. It was an incredible feeling and I am sure that it was important for my daughter too to know that I was there and ready to help. (Elvina, Brazilian grandmother, 63 y.o., divorced, 4 children and 9 grandchildren, dietician)

In contrast with this G0 copresence and care pattern, European G0 parents come to Switzerland not to support or take care of their daughter and grandchildren but *only* to get to know the newborn, congratulate the parents and *celebrate the birth of the child* together. In this case, family reunion comes later, one to several weeks after childbirth and lasts for only 1 or 2 days. In these cases, migrant women told us

that, when they gave birth, they didn't need nor wish to be 'mothered' by their mothers. Managing the first days of a newborn's arrival is a 'husband and wife matter' and these women are quite satisfied by their husband's presence at their side and the support provided by formal postpartum/postnatal follow-up services.

In Western societies, and now almost everywhere in the world, the medicalization of birth has increasingly secured the process of bringing a child into the world: hospitals and their professional staff organize and provide varied and effective prenatal, delivery and postnatal care and services (van Teijlingen et al. 2004). But, because some families look at childbirth as being a moment of particular individual and family vulnerability, *mothering the mother* becomes a sort of symbolic survival imperative. More generally, this is related to the persistence of traditional practices and beliefs alongside the formal medical system in several societies throughout the world (for a systematic review, see Dennis et al. 2007). Thus, interviewed North African and Brazilian families, while subscribing to the medicalized model of childbirth and services on offer, are also keen to benefit from certain traditional practices derived from their culture of origin. By mixing the two, they fit more into a logic of "both-and" solutions than into "either-or" choices (Falicov 2011).

In the case of EU families, migrant women do not want to be "invaded" by *others* during these first moments when they form or expand their own nuclear family. They consider this time to be part of their couple's intimacy. For all that, they welcome the short visit of G0 parents which represents celebrating the birth of the child and participate in what Baldassar (2008) called *ritual visits*, which are motivated by essential life-cycle events.

11.4.2 *Troubleshooting in Occasional Need of Childcare*

When migrant women are professionally active and need to reconcile work and family life, they usually build a complex childcare 'jigsaw' (Wheelock and Jones 2002) that combines *formal childcare* (day nursery, kindergarden, school and after-school, etc.) and *informal childcare* (alternating mother and father shifts, a nanny, members of the local social network, such as a friend or a neighbor). The *Troubleshooting G0-A* occurs when this type of complex jigsaw comes up against 'extraordinary' situations engendering childcare needs where migrant mothers are unable to take on their part in the childcare routine. Two different circumstances require this type of G0-A: an emergency or pre-planned situations of childcare needs.

An *urgency Troubleshooting G0-A* takes place when a child suddenly falls ill and has to stay at home under the supervision and benevolence of an adult. In fact, the unexpected illness of a child challenges a well-run childcare routine. Our respondents refer to "chaos moments that really put them to the test". A typical situation for this kind of G0-A is described by a Moroccan mother of two children. Her German father-in-law living in Frankfurt comes to the rescue each time she and her husband cannot find any other childcare solution:

My father-in-law always told me 'if you need me for anything, just tell me. If I can, I'll take the first train and I'll come'. And he really does do it. [...] For instance, when I returned to work, on the very first day, my two daughters got sick and I didn't want tell my boss 'I cannot come, my kids are ill.' [...] So I called him, and next morning we met directly in pediatric. It was such a stressful situation, but luckily, he came. [...] It was such a relief for me; it was just enormous, because it was my very first week at work. (Sarah, Moroccan woman, 38 y.o., married, 2 children, librarian)

Scheduled troubleshooting G0-A concerns two particular situations. First, childcare during school holidays, when formal institutions are closed and parents are still at work. In these situations, the recourse to grandparents as *substitute childcarers* is observed in many families. As related by Maria, a Brazilian mother of two children, the G0 grandmother was completely integrated in a complex childcare organizational system, coming every summer from Brazil to Switzerland:

When the kids were very little, I had a childminder who cared for them during the day when I was at work. At two years old, they went to the kindergarten. With the youngest, I used to work two days per week when he was at the crèche; for the rest, with my husband, we took alternative days off to stay with him. In addition, during the holidays my mother came, each summer, until my son was seven years old. (Maria, Brazilian woman, 40 y.o., married, 2 children, salesperson)

Second, *planned troubleshooting G0-A* is usually observed when adult migrants have to take on an additional-work charge. In this case, they ask G0 parents for help with their ordinary childcare tasks (taking children to school, cooking for them, putting them to bed, etc.). The case of Agathe, a French working single mother of two children 2 and 4 years old, is typical of this form of planned G0-A. She strives to reconcile childcare, part time work as well as additional professional training, which takes place every 2 months for a whole week. During these training weeks, her parents' contribution is priceless:

Now, for instance, I know the weeks when I need them next year. [...] We schedule together these weeks a long time in advance, as my sisters also have their needs and their dates. My parents have a family calendar with all this, and for them it is almost entrepreneurial management. (Agathe, French woman, 31 y.o., in process of divorce, 2 children, psychologist)

Agathe's parents explain that, since she is divorcing, their daughter has priority within their distribution of time and care over other family obligations and needs. They argue that their presence is a source of emotional stability for their granddaughters and justify their support as a moral and practical imperative that "the other three children understand, accepting that we are less available for them".

In general, these two expressions of *troubleshooting G0-A* fill in the gaps in the complex organization of routine childcare. In fact, G0 grandparents operate as the missing link in this organization. They represent a social backup system that is put into action in order to overcome temporary difficulties encountered by their daughters (and sometimes daughters-in-law) in the work-family balance. In such cases, they are not ordinary, occasional baby-sitters. They become fully involved in family life, worrying about daily problems and doing other everyday tasks such as preparing meals for the whole family, ironing or mowing the lawn. Likewise, the activities they share with their grandchildren are totally motivated by their love for them, their

natural concern for their family's well-being and their desire to build or strengthen intergenerational bonds. In this sense, G0 parents act as occasional substitute parents at home.

Obviously, *urgency troubleshooting G0-A* involve mostly grandparents living in EU bordering countries, especially as they benefit from both EU free circulation agreements and relative geographical proximity to their children. *Scheduled G0-A* are also observed within Brazilian transnational families, with regard to the organization of school holiday childcare. *A contrario*, North-African migrant families do not use this kind of G0-A, mostly because migrant women are stay-at-home mothers, but also with regard to draconian visa requirements which render G0 mobilization impossible in emergency situations.

11.4.3 *Full and Permanent Childcare and Family Support*

In this third type of G0-A, G0 grandmothers cohabite long term in Switzerland with their descendant migrants, either continuously or intermittently; and they also take care of all childcare and domestic tasks within the household. This is the case of two families of Romanian migrant women, mothers of three and four young children who are equally devoted to the advancement of their professional careers.

The first example involves a G0 Romanian grandmother who first lived in Switzerland for 10 years as an undocumented late-in-life migrant, working as an informal caregiver to an old lady. When the latter died in 2011, she planned to return in Romania, but as her migrant daughter got pregnant, they both decided to prolong her stay in Switzerland. As her first grandson was born prematurely, her contribution was even more important through the assistance she gave the migrant couple with specific healthcare that was needed during the first months. Afterwards, with the subsequent births of her second and third grandchildren, she became a permanent member of the migrant family. In this three-generation household, there are three adults – instead of two – co-managing and sharing daily family work. This situation is possible because each one finds his/her groove, including the G0 grandmother:

Now I am in great shape, because my little treasures, my grandchildren give me all I need. When my daughters were little, I didn't really have time to see them growing up. But now, I am totally happy with my grandchildren (Victoria, Romanian grandmother, 59 y.o., divorced, 2 children and 5 grandchildren, retired worker)

The reciprocal trust and the G0 benevolence contributed to the migrant couple's wellbeing, as the G0 grandmother's help allowed them to spend time without the children. This situation benefitted her daughter's professional career, as she was able to pursue it without having to give it up in spite of three successive childbirths. With the exception of her maternity leaves, she always worked full-time or studied to make progress in her professional career.

My mother's support is important with regard to the kids, my couple, my education and my career [...] For example, this year will be a decisive one as I am preparing for the final

exams for the federal diploma in Human Resources. Next Thursday I'll have an exam. So this evening, I'll go home, I'll eat, take my course notes and go to the library until 10 p.m. Thanks to my mother I can focus on and pass this exam and train. Without her, I couldn't do this. (Elena, Romanian woman, 35 y.o., married, 3 children, human resources officer)

A second situation is that of Adriana, mother of four kids, who arrived in Switzerland from Romania in 2001 as a student. She has pursued a career in academia as a researcher. In 2009, after the birth of her second child, at the end of her 4-months maternity leave, she asked her mother to help. The G0 grandmother took steps to stay repeatedly in Switzerland, for almost 2 years. In 2012, after a third childbirth, Adriana had not been able to re-enter immediately the academic field and she took time to care for her children. Two years later, she obtained a research grant to finish research for her PhD and she requested once more her G0 mother's help. A new care arrangement was then established: the G0 travels back-and-forth several times a year, and in between one of her trusted friends replaces her as a childcare and a housekeeper:

For instance, in 2015, my mother came for one month in January, then three months between April and June and again in November for another three months. Then, before the delivery of my fourth child, the cousin of my father came for a couple of months, and just now, my mother has been here for almost a month. When she will go back, it will be a friend or a good neighbor who will come to replace her. [...] My mother is the one who looks around within her friends; she makes some calls to see who is available (Adriana, Romanian woman, 38 y.o., married, 4 children, academic career)

Fully committed to offer practical and emotional support to her descendants in Switzerland, Adriana's G0 mother, now aged 63, decided to take early retirement so as to be free to help. At the same time, with the ingenious organization of a childcare rotation that mobilizes her close social network in Romania, she maintains a certain freedom of movement and periodically returns to her home country.

These two situations show that the quasi-permanent co-presence of G0 grandmothers and their full involvement in childcare, child-rearing and domestic work in the migrant family household represents above all else an essential support for their daughters, in their ambition to reconcile large families and their progression in their professional careers. Clearly, G0 mothers (and their occasional substitutes) free their daughters from the constraints that, most of the time, push mothers of young children to give up being fully invested in a professional career. Given the gender inequalities in this area, notably what is called the glass ceiling, one can say that these G0 are real *career saviors* for their daughters. In addition, these G0 grandmothers say they are now "living for their grandchildren". Thus, they uncompromisingly fulfill the specific role of grandmother at home – a sort of *mother's substitute* – which becomes their main reason to be.

Only these two Romanian transnational families were concerned by this type of G0 grandparenting. Although this does not mean that other nationalities are excluded from it, there are several conditions favouring such arrangements: the free circulation of Romanian nationals within the EU; the availability and benevolence of G0 parents to help their daughters in the long run; their ability to accept the consequences of this 'on the move' lifestyle, including a renegotiation of relationships

with their *left behind* life; as well as the couple's willingness to accept living together in a three-generation household.

11.4.4 Intergenerational Sharing and Transmission

Each time that G0 grandparents are able to travel and their migrant children can welcome them, three generations live together more or less repeatedly during the year, in the same household, for periods varying from a few days to several weeks. This type of physical proximity can occur beyond any practical need for childcare, as a response to a more general wish to see loved ones that Baldassar (2007, 2008) already pointed as a 'basic' need of transnational families.

When she describes such situations, Anna, a German mother of three small children, underlines that this kind of copresence is sought both by her parents and parents-in-law (living in Germany) as a privileged occasion to be together, do things and enjoy time spent with their grandchildren:

My parents maybe come once a year and stay for two or three days [...] they don't come for childcare. [...] When they come, it is joy and entertainment. My mother is really that kind of joyful grandmother. She sits next to my daughter and they do craft activities together; or she tells her stories [...] It is the same with my mother-in-law. She comes more often, maybe once per month. [...] It is simply about playing with the kids, having a good time and building a meaningful relationship. This is such an important thing! Each grandparent does and teaches them what she knows best. [...] I am happy that my children can have this relationship with their grandparents. (Anna, German woman, 32 y.o., married, 3 children, gynaecologist)

According to several migrant respondents, grandchildren also appreciate these situations because of a more indulgent approach adopted by grandparents in their interactions, which contrast with normative education patterns that characterize children-parent relationships.

Marie, a French G0 mother living about 700 km away from her daughter, relates how she and her husband take advantage of each opportunity to visit and spend time with their two grandchildren aged 8 and 5 years old. When describing the circumstances of their last stay in Switzerland, she insists on the activities and the mutual pleasure they all share:

Usually we find a good excuse to come [...] As we are far away and the kids have grown up, we are very happy to take a charter and come for 3-4 days. [...] When we are here, the children are full of joy to walk to school in the morning with grandpa and grandma. [...] Instead of eating at the canteen, they come and have lunch at home, grandma cooks. We supervise our eldest granddaughter's homework before she goes out to play. [...] And if we have half a day at our disposal, we go to the lake side and we have a picnic. [...] But we are not boasting about doing something for our grandchildren, it is mutual; we receive even more than we give. Emotionally, we give our all. [...] We feel the pleasure of sharing and passing on things that we experienced and appreciated, with wisdom, when we can. (Marie, French grandmother, married, 70 y.o., 4 children and 5 grandchildren, retired teacher)

The activities shared by G0 grandparents with their grandchildren also represent opportunities to transmit key symbolic features of their culture of origin (language, typical meals, tales, etc.), as well as experiences and skills central to the development of younger family members, and more widely to their transnational socialization.

This type of G0-A reflects the need of transnational families to reproduce, through temporary physical co-presence, *a sense of intergenerational closeness*. These copresence opportunities enable or reinforce the processes of family relationship building, by developing and/or revivifying intergenerational emotional attachments. Thus, they contribute to the well-being of all family members, everyone finding his or her groove.

One can notice that *intergenerational sharing and transmission G0-A* are organized wherever the country of origin is. Nevertheless, G0 grandparents living in bordering EU-countries come several times a year for short visits of no more than 1 week; while G0 Brazilian and North-African grandparents come once a year or less, but stay longer, for a few weeks to a couple of months. Travel costs and visa constraints dealt with by the latter are the reasons for these differences, and push non-EU G0 grandparents to organize their stays to also include leisure and holiday time in Switzerland. An intermediate situation is encountered in the case of Portuguese G0 grandparents. Basically return migrants, they can come more than once a year and for longer periods, combining intergenerational sharing needs with special events (such as birthdays or Christmas) celebrated within the family.

11.5 Conclusive Remarks

The four G0 grandparenting patterns revealed through the analysis of the related G0-A reflect the high diversity of care organization in transnational families that involve grandparents' contributions during their visits to Switzerland. These visits represent privileged occasions to be together and (re)weave family ties, while expressing family affection and intergenerational solidarity. They illustrate in concrete terms how three generations of relatives are 'doing family' transnationally and, more generally, how G0 grandparents participate in the fabric of transnational spaces (Faist 2000). At the same time, by meeting the specific needs of the transnational family, each type of G0-A contributes in particular ways to the wellbeing of family members. Precisely, by providing providential support in childbirth circumstances; helping in the work-family balance; encouraging mothers' professional career ambitions; and developing intergenerational relationships and emotional attachments.

These G0 transnational grandparenting patterns, although clearly differentiated, are interlinked. On the one hand, overlapping situations were observed, as in particular in the case of *intergenerational sharing and transmission G0-A* which appears as common to all the studied migrant families and can occur as a complement to all the other types of G0-A. On the other hand, within the same family,

transnational grandparenting can take different G0-A forms over time, in line with migrant family events and lifecycles. For example, as the grandchildren get older, the G0-A scheduled during the school holidays become scarce, while the grandchildren often join their grandparents in the country of origin. This allows us to argue that G0 transnational grandparenting is a dynamic process that evolves within the course of family life transformations.

In addition, this paper highlights an uncontested effect of migration policy on G0 transnational grandparenting by showing that the G0 visits vary notably according to circulation facilities between the grandparents' home country and Switzerland. In particular, we have noticed that G0-A *Urgency troubleshooting* is not an option for North-African families because of the impossibility of obtaining a visa within a short delay. In fact, in these families, G0 grandparents make the effort required to get a visa when it is worthwhile, in particular when migrant daughters give birth and their presence represents a moral obligation.

Nevertheless, we observed that other factors intervene in shaping G0-A diversity. For example, G0-A differentiation between *Mothering the mother* and *Celebrating the birth of a child* appears clearly related to cultural differences between familistic (Nord-African and Brazilian) versus individualistic values (European). Likewise, the frequency of visits by Brazilian G0 is distinctly limited by their poor financial resources.

As a conclusive remark, we argue that to understand more profoundly the observed differences, further investigation should give greater attention to the diversity and the possible multiple intersections of structural (for instance, cultural accounts), relational (such as quality of relationships between G0 and their adult children or the availability of social networks), and individual factors (such as G0 grandparents' health or economic resources) to build on a multi-layered analytical framework.

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