The effects of international migration: Elderly parents left behind in Lithuania.

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ABSTRACT

Even if Lithuania’s emigration rate is among the highest in the European Union, there is a gap of research addressing the effects of adult children migration for elderly parents who stay behind. Lithuania represents a case where the formal elderly care is rather limited. At the same time, the norms that adult children should provide care for elderly parents are rather strong. My postdoctoral research aims to reveal the consequences of international migration for intergenerational relationships from the perspective of elderly parents who stay behind.

The theoretical background consists of transnationalism and intergenerational solidarity approaches. Based on quantitative research, the analysis of empirical data opens up with the discussion on the cultural context – the attitudes towards elderly care and adult children migration. In the second part of empirical data analysis I discuss the effects of adult children migration for intergenerational solidarity: associational (frequency of contacts), affectual (evaluation of relationships) and functional (exchange of support) dimensions. Qualitative data is employed in order to illustrate what meanings elderly parents adhere to adult children migration.

The quantitative survey with elderly parents who have at least one child living abroad (N=305) was conducted in year 2013 by Baltic Surveys Ltd. A qualitative survey – 10 semi-structured interviews with elderly parents who have migrant children and at the moment live at care institutions were conducted.
Short CV:

Margarita Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė is a postdoctoral fellow at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania) and a research assistant at Lithuanian Social Research Centre (Vilnius, Lithuania). After receiving a Master of Arts in sociology and social anthropology from Central European University, she earned a Phd in sociology from Vilnius University and Lithuanian Social Research Centre (joined doctoral programme). Her areas of interests include intergenerational relationships, transnational family, family changes and policy. During her Phd studies she was involved in various projects on demographic changes and demographic processes in Lithuania and gained experience with applying statistical modelling methods and also combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques.