WILEY

ORIGINAL ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

'I Kiss the Screen, But It Is Not the Same' — Grandparenting in Geographically Dispersed Families

Weronika Kloc-Nowak[1] 🔟 | Louise Ryan[2] 🔟

[1]Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland | [2]Global Diversities and Inequalities Research Centre, London Metropolitan University, London, UK

Correspondence: Louise Ryan (l.ryan@londonmet.ac.uk) | Weronika Kloc-Nowak (w.kloc-nowak@uw.edu.pl)

ABSTRACT

Taking the perspective of grandparents living in the origin country, our article is innovative in examining a range of ties within social networks, not only transnational ones but also family ties in-country with both close-by and geographically dispersed relatives. We analyse focus group discussions with Polish grandparents whose grandchildren live in different locations. Thus, we are looking at transnational ties as part of interlocking personal networks spanning distances, including internal migration. By comparing grandparents' interactions with those who are near and far, we advance understanding of how distance impacts feelings of closeness and bonding between generations. This networks lens reveals how varied communication practices and contact patterns affect emotional wellbeing of ageing (grand)parents at origin. Although technology helps maintain contact, especially transnationally, it does not offer a multisensory experience—a limitation which becomes evident when compared with in-person childcare and family socialising.

1 | Introduction

The geographical dispersion of families due to internal and international migration, despite existing communication technologies, is a challenge for sustaining relationships (e.g., Bell and Bivand Erdal 2015; Guo et al. 2018; Hossu 2019; Brandhorst et al. 2020). In transnational families, as distance physically disassociates the migrants from their kinship and non-kin networks, the separation may become emotionally loaded (Skrbiš 2008). The circulation of emotions and support between distant locations and across boundaries becomes constitutive for sustaining familyhood (Wilding et al. 2020), even if combining transnational circulation and emotional care is sometimes difficult, evoking tensions, painful inequality or lack of reciprocity (Baldassar and Wilding 2013; Marchetti-Mercer, Swartz, and Baldassar 2021). However, such strong, sometimes conflicting emotions also occur

between relatives living in different parts of the same country or those who are unable to meet in person for long periods due to personal circumstances (King 2003; Gair 2017) or due to critical events such as COVID-19, which led to restrictive social distance measures limiting contact even among geographically close kin (Naim, Lowenstein, and Katz 2023). These aspects of family practices at a distance resulting from internal migration escape our attention if we concentrate only on transnational migrants.

In this article, we adopt an innovative approach, using a social networks lens to analyse the interplay of local, regional and transnational family ties. We do this based on data collected during eight focus group discussions (FGs) conducted in 2020 and 2021 with Polish grandmothers and grandfathers. We focus on grandparents in the origin country to learn how they sustain and experience relations with their children and grandchildren living

---

in various locations. Using a network lens, rather than looking at transnational relationships in isolation, we are interested in understanding how these grandparents engage with a range of relationships, including local and distant ones within the country of origin. Thus, we seek to gain deeper insights into how relationships and wellbeing are maintained across space and different (local, national and transnational) scales. Adopting this network lens, and rich qualitative data, can offer important insights into the multiplicity of relationships, flow of resources and relative location of social actors across geographical distances (Ryan 2011, 2023).

A network lens is also useful to understand how geographical distance impacts emotional wellbeing and practical support (Silver et al. 2018) and the mental health of the left-behind older parents (Thapa et al. 2024). By examining these relationships across distance, we are paying special attention to the benefits and limitations of information and communication technologies (ICT). Although cross-border networks may be facilitated by new technologies and digital media (Madianou 2016), it is necessary to consider the limits of online communication (Nowicka 2020), especially for hands-on care (Bojarczuk and Mühlau 2018).

Our case is Poland, where grandparenthood is a large-scale phenomenon and an important part of later life for most people (Pustulka 2022). In the Survey of Health Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), 75% of Polish respondents, compared to just over 60% in all surveyed European countries, agreed that looking after grandchildren is the grandparents' duty (Krzyżowski 2011, 61). The traditional grandparenthood model in Poland involves frequent meetings and joint leisure activities (Matejek 2013; Pustulka 2022), but also intensive childcare provision, especially by grandmothers (Wóycicka 2009; Radziwinowiczówna, Rosińska, and Kloc-Nowak 2018).

Since 2004, European Union (EU) accession mobility resulted in widespread migration of young Poles and the settlement of Polish families abroad. Thousands of children born abroad, as well as many adults who emigrated or were brought up in Polish families abroad, have grandparents in Poland. Polish families of intra-EU migrants have established transnational practices, including visiting each other on holidays and for family celebrations, having grandparents stay temporarily in the parents' country of immigration to provide childcare, arranging for the grandchildren to spend summer holidays with grandparents in Poland and travelling to offer planned or emergency care to a relative (Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016; Kloc-Nowak and Ryan 2023). For all these reasons, both in-person meetings and remote communication are important for Polish transnational families. However, widening access to the Internet, smartphones and social media, and more recently COVID-19 and the lockdown periods, have made reliance on remote communication much more common also among families without international migrants (Kloc-Nowak and Ryan 2023).

We open our article with a discussion of relevant literature on family networks' spatial differentiation, ICT use in dispersed families and emotional and sensory experience of older persons in a remote communication context deprived of physical touch. After presenting our data and method of its analysis, we discuss new insights from our empirical results on grandparenting in proximity versus at a distance, both within a country and across borders, digital communication practices with grandchildren contextualised within complex social networks as well as the emotional and sensory experience of ICT-mediated contact with grandchildren, as compared with grandparenting in physical closeness. On the basis of our innovative approach of taking the perspective of grandparents living in the origin country, we conclude by showing how our work advances understanding of inter-generational networks not only transnationally but also in-country with local and geographically dispersed kin and how this is mediated by ICT and experienced through senses.

2 | Geographically Dispersed Family Networks, Support and Communication

Despite the plethora of research on migration and transnationalism in recent decades (for the focus on transnational families, see, e.g., Baldassar et al. 2014, 2016; Mazzucato et al. 2015; Nedelcu 2017; Brandhorst, Baldassar, and Wilding 2020; Merla et al. 2021), we are mindful of Dahinden's warning that transnational relations cannot be simply assumed but instead should be 'carefully analysed' (2005, 191). Indeed, as observed elsewhere (Ryan 2023), the mere existence of transnational connections tells us very little about what is actually going on within those relationships (see also Nowicka 2020). Social network analysis (SNA) has been used to explore the resources flowing between inter-personal ties across national borders, including financial remittances, emotional support and practical hands-on care (Bojarczuk and Mühlau 2018; Silver et al. 2018).

In adopting a social network lens to study relationality in contexts of migration, it is useful to consider Bourdieu's concept of social fields (1977). As Lubbers, Verdery, and Molina (2020) note, a transnational social field can be conceptualised as interlocking egocentric networks extending across national borders and incorporating actors in the activities of social reproduction. Using this lens, researchers can focus on 'transnational processes unfolding in social networks rather than ones circumscribed within national boundaries' (Lubbers, Verdery, and Molina 2020, 179). This may be considered network transnationalism (Dahinden 2009), which refers to the extent to which a person's ties spread across borders.

In our article, we adopt an innovative approach by going beyond a transnational frame to consider the interplay of local and geographically dispersed ties within the origin country as well as abroad. In this sense, the transnational social field can be extended to take account of local and regionally dispersed ties, including internal migration, within the origin country. Thus, we argue that in studying spatially dispersed family networks, it is necessary to identify who are relevant members of the network, where they are located geographically, and what is the nature of the social relationships between them (see also Ryan 2023; Nedelcu, Fernández G. G., and Wyss 2024).

Moreover, it is also necessary to pay attention to temporality and consider how relationships are situated in time. Far from being static, relationships ebb and flow over time (Ryan and D'Angelo 2018), along with ageing (Baldassar and Wilding 2020) and within the context of dynamic socio-structural contexts

(Erel and Ryan 2019) such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Kloc-Nowak and Ryan 2024).

Beyond a vague and generalised view of 'a network', adopting a network lens enables us to understand the specificities of particular relationships and the resources flowing between them (Ryan 2011, 2023). As shown by Bojarczuk and Mühlau, 'transnational ties, their role and limitations, can be usefully studied in a support network framework' (2018, 109). Furthermore, as noted in the classic work of Wellman and Wortley (1990), different ties provide different types of support. For example, within the academic literature, there has been significant research on care circulating within transnational networks. Baldassar and Merla (2014, 7) highlight that 'transnational caregiving… binds members together in intergenerational networks of reciprocity and obligation, love and trust'.

Nonetheless, it should not be assumed that network ties necessarily offer support. For example, although migrants may expect and rely upon practical support from their networks, geographical distance can constrain the capacity or willingness to provide that support (Ryan 2008, 2023). For Polish migrants, for example, cultural expectations about the hands-on care offered by grandparents, especially grandmothers due to traditional gender roles and care culture (Wóycicka 2009), may be at odds with the obstacles created by geographical distance and travel restrictions (see Bojarczuk and Mühlau 2018; Kloc-Nowak and Ryan 2023). Thus, locality matters, and migrants' practical support networks may involve a complex blend of transnational and local ties to kin as well as friendship ties and other proximate connections to neighbours and work colleagues (Bojarczuk 2023). From the perspective of ageing parents, some of whose children and grandchildren have emigrated to another region or abroad, local actors, including non-kin are crucial in the provision of practical assistance and hands-on care; the social norms and practical arrangements involving such informal networks can be identified as elements of the local ethnomorality of care (Radziwinowiczówna, Rosińska, and Kloc-Nowak 2018).

In their analysis of the transnational networks spanning Mexico and the USA, Silver et al. (2018) highlight the impact of changing immigration regulations, resulting in restricted mobility and enforced separation, on the emotional wellbeing of migrants and their non-migrant kin. Time is important, as prolonged separation can cause significant emotional distress. However, Silver et al. (2018) also find that transnational ties cannot be understood in isolation and, hence, they consider the interplay of geographically proximate and distant ties and impacts on emotional wellbeing. Their findings suggest that both local and transnational social networks affect the experience of family separation for individuals in the countries of origin and destination (Silver et al. 2018). They argue that: 'the number of local family ties seems to temper the impact of family separation', as proximate kinship ties offer social support and thus 'mitigate feelings of isolation associated with family separation' (Silver et al. 2018, 9). Although their survey analysis showed evidence of high levels of communication, the impact of that communication on emotional wellbeing was mixed. They conclude that modern communication technology cannot eliminate the effect of separation on emotional distress in the absence of face-to-face interaction. Visits

markedly decrease the pain of separation (Silver et al. 2018). Our article builds on these insights from Silver et al. (2018) and so contributes to understanding this complex interplay for kinship ties across geographical locations.

3 | ICT-Mediated Versus Face-to-Face Contact and Their Sensory and Wellbeing Outcomes for the Older Generation

In recent decades, the proliferation of smartphones and Internet-based communicators has transformed the way all families stay connected (Tammisalo and Rotkirch 2022). For migrants, geographically separated from some of their kin or non-kin networks, ICTs are digital tools for kin keeping and belonging at home (Nedelcu 2012; Stevens, Baldassar, and Wilding 2024). Yet today, even those living together have moved much of their communication online, using it to practise family and strengthen ties (Christensen 2009). These portable devices and communication apps mimic everyday face-to-face contact in verbal, visual and auditory content, while being synchronous, instant and practically costless.

However, technology has its limitations. Age is often considered a barrier to acquiring new skills, but once initiated, developing a habit drives the frequency of using the ICT. Family communication needs motivate the older generation to acquire ICT skills (Ivan and Fernández-Ardèvol 2017); although physically co-present, younger relatives may enable the digital connection, proving technical assistance and instruction (Greschke 2021).

ICT practices may vary from intense, virtual co-presence (Nedelcu 2017) to ambient, peripheral awareness of the relative's online updates (Madianou 2016). According to Lomanowska and Guitton (2016), prior familiarity affects the quality of online interaction and contributes to wellbeing through such practices as confiding and emotional support. However, forced reliance on digital communication contributes to the sense of deprivation of the sensory aspect of family relationships (Simola et al. 2023) that ICT cannot offer. Moreover, it has been noted that Skype calls are staged family events, and their frequency lowers as grandchildren grow older (Share, Williams, and Kerrins 2018). Such age-related changes in communication patterns may also impact the emotional wellbeing of ageing grandparents, as discussed below.

In considering wellbeing, touch is the least researched sense, yet it is crucial for socio-emotional and physical wellbeing (Field 2010). In grandparent–grandchild relations, touch is beneficial, not only for the child's early development, but also for 'grandparent-age people [who] may not receive enough touch after they lose their partners' (2010, 379). The practice of a caring touch and close face-to-face contact between family members, covered by the term 'skinship' coined in Japan (Gregory 2011), creates an embodied sense of closeness which is beneficial for children and elderly alike (Thang 2003, 82). Being away from grandchildren deprives the elderly of this socially acceptable tactile experience, part of the protective aspect of the family social network, and may contribute to poorer wellbeing. In our analysis, we pay particular attention to how grandparents articulate the absence of touch and physical contact with distant kin, especially young grandchildren, and the

impact on their emotional wellbeing. By emotional wellbeing, we mean the 'emotional quality of momentary and everyday experiences' (Park et al. 2023, 16) of various forms of interaction with grandchildren.

4 | Data and Method of Analysis

The article is based on the qualitative analysis of eight FGs conducted with Polish grandmothers and grandfathers aged 50 or over. The main aim was understanding how they practiced and experienced grandparenting with grandchildren depending on distance, transnationality and mode of contact. FG was chosen as a format enabling the participants to directly comment on each other's similar or contrasting experiences. Discussion in a peer group (rather than one-on-one with a younger interviewer) was aimed at eliciting the shared perception of social norms, expectations and pressures the participants felt subjected to. The first round of FGs consisted of four in-person discussions in July 2020, which were possible thanks to the temporary easing of the COVID-19 restrictions on social gatherings but following strict safety procedures. When the pandemic conditions in Poland worsened, the fieldwork was suspended. Eventually, four synchronous online FGs (Tuttas 2015) with new sets of participants were conducted on the Zoom platform in March 2021. Although the remote FGs offered less direct social interaction than the in-person ones, the moderator (Kloc-Nowak) ensured they followed the same order of topics and enabled all participants to engage and contribute fairly.

Although there is no data on how many older Poles have grandchildren (or relatives in general) abroad, we have an overview of within-country residence, communication and ICT usage patterns. According to a 2018–2019 survey of Poles aged 60 or older, 16% lived with their grandchildren and 57% met them more often than once a month (Szatur-Jaworska 2021, 873–875). Although 39% talked to their grandchildren or great-grandchildren weekly via phone and 7% had contact online, the popularity of remote communication technologies was limited, as almost 4% did not use a telephone at all and 50% did not use the Internet (2021, 876–877). ICT adoption among older Poles is lower than in other EU countries with only 27% among the 55–64 age group and 16% among the 65–74 age group using remote calls, around 10 percentage points lower than the corresponding EU-27 averages (Eurostat 2022).

In each FG, there were people with varying confidence with ICT, but without any systematic difference along gender or age. Nevertheless, in the light of the limited popularity of ICT among elderly Poles, as highlighted above, the online format possibly biased the recruitment in favour of the persons possessing an Internet-connected device and feeling comfortable enough online. Even among this group of people able to use the ICT, attitudes about communicator apps and remote conversations differed, also visible in the varied levels of ease and technical fluency during the online FG. Although our research took place against COVID-19 restrictions (as we discussed at length elsewhere, Kloc-Nowak and Ryan 2024), this experience meant that all participants were well placed to reflect on how staying at home and being limited to remote means of communication impacted their relationships and social contact practices.

The groups varied by gender (five composed only of women and three only of men), age group (50–64/65 and 65+ [in practice—up to 81]) and grandchildren's location. In six groups, the participants had either only one grandchild or all of their grandchildren living abroad or a combination of different situations (participants with at least one grandchild living at a distance of 25+ km within Poland or abroad). Two of the 2020 in-person FGs were composed of grandmothers with only local grandchildren (living in one town or its county, within approximately a 25 km radius) and were recruited to provide a model of grandparenting based on proximate personal care and companionship (Pustulka 2022). Hence, grandparenting at a distance could be systematically compared with the local/proximate one on the level of a particular participant or group with a similar range of family configurations and between peers with and without the experience of geographical distance (and/or transnationality) of their grandchildren.

Detailed composition of the groups is presented in the Annex. A limitation of our data is gender composition. Although grandfathers were included, the numbers were skewed, as we had far more women than men participants in the FGs. Therefore, we are not presenting a gender analysis of the data. Although some of the participants had previous international migration experience or had travelled abroad to provide childcare for up to a few weeks (at least before COVID-19), at the time of the study they were all living in Poland. All discussants agreed to participate in the recorded FGs based on the informed consent form. The research design and its subsequent modifications in response to the pandemic situation have been approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw.

Inspired by the three-level conceptual framework of ethnomorality of care (Radziwinowiczówna, Rosińska, and Kloc-Nowak 2018), the research questions inquired: What were the social norms and expectations expressed towards them as grandmothers and grandfathers? What were their caring, socialising and communication arrangements and practices towards grandchildren? How do these practices compare in relation to local, distant and living-abroad grandchildren? What do they wish to change or arrange differently in their relations with grandchildren and adult children? The unique pandemic context of the FGs necessitated addressing the period-specific question: What changed in their experience of grandparenting during the COVID-19 pandemic? The discussions were transcribed verbatim, coded by the first author in Atlas.ti and subject to thematic analysis (Lochmiller 2021). The initial coding was organised along grandparenting norms, practices and wishes and how they related to the categories of distance and family living abroad. Practices related to childcare, family celebrations, emotional care and frequency, length and mode of contact were coded. Themes relating to various ICT tools (e.g., smartphone) and modes of learning to use a particular application (installing, maintaining, getting assistance in setting up the devices) were systematically coded. The ICT-related passages and codes revealed a pattern of occurring alongside speaking not only about the grandchildren but also diverse family members and non-kin, combining local and distant contacts into complex networks of communication process participants and mediators (such as the migrant adult child as the communication gatekeeper or a local grandchild setting up devices for a videoconference with the migrant relatives). Along

the advancement of the analysis, new codes emerged, forming a cross-cutting theme of physical contact (with such codes as kissing, hugging, smelling and, above all, touching). A pattern was identified of attaching emotional value and joy to practices related to such sensory experiences in physical proximity and regrets and wishes related to the lack of such elements in their ICT-related contacts with grandchildren. Hence, the empirical analysis that we present below is organised along the themes of dispersed family networks, ICT usage and multisensory dimension in physical closeness—and its limitation in remote communication.

5 | Beyond the Transnational Social Field: Physical Closeness Versus Geographic Dispersion in Grandparents' Family Networks

The traditional model of grandparenting in Poland is based on physical co-presence and regular informal childcare or at least being on call to offer such care (Matejek 2013; Sikorska 2019; Pustulka 2022). Typical activities, described by the participants who met (some of) their grandchildren on an everyday basis, were childcare (picking up from the kindergarten, staying with the grandchild when the kindergarten was closed for quarantine), playing games and cooking. As discussed in this section, our rich qualitative data provides insights into how proximity and distance impacted experiences and expectations of grandparenting and thus enables us to look beyond the transnational social field to consider interlocking kinship networks.

In the case of participants whose grandchild was born abroad, the importance of being present soon after the birth was especially valued to forge a bond with the baby (see also Wyss and Nedelcu 2019). A grandfather described how his own temporary migratory experience, in Germany, meant he and his wife could visit their grandchild soon after her birth:

> I have such a photo, when as one of the first, and my wife too, we held her heel, literally half an hour after she was born. (…) We managed to coordinate the time, because when she was born, we had a summer job in [Northern] Germany. And from there we drove south and we got there on time for the birth. We had known the due date more or less, but we had exceptional luck, and an amazing experience. We didn't believe it had worked out that way.
>
> (FG7, men 50–64, at least one distant/transnational)[1]

Although it is apparent that transnational distance impacts inter-generational relationships, it should not be assumed that living in the same country automatically guarantees regular contact. The participants noticed differences in the frequency of contact with their grandchild depending on distance, in one case even within the same town. For example, one of the grandfathers noticed his daughter-in-law relied on her own mother, who was not working and lived 'within their reach', whereas he and his partner lived further away and would have to cross the town to take care of the grandchild (FG4, men 50+, mixed family arrangements). This

example illustrates the interplay of different network ties. In this case, the daughter-in-law chose to rely on her own mother for childcare rather than her in-laws. Therefore, spatial proximity interacted with other factors, like lack of work responsibilities and lineage (maternal vs. paternal grandparents) and results in a different type of support expected from and offered by the grandparents.

As noted earlier in this article, it is necessary to look beyond the transnational social field in order to understand the diverse composition and geographical location of kinship networks. The family network configurations of the participants included not only physically proximate (local) grandchildren and those born abroad (transnational), but also those born in other regions of Poland.

A grandmother, with many grandchildren, talked about rare meetings with her grandchildren living in another region of Poland:

> I have two grandchildren in another town, so the contact with them is rather infrequent, as due to my age and illnesses I am there twice per year. So I go there for 2 weeks and try to devote to them as much time as possible. But we often have contact over the telephone and I try to follow their lives.
>
> (FG5, women 65+, at least one distant/abroad)

Moreover, paying attention to change over time, grandchildren who used to live locally may later move further away, either within the country or abroad. A typical moment when distance starts to separate inter-generational kin is educational mobility to another town. A grandmother talked about the change in contact when her granddaughter started studies in another town:

> I have three grandchildren here in the town, but the eldest granddaughter is in another city nowadays, since 2 years, but the contact with her has not broken, it is rather systematic. We call each other. When she visits her parents, she always comes to grandma, as she knows grandma will prepare some food.
>
> (FG5, women 65+, at least one distant/abroad)

Furthermore, the adult children (parents of the grandchildren of these FG participants) might have migrated to another region of Poland due to a variety of factors, such as, for example, already being less emotionally close to the parents. As in the quote above, the participants reported rather infrequent meetings with such children and grandchildren—contact patterns that resembled more the transnational ties than the local ones. Thus, in understanding how migration impacts inter-generational ties and caring relationships, these examples illustrate the necessity to pay attention not only to the transnational social field but also to internal migration and geographical separation within countries. Moreover, as noted by Silver et al. (2018), local, regionally dispersed and transnational ties should not be looked at separately. As discussed earlier, we adopt a networks lens in order to understand how different social ties may interact with each other, across distance, to provide particular kinds of support.

In the following section on ICTs, we provide specific examples of this inter-play of social ties across networks.

6 | Inter-Generational Relations and Communication Technology

When asked about particular communication technologies, FG participants displayed varied levels of familiarity and usage. Some of them declared having used multiple applications for different aims or at different stages of their family's migration history. Going beyond details like quality of the signal or cost, the participants remarked upon how technology was transforming their emotional experience and relationship quality. Families with longer histories of migration compared how new and free ICT changed the experience of separation:

> I remember when many years ago my husband went to the US for half a year. And phone calls were very expensive back then. Nowadays, the separation is not as hard to endure. Through these communicators we see each other, we can talk as much as we want, so it is less of a burden, it's nicer and easier to sustain the contact.
>
> (FG6, women 50–64, with at least one grandchild abroad)

A former temporary labour migrant who, at the time of the FG was living alone in Poland, was reliant on ICT to keep in touch everyday with his complex family network: his daughter studying in another city in Poland, his wife, a temporary labour migrant and his daughter and granddaughters living in another country. His situation was in contrast with the times when, despite migrating, they could be together as a family. For example, he and his wife used to work in the same country where their daughter lives and were able to travel domestically to visit her on the very day when she gave birth to their first granddaughter. Now, thanks to the ICT, he was in touch and felt emotionally close to his wife and daughters:

> I think that our meetings are so intense, so full of love, so full of devotion… the fact that during morning coffee at 6.30 I send hearts and "good day" to everyone on Messenger… these things are unprecedented because usually one burbles something to the wife in the morning 'come on, get up, what about breakfast' or one was not interested in the way his daughter got up. Now one is interested in whether she made it on time for the tram, the train or the bus. Whether she's already up, whether she overslept, what the weather is like. I think such contacts are difficult, they are tiring, but on the other hand, they bring new values, and we build new values, I think they definitely influence these emotional bonds more.
>
> (FG7, men 50–64, at least one distant/abroad)

When discussing ICTs, our data reveal different ways in which technology is used depending on whether relatives live nearby or far away. For contact with local relatives, the ICTs are used, but not for very long conversations. One function is organising an in-person get together:

> When my older granddaughter calls there is no long conversation, only 'Grandma, are you home? Can I come for tea?' I tell her 'Wait a minute, I'll go get some ice cream' and then we sit and talk. We wouldn't talk on the phone, really. The talks over the phone or Internet are limited. She prefers to come and talk, she doesn't live far away, maybe 5 kilometres.
>
> (FG2, women 50–65, local only)

On the other hand, especially where relatives live far away and cannot meet in person, there were some longer, occasionally 2–3 h long, 'virtual co-presence' sessions on online communicators. These conversations involved grandchildren showing drawings to the camera, joint cooking and similar everyday activities and not necessarily having a structured conversation. Such examples included both a transnational grandfather, whose only daughter and grandchildren resided abroad, and, in the pandemic lockdown, a grandfather with an only son and grandson living in another region of Poland.

Applying a networks lens, our data indicate the interplay of different kinship ties in supporting the use of ICTs. For example, younger generations helped to teach about technology, such as a local daughter and granddaughter who were determined to teach the grandmother:

> My daughter taught me how to be a confident computer user. I used to cry, my [granddaughter], who was little then, would tell me 'Don't cry, Grandma! Soon I will be helping you'. But now she doesn't have to help her grandma.
>
> (FG3, women 65+, at least one distant/transnational)

Transmission of skills in some of the participants' families was an inter-generational activity, as this informal way of learning ICT was mentioned more frequently than learning for professional purposes or during organised courses. This was reciprocated by currently practised, or envisaged future, transmission of grandparents' knowledge to the grandchildren, ranging from mathematics to national history.

Moreover, using technology to contact relatives far away may be facilitated by the assistance of other, proximate, network members. One grandfather talked about grandsons coming to set up the computer for a video call with migrant kin. This was often mentioned in connection to celebrating pandemic Easter or Christmas, when setting up a videocall with the family abroad was a part of socialising together at the dinner table.

This interlocking of network members, to enable long-distance communication, was illustrated by a grandfather, who cannot use ICT by himself and enjoys gatherings arranged by his local offspring:

> Often one family was in London, another here, so we would meet in my place to be together in front of the screen… they set it up and I only joined in the conversation, as I didn't know how to connect it all. And that's how we spent time together, all the grandchildren were there…
>
> (FG8, men 65+, at least one distant/transnational)

These examples clearly illustrate how local kinship ties help to mediate communication with geographically distant ties, regionally and transnationally, and thus evidence the interplay of different network members across different locations. Therefore, as also found by Silver et al. (2018) in the case of Mexican migrants, transnational connections need to be understood in relation to wider networks including local kin.

Technology also can serve to manage a dispersed family network according to the needs of a situation. A grandmother talked about her children and grandchildren setting up separate WhatsApp groups to prepare a relative's surprise birthday celebrations. Or simply to bring dispersed kin together at one moment:

> WhatsApp of course. It's so nice. [She] says 'Mom turn it on'. So I turn it on and call my husband, 'Look, one daughter, second daughter. Oh Mother, it's so nice. Although, when a small baby is crying, you cannot hear anything, but the contact is great as I see one of them, see the other, we are talking together. It's fantastic, so nice.
>
> (FG3, women 65+, at least one distant/transnational)

Through ICT, the parents left in the home country can also be connected with their migrant children's networks spanning across many countries and even including local non-kin. In this way, even local news is circulated via transnational ties:

> I don't use those Messengers or Facebooks at all, it's a waste of time for me. Besides, I learn from [them], for example my daughter sends me on WhatsApp films from my block. She has friends who upload their clips and I learn via England what is going on here in my block. They often share things. They have what they nicknamed the 'Residents Association'. There were four of them, peers. One is in Canada, two in England, one remained in Poland. And they are constantly in touch with each other.
>
> (FG4, men 50+, mixed situations)

This fascinating story, about the so-called Residents Association, illustrates how geographically dispersed and inter-generational ties use ICTs to share local news, not just across national borders (e.g., in England and Canada) but also back to the neighbourhood in Poland. Applying a network lens brings to light the interlocking of various social ties, including relatives and friends, across different geographical scales and adds insights into how particular transnational and local connections may work together.

However, that is not to imply that grandparents have easy access to all their relatives. Crucially, adult children act as gatekeepers to grandchildren, which sometimes interferes with the grandparents' ability to stay in touch:

> He is 6 years old, he starts school soon and there are some computer classes while he cannot even use a phone, you know, to talk. We've had such a problem, that our daughter would not let him, so he didn't want to talk to us on the phone. For him it was something abnormal, strange. So it annoyed us that he didn't use it at all.
>
> (FG4, man 50+, one grandchild in a distant region)

Among the data, some participants were optimistic about the role of technology in allowing them to stay in touch with distant kin; they emphasised practising short calls, which gave them 'snapshots' of everyday life, attentive listening, trying to understand the lives of younger generations and 'living their lives'.

Thus, virtual contact could provide joy and the sense of being up to date with and feeling a part of the everyday life of the descendants.

> One participates all the time in what is happening to the grandchildren. Although it is in the photo sent, you can see it there, and participate in it, one feels happy and different.
>
> (FG3, women 65+, at least one distant/transnational)

However, our data also highlighted the limits of ICT, as discussed below.

7 | The Importance of Multisensory Experience of Togetherness

In normative terms, the discussants identified physical closeness between kin of different generations as a part of Polish care culture, adding value to emotional wellbeing and strengthening the families. While discussing these themes, participants emphasised the importance of the sense of touch, especially in relation to infant grandchildren. Grandparents expressed awe at seeing, smelling and hugging the babies and witnessing their milestones:

> When they were small, it was so much fun. You sit them on your lap, rock them, entertain them, sing a lullaby or read a fairy tale.
>
> (FG8, men 65+, at least one distant/transnational)

Despite the previously mentioned practices of maintaining emotional closeness via ICT, contact mediated by technology remains

different from a face-to-face meeting on the dimension of sensory experience:

> This contact at a distance is however not so, because there is no hugging, there is no hair stroking, it is so different.(…) I kiss the screen, but it is not the same.
>
> (FG3, women, 65+, distant/abroad)

> The voice coming out [from speakers] is not the same as when we talk normally. It does not let you forget.
>
> (FG4, men 50+, mixed family arrangements)

These remarks define the sensual experiences that are clearly missing in technology-mediated communication in comparison with the experience of 'skinship', in which physical contact between persons, through touch, engages also other senses (Gregory 2011). Taking this difference into account, virtual co-presence occurs with an acute sense of absence. The communication device becomes a proxy (Baldassar 2008) for the physical presence and close contact that grandparent craves:

> Sometimes, when my daughter bathes him, I am put away [in the form of a smartphone with an active video call] somewhere on a shelf. I see the bathroom and him, as she bathes him. But we cannot talk, as then he screams and doesn't want to get out of the bathtub… So I am only an observer then, for half an hour, 20 minutes.
>
> (FG6, women 50–65, at least one distant/transnational)

This quote contrasts markedly with a quote from a grandmother, who spoke lovingly about the joy of bathing her local grandchild:

> I don't have much experience, as my grandson is still very little, I don't talk with him yet, as he only speaks 'gugu'. He's one and a half years old, so what can we do? We play with flour, sugar, salt. Bathing is the best. A bath is an amazing experience. He's so grateful when I pour him a bath and he bathes and plays with water. And that's it, for the time being.
>
> (FG2, women 50–65, local only)

Watching a bath, on screen, seems a poor substitute for the embodied, tactile experience. With infants, when there is no verbal communication, the main digital experience is watching.

Grandparents, who spend a lot of time in-person with their grandchildren, get introduced to the joys and worries of preschoolers, participating in activities not planned but stemming from the children's everyday experiences. One such example involved a situation of confiding in a grandmother about a broken toy:

> I am still on a stage like 'Grandma, look, the elephant [figure] lost his trunk, what am I supposed to do so that mommy wouldn't shout at me?' So I tell her 'Come here quick, give me the glue, so mommy will not see it.'

> And she's happy and tells me 'Grandma, they haven't noticed'.
>
> (FG3, women 65+, at least one distant/transnational)

A small child can share such everyday joys and sorrows unmediated by their parent only if they have an opportunity to be alone with the grandparents, as in everyday childcare situations such as after (pre)school, when by definition the parents are not present. It is more difficult in ICT-mediated communication at a distance, when the parents usually enable and control access to the digital device.

The grandparenting experience changes as the grandchildren grow up. This is experienced on the level of physical contact:

> One can tell the grandchildren start growing up…. When they come they no longer let you hug or kiss them. When I try to hug them, the kid gets all rigid.
>
> (FG5, women 65+, at least one distant/abroad)

Physical gestures showing small grandchildren's affection were, according to some experienced grandmothers, replaced with teenagers' confiding their emotional problems or personal life such as puberty or first romantic experience. Grandparents seemed to accept that the grandchildren's growing up changes the dynamic within the extended family network, for example, making younger aunts and uncles more attractive companions. Thus, applying a networks lens, it is apparent that, over time, relationships may develop and change between different kinship ties. This example reminds us that grandchild–grandparent relationships cannot be viewed in isolation but need to be understood in relation to a wider kinship network, including parents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Given the above sense of difference or lack of full satisfaction with the ICT-mediated contact, it is no surprise that when asked about the desired changes in their grandparenting, some participants expressed a wish that technology could offer more sensory experience. Another recurring theme was the desire that they could meet in-person more often and socialise, especially at a home-made meal, as an extended family. Last but not least, a few of the participants shared a wish that their children and grandchildren would return permanently to the country of origin, to be permanently spatially closer to them.

8 | Conclusions

In this article, we delved into grandparents' perspectives on inter-generational family relations across distance and national borders, the role of ICT and the importance of different senses in grandparenting experience. Thus, going beyond the transnational field, our article demonstrates the salience of distance within a country, including internal migration.

First, we have offered a novel contribution by using a networks lens to advance understanding of the interplay of inter-generational ties across distance—locally, nationally dispersed and transnationally—and how this is mediated by

new technology. Our data show how communication with geographically dispersed kin was often mediated through local network members, such as proximate grandchildren setting up devices to enable inter-generational communication with relatives abroad. We have also shown how news and information flowed among different ties across the kinship network so that a range of relatives were interacting across geographical areas. In so doing, we have built upon recent calls (Silver et al. 2018; Ryan 2023) not to look at transnational ties in isolation but to consider how proximate and distant ties interact across networks.

Second, we have contributed to understanding how grandparenting practices, and how these are mediated by ICT, clearly differed along the spectrum of distance—starting with differences in proximity between kin at a local scale. Geographic closeness, enabling spontaneous and frequent meetings or, if required, regular childcare provision, allowed the grandchildren to build trust and confide in their grandparents. In contrast, in nationally distant and transnational settings, grandparents sought to compensate for the lack of everyday contact with longer visits and intense ICT-mediated communication. Grandparents sustained ties at a distance through collecting photo updates, practicing connecting rituals of short calls or caring messages and sometimes virtual co-presence sessions (Nedelcu 2017).

Finally, through contrasting grandparents' perspectives on in-person and ICT-mediated contact, we advance understanding of grandparenting as a multisensory experience. Grandparents highlighted the importance of senses (touch, smell and physical interaction) for their bonding with their small grandchildren and their own emotional wellbeing as grandparents. In-person visits and activities in physical proximity were sought and preferred over the ICT-mediated contact, which was seen by many as useful and beneficial for geographically separated relatives but also as only a poor substitute and a less fulfilling experience, lacking the sensory multidimensionality.

Although our data are limited to grandparents residing in one country, it contributes to scholarship by comparing across scales, including the local, and covering interlocking, geographically dispersed family networks. Thanks to going beyond a simple transnational lens, our research posits that distance also matters for family contact patterns within country. Hence, our article offers new insights into how caring relations are practiced and sustained within kinship networks across varied scales of distance and through generations. Despite the advances of ICTs, remote contact still does not offer the multisensory experience of face-to-face closeness or 'skinship' (Thang 2003), which is vital, especially with small children. Hence, having opportunities for physical closeness remains important for family bonding and emotional wellbeing.

Ethics Statement

This research project's ethical strategy, including the informed consent procedure, was approved on 9 January 2020 by the Research Ethics Committee at the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw (CMR/EC/1/2020). Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the revised ethical strategy regarding the security measures for the in-person focus group discussions was submitted to and approved by the same committee on 20 June 2020 (CMR/EC/3/2020). As the pandemic situation worsened, on 18 March 2021, the principal investigator informed the committee of the decision to arrange and conduct the final four focus group discussions remotely and updated the ethical considerations of interviewing participants in the context of the pandemic.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

In relation to the focus group discussions, transcripts are not shared (beyond the characteristics of the interviewees in Annex and citations from the discussions in the text) due to the sensitive topics related to the private and family life of the participants. Such were the terms of the informed consent presented to the participants.

Endnotes

[1] The quotations are signed with the FG number, followed by gender and age group and the location of participants' grandchildren, which was the recruitment criterion for particular groups. Please refer to the Annex for details.

References

Baldassar, L. 2008. "Missing Kin and Longing to be Together: Emotions and the Construction of Co-Presence in Transnational Relationships." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 3: 247–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169196.

Baldassar, L., M. Kilkey, L. Merla, and R. Wilding. 2014. "Transnational Families." In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Families*, edited by J. Treas, J. Scott, and M. Richards, 155–175. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118374085.ch8.

Baldassar, L., and L. Merla. 2014. "Locating Transnational Care Circulation in Migration and Family Studies." In *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life*, edited by L. Baldassar and L. Merla, 25–58. Routledge.

Baldassar, L., M. Nedelcu, L. Merla, and R. Wilding. 2016. "ICT-Based Co-Presence in Transnational Families and Communities: Challenging the Premise of Face-to-Face Proximity in Sustaining Relationships." *Global Networks* 16, no. 2: 133–144. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12108.

Baldassar, L., and R. Wilding. 2013. "Middle-Class Transnational Caregiving: The Circulation of Care Between Family and Extended Kin Networks in the Global North." In *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care*, edited by L. Baldassar and L. Merla, 235–252. Routledge.

Baldassar, L., and R. Wilding. 2020. "Migration, Aging, and Digital Kinning: The Role of Distant Care Support Networks in Experiences of Aging Well." *Gerontologist* 60, no. 2: 313–321. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz156.

Bell, J., and M. Bivand Erdal. 2015. "Limited but Enduring Transnational Ties? Transnational Family Life Among Polish Migrants in Norway." *Studia Migracyjne—Przegląd Polonijny* 157, no. 3: 77–98.

http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-4b90cf24-06cc-4416-a4a0-3f8672fbefaa.

Bojarczuk, S. 2023. "Local Migrant Kin or Floating Grandmother? Reflections on Mobility and Informal Childcare Support Strategies Among Polish Migrants in Ireland." *Global Networks* 23, no. 2: 444–458. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12406.

Bojarczuk, S., and P. Mühlau. 2018. "Mobilising Social Network Support for Childcare: The Case of Polish Migrant Mothers in Dublin." *Social Networks* 53: 101–110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2017.04.004.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Brandhorst, R., L. Baldassar, and R. Wilding. 2020. "Introduction to the Special Issue: "Transnational Family Care 'on Hold'? Intergenerational Relationships and Obligations in the Context of Immobility Regimes"." *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 18, no. 3: 261–280. https://doi.org/10.1080/15350770.2020.1787035.

Christensen, T. H. 2009. "'Connected Presence' in Distributed Family Life." *New Media & Society* 11, no. 3: 433–451. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444808101620.

Dahinden, J. 2005. "Contesting Transnationalism? Lessons From the Study of Albanian Migration Networks From Former Yugoslavia." *Global Networks* 5, no. 2: 191–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2005.00114.x.

Dahinden, J. 2009. "Are We All Transnationals Now? Network Transnationalism and Transnational Subjectivity: The Differing Impacts of Globalization on the Inhabitants of a Small Swiss City." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32, no. 8: 1365–1386. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870802506534.

Erel, U., and L. Ryan. 2019. "Migrant Capitals: Proposing a Multi-Level Spatio-Temporal Analytical Framework." *Sociology* 53, no. 2: 246–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518785298.

Eurostat. 2022. *Individuals—Internet Activities [ISOC_CI_AC_I]*. Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ISOC_CI_AC_I/default/table?lang=en&category=isoc.isoc_i.isoc_iiu.

Field, T. 2010. "Touch for Socioemotional and Physical Well-Being: A Review." *Developmental Review* 30, no. 4: 367–383. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2011.01.001.

Gair, S. 2017. "Missing Grandchildren: Grandparents' Lost Contact and Implications for Social Work." *Australian Social Work* 70, no. 3: 263–275. https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2016.1173714.

Gregory, C. 2011. "Skinship: Touchability as a Virtue in East-Central India." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1, no. 1: 179–209. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau1.1.007.

Greschke, H. M. 2021. "Idioms of Polymediated Practices and the Techno-Social Accomplishment of Co-Presence in Transnational Families." *Pragmatics and Society* 12, no. 5: 828–849. https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.20053.gre.

Guo, M., J. Liu, L. Xu, W. Mao, and I. Chi. 2018. "Intergenerational Relationships and Psychological Well-Being of Chinese Older Adults With Migrant Children: Does Internal or International Migration Make a Difference?" *Journal of Family Issues* 39, no. 3: 622–643. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X16676855.

Hossu, I.-E. 2019. ""Are We Still a Family?" The Perspective From Romanian Transnational Families." *Lud* 103, no. 1: 49–65. http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/lud103.2019.03.

Ivan, L., and M. Fernández-Ardèvol. 2017. "Older People and the Use of ICTs to Communicate With Children and Grandchildren." *Transnational Social Review* 7, no. 1: 41–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2016.1277861.

King, V. 2003. "The Legacy of a Grandparent's Divorce: Consequences for Ties Between Grandparents and Grandchildren." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65, no. 1: 170–183. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2003.00170.x.

Kloc-Nowak, W., and L. Ryan. 2023. "Negotiating Long-Distance Caring Relations: Migrants in the UK and Their Families in Poland." In *Handbook on Migration and the Family*, edited by J. Waters and B. Yeoh, 154–169. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789908732.00016.

Kloc-Nowak, W., and L. Ryan. 2024. "'I am Afraid to Fly There': Informal Care in Polish Migrants' Families Immobilised by COVID-19." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 47, no. 14: 3021–3040. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2351634.

Krzyżowski, Ł. 2011. "In the Trap of Intergenerational Solidarity: Family Care in Poland's Ageing Society." *Polish Sociological Review* 173, no. 1: 55–78.

Lochmiller, C. R. 2021. "Conducting Thematic Analysis With Qualitative Data." *Qualitative Report* 26, no. 6: 2029–2044. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.5008.

Lomanowska, A. M., and M. J. Guitton. 2016. "Online Intimacy and Well-Being in the Digital Age." *Internet Interventions* 4: 138–144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2016.06.005.

Lubbers, M. J., A. M. Verdery, and J. L. Molina. 2020. "Social Networks and Transnational Social Fields: A Review of Quantitative and Mixed-Methods Approaches." *International Migration Review* 54, no. 1: 177–204. https://doi.org/10.1177/0197918318812343.

Madianou, M. 2016. "Polymedia Communication Among Transnational Families: What Are the Long-Term Consequences for Migration?" In *Family Life in an Age of Migration and Mobility: Global Perspectives Through the Life Course*, edited by M. Kilkey and E. Palenga-Möllenbeck, 71–93. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52099-9_4.

Marchetti-Mercer, M., L. Swartz, and L. Baldassar. 2021. ""Is Granny Going Back Into the Computer?": Visits and the Familial Politics of Seeing and Being Seen in South African Transnational Families." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 42, no. 4: 423–439. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2021.1939280.

Matejek, J. 2013. "Rola Seniorów w Rodzinie w Procesie Organizacji Czasu Wolnego Dzieci." In *Sociální Pedagogika v Kontextu Životních Etap Člověka*, edited by M. Bargel, 1127–1136. Institut mezioborových studií.

Mazzucato, V., D. Schans, K. Caarls, and C. Beauchemin. 2015. "Transnational Families Between Africa and Europe." *International Migration Review* 49, no. 1: 142–172. https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12153.

Merla, L., M. Kilkey, R. Wilding, and L. Baldassar. 2021. "Key Developments and Future Prospects in the Study of Transnational Families." In *Research Handbook on the Sociology of the Family*, edited by N. F. Schneider and M. Kreyenfeld, 439–451. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788975544.00040.

Naim, S., A. Lowenstein, and R. Katz. 2023. "Intergenerational Family Relations in Old Age During Regular Times and in Covid-19 Period." In *Handbook on COVID-19 Pandemic and Older Persons: Narratives and Issues From India and beyond*, edited by M. K. Shankardass, 155–165. Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-1467-8_11.

Nedelcu, M. 2012. "Migrants' New Transnational Habitus: Rethinking Migration Through a Cosmopolitan Lens in the Digital Age." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 9: 1339–1356. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2012.698203.

Nedelcu, M. 2017. "Transnational Grandparenting in the Digital Age: Mediated Co-Presence and Childcare in the Case of Romanian Migrants in Switzerland and Canada." *European Journal of Ageing* 14, no. 4: 375–383. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-017-0436-1.

Nedelcu, M., E. Fernández G. G., and M. Wyss. 2024. "A Configurational Approach to Transnational Families: Who and Where Is One's Family in the Case of Mobile Older Adults?" *Global Networks* 24, no. 2: e12466. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12466.

Nowicka, M. 2020. "(Dis)Connecting Migration: Transnationalism and Nationalism Beyond Connectivity." *Comparative Migration Studies* 8, no. 1: 20. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00175-4.

Park, C. L., L. D. Kubzansky, S. M. Chafouleas, et al. 2023. "Emotional Well-Being: What It Is and Why It Matters." *Affective Science* 4, no. 1: 10–20. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42761-022-00163-0.

Pustułka, P., and M. Ślusarczyk. 2016. "Cultivation, Compensation and Indulgence: Transnational Short-Term Returns to Poland Across Three Family Generations." *Transnational Social Review* 6, no. 1–2: 78–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2016.1182312.

Pustułka, P. 2022. "Grandmother Role in Poland in a Longitudinal Perspective." Studia z Teorii Wychowania XIII, no. 3 (40): 399–416. https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0016.1147.

Radziwinowiczówna, A., A. Rosińska, and W. Kloc-Nowak. 2018. *Ethnomorality of Care: Migrants and Their Aging Parents*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Ryan, L. 2008. "Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Families "Here" and "There": Women, Migration and the Management of Emotions." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 3: 299–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169238.

Ryan, L. 2011. "Migrants' Social Networks and Weak Ties: Accessing Resources and Constructing Relationships Post-Migration." *Sociological Review* 59, no. 4: 707–724. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2011.02030.x.

Ryan, L. 2023. *Social Networks and Migration: Relocations, Relationships and Resources*. Bristol University Press.

Ryan, L., and A. D'Angelo. 2018. "Changing Times: Migrants' Social Network Analysis and the Challenges of Longitudinal Research." *Social Networks* 53: 148–158. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2017.03.003.

Share, M., C. Williams, and L. Kerrins. 2018. "Displaying and Performing: Polish Transnational Families in Ireland Skyping Grandparents in Poland." *New Media & Society* 20, no. 8: 3011–3028. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817739272.

Sikorska, M. 2019. *Praktyki Rodzinne i Rodzicielskie We Współczesnej Polsce—Rekonstrukcja Codzienności*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar. https://www.ceeol.com/search/book-detail?id=846220.

Silver, A. M., H. Edelblute, T. Mouw, and S. Chávez. 2018. "Fractured Families, Connected Community: Emotional Engagement in a Transnational Social Network." *International Migration* 56, no. 6: 153–168. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12514.

Simola, A., V. May, A. Olakivi, and S. Wrede. 2023. "On Not 'Being There': Making Sense of the Potent Urge for Physical Proximity in Transnational Families at the Outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Global Networks* 23, no. 1: 45–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12382.

Skrbiš, Z. 2008. "Transnational Families: Theorising Migration, Emotions and Belonging." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 3: 231–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169188.

Stevens, C., L. Baldassar, and R. Wilding. 2024. "Friendship, Connection and Loss: Everyday Digital Kinning and Digital Homing Among Chinese Transnational Grandparents in Perth, Australia." In *Doing Digital Migration Studies: Theories and Practices of the Everyday*, edited by K. Leurs and S. Ponzanesi, 113–131. Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.5117/9789463725774_ch04.

Szatur-Jaworska, B. 2021. "Sytuacja Rodzinna i Więzi Rodzinne." In *PolSenior2 – Badanie Poszczególnych Obszarów Stanu Zdrowia Osób Starszych, w Tym Jakości Życia Związanej Ze Zdrowiem*, edited by P. Błędowski, T. Grodzicki, M. Mossakowska, and T. Zdrojewski, 865–886. Gdański Uniwersytet Medyczny. https://polsenior2.gumed.edu.pl/attachment/attachment/82370/Polsenior_2.pdf.

Tammisalo, K., and A. Rotkirch. 2022. "Effects of Information and Communication Technology on the Quality of Family Relationships: A Systematic Review." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 39, no. 9: 2724–2765. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075221087942.

Thang, L. L. 2003. "Generational Reengagements: Changing Demographic Patterns and the Revival of Intergenerational Contact in Japan." In *Demographic Change and the Family in Japan's Aging Society*, edited by J. W. Traphagan and J. Knight, 77–88. SUNY Press.

Thapa, D. K., D. Visentin, R. Kornhaber, and M. Cleary. 2024. "Internal and International Migration and the Mental Health of "Left-Behind" Older Parents." *International Migration Review* 58, no. 1: 37–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183231154559.

Tuttas, C. A. 2015. "Lessons Learned Using Web Conference Technology for Online Focus Group Interviews." *Qualitative Health Research* 25, no. 1: 122–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732314549602.

Wellman, B., and S. Wortley. 1990. "Different Strokes From Different Folks: Community Ties and Social Support." *American Journal of Sociology* 96, no. 3: 558–588. https://doi.org/10.1086/229572.

Wilding, R., L. Baldassar, S. Gamage, S. Worrell, and S. Mohamud. 2020. "Digital Media and the Affective Economies of Transnational Families." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 23, no. 5: 639–655. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920920278.

Wóycicka, I. 2009. "Model Opieki w Polsce." In *Strukturalne i Kulturowe Uwarunkowania Aktywności Zawodowej Kobiet w Polsce*, edited by I. Kotowska, 99–117. Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.

Wyss, M., and M. Nedelcu. 2019. "Grandparents on the Move: A Multilevel Framework Analysis to Understand Diversity in Zero-Generation Care Arrangements in Switzerland." *Global Networks* 20: 343–361. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12250.

FG no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Technique	f2f	f2f	f2f	f2f	Online	Online	Online	Online
Date	2020	2020	2020	2020	2021	2021	2021	2021
Number of participants	6	6	6	6	7	5	6	6
Gender	F	F	F	M	F	F	M	M
Age criteria	65+	50–65	65+	50+	65+	50–64	50–64	65+
Age brackets	59–71	55–65	65–73	51–67	65–77	51–58	50–57	68–81
Number of grandchildren	1–3	1–6	1–11	1–7	1–10	1–3	1–2	1–8
Recruitment criteria regarding the location of grandchildren	Only local (one city and county)	Only local (one city and county)	At least one abroad or 25+ km distant	Mix of local, abroad and distant	At least one abroad or 25+ km distant	At least one abroad	At least one abroad	At least one abroad or 25+ km distant