FILOSOFIJA. SOCIOLOGIJA. 2011. T. 22. Nr. 4, p. 348–364,

Contacts between adult children and their parents in Lithuania: the effects of familial, individual and structural factors

AUŠRA MASLAUSKAITĖ
Lithuanian Center for Social Research, Saltoniškių Str. 58, LT-08105 Vilnius
E-mail: amaslauskaite@ktl.mii.lt

The paper focuses on the frequency of intergenerational face-to-face contacts between parents and their adult children in Lithuania, and how they are affected by the parental family history events, the child's life course events, individual and structural level factors. The main empirical findings prove that parental divorce negatively affects the father–child contacts and has no effect at all on the mother–child contacts. Moreover, the effect of divorce is more negative on father–daughter contacts, and this contradicts the findings from other countries. Contrary to what has been expected, the child's life course events, individual and structural level factors define the intergenerational contacts to a very limited extent. Proximity stands out as the most stable defining factor of contacts in all types of child–parent dyads.

Key words: intergenerational contacts, parental divorce, life course events, linked lives, Lithuania

INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational contacts as a form of informal support for the elderly are a widely addressed issue in the contemporary social sciences. Their social and even political relevance is defined by the demographic reality of the ageing population and the specific welfare mechanisms in an individual country. In societies with an underdeveloped system of formal support, care becomes a private issue, and family networks are turned into the primary providers of care, herewith raising the dilemma of care and working life for the family members. The solution to this dilemma might lead to interruptions in professional life and the consequent reproduction of social inequalities associated with class and gender.

Lithuania represents a case in which the formal support provided by the state or market is underdeveloped, and care for elderly citizens is primarily associated with the family. Besides, Lithuanian society is experiencing a rapid demographic ageing. In the period 1993–2004, the proportion of the population over 65 was increasing on average by 2.4 per cent each year, while at the same time this figure was 1.1 per cent in the EU-15 and 1.2 per cent in the EU-25 (Mikulioniene 2006). The ratio of the population aged 65 and over to the population aged 15–64 (old age dependency ratio) increased from 16.2 per cent in 1990 to 22.7 per cent in 2007 and placed Lithuania close to Denmark, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Romania (Europe 2009).

This paper addresses the questions of care, expressed through intergenerational contacts and the determinants that shape the various patterns of intergenerational contacts in Lithuanian society. How is the care that adult children provide in the form of face-to-face contacts with their elderly parents distributed within society? Who in the parents' generation

might expect to get more and who in the children's generation provides more? How do the parents' and child's life course events and children's individual and structural level factors affect intergenerational contacts? The paper seeks to answer these questions by analysing the intergenerational face-to-face contacts between adult children and parents not residing with them. In the paper, much attention is given to the examination of the effect of parental life course events on intergenerational contacts because divorce, which started to proliferate in Lithuanian society in the 1960s, had and still has high rates (Stankuniene 2009), but the long-term effects of divorce are not analysed at length.

Although the questions raised in this paper are common within the field of research on intergenerational support, they are relatively new to research on intergenerational contacts in Lithuanian society. Hopefully, this paper will contribute to the understanding of the variety of intergenerational support patterns in Europe.

The study is based on the dataset of the "Generations and Gender Survey". This is the first dataset in Lithuania that gives the possibility to analyse the frequency of intergenerational contacts by taking into account parental family history and factors related to a child's social and demographic characteristics. The "Generations and Gender Survey" is a unique dataset in Lithuania for studying the dimensions and determinants of intergenerational support since this dataset is the first that covers a wide list of themes on ageing and generations and is based on the longitudinal panel methodology.

The paper is divided into five sections. It opens with a literature review on previous research relevant to the study; firstly, it discusses the findings concerning parental life course events and their impact on intergenerational contacts and, secondly, considers the factors associated with the children's generation. The next section is dedicated to theoretical considerations and the development of the research hypothesis. The empirical part starts with a section on the dataset, variables and methods. The section on results opens with a presentation of the results of descriptive analysis and moves on to the results of statistical modelling. The article closes with a discussion.

Literature review

Parental life course events as determinants of adult child–parent contacts

Previous research from various countries proves that children of divorced families generally have less frequent social contacts with their parents in later life than children from non-divorced families (White 1994; Lye 1996; Lye et al. 1995; Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; Kaufman, Uhlenberg 1998; a further overview Kalmjin 2007a). These findings have been validated for various European and North American countries.

Nevertheless, the effect of parental divorce on intergenerational contacts seems to be gender-specific, and the frequency of intergenerational contacts depends on the child–parent dyad type. The effect of divorce on the contacts between an adult child and the father is more damaging than on the contacts between an adult child and the mother (Cooney, Uhlenberg 1990; Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; Shapiro 2003; Tomassini et al. 2004; de Graaf, Fokkema 2007; Albertini, Saraceno 2007). This is valid for countries such as the USA, the UK, Italy, Finland, Italy, and the Netherlands. Some studies imply, however, that even if gender differences do exist, they are still not terribly relevant for the contacts between an adult child and parents and that more important is the negative effect of parental divorce on both the child–mother and the child–father dyads (Aquilino 1994; Tomassini et al. 2004; Amato, Cheadle 2005).

Considering the structuring power of gender in post-divorce child–parent relations, it would be logical to assume that these relations are also shaped by the gender of the child. This assumption is, however, not so widely discussed and scrutinized in the literature compared with the previously discussed one about the effect of parental gender on post-divorce parent–child relations. Some research has proven that divorce has a more negative effect on father–son than on father–daughter relations (Cooney 1994; Kaufman, Uhlenbeg 1998). This effect is attributed to the socio-psychological stress the sons experience when they have to internalise some of the father's roles in the family.

The effect of the timing of divorce is another important factor for parent–child relations in later life. Late divorce has a less negative impact than early divorce on parent–child relations (Bulcroft, Bulcroft 1991; Aquilino 1994; Lye et al. 1995; Kalmijn 2007a). Even if the overall effect of early divorce is negative, this applies more to the father–child than to the mother–child dyad (Kalmijn 2007a).

If the negative effect of divorce on parent–child contacts in later life is commonly agreed upon, the next question would then be about the effect of post-divorce events like remarriage or staying single after the divorce. There are numerous research findings that remarriage after divorce has a negative effect on parent–child relations (Aquilino 1994; Kalmijn 2007a; Kalmijn 2007b; de Graaf, Fokkema 2007; Albertini, Saraceno 2007). Some data suggest that the effect of remarriage has a stronger negative impact on father–child relations (Kalmjin 2007a) than it does on mother–child relations (Aquilino 1994; de Graaf, Fokkema 2007; Albertinti, Saraceno 2007). Previous research proves that, compared to remarriage, staying single after divorce is positively associated with the frequency of parent–child contacts (Kalmijn 2007a).

Widowhood as a parental life course transition is an important factor that affects adult parent–child relations in later life. Compared with divorce, widowhood has a less negative effect on parent–child relations (Kalmjin 2007a; Albertini, Saraceno 2007), is not significant for the frequency of contacts with a mother and father (Aquilino 1994; Tomassini et al. 2004), or has a positive effect on the frequency of contacts with the mother (Tomassini et al. 2004). Hence, it is obvious that widowhood as a parental life course event is gender- and country-specific. As research shows, it is not significant for contacts with a mother or father in the USA, the UK, Italy, or Finland, but it is significant in the Netherlands where widowhood has a positive effect on mother–child contacts (Tomassini et al. 2004).

Characteristics of adult child as determinant of intergenerational contacts

Three sets of characteristics of adult children could be regarded as the factors that determine the frequency of intergenerational contacts: life course events (partnership and marital status, being a parent), individual level factors (gender and age), and structural level factors (education, employment, level of income as markers of SES, and proximity to parental home).

Some previous research shows that being married has a positive effect on the frequency of contacts compared with unmarried children (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; White 1994). On the other hand, other studies report contradicting results and conclude that a child's marital status has no significant effect on the frequency of contacts (Kalmijn 2006; Grundy, Shelton 2001). These contradictions might be caused by country-specific factors, i. e. variations in the socio-cultural importance of marriage. In societies where marriage sustains a culturally hegemonic pattern of family formation, unmarried children might be regarded as those who have not fulfilled the socio-normative expectation of parents and therefore developed more distant relations with them. Several studies that include not only traditional partnership forms (i. e.

marriage) of children, but also cohabitation, prove that cohabiting couples exchange less support with parents than those who are married or have never married (Eggebeen 2005).

There are rather mixed research findings on the impact of a child's divorce on parent–child contacts. Some studies prove the negative effect a child's divorce has on intergenerational contacts (Kalmijn 2006), and others suggest that there is no negative effect at all (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994). Additionally, Kaufman and Uhlenberg point out that divorce negatively affects daughters' relations with parents but has no effect on parent–son relations (Kaufman, Uhelnberg 1998).

The research shows that the effect of having dependent children on the contacts between an adult child and parents is positive. Those who have children have more contacts with parents than those who have no children (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; White 1994; Roan, Raley 1996; Kalmijn 2006). There is some evidence that the effect might be negative, however (Grundy, Shelton 2001).

In terms of individual level factors, it is generally agreed that the gender of an adult child has an overriding influence on intergenerational relations, and it has been proved that daughters have more frequent contacts with parents than sons do (White 1994; Lye 1996; Roan, Raley 1996; Grundy, Shelton 2001). Female identity is socially constructed around caring, nurturing, and sustaining kinship, and consequently it positively affects intergenerational contacts.

The age of an adult child is another important factor for the frequency of contacts in later life. Research proves that contacts decline when children get older (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; Grundy, Shelton 2001). When parents and children get older, parents initiate fewer contacts. On the other hand, the age effect might become positive when parents reach a very old age and need more support from their adult children.

Along with the factors discussed above, a child's socio-economic status shapes intergenerational contacts as well. Research proves that higher education is associated with the lower frequency of contacts (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; Grundy, Shelton 2001; Kalmijn 2006). Educational differences might be the result of structural or cultural factors (Kalmijn 2006). More highly educated people tend to live further away from their parents, and proximity is one of the strongest factors defining the frequency of intergenerational contacts. On the other hand, those who are more highly educated might have more individualistic and less filial values. Grundy and Shelton additionally point out the importance of friends rather than parents in the social network of highly educated people (Grundy, Shelton 2001).

Research indicates that employment status could also add to the differentiation of intergenerational contacts. Unemployment might have a negative effect on parent–child contacts, whereas an increase in working hours has a negative effect on father–daughter relations and a positive effect on father–son relations (Kaufman, Uhelenberg 1998).

Theoretical framework

The conceptual framework of the study is derived from the life course perspective (Elder 1994; Elder 2001). The theoretical baseline for the study is the principle of linked lives (Elder 1994; Elder 2001). It presupposes that intergenerational contacts are influenced by the life course events of family members. Consequently, parental divorce or post-divorce transitions do have an impact on intergenerational contacts. Likewise, the child's life course events such as formation of partnership, parenthood, educational attainment, and employment status are the factors that have an impact on the nature of intergenerational solidarity within a family.

The next theoretical baseline assumption states that linked lives, and consequently intergenerational relations, are embedded within the institutional and cultural settings of a particular society. Thus, in every society, parental divorce might have a different outcome for long-term parent–child contacts. A child's matrimonial choices (cohabitation, divorce, or staying single) might similarly catalyse or constrain the contacts between an adult child and parents, depending on the social meaning and consequences of these choices.

Gender is widely recognized as the key factor shaping the effects of divorce on intergenerational contacts. There are, however, various approaches to theorising the role of gender in the social mechanism that reproduces the parent–child relationship in post-divorce families. In this paper, we use the approach of maternal gatekeeping (Allen, Hawkins 1999; Madden-Derdich, Leonard 2000; Fagan, Barnett 2003) since it interconnects the relational and institutional dimensions of gender. Fagan and Barnett define maternal gatekeeping as "mothers' preferences and attempts to restrict and exclude fathers from child care and involvement with children" (Fagan, Barnett 2003: 1021). The factors that explain the maternal gate closing or opening have to be considered on behavioural, cognitive and institutional levels. As research shows, in the first case maternal gatekeeping depends on the mother's perception of the father's parental competence (Fagan, Barnett 2003: 1021; Trinder 2008), child welfare beliefs, and parental relationship quality (Trinder 2008). On the societal level, maternal gatekeeping is shaped by women's position in society (Rutter, Schwartz 2000 in Fagan, Barnett 2003). The social and cultural barriers that limit the possibilities of women to obtain power in the public domain direct them to strengthen their power within the family structure (Fagan, Barnett 2003). As a result, care is prescribed to the female identity, and this shapes the identities, relations, as well as the parenting and legal norms that govern child custody and family policy resources.

Under these conditions, fathers have limited possibilities to develop their parental competence, while mothers have opportunities to consolidate their negative perception of the father's parental competence. Moreover, having the power to control post-divorce family relations, mothers are in a position to transmit these negative perceptions of the father to the children. Thus, we could expect that daughters will more actively internalise the negative perceptions of the father since the mothers are the role models in their daughter's gender identity building process. Hence, we might formulate the first *hypothesis about the role of maternal gatekeeping in post-divorce intergenerational family relations* (*H1*) and expect that parental divorce in Lithuania will have an overall negative effect on intergenerational relations and will more negatively affect the father–child dyad and, within this dyad, the father–daughter relations.

The timing of divorce and post-divorce parental life course events is an additional factor that shapes the intergenerational contacts between adult children and their parents. De Graaf and Fokkema developed an investment hypothesis which states: "the more parents have invested in the quality of their relationship with their children, the more contacts they will have with their children when these have become adults" (De Graaf, Fokkema 2007: 264). Accordingly, the earlier the divorce, the lower the investments a non-custodial parent can make into relations with the child. The time factor should, however, be considered along with the gender factor. The investment possibilities are structured by the gendered nature of the organisation of post-divorce family relations. The more traditional the organisation of gender relations within the family and society are, the more legal, structural and cultural limitations non-custodial fathers will experience in investing time and energy into their children. Thus, we might formulate the first part of *the investment hypothesis* (*H2.1*) and predict that early divorce will have a more negative effect on the frequency of father–child contacts

than late divorce and that the timing of the divorce will have no effect on mother–child contacts.

Following the logic of the investment hypothesis, we might speculate about the effect of remarriage and consider this event as an additional investment barrier. De Graaf and Fokkema explain the negative effect of remarriage, arguing that the new partnership started by a divorced parent requires time and energy that could be spent on the children (Graaf, Fokkema 2007). The new partnership and children from the previous marriage, therefore, compete for the parents' attention. It could be hard for divorced parents to balance these competing demands. On the other hand, children of divorced parents might underestimate the real importance of their bond with the parent and socially construct the situation as if their parents are giving priority to the new family (ibid.). But, again, we have to consider the gender factor in the parent–child dyad and see the event of remarriage in the context of maternal gatekeeping and a child's gender identity-building process. Consequently, the *second part of the investment hypothesis* (*H2.2.*) suggests that remarriage will have a negative effect on father–child contacts and will not affect mother–child contacts.

As discussed above, intergenerational relations are affected not only by parental life course events, but also by individual and structural factors in the lives of children. The previous research proves that some of these factors might limit or stimulate intergenerational contacts; the next question of the research consequently directs us to the exploration of the predicting power of these factors and to the supposition that the set of predicting factors will vary if we consider an individual parent–child dyad. In view of the previous research findings and the other research hypotheses, we therefore formulate the *priority factor hypothesis* (*H3*) and expect that within the frame of the four sets of factors (parents' and child's life course events and child's individual and structural factors) parental life course events have a priority in defining the intergenerational contacts between an adult child and a father but not between an adult child and a mother.

The next question of the research concerns the set of factors that affect the contacts between a mother and child and between a child and non-divorced parents. Considering the findings of previous research, we develop the *hypothesis* (*H4*) *about constraints on intergenerational relations*. We expect that for intergenerational contacts within the mother–child and child–non-divorced-parent dyad, the constraint factors will be the child's matrimonial choices such as cohabitation and divorce and the condition of not having children. We also predict that sons will meet their mothers and parents less often than daughters, and older adult children will meet their mothers and parents less often than younger adult children. A lower socioeconomic status will result in more frequent contacts, and closer proximity will have a positive effect on intergenerational contacts.

Data, measurements and methods

Data. This study is based on the dataset of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS)*. The GGS thematically covers a wide range of topics, among them parent-child relations. The sample size consists of 10,036 respondents 18–79 years old. The sampling procedure was nationally representative; a multi-stage random sample design was applied. Field work in Lithuania was carried out in April–August 2006; face-to-face interviews were conducted. The dataset was weighted.

* In Lithuania, the survey was conducted by the Demographic Research Centre, and the field stage of the survey was undertaken by the Baltic Survey Ltd. The survey was partially funded by the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation.

Measurements. Respondents aged 18 and older, not residing with parents, were selected for the empirical analysis. In the GGS questionnaire, the main anchor for analysing the relations between an adult child and a parent is the adult child; therefore, the contacts are analysed from the perspective of the child.

Intergenerational contacts (dependent variable) were measured by the frequency of face-to-face contacts with the parents (How often do you see your mother / father?). The frequency of contacts with parents who live together and contacts with the mother or father who live separately were measured. Parental divorce was measured with the variable on the occurrence of registered or non-registered divorce of a respondent's parents (Did your biological parents ever break up?). The measurement of early / late divorce / separation was calculated by deducting the birth date of the respondent from the date given by the respondent for the parental divorce. Parental life course transitions (divorce / dissolution of partnership, remarriage, staying single after divorce, widowhood) were measured with assessments on the parental living arrangement up to the time of interview given by the anchor respondent.

Methods. Data were analysed by applying methods of descriptive analysis and logistic regression. For the models of logistic regression, the dependant variable frequency of face-to-face contacts with the father, mother and parents, respectively, were dichotomised, and separate models were built for those who had at least one weekly contact (yes [1], no [0]) and who had at least one monthly contact (yes [1], no [0]). Separate models were constructed for at least once-per-week and at least once-per-month contacts since these two cases represent different degrees of intergenerational support. Additionally, modelling for two types of contacts gives the possibility to observe whether the controls for both types of contacts are stable. The controls included the set of variables concerning life course events of parents (divorce, remarriage, widowhood, and timing of divorce, if any), life course events of children (partnership status and being a parent), as well as individual (sex, age) and structural factors of children (monthly income, education, employment status, proximity to parental home).

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis

The first hypothesis (*H1*) suggested that parental divorce would have an overall negative effect on intergenerational relations and would more negatively affect the father–child dyad and, within this dyad, the father–daughter dyad. The results of descriptive analysis verify this hypothesis.

Figure 1 shows that there are differences in the frequency of the contacts children have with parents living together and the divorced father, but not with the divorced mother. The pattern of the frequency of contacts with a divorced mother is similar to the one with parents living together and markedly different from the one we observe for the contacts with the father. On the contrary, divorced fathers are mostly contacted on a yearly basis.

The first hypothesis predicted that contacts between adult children and their divorced parents could be affected not only by the gender of the parent, but also by the gender of the child, and we expected that contacts in the father–son dyad would be less affected by parental divorce than in the father–daughter dyad. Table 1 shows that, within the child–father dyads, contacts per week in both dyads are quite similar, but contacts per month between daughters and fathers are less frequent than those between sons and fathers. Moreover, daughters more often than sons meet their fathers on a yearly basis. Thus, parental divorce

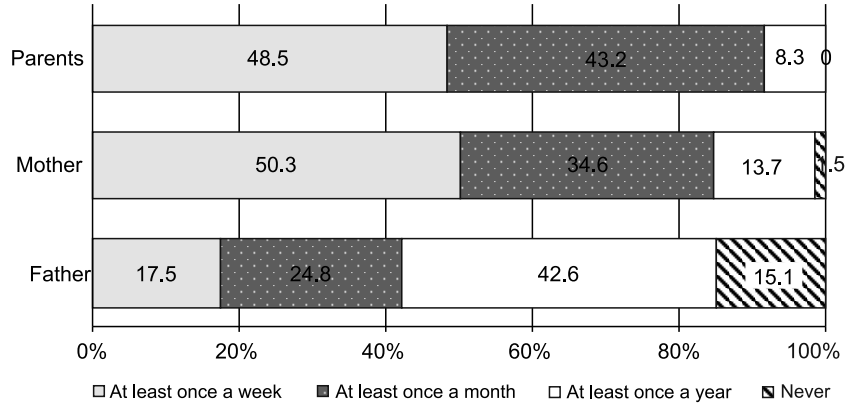

Fig. 1. Frequency of contacts with divorced mother, divorced father, and parents (percentages)
Note: divorced fathers N = 331, divorced mothers N = 344, parents N = 2516.

has a stronger negative effect on intergenerational contacts between fathers and daughters than it does on contacts between fathers and sons. Also, within the divorced mother–child dyad, daughters meet mothers on a weekly basis more often than sons do, but generally the contacts within the mother–child dyad resemble the frequency of contacts in the child–non-divorced-parent dyad.

Table 1. Frequency of contacts within parent–child dyads, percentages

	Divorced parents				Non-divorced parents	
	Father–son	Father–daughter	Mother–son	Mother–daughter	Parents–son	Parents–daughter
At least once a week	20.4	23.8	44.4	53.1	47.1	49.9
At least once a month	38.8	22.1	37.2	31.8	45.1	41.2
At least once a year	40.8	54.1	18.4	15.1	7.9	8.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	152	172	226	324	1 234	1 227

The second hypothesis was divided into two arguments: the first presupposed that early divorce would have a negative effect on father–child contacts and would not affect mother–child contacts (*H2.1*). Figure 2 shows the effect of divorce timing on father–child contacts and almost no effect on mother–child contacts. For the father–child dyad, the frequency of contacts is generally positively associated with the timing of divorce: the later the divorce the more frequent the contacts are. Even if the small share of respondents who contact their divorced fathers at least once per week is relatively similar despite the timing of divorce, it varies significantly in terms of at least one contact per month and per year contacts.

The second part of the *investment hypothesis* (*H2.2.*) predicted that remarriage would have a negative effect on contacts between fathers and adult children and would not affect contacts between mothers and children. Figure 3 shows that post-divorce life course transitions have no impact on contacts with mothers. Remarried or single divorced mothers are contacted by their children similarly frequently on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis. Almost

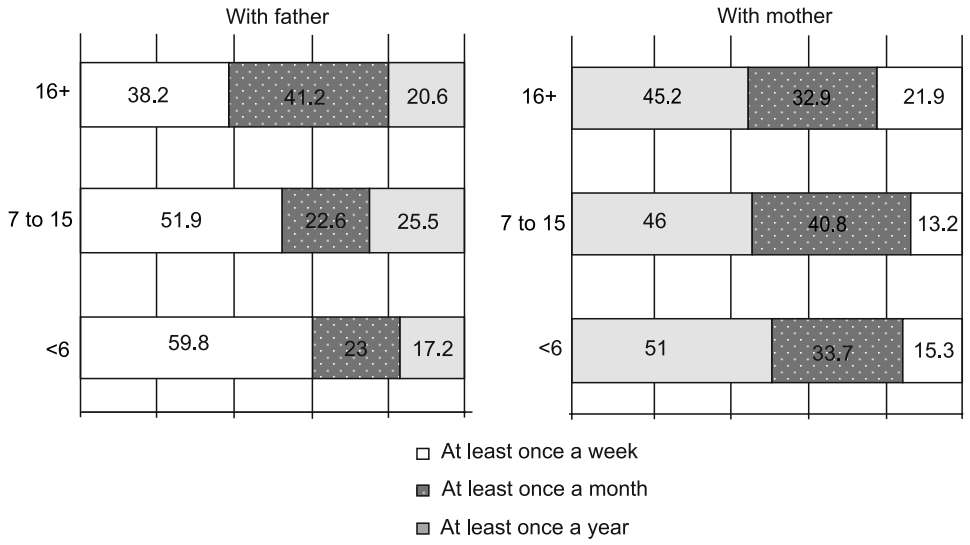

Fig. 2. Contacts with father and mother by age of respondent at the time of divorce, percentages
Note: the group of children who contact their father N = 254;
the group of children who contact their mother N = 294.

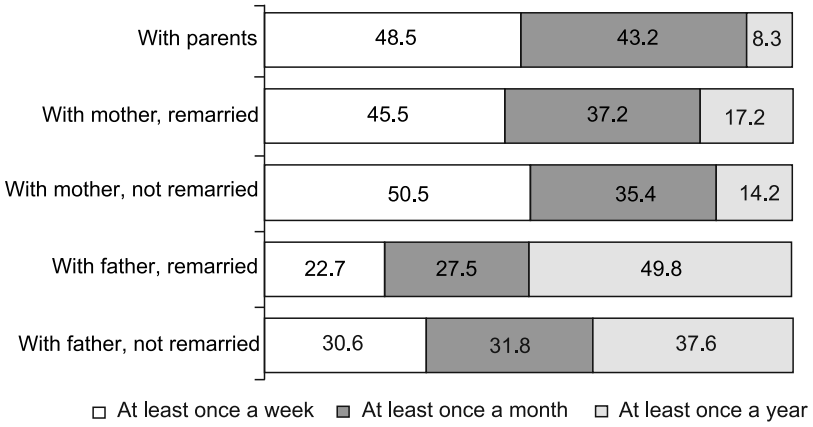

Fig. 3. Frequency of face-to-face contacts between parents and
adult children by parental living arrangement, percentages
Note: group of divorced single fathers N = 85, divorced remarried fathers N = 197;
divorced single mothers N = 188, remarried divorced mothers N = 115.

half of the children meet their divorced single or remarried mothers on a weekly basis, and one-third meet on a monthly basis. The frequency of contacts with divorced, remarried or single mothers equals the frequency of contacts with non-divorced parents.

Contrary to what was expected, a father's post-divorce life course transitions have a very limited effect on intergenerational contacts. Remarried and single divorced fathers are contacted similarly often, but compared to mothers the contacts are not as frequent.

Results of multivariate analysis

The *hypothesis of priority factors* (*H3*) supposed that within the four sets of factors parental life course events have a priority in defining intergenerational father–child but not mother–child contacts. Hypothesis H3 was verified using statistical modelling (logistic regression) procedures. Table 2 presents the results of the predictors for the likelihood of having at least one weekly contact with parents, and Table 3 presents the likelihood of at least one monthly

Table 2. Odds ratios for at least one weekly face-to-face contact with father, mother and parents among children not living with their parents

	Father	Mother	Parents
Living arrangement of father / mother			
Divorced, no other partner (with or without other children)	1	1	
Remarried after the divorce or death of mother / father (with or without other children)	0.39*	n.s.	
Widower / widow after divorce or death of mother / father (ref.)	0.9	n.s.	
Timing of divorce (child's age at the time of divorce)			
Divorce when R was younger than 6 years old (ref.)	1	1	
Divorce when R was 7–15 years old	2.33*	n.s.	
Divorce when R was older than 16	0.61	n.s.	
Non-divorced	2.55*	n.s.	
Adult child partnership status			
Without partner (ref.)	1	1	1
With partner, married	3.12*	n.s.	n.s.
Cohabiting	1.65	n.s.	n.s.
Divorced or widowed	1.29	n.s.	n.s.
Adult child with / without children			
With children (ref.)	1	1	1
Without children	2.31**	n.s.	n.s.
Adult child's age			
18–29 (ref.)	1	1	1
30–39	n.s.	0.76	1.08
40–49	n.s.	0.7	0.85
50+	n.s.	0.51**	0.62*
Adult child's sex			
Female (ref.)	1	1	1
Male	n.s.	0.57***	0.74**
Adult child's level of monthly household income			
Lowest (<231 euros) (ref.)	1	1	1
Low (232–463 euros)	n.s.	n.s.	0.72
Middle (464–869 euros)	n.s.	n.s.	0.71
Highest (>870 euros)	n.s.	n.s.	0.56**
Adult child's proximity to father's / mother's / parent's home			
Close (<30 minutes)	1	1	1
Moderate (31 minutes – 1.5 hours)	0.27***	0.183***	0.11***
Distant (>1.5 hours)	0.004***	0.009***	0.035***
Log pseudolikelihood	*358.58*	*1275.8*	*1806.4*
R2 (Nagelkerke R Square)	*0.462*	*0.481*	*0.397*
Number of cases	*387*	*1267*	*1589*

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$.

Table 3. Odds ratios for at least one monthly face-to-face contact with father, mother and parents among children not living with their parents

	Father	Mother	Parents
Parental life course factors			
Living arrangement of father / mother			
Divorced, no other partner (with or without other children)	1	1	
Remarried after the divorce or death of mother / father (with or without other children)	0.55	n.s.	
Widower / widow after divorce or death of mother / father (ref.)	3.28*	n.s.	
Timing of divorce (child's age at the time of divorce)			
Divorce when R was younger than 6 years old (ref.)	1	1	
Divorce when R was 7–15 years old	1.03	n.s.	
Divorce when R was older than 16	2.73*	n.s.	
Non-divorced	1.94	n.s.	
Adult child life course factors			
Partnership status			
Without partner (ref.)	1	1	1
With partner, married	n.s.	0.3**	0.73
Cohabiting	n.s.	0.5	1.03
Divorced or widowed	n.s.	0.49	0.35*
Adult child's individual and structural level factors			
Age			
18–29 (ref.)	1	1	1
30–39	n.s.	0.41**	n.s.
40–49	n.s.	0.61	n.s.
50+	n.s.	0.72	n.s.
Sex			
Female (ref.)	1	1	1
Male	1.76*	n.s.	n.s.
Level of monthly household income			
Lowest (<231 euros) (ref.)	1	1	1
Low (232–463 euros)	n.s.	1.44	n.s.
Middle (464–869 euros)	n.s.	2.78***	n.s.
Highest (>870 euros)	n.s.	2.12**	n.s.
Employment status			
Employed (ref.)	1	1	1
Unemployed (incl. maternity leave, housewife, retirement)	n.s.	n.s.	0.6*
Student	n.s	n.s	3.33**
Adult child's proximity to father's / mother's / parent's home			
Close (<30 minutes)	1	1	1
Moderate (31 minutes – 1.5 hours)	0.51	0.78	0.63
Distant (>1.5 hours)	0.13***	0.1***	0.09***
Log pseudolikelihood	*334.101*	*689.37*	*692.27*
R2 (Nagelkerke R Square)	*0.318*	*0.252*	*0.182*
Number of cases	*269*	*671*	*863*

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$, * $p \leq 0.05$.

contact with parents. Separate models have been composed for individual parent–child dyads: divorced or widowed father, divorced or widowed mother, and parents living together.

The results presented in Tables 2 and 3 show that fathers' life course events are important predictors for the frequency of contacts with adult children. Remarried divorced fathers are contacted slightly less often than divorced single fathers. The probability that widowed fathers will be visited at least once per week is not significantly different from the probability for single divorced fathers. In the case of monthly visits, fathers' post-divorce life course transitions are not relevant, but widowed fathers are contacted more often than divorced fathers (Tables 2 and 3).

The timing of divorce is an important predictor only for contacts with fathers on a weekly and monthly basis. Adult children, who have experienced a divorce that did not take place early, contact their fathers more often than those whose parents divorced when they were aged under 6 years.

On the contrary, contacts with mothers are not affected by mothers' life course events. Mothers' life course transitions, i. e. widowhood, divorce or remarriage, are not significant predictors for weekly or monthly contacts. Hence, mothers are contacted similarly often despite divorce, remarriage or widowhood. Similarly, the timing of divorce is not a relevant factor for the prediction of contacts with mothers. Thus, mothers' life course events and the timing of those events have no impact on the frequency of contacts with mothers, and this effect is stable for both types of contacts (weekly and monthly). Consequently, these findings confirm the hypothesis of the priority of life course events in the father–child contacts.

The *hypothesis about constraints on intergenerational relations* (*H4*) could be accepted only with some corrections. We have not found that children's life course events have any stable effects on the frequency of contacts. A child's partnership status is important for predicting contacts with father in the case of at least once per week, but not per month. Grandchildren significantly increase the chances for at least one weekly contact with fathers, but these effects are not stable and are not replicated in the case of contacts on a monthly basis.

For those who meet their mothers at least once a week, partnership status is not relevant for defining the frequency of contacts, but in the case of monthly contacts, married children visit mothers less often than those living without a partner. Having children has no effect on contacts with mother. Contacts with parents are affected by a child's partnership status only for those who contact their parents at least once a month. In the case of at least one monthly contact, divorced or widowed children contact their parents less often than other children do.

Within the hypothesis of constraints, we expected that daughters would visit their parents more often than sons. This was proven only partially and revealed different patterns regarding the parent–child dyad. Table 2 shows that if daughters and sons meet their fathers at least once a week, they do it similarly often. In contrast, data in Table 3 show that if fathers are contacted at least once a month, then they are more often visited by their sons than by their daughters. In the case of weekly contacts with mothers and parents, we observe that daughters visit their mothers more often than sons do, and this finding corresponds to the results of other studies. It is important that the effect of gender disappears for monthly contacts; in this case, mothers and parents are visited similarly often by sons and daughters. The same effect is observed for contacts with parents.

A child's age is an important predictor for contacts with mother and parents and is not relevant for contacts with father. As we have expected, age is negatively associated with intergenerational contacts. The likelihood of contacting mother or parents at least once a week is

significantly lower only for children older than 50 years. Age is a relevant predictor for at least one monthly contact with mother; children 30–39 years old contact their mothers less often than the youngest age group, and the frequency of at least one weekly contact of children older than 40 does not vary.

We supposed that a lower socioeconomic status would result in more frequent contacts with parents. However, the analysis shows that the SES controls are not relevant for contacts with fathers (disregarding weekly and monthly contacts), but some of them are significant predictors for contacts with mothers and parents. As in the case of fathers, those visiting their mothers at least once a week do it regardless of their socioeconomic status; neither of the SES controls was relevant for predicting at least one weekly contact with mothers. For this type of contacts with parents, the effect of income is significant, because children with the highest incomes visit their parents less often than those with lower incomes.

Those having a median or high income more often visit their mothers at least once a month than those having a lower income. Employment status is relevant only for at least one monthly contact with parents; students visit their parents more often than employed children, and those who are unemployed arrange fewer monthly contacts than those who are employed. Educational attainment has no effect on intergenerational contacts.

One stable effect relevant for all parent–child dyads is proximity. In Table 2 we see that at least one weekly contact is mostly arranged by the children that live in close proximity (30-minute travelling time), and respectively children living in a moderate or distant proximity meet their fathers, mothers or parents significantly less often. A similar predicting effect is observed for at least one monthly contact, but in this case those who contact their parents less often live in distant proximity.

DISCUSSION

This study, based on the theoretical assumptions of the life course perspective, analyses how in Lithuanian society the life course events of both generations shape parent–child contacts in later life. Also, the effects of other factors associated with a child's age, gender, and socioeconomic status were analysed.

The study results show that the life course events of parents, and the divorce of parents in particular, are an important factor defining the parent–child contacts in later life. In accordance with findings from other countries, our results have shown that divorce has a damaging effect on relations between adult children and parents, but this effect is valid only for father–child relations. Children of divorced parents have fewer contacts with their father, but contacts with their mother equal those of children having parents who are not divorced. Additionally, the effect of divorce seems to be gender-specific for both parts of the parent–child dyad. The effect of divorce in Lithuania is more damaging to father–daughter than to father–son contacts, and this comes as a contradiction to the results reported in other studies (Cooney 1994; Kaufman, Uhlenberg 1998).

Even if the findings on the negative effect of divorce on father–child contacts place Lithuania in line with other European countries, some comments to highlight the findings could be useful. In the paper, we have theorised that the outcome of divorce could be explained by using the approach of maternal gatekeeping. Although the dataset limited the opportunities to empirically assess the behavioural and cognitive manifestations of maternal gatekeeping in post-divorce families, the concept is useful for understanding the social mechanism that reproduces asymmetry in parent–child relations. Applying this approach to Lithuanian con-

ditions, one more important remark has to be made: the paper deals with retrospective family events; thus, in many cases the divorce occurred and post-divorce family relations were formed in the Soviet period when gender and family relations were socially organised under significantly different circumstances.

There are no comprehensive data concerning this period, but looking at contemporary Lithuanian society, various comparative studies prove Lithuania to stand out as one of the countries (together with Poland and Hungary) with the most traditional gender culture among the Central and Eastern European countries (Stankuniene, Maslauskaite 2008; Puur et al. 2008); thus, child rearing and caring tasks remain primarily and, compared to other countries of the region, extremely closely associated with the identity of women. In the Soviet period and now, women's power is still predominantly allocated within the private sphere; as a consequence, the father's involvement in child rearing is controlled by the mother. In the case of divorce, women in the Soviet period were, and now remain, in a position to control the access to the child and use this gate-closing or opening power as a punishment for the father. On the institutional level, this resulted in child custody arrangements being associated predominantly with the mother (Maslauskaite 2009). Of course, all these conditions do not make Lithuania a unique case. They could be understood as the dimensions that need more research and could define Lithuania's place in the continuum of countries.

The further results show that the timing of divorce is important in defining father–child but not mother–child contacts. Contacts with divorced fathers take place more often when the divorce occurs later, and this can be explained using the investment approach. It is likely that the fathers who divorce later have had more opportunities to build a closer social bond with their children and to establish their parental role in the family.

Contrary to what was expected, we did not find that the post-divorce life course transitions of parents had a very strong negative effect on father–child relations. These findings contradict data from other countries (Aquilino 1994; Kalmijn 2007a; de Graaf, Fokkema 2007, Albertini, Saraceno 2007). Our results show that contacts with divorced single and divorced remarried fathers are frequent, although in the latter case less. Thus, divorce *per se* is the event that essentially disrupts father–child relations, and the further developments in the father's life are not overriding the relevant determinants. The weak emotional bond in later life is primarily predefined by the very low level of investments of time and energy the fathers make into their relationships with children after the divorce, and fathers' post-divorce life course transitions do not affect the changes in these investments.

The results of the study showed that the principle of linked lives applied to the study of intergenerational contacts in Lithuania could be complemented in two ways. First, we have found that the lives of children and of divorced mothers are linked differently than the lives of children and of divorced fathers. Whereas the events in mother's life have no effect on intergenerational contacts, the father's life course events, and specifically their timing, are important determinants for intergenerational support. For contacts with mothers, the defining set of factors is associated with structural, but not life course, factors. The opposite can be said about contacts with fathers; here, at least as regards one weekly and monthly contact, life course factors are important predictors. Second, a child's life course events (partnership status and parenthood) are not the defining elements for the linking of lives of both generations. We have not found the expected stable and explicable effects of a child's divorce and cohabitation on intergenerational contacts with mother and parents. Besides, grandchildren proved to have no impact on the frequency of contacts with mother or parents.

As expected, gender is a relevant predictor for intergenerational contacts, but it works in accordance with the other determinants of intergenerational support. Gender matters for weekly contacts with mothers and parents since within these dyads daughters are more active than sons in meeting their aged parents. If fathers are contacted weekly, gender-related differences are not relevant. We observe a reverse effect in the case of contacts on a monthly basis: fathers are contacted more often, but there is no difference in the contacts daughters and sons have with mothers or parents. The effect we observe for contacts with mothers and parents could be defined not only by gender, but also by proximity. Daughters *per se* are not more active in arranging contacts; they do so only if they live closer to their mother or parents.

The effect of older age is significant for weekly contacts with mother and parents, but not with father. Older children meet their parents less often than younger children, and this corresponds to the findings of other studies (Lawton, Silverstein and Bengston 1994; Grundy, Shelton 2001). This fact may be caused by older parents having a less active role in arranging contacts or by the competing demands that the 'sandwich generation' (children in their 50s) experience balancing contacts with their older parents, adult children, or even grandchildren. For contacts on a monthly basis, the effect of age becomes irrelevant. It is possible that at least one monthly contact is understood as obligatory by the children, and this contact is arranged and managed regardless of other responsibilities.

The majority of SES factors we have included into the models concerning weekly and monthly contacts show no significant or stable effects. There could be several reasons for this fact. First, the limitation of the study was a relatively small number of cases for some dyads. Second, it could be that the limited explanatory power of the SES factors is associated with social and cultural interdependencies between the generations. These interdependencies result from the economic needs sustained and reproduced throughout the 20th century. In the Soviet period, the downward flow of goods from parents to children was an exchange for the labour of children whose labour was required on farms or even small dachas. The economic interdependence between the generations was universal, irrespective of social class, and economic shortages were also universal. The economic interdependence reproduced social and emotional patterns of intergenerational relations and at the same time even shaped the contacts between adult children and parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was funded by a grant (SIN-01/2010) from the Research Council of Lithuania.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Andreas Hoff from the Oxford Institute of Ageing (OIA), Department of Sociology, University of Oxford for his valuable advice, comments, and patient support. Part of the research was conducted during my time as a visiting research fellow at the Oxford Institute of Ageing (OIA), Department of Sociology, University of Oxford. Financial support from the Leslie Kirkley Fellowship is gratefully acknowledged.

Received 09 May 2011
Accepted 15 November 2011

References

1. Albertini, M.; Saraceno, Ch. 2007. *Contact between Adult Children and Their Divorced Parents: Italy in a Comparative Perspective.* Social Science Research Center, Berlin.
2. Allen, S.; Hawkins, A. J. 1999. "Maternal gatekeeping: Mothers' beliefs and behaviors that inhibit greater father involvement in family work", *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61: 199–212.
3. Amato, P. R.; Cheadle, J. 2005. "The long reach of divorce: divorce and child well-being across three generations", *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67(1): 191–206.

4. Aquilino, W. S. 1994. "Impact of childhood family disruption on young adult's relationships with parents", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56: 295–313.
5. Bulcroft, K. A.; Bulcroft, R. 1991. A. "The timing of divorce. Effects on parent–child relationships in later life", *Research on Ageing* 13(2): 226–43.
6. Cooney, T. M.; Uhlenberg, P. 1990. "The role of divorce in men's relations with their adult children after mid-life", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52: 677–88.
7. Cooney, T. 1994. "Young adults' relations with parents: the influence of recent parental divorce", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56: 45–56.
8. De Graaf, P. M.; Fokkema, T. 2007. "Contacts between divorced and non-divorced parents and their adult children in the Netherlands: an investment perspective", *European Sociological Review* 23: 263–77.
9. Dykstra, P. A. 1997. "The effects of divorce on intergenerational exchanges in families", *Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences* 33: 77–93.
10. Eggebeen, D. J. 2005. "Cohabitation and exchanges of Support", *Social Forces* 83: 1097–110.
11. Elder, G. H. Jr. 1994. "Time, agency, and social change: perspectives on the life course", *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57: 5–15.
12. Elder, G. H. Jr. 2001. "Families, social change and individual lives", *Marriage and Family Review* 31(1–2): 177–192.
13. *Europe in Figures. Eurostat Yearbook*. 2009. Eurostat, European Commission, Luxembourg.
14. Fagan, J.; Barnett, M. 2003. "The relationship between maternal gatekeeping, paternal competence, mothers' attitudes about the father's role, and father Involvement", *Journal of Family Issues* 24(8): 1020–1043.
15. Grundy, E.; Shelton, N. 2001. "Contacts between adult children and their parents in Great Britain 1986–99", *Environment and Planning* 33: 685–697.
16. Jasilionis, D.; Stankuniene, V.; Shkolnikov, V. 2006. *Socio-demographic Mortality Differentials in Lithuania 2001–2004.* Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius.
17. Kalmijn, M. 2006. "Educational inequality and family relationships: influences on contact and proximity", *European Sociological Review* 22: 1–16.
18. Kalmijn, M. 2007a. "Gender differences in the effects of divorce, widowhood and remarriage on intergenerational support: does marriage protect fathers?", *Social Forces* 85: 1079–104.
19. Kalmijn, M. 2007b. *Father–child contact and divorce in comparative perspective*. Paper presented at FMNET Conference Intergenerational Relationships in Family and Society, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialfroschung, Berlin.
20. Kaufman, G.; Uhlenberg, P. 1998. "Effects of life course transitions on the quality of relationships between adult children and their parents", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60: 924–38.
21. Lawton, L.; Silverstein, M.; Bengston, V. 1994. "Affection, social contact, and geographic distance between adult children and their parents", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56: 57–68.
22. Lye, D. N. 1996. "Adult child–parent relationships", *Annual Review of Sociology* 22: 79–102.
23. Lye, D. N.; Klepinger, D. H.; Hyle, P. D.; Nelson, A. 1995. "Childhood living arrangements and adult children's relations with their parents", *Demography* 32: 261–280.
24. Madden-Derdich, D. A.; Leonard, S. A. 2000. "Parental role identity and fathers' involvement in coparental interaction after divorce: fathers' perspectives", *Family Relations* 49: 311–18.
25. Maslauskaite, A. 2009. "Lithuanian households at the turn of the 21st century", in *The Baltic Countries: Population, Family and Family Policy,* eds. V. Stankuniene, D. Jasilionis. Institute for Social Research, Vilnius, 183–99.
26. Mikulioniene, S. 2006. "Age structure", in *Population of Lithuania: Composition and Demographic Development*, eds. D. Amrozaitiene, V. Stankuniene, A. Maslauskaite, R. Balandiene. Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius (in Lithuanian), 8–27.
27. Puur, A.; Oláh, L. Sz.; Tazi-Preve, I. M.; Drobritz, J. 2008. "Men's childbearing desired and views of the male role in Europe at the dawn of the 21st century", *Demographic Research* 19: 1883–912.
28. Roan, C. L.; Raley, K. R. 1996. "Intergenerational coresidence and contact: a longitudinal analysis of adult children's response to their mother's widowhood", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58: 708–17.
29. Rutter, V.; Schwartz, P. 2000. "Gender, marriage, and diverse possibilities for cross-sex and same-sex pairs", in *Handbook of Family Diversity*, eds. D. H. Demo, Allen, K. R., M. A. Fine. Oxford University Press, New York.

30. Shapiro, A. 2003. "Later-life divorce and parent–adult child contact and Proximity", *Journal of Family Issues* 24: 264–85.
31. Stankuniene, V.; Maslauskaite, A. 2008. "Family transformation in the post-communist countries: attitudes toward changes", in *People, Population Change and Policies*, eds. Ch. Höhn, D. Avramov, I. Kotowska. New York: Springer, 113–141.
32. Stankuniene, V. "Changing marital status in Lithuania in the 20th century, in *The Baltic Countries: Population, Family and Family Policy,* eds. V. Stankuniene, D. Jasilionis. Vilnius: Institute for Social Research, 211–25.
33. *The European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Statistical Comparison*. 2008. Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
34. Trinder, L. 2008. "Maternal gate closing and gate opening in postdivorce families", *Journal of Family Issues* 29(10): 1298–1324.
35. Tomassini, C.; Kalogirou, S.; Grundy, E.; Fokkema, T.; Martikainen, P.; van Groenou, M.; Karisto, A. 2004. "Contacts between elderly parents and their children in four European countries: current patterns and future prospects", *European Journal of Ageing* 1: 54–63.
36. White, L. 1994. "Growing up with single parents and stepparents: long-term effects on family solidarity", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56: 935–48.

AUŠRA MASLAUSKAITĖ

Santykiai tarp suaugusių vaikų ir tėvų Lietuvoje: šeimos, individualūs ir struktūriniai veiksniai

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas suaugusių vaikų ir tėvų susitikimų dažnis bei jį lemiantys šeimos, individualūs ir struktūriniai veiksniai. Tyrimas atskleidė, kad tėvų skyrybos neigiamai veikia tėvo ir vaikų santykius, bet neturi įtakos motinos ir vaikų santykiams. Lietuvoje, priešingai nei kitose šalyse, neigiamas skyrybų poveikis stipriau pasireiškia tėvo ir dukters diadai. Palyginus su kitomis šalimis, Lietuvoje nustatytas labai silpnas suaugusio vaiko gyvenimo būdo bei struktūrinių požymių poveikis susitikimų dažnumui. Atstumas nuo tėvų namų yra stipriausias suaugusių vaikų ir tėvų santykių dažnį modeliuojantis veiksnys.

Raktažodžiai: santykiai tarp kartų, tėvų skyrybos, gyvenimo įvykiai, Lietuva