

Irma Budginaitė-Mačkinė¹

0000-0001-6679-0365

Institute of Sociology and Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy,
Vilnius University

Representations of transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad in Lithuanian media discourse

Abstract

The Lithuanian population has been highly mobile since joining the EU. Consequently, life across borders has become a common experience for many children and young people from Lithuania. This article first examines the extent to which Lithuanian media (2006–2021) captures the experiences of Lithuanian children living abroad and of those who remain in Lithuania when their parents emigrate. It then focuses on a subsample of news items which portray mobile and transnational childhoods as “vulnerable” and in need of protection, building on the concepts of “family troubles” and “troubling families” (McCarthy et al., 2013). The findings reveal that the constructions of childhoods in the migration context are grounded in two powerful imaginaries – one linked with migration and the other tied to the notion of family. The increasing diversity of family forms challenges the strong imaginary of the national-bound single household family unit as the norm and reveals the media’s power in defining “good families” and “appropriate” childhoods.

Keywords: media discourse, transnational childhoods, childhoods abroad, family troubles, troubling families

¹ **Corresponding author:** Irma Budginaitė-Mačkinė, Institute of Sociology and Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Universiteto str. 9, 01513, Vilnius, Lithuania; email: irma.budginaite@fsf.vu.lt.

Introduction

Lithuania's accession to the European Union in 2004 made it easier for Lithuanian citizens to move abroad and, consequently, life across borders has gradually become an increasingly common experience among children and young people. According to Statistics Lithuania (2023), between 2005 and 2021, more than 100,000 Lithuanian residents under 18 years of age left the country. In parallel, nearly 27,000 Lithuanian nationals under 18 years of age moved (back) to Lithuania between 2005 and 2021. For a country with a population below 3 million, such figures are quite significant. They indicate that children and young people represent an important group of the mobile Lithuanian population.

A significant share of children and young people in Lithuania are leading a transnational family life due to parental emigration. The data from the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Agency for the years 2010–2016, shows that more than 15,000 minors were placed under temporary guardianship at the request of their parent(s) who had moved abroad (EMN, 2017). It is estimated that this number is actually significantly higher if we consider that children who remain in the care of one of their parents do not require a change of guardianship.

Taking into account the significant share of children and young people living abroad and the considerable number of minors remaining in Lithuania following the departure of their parents, it is important to know to what extent their experiences are covered in the public discourse. Acknowledging the role media plays in framing migration (Eberl et al., 2018) and defining “good” families and “appropriate” childhoods (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2013), this paper examines how Lithuanian online media (2006–2021) depicts transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad. First, it aims to uncover the overarching themes in the media coverage of the migration of the Lithuanian population and to determine the extent to which the experiences of children and young people are captured in the media, whose voices are presented and in what contexts. Second, the article focuses on the subsample of news items referring to children's rights and child protection. Using the framework of “family troubles” and “troubling families” (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2013; 2019), the article reveals how transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad can be constructed as “vulnerable” and in need of protection.

Researching “family troubles” in the context of migration

Ribbens McCarthy, Gillies, and Hooper (2019, pp. 2207–2208) offer a conceptual framework to breach the binary between the research focused on so-called “ordinary” family lives and research concentrated on “the problematic” observed in family studies. They define the concept of “family troubles” as “unexpected disruptions and/or [...] disruptive changes, and/or [...] a chronic failure of life to live up to expectations” (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2013, p. 14). At the same time, they recognise that these expectations themselves might be troubling (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2019, p. 2211).

Childhood, in particular, becomes a period of life which has increasingly high expectations, and, consequently, anything that may be seen as disrupting an (idealised) image of childhood can be perceived as a source of “trouble” (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2019, p. 2211). The concept “family troubles” was initially used to acknowledge the “‘normality’ and ‘ordinariness’ of changes and challenges in the family lives of children and young people”, which may not necessarily be experienced as “family troubles” (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2019, p. 2210).

Migration of one or several family members is prone to come to the attention of the media, as it does not comply with the expectation that a child will be raised by their parents at their home, which is considered to be the suitable site of a “proper childhood” (Ribbens McCarthy & Edwards, 2011). Furthermore, some families living abroad do not comply with the expectation that children will be raised in their country of origin. Therefore, “family troubles”, which would be deemed undeserving of attention in “regular” circumstances, may start to be seen as “troubling” enough to “require some sort of action or ‘intervention’” (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2019, p. 2212) in the context of migration.

Migration was not one of the themes researched by the group of scholars focusing on “family troubles”. However, the usefulness of this theoretical framework for researching families in the migration context and across diverse cultures has already been acknowledged elsewhere (Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2018; Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020a; Ribbens McCarthy & Gillies, 2018) and it serves as a basis for this paper. Transnational parenting is at the core of debates about the moral imperative of being responsible parents (especially mothers) and fulfilling family responsibilities (see: Duque-Paramo, 2013; Gu et al., 2022; Phoenix, 2019). The review of Lithuanian academic publications between 2004 and 2017 (Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020a; 2020b), shows that when negative framing is used in the media, scripts such as disrupting family relations, abandoning children, misinterpreting parental responsibilities, putting one’s own needs first instead of prioritising the needs of the child are employed.

The research to date on raising children abroad focuses on the efforts of Lithuanian parents to be a “good” parent: ensure the child’s well-being and maintain the child’s ties with their country of origin (see: Rupšienė & Rožnova, 2011; Batuchina, 2014; cf. Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020a). It acknowledges that these efforts may both succeed and fall short and frames the examples of weakening the Lithuanian identity in the second generation as failing the moral imperative to preserve the national identity abroad (see: Štutienė, 2009). Meanwhile, recent research situating the experiences of Lithuanian families abroad in the institutional context and public discourse in the host countries point to ineffective state interventions or insufficiently implemented assistance (see: Šilėnienė & Koblova, 2017) and the fear of host country institutions by Lithuanian families abroad (see: Daukšas, 2020).

Following the line of inquiry suggested by Ribbens McCarthy and colleagues, this paper aims to reveal how certain kinds of childhoods are inherently constructed as less “appropriate”, where mobility of parents is perceived as a problem. Furthermore, it aims to demonstrate when changes and challenges related to parents’ migration (together with and without children) become considered “troubling”, “harmful” and requiring intervention. What responses are portrayed to be appropriate, by whom, to which families, and in which contexts?

Portraying migration and family life in the media discourse

The research on media coverage of migration highlights a prevailing tendency to focus on negative issues (see: Lubbers et al., 1998). The host countries' media often depict migrants from what is called Eastern European countries as an economic threat and a potential burden on the welfare system (see: Eberl et al., 2018; Tereškinas, 2011). Security concerns and criminal activities also receive attention in some cases (see: Loftsdóttir, 2017; Radziwinowiczówna & Galasińska, 2021), albeit less compared to migration from non-EU countries (see: Poole & Richardson, 2010). The research predominantly examines the host countries' perspectives, with a few notable exceptions that consider both the host and sending countries' viewpoints (see: Balabanova & Balch, 2010; Cheregi, 2018).

The international research demonstrating that media plays an important role in defining “good” families and “appropriate” childhoods (see: Ennis, 2014) is also relevant for developing arguments made in this article. Notwithstanding the general underrepresentation of children in the media, it has been established that vulnerable children tend to receive significant coverage in the news due to their potential attractiveness to the reader (Popović & Kampać, 2017). Research on transnational families demonstrates that public concerns over the welfare of children remaining in the country of origin after the departure of their parent(s) abroad prevail across time and across various contexts (see: Gu, 2022; Shostak, 2006). The recent research evidence shows that, even if children later join their parents abroad, a two-fold disruption of primary attachments may be noticed in such a context: first, when their parents (particularly mothers) migrate; and second, when children leave their “beloved caregivers” in the country of origin to join their parent(s) abroad (Phoenix, 2019, p. 2321).

Furthermore, families who move abroad with their children or who start a family while already living abroad are not exempt from potentially falling under the scrutiny of institutions of the host country or the host country's media. It is acknowledged that mobility continues to shape the “contours of particular childhoods” in the second generation (see: Orellana et al., 2001; Wolf, 2002). This can be illustrated by the accounts of “feeling peculiar” shared by youth with migratory backgrounds and a wide range of identities constructed by the migrant children (Pustułka et al., 2015, p. 207). Both children and their parents face various challenges: they have to navigate the (new) settings, which are “determined by a superimposed group culture of the majority” (Adams & Kirova, 2006) and engage with or cope with (symbolic) “everyday bordering” practices in these settings (Tervonen et al., 2018; Walsh et al., 2021). They can be identified (and differentiated) as not belonging to the majority population. Consequently, there is a possibility that the difficulties some migrant children face can be “attributed to their ethnic/national origin or the (wrong) doing of their parents” (Ślusarczyk & Pustułka, 2016, p. 62), which can lead to labelling a particular family as “troubling”.

The broader research on childhoods in the migration context also points to the mobilisation of children's rights for governing and controlling transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad by various welfare regimes (see: Lind, 2019). Enforcement of protective rights may particularly concern children, as they are likely to be

“the least controversial subjects of a policy guided by harm protection” (Anderson, 2012, p. 1242). Furthermore, “vulnerability” may be distributed differentially and become a negative and stigmatising feature for some specific groups (Casalini, 2016).

Data and methods

The article draws on the empirical data from two Lithuanian Internet media portals (Delfi.lt, 15min.lt) over a period of 16 years (2006–2021). Internet media was chosen for two main reasons: first, the selected news portals have historically had the widest readership in Lithuania, surpassing traditional printed media for quite some time²; second, the online format ensures accessibility to both Lithuanian residents and Lithuanians abroad, influencing their perception of migration processes and their effects across borders.

The empirical data was gathered while implementing the postdoctoral research project “Migrants from Lithuania: representations in Lithuanian public discourse and everyday contexts” (no. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-23-0155), which has received funding from the European Social Fund under a grant agreement with the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT). As emigration rates increased in the official statistics, the Lithuanian media’s interest in migration topics grew (Budginaitė, 2012). This led to the creation of sections dedicated to covering news on the migration of the Lithuanian population. Delfi.lt (established in 1999) was the first to introduce a special section “Lithuanians abroad” in 2006. Meanwhile 15min.lt (established in 2008) created the special section “Emigrants” around 2012. By then it already had a very high readership (Gemius, 2015), rivalling Delfi.lt. The decision to focus on the specific sections also made it possible to avoid limitations posed by the data collection with the keywords search³.

The data was collected using the Web Collector function embedded in the data analysis software MAXQDA 2022. The copy of each article was saved in the MAXQDA programme in two formats (.pdf and .docx). The latter format was used for textual analysis; while the former was kept to retain the visual appearance of each article on the website. All articles published under these two sections were included in the analysis (N=6899) and grouped into separate sets according to the source and the year of publication (see Figure 1 in the following section).

As the first step, the articles’ content was analysed using an automated approach to thematic analysis. The research on media framing of migration distinguishes issue-specific frames and generic news frames (Brüggemann & D’Angelo, 2018; Eberl et al., 2018). The issue-specific frames represent the themes (e.g., economy, social

² The top three printed media sources (*Savaitė*, *Žmonės* or *Lietuvos rytas*) had a readership of between 173,200 and 321,700 in 2019 (Kantar, n.d.). For comparison, in 2019 Delfi.lt and 15min.lt had a readership of over 1280,00 and 1248,00 readers respectively (Gemius, 2019).

³ The search engines integrated into the selected Internet media portals provide only a limited number of (most recent) results when running keyword searches, making it impossible to capture the changes over time. Furthermore, there is a wide variety of terms used to refer to the mobile Lithuanian population (e.g., “emigrants”, “Lithuanians abroad”, “diaspora”), making it difficult to capture the same media corpus.

welfare, security, or culture) with which migration tends to be inherently associated; while generic frames (e.g., conflict, victimisation) rise above thematic boundaries and “are closely related to routines of journalism” (Eberl et al., 2018, p. 211). Issue-specific thematic dictionaries were developed on the basis of a literature review and integrated into the MAXQDA project using MAXDictio package. The distribution of themes in time is presented in Figure 2 (see the following section).

As the second step, the articles attributed to the theme of “family” during the first stage of the analysis were reviewed further. Those articles, which mentioned children (N=2214 articles with over 14,600 mentions), were reviewed to make sure they referred to underaged children⁴. After screening, the remaining articles were grouped into three sub-groups: articles focusing on childhoods abroad (Lithuanian citizens under 18 years of age living abroad), transnational childhoods (living in Lithuania, while one or both of their parents live abroad), and childhoods upon return to the country of origin (moving back to Lithuania with their parents).

These two initial steps of analysis allowed the general trends in media coverage over an extended period of time to be unveiled and to determine the extent to which families affected by migration (in particular transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad) were depicted in the Lithuanian media discourse. The exploratory thematic analysis carried out at this stage also revealed that one of the (initial) themes present in the news articles on childhoods abroad and the news articles on transnational childhoods were related to the protection of child(ren)’s rights and protection of child(ren) against (potential) harm. Therefore, as the third analytical step, an in-depth qualitative analysis was performed on a subsample of the articles, which mentioned child(ren)’s rights or protection of the child(ren) (N=85 articles). The analysis was carried out following the thematic analysis approach using MAXQDA 2022 software for coding.

General thematic trends

Attention to the mobility of the Lithuanian population post-EU accession increased, peaking shortly after the introduction of dedicated sections in the researched news portals (see: Figure 1). The “Lithuanians abroad” section on Delfi.lt included over 350 articles annually for several years and a similar trend was observed in the section “Emigrants” (15min.lt) from 2013 to 2016. However, both portals witnessed a gradual decline in the number of articles over the recent years. This may indicate both a decreasing interest in news focusing specifically on mobile Lithuanians and, at the same time, a better integration of such news in the general media flow.

⁴ Articles, which used the word in the sense of “adult children” or as part of a specific expression (e.g., “feeling like a child”), referred to not having or planning children in the future were excluded.

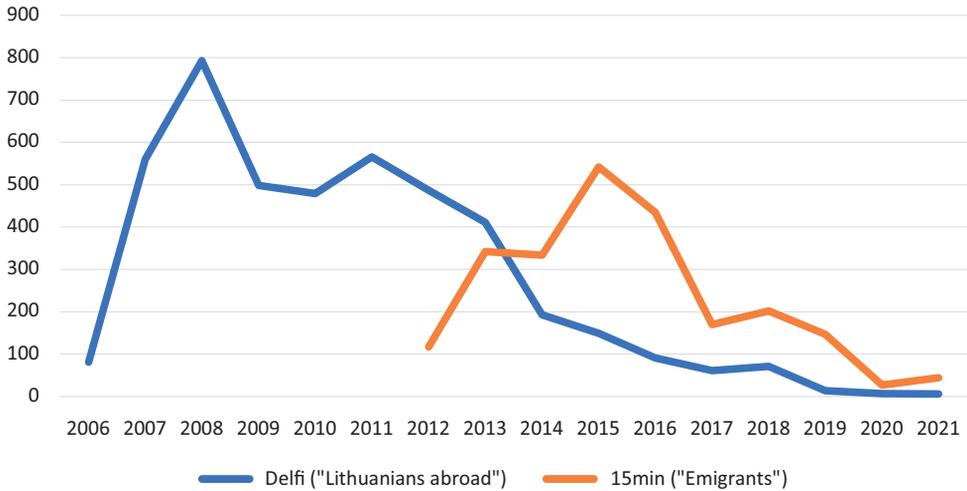


Figure 1. Number of articles in the sections “Lithuanians abroad” (Delfi.lt) and “Emigrants” (15min.lt) by the year of publication (2006–2021)

The thematic focus evolved over time, yet the top three themes remained consistent (see: Figure 2). First, the international mobility of the Lithuanian population was primarily framed as a political matter, with journalists actively covering political debates around emigration, return migration policies, double citizenship, and the political engagement of Lithuanian communities abroad, etc. Second, there was substantial media coverage of various crimes involving Lithuanian nationals abroad and offences against them. This aligns with a broader trend of crime-centric coverage in migration news observed elsewhere (cf. Eberl et al., 2018). Figure 2 illustrates a sustained high share of articles on this theme and increased attention in recent years. On the one hand, this could be attributed to the growing criminalisation of migration in the host countries’ media (see: Radziwinowiczówna & Galasińska, 2021): a significant share of articles on criminal activities published on both Delfi.lt and 15min.lt were either directly based on news items published in the host countries or collected from several international sources, often in English. On the other hand, the increasing share of crime-centred articles may be due to a decline in news items on other themes, while the reporting on criminal activities abroad continued as before.

Compared to the prominent themes of “politics” and “crime”, “family” received less media attention (see Figure 2) although it consistently ranked in the top three themes over the whole period of analysis. A closer look at the articles attributed to this theme reveals that despite the frequent use of the keyword “child(ren)”, children were seldom the central focus of the article. They were typically mentioned in passing when reporting about Lithuanian nationals abroad (e.g., “they brought⁵ their children

⁵ In Lithuanian, a specific verb was selected (“atsigabeno”), which is commonly used to refer to cargo or goods/things.

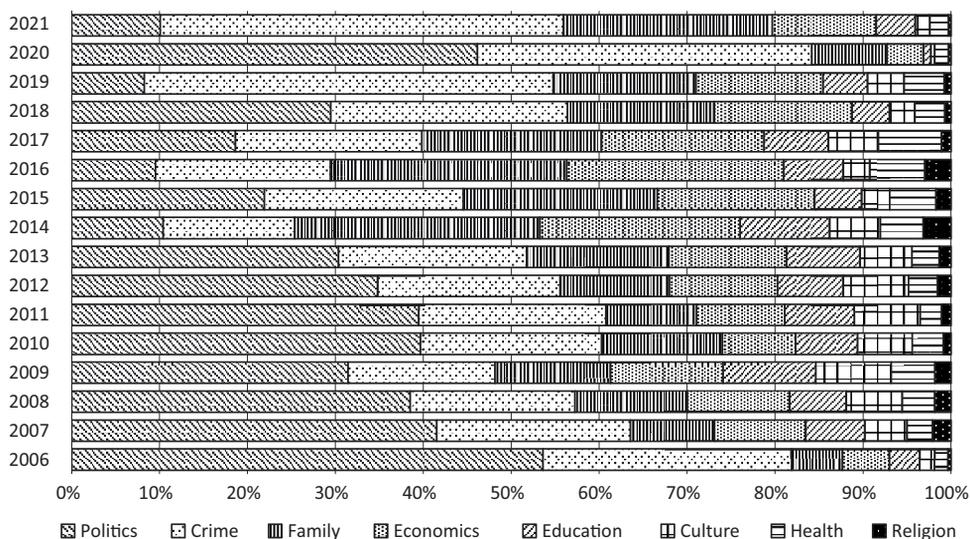


Figure 2. Share of references to specific themes by year (2006–2021)

to England”). This echoes the tendency to overlook children and their position in the migration processes (see: Orellana, 2001; Sime & Fox, 2015) and treat children as “luggage” in both academic discourse (Orellana et al., 2001; cf. Pustułka et al., 2015), and media discourse (Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2018).

Articles delving deeper into children’s lives within migration context (rather than mentioning “child(ren)” in passing) predominantly viewed the children’s situation from the perspective of their parents, educators, psychologists, social workers, child rights protection services staff, government officials, experts, and others. This approach reflects the involvement of “personnel with recognised authority” (cf., Archard & Skivenes, 2009), who are consulted when defining the child’s best interests across various contexts. It is agreed, however, that the use of the notion of “best interests” has some inherent difficulties related to hidden cultural and moral assumptions (Thomas & O’Kane, 1998, p. 138; cf. Woodhead, 2015).

Despite the recognised importance of including children’s perspectives in legal and policy decisions related to their lives (cf. Thomas & O’Kane, 1998), the media seldomly gave a voice to the children or young people themselves and in those few cases when they did, the reflection on childhood experiences was made from the point of view of (young) adults. Such lack of (young) children’s voices in the media (before adulthood) relates to ethical dilemmas, age-appropriateness and particular approaches required for interviewing, as well as difficult access and time constraints (Bird, 2013). It reflects the inherent contradiction between having their voices heard and preventing (possible) harm, as well as a careful balance between a child’s best interests and their views (Archard & Skivenes, 2009). At the same time, however, it also leads to the lack of understanding and visibility of children’s perspectives on matters that directly affect their lives in childhood and well beyond.

Most of the articles focused on Lithuanian nationals living abroad. However, a significant number of features concerned cases where children and their parent(s) lived across borders, particularly around 2008–2010. The experiences of children upon return started to be captured at a similar time as transnational childhoods but children's experiences upon return remain the least talked about subject so far. It is important to acknowledge that a number of articles captured changing family life arrangements in the same family over time. Despite the conventional linear perception of the migration process, recent academic research shows that migration trajectories are not necessarily "marked by a beginning and an end but rather involve ongoing, multiple and provisional journeys across locales and over time and the life course" (Amrith, 2021, p. 127). Similarly, a significant number of news articles in the Lithuanian media recognised the complexities and fluidity of family life in the context of migration by referencing multi-local family arrangements. In some of the migration stories depicted by the media, it was also acknowledged that these arrangements may change over time and in various directions, e.g., children join their parent(s) abroad for a while, are then later sent back to the country of origin to be cared for by relatives, and then re-join their parent(s) in the host country once the living circumstances abroad improve. While the subsequent sections of this article focus specifically on representing transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad, the non-linearity of migration trajectories is also taken into account.

Representations of transnational childhoods

Previous research shows that the negative framing of transnational families (and transnational childhoods) dominated the news coverage for over a decade (Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2018). The departure of parents (particularly mothers) was often framed as creating an unfavourable and unsafe environment for the children both in the psychological and physical sense, as the following quote illustrates: "parents' departure creates a lot of anxiety, sadness for children. Furthermore, [children] have to adjust to living with others, sometimes even almost complete strangers" (Smalskienė, 2010). In numerous articles, the experience of migration in the family was associated with difficulties related to the separation of child(ren) and parent(s): children were considered "lonely", "unloved", "in want of closeness", "searching for close people". This section details how the depictions of the "troubling" nature of transnational families differ depending on the family circumstances and how representatives from institutions working with the protection of children's rights emerge as (potential) protectors against harm.

"It is not always necessarily bad, but it is never good": gradation of "troubles" in transnational families

The parental decision to move abroad was usually depicted as a disruptive change and as a source of (potential) "trouble". However, how troubling it actually became in journalists' eyes was at least partially linked to the family's circumstances. For exam-

ple, the article “Emigrants risk losing their children” quoted a psychologist who argued that there might be different kinds of families: in most cases, parent(s)’ emigration creates “great suffering for children” and “leaves deep scars”, but “it is likely that there are families, where such problems are not so severe” (Smalskienė, 2010). All parent(s) moving abroad risk losing their children (as the article’s title suggests), but the odds of actual loss happening might be worse for some rather than for others. The same subtle distinction is drawn when the author concludes that it is never good for children to live apart from their parents, but whether it is bad, may depend on a specific family history or situation.

The gradation of “troubles” depending on family circumstances observed in numerous news items is particularly evident in the article “New orphans: emigrants’ children” (Navickaitė, 2012). This article also happens to represent one of those very rare cases when the media considers the point of view of the children themselves. Claiming to set out to present *two stories of children left in Lithuania* in their own words, the article depicts both protagonists as independent and successful young adult women. Nevertheless, the way these two stories are framed points to a subtle grouping of transnational childhoods into more and less “troubling”.

The stories are narrated in juxtaposition to explain why the *emigration of the parent(s) became a big challenge* in one case, but not the other. It starts with the story of a girl who, after her single mother’s departure, began living with her grandmother:

She was raised without her father and she remained with her grandmother [...]. After two years the mother returned, but not for long – not even a year passed before she moved abroad again. This time not only for the money – her mother wanted to recover from alcohol abuse.

After these initial introductions, the reader soon learns that the story’s protagonist moved in with her mother’s sister and later ended up living independently before reaching adulthood. Wrapping up the story, the author of the article concludes that “her childhood was not easy” and now her mother is “only a friend”.

The introduction to the second story, similarly, focused on a girl who began living with her grandparents after her parents’ departure:

[She] remained in Lithuania when she reached 15. Her parents had very good jobs abroad, but she did not want to move abroad with them, because she attended a good school. Living without her parents, she found she didn’t miss them. On the contrary, she even wished that they would not call her every day.

Despite the similarities of the starting points of the stories (i.e., moving in with grandparent(s)’ after parent(s)’ departure), the reader immediately learns that the second protagonist attempted to join her parents abroad after some time, but she did not like it and returned to Lithuania to live alone “in a big house” under the supervision of her uncle until she reached the age of 18. The article states that the heroine of the second story “decided to stay [in Lithuania] herself”, never had any psychological problems and her classmates greatly respected her for being so independent.

The framing of family circumstances (single parenthood vs. nuclear family; lower vs. higher socioeconomic status; regular vs. prestigious schooling; different reasons for the parents' migration) as the main factor leading to different experiences of life apart represents inherent hierarchisation of transnational childhoods as more or less "troubling" depending on the families economic, social, and cultural capitals.

Protecting children from harm

Even if we do encounter some cases when the media gives a voice to children to share their experience of transnational childhood, the stories about the dangers for children living apart from their parents were usually told from the point of view of other actors (social workers, representatives of institutions of child rights, psychologists, experts), representing recognised authority (cf. Archard & Skiveness, 2009). In such instances, Lithuanian institutions and services were usually depicted as the (last line of) protectors of children against (potential) harm.

Some articles recount attempts to talk parents out of leaving in an effort to prevent the creation of (potentially) "troubling" transnational childhoods. One notable example of such efforts with a successful outcome was shared in the article "Emigrants risk losing their children" (Smalskienė, 2010): *'Believe me, if you leave, you will take away from your child and yourself much more than you will ever earn over your whole life' – these were the words I used to finally convince an 18-year-old [city] resident woman not to leave her month-old baby to go abroad to work.* As journalists explain, such efforts are not always successful. When "long conversations" do not make a difference, child rights services do everything they can to take care of the legal guardianship even when *at the very last week* a child's parents attempt to take care of the required documents (Nagročkienė, 2007).

Another instance where Lithuanian institutions and various specialists come into the picture as providers of support is the (attempted) reunifications of family members in Lithuania. Journalists explain that even after the return of the parent(s), some children continue living with their guardians (most often grandmothers). Reuniting with the child is not always enough to solve family "troubles" and, even with the help of professionals, the (accumulated) harm to the child(ren) cannot be fully addressed. When reporting on unsuccessful attempts to reunite with the child, journalists argue that parent(s) should have known better than to leave their child(ren) in Lithuania. *Didn't the specialists tell [her before leaving], that separating the child from the mother would have consequences? Or she did not want to hear it?*, asks the author of one of the articles (Smalskienė, 2010). Even if such a rhetorical question was not answered, the story is told solely from the point of view of the child rights services and can be read as a gendered moral tale, where the main responsibility for the child rests on the shoulders of the mother (cf. Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2000).

Representations of childhoods abroad

While transnational families are prone to fall under media scrutiny for not complying with the expectation that children will be raised by their parents, raising children abroad may also be depicted as troubling for other reasons. First, the media demonstrates that parents (including “good parents”) may find it hard to protect their children from the (potential) harm they face as “migrant children” living outside of their country of origin. Second, journalists argue that being a “good parent” and having a “proper childhood” is culturally specific. This section first focuses on instances presenting the inappropriateness of living abroad for “proper childhoods”, and later turns to discussing the role parents and various institutions may play in creating the (un)safe environment abroad or preventing the children from (potential) harm there.

Inappropriate sites for “proper childhoods” abroad

One of the settings attracting significant media attention as a source of potential “troubles” were schools abroad. Articles shed some light on the Lithuanian pupils’ experience of bullying at schools in various countries. The instances mentioned in the media range from various forms of verbal to physical harm, directed at both boys and girls (Jackevičius, 2007a). Some of these instances are defined as “experiences of terror” (Jackevičius, 2007b), claiming that they do not always receive sufficient attention from the host country institutions. As the following quote illustrates, the (small) injury can be perceived as a small matter (not deserving attention or concern) and the (interviewed) mother’s worry for her child’s safety at school can be disregarded on this basis: *One day my son came home from school with one of his eyebrows split open. When I went to the school to find out what happened, the school staff told me: ‘Never mind this – they [children] are just toughening up’* (Jokubauskienė, 2018). In such and similar cases, reactions from host country institutions to problems reported by the parents of Lithuanian children were depicted as ranging from disregard and insufficient attention to active discrimination of the children based on their migration status.

Dangers may lie both within and beyond the school walls if the children fall in with the wrong crowd abroad (15min.lt, 2018). In addition to shedding light on various crimes abroad, some of the articles raised broader questions about the safety and security of life abroad for children and young people and reflected on ways the crimes in question could have been prevented. The host country institutions are not the only ones to which the calls to take (more) responsibility and ensure a safe(r) environment for the Lithuanian children abroad are directed. For example, the article detailing the negative experiences of Lithuanian children in Ireland hints that “it might be even worse in Spain” later to remind that “it was the parents’ decision: they took their children to Spain, to Ireland” (Jackevičius, 2007a).

The media also shows that children often come to harm in their own private space (family home), which should be the safest possible space for a “proper childhood”. Over the years, journalists reported a number of cases when children were not taken care of, they witnessed continuous violence in the family (directed against

other family members) or were beaten by their parents (both mothers and fathers alike) and, in few instances, even killed by them. According to the media, at some point, various forms of neglect and violence started to be reported “almost daily” in various host countries (ELTA, 2010). The parents in most articles are depicted as incapable of understanding what it means to raise children and lacking the skills to take proper care of them: *If they had no background in raising children back in Lithuania, nothing will change abroad. Earning money does not teach one how to raise a child* (Bereišis, 2012).

Such and similar quotes in other articles depict child neglect as a widespread phenomenon and a concern to both institutions in the host countries and institutions in Lithuania. The child protection services abroad in such instances are presented as very well informed and, if the need arises, cooperate across country borders. Both the active presence and speed of the services abroad were well noted, as were the efforts of Lithuanian services to find suitable guardians (usually grandparents) for the children back in Lithuania to make sure they do not end up in care institutions abroad.

Another (possible) form of harm in the close (home) environment is described in the articles detailing divorces in families with underage children living abroad. The families going through a divorce are described as “undergoing legal battles” (Bačėnienė, 2012), “legal dramas” (Limontaitė, 2013). Although such metaphors are commonly used when reporting on the divorces of both couples of single and different nationalities, the media coverage of the latter group includes some additional layers and depicts them as much more troubling. Not only can divorce be depicted as harming the child, but the decision to create a family with a foreign national in the first place can be questioned, as a quote from the article “Different nationalities – not an obstacle for a family?” illustrates:

The family is the foundation of a strong state. Lithuania cannot be proud on this front – the number of registered marriages dropped by 3,600 last year compared to the previous years. Instead, every year there are more and more Lithuanians who start families with foreigners and with representatives of other faiths. Emigration is the reason why the number of mixed families is increasing (Griškonytė, 2010a).

Both journalists and the interviewees (usually Lithuanian women) warn the readers about the danger of losing custody of the child (if the former spouse who is national of the country where the couple lived gets full custody of the child) or practically (when the former spouse takes the child to another country without the mother’s consent). Lithuanian women, who “feel lonely, fragile” abroad and seek companionship in the arms of foreigners are warned by the media “not to forget that feelings and nice experiences should be accompanied by responsibility” (Griškonytė, 2010a). The media places the responsibility to defend oneself and protect child(ren) born from unions with foreign nationals on the shoulders of Lithuanian women abroad, at the same time, implying that unions formed by two Lithuanian nationals would correspond better with the imaginary embedded in the Lithuanian public discourse of what a “normal” family should be.

Inappropriate parenting vs. overreacting institutions abroad

The threat of children being taken away from (one of) the parents is mentioned not only in media coverage of families abroad undergoing a divorce. “Emigrant families more and more often lose their right to raise their children” informs the title of an earlier article (published in 2009) reporting on cases where children were taken by social services abroad. The articles published in subsequent years not only detail how widespread such a phenomenon is, but also try to determine how grounded such actions are, and whether they are always necessary. Reporting can be grouped into “justifiable” cases where children are taken due to inappropriate parenting and “insufficiently grounded” cases presented as a (possible) overreaction on the part of the host country institutions.

Parents are held responsible for creating the unsafe environment directly (actions towards the child(ren) ranging from neglect to abuse) or indirectly (decision to take their child abroad). In the former case, the intensive coverage of various cases of child neglect and abuse abroad is used to justify the need for such interventions. The actions of the social services are seen the only way to stop the suffering of Lithuanian children abroad, as the following quote illustrates:

The number of such ‘sores’ recently increased, because there are more and more asocial families who leave to earn money abroad and they take their children with them. Life abroad does not change the habits of these parents – they continue to drink, while their neglected children have to fight for their survival abroad themselves. Truth be told, this usually does not last long – they are soon taken by the local social services from their ‘damaged parents’ (ELTA, 2010).

At the same time, the media acknowledges that parents bringing up children abroad may have difficulties reading the cultural scripts and (with or without sufficient reason) fail to be seen as “good parents” in the eyes of the host country’s institutions and the circumstances the children grow up in may be considered differently depending on the context. On the one hand, instances of misreading the cultural scripts concern the attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment to discipline children in different countries. As illustrated by the following quote, the media usually sides with the institutions of the host country rather than parents in such instances: *while Lithuanians are used to pulling the ear of their children as a disciplinary measure, this might be looked on with real “horror” by Norwegian, British and Irish child protection services (Želnieņė, 2013).*

On the other hand, the media also reports cases of children being taken away based on what is considered “not entirely sufficient grounds”. The actions mentioned in the media include: “putting down a child’s hamster” (15min.lt, 2015a), coming “a bit late to kindergarten” (15min.lt, 2015b), a child walking “just a few hundred metres alone from school to home and spend[ing] an afternoon alone at home” (Griškonytė, 2010b), skipping a few days of school before Christmas to visit Lithuania and similar instances. Journalists and the experts they interview warn that such instances may seem quite insignificant to some, but they can be interpreted as disregard for the child’s interests

and custody of the child might be restricted, which can become a source of “cultural shock” and result in “troubles” with the social services in the host country.

Finally, some argue that “neighbours keep a closer eye on migrant families and can call the services for just minor reasons” (Čepaitė, 2010) and consider it to be “the business” model of the institutions abroad targeting migrant families (Jokubauskienė, 2018). Instances, when children are taken from parents by the services of the host country, are seen as particularly problematic when the guardianship of the child is given to a single-sex family. The article titled “[The child] is surrounded by the hot love of the Norwegian lesbians” (Stanišauskas, 2010) shares that:

For over a month now the two-year-old [boy] has had to listen to stories about two princesses in love. Norwegian society treats the citizens of less economically developed countries worse than the population of the banana republics. Norwegian child protection services took [the child] away by force and gave him into the temporary care of a lesbian family.

While a number of stories from countries (Ireland, Sweden, the UK) tended to frame the interventions by social services as justified, most of the cases, considered insufficiently grounded, were reported from Norway. This led the media to ask “Can they take away your child from you in Norway?” (Delfi.lt, 2013), detailing the efforts of the Lithuanian diaspora to make sure that newly arrived parents were fully informed about the rules, and their rights and obligations when bringing up children in Norway. The effects of such extensive and detailed media coverage are reported in other research on the experiences of a “climate of fear” in Norway (see: Daukšas, 2020; Hollekim et al., 2016; Vassenden & Vedoy, 2019) and elsewhere (see: Walsh et al., 2022).

Conclusions

Following the line of inquiry suggested by Ribbens McCarthy, Gillies, and Hooper (2013; 2018; 2019), this article sought to examine representations of transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad in the Lithuanian media, with a particular focus on articles discussing child protection and child’s rights. It is acknowledged that the media may affect children’s lives by shaping societal expectations towards “appropriate” childhoods and the way that policy interventions are framed (cf. Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2017). Even if the findings reveal “family” as one of the dominant themes, children rarely emerge as the main informers and their stories, when told, are shared when they have already reached adulthood. Despite the active involvement of children and young people in the migration processes, the public imaginaries surrounding their experiences remain shaped by others. This underscores the inherent contradiction between advocating for the expression of children’s voices while also avoiding ethical dilemmas related to interviewing children and preventing them from media attention, which can cause harm (cf. Archard & Skiveness, 2009). At the same time, it engenders the acknowledgement of children’s viewpoints about matters directly impacting their lives during childhood and extending into adulthood.

The analysis also revealed that media discourse on transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad relates to two types of powerful imaginaries: one associated with migration and one associated with family. These imaginaries are shaped by institutionalised understandings of the troubling nature of migrant families (with locally situated families considered as the norm) and varying expectations on “how a family should be” (cf. Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020b) depending on the country contexts. It has been acknowledged that transnational families are often subject to scrutiny in Lithuanian public discourse (see: Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2018) and elsewhere (see: Duque-Paramo, 2013; Gu et al., 2022; Phoenix, 2019). Similar to Duque-Paramo (2013), this article alludes to broader societal attitudes that media discourse reflects, highlighting the mismatch between the idealised image of a (privileged) childhood in a nuclear family household and the diversification of family forms due to migration and other significant demographic changes. While discourses on transnational childhoods in Lithuanian media are far from the “pathological migrant family” observed elsewhere (see: Gu et al., 2022 on depictions of Chinese transnational families), the analysis of the representations of childhoods in the context of migration reveals how both transnational life and life abroad may be framed as “troubling”. In both cases, family life does not correspond to a single household in a single country ideal. Seeing the lack of co-residence (transnational childhoods) and life in a different cultural environment (childhoods abroad) as being problematic points to the importance of situating the research in the wider theoretical debates addressing issues of household changes and increasing diversity of contemporary family life (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2000).

This article extends prior research by demonstrating how some transnational childhoods are deemed to be more troubling than others in the public “imaginary” (cf. Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020b; Smart, 2007). The findings reveal that depictions of transnational childhoods are influenced by social class, with families having fewer resources more likely to attract media attention. While challenges experienced by children from families in more advantageous socioeconomic circumstances are acknowledged, they are less often depicted as troubling, compared to children from less privileged backgrounds (e.g., single-parent households, lower socioeconomic status, etc.). In the latter case, the media tends to magnify the changes and challenges, framing them as deserving of public scrutiny (cf. Morgan, 2019). Lithuanian institutions in such cases are depicted in the Lithuanian media discourse as protectors against harm holding the higher moral ground and the Lithuanian state emerges as “valued and well-meaning” (cf. Anderson, 2012; Hollekim et al., 2016). Such construct of a state rushing to children’s defence relates to the work of Hollekim and colleagues (2016), who examined contemporary discourses on children and parenting in Norway. They show how the emphasis on the “proper” parenting skills compels processes toward standardisation and homogenisation of parenting, labelling certain groups of parents as deficient and arguing in favour of state institutions exploring alternative approaches.

Representations of children living abroad can be subjected to a process of “vulnerabilisation” in the Lithuanian media discourse in multiple ways similar to other groups deemed vulnerable in other contexts (cf. Casalini, 2016; Karin et al., 2012; Lind, 2019). Findings reveal that parental choices are scrutinised for moving abroad, reinforcing the depiction of locally rooted families (remaining in the country of origin) as the

norm, transnational parenthood as “irresponsible” and transnational childhoods as “troubling” (cf. Juozeliūnienė et al., 2020b; Juozeliūnienė & Budginaitė, 2018). Moreover, being raised in a bi-national or multi-national family is inherently constructed as less “appropriate”, categorising the childhoods in bi- or multi-national households as inherently problematic. Similarly, the media portrays the placements of Lithuanian children under temporary guardianship, especially involving same-sex couples, as a cause for heightened concern. Such and similar instances illustrate how families involving people of different nationalities and those not aligning with heteronormative “imaginary” may be presented in the media as a source for (national) concern. Such discourses tap into the anxieties about ethnic (and racial) preservation, which are exacerbated by the parents and/or carers not conforming to the ideal of single nationality heterosexual coupling as the safest environment for a “proper childhood”. This can be seen as an expression of heteronationalistic discourse, explored in other EU countries with a long emigration tradition and traditionally strong family values (see: Mulhall, 2011 on the case of Ireland).

The wider academic literature highlights the diverse challenges faced by children growing up in competing national and ethnic contexts. They must navigate growing up in complex (intersecting) environments (family, peer groups, educational institutions, etc.) (Adams & Kirova, 2006). Each of these environments may contain (some) dangers to “proper childhoods” that children living abroad are exposed to. Lithuanian media acknowledges the insufficient attention from the host country institutions, especially regarding the challenges Lithuanian children face in schools, and the inappropriate parenting practices, ranging from neglect to serious harm. These contribute to an “imaginary” of the social pathologies believed to be inherent in families finding themselves in less privileged circumstances. Even if the way in which institutions and services of the host countries’ actions are interpreted in the media may vary (from well-grounded actions to overreactions), the portrayal of parents as ultimately responsible for the situation remains a recurring theme: the parents took the risk to move abroad and they have to bear the ultimate responsibility if something goes wrong.

The findings of this article should be understood in a context related to the inherent limitations of the study. The choice to focus on two specific sections “Lithuanians abroad” (Delfi.lt) and “Emigrants” (15min.lt) does not cover the broader media corpus, which may also refer to transnational childhoods and childhoods abroad using a different framing (less linked with imaginaries surrounding the migration topic). It should be also noted that the analysis primarily focused on a subset of news items related to child’s rights and child protection, attention to which decreased in recent years. The broader thematic range of the entire corpus was only briefly touched upon but largely remains beyond the scope of this publication, and warrants separate exploration due to the increasing diversity of themes. The article also only analysed internet media, excluding newspapers and alternative genres of media (e.g., social media), which may contain different perspectives. Although this choice ensured capturing messages accessible to both Lithuanians abroad and Lithuanians residing in the country, it also missed out on exploring alternative perspectives and voices of children and young people. These voices may be more prominent in social media and warrant separate investigations.

Funding source

This publication was prepared while implementing the postdoctoral research project no. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-23-0155, which has received funding from the European Social Fund under a grant agreement with the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT).

Acknowledgments

It would like to thank the editors of this special issue, participants of panel on mobile and migrant childhoods organized by Charlotte Melander, Oksana Shmulyar Gréen and Kerstin von Brömssen in 2022 at Nordic Migration Conference, colleague Anna Wojtynska and anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on the earlier versions of this paper that helped me to significantly improve the manuscript. In addition, I would like to thank Irena Juozeliūnienė (Vilnius University) for continuous collaboration, as idea for this article emerged from our earlier research on transnational mothering and transnational families.

References

- Adams, L. & Kirova, A. (2006). *Global migration and education: Schools, children, and families*. Routledge.
- Amrith, M. (2021). The linear imagination, stalled: Changing temporal horizons in migrant journeys. *Global Networks*, 21(1), 127–145. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12280>
- Anderson, B. (2012). Where's the harm in that? Immigration enforcement, trafficking, and the protection of migrants' rights. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(9), 1241–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764212443814>
- Archard, D. & Skivenes, M. (2009). Balancing a child's best interests and a child's views. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 17(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181808X358276>
- Bačėnienė, D. (2012). Tėvų kovoje dėl mergaitės tašką padėjo teismas. *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on *Tiesa*]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/tevu-kovoje-del-mergaites-taska-padejo-teismas.d?id=60179505>
- Balabanova, E. & Balch, A. (2010). Sending and receiving: The ethical framing of intra-EU migration in the European press. *European Journal of Communication*, 25(4), 382–397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026732311038100>
- Batuchina, A. (2014). Children's perspective on parental involvement in the emigration country. *Education in a changing society*, 1, 167–173.
- Bereišis, A. (2012). Dėl emigracijoje neprižiūrimų lietuvių vaikų – milžiniškas skundų šuolis. *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on *Valstiečių laikraštis*]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/del-emigracijoje-nepriziurimu-lietuviu-vaiku-milziniskas-skundu-suolis.d?id=59178293>
- Bird, W. (2013). Absent voices – children in the media: young and mediated. *Rhodes Journalism Review*, 33, 27–30.

- Brüggemann, M. & D'Angelo, P. (2018). Defragmenting news framing research: Reconciling generic and issue-specific frames. In P. D'Angelo (ed.), *Doing news framing analysis II*. (90–111). Routledge.
- Budginaitė, I. (2012). Visuomeniniai grįžtamosios migracijos veiksniai: grįžusių migrantų įvaizdis viešojoje erdvėje ir visuomenės požiūris. In E. Barcevičius & D. Žvalionytė (eds.), *Užburtas ratas? Lietuvos gyventojų grįžtamoji ir pakartotinė migracija*. (221–239). Vaga.
- Casalini, B. (2016). Politics, justice and the vulnerable subject: The contribution of feminist thought. *Gênero & Direito*, 5(3), 15–29. <https://periodicos.ufpb.br/index.php/ged/article/view/31309>
- Cheregi, B.F. (2018). The media framing of migration in sending and receiving countries: the case of Romanians migrating to the UK. In J. Mulholland, N. Montagna, and E. Sanders-McDonagh (eds), *Gendering Nationalism: Intersections of Nation, Gender and Sexuality*. (259–280). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Čepaitė, Z. (2010). Ar emigrantai – blogi tėvai? *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on *Anglija.lt*]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/ar-emigrantai-blogi-tevai.d?id=32423967>
- Daukšas, D. (2020). Baimės atmosfera ir (ne)saugūs namai: (I)migrantų iš Lietuvos Norvegijoje atvejis. *Lietuvos etnologija: socialinės antropologijos ir etnologijos studijos*, 20(29), 127–147.
- Delfi.lt. (2013). Ar Norvegijoje iš jūsų gali atimti vaiką? *Delfi.lt*. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/ar-norvegijoje-is-jusu-gali-atimti-vaika.d?id=62422409b>
- Duque-Paramo, M.C. (2013). Colombian families dealing with parents' international migration. In J. Ribbens McCarthy, J., Hooper, C.-A. and Gillies, V. (eds), *Family troubles? Exploring changes and challenges in the family lives of children and young people*. (209–222). The Policy Press.
- Eberl, J.-M., Meltzer, C.E., Heidenreich, T., Herrero, B., Theorin, N., Lind, F., Berganza, R., Boomgaarden, H.G., Schemer, C., & Strömbäck, J. (2018). The European media discourse on immigration and its effects: A literature review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 42(3), 207–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2018.1497452>
- ELTA. (2010). Svetimuose kraštuose – lietuvių vaikų kancios. *Delfi.lt*. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/svetimuose-krastuose-lietuviu-vaiku-kancios.d?id=36041361>
- EMN. (2017). *Migracijos tendencijos*. <https://123.emn.lt>
- Ennis, L.R. (2014). *Intensive mothering: The cultural contradictions of modern motherhood*. Demeter Press.
- Gemius. (2015). 2015 m. pradžia augino svetainių populiarumą. <https://www.gemius.lt/interneto-ziniasklaidos-naujienos/id-2015-m-pradzia-augino-svetainiu-populiaruma.html>
- Gemius. (2019). Rugsejo mėnesio apžvalga. <https://www.gemius.lt/interneto-ziniasklaidos-naujienos/rugsejo-menesio-apzvalga.html>
- Grīškonytė, A. (2010a). Skirtingos tautybės – ne kliūtis šeimai? *Delfi.lt*. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/skirtingos-tautybes-ne-kliutis-seimai.d?id=35374369>
- Grīškonytė, A. (2010b). Spąstai emigrantams – vaikų priežiūros taisyklės. *Delfi.lt*, 2010 08 04. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/spastai-emigrantams-vaiku-prieziuros-taisykles.d?id=35138331>

- Gu, X. (2022). “Save the children!”: Governing left-behind children through family in China’s great migration. *Current Sociology*, 70(4), 513–538. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120985874>
- Hollekim, R., Anderssen, N., & Daniel, M. (2016). Contemporary discourses on children and parenting in Norway: Norwegian Child Welfare Services meets immigrant families. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 60(C), 52–60. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.11.004
- Jackevičius, M. (2007a) Airijos mokyklose terorizuojami lietuvių vaikai. *Delfi.lt*. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/airijos-mokyklose-terorizuojami-lietuviu-vaikai.d?id=13432148>
- Jackevičius, M. (2007b) Airijos ambasadorius susirūpino lietuvių vaikais Airijoje. *Delfi.lt*. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/airijos-ambasadorius-susirupino-lietuviu-vaikais-airijoje.d?id=13440989>
- Jokubauskienė, R. (2018). Vis daugiau emigrantų nesugeba pasirūpinti savo vaikais. *15min.lt*. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/vis-daugiau-emigrantu-nesugeba-pasirupinti-savo-vaikais-56-990914>
- Juozeliūnienė, I. & Budginaitė, I. (2018). How transnational mothering is seen to be “troubling”: Contesting and reframing mothering. *Sociological Research Online*, 23(1), 262–281.
- Juozeliūnienė, I., Bielevičiūtė, I., & Budginaitė-Mačkinė, I. (2020a). Parenting and migration in academic publications: What is seen to be “troubling”? In I. Juozeliūnienė and J. Seymour (eds), *Making Lithuanian families across borders: Conceptual frames and empirical evidence*. (77–96). Vilnius University Press.
- Juozeliūnienė, I., Bielevičiūtė, I., & Budginaitė-Mačkinė, I. (2020b). Portraying migrant families in academic publications: Naming and framing. In I. Juozeliūnienė & J. Seymour (eds), *Making Lithuanian families across borders: Conceptual frames and empirical evidence*. (63–76). Vilnius University Press.
- Kantar. (n.d.). <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-metinis-spaudos-auditorijos-tyrimas/>
- Limontaitė, S. (2013). Emigrantų skyrybų drama – mūšis dėl vaiko. *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on *Tiesa*]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/emigrantu-skyrybu-dramamysis-del-vaiko.d?id=62147367>
- Lind, J. (2019). Governing vulnerabilised migrant childhoods through children’s rights. *Childhood*, 26(3), 337–351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568219847269>
- Loftsdóttir, K. (2017). Being “the damned foreigner”: Affective national sentiments and racialisation of Lithuanians in Iceland. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 7(2), 70–78.
- Lubbers, M., Scheepers, P., & Wester, F. (1998). Ethnic minorities in Dutch newspapers 1990–5: Patterns of criminalisation and problematisation. *International Communication Gazette*, 60(5), 415–431. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016549298060005004>
- Morgan, D.H.J. (2019). Family troubles, troubling families, and family practices. *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(16), 2225–2238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19848799>
- Mulhall, A. (2016). Queer in Ireland: “Deviant” filiation and the (un)holy family. In L. Downing and R. Gillett, *Queer in Europe*. (99–112). Routledge.
- Nagrockienė, I. (2007). Susirūpinta emigrantų vaikų globa. *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on *Sekundė*]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/susirupinta-emigrantu-vaiku-globa.d?id=13949076>

- Navickaitė, V. (2012). Naujieji našlaičiai – emigrantų vaikai. *15min.lt*. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/naujieji-našlaiciai-emigrantu-vaikai-56-235292>
- Orellana, M.F., Thorne, B., Chee, A., & Lam, W.S.E. (2001). Transnational childhoods: The participation of children in processes of family migration. *Social Problems*, 48(4), 572–591. <https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/publications/3445846804bd0e836e0552.pdf>
- Phoenix, A. (2019). Situating children’s family troubles: Poverty and serial migration. *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(16), 2310–2329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19846180>
- Poole, E. & Richardson, J.E. (2010). *Muslims and the news media*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Popović, S. & Kampać, K. (2017). Media coverage of children in care and „out-of-home” care: Content analysis of Croatian daily newspapers. *Medijska istraživanja: znanstveno-stručni časopis za novinarstvo i medije*, 23(1), 127–148. <https://doi.org/10.22572/mi.23.1.6>
- Pustulka, P., Ślusarczyk, M., & Strzemecka, S. (2015). Polish children in Norway: Between national discourses of belonging and everyday experiences of life abroad. In Z. Millei and R. Imre (eds), *Childhood and nation: Interdisciplinary engagements*. (207–227). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Radziwinowiczówna, A. & Galasińska, A. (2021). “The vile Eastern European”: Ideology of deportability in the Brexit media discourse. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 10(1), 75–93. DOI: 10.17467/ceemr.2021.01
- Ribbens McCarthy, J. & Edwards, R. (2011). *Key concepts in family studies*. Sage Publications.
- Ribbens McCarthy, J., Edwards, R., & Gillies, V. (2000). Moral tales of the child and the adult: Narratives of contemporary family lives under changing circumstances. *Sociology*, 34(4), 785–803. <https://doi.org/10.1177/S003803850000047X>
- Ribbens McCarthy, J., & Gillies, V. (2018). Troubling children’s families: Who is troubled and why? Approaches to inter-cultural dialogue. *Sociological Research Online*, 23(1), 219–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780417746871>
- Ribbens McCarthy, J., Gillies, V., & Hooper, C.-A. (2013). *Family troubles? Exploring changes and challenges in family lives of children and young people*. The Policy Press.
- Ribbens McCarthy, J., Gillies, V., & Hooper, C.-A. (2019). “Family Troubles” and “Troubling Families”: opening up fertile ground. *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(16), 2207–2224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19870047>
- Rupšienė, L. & Rožnova, A. (2011). Lietuvos darbo migrantų galimybės apmokėti mokyklinio amžiaus vaikų mokymosi ir neformaliojo ugdymosi užsienyje išlaidas: kaitos aspektas. *Tiltai*, 3, 367–378. <https://etalpykla.lituanistika.lt/object/LT-LDB-0001:J.04~2011~1367176324095/J.04~2011~1367176324095.pdf>
- Shostak, N. (2006). In search of Cinderellas, in Naples and beyond: Popular culture responses to labor migration from Ukraine. *Spaces of identity*, 6(2), 185–205. https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Khanenko-Friesen_Natalia/In_Search_of_Cinderellas_Naples_Beyond_Popular_Culture_Responses_Labor_Migration_from_Ukraine_anhl.pdf?PHPSESSID=njtjb47i00a4vehpssv04ubf77
- Sime, D. & Fox, R. (2015). Home abroad: Eastern European children’s family and peer relationships after migration. *Childhood*, 22(3), 377–393. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568214543199>

- Smalskienė, I. (2010). Emigrantai rizikuoja netekti vaikų. *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on Sekundė]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/emigrantai-rizikuoja-netekti-vaiku.d?id=34972069>
- Smart, C. (2007). *Personal life*. Polity Press.
- Stanišauskas, G. (2010). Petriuką supa karšta Norvegijos lesbiečių meilė. *Delfi.lt*. [Initially published on Valstiečių laikraštis]. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/emigrants/petriuka-supa-karsta-norvegijos-lesbieciu-meile.d?id=36138897>
- Statistics Lithuania. (2023). International Migration. <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize#/>
- Šutinienė, I. (2009). Lietuvių imigrantų požiūriai į lituanistinį vaikų ugdymą. *Filosofija. sociologija*, 20(4), 310–317. <https://mokslozurnalai.lmaleidykla.lt/publ/0235-7186/2009/4/310-317.pdf>
- Šilėnienė, B. & Koblova, V. (2017). Lietuvių imigrantų vaikų integracijos problemos Norvegijoje. *Švietimas: politika, vadyba, kokybė*, 9, 114–131. DOI:10.48127/spvk-epmq/17.9.114
- Ślusarczyk, M., & Pustulka, P. (2016). Norwegian schooling in the eyes of Polish parents: From contestations to embracing the system. *Central and Eastern European migration review*, 5(1), 49–69.
- Tereškinas, A. (2011). Imigrantai Didžiosios Britanijos, Ispanijos ir Norvegijos spaudoje. In V. Čiubrinskas (ed.), *Lietuviškasis identitetas šiuolaikinės emigracijos kontekstuose*. (71–86). Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla.
- Tervonen, M., Pellander, S., & Yuval-Davis, N. (2018). Everyday bordering in the Nordic countries. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 8(3), 139–142. <https://doi.org/10.2478/njmr-2018-0019>
- Thomas, N. & O’Kane, C. (1998). When children’s wishes and feelings clash with their best interests. *International journal of children’s rights*, 6(2), 137–154. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718189820494003>
- Vassenden, A. & Vedøy, G. (2019). Recurrence, eruptions, and a transnational turn: Three decades of strained relations between migrants to Norway and the child welfare services. *Child & family social work*, 24(4), 582–591. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12639>
- Walsh, J., Khoo, E., & Nygren, K. (2022). “Everyday bordering” in England, Sweden and Bulgaria: Social work decision-making processes when working with migrant family members. *Journal of international migration and integration*, 23(1), 343–361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00838-w>
- Woodhead, M. (2015). Psychology and the cultural construction of children’s needs. In A. James and A. Prout (eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood*. (54–73). Routledge.
- Wolf, D.L. (2002). There’s no place like “home”: Emotional transnationalism and the struggles of second-generation Filipinos. In P. Levitt and M.C. Waters (eds.), *The changing face of home: The transnational lives of the second generation*. (255–294). Russell Sage Foundation.
- Želnienė, L. (2013). Pragerti vaikai: emigrantai neišmoksta vaikų auginti pagal svetimas taisykles. *15min.lt*. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/pragerti-vaikai-emi->

grantai-neismoksta-vaiku-auginti-pagal-svetimas-taisykles-56-349816?utm_medium=copied

Želnienė, L. (2015). Dvi emigrančių istorijos: Norvegijoje vaikai atimti už tai, kad tėvai užmigdė žiurkėną? *15min.lt*. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/dvi-emigranciu-istorijos-norvegijoje-vaikai-atimti-uz-tai-kad-tevai-uzmigde-ziurkena-56-484259>

15min.lt. (2015). Ambasadorė Norvegijoje Izolda Bričkovskienė reikalauja susitikimo su 7-mečiu Gabrieliumi. *15min.lt*. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/lietuvos-ambasadore-norvegijoje-izolda-brickovskiene-reikalauja-susitikimo-su-7-meciu-gabrieliumi-56-482632>

15min.lt. (2018). Anglijoje nužudytos lietuvės motina papasakojo apie problemas su dukra ir paskutinį bučinį. *15min.lt*. https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/anglijoje-nuzudytos-lietuves-motina-papasakojo-apie-problemas-su-dukra-ir-paskutini-bucini-56-1070900?utm_medium=copied

