Chapter 1. Introduction: Translocal Familyhood and Lifelines across Borders

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Abstract

What are translocal families and what are their lifelines like? The theoretical section of the chapter explains translocality, translocal familyhood and lifelines, the three key concepts of the book. Based mainly on research carried out for the Inequalities of Mobility: Relatedness and Belonging of Transnational Families in the Nordic Migration Space project, the authors ponder how emotion, multiple belonging and intersectional inequalities play out in various ways in the lives of translocal families. This approach grasps the complexity of translocal family lives in the East and North European context, where the authors have conducted multilingual and interdisciplinary case studies across national borders.

Methodologically the chapter discusses how intersectional analysis reveals the coming together of family lifelines and inequalities and looks at how gender, generation, class and translocality create, influence and reinforce the strengths and vulnerabilities of familyhood. This section discusses the wide variety of qualitative methods the authors have used to analyse translocal familyhood: in-depth thematic and open interviewing, extended research conversations, photography, analysis of media materials, participant observation, and long-term intensive research engagement with families. Finally, the chapter introduces the different sections of the book and each chapter.

This book is about familyhood across borders. Based mainly on research carried out for the project Inequalities of Mobility: Relatedness and Belonging of Transnational Families in the Nordic Migration Space (Academy of Finland, 2015– 2019), the authors discuss how emotions,

multiple belonging and intersectional inequalities play out in various ways in the lives of translocal families. This approach is adequate to the complexity of translocal family lives in the East and North European context, where the authors have conducted multilingual and interdisciplinary case studies across national borders.

Easier and cheaper travel and border crossings have made it possible for people to travel long distances to improve their lives while remaining connected physically or digitally to their home countries. The result is a variety of family forms in which one or several family members travel between countries while maintaining family relations. Societies, economies and people's lives depend on such mobilities in many ways. For example, Lithuanian women and men work in the fish-processing industry and the health care system and contribute to northern Norwegian local communities while making a living and bringing children to a country far away from Lithuania. Estonian and other East European construction workers make up almost one fourth of the labour force in the Finnish construction sector, and while some commute for years, others settle, with or without families and children.

Women and men are the driving force of transnational economies, but they are also the force behind a variety of translocal family forms. The everyday lives of these families play out in and between different places and social systems. People live part of or most of their lives away from their families, yet try to sustain intimate relations through the Internet, by sending money and gifts, by establishing and maintaining traditions, with visits, and more. This book explores what translocal familyhood is, and how lifelines in and between countries are formed, and some of the consequences these lifelines produce. The authors' long-term qualitative research allows them to analyse emotions, relations, materialities, inequalities and negotiations in family lives performed in and between Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia and Sweden. The chapters discuss the various phenomena that affect these lives, covering subjects such as economic and national welfare systems and how gender, generation, class and geography create and reinforce inequalities, strengths and vulnerabilities in families and communities.

The East and North of Europe offer particularly interesting locations to shed light on patterns of migration and translocality. Large-scale migration to the Nordic region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) from the region commonly known as Eastern Europe started with the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc from late 1980s onwards and the ensuing gradual opening of

national borders that allowed people to cross the East–West divide. However, there are important historical and cultural differences between East European countries that currently influence the mobility of people's lives. Of the countries we study, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union, remaining so for 50 years despite having been independent before the Second World War. Poland and Romania are formerly socialist countries, yet they had very different relationships with the Soviet Union, and hence positions within the Soviet Bloc. Currently the Baltic States, Poland and Romania are European Union and NATO member states and thus firmly position themselves as belonging to Europe. The present-day Russian Federation, on the other hand, aggressively proclaims itself a continuation state of the Soviet Union and has in the 2000s under Vladimir Putin's rule progressively distanced itself from European values and forms of collaboration.

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Figure 1.1. Case study countries in East and North Europe. Map by Matti Fritsch.

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The Nordic region is of course not uniform either, although Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden still possess important social and cultural similarities, connected histories, economies and welfare state structures (Esping-Andersen 1990). The Nordic region countries all belong to the political West and are at the same time geographically located in the North-East of Europe. This makes North-Eastern Europe and the East–West divide in this region, where various inequalities, conflicts and new relations take place, an appropriate location to shed light on migration patterns. In this book we combine rich and detailed material from nine different migration contexts within the vast and heterogeneous, yet geographically relatively proximal, migration space of East and North Europe.

We focus particularly on the Baltic Sea area, where significant changes with regard to people's possibilities to move across national borders took place in the first decades of the 2000s. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland were among the Eastern European countries that joined the European Union on May 1, 2004, after which the relative proportion of labour migration increased significantly. Some countries, such as the UK, immediately opened their job markets to the accession states, whereas other countries, among them Finland, Norway and Sweden, placed temporary restrictions on the rights of work for the citizens of new EU member states. The largest waves of emigration from the Baltic countries took place in the years after Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined the EU, and during the global economic crisis of 2008–2011.

Romania and Bulgaria were next to join the EU, in January 2007, followed by increased labour migration from these countries. People from Russia, subject to regulations based on so-called third countries (outside the EU/EEA) could only migrate to the Nordic countries with a visa and a work permit, or with another legal reason for their stay. Between 1990 and 2016 tens of thousands of people with Ingrian Finnish or Finnish backgrounds moved, mainly from Russia and Estonia, to Finland as ethnic return migrants, later followed by labour migrants from other Eastern European countries. Norway has been recruiting workforce from Finland and Sweden since the 1950s, while the dismantling of the iron curtain in 1990 led to increased East - North migration based on work, family establishment and study. Currently, Norway receives most immigrants from Poland and Lithuania, while in Sweden Poles are the fourth largest immigrant group after Syrians, Iraqis, and Finns.

Crossing borders between the countries we have studied might seem easy, especially in the cases of intra-EU/EEA migration. At the same time people are moving from one system of social, economic, cultural and historical values to another. In their home countries, people leaving for greener pastures might be looked down upon and called “convenience refugees”, for instance in Estonia, or “sausage migrants” in Russia (Astapova 2019, pp. 95–97), referring to a quest for a better life and material well-being. On the other hand, in the receiving Nordic countries, societal values of equality and non-discrimination often hide a reality of hierarchies, prejudice and (wage) discrimination. To some extent, the migrant groups we are studying are “unmarked”, and their “relative whiteness” can be used as a resource to blend in and climb the social ladder (Daukšas 2017; Siim 2020; Runfors 2021). However, Europe is still in many contexts constructed through internal hierarchies and through symbolic boundaries between what has been termed “proper” Western Europeanness and “incomplete” Eastern Europeanness (Krivonos 2020, p. 389). Roma migrants from Eastern Europe are not considered white in Finland (Tervonen and Enache 2017), and Russians in Norway at a certain time were considered “white, but not quite” (Aure 2011, p. 184). In this kind of situation, people have to make an effort to avoid stigmatisation, using different tactics in order to pass as non-East Europeans (Krivonos 2020). Our book offers a way to think along the lines of inequality, hierarchy and negotiation, focusing on the wide range of translocal relations between countries of origin and countries of residence that migrants and their families maintain.

In the following, we first outline the framework of the book and its three key concepts: *translocality*, *translocal familyhood* and *translocal lifelines*. Next, we present and discuss the

main methodological approach of the book, *intersectionality*. This is followed by a brief presentation of the book's structure and chapters. We conclude this introductory chapter with an exploration of the possible future lifelines of translocal families in times of global crises, capturing both continuity and change in the context of East and North Europe, and beyond.

Translocality, translocal familyhood and lifelines

We approach migration processes using the conceptual lens of *translocality.* The concept of translocality has been raised in a decades-long discussion on migration as a transnational process, admitting that "immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations", constructing and reconstituting their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Glick Schiller et al. 1995, p. 48). This was a strong argument for upgrading the image of uprooted migrants and advancing the understanding of migrants' cultural and political identity as more complex. This included highlighting so-called circular migration, the back-and-forth mobility which has always been part of migration patterns and experiences (Ravenstein 1885; Castles and Miller 1998). The concept of migration has too often been seen as describing a linear, one-way journey of departure and arrival, while in fact it has always been far more complex. In this way our understanding of transnationalism and translocality are embedded in the "mobility turn" (Urry 2000; Cresswell 2010) in migration studies as well as in the social sciences and humanities more generally.

Transnational perspectives also stress the political aspect of migrant identities across national borders and boundaries. They help to see loyalties rooted in nation-state building in a new light, causing the myth of the unity and homogeneity of the nation-state to appear fictional. Due to new technologies migrants can now move more easily across borders, also making it easier for things, information, money, ideas, ideologies, sentiments and loyalties to move with them (cf. Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996). Electronic media together with migration profoundly changed the work of the imagination, the ways we construct imagined selves and imagined worlds (Appadurai 1996, p. 3). The theoretical discussions on transnationalism have also become important in understanding the more general processes of diversification (Loftsdòttir and Skaptadòttir 2020). However, transnationalism was criticised for its overemphasis of the nation state (Hannerz 1996, p. 6; Vertovec 2009). Somehow the concept encouraged binary thinking of migration as a two-site connection between migrants'

national homelands, left behind, and their national host societies, into which they are expected to be incorporated (Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

In this book we use the concept of translocality to mark a shift from transnational studies to a more 'grounded transnationalism' of mobile actors (Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). This concept highlights how the practices of everyday life play out at the local scale (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). The concept of translocality also points to the multiplicity of borders and locations, inside and outside the nation state, that are likewise important, rather than prioritising the nation as the only relevant context, as Loftsdóttir and Skaptadóttir (2020, p. 8) put it. Like the related concept of transnational social space, translocality opens a way to examine motivations, modes and frequencies of maintaining migrant ties "which spanned different nation states and included different geographical spaces" (Aure et al. 2011, p. 140).

Translocality, as we use the concept, points to and highlights local–local relationships transnationally. Translocality, moreover, implies the transgressing of locally bounded, fixed understandings of place and emphasises the importance of places as nodes where flows that transcend spatial scales converge (Massey 2005; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Everyday practices of migrants are informed by their localised experience (Brickell and Datta 2011), both "here and there" (Aure et al. 2011). Translocality thus emphasises place and local embeddedness: "'moorings' are often as important as 'mobilities'" (Cresswell 2010, p. 18). The translocal approach highlights that connections are not necessarily nation-to-nation but can also be town-to-town, rural-to-urban, or family-to-family, inside as well as between nation states. This approach also stresses that translocal spaces and connectedness are constantly co-produced by mobile and immobile populations (Brickell and Datta 2011). Through mobility and translocal connections families and their practices are simultaneously embedded in different local social fields (Massey 1994; Hanson and Pratt 1995; Peth et al. 2018).

Translocal familyhood is the lens that allows us to find a thematic focus for our studies. The book deals with families and members of families who move between countries for work, education, family establishment, "for the children's future" or "for a better life". Families' mobile lives across borders and between localities take many forms and are constantly changing. People can live between different countries, neighbouring or more distant, for several weeks or for decades. Families might relocate transnationally together as a unit or with only

one or more family members entering into some kind of mobility, while other members stay in the country of origin, or even live in a third country. Family members might also travel frequently between the home country and the country in which they care for a family member or go to school, in an analogous way to commuting for work. Whatever the set-up, such families can be described as leading a translocal family life where family members may keep up significant practical and affective relations on multiple levels and time spans across borders. In the process of doing so, they can maintain and reinforce feelings of relatedness and belonging as a translocal family unit. We have defined a way of life that includes such practices of 'doing family' as translocal familyhood. (Cf. Assmuth et al. 2018.)

Our use of the concept of translocal familyhood is indebted to Bryceson and Vuorela's (2002) ground-breaking approach to transnational families in which they define the concept as: "families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, i.e. 'familyhood', even across national borders" (ibid., p. 2). We further their work through a grounded, more place-focused translocal perspective on familyhood across borders. Indeed, we see translocal familyhood as a way of life where family members are spatially dispersed between countries but support their local–local connections in time and space. We consider that members of translocal families are not necessarily uprooted, although they are mobile. They are anchored in their everyday environments, and yet often try to be part of their families elsewhere, physically or mentally. They create translocal familyhood while connecting their mobile lives to their family members' lives through embodied relations with people and animals, through material objects, digital technologies, memories, emotions and sentiments, and senses of place (Svašek 2008; Assmuth et al. 2018; Povrzanović Frykman 2019).

Living and acting between localities can create an 'in-betweenness' mindset (Bhabha 1994; Schuck 1998; Christou 2006; Brickel and Datta 2011; Boehm 2012). We explore the idea of in-betweenness as negotiation of translocal space. Members of translocal families experience multiple 'heres' and 'theres'; they might "understand themselves as belonging to, divided between, or outside" different localities and nation states (Boehm 2012, p. 6). However, mobile subjects do not necessarily experience placelessness, rather they are 'transferred and regrounded' (Vertovec 2009, p. 12). Their local and/or national belonging and identity may be fluid, situational and negotiable. We examine familyhood, broadly and openly defined, as one

of the primary social spaces where translocal identities and belonging are articulated and negotiated.

In our analyses of translocal familyhood we consider the units, or active networks, that people perceive as being significant in their lives. Translocal familyhood hence includes a wide spectrum of intimate relations that people practice. The boundaries between family members and others close to them, such as lovers, friends or neighbours, are not necessarily strictly defined (Grillo 2008; Hakkarainen 2015). As part of their mobility people negotiate their family memberships, social relations and belongings. Mobility and migration thus create new conditions in which to do family, denoting specific contexts where people practice their familyhood, initiate new close relationships and make choices (Körber and Merkel 2012). Based on their studies of the North Atlantic Rim region, Walsh et al. (2013) have shown how this requires analysis of both women and men as gendered actors across a variety of spatial scales. In sum, our understanding of translocal familyhood emphasises people's agency and imagination in doing family, constructing their feeling of family belonging and intimate relationships in the ordinary, everyday activities of family life. Keeping in mind the constrains of various legal frameworks and family demands and obligations, we explore the limits of such agency, asking to what extent families can be considered "given" and to what extent they can be "made". (Cf. Carsten 2004, pp. 6, 9.)

Translocal lifelines is the third concept that helps build the theoretical and conceptual framework of this book. It emphasises how families' lives form lines and connections and how, in translocal lives, these lifelines stretch across borders. Increasing global mobility and migration are dynamic and consequential. They form a complex picture of flows, connections, frontiers, and channels that can be conceptualised as lines embedded in, and produced by, families' everyday lives. The concepts of lines and lifelines stress movement and dynamics, links and relations, but also the continuation of social life. Hence lifelines are at the core of practicing translocal family lives. We find this to be a promising way to conceptualise mobility and migration. The concept of lifelines shifts our attention from the static image of group positioning to the dynamism of personal being and becoming through, within and with family and other groups. Lifelines help us think about mobile translocal lives not as separate social entities but as the continuities passing through and taking place in and between these entities.

The concept of line(s) is widely used in the social sciences both as indicators of separation and of connection. In our research, the metaphor of lines helps to conceptualise family relations as "blood-lines", genealogical lines, and family lines, as well as highlighting the concept of mobility (Pérez-Mejia 2004; Ganser 2009; Bear 2012, pp. 8–11). The concept of lines also points to other practices and connections relevant in translocal lives. Lines come alive when they are heard, narrated and retold as "storylines" (Ingold 2007; Lulle 2015, p. 193; Seljamaa in this volume). Lines concerning biographies and family stories can also be approached as lifelines (Brodzki and Schenk 1988; Bledsoe 1999; Lulle 2015). Our concept of lifelines was initially inspired by Ingold's theoretical exploration of the lines and meshwork metaphor (2007, 2011). Ingold stresses the relational constitution of being and the primacy of movement. He suggests a line as a trail that discloses relations: "Proceeding along a path, every inhabitant lays a trail. Where inhabitants meet, trails are entwined, as the life of each becomes bound up with the other. Every such entwining is a knot, and the more that lifelines are entwined, the greater the density of the knot" (2011, p. 148). Ingold understands lifelines broadly as a trail that human and non-human, real and immaterial entities create in their existence. His conceptual system encourages our ideas of inclusiveness, mentioned above, as a multi-dimensional understanding and holistic approach that describe mobile lives as place-based and embedded in tangible and intangible environments (Ingold 2011, p. 119–121). This bears a strong relationship to Massey's (1994, 2005) conceptualisation of place and space as relational concepts made up of links and connections, forming traces and knots of meaning.

We develop and implement the concept of lifelines within the field of mobility and migration studies, focusing on different lines of transmission, interconnections and interruptions (Lulle 2015). The concept of lifelines helps us grasp the complexity of multidirectional processes and understand mobility and migration as multi-stranded and multi-sited. Lifelines intertwine the movements and the life-worlds of mobile subjects. This framework allows us to analyse connections not only between people but also between people's life trajectories and the places they inhabit. It also contextualises personal and family mobilities within people's biographies.

Intersectional analysis and methodological approach

The concepts of translocality, translocal familyhood and translocal lifelines not only constitute the theoretical framework of this book, but these key concepts are also employed as part of the authors' shared research approach. To grasp and analyse the power dynamics in which

translocal families are embedded we employ intersectionality as the main pillar of our methodological approach. Broadly speaking, intersectional analysis is a concept originally developed from critical race theory and law studies (Crenshaw 1989). The aim is to enable an understanding of how people come across multiple barriers in their everyday lives and the interplay of different power formations, and the inequalities they generate, in particular situations. Intersectional analysis was Crenshaw's approach to understanding how black women were subject to structural and individual discrimination based on gender, class and colour, in the labour market. Intersectionality may also explain the forming of identities and describe how race, class, gender and other characteristics intersect and overlap. Different axes of inequality hence intersect in the social positions in which individuals are located.

Recent approaches to intersectionality (Anthias 1998; Lutz et al. 2011; Yuval-Davis 2011; Lutz 2015; Webster 2016) employ the concept as an approach to practices of doing gender and other processes of differentiation and similarity. For instance, a study conducted in the Russian–Norwegian borderland used the intersectional approach to explain how employers and the legal system in concert constructed Russian women and men as low skilled, mostly female, hardworking, temporary labour migrants (Aure 2011). This made Russian men partly invisible and feminised them. Hence, the approach makes it possible to analyse how different axes of inequality or differentiation intersect.

Intersecting axes are relational and context-dependent, and they have to be identified and studied in the historical and social contexts that produce them. When studying translocal familyhood, this means identifying how translocal lifelines and everyday lives relate to, are embedded in, but also transmit and negotiate, processes of differentiation. Analytically, we then go on to ask: how do the positions of individuals and groups at the intersections of differentiation processes play out? What consequences do the intersectional processes of differentiation create? This means that categories of inequality cannot be regarded as constant, separated from each other. Neither can their interplay be taken for granted. Specific intersections do not necessarily have to be disadvantageous to individuals or groups; they can also improve their situations. Our approach does not settle for an a priori list of categories but will be inductively decided based on the relevant processes of differentiation.

The authors of this book examine the range of very different situations and contexts in which translocal familyhood is practiced. This is why the intersectionality approach, with its openness

to different methods and neighbouring theoretical concepts, is well suited for examining the cases studied. Furthermore, as Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck (2011) have demonstrated using the example of care migration in Europe, intersectionality is an especially useful tool for the analysis of interconnecting regimes, organisations and actors in transnational spaces where geography (location) matters. For example, we can observe that in the Nordic countries intersections of gender, age, ethnicity and class produce inequalities, in addition to which there are subtle geographical hierarchies based on migrants' countries of origin, on rural–urban divisions, on local–local connections, etc. (Aure 2011; Webster 2016; Koskela 2019).

Methodologically an intersectional approach is also workable when analysing the different migration positions of the research subjects studied in this book. We acknowledge that in certain contexts and debates, the definitions of migrant may vary, including for example EU citizens, cross-border commuters, second-generation migrants, etc. Return and circular migrants can either be included in or excluded from the legal and everyday definitions. People's reasons for having migrated vary and intersect, as does their legal status. Hence, an intersectional research lens sharpens the view of the nuanced categorisations of migrant. This book adds to the theoretical understanding of intersectionality by connecting translocal familyhood and translocal lifelines to dimensions of gender, generation, class and geography. We also demonstrate and highlight how these dimensions play out and are shaped by emotion, identity, belonging and in some cases issues of integration and welfare. This further broadens and deepens the understanding of intersectionality.

The overarching aim of our work in terms of both methodology and research practice is to work against methodological nationalism, defined as a tendency for scholars to assume, usually implicitly, that the nation state is the natural social and political form (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). The problem with this tendency is in how various phenomena related to the nation state are studied. In many studies of migration, the key problematic assumption is that migration and migrants' lived realities should be viewed mainly from the point of view of the destination society; hence the use of unidirectional concepts such as assimilation, acculturation and integration. Nation states, and other kinds of state, frame, constrain and indeed coerce the lives of migrants, despite the fact that they do not, and cannot, fully control the cross-border lives of these individuals and families. Nor do social relations ever stop at state borders. (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004.) The other problematic assumption has been the separation of discourses on internal and international migration (King and Skeldon 2010; Greiner and

Sakdapolrak 2013, p. 376). In order to avoid these artificial dichotomies and explore connectedness between different scales, we have chosen to employ a multi directional, translocal perspective in our methodology.

In terms of research practice and the researcher–research participant relationship, the research teams' own transnational and translocal positions and lifelines bear many resemblances to those of the research participants, as many of the researchers also lead translocal family lives. Therefore, in some chapters, reflecting on our own emotions and actions in translocal life situations has been a fruitful way of connecting with and understanding the research participants and their choices, while at the same allowing us to become aware of the many inherent differences and inequalities. We have practiced such criss-crossing and colliding of perspectives in our methods of researching, writing and structuring this book. Writing in pairs has, for example, created the possibility to work with combined data against the background of the authors' respective national contexts. It has also helped us formulate new questions and bring in new mindsets to some well-trodden migration topics, for example framing integration translocally instead of viewing it as only into the host nation.

Our holistic, multi-dimensional and actor-oriented (see Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, p. 376) research approach builds on the well-established epistemology of ethnographic fieldwork. During the data collection phase of our research, in which we made numerous visits and occasionally accompanied our research subjects on heir migratory journeys, we participated in our research subjects' everyday lives as much as was feasible, using a varied toolkit of methods. We acknowledge what Spradley (1979, p. 34) famously called "the ethnographic stance", describing in essence the researcher's interaction with her or his research participants as a mutual process of knowledge production. We adopt the epistemological idea of learning from one's research subjects and being reflexive in the position of researcher. In-depth engagement with research subjects combined with careful attention to individual and family migration lifelines allows us to capture their everyday realities.

The transnational lifelines and spaces of interaction between the research subjects create novel realities that demand methodological imagination and non-standard solutions so that the extremely varied and dynamic social realities of migration can be captured, described and understood (Hirvi and Snellman 2012). In varied research contexts the authors have developed new combinations of qualitative methods in order to better capture the views and experiences

of the research participants: in-depth thematic and open interviewing, extended thematic conversations, photography, analysis of media materials, extensive participant observation, etc. In addition, some of the authors have long-term co-researching engagements with particular families, while others have met and spent time with the research participants in their various meaningful locations. Several chapters are co-written by authors of different nationalities with connections and in-depth knowledge of the translocal case they study. This has made some of the analytical processes translocal as well. Other authors have long-term migration and translocal (family) experiences, adding depth and understanding to the analysis.

Going beyond conventional understandings of ethnographic methodology, interdisciplinary feminist scholarship has for decades focused on the positionality of the researcher (for example Smith 1987; Abu-Lughod 1993 [2008]; Skeggs 2003). Most importantly for our analyses, fieldwork is an embodied activity (Coffey 1999, p. 59). The researcher is always bodily present in the space in which she or he performs field research and cannot therefore be neutral. Moreover, we do not just 'conduct enquiries and participant observation' in the field and make intellectual conclusions. We 'feel' the field using all of our senses, bodily and emotionally experiencing our fieldwork surroundings, something that is important in understanding our research subjects. (Coffey 1999; Assmuth et al. 2018, pp. 18–19.)

The chapters in this book build on the authors' extensive and long-term research experience and previous work during the 2010s in East and North Europe including Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia and Sweden. The authors possess rich local knowledge that helps them build on and maintain connections with the various actors and relationships under study. Such long-term research engagement is valuable because trusting relationships between researchers and research subjects are a prerequisite for valid and ethically sound research, and trust takes time to develop.

Despite our vigorous attempts to lessen the barriers between researchers and those researched, we encountered many discrepancies of power and status during our research that are always present in some form in qualitative (ethnographic) research based on face-to-face interaction. As a consequence, we have paid close attention to positionality. The researchers have had to work through the implications of our own intersectional positionings of gender, age, nationality, citizenship and ethnicity, versus those of the research participants. In the framing of the case studies, we were aware of and tried to work against the various imbalances of power,

gender imbalances being just one obvious example (cf. Skeggs 2003). Another, often-neglected, positionality that can adversely affect the relationship between researcher and research participant is that of language and linguistic ability. Our multilingual research team members have been able to use those languages that the research participants have felt most at ease with, in most cases their mother tongues.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into four sections, each of them with two chapters plus a commentary chapter. The four sections concentrate on 1) everyday emotions, 2) gender and inequality, 3) materialities, and 4) family values and integration, respectively. Naturally, these are themes that are to a greater or lesser extent present throughout the book. Emotions, both positive and negative, affect people's sense of being in place and play a central role in maintaining or breaking family relations across borders. Families invest a lot of time in emotion work (Hochschild 1979). Similarly, issues related to gender and inequality are emotionally very loaded. This is a field where gendered everyday practice and negotiation in families meet – and sometimes also contest – societal and legal expectations and norms. Emotions are also in a central position when we talk about researching translocal families and understanding individual lifelines, including those parts of family lives that are hard to put into words. The two photography-based chapters in section three continue the discussion on non-verbal tools of enquiry, addressing the possibility of communicating the sensorial experiences and materialities of translocal lives through photography. As discussed in detail in the chapters in section four, the materialities and practices of translocal families are also affected by rumour, uncertainty and fear. The power of fear does not stand separately from class, hierarchy and privilege: some families and age groups are more vulnerable than others when it comes to the processes of integration, accessing resources and gaining rights locally, and managing their translocal lives.

To increase the dialogic aspects of our research, and to underline how any analysis is always partial, suggestive and situated (Haraway 1988), we have invited extensive commentaries on the chapters by scholars from several fields, backgrounds and countries. Maja Povrzanović Frykman (ethnology, Malmö) comments on the chapters on everyday emotions, Natasha A. Webster (human geography, Stockholm and Örebro) on the chapters on gender and inequality, Carlo Cubero (social anthropology, Tallinn) on the chapters on materialities, and finally Elo-

Hanna Seljamaa (folkloristics, Tartu) on the chapters on family values and integration. The commentaries suggest and open up yet new angles of exploration in the study of translocal families.

Laura Assmuth's and Keiu Telve's Chapter 2 opens the first section on everyday emotions, offering an analysis of the role of emotion in the family lives of Estonian men who work in Finland while their closest family members – spouses and children – continue to live in Estonia. The authors elaborate on how men try to create ways to sustain trust, closeness and mutual support with their family members across borders, and to deal with feelings of homesickness, jealousy, and in some cases, estrangement from their families. The narratives point towards the fragility of translocal familyhood as experienced by men working abroad. In Chapter 3 Ann Runfors focuses on how young adult descendants of migrants from Poland relate and attach themselves to different places within their translocal family geography. Combining theories on place attachment and translocality, the chapter presents a case study of the under-researched category of descendants of Polish migrants in Sweden, and how they create place, translocal ties and belonging. The descendants' place attachments were created in relation their parents' status as one-time migrants and their own experience of being positioned as 'in place' or 'out of place' in different contexts.

The section on gender and inequality starts with Chapter 4, by Marina Hakkarainen, which follows the stories of three people, two women and one man, who emigrated from Russia to Finland and married same-sex partners. Hakkarainen investigates the couples' (im)mobility between Finland and Russia and the translocal landscapes of privilege and deprivation they have to deal with. By using different strategies of visibility and invisibility with their relationships they negotiate same-sex family vulnerability. In Chapter 5 Pihla Maria Siim offers a close reading of the stories of three middle-aged women who moved from Estonia to Finland in the 2000s. Through their stories, the chapter scrutinises gendered everyday practice, informal survival strategies, and the different hierarchies and inequalities in and across the two societies. The chapter points to differences between the welfare systems of Estonia and Finland and to the importance of care and family responsibility.

Agnese Bankovska's Chapter 6 opens the section on materialities by addressing photography as a medium that communicates the sensorial experience and materiality of food in the translocal lives of Latvian-Finnish families. The chapter takes a look at the concept of

translocal taste buds, which can be seen as an embodied tool of adaptation, negotiation and adjustment. In Chapter 7 Anca Enache and Airi Markkanen employ photography as a way of introducing how displaced Roma migrants creatively inhabit public spaces in Helsinki, Finland, temporarily transforming them into intimate spaces of familyhood. Individual families and family networks construct their own paths of finding, using, and developing public space and infrastructure depending on their needs and possibilities, and on the spatial features and governance of the urban environment.

Chapter 8, by Marit Aure and Darius Daukšas, opens the last section arguing that the lives of Lithuanian migrants in Norway are strongly affected by fear of the Norwegian Child Welfare Service (NCWS). The authors use this fear as a heuristic lens to understand the diversity and nuances of such lives. Lithuanians in Norway are often economically well integrated, yet for some, their lives are mainly embedded in Lithuanian local values and institutions, rather than Norwegian. Their translocal lives involve the material and social realities of both here and there, making the discourse of the NCWS a class-divided symbol, showing important distinctions and differentiations between Lithuanians and variations in Lithuanian translocal lives in Norway. Marina Hakkarainen's Chapter 9 examines fears and aspirations that Russian-speaking parents experience in relation to their children's integration in Finland. Parents see many dangers on the path to integration, including a cultural and generation gap that they perceive as corrupting family relations. Children seen as successful by their parents overcome cultural tensions between their Russianness and Finnishness, obtain translocal practices and create a bridge between the family and the host society. Through ethnographic interviews with two generations of adult family – parents and children – the author shows how children were given a key role both in integration and in maintaining translocal family practices.

Translocal familyhood in a changing migration landscape: the ways forward

Only a few years have passed since the TRANSLINES research project, on which this book is based, came to an end. Our research has continued since the project and will continue after publication of this book, in a world that has changed dramatically. Hence, we end this chapter with a discussion of how the contemporary realities of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine have changed the meanings and consequences of mobility and migration in and for Europe.

Some of the book's authors collected their research materials up to 2019, a time in which crises such as a global pandemic and a major war in the middle of Europe seemed unimaginable. And yet they happened, and their consequences will affect all our lives in the long-term as well as in the short-term. Such crises, together with the global ecological crisis that we are living with, have made our lives more unpredictable and insecure than for many decades. There are many real and yet unforeseen consequences of the current crises for mobility and migration, and therefore for translocal family lives, in the region we have studied.

The outbreak of COVID-19 affected migrant workers, commuters and their families unexpectedly and harshly. Borders that had been dismantled since the 1990s again became real obstacles for translocal families: going to work and making a living abroad, as well as returning home across borders, was no longer easy, or even possible. For example, Estonian commuting workers had to choose between keeping their jobs in Finland and visiting their families in Estonia, and many ended up spending months stuck in the country where they work. In addition, continuous changes in border and health formalities and the differences between countries in implementation of restriction made many translocal people feel insecure and afraid of crossing borders, even when it was possible.

Mobility and migration bring to the fore the many historically founded divides and inequalities between the East and West of Europe, as some of the chapters of this book will show. As mobility was to a great extent defined in terms of essential versus non-essential, the latter being temporarily restricted or even forbidden, the global pandemic revealed many existing inequalities relating to (im)mobility (Salazar 2021). If anything, the pandemic has increased inequality between different migrants, as well as between migrants and long-term residents in receiving countries. It has also further diversified translocal lives and brought up earlier traumatic family memory of closed borders. The pandemic has exposed many underlying structures and phenomena that render people in precarious positions vulnerable, like the exploitation of cheap foreign labour and human trafficking. The pandemic also highlighted how the economies and societies of the Nordic region indeed depend on labour migration.

COVID-19 was a global health and social crisis that has touched people and societies on all continents. The pandemic seriously disrupted patterns of global mobility for a significant length of time, although at the time of writing (2022) most restrictions on movement have come to an end. We expect work migration and commuting in East and North Europe to resume quite

rapidly as there is, post-pandemic, a severe shortage of labour in many sectors of the Nordic economy. And neither have these societies lost their appeal for most potential migrants. On the contrary, the insecurity and unpredictability of migration exposed by the pandemic might seem less threatening than elsewhere in the stable Nordic welfare societies. Britain's exit from the European Union, which came into force in 2021, also affects the Nordic countries as thousands of existing and potential migrants, now barred from the UK, will look elsewhere.

A major war in the middle of Europe is a very different kind of a crisis, with far-reaching and long-lasting consequences. Apart from the massive devastating effects that the war has had, and continues to have, on Ukraine and Ukrainians (loss of life, destruction of human capital and infrastructure, the collapse of the economy), the war has already affected Europe as a whole, and European countries individually. The European Union, and the world, failed to react firmly to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 in the occupation of Crimea and the war-by-proxy in south-eastern Ukraine, although both were clear violations of international law. However, the escalation of eight years of violence ultimately into the destructive war started by Russia in February 2022 triggered rather firm political and military responses, including severe EU and US sanctions. The attack on Ukraine by Russia in effect tore apart the European legal, treaty-based, security framework that emerged in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War. In East and North Europe the war has also torn apart grass-roots relations and civil society connections between citizens of Russia and those of neighbouring countries. Many translocal futures have been altered or made impossible because of the war and the ruptures it has caused. Consequently, the war will affect ordinary people's ideas on living and working across borders for years to come.

In East and North Europe the effects of Russia's war on Ukraine are concrete and visible. The humanitarian and refugee crisis caused by the war is the largest and most severe in Europe since Second World War. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that at least 7.8 million people have fled Ukraine to other European countries between February and November 2022, and at least an additional 7.1 million have been internally displaced (UNHCR 2022). More than 1.5 million refugees have settled in Poland where there is already a large Ukrainian migrant population, and 92,000 have fled to Romania. In addition, an estimated 2.8 million Ukrainians have been forcibly moved or exiled to Russia. (Ibid.) However, the Baltic and Nordic countries are also quite close to Ukraine, and the people who have fled there often have relatives already living and working in these countries. For example,

in 2020 there were around 5,800 Ukrainian citizens living permanently in Finland, and in 2019 almost 15,000 Ukrainian seasonal workers in agriculture (Vuorio 2019; Statistics Finland 2022). Between February and November 2022 around 68,000 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Estonia, 42,000 in Latvia and 70,000 in Lithuania; for Finland the number is 43,000, for Norway 32,000, and for Sweden 48,000 (UNHCR 2022). In all these countries Ukrainian refugees have been granted the right of temporary protection and residence permits allowing them to work (ibid.).

At the same time, long-standing transnational family ties across the Russian–Estonian, Russian–Finnish and Russian–Norwegian borders have been severely affected, first due to the pandemic, and afterwards due to the war. The war has also affected migration directions, with the majority of mobility in the region studied unexpectedly changing its character from an emphasis on labour migration and other forms of voluntary mobility, to forced migration (fleeing the war or leaving because of its consequences, both from Ukraine and Russia).

The great majority of the refugees from Ukraine are women and children; UNICEF estimates that at least 4 million children have fled Ukraine (UNICEF 2022), and according to Save the Children (2022), two thirds of children in Ukraine have had to leave their homes either in Ukraine or abroad. In Finland alone there were, already at the end of May 2022 3,446 refugees from Ukraine who are in early childhood education and care, pre-primary and basic education and upper secondary education (Finnish National Agency for Education 2022). Even if the war were to end very soon, and many refugees hope and plan to return to Ukraine or have already done so, some think about staying in a receiving country that is safe and where they could ensure a better future for their children – the hope and dream of every migrant parent (see Assmuth et. al 2018). As with migration for work, family members' lifelines matter when people make decisions to stay or return. When refugee children start school or kindergarten in the country of arrival it anchors the whole family, and it becomes less likely that their parent/guardian would consider returning home as soon as possible. (Suomenmaa 2022; cf. Assmuth and Siim 2018.) It remains to be seen how many of the refugees will settle permanently in the Nordic countries, and whether these families will reunite in the region, or back in Ukraine when the war comes to an end. However, many thousands of Ukrainian families are likely to become translocal across the Nordic region as the option of work migration is as relevant for them as it is for Estonians, Latvians or Lithuanians.

The concepts and methodologies we have developed during the course of our research can be put to use to understand the current migration situation, during this period of overlapping crises, and also perhaps to provide some clues towards future directions. We believe that our core concept, 'lifelines', in the context of migration, makes it possible to see and understand more clearly how material, social, structural and emotional aspects of translocal family life are connected and intertwined, in diverse ways as well as in way that change over the course of a person's life. Translocal familyhood plays out in different ways and forms overlapping and dynamic translocal spaces along lines of gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and age. In aspiring to well-being, work and education, translocal families as individuals and as units pave their lifelines between different places and across borders. Such in-betweenness creates both difficulties and opportunities and is especially challenging in times of global crises. The research presented in this book shows that translocal families are particularly sensitive to geopolitical and economic fluctuations, and that the women, men and children in translocal families also actively shape and sustain their own versions of translocal familyhood.

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