



## PARENTING AT A DISTANCE: TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES IN MIGRANT FAMILIES FROM TAJIKISTAN

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**Abstract:** In this paper, I consider some transnational practices in performing parental care at a distance in the families of labour migrants from northern Tajikistan. My research is based on fieldwork conducted in several villages in the Kanibadam region of the Republic of Tajikistan. There are a number of aspects to take into account when researching transnational parenting. This paper is limited to a consideration of transnational practices that link migrant parents and the children they leave behind, e.g. regular home visits, phone calls, and photo and gift exchanges. Parental experience is highly gendered: a mother's departure, as a rule, is not so much stigmatised in the sending community, as it is legitimised by parental obligations. However, financial support is insufficient, and mothers do not withdraw from the upbringing process, but provide emotional support for their children using modern means of communication. There are different modes of involvement in care at a distance, not just an intensive one, but researchers should avoid normative judgements about the quality of such parenting. Instead more emphasis should be placed on how transnational families overcome distance and negotiate family contexts, and how a sense of familial unity and proximity is constructed.

**Keywords:** migration, transnationalism, care at a distance, Central Asia.

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## Parenting at a Distance: Transnational Practices in Migrant Families from Tajikistan

In this paper, I consider some transnational practices in performing parental care at a distance in the families of labour migrants from northern Tajikistan. My research is based on fieldwork conducted in several villages in the Kanibadam region of the Republic of Tajikistan. There are a number of aspects to take into account when researching transnational parenting. This paper is limited to a consideration of transnational practices that link migrant parents and the children they leave behind, e.g. regular home visits, phone calls, and photo and gift exchanges. Parental experience is highly gendered: a mother's departure, as a rule, is not so much stigmatised in the sending community, as it is legitimised by parental obligations. However, financial support is insufficient, and mothers do not withdraw from the upbringing process, but provide emotional support for their children using modern means of communication. There are different modes of involvement in care at a distance, not just an intensive one, but researchers should avoid normative judgements about the quality of such parenting. Instead more emphasis should be placed on how transnational families overcome distance and negotiate family contexts, and how a sense of familial unity and proximity is constructed.

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In the course of my fieldwork I made the acquaintance of A., a thirty-seven-year-old woman, at that point a housewife, who was bringing up two children of her own and her one-year-old nephew, whose parents had gone to work in Moscow. She said that he could not remember them at all, and so he did not miss them, even though his mother telephoned every day and 'spoke' with him. A. herself had very much wanted to go to Russia after her daughter's wedding, when she would have left her young son with her mother. She answered my question whether she was not afraid that he would miss her with surprise: 'No, he wouldn't. There is such a thing as a telephone! You can ring every day...' I was surprised at the ease with which many women leave very young children with guardians when they go to Russia. At the same time it is evident that parents, though physically absent, are nevertheless present in their children's lives, and as a rule keep their status as parents, so I asked myself how parental care is organised in families like this.

The concept of transnationalism forms the conceptual framework for this research. I start from the fact that migration from Tajikistan to Russia is transnational in character [Levitt, Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt, Jaworsky 2007].

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The migrants, who travel basically to earn money, maintain very close links with the sending society and are forced to heed the obligations imposed upon them in that place by their family and social environment, particularly in rural areas. They exist in several socio-cultural contexts at once: as they move between the sending and receiving societies, they are forced to switch between different cultural repertoires and to position themselves within different frames of reference, changing their status, habits, behaviour and even their appearance [Abashin 2012]. It is obvious that migration has firmly entered into the Tajikistani way of life: a whole generation has grown up of people that have spent most of their independent life in migration, having migrated immediately after marriage.

Whereas until recently Russian researchers have not been able to get away from economic determinism in their interpretation of migratory processes and have viewed migration as an individual project enacted by an economically rational individual, foreign anthropologists have long been aware of the fact that strategies of migration often take place not in terms of separate individuals, but of nuclear or extended families. An awareness of this fact has shifted the focus from separate individuals to transnational families in the examination of transnational currents. Transnational families are understood as those families whose members are separated and live for a certain time (sometimes a very long time) in different countries, but nevertheless keep in contact and create and cultivate by every means a sense of family unity, of their togetherness and emotional involvement with each other. It is possible to view such families as imagined communities whose members have constantly to work actively to create and maintain a sense of closeness so as to prevent their ties of kinship from losing their significance [Bryceson, Vuorela 2002].

This article has been written on the basis of materials gathered by the author during research in the field in August 2014 and February 2015 in a *jamoat* in the Konibodom Region of the Republic of Tajikistan.<sup>1</sup> During these visits I lived with migrant families where mothers and children were separated at a certain stage by national borders. My informants were the migrants themselves, members of their families who had never been to Russia, and also the headteachers, teachers and pupils of two schools with both Russian and Tajik as the language of instruction. The basic research methods, besides participant observation within the families, were in-depth interviews with migrants, non-migrants, migrants' children and their guardians. In addition to the interviews I asked the schoolchildren to write

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short compositions to discover their plans and expectations with regard to migration, and compiled a small questionnaire to correlate these with their relatives' history of migration.

### **Theoretical aspects of the study of transnational parenthood**

The phenomenon of transnational parenthood, though it is far from new, has only recently attracted the attention of researchers into transnationalism. And since the situation where parents and children are separated is perceived as anomalous, discussion has had a strong normative colouration. In public debates in some of the countries from which migrants are drawn, the topic of parents (particularly mothers) going abroad to earn money without their children is addressed with great acerbity. For example, the negatively coloured term 'Euro-orphans' for children of migrants left at home, which appeared in the Ukraine and Poland, very quickly migrated from the mass media to the reports of non-profit-making organisations and even scholarly publications [Lutz, Palenga-Möllenberg 2012: 26]. In public discussions migrants' children left behind in their home country are often said to have various psychological problems, to be inclined towards deviant behaviour and to have problems making progress at school. Prominent in these discussions are non-profit-making organisations, journalists, social workers, pedagogues and politicians in the migrants' home countries, who are inclined to dramatise the situation [Zentgraf, Chinchilla 2012: 347–8].

The basis for the appearance of a body of scholarly literature on transnational parenthood was an awareness that often parents who migrate leaving their children in their home country retain their responsibility not only for maintaining them materially, but also for their emotional support. In migration there is a discrepancy between the parents' ideology and their practice, and to smooth it over migrants have to engage in various transnational practices that create the effect of 'double presence', and / or to redefine their concepts of care and participation [Peng, Wong 2013: 492].

It should be noted that there are also popular points of view among researchers into transnationalism as to the quality of care at a distance. Loretta Baldassar, for example, maintains that the sense of closeness between parents and children is directly proportional to the distance and time spent apart and inevitably falls off in spite of all the parents' efforts to build involvement [Baldassar 2007: 405]. Amongst authors writing in Russian one may note the work of A. V. Tolstokorova, who addresses the problem from a gender perspective and maintains that 'love by telephone' cannot exist for long and is even 'harmful' to migrant workers, who are stigmatised as it is, because it results in 'the creation of a quasi-familial space', and the use of

modern methods of communication ‘encourages the creation of an illusory idyll in relationships’ [Tolstokorova 2013: 154].

Other authors, however, consider the assertion that the experience of separation of parents and children is necessarily traumatic and negative rests upon unexamined Eurocentric premisses: the model of the nuclear family in its Western form and intensive parenting is taken as the ideal. Everything else, such as extended families in which children are cared for not so much by their parents as by older members of the family, is regarded as a deviation from the norm. Researchers who take this point of view suggest that the focus should be shifted to an examination of the transnational contexts in which such families exist [Carling, Menjívar, Schmalzbauer 2012]. My research has also been undertaken with this approach. Unfortunately, the framework of an article does not permit the analysis of all the significant aspects of the organisation of parental care at a distance, and so here I shall try to answer the question as to what practices are used to construct emotional involvement and closeness between parents and children in situations where one or both parents have migrated.

### General context

Although economic migration from Tajikistan is still predominantly ‘male’, women too are migrating ever more often [Tyuryukanova 2011: 5]. According to official data of the Federal Migration Service, as of 6th August 2015 there were 157 770 female and 827 646 male citizens of Tajikistan on Russian territory. The most numerous age groups of female migrants were 18–29, with 54 213 persons, and 30–39, with 38 789.<sup>1</sup> Whereas previously the fact of women going abroad to earn money was only imaginable in exceptional circumstances (they were for the most part divorced women or widows, for whom, besides the opportunity to support their children independently, migration offered a means of avoiding pressure from their community), now the practice of husband and wife migrating together is quite widespread, or even, in some cases, the wife goes by herself<sup>2</sup> while the husband remains with the children.<sup>3</sup> Another tendency, evidently, is for women to engage in migration at a younger age. Most of my informants, who were in their forties, had not migrated immediately, but had gone to join their husbands later. Now the situation is changing, and the flow of migrants includes quite young married women, as can be seen from the statistics given

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<sup>1</sup> See the Federal Migration Service’s official site: <<http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/data/details/54891/>>.

<sup>2</sup> That is, without her husband, but as a rule together with other friends or relations.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail on the categories of women in migration see: [Tyuryukanova 2011: 34–9].

above, because their husbands have often spent a long time as migrants before they were married, and therefore they have sufficient resources to take their wives with them.<sup>1</sup>

Migration researchers have noted a world-wide tendency: more and more often recently mothers are taking the decision to leave even very young children with guardians while they go away in search of work [Zentgraf, Chinchilla 2012: 374]. According to official statistics from the Federal Migration Service, there are 82 711 boys and 31 780 girls under eighteen with Tajik citizenship on Russian territory.<sup>2</sup> Children make up 11.6 % of citizens of Tajikistan resident in Russia. Given that extended families with many children are the prevalent type in Tajikistan, we can conclude not only that men as a rule do not bring their children with them, but also that many women do not or cannot bring all their children with them either.<sup>3</sup>

Although children's mobility is also gradually increasing, most of them still remain in their parents' homeland with their guardians for quite a long time. According to the survey which I conducted in the five oldest classes<sup>4</sup> of one school in Konibodom Region in the Republic of Tajikistan, at the time of the survey 94 % of children had relatives in Russia; in 35 % of cases both parents, in 33 % only the father, and in 10 % only the mother. The other relatives were most often uncles and aunts (both maternal and paternal) and older brothers and sisters. 68 % of those questioned said that their relatives had been going to Russia for several years, and when interviewed many children said that their parents had been going to Russia for eight to ten years.

In the post-Soviet period people in the Central Asian republics have come to rely more on family connections and to put more resources into constructing family networks [Ismailbekova 2014]. These connections are easily activated in situations of crisis, which is

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that for newly married young women, going to Russia with their husbands is a very attractive option, because it implies the opportunity of living more autonomously and independently immediately after their wedding, without having to wait to extricate themselves from the extended family. This makes it possible to avoid conflict with their mothers-in-law and their husbands' other relatives. Young newly married women who remain in their husband's parents' home have practically no autonomy and are subordinate to the older members of the family, which leads to relations of potential conflict between the daughter-in-law and the husband's relatives, particularly his mother [Harris 2004]. These conflicts become more acute in situations when the husband has migrated, because often the extended family's control over their daughter-in-law's behaviour is intensified, and her mobility even further restricted [Reeves 2011].

<sup>2</sup> Studies on the children of migrants in Russia are for the most part concerned with integration and concentrate on problems of interaction with the education and healthcare systems [Aleksandrov, Baranova, Ivanyushina 2012; Florinskaya 2012; Sabirova, Andreeva 2014].

<sup>3</sup> According to data from Tyuryukanova's research, about 70 % of migrant women from Central Asia leave their children at home [Tyuryukanova 2011: 46].

<sup>4</sup> The survey was conducted in the ninth, tenth and eleventh classes of Russian-speaking schools. 117 persons were surveyed in all.

directly relevant to the situation of migration. Most often migrants' children stay with older members of the extended family: their paternal grandparents. Other variants are only considered in those cases where there is no grandmother and grandfather in the family or where they already have so many grandchildren left with them that they cannot cope. If the parents have a choice with whom to leave their children, they are guided by several considerations. Firstly, a geographically convenient location, close to a school, plays a major role, since the parents are often trying not to take their children out of a familiar environment. Sometimes children from the same family live with different relatives, but this is not a typical situation, since it is disadvantageous for the migrants, who then have to send money to several different households at once, which is often a source of conflict. The potential guardians' ability to keep the children left with them safe (particularly the girls) and keep their behaviour under control is also important. In this respect households where there are adult men are preferred. For some of my informants (those who had already managed to acquire their own house, finish building it and furnish the rooms) it was important to find a guardian who would agree to live in their house while they were away and look after it as well as the children, particularly when they had 'unreliable' neighbours. But this is by no means always possible, because as a rule most relatives who are suitable in age and status have households of their own. For this reason most children whose parents are absent live with their guardians.

Nevertheless, parents continue to fulfil their functions in bringing up children (with varying degrees of intensity, as will be described below), using modern means of communication. Besides this, they try to keep up emotional contact with their children and cultivate a sense of involvement and family closeness. I shall go on to describe the transnational practices which help to construct and maintain this sense.

### **Transnational practices**

The development of mobile phones and the internet has led to migrants' being able to share the same socio-cultural practices while they are situated at different ends of the earth, thus uniting the sending and receiving societies in a single arena of social action. Steven Vertovec has called accessible mobile communications the 'social glue' of transnationalism [Vertovec 2004]. Indeed, when many of my informants who had spent a long time in migration compared their experience as migrants before and after the appearance of mobile phones and cheap tariffs, they said that telephone calls are an effective way of overcoming nostalgia for their homes and children, and also significantly 'bring together' relatives

who are on different sides of the frontier. According to the results of the survey of older schoolchildren referred to earlier, 37 % of my informants talk to their relatives over the phone every day, 26 % several times a day, 18 % every few days and 12 % once a week. 52 % of those questioned use Skype, and value above all the possibility of seeing their relatives face-to-face. However, by no means all of them have access to it, because of the slow and expensive internet connections in rural areas. In this case exchanging photographs can go some way to fulfilling the function of representing the absent family member. 66 % of those questioned regularly exchange photographs with their relatives and, it turns out, not only digital ones (via social networks and the mobile internet), but also actual prints.

In the context of maternal care daily telephone calls are a usual, well established practice of everyday life. Thanks to them women can not only express their emotional involvement in their children's lives, but also put into practice the ordinary aspects of bringing up children: make sure how they are doing at school and who their friends are, limit their mobility (particularly their daughters'), see that they are doing their chores, etc.

To assure themselves that all is well, migrants check up on the information that they have received from the children themselves by using other sources: they ring their guardians, teachers and even neighbours. For example, M., the mother of five children, described how she tries to verify information and receive it from different sources:

**Int.:** *Do you trust them?*

**M.:** *Well, I trust them, but I check.*

**Int.:** *How do you check?*

**M.:** *How do I check...*

**Int.:** *For example, if they're in Russia and you're here, how then?*

**M.:** *I ask the younger one about the older one, how is she, who does she talk to, who she goes about with. She knows all the older one's secrets, she'll tell me. Then I ring the older one, ask how the younger one is, who her friends are, where she goes, what she does. I ask the older one. They'll tell me themselves, but I still ask the older ones, I ask them about each other, and their sister (M., housewife, 45).*

Researchers into transnational families have pointed out that the experience of parenthood at a distance is gender-specific, and that in most contexts mothers have to make more of an effort to maintain their status than fathers [Parreñas 2001; 2008]. The traditional patriarchal gender structure of rural Tajikistan assumes that a man's main function is to provide for his family, while women are responsible for biological and social reproduction [Temkina 2005: 19]. Since it is expected from the beginning that a mother will take more emotional care of the children, most of my female informants



assessed their own relationships with their children as closer than their relations with their fathers, and this concerned all children irrespective of sex. They call upon the fathers for help, as a rule, only if a child will not obey his guardians at all. Since many men spend up to ten or fifteen years in migration and leave their children when they are very small, some children could not tell me anything about their fathers apart from a few commonplaces; they characterised their relationships with their fathers as not close, and some of them said frankly that they hardly knew their parents. Still, in those cases where the fathers have not distanced themselves entirely from their parental responsibilities, they are responsible for discipline and fulfil this function no less inventively than the mothers. Thus, to keep track of his children's progress at school, one informant wrote down the marks they had told him over the telephone, and when he came home compared these with their marks in their reports.

In transnational space information circulates very quickly and goes from one end to the other, as one of my informants put it, 'quicker than a text message'. I often heard that migrants received information about events at home sooner than their relatives who were there, so that it is quite hard for both migrants and non-migrants to hide anything from members of their family.

I encountered this situation even before my field trip. In the spring of 2014 I was visiting my informant S., the mother of four children. Her husband had an old car, and S. had been urging him to sell it before he left, but he had gone to Tajikistan leaving the car parked. Her son, who was twenty at that time, knew how to drive but did not have a licence. One evening he joked that he would go for a drive, then went away somewhere and after a while came back. Almost immediately his father rang up from Tajikistan and began to tell him off. It turned out that someone from St Petersburg had rung him in Tajikistan and told him that he had just seen his son behind the wheel of his car.

Still, there is an element of 'economy with the truth' in relations at a distance: usually relatives prefer not to tell each other about any serious health problems, and sometimes not about financial problems either, and prefer only to share good news.

**Int.:** *That is, you told them everything, all the news?*

**S.:** *Well, I told them the news [pause], but I didn't tell them when I'd had a hard day. They're a long way away. If I tell them something, they'll be worried, they won't be able to work properly, they'll keep thinking, 'What's happened over there?', they'll want to come here, and that's a big expense, dearie. Come — go — go back again... it all costs money. So we didn't tell them the hard days, but we always told them the happy days (S., housewife, 72).*

A regular exchange of presents is another way of showing that one cares, and this is sometimes asymmetrical, because migrants are perceived by the community that they come from to be in the position of those who are supposed to ‘give’, and not receive. Parents try to send their children chocolate, clothes and various gadgets (telephones, tablets, laptops), and so on regularly, even though they could perfectly well buy these at home. Some mothers prefer to send things to their children for fear that money sent to their guardians would not be spent on the child.

In my informants’ ‘emic’ hierarchy, one of the main and most effective transnational practices was regular visits home, since they afford the opportunity to demonstrate one’s care and involvement not only through the virtual manifestation of one’s emotions, but immediately, by direct bodily means: embraces, handshakes, tears of joy, etc. These visits are important for maintaining one’s status as a member of the local community as well. 74 % of the parents of the children whom I surveyed come home once a year, a frequency which is most likely connected with the details of the legislation concerning migration, 11 % come home more often, several times a year — evidently they are engaged in seasonal or temporary work — and 15 % come every few years.

During these short visits, parents and children attempt to construct or reconstruct family intimacy. Even if their house is not particularly comfortable or is still being built, it is important to parents to gather their children there and live ‘like a normal family’ for at least one month a year, thereby affirming their status in the eyes of members of the community. Social practices change at this time too. For example, some parents told me — as did their children themselves — that they generally shared their experiences with their parents only when the latter were at home, and for the rest of the time would share their experiences with their guardians. During these occasional visits, the parents take on all the functions of bringing up the children: they check up on their progress at school, help them with their homework, take an interest in who their friends are, punish them for their faults and so on, even if they are not particularly good at it. But as soon as they go away, and the children return to their guardians’ house, the practices of parental care at a distance reconstitute themselves.

### **Modes of involvement**

Although modern means of communication are very widely available, by no means all mothers are fully involved in the everyday life of their children, as appears from the survey that I carried out. In their study of Filipina migrants in Hong Kong, Yinni Peng and Odalia M. H. Wong identified several modes of care at a distance: the intensive, the collective, and the passive [Peng, Wong 2013]. In my

case it is also possible to identify several variants of maternal care given at a distance, according to their degree of intensity.

In the first case, mothers try to keep complete track of their children's everyday life and are 'on call' twenty-four hours a day, and phone their children morning, afternoon and evening. This configuration of maternal care is most likely when the child has been left with a guardian in whom for whatever reason the mother does not have complete confidence. For example, even though my informant N., the mother of three children, had left them with their father, she was sure that he was not sufficiently able to carry out the functions of their upbringing, and therefore relied only on herself.

**Int.:** *So their father is bringing them up here, isn't he?*

**N.:** *Yes. Their father is bringing them up — but how? He leaves early in the morning and comes back in the evening. What sort of an upbringing is that? They do as they like.*

<...>

**Int.:** *And does she [her daughter] do as you tell her?*

**N.:** *Yes, she does. She does as I tell her.*

**Int.:** *Even when you're in Russia?*

**N.:** *Yup. When I'm in Russia I phone every day: 'Where are you? Where have you been? What are you up to? What are you doing?' I ask every day. If I were to leave her alone, then what would happen? No (N., care worker, 42).*

At the opposite extreme are those mothers who delegate their parental responsibilities entirely to their guardians, being confident in their reliability. This configuration is likely if a mother leaves her children with her own parents or with her husband's, provided that she has had a good relationship with them from the start. This situation surprised me more than once, for example, one of my informants could not tell me what class her children were in, and asked her mother, who worked at the school, for help. In such a case the mothers themselves often say that their children's relationship with their guardians is 'closer', but they are not worried or upset by such a situation.

**Int.:** *Do any conflicts arise between you and your children?*

**M.:** *No, my mother-in-law loves the children, so there aren't any.*

**A. (M.'s neighbour):** *Her children don't love her, but they love their grandmother. Both the daughter and the son.*

**M.:** *When my daughter got married, it wasn't here she came first the next day, but first she went to her grandma's, then she came here. They love their grandma most.*

**Int.:** *Don't you get upset?*

**M.:** *No, what for? She brought them up too, what is there to get upset about? (M., housewife, 45).*

Within this continuum there are those who aim to maintain an emotional closeness to their children, but do not try to keep complete track of their everyday lives. Mothers of this sort ring their children several times a week, but only to share their most important news, since, if they have complete confidence in their guardians, they have no need to follow their children's progress at school, control whom they go about with or worry about their home comforts. Questions of supervision and upbringing are also settled through the guardians, but the parents nevertheless do not distance themselves entirely from the process of upbringing, while not attempting to influence their children directly.

*Grandma is so, you know, strict, she checks up on them all the time. On my son and on my daughter, all the time, and if anything happens she'll go to the school too, she won't let them be. They're under supervision all the time. That's why I'm not worried, you're not thinking, where's my daughter now, or what's my son up to. They've had something to eat and drink, they're not hungry, they're not cold, that's it. I didn't even have to think about it, because I knew that grandma was there, and she's very strict about that sort of thing, so she won't abandon them, she'll feed them even if she goes hungry herself. I've heard that there are some grandmothers who won't even give them anything to eat, there are all kinds of people, they won't give them clothes to wear, but our grandma's not like that (S., teacher, 35).*

It would be wrong to write about parental care at a distance without mentioning the conflicts and problematical situations connected with it that inevitably arise in migration. Although the situation of parents and children being separated is not regarded as problematic by the migrants themselves, some of them have noticed nevertheless that their children do not perceive them as having the status of parents: they will not obey them, they do not help them, they are reluctant to come and live with them during their short visits, and they keep themselves aloof. However, problems of this sort do not affect<sup>1</sup> people as strongly as an inability to influence their guardians in the context of care for the children if something has gone wrong. Conflicts between parents and guardians may be characterised as the typical conflicts between migrants and non-migrants, and children who are not the immediate cause of a conflict may be drawn into a conflict that already exists and become equal (in the case of adolescents) or silent (in the case of small children) participants in it. In many cases the cause of the conflict is asymmetry in the relations

<sup>1</sup> Emotions are a very important topic in making sense of the phenomenon of transnational parenthood [Baldassar 2008; Skrbiš 2008]. Unfortunately it is not possible within the scope of this article to dwell on this aspect. I shall note only that the experience of parting from a child is almost always emotionally coloured, and a woman is often required to manifest these emotions publicly to affirm her status as a caring mother. Not every woman can cope with missing her child, and this is often a reason why a woman comes back home.

and position of migrants and non-migrants, and / or an unequal distribution of resources among households. This can lead to children not receiving the necessary care and attention, and money sent for their upkeep being spent on other needs.

### Conclusion

We thus see that migrant parents try to take an active part in the lives of their children who have been left at home, and to construct an intimate family space through transnational practices. One of the most important practices is short-term home visits by the migrants, during which they cultivate a sense of belonging and family closeness most intensely by reproducing practices which are typical of families which are not divided by borders. Modern means of communication also play a huge role in this process, particularly mobile phones, by means of which parents can carry out the everyday practices of bringing up their children: telling them what to do, supervising their behaviour and their progress at school, and even restricting their mobility. However, the modes of parental care at a distance may also be significantly different: the choice of one or another depends on the context of migration (the way in which the parents are occupied, their work timetable), the history of the family before migration, their relations with the guardians, unequal access to modern means of communication, and various external factors (for example, the difference in time zones), etc. Although the community does not perceive the situation where parents and children are separated as problematic, various tensions, breaches and conflicts in family relationships are inevitable in a situation of migration, but these, nevertheless, do not always lead to family disintegration. How migrants manage to extricate themselves from these problematical situations with minimal losses is a question requiring further research.

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