

Intergenerational Family Relations in Luxembourg: Adult Children and their Ageing Parents in Migrant and Non-Migrant Families

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Abstract. Most studies in the context of acculturation research have focused on family relations between first generation parents and their second generation children in adolescence, but less is known about immigrant families at later stages in the family life cycle. As first generation immigrants now approach retirement age in many European countries, the question how their families will deal with issues of intergenerational solidarity in older ages gains increasingly importance. In the project on "Intergenerational Relations in the Light of Migration and Ageing – IRMA" (funded by the Luxembourg Research Fund (FNR) top the first author), a cross-cultural comparison of altogether $N = 120$ Portuguese and Luxembourgish triads of older parents and their adult children, both living in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, is envisaged. Firstly, we will examine similarities and differences in identity constructions of older parents and their adult children. Secondly, we will investigate how intergenerational relations are regulated in migrant compared to nonmigrant families. Finally, we will explore how these aspects influence subjective well-being (SWB) of older individuals. Qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied.

Background.

Most studies in the context of acculturation research have focused on family relations between first generation parents and their second generation children in adolescence, but only few studies have focused on intergenerational relations in ageing migrant families (e.g., Attias-Donfut, Wolff, & Tessier, 2005). As first generation immigrants are currently approaching retirement age in many Western European countries, the question of how parent-child relations in adulthood are regulated, gains - however - particular importance also with regard to acculturation. Older migrants (first generation) and their adult children (second generation) might be confronted with very special tasks compared to families without migration background. In general, first generation parents might need higher intergenerational support from their adult children due to a smaller social network in the host country or due to fewer sociocultural resources such as language competences. There might also be an *acculturation gap* between parents and their adult children regarding different identity constructions, value orientations, norms and expectations with regard to intergenerational solidarity and support. These differences in expectations and beliefs could lead to intergenerational strain and to diminished well-being of family members (see e.g., Sam & Berry, 2010; Ward, 2001).

Objectives.

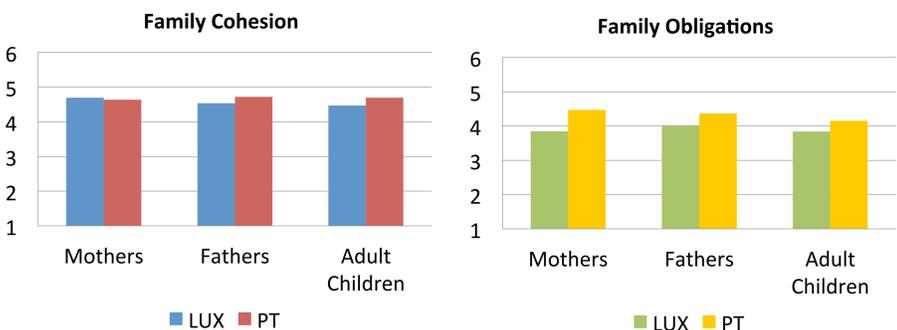
The aims of the present study are, firstly to examine similarities and differences in family values, internalized norms and mutual expectations of older parents and their adult children in migrant and non-migrant families; secondly, to analyze in how far an acculturation gap respectively a generation gap might have an impact on the relationship quality between parents and their adult children; thirdly and related to this, to explore subjective well-being (SWB) of all involved family members.

Constructs and Instruments.

Participants had to fill out a standardized questionnaire which was available in German, French and Portuguese (different language versions were prepared and cross-checked by a team of multilingual psychologists). Constructs were assessed from the perspectives of both parents and their adult children. Items had to be rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 = "do not agree at all" to 6 = "fully agree". All reliabilities were satisfactory.

- *Family Cohesion* (see e.g. Manzi, Vignoles, Regalia, & Scabini, 2006; 4 Items, e.g. "We always help and support one another")
- *Obligations toward family* (see e.g., Lay et al., 1998; Merz, Özeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009; 6 Items, e.g. "I feel obliged to behave in line with our family rules")
- *Given and received intergenerational support* (see also Albert, Michels, & Ferring, 2013; Schulz & Schwarzer, 2003; 12 items each, e.g. "My mother/father/child handles many things for me that I cannot do on my own; "I handle many things for my parents/ my child")

Results.



	Nationality		Position		Nationality x Position	
	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2
Family Cohesion	0.52	.01	0.23	.00	0.60	.01
Family Obligations	7.51**	.13	1.41	.03	1.18	.02

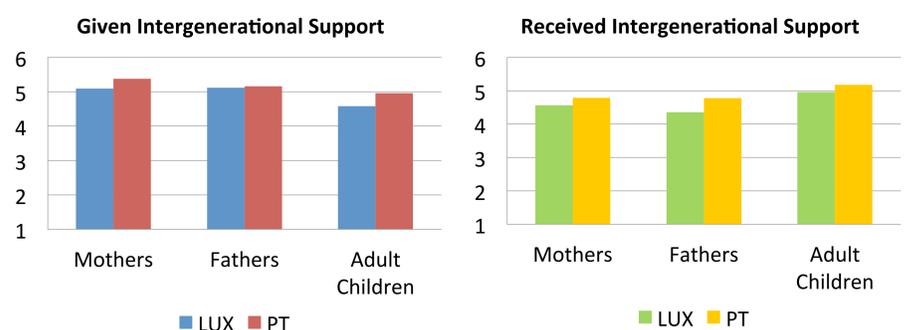
Sample.

The present study is part of the FNR-funded project on "Intergenerational Relations in the Light of Migration and Ageing – IRMA" (PI: Dr. Isabelle Albert). A cross-cultural comparison between Portuguese and Luxembourgish families living in Luxembourg with $N = 120$ family triads (older mothers and fathers; one adult child, born resp. grown up in Luxembourg; see table 1) is envisaged. In Luxembourg, where 43% of the inhabitants are currently foreigners; Portuguese are the largest immigrant group (Statec, 2011); Portuguese of the first immigration wave are currently close to retirement age (Beirão, 2010), hence our focus on Portuguese families. Our preliminary sample included $n = 29$ Luxembourgish and $n = 25$ Portuguese full family triads. Luxembourgish mothers were on average $M = 55.29$ ($SD = 6.47$), fathers $M = 58.83$ ($SD = 7.41$) and adult children $M = 25.93$ ($SD = 7.66$) years old. Portuguese mothers had an average age of $M = 54.56$ ($SD = 6.19$), fathers of $M = 57.79$ ($SD = 7.11$) and adult children of $M = 27.24$ ($SD = 7.93$). Portuguese mothers had been living in Luxembourg on average for $M = 31.09$ years ($SD = 8.33$) and fathers for $M = 30.91$ years ($SD = 9.14$). 60% of Portuguese adult children were born in Luxembourg, the remainder had come to Luxembourg at an average age of $M = 5.11$ years ($SD = 4.37$). Data collection is currently going on.

Table 1. Sampling plan of the main study.

	Portuguese Families		Luxembourgish Families	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
G1				
	50-60	20	20	20
	61-70	20	20	20
	71-80	20	20	20
G2	±30-50	60	60	

Note. The full sample will comprise $N = 360$ participants.



	Nationality		Position		Nationality x Position	
	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2
Given Intergenerational Support	4.44*	.08	10.79**	.17	1.37	.03
Received Intergenerational Support	4.22*	.08	6.72**	.12	0.31	.01

Conclusions and Future Directions.

No differences between Luxembourgish and Portuguese family triads were found regarding family cohesion, but Portuguese participants rated their family obligations and their mutual intergenerational support higher. Parents and adult children did not differ with regard to family cohesion and family obligations, but parents reported to provide more support to / receive less support from their adult children than vice versa.

Interestingly, Portuguese adult children reported to give as much support to their parents as they received from them, whereas Luxembourgish adult children reported to receive more support from their parents than they give (for similar findings see Albert et al., 2013; Fleury, 2010). It is still an open question, if these specific support patterns in immigrant families have consequences for their relationship quality and for their well-being. Our preliminary results provide an interesting starting point for further analyses regarding intergenerational relations in the light of migration and ageing.

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