

**MM41 MA Dissertation**

**Immigrant children's perceptions of home: the case of Lithuanian children in Stavanger municipality, Norway**

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Juozukas (age eight) has kindly agreed to give his drawing as a gift for this title page.

*It is good everywhere, but it is the best at home.*

(Lithuanian proverb)

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1. Choice of the study area

International migration is changing the social and cultural composition of contemporary societies, sometimes posing difficult questions about living in difference and diversity. Two aspects of this migration have been an area of interest for social scientists as well as policy makers. While many migrants still come to work in countries such as Norway, which is considered to have one of the highest living standards in the world, on a temporary basis, others have already settled down for a number of years. One of the outcomes of the latter process is that the migrant population became substantially a family population, becoming part of educational, housing and health systems in receiving countries.

Being settled, however, does not imply that those who came as migrants have left behind all ties to countries they came from. Their links with sending countries have not necessarily decreased and a number of scholars during the last decade have explored the way in which individuals, families and whole communities find themselves between interconnected worlds living ‘multi-sited’ lives which they try to manage simultaneously (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002). Although this process is not unique, the revolution in communication and information technologies boosting since the beginning of the twenty first century together with cheap international air travel has enabled millions of people to be ‘doubly engaged’ or, as Roger Rouse (1991) has described it, being ‘here’ and ‘there’.

Exploring the belonging between ‘here’ and ‘there’ is the starting point of this master thesis, with the particular focus on perceptions of *home*. The choice of the topic is closely related to a personal position and experience. Being a Lithuanian and living in Norway for a couple years off and on, I have met a number of Lithuanians who decided to leave Lithuania for Norway. Mostly they were labor migrants, leaving because of material realities – escaping an economic hardship and seeking for new opportunities. What amazed me, though, was that a significant part of them has never lived up to their

initial plans to “earn and come back”, rather choosing to settle in the new location and coming back for short periods of time. New communications and transportation technologies made it easier to stay connected to the homeland and to keep a possibility of return open, even if shortly. My particular interest was in how the children migrating together with their parent(s) were experiencing the process of moving, settling and migrating between the two countries, which has also predetermined the topic for the master thesis.

It can be argued that Lithuanian migrant population tends to become a *family population* as the statistics prove (*see* sub-section 1.4.). Thus, the experience of moving between the two countries is relevant not only for adult migrants, but for their children moving together as well. However, a closer look at perceptions of home and belonging in the context of migration has been mostly addressed from the perspective of adults. Children’s role has been mostly ignored and neglected. As one of the interviewed children has told me: “It was not my choice to come here” (Margarita, age eleven), which has showed that it is often the case that children are dependent on adults’ choices and decisions made on their behalf, in terms of migration as well.

It has been argued that migration research has neglected children’s migration, focusing on the movements of adults or families (Faulstich Orellana et al, 2001; Young and Ansell, 2006; Mand, 2010). As Orellana et al (2001) elaborates, children are treated as luggage and portrayed as burdens for otherwise mobile adults, as in phrases like “the immigrant sent for his wife and children”. However, children engage in migration in various ways and their experiences are not only valid, but often different from those of adults and therefore worthy of consideration (Young and Ansell, 2006: 3). One of the reasons why children’s perspectives were not taken into account was because childhood was seen as a natural phase of life and associated with passivity. It was rather proposed (Ariès, 1962, in Mand, 2010: 277) that childhood was a socially constructed category. A new approach came with the “new studies of childhood”, which emphasize children as active agents influencing and being influenced by wider social processes as well as aims to understand children as they are rather than as they are seen by adults (Mand, 2010:

277). In this way children move from being treated as passive members of families “who are socialized into identities” (ibid.), to being recognized as active agents, dynamic in creating identity and cultural meaning (James, 1998: 153).

In this thesis the experiences and perceptions of Lithuanian migrant children is the main concern. Recognizing children as active agents and members of migration is the leading research impetus as I seek to give a *voice* and empower the participants to express their migration experiences and perceptions of home.

## 1.2. Goal of the study and research questions

The initial idea for the thesis and research comes from an eagerness to draw attention to the significant numbers of children within Lithuanian community in Stavanger municipality and to take a closer look at their experiences while seeking to understand what it means to have homes across places. Therefore, the main goal of my study is to contribute to better understanding of children’s perceptions of home after migrating with their families from Lithuania and settling in Stavanger municipality, Norway. I am interested in exploring the sense of belonging between the country of origin and the country of settlement, and examining children’s perspectives in understanding ideas and practices of home, or what Mand (2010) called “playing an active role in maintaining transnational linkages”.

I will investigate this by deconstructing the notion and understanding of *home*. Further, I will look at how children connect to two different homes or localities and what kind of relations they develop towards them. The study will try to develop a deeper understanding of how the transnational social relations and practices, maintained at two different locations, shape children experiences of home.

The research questions of this study are:

- What kind of experiences have Lithuanian children gone through due to their migration to Stavanger? What was their role in migration decision making? How (if) they maintain ties with their homeland?

- How do Lithuanian children understand the notion of *home*? What is the relationship between feeling *at home* and dwelling between two countries – Lithuania and Norway? How does that affect children’s perceptions of home?

Thus, the research raises questions that are relevant for understanding the situation of Lithuanian migrant children in Stavanger and their experiences, perceptions and the way they construct a sense of belonging to both countries. The initial presumption, based on personal observations and experiences, was that research participants would be highly mobile, travelling to and dwelling temporarily in the houses/homes in two countries – Lithuania and Norway, sustaining close ties with both countries and thus having *homes* across places. The purpose of the research is to investigate this hypothesis.

### **1.3. Theoretical framework and methodology**

Several researches have been conducted addressing children experiences in migrating (Faulstich Orellana et al, 2001; Mand, 2010). However, as already said, the perceptions of belonging and home have been mostly researched focusing on adult migrants and their ideas and practices of recreating home in the host country (Mand, 2010: 275). It is especially evident in the literature on transnationalism and diaspora as the emphasis on home through the lens of transnationalism enables researchers to explore ideological claims of belonging alongside practices through which migrants maintain ties across nation-states (Vertovec, 1999).

Drawing on the concept of transnationalism as a theoretical framework (Portes, 1999; Pries, 2001; Levitt, 2004), I will attempt to explore the approach towards home arising from the literature in order to receive a better insight into what Ahmed et al. (2003: 2) called “the plural experiences of home”. To bring it closer to my target group, I will draw on works of Faulstich Orellana et al (2001), Mand (2010), and Tyrell (2011), who offer their insights on children as active agents in migratory processes and investigate their migratory experiences. Within this theoretical framework, I will explore



*home* as a “concrete site of relations [that are] <...> made in local as well as global fields of relations” (Fog-Olwig, 2002, in Mand, 2010: 274).

Therefore, in this study I primarily draw on literature and academic articles that use the theory of transnationalism to approach and challenge the concepts of transnational communities and transnational migrants as well as the understanding of family in the transnational context and the role of children in mobile families. Finally, the concept of *home* is investigated.

In addition, to answer my research questions I have interviewed eleven Lithuanian children of age between 7 and 11 in the timeframe of March-May 2013. To gather an additional data and to get a closer picture of children’s perceptions and experiences from a perspective of adults, who have a close relationship with the children, 3 parents and 1 teacher have been interviewed during the same period of time.

#### **1.4. Statistical overview**

According to the Statistics Norway (SSB, 2013), at the turn of the year, 449 000 foreign citizens lived in Norway, representing 8.8 % of all 5 051 000 residents in the country. Within this picture, Lithuanians represent the third biggest group of foreign citizens with the population of 28 605 residents, coming after Polish (77 100 persons with Polish citizenship; SBB, 1 January 2013) and Swedes (43 100 citizens; *ibid.*). However, as Norway is a member state of the Schengen Area which allows a free movement of people within Schengen countries<sup>1</sup>, and it would be correct to claim that this is an accurate number of Lithuanians working and residing in Norway. Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 EU citizens are not required to apply for a residence visa, according to the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). European Union citizens are only obliged to register with the police and only if they overstay the period of three months (UDI, Registration Scheme for EEA nationals, 2009). Consequently, SSB statistics of registered residents

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<sup>1</sup> Full members: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (EU Commission, Home Affairs, 2013).

does not include Lithuanian migrants who are employed in Norway, but have not declared their residence here, not forgetting those who are working illegally or are seasonal workers and do not overstay the allowed period of three months. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate a more accurate number, although some Lithuanian news agencies suggest that there might be up to 40 000 Lithuanian citizens working and living in Norway (DELFI, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010).

Stavanger is one of the five municipalities where number of people with an immigrant background is the highest (SBB, 2013). Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents account for 26 054 people from the population of 130 000 (SBB, 2013). The numbers of registered Lithuanians in Stavanger have been growing since several years now. While in 2007 there were 138 Lithuanians officially registered in Stavanger, in 2010 there were 250 registrations with even more (627) in 2013 (Stavanger-Statistikken, 2013). Lithuanians also tend to reside in municipalities of Bærum (384 Lithuanian citizens), Drammen (395), Fredrikstad (249), Asker (207), with the highest numbers in Bergen municipality (1230) (SBB, 2013).

Despite some accuracy challenges providing the statistical data on Lithuanian immigrants in Norway in general terms, a relatively easier task is to estimate the number of Lithuanian children who have migrated together with their parents. One of the reasons could be that persons with children under the age of 18 years who live in Norway are entitled to receive child benefit (NAV, 2013), which is an incentive for parents to officially register their children. Another way to get an insight of the number of Lithuanian children is through schooling statistics.

The Norwegian Statistics states that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011, there were 614 334 pupils in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools (6 - 15 years). Out of this number 69 829 children were of immigrant background, which equals to 11% of all pupils. The distribution of those born in Norway with two migrant parents and those who immigrated with their parent(s) was almost equal – accordingly 51% and 49%. In Stavanger municipality there were 15 724 pupils at the beginning of the year (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013). The number of Lithuanian

children attending schools in Stavanger is relatively small compared in overall. According to the representative (personal e-mail communication, 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2013) of Johannes Learning Center in Stavanger - which is a learning space for newly arrived refugees and immigrants – during the school year 2012/2013 there were 11 pupils attending the Center, which accounted for roughly 6% of all pupils, and there were 24 Lithuanian pupils attending other primary and lower secondary schools, but still receiving mother tongue support from the Center. However these numbers do not include Lithuanian pupils who have finished their mother tongue support programme already and attend Norwegians schools as any other pupils. The Norwegian Statics (2013) presents more accurate numbers. It can be seen in the table (No.1) that at the beginning of the year, there were 3067 Lithuanian children of school age (6-19 years old) registered in Norway. In the municipality of Stavanger there were 32 children of age 6 to 12 and 31 child of age 13 to 19.

	Norway	Stavanger municipality
<b>Lithuanian immigrants by age</b>	<b>28,605</b>	<b>627</b>
0-5 years	1,239	29
6-12 years	1,687	32
13-19 years	1,380	31
20-29 years	9,425	209
30-39 years	9,021	204
40-49 years	4,260	90
50 and more	1,593	32

*Lithuanian immigrants, by age. 1st of January 2012  
The whole country and Stavanger municipality (SBB, 2013)*

Nevertheless, in relation to the overall number of pupils in the country with the immigrant background, Lithuanian children represent a considerable part, and relating to growing numbers of immigrants from Lithuania each year, it is likely that more children would migrate with their parents as well.

## 1.5. Disposition of the master thesis

This thesis is composed of five main chapters. After introducing the choice of the study area and the relevant background for the study in the *first chapter*, the paper lays down a theoretical perspective in the *chapter two*.

Firstly, the theory of transnationalism is introduced from the perspectives of key scholars. Background and challenges of transnationalism are discussed, in relation to transnational communities and transnational migrants. The section is summarized while discussing the relevance of theory of transnationalism for the study. Secondly, the way transnational families are comprised is discussed. A closer look is taken at how they identify themselves and link to global networks across the nations. It then continues discussing the place of children in transnational families and their agency in migratory processes. Finally, an understanding of home from the perspective of transnationalism is approached and discussed.

*Chapter three* introduces chosen research method – a guided or semi-structured interview, then presents its relevance for the research and considers its advantages and shortcomings. Also, the validity of the research is discussed and the role of the researcher is taken into critical consideration. The choice of the setting and the target group is introduced, presenting the main criteria for the choice of informants. Lastly, some ethical issues are discussed.

*Chapter four* presents and interprets the findings within the theoretical framework introduced and discussed in the chapter 2. The basis for the analysis is the data collected during qualitative interviews with Lithuanian migrant's children, their parents and one teacher. Three main topics are investigated - children's migratory experiences, their ties with the homeland and children's understanding of home as well as dwelling between the two countries – Lithuania and Norway.

*Chapter five* presents the summary of main findings and offers concluding remarks and perspectives for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **2.1. Apprehending transnationalism as a tool for analysis**

The chapter introduces the theory of transnationalism as a useful tool and perspective to approach transnational communities and transnational migrants. The key concepts are discussed and the main scholarly works in the field are presented. Drawing on existing literature the background and challenges of transnationalism is discussed, in relation to transnational communities and transnational migrants, who are the main actors and driving force for the transnational social spaces to emerge. The section is summarized while discussing the relevance of theory of transnationalism for the study.

#### **2.1.1. Transnationalism and transnational communities**

Much early migration research has predicted that migrants would abandon attachments to their homelands as they became integrated into countries that received them (Castles & Miller, 2003: 13). In the last decade, however, a number of scholars have come to acknowledge that international migration can no longer be seen as a one-way process and cannot be understood without studying the impact of it on both sides of the border. Communities, individuals and their lives are increasingly linked across borders. As Levitt (2001) summarizes, the social, economic, and political ties linking migrants and non-migrants are so deep and widespread that they fundamentally change the ways individuals earn their livelihoods, raise their families, enact religious rituals, and express their political interests (elaborated by Basch et al., 1994; Portes et al., 1999; Smith, 1995). Repeated movement back and forth between communities of origin and the new residence, and the resulting economic and cultural transformations, have prompted some researchers to speak of a set of activities grouped under the umbrella of “transnationalism” (Levitt & Waters, 2006: 5).

Critics, however, argue that strong sending and receiving countries ties is not a new phenomenon, and only a small number of individuals actually sustain them and it is more likely that they will not last beyond the first generation (Jones-Correa, 1998;

Suarez-Orosco, 1998; Waldinger, 1997). They also argue that transnationalism became an all-encompassing category that is used to define any migratory activities, therefore lacking clear and widely-accepted analytical concepts and common consensus of what it actually stands for, which diminishes its explanatory power. As a contra argument to critics, Levitt (2001: 196) notes that the relative newness of this field must be taken into consideration, and growing number of systematic surveys and comparative case studies definitely contribute to better conceptualization of the term and field of studies.

Therefore, it is evident that the use of the term itself is controversial due to contrary opinions and approaches different scholars take. Before discussing the relevance of transnational theory for this study, it is important to look at how different proponents of the theory have conceptualized transnationalism in the context of migration.

As Al-Ali & Koser (2002) notice, most of the scholarly contributions share a similar starting point. Firstly, it is common to make a distinction between the processes of globalization and transnationalism, which was suggested by Michel Kearney (1995). Kearny argued that global processes are most often de-centered from specific national territories, while transnational processes are anchored in and also transcend one or more nation states. The other now commonly accepted distinction, offered by Portes et al. (1999: 221), is transnationalism from above – activities “conducted by powerful institutional actors, such as multinational corporations and states”, and transnationalism from below – activities “that are the result of grass-roots initiatives by immigrants and their home country counterparts”. Guarnizo & Smith (1998) suggested referring to the former as synonymous with globalization, concerned mainly with macroeconomic processes that are not anchored in territories, whereas “transnationalism from below” is about relationships that emanate from two or more nation states and individuals are the principal agents.

So is there a more clear definition of transnationalism? It might be easier to grasp a better notion of it through defining *transnational communities* that are engaged in transnational activities. As Portes (2000), states:

*What common people have done, in response to the process of globalization, is to create communities that sit astride political borders and that, in a very real sense, are “neither here nor there” but in both places simultaneously (p. 254).*

The notion of transnational community, thus, puts emphasis on human agency. As Castles elaborates (2009: 31), in the context of globalization, transnationalism can extend previous face-to-face communities into far virtual communities which communicate at a distance. Those communities tend to integrate locally while at the same time maintaining real and symbolic connections with the original community. They can be active in political or social activities in the home and the host societies, but also at the interconnections of the two. It is important to locate transnational communities with respect to the term *diaspora*. Castles (ibid.) notes, that it is a much older term, often used to refer to displaced or dispersed people, like the Jews, African slaves in the Americas or trading groups, such as Greeks in Western Asia and Africa or the Arab traders who brought Islam to South-East Asia. Although both terms deal with people who have migrated and maintained ties with their homelands, the term *diaspora* carries much stronger emotional connotations and the notion of transnational community is more neutral. Safran (1991, in Levitt & Waters, 2006: 7) describes *diaspora* as a social form involving individuals living throughout the world, but identifying collectively with one another, their host societies, and the lands from which they and their ancestors have come. In Safran’s definition stronger emphasis is put on “collectivity”, while the term *transnational community*, it can be argued, stresses the mobility and *being* between “here and there”. There is a disagreement whether both terms can be used synonymously. While Castles (2009: 31) sees only slight difference, Faist (2000: 197) argues that diasporas tend to constitute only a specific type of transnational communities. In diasporas, he claims, a group “has suffered some kind of traumatic event which leads to the dispersal of its members, and there is a vision and memory of a lost or imagined homeland still to be established, often accompanied by a refusal of the receiving society to recognize in full the cultural distinctiveness of the immigrants”. Therefore, Faist refused to apply the same term to, for example, labor migrants as they have not undergone traumatic experiences or it cannot be said that most of the members of these

groups yearn to return to their lost homeland. This last argument of Faist can be challenged by empirical data of this particular study as it will be demonstrated in following chapters. However it is a particular feature of diasporas that they do not necessarily need to concrete social ties to prosper, unlike transnational labor migrants communities, for example. Faist (ibid.) argues that it is possible that “the memory of a homeland manifests itself primarily in symbolic ties”. Therefore, in this study terms transmigrants and transnational community are used while referring to Lithuanian immigrants in Norway. Primarily because of the focus on constant mobility and dwelling between the two countries and not so much on collective Lithuanian identity maintained (or not) by Lithuanians living abroad.

### **2.1.2. Transnational social spaces**

Maintaining *social ties* that Faist refers to is a significant element of contemporary transnational migrations. Firstly, as Levitt (2001:197) elaborates, once begun, migration spreads through social networks. For some migrants these networks do not grow more extensive and deep, and over the time migrants become more incorporated into countries they migrated to, without strong ties with their homelands. However, a significant number of ordinary and elite migrants may continue to engage in a number of transnational practices or economic, political, and socio-cultural activities that require regular long-term contacts across borders (Portes et al., 1999). In many cases, due to the duration and impact of migration, networks like those grow to *transnational social fields*, which intersect the sending and receiving country. Pries (2001: 18) sets his understanding of transnational social spaces through analysis of “the very different forms of social spaces and the very different levels of geographic spaces” because in his view “a social space cannot exist without reference to a geographic space, but the emerging transnational social spaces cannot be adequately drawn in terms of, and by reference to, nation-states”. In other words, Pries (ibid.) starts with the definition of any social space, which could be the household, local community or national society as well as leisure activities clubs or restaurants and cinemas. He then looks at changing nature of the



relationship between the social and the geographic or spatial spaces and concludes that it no longer makes sense to focus only on social spaces that coincide exactly with geographic spaces. Therefore, one must focus on multi-sited or pluri-local social spaces. On the one hand, multi-sited social space is not necessarily a transnational one. Pries notices that a family where a husband and a wife or children work and study far from “home” and meets at “home” only on weekends, also shares a multi-sited social space. On the other hand, as Pries puts it, the same way as multi-sited social spaces inside a national society are not completely new, the transnational social spaces are not a recent development either, referring to histories of various diasporas. The new direction, though, is that transnational social spaces are becoming a mass phenomenon (ibid: 24). It is worth quoting the whole passage where Pries (ibid.) summarizes his definition confronting earlier opinions by other scholars:

*Emerging transnational social spaces are not merely spatial extensions of the migrants’ communities of origin (see Smith 1995); they do not exist without a geographic-spatial extent and therefore are not “de-territorialized” (see Basch et al 1997; Ong and Nonini 1997); they are neither only or mainly channels for movements of people, in the sense of social capital or migration networking (Massey and Espinosa 1997), nor are they sufficiently captured by focusing on integration and the adaptation problems of second-generation migrants (Portes 1996)*

Thus:

*Transnational social spaces are pluri-local social entities and genuine realities composed of social practices, artifacts and symbols with a density and stability relatively high in comparison to other social spaces (p. 24).*

What is important to grasp from Pries’ ideas is that he recognizes transnational social fields as an important factor that changes the relation between the social and the geographic spaces. They span different geographic spaces in at least two nation-states however they do not constitute a new ‘deterritorialized’ nation-state. Pries’ ideas can be well applicable to various transnational activities, starting with transnational migration and continuing with international trade and international business companies. For this study his thoughts are substantial as they put focus on “transnational social spaces emerging as a result of growing and differentiating migration movements” (Pries, 2001:

24). Summing up Pries' point, the emphasis is put on how transnational social fields or spaces form connections between multiple localities. The second important point is that these spaces engender all aspects of social life. As Levitt (2001: 197) puts it all together, although initially they may form as a response to economic relations between migrant and non-migrants, connections in social and political and religious fields develop as well, and the more diverse and thick a transnational space is, the greater the number of ways it offers migrants to remain active in their homelands.

### **2.1.3. Transnational migrants**

As already mentioned, transnational activities and relationships is not a new phenomenon. Especially in the era of improving communication and transportation technologies which allow maintaining close and more frequent connections. Due to that migrants can be actively involved in everyday life of their homelands in ways they could have never been in the past. The previous section discussed how contemporary migration studies have turned to analyzing transnational social spaces and activities. A number of scholars suggested that migrant communities are “often ‘pluri-local’ in the sense that their members maintain multiple and overlapping ties to their region or place of departure, as well as their place of arrival” (Djelic & Quack, 2010: 15). It is necessary to take a closer at who are the main actors in the processes discussed.

The notion of transmigrants overlaps greatly with the concept of transnational communities and transnational spaces. They can be seen as the smallest units or actors involved in transmigratory activities. Firstly, it can be discussed what is the difference between *immigrant* and *transmigrant*. They both crossed national borders, making an act of international migration. The main difference, though, is that *immigrant* can be considered as “uprooted”, implying that the focus is on incorporation into the new society rather than staying “in between” or remaining strongly engaged with the home society. *Transmigrant*, although becoming firmly rooted in the new society and country, maintains strong linkages to the homeland. Schiller et al (1995: 48) recognizes the shift from being an immigrant to becoming a transmigrant. The authors acknowledge (ibid.)

that in the United States several generations of scholars have perceived immigrants as uprooted persons who leave behind their countries and face the painful incorporation into a new society and culture. However in the context of new transnational migrations, which happen to be much more dispersed, interconnected and compromising, it is suggested that in US as well as in Europe an increasing number of migrants are best understood as *transmigrants*.

Almost every scholar in the field has his/her own understand of what the term actually stands for, but the common agreement can be summarized from existing definitions. Schiller et al (1995: 48) understands *transmigrants* as “immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state”. They are not temporary residents as they settle and become engaged in local economy, daily life and/or political institutions. However, at the same time they participate in similar activities in their homelands – they “maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events” (ibid.). In other words, transmigrants are active agents in sustaining ongoing multi-stranded social relations between the two (or several) societies they are embedded in.

Other scholars conceptualize the notion of *transmigrants* in somewhat similar way. Pries (2001: 67) identifies transmigrants as movers “in new pluri-local transnational social spaces where individual and collective biographical life projects, everyday life as well as the real “objective” sequence of life stations span between different geographical-spatial extensions”, and therefore emphasizes the “pluri-locality”. Portes (2000: 264) focuses on “dual lives” and defines transmigrants as “at least bilingual”, moving easily between different cultures and often maintaining homes in two countries, in addition to pursuing “economic, political, and cultural interests that require a simultaneous presence in both”. However Portes points out that not all migrants can be labeled as transnational. He notes that the term should only be applicable to migrants who are involved in transnational activities on a regular basis and that accounts for a major part of their occupation.

Levitt (2006: 11) is more precise in distinguishing different types of transmigrants. She understands *transmigrants* primarily as those who travel “regularly to carry out their routine affairs” and suggests calling them *frequent travelers* synonymously. Another type for her is those who “move infrequently and are rooted primarily in a single sending- or receiving-country setting, but their lives are integrally involved with resources, contacts, and people from far away”. She also suggests calling them *periodic movers*. The third type stands for individuals who never move, but “who live their lives within a context that has become transnationalized because it is permeated by social remittances and cultural elements that migrants introduce”.

In summary, the contributions from different scholars point to the fact that due largely improved communication and transportation facilities migrants have the capabilities to remain actively involved in daily life of their homelands, thus they maintain multi-stranded social relationships that link their societies of settlement and origin, which then makes them *transmigrants*. Their experiences and activities are the outcomes of being transnational and the base to establish transnational social fields that cross geographic, political and cultural borders. Transmigrants then are individuals who “take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns” (Schiller et al, 1992: ix) within such social fields.

#### **2.1.4. The relevance and the applicability of the transnational perspective to the study**

As Levitt (2006: 12) notes, there is already a growing body of scholarly work that uses a transnational lens to explore experiences of the immigrant generation. Studying transnational actors and the social fields they get engaged to, can contribute to better understanding of migrants’ experiences in their home and host communities as well as contemporary migration in general. Firstly, transnational perspective can shift the focus to processes that have been ignored before. Al-Ali & Koser (2002: 3) acknowledge that more traditional approaches to migration used to perceive international migrants as exceptions from the norm. The emphasis was put on the act of actual migration as

geographical movement crossing international borders at one end, and the outcome of this movement dealing with the consequences and impact to the receiving society at the other one. Transnational approach in this case treats transmigrants not as an exception, but “as representatives of an increasingly globalized world” (ibid.). More attention is paid to how transmigrants adapt to situation “in between” the two countries and how they make use of improved telecommunication and transportation possibilities as well as how they deal with “new social forms, political challenges and cultural resources generated by linkages across several geographic locations” Al-Ali & Koser (2002: 4). Moreover, the transnational perspective sheds the light on the ways in which individuals distribute their resources and loyalty between the sending and receiving country (Levitt, 2001: 198).

Secondly, the transnational perspective can provide a new insight on transnational processes that have taken a different form due to globalization. As mentioned already, improving technologies play a crucial role in the everyday lives of transmigrants. It has enabled migrants to maintain multiple localities as well as multiple identities (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002: 4), which is mainly the consequence of being anchored socially, culturally and physically “neither in their place of origin nor in their place of destination”. Another aspect is restructuring the relationship between “home” and “host” societies, which shifts family ties from local to global scale as well as reconstructs the perceptions of *place* and *locality*.

Summing up, the transnational perspective can be applied as a useful tool approaching contemporary processes of migration as well as migrants themselves. One of the tasks of this study is to make a convincing case that transnational perspective can also contribute to deeper insights into how Lithuanian migrant children perceive home. I will argue that looking through the lens of transnationalism adds to better understanding of how children (re)construct their sense of place and home.

However, in order to arrive there the next step that needs to be taken is conceptualizing transnational families and children as active agents in them as well as approaching an understanding of *home* from the perspective of transnationalism. The following chapter will attempt to make those steps.

## **2.2. Conceptualizing transnational families**

In this chapter the concept of transnational family is described and investigated, focusing on the place of family in the prevalent understanding of migration and turning to the members of transnational families whose role is often and largely underestimated - the children of migrants. The concept of being a migrant child is discussed as well as their agency in migratory movements is considered.

### **2.2.1. What makes a family transnational?**

To start with, it is necessary to acknowledge that the concept of transnational family is still lacking a common agreement and accepted perception among the scholars. As Goulbourne et al (2010: 4) notes, the concept is generally taken for granted or obvious and it is assumed that it is a straightforward description of “families whose members live in different countries but manage to continue to keep in touch with each other”. Bryceson & Vuorela (2002: 3) somewhat extends the definition claiming that transnational families not only live some or most of the time separated from each other, but also “hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders”. While these definitions can be a starting point to develop a better concept of the transnational family, they are still too broad and vague. Therefore, it is necessary to take a closer look at what makes a family transnational and where is the place for family in the prevalent understanding of migration.

One might question the purpose of considering the position and perception of transnational families while their experiences can be viewed from the perspective of transnational migrants in general, as discussed in previous section. However, the family and community are crucial migration networks. As Castles & Miller (2009: 28) argue, migration decisions are usually made not by individuals but by families. In situations of rapid change, “a family may decide to send one or more members to work in another region or country, in order to maximize income and survival chances”. Once migratory

movements started, it becomes self-sustaining social processes (ibid: 29). Family linkages then provide financial, cultural and social capitals that make migration possible. Moreover, as soon as migrants establish their own economic and social infrastructures, they begin to bring their spouses and children. Thus, Castle's & Miller's argument puts the unit of family in the center of migration networks. In the context of globalization and contemporary large-scale migration the unit of family plays a crucial role, especially in terms of keeping and maintaining social ties across the borders and constituting itself as a transnational family.

As already mentioned, in this study the transnational perspective is being applied "from below" (Castles & Miller, 2009), that is the focus is on how transnationalism impacts people's lives and lifestyles, and in this case particularly family lives. It would be too simplistic to perceive a transnational family as either integrated or assimilated to the new society, while the actual family can have completely different ideas about networking and connecting. Likewise, seeing a family only oriented towards past and captured by nostalgic feelings towards homeland as often is the focus in diaspora studies would not provide a full picture. Therefore, it is useful to apply a transnational perspective and focus on transnational ways of living, highlighting, as Bryceson & Vuorela (2002: 6) puts it, "negotiations between movement and staying, between different levels of loyalties and [...] orientation to past, present and future".

Although the experience of transnational families is the focus here, it must be noted being a transnational family is not a new phenomenon. Bryceson & Vuorela points to migrations of intellectual and business elites as well as colonial rulers and administrators "representing transnational families before what is described as the postmodern age" (ibid.). Goulbourne et al (2010: 5) adds that missionaries, teachers and travelers in Europe's empires abroad have also contributed to the general context of the formation of transnational families over the last three or more centuries. These authors claim that this "imperial type" of transnationalism gave a start for long-distance living and consciousness, and sense of belonging irrespective of physical space. In this context, however, being "transnational" meant being "mobile" more than being a "migrant" and

applied to transnational elites, transnational families at the higher end of the income scale and also who were moving for financial or status reasons. This is still the case today as well – the word *migrant* carries class connotations and is applied more on people who are considered economically or politically deprived (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002: 7), while people working in higher units of transnational companies or global development cooperation organizations are not perceived as migrants at all. However, contemporary realities of globalization and modernization make transnational experiences possible for families no matter their social class. The transnational experience became a part of the lives of working-class people as well as well-heeled middle-class families in society (Goulbourne et al 2010: 6), thus, it applies to labor migrants on a large scale as well.

Having said that, it is useful to summarize some of transnational families features which are discussed by several scholars. As already mentioned, transnational families gives the base for what is called “network society” (see Castles, 2009; Castells, 2000), which reduces the importance of distance. Migration and distance no longer mean the total loss of contact between family members and wider kinship networks. Being scattered across two or more nation states shows a world in which “ordinary people are able relatively freely to negotiate physical, social and cultural spaces to suit their felt or perceived needs” (Goulbourne et al 2010: 9). In this context, different kinds of movements of families appear, and either the whole family or individual members move repeatedly across nations or negotiate these routes.

While it is more or less clear what is meant by being a “transnational” family, it is also important to note that the term *family* is used in its broad sense in this study. That means that not only a nuclear family (parents and their offspring) are considered to be a family, but also their wider kinship, including grandparents or any other close relatives that are affected or involved in migratory activities. A broader understanding of *family* is also more applicable as it includes all the actors of migration, also to non-migrants and those who engage in periodical migration. As already mentioned and elaborated by Levitt (2001: 198), movement is not a prerequisite for engaging in transnational practices. Therefore, understanding a transnational family as extended family avoids ruling out of



those family members, who might move infrequently or do not move at all, but live their lives within a context that has become transnationalized.

Another feature of transnational families is a set of general relationships and concerns that matters/might matter to such families. Portes et al (1999) as well as Faist (2000) point to three main kinds of concerns and connections that a transnational family can have. These are the broadly economic, the political and socio-cultural. In this study the emphasis is on the last one, the socio-cultural matters in a broad sense, with the particular focus on home and belonging, which will be elaborated in later sections. It is important to point out that the unit of transnational family is actually very suitable and fitting for proper analysis of transnational practices. Although Portes et al (1999) suggests that the individual should be a starting point for the studies of transnationalism, Goulbourne et al (2010: 12) argues that an individual is embedded within the family and his/her “points of departure and arrival, like the points of settlement and return, are located or buried within the bosom of the family”. Thus, it can be stated that the unit of family can be considered as a crucial location that transnational practices stem from.

### **2.2.2. Children as active agents of transnational families**

Children migration is quite an under-researched topic. This is primarily because, as have been noted in the introductory section, migration research has neglected children’s migration, focusing on the movements of adults or families (Faulstich Orellana et al, 2001; Young and Ansell, 2006; Mand, 2010). Firstly, it is also important to agree on what is a *child* or a *migrant child*, and how children should be approached in migration contexts.

It can be argued that the research of childhood is a relatively new topic. The breaking key work in the new social studies of childhood was Philippe Ariès’ book *Centuries of Childhood* (1962). He introduced the understanding of childhood as a social phenomenon and argued that childhood was “discovered” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a result of particular social changes, such as the growth of the bourgeoisie in Europe (Ariès, 1962: 93-99). Ariès has raised crucial questions about

historical perspectives towards childhood and its interpretations in modern times. He has also posed a fundamental claim in childhood research that childhood is socially constructed and rooted in particular social, historical and cultural contexts.

There exist a number of cultural definitions of who embodies childhood or even personhood (Sheper-Hughes, 1992). Nevertheless, most of them commonly describe children as different from adults, meaning that despite different definitions, children are seen as persons that distinct from others. Another feature, noted by Coe et al (2011: 2) is that children, possibly everywhere, have discursive and symbolic links to time, “because they are seen as people in the process of becoming and because it is through children that community’s reproduction is actualized”. Orellana (2009: 49) recognizes this feature as well, however argues against future-oriented focus on children and instead suggests to treat children as any other social actors who are worthy of study in their own right, not only in relation to their process of “becoming”. Orellana’s position helps to see children “as actors and agents not just in their own lives, but in the functioning of society” as well. In this study children are also approached the way they *are*, not how they will *become*. Thus, the focus is not on their future roles as adult. As Kjørholt (2004: 7) put it: “childhood has an intrinsic value here and now, and the dialogue should focus on children’s reflections, thoughts and everyday experiences”, which is also the leading approach in this thesis.

Regarding the actual term *a child*, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 2009) considers everyone under the age of eighteen to be a child. However *children* category is then divided to more sub-categories – children (under the age of 15) and adolescents (15 – 17 years). Youth and young adults considered to between 18 and 24 years old. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2006: 1) suggests that children are under the age of 10, adolescents – 10 to 19 years old, and in general young people those between 10 and 24. Varying categorization of childhood is divided by age as it is necessary mostly due to legal and formal requirements. In this study the legal definition of *being a child* is not as important as an actual approach to a person who is a child. The age group chosen for this study is determined and defined in the following chapter,

however at this point this study follows UNICEF's categorization and considers any person under the age of 18 to be a child.

From the children's rights perspective, children are one of the most protected and regulated group by state and civic society in Europe, and the state often determines what is "good" for them (Hill et al, 2004). Parents, from their side, are supposed to care for their children and act in their best interest and develop children's agency including them in decision making (UNCRC). In addition, children's rights is a highly significant and important matter, considering individual European Union's states' children acts and global regulations, like above reference the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990). Consequently, as pointed out by Tyrell (2011: 25), socio-cultural changes in contemporary constructions of childhood are also becoming influential in the political sphere. One of the features of it is that the right of children to be involved in making decisions that affect their lives is now broadly recognized as being in children's best interests, for example in cases like formal decision making procedures in Britain, when children are in government care or when their families separate (ibid: 26).

Turning to the main focus of the study – the children of migrants, it is interesting to note that in recent years there has been a growing interest between scholars in ways children participate in family migration (Orellana et al, 2001; Al-Ali et al, 2002; Levitt, 2006; Mand, 2011; Coe et al, 2011). Although, as Coe et al. (2011: 3) notes, the discourse on how children specifically contribute to family decision making to migrate and which experiences they have is rather minimal. Therefore, studying children's agency and experiences in migratory movements is relevant and well timed. Children's agency in migration has to be contextualized within children's rights in societies as well as their everyday experiences in families (Tyrell, 2011: 24).

Thus, despite the attempt of a number of scholars "to open up the 'black box' of family migration decision making and recognize the roles of different family members, much research [...] tends to be 'adultist'", as claims Tyrell (2011: 24). The author also recognizes that family migration research is rarely sensitive to age and agrees that once

again children have been under-theorized as active agents in migration and transnational processes. On the other hand, it might be helpful to first elaborate the understanding of *agency* and how it can be applied to the study of children. Coe et al. (2011: 7) take into consideration the domains in which children have or display their agency. It is useful to shortly introduce their position. Coe et al define *agency* as “the ability to exert one’s will and to act in the world, agency [also] includes aspects of independence and autonomy”. Moreover, while all people, including children as well, are “agentive”, their agency is embedded and created within different contexts. From the perspective that is taken by global organizations like UNICEF or UNHCR, the usual premise is that children need protection and persons whose agency should be recognized (ibid: 8). Academics, however, tend to reduce children’s agency to something either present or absent, as notice Coe et al. The authors conclude that regardless the way adults – be it parents or any other adults in the society as well as adults in the academy – interpret the experiences of children, they themselves “have resiliency and an ability to construct new social meaning that surround their status” (ibid: 9). In this study at the hand *children’s agency* is understood and promoted in two ways. As a starting point it is explored what role children had played in making a decision to migrate, but more importantly an effort is made to give children a voice and a space to be considered as active agents in migratory experiences and to pay attention to their perceptions of movement and notions of home and household.

Finally, there is one more important question to ask – so where is children’s place in migratory processes? As the empirical data demonstrates in the coming chapters, children are often in the center of migratory processes, as one of the reasons to migrate or as migrants themselves. Milharčič Hladnik (2010: 22) uses the framework of five main forms to position children in the migration processes. It is worthy to shortly summarize author’s position. The first form she sees is when children migrate together with family which is also the most widespread form of migration and which can “occur as permanent, temporary or one or the other – different for individual family members” (ibid.). The second form is a decision made by parent(s) to migrate while leaving child/children with

relatives, neighbors or close friends. Here the author assumes that the reason behind it must be a belief in return when the conditions allow that or when the reunion of the family is possible, bringing children along. The third form is when abroad-born children return to their parents' homeland either with them or by themselves and are referred to as returnees. The author argues against such a perception due to the fact of being born abroad. The fourth form is "conditioned by work performed exclusively by women, i.e. giving birth and nursing the children" (ibid.). These children are, as she calls them, the *beneficiaries* of this work and cannot be separated from the migration context. This form also includes children left at home by migrant women. Lastly, Milharčič Hladnik mentions children who migrate by themselves or are sent by their parents to work abroad. Importantly, among these forms only the last one perceives children as their own decisions makers, and all the other forms see a child as a part of parents' decision. When talking about Lithuanian migration and migrants in Stavanger, not all of those forms are present; some of them might still become present, for example when abroad-born children who might come back to their parents homeland. The degree and extent of contemporary migration from Lithuania is still very recent<sup>2</sup> and the most common forms of children migration is the first two – when children migrate together with their family or when they are left with the relatives until they can join their parents. The mentioned forms of placing children in migration context will be illustrated by empirical cases in the following chapter of the thesis, going much further and deeper exploring children experiences and perceptions of home within the context of migration.

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<sup>2</sup> The numbers of Lithuanian migration have been increasingly growing since Lithuania has joined the EU in 2004. Between 2004 – 2009 migration rates were fluctuating between approximately 23 000 to 48 000 altogether of declared and not declared emigration. In 2010 numbers have increased almost four times and reached 83157 persons. The current figures of the year 2012 state that 41 000 has declared their emigration and estimate that approximately the same number of people have emigrated without declaring their migration (Lithuanian Statistics, 2013).

### 2.3. Approaching an understanding of *home* from the perspective of transnationalism

What does it mean to be at home? Where, when and why does one feel at home? How does it change when one leaves home? Does the sense of feeling at home change towards different places? Surely, a number of very different answers can be given to those questions. Also, definitions of home can change depending on one's personal experiences. Ahmed (1999: 338) suggests that home can mean where one usually lives, also it can mean where one's family lives or it can mean one's native country, and *being at home* can involve the coexistence of all of those ways. This section discusses briefly the notion of *home* as it is understood and seen in the context of migration. It is also an aim to lay down some ideas and insights about the effects of being a transnational migrant on feeling at home, not at home or at home in several places. Therefore *home* is primarily approached from the perspective of migrants, who have left their initial homes.

Blunt & Dowling (2006) in their critical geography of home approach the notion of *home* from domestic to transnational scales. For them home is much more than a house or a physical space in which people live, it is a location as well as a set of feelings. While being a physical place on the one hand, *home* is usually linked to family, community, nation on the other one. Moreover, it is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging, thus the meaning of home is continually created and re-created through everyday home-making practices, which are themselves tied to spatial imaginaries of home (ibid: 254). A similar thought is elaborated by Al-Ali & Koser (2002: 6) who notice that in general the existing literature on *home* is torn between definitions that relate to physical places and those that are concerned about symbolic spaces, although a number of scholars agree that the concept implies both meanings. They refer to Papastergiadis (1998: 2, in Ali & Koser, 2002: 7) who sees the ideal home not only as a shelter, but also “a place where personal and social meaning is grounded”, and come up with their own approach. For them “conceptions of home are not static, but dynamic processes, involving the acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving ‘homes’” (ibid: 7). Thus, *home* is a complex concept. As Blunt & Dowling

(2006: 254) puts it together – “home is a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meaning, and the relations between the two”.

Besides the nexus of spatial – imaginary understanding of home, more traditional accounts on home in the literature have focused on sedentary ways of life and defined households on the basis of co-residence and collective ownership of property (Mand, 2011: 275). Such approaches were discarded as excluding a movement of people and providing a rigid notion of home, tied to locality, and blind to understanding home in the context of mobility (Fog-Olwig, 1997: 33). Those more traditional meanings of home have been and still are being redefined due to social, cultural, economic and political changes (Bammer, 1992: viii). The contemporary approach to *home* differs greatly from those classic representations and emphasizes the mobility as a driving force that is changing the whole concept.

One of the most influential factors, which have disrupted the singular and stable notion of home, is transnational migration. In the context of Europe and emerging transnational communities, the importance and attachment to a certain *place* is changing. On the one hand, many transnational communities are strongly related to their home areas, although some individual transnational migrants or transnational families do not hold to any origins, do not have any permanent geographical attachments or final destinations (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002: 25). Even so, many families, especially those who have migrated relatively recently, as the empirical data reveals as well in the following sections, tend to maintain strong attachments to their home area. Thus, the question is what happens to the perception of *home* and everyday practices that are associated with home when there is no fixed place. As Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 7.) embeds it into transnational perspective – “how do transnational social fields and practices manifest themselves in daily lives, and how (if at all) do they impact on abstract conceptualizations of home?”

Research on home and transnational migration raises even more challenging and important questions. As already mentioned, Al-Ali and Koser in their work try to grasp if/how *home* is no longer tied to a specific geographical place from the perspective of

migrants, and to what extent do transnational migrants understand and experience more than one *home*. Brah (1996: 193) asks when a location can already be called home and can a place of residence at some point be called a home at all. Although Brah approaches *home* from the perspective of diaspora studies, her questions are well relevant to transnational migrants and communities, which face similar anxieties and experiences regarding leaving home and maintaining ties with their homelands. Ahmed (1999: 338) in her theoretical considerations puts more emphasis on migration and questions how homes are being made in the context of migration, and how “being at home” is affected when one leaves it. Thus, questions raised by scholars shift understanding of home as a single and fixed place. The findings and answers to those questions, as Blunt & Dowling (2006: 198) summarizes, suggest that “ideas of home are relational across space and time [and] are often shaped by memories of past homes as well as dreams of future homes, and bring together both material and imaginative geographies of residence and belonging”.

Thus, theoretical inquiries above reveal a blurring picture of home as a single place. It also shows the appearing interplay between ‘here’ and ‘there’ or between several locations that transnational migrants can be residing at or attached to. Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 1) recognizes that “the changing relationship between migrants and their ‘homes’ is held to be an almost quintessential characteristic of transnational migration”. This paper is also following the path that Al-Ali and Koser have taken, and is aiming to grasp some insights from the dynamics of the relationship between *home* and *transnational migration*. Blunt & Dowling (2006: 196) goes even further and uses the term *transnational homes*, which stems primarily from this relationship. However, what is a transnational home? It might sound like an ambiguous and vague definition of connections between different homes or spaces that transnational migrants consider to be their homes. On the other hand, the notion of *transnational home* can be related well to the concept of transnational social spaces. As already discussed in previous sections, Pries (2001: 18) has defined transnational social spaces as “pluri-local social entities [...] composed of social practices, artifacts and symbols”, which corresponds to Blunt and Dowling (2006: 254) suggested perception of *home* as constantly “re-created everyday



practices, tied to spatial imaginaries of home”. Moreover, they argue that transnational homes are shaped by experiences and ideas of location and dislocation as people as people migrate for a variety of reasons and feel both at home and not at home in a number of different circumstances.

It can be argued that for a lot of transnational migrants the physical and imagined notions of homes are both multiple and ambiguous, especially because of associations with more than one place. There are many ways how the state of being “in between” or “here and there” can be framed, like through the relationship between “residing” home and homeland, diverse home-making practices, intersections of home, memory and belonging, return journeys and economic as well as political connections across multiple homes (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 196). The ways just described are also features of diverse transnational communities. Being a transnational migrant and engaging in transnational activities is also reinforced strongly or even predetermined by maintaining *homes* in several locations and dwelling across places. Blunt and Dowling (ibid.) suggests to approach transnational homes as “the interplay of both mobile and located homes and identities and [...] the processes and practices of home making both within particular places and across transnational space”, which accurately summarizes their main points introduced above.

An interesting aspect of dwelling “in between” is elaborated by Ahmed (1999: 331). She discusses that in some sense, a transmigrant can lose his/her feeling “at home” or start feeling like having “no home”. She argues that when there are too many places that one has/wants to be attached to, one might not be able anymore to declare himself / herself as having home. Ahmed suggests that “movement between homes hence allows Home to become a fetish, to become separated from the particular worldly space of living here, through the possibility of some memories and impossibility of others” (ibid.). It is then often the case that the space which is most like home and is the most familiar, is not the space where one actually lives or resides and thus puts one in a position of constant waiting or “being on the way”, where going home is sometime in the future. Home, as

claims Ahmed, is elsewhere, but it is also where one is going – “one never gets there, but is always getting here” (ibid.).

Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 6) have elaborated Ahmed’s thought. They argue that while transnational migrants get engaged in a number of transnational practices, their understanding of home is changing. They assume that in the transnational context that migrants are embedded to, they tend to develop globally oriented identities and consequently pluri- or trans-local understandings of *home*. In other words, “‘home’ has become a space, a community created within the changing links between ‘here’ and ‘there’” (ibid.). However, it has to be taken into consideration that separate individuals come from different circumstances, generations and experiences of previous and current homes. There might be a number of different conceptions of *home* even within one particular group of migrants. That is exactly one of the aims of this thesis – to approach and to investigate the relationship between transnational migrants and their *homes*. Thus, the approach of “being in between”, briefly introduced from the point of view of Ahmed (1999) and Al-Ali and Koser (2002), is interesting and valuable to investigate within the chosen group for research, which will be presented in the following part of the thesis.

The concluding remark of this section could be that it is necessary to think more critically about the ways the notion of *home* is shaped and understood, especially in the context of transnational migration. As a short introduction of several scholars’ thoughts on *home* has demonstrated, the concept of home is shifting and in contemporary migratory movements obtains a new form of perception.

## 2.4. Summary

In this chapter the theoretical framework of the research has been presented. Drawing on the contemporary scholarly works in the field of transnational migration, the theory of transnationalism as a tool for analysis has been introduced. Using the “lens” of transnationalism the main concepts of transnational migratory movements, mobile families, individual migrants, children and their role in migration have been discussed, finally turning to the notion of home in the context of international migration.

Next chapters turn to the main focus group of the research – Lithuanian migrant children in Stavanger. Adapting theoretical insights developed in this chapter and analyzing the gathered empirical data, (transnational) children’s perceptions of home and belonging is investigated.

## CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As the research questions suggests, this thesis addresses Lithuanian migrant children in the municipality of Stavanger, their sense of belonging, being mobile between Lithuania and Norway and their perceptions of *home*. This chapter is dedicated to present the research method, to introduce the target group and to justify the choice of informants. The ethical considerations and the role of the researcher are presented as well.

### 3.1. Qualitative research: the choice of the method

Carrying out research with children and young people may require creativity and slight adaptation of traditional techniques, especially because of their “varied social competencies and preferred ways of communications with unfamiliar adults” (Punch, 2002: 45). Having that in mind, one of the most important tasks before the research was to assure a proper methodology to record experiences of children in meaningful ways. A number of scholars have expressed their theoretical considerations on the best and the most suitable techniques to approach children as informants (O’Kane, 1999; Christensen & James, 2000; Lewis & Lindsay, 2000; Punch, 2002; Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). It has been argued that research with children is different from doing a research with adults, primarily because of children’s positioning towards adults, which has to do with power relations. Therefore most of the mentioned contributions in researching children suggest adapting a wide and flexible set of tools ranging from individual interviews combined with various activity based techniques, stimulus material and games, to pair interviews, group interviews and focus groups or a particular mixture of those tools. The purpose behind it, as Punch argues (2002: 54), is to reduce the power of the researcher over participants and decrease researcher’s control, which is one the main challenges while researching children.

Some researchers have argued for a participatory approach to solve this challenge. For Bagnoli and Clark (2010: 102) a participatory research is a very suitable approach in working with young people, as it is primarily about involvement of participants to the

whole research process. Authors argue that as in the participatory research the researcher's role is less a leader and more a facilitator, cooperating with the participants who, on their end, can be involved in some or every aspect of the research process, including setting goals and questions as well as collecting and interpreting data (Clark et al, 2009: 351). This is seen as one of the ways to get rid of imposing role of the researcher and to implement non-hierarchical research. Then, a relevant method is conducting focus groups. Firstly because the data in focus groups is being generated through interaction with other participants, thus the researcher is much less present. A focus group provides a space for participants, where they can “define their own categories and labels, and unmask ideas and opinions” (Bagnoli and Clark, 2010: 103). In other words, a focus group can create a much more relaxed atmosphere, especially in the researcher-participant relationship as well as enable its participants to express themselves more easily. Surely, the method has its own limitations and shortcomings however it can be a better solution, especially in working with children.

The above summarized theoretical assumptions have been taken into serious consideration while designing the methodological framework for this research. The initial idea was to follow a participatory approach and conduct a number of focus groups, in addition conducting semi-structured interviews with children's parents and a teacher in order to gather some additional data. However after visiting the chosen setting<sup>3</sup>, observing the activities carried out there and getting to know the group of children whose parents gave consent to participate in the research, it became clear that focus groups could not be conducted due to a number of reasons. The only time slot available to meet the children in the setting was each second Saturday, that is twice a month. It took some time to get to know children and for them to get used to me as well, and then to organize a suitable time to talk to them. The main challenge was to bring a group of children together in one room, as it was often the case that each time there were different children arriving to the setting, due to participation in setting's activities on voluntary basis. Being present in the setting in the period of March – May 2013 (six meetings) and participating

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<sup>3</sup> The choice of the informants will be elaborated in the section 3.3.

in the organized activities as either observer or assistant, I got to know almost all the children that were usually attending. However, irregular attendance was the first reason why the method of focus groups could not be organized so easily. Secondly, after observing the dynamics in the group, it became clear that some children preferred to participate in activities with some other particular children only, mostly girls with girls, boys with boys. So the gender and being “better friends” with some other children played quite important role. Finally, after introducing me as a researcher and explaining the purpose of being in the setting, it was discussed with children which method they would prefer for the interviewing. They could choose to be interviewed individually or in small groups or even in pairs with a friend of their choice. Most of the children preferred to be interviewed together with a friend. Only one girl and one boy were interviewed separately and not in the setting, but in their homes as it was arranged and agreed separately with their parents. However it was made sure, that these children felt comfortable in being interviewed alone and from their feedback after the interview it was clear that they did not experience stress and that they found it interesting and fun.

Thus, due to the reasons outlined above, the method of focus groups has been discarded. The irregular children’s appearance in the setting, the relatively small group that fit into chosen age group and also a short time to collect the empirical data has determined that a participatory approach, promoted by Bagnoli and Clark (2010) could not be fully applied either. Of course, children had a freedom to choose how they would like to be interviewed, and an extensive effort was made to become a more or less familiar person for the children. It was done through taking part in their ordinary activities in the setting as well as providing them activities seeking to get to know them and them to know the researcher, to create a relaxed atmosphere and a warm and trustworthy relationship as far as it was possible in that short time. Most of the children had had a limited experience of talking to unfamiliar adult without their parents being present, so it was important to build a rapport and to increase their confidence in taking part in interviews. However, children were not included in any other parts of the research design such as setting goals and questions as well as collecting and interpreting data as

suggested by Clark et al (2009: 351). The interview questions, as will be presented in the following section, were flexible enough to adjust them regarding children's answers and more preferred topics, although the framework of questions was predetermined in advance. The main challenge was to keep the balance between what Punch (2002: 54) calls "not patronizing young people [...] but maintaining their interest and keeping the research familiar and relevant to them".

Therefore, when choosing the most suitable type of interview to use, factors such as gender of participants, interpersonal relations, the setting and a personal choice of the interviewing method was taken into consideration. Thus, in the pursuit to answer central research questions, a qualitative semi-structured interviewing approach has been employed, using for both groups – children, as the main target group, and adults, while gathering additional data. The method will be presented in the following section.

### **3.2. Qualitative research: semi-structured interviews**

Taking into account the preferences of children to be interviewed in pairs, the most suitable method to gather data appeared to be semi-structured interviews. The aim of the method was to obtain in-depth information about participants' thoughts, beliefs, motivations and feelings about the topic. As Seidman (2006: 15) suggests, the purpose of such an interview is not just to get answers to questions or to test hypothesis, it is "an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience", that is important. Furthermore, the author argues that interviewing allows accessing the context of people's behavior and perceptions and thus provides a way for the researcher to understand the meaning of those perceptions. Researcher's task is investigate participants' responses and to build his/her knowledge on it. The purpose is to "have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study" (ibid: 16).

Johnson & Christensen (2012: 202) use a term *interview guide approach* to refer to the similar method, when the interviewer starts the interview session with a plan to explore specific topic and to ask specific open-ended questions of the interviewee.

However, the interview is a relatively unstructured interaction between the researcher and the respondent, although the interview covers the same general topics and questions with all the participants. In other words, the aim is to collect a relevant data using predetermined question guide, but to keep a friendly and open conversation attitude. As Kvale (1996: 27) concludes – “it is neither an open conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire”. Young people and children, however, tend not to be as likely as adults to give long answers to open-minded questions (Punch, 2002: 54). Therefore, it is necessary to make them feel confident and relaxed enough to open up and talk, and prevent them feeling like in the test. This can be achieved assuring that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and using such techniques as asking follow-up questions and prompts to enable them to expand their responses.

However, there exist several dangers and pitfalls while conducting semi-structured or guide approach interviews. As Seidman (2006: 22) notices, the researcher must constantly ask himself / herself a question: whose meaning is it that an interview brings forth? The author points out that no matter how careful the researcher is in trying to minimize the effect he/she makes as an interviewer, he/she is still a part of the interviewing picture. The researcher asks questions, respond to the participant, and sometimes even shares own experiences. Moreover, he/she process the data, select from it, describe and interpret it. Thus, one can be disciplined and making considerable efforts to keep interview as “the participants’ meaning-making process, interviewer is also a part of that process (Seidman, 2006: 22). Johnson and Christensen (2012: 264) define this process as *validating* research. Although the term validity have been traditionally associated with quantitative research and was meant to measure the accuracy of interpretations, however it can be applicable to qualitative research as well. When qualitative researchers speak about research’s validity, they refer to “qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and therefore defensible” (ibid.). As mentioned, one of potential threat for the researcher is to become bias, which might result from selective recording of information during interviews and also from allowing one’s personal views to affect the interpretation of data. However, while engaging in critical



self-reflection about his/her potential biases, the researcher can become more self aware, monitor and try to control his/her biases. Moreover, as Lincoln & Guba (1985, in Seidman, 2006: 23) suggests, some credit has to be given to the researcher – “rather than decrying the fact that the instrument used to gather data affects this process, we say the human interviewer can be a marvelously smart, adaptable, flexible instrument who can respond to situations with skill, tact and understanding”.

Considering that the age group for this research was more vulnerable than others, it was extremely important to make sure that personal bias would be avoided. Avoiding researcher’s bias and this way validating the research was the purpose throughout all of the stages in this study. Being of the same nationality as the interviewees was in many ways a useful advantage, as I could speak their mother tongue and I was aware of economic, social and cultural backgrounds of the informants. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian background has also required more attention to possible bias and more effort to being objective. As a researcher I was aware of possible dangers to become too subjective and therefore attempted to maintain adequate relation to the informants. After every interview I was reflecting on my own role as the interviewer and my possible assumptions due to my Lithuanian background, which helped me to prepare for coming interviews.

As mentioned already, the method of semi-structured interviews is flexible and does not require following a strict questions list. The interview guide was prepared outlining a general framework for questions and themes, assuming that during the interviews the guide would be used as a reference check of the thematic interest and leaving some space for additional questions if they appeared from the context. Conducting the actual interviews it was often the case that the interviewees have answered the questions themselves before I came up with them. Other times some additional questions were necessary to encourage the participants to expand their answers. As a researcher, I was careful and attempted to prevent myself from asking leading questions that could predetermine participants’ answers.

The interview guide contained three sets of questions<sup>4</sup>, developed considering the research goals. The first set of questions was prepared for children. The questions can be summarized under the three main categories or themes:

- what kind of experiences children went through when they had to move to from Lithuania to Norway and what was their role and agency in this process (children’s migratory experiences);
- what kind of relationships they still maintained with people left in Lithuania (ties with homeland);
- how children understood what and where home is (their general perceptions of home) and how they felt where *their* home was or where *they* felt at home; moreover, how the children perceived and felt about dwelling between two places - Lithuania and Norway.

The second set of questions was prepared for parents. The idea to interview several parents came up while seeking to gather an additional data and to get a closer picture of children’s perceptions and experiences from a perspective of adults, who have a close relationship with them. Not every parent of the children who participated in the research has been interviewed. The reason behind it was that the main data that the research was looking for came from the children. Parents’ perspective was important, too, however only in complementing children’s perspective. The questions for parents contained several background questions, which usually served as an “ice-breaker” for the interview as there was no possibility to build close rapport with them as it was in the case with children. The parents were asked similar questions as the children, regarding their ties with homeland, the frequency of visits to Lithuania, their perceptions of home and what changes they have observed (if any) in their children regarding the notion of *home*.

The last set of questions was developed for teacher(s) who has worked with the target group. One of the purposes to interview teachers was to gain more insights and information of the setting, such as the goal of activities that are implemented there, the

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<sup>4</sup> The example of interview guide can be found in the appendix no. 6.

number of children that usually attend, but also their observations regarding children's attitudes towards migratory experiences and perceptions of home.

### **3.3. The setting and the informants**

As it was shortly mentioned in the introductory of the thesis already, the chosen target group is Lithuanian migrant children in Stavanger municipality. The access to the target group was gained through Rogaland's children's leisure activities center where Lithuanian children from Stavanger city and the region around have a space to gather twice a month to have some activities in Lithuanian language and to meet other Lithuanian children. The initial contact with the center was made through Rogaland's Lithuanian community. Its chairman has kindly agreed to introduce me to the teachers working there on the voluntary basis, who have invited me to attend their Saturday meetings and later helped me to arrange time for interviews. It should be noted, though, that the center itself is not a school and the purpose is not to involve children in formal schooling. On contrary, the meetings there are very informal, although structured and prepared in advance. The main aim is to use Lithuanian language, to bring Lithuanian children together and spend some time together. The thematic choices are as well largely connected to Lithuania, its traditions, annual festivals, language. Therefore, children who attend these activities are constantly confronted with facts, stories, songs, folklore and the language of their homeland, which can be considered as a factor to influence their perception of Lithuania. This point is also reflected in the research findings in the following chapter.

The number of the children who attend the center varies and is not fixed, also because the center itself has been established rather recently, at the beginning of the year 2013. Although the aim is to keep working with the same group of children during the year, the attendance is more on the voluntarily basis and the activities are organized in a way that if one Saturday meeting is missed, the child does not feel left out or missing something that others did or learned while he/she was not there. The age of the children in the centre varies from 4 up to 12. However two big groups dominate – children that I

have met during the research time fell either in the group of being 4-5 either to the group of 8-11. There were a couple of children who were in between those groups and one 12 years old girl. The activities in the center were also organized separating those two big groups. After observing children in both groups it became clear that the age difference was too big. Children of younger age were too little to be interviewed, also, because most of them did not remember moving from Lithuania to Norway or could not really distinguish the difference between the two countries, as it appeared after spending some time with them. Therefore, it was decided to limit the age group between 8 to 11 years.

The most important criteria while choosing children from predetermined age group was their length of stay in Norway. The time frame for staying in the country was necessary in order to get a sample group of children who would have at least a minimal experience of living in the host country, so that the participants could connect their experiences to the research topic more easily and understand the purpose of their involvement in the research. Thus, only those children who have migrated from Lithuania to Norway and lived here for at least a year participated in the research. In fact, most of the children attending the center were rather recent migrants, who have arrived with their parents a year or two ago to Stavanger. However there were several Norwegian born children to Lithuanian parents and a couple of Norwegian born children born to one Lithuanian and one Norwegian parent. Nevertheless, considering the chosen scope of the research, these children were not involved.

The criterion of gender was difficult to apply while looking for informants. Most of children who attended the center were girls, especially in the predetermined age group. However as the research findings are not being correlated in regards of gender, this criterion was not considered as crucial. When I refer to children, I refer to both – girls and boys.

Regarding the criteria of residence, the initial idea was to interview children from Stavanger city and region, but at the end the group interviewed appeared to be living in Stavanger or its suburbs, so the area that participants come from is referred to as Stavanger municipality. It must be noted that although the initial presumption was that

the participants would be highly mobile, travelling to and dwelling temporarily in the houses/homes in two countries – Lithuania and Norway, due to their families' maintained transnational connections, it was not considered as a criteria. However, as the findings reveal in the following chapter, it appeared to be truth in almost all the cases.

The occupational background of children's parents' and the reasons for migration to Stavanger was not a criterion for choosing the interviewers. However, most of the children have mentioned that their families migrated with the purpose to find a job or join parents who have been already working there.

Thus, during the period of 22<sup>nd</sup> of March – 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2013, eight girls and three boys were interviewed. There were nine families in total, as four sisters (two and two) were interviewed. As mentioned earlier, most of them preferred to be interviewed in pairs. Only one girl and one boy were interviewed alone. Additionally, 1 teacher working in the center and 3 mothers were interviewed. There were no specific criteria for adults, except their willingness to share their insights about children.

### **3.4. Ethical considerations**

All the data collected about children and their families is anonymous. The interviewees are given pseudonyms to protect their identity and to assure that they could not be recognized in any way. This research has also been reported to the Data Protection Official for Research, the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), which obliges the researcher to treat the data confidentially and to delete all the personal information, recordings and notes when the research is completed. As the main informants of the research were children, the group that is much more vulnerable than adults, a special attention was paid to assure the protection of their personal data. Therefore, following the regulations of NSD and seeking to protect the identity of the informants, all the recording made with a voice recorder during the interviews as well as notes and any kind of other personal information gathered during the research is destroyed as soon as the task is completed.

The quotes that are selected to illustrate and supplement the main findings are chosen based on criteria such as the relevance of information to the topics that have been addressed. Also, a clarity and coherence of the answers was taken into consideration as well as the repetition of similar answers. The quotes that provided the most information in a brief and consistent way were chosen as well. All of the interviews were conducted in Lithuanian language. The quotes were translated by me, trying to be as accurate as possible and seeking not to lose any part of the meaning due to translation from Lithuanian to English.

In the interviews with children it was often the case that their answers were short and straight forward. Thus, a number of following up questions were asked or the questions were circled and asked once again while rephrasing to make sure that children understood the question and the researcher understood the answer. Nevertheless, it was never the case that children were driven in any way to give “an expected answer” and it was made sure that children would feel comfortable enough during the interview to skip the question if they did not understand it or did not want to answer it. Also, it was reassured with children several times that all the answers were right and the interview was not a test.

Before approaching children, oral and written information about the research was provided to their parents. Only those children whose parents gave consent for them to take part participated in the interviews. Additionally, parents were assured that the interview was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw themselves or their child with no explication at any stage. The parents also had a possibility to pre-check interview guides before the interviews. Children, at their end, were informed about the nature and goals of the research as well. They could choose to answer only those questions that they understood and wanted to as well as to finish the interview at any point if they felt uncomfortable.

Most of the interviews with children were conducted in the setting, in the space which was familiar to the children, so there was no additional stress factor. Only two interviews with children were conducted in their homes, after it was agreed so with their

parents as that fit best their availability for the interview. However, interviewing children in their homes caused additional challenge – parents of one interviewee first were eager to participate in the interview together with their child. However the situation was solved as the child himself made it clear that he would like to be interviewed alone.

The interviews with adults were conducted either in the setting or meeting them in their homes. The teacher and one mother were interviewed in the setting, and three parents in their homes. The challenge while talking to adults was to manage their prolonged answers to the questions. Firstly I have avoided interrupting the informants and continued with the questions only they have finished talking. However, sometimes it has led to too open and prolonged answers and reflections on their life in general, which went too far from the initial question or topic. Thus, I have taken the initiative to be more precise with the questions, also because I was concerned more about their observations about their children/pupils, not their life as migrants in general. I have only interrupted them if their answers went to direction irrelevant for the research, which resulted in more focused answers. I must admit, though, that adults (parents as well as teachers) were very eager to share their own migratory experiences and their attitudes towards feeling/not feeling at home in Norway, and some have even expressed their excitement openly, that there was someone who was interested in their experiences as migrants. This showed that the topic of migration and home was present in those families, which could also influence children's perceptions on those topics. This observation is considered and elaborated more in the following chapter, where empirical data is analyzed and interpreted.

### **3.5. Summary**

In this chapter the choice of the research method was justified. The main reasons to switch from the initial idea to conduct focus groups to more feasible method of semi-structured or guided interview were explained. The qualitative method of semi-structured interview was then presented, considering its advantages as well as possible shortcomings and pitfalls. Moreover, the validity of the research was discussed and the role of the researcher was taken into critical consideration. The choice of the setting and the target

group was introduced, presenting the main criteria for the choice of informants. Lastly, some ethical issues were discussed.



## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following chapter turns to the crucial part of the thesis, where the findings are presented and interpreted within the theoretical framework introduced and discussed in the chapter 2. The basis for the analysis is the data that was collected during qualitative interviews with Lithuanian migrant's children, three parents and one teacher. In the course of following sections, three main topics are investigated - children's migratory experiences, individual ties between the child and the homeland, and children's understanding of home as well as dwelling between the two countries – Lithuania and Norway. To make it easier to follow and recognize the informants in the following sections, a brief profile is presented in the table below.

<b>Children</b>	
Informant 1 (girl)	Monika is 9 years old; she has lived in Stavanger for 2 years now.
Informant 2 (girl)	Saulė is 9 years old; she has lived in Stavanger for 1.5 years.
Informant 3 (girl)	Ieva is 10 years old; she has lived in Stavanger for 2.5 years.
Informant 4 (boy)	Paulius is 8 years old; he has lived in Stavanger for 1 year.
Informant 5 (boy)	Juozukas is 9 years old; he has lived in Stavanger for 2 years
Informant 6 (girl) Informant 7 (girl)	Goda and Margarita are sisters who have lived in Stavanger for almost 2 years now. Goda is 10 years old, Margarita is 11 years old.
Informant 8 (girl)	Dovilė is 10 years old; she has lived in Stavanger for 3 year now.
Informant 9 (boy)	Povilas is 8 years old; he has lived in Stavanger for a year and a half.
Informant 10 (girl) Informant 11 (girl)	Vaida and Justina are sisters who have lived in Stavanger for almost 2 years now. Vaida is 9 years old, Justina is 10 years old.
<b>Adults</b>	
Parent 1 (female)	Kristina is the mother of Goda and Margarita. She has lived in Stavanger for 4 years now.
Parent 2 (female)	Neringa is the mother of Povilas. She has lived in Stavanger for a year and a half now.
Parent 3 (female)	Aistė is the mother of Vaida and Justina. She has lived in Stavanger for almost 2 years.
Teacher (female)	Rita has lived in Stavanger for 7 years now. She has worked in Lithuanian children's activity center for half a year and is one of the initiators to establish it.

## 4.1. Children's migratory experiences

Open borders and improved travelling means within Europe made it easier to migrate between the countries. The mobility became easier and affordable for a number of migrants seeking for better opportunities abroad, as already discussed in the introduction. Lithuanians take a considerable part in migration flows, especially to Norway, where they represent the third biggest group of foreign citizens within the population<sup>5</sup>.

Children are a part of these migratory processes as well. In this section migratory experiences of children interviewed are presented and analyzed. It is done from two perspectives – involving children in migration decision making and the actual transfer between the two countries – leaving and arriving.

### 4.1.1. Involving children in making the decision to migrate

As Hladnik (2010) has introduced, there might be several different forms of children becoming migrants. In the case of Lithuanian children interviewed for this research, most of them have migrated with either both parents together or arrived later with one parent after the first parent has been in Stavanger for a while already<sup>6</sup>. Only two sisters had experienced living separately from their parents in Lithuania for a year until they joined them in Norway. The interviews have shown that children have had different roles in making the decision to migrate as family. In seven out of nine families children were informed about the fact that they will have to migrate after the final decision was made already. Thus, children had no say in the decision making. One girl, Dovilė<sup>7</sup> (age ten), came for a short visit together with one parent before the actual migration and had a chance to see where she was going, however, to question whether her parents asked her

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<sup>5</sup> See section 1.4.

<sup>6</sup> Out of eleven children, one girl and one boy have moved to Stavanger with one parent after the first parent has been living there already.

<sup>7</sup> All names of the informants are changed seeking to protect their identity.

opinion about leaving, she admitted: “No.. They just said that we are going. That’s it”<sup>8</sup> (Interview, 6.4.2013). In the family of Goda (age ten) and Margarita (age eleven), the decision to migrate permanently was even hidden:

***Margarita:** First I thought that we came here just to take a look, how everything is and where and how, and it didn’t look like we were going to live here.*

***Interviewer:** Did you talk about that to your mom?*

***Margarita:** We did, but it didn’t look like for real.*

When this question was given to the mother of the girls, Kristina, she has revealed:

*It was our plan to bring them. We have left first, we were sending the money, but the girls were missing us badly, so we decided to bring them here after the school year ended. [...] They didn’t want to come here at the beginning. We told them – try to go to school, if you don’t like it, then we all go home. So we have tricked them a little bit. But they liked it here..(smiling)*

***Interviewer:** Why did you choose not to tell them at the beginning?*

***Kristina:** I don’t know, they were kids after all. It was easier and less tears. And then they just liked it here. You know, like kids.*

This quote is an example how children were excluded not only from the decision making, but also from having correct and relevant information about their changing lives. On the other hand, none of the rest of the children who knew where they were going and what was happening said that they did not like not being consulted by their parents before moving. Vice versa, they did not expect their parents to ask their opinion in advance, which might show that it is usually the case in the family to exclude children from family decision making.

Only in one family of two sisters, Vaida (age nine) and Justina (age 10), parents not only informed about moving to a new country, but also discussed it with children. In this family parents talked to the girls about moving beforehand. One of the reasons could have been a fact that one parent was already in Norway:

*The husband was already working there alone, I had nothing to lose and girls were missing father. So we talked to the husband and then there were continuous*

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<sup>8</sup> All of the quotes are translated from Lithuanian language by my own.

*talks with the girls.. We thought – new challenge. Why not. It is important to be all together.*

**Interviewer:** *So you have talked to the girls about it beforehand?*

**Aistė** (the mother of Vaida and Justina): *Yes, we did. We used to talk about it a lot, as we missed dad a lot (laughing). So it was always somehow present and I think girls wanted that too.*

When girls were asked whether they felt involved enough into deciding whether to go or stay, Vaida (age nine) answered: “*Me.. I didn’t want to go at all. I was almost crying. But I had to. [...] I told mom that he [father] should come back*”, while Justina (age ten) said she felt “in between”:

*Well.. I think we talked about it. Yes, we did (sighing).*

**Interviewer:** *Did you feel that you could choose – to stay or to go?*

**Justina:** *I think so. But I felt both – happy, but also sad. I didn’t want to leave everything.*

Aistė (the mother) was not too explicit about managing her daughters’ feelings towards decision, however from the quote it is clear that children were involved into conversations and were not left out without having any idea what was going to happen. On the other hand, the topic was very much present at home already, as the father have already had left. In comparison to other children, who were only informed that they will have to move, Vaida and Justina were much more exposed to the topic of migration. The girls were consulted in a way, although it seemed that the decision making was still in the hands of parent(s). In fact, Aistė has admitted that they would have migrated even if the girls would have been against it, and they would have counted on girls just getting used to a new place and being happy that the whole family is together again. Kristina (the mother of Goda and Margarita) had the same hope while “tricking” girls to “come and see first”. She agreed that the family would have stayed in Stavanger anyway, even if the girls would have not liked the school, and they were expecting them just to get use to it.

Referring to the passages above, it can be argued that children did not have agency in families’ decisions to migrate. As it was discussed in the section 2.2.2, the reason behind that is often the “adultist” point of view, when decisions such as migration are considered to be adults’ decisions. Coe et al (2011: 31) assumed that usually the

factors that prevent “children having a high degree of agency in their families when decision to migrate was being made were children’s age, level of understanding [and] parents’ views of children’s best interests”. As in the case of Margarita’s and Goda’s family, it seemed that age was the main factor for their mother to withhold the information about migration decision: “*they were kids after all*” (*Kristina, the mother*). Once again, it shows the classical developmental understanding of child and childhood (see section 2.2.2), as parents assumed that children were too small to understand the situation and thus did not encourage them to participate equally in the discussion. Surely, children’s age has to be taken into consideration, as is also recommended by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), which states that children’s involvement in an official decision making should increase with their age and maturity. Comparing the interviews with children it became obvious that children of younger age often felt confused about the whole migration process, but it was difficult to say whether it was so because they were too young to understand it or whether they just were not involved enough in family’s decision making nor informed sufficiently. Referring to Coe et al (ibid.) thoughts on this topic, it can be understandable that parents with younger children are thinking in a more protective way and make decisions thinking that they are in children’s best interests, but that should not be the reason to exclude children from being a part of decision making at all.

#### **4.1.2. Transfer between the two countries**

Talking about leaving Lithuania and settling in Norway has evoked a lot of discussions among the children. As most of them were interviewed in pairs, often they wanted to compare their experiences and found a lot of similarities which for some children seemed to be a slight surprise and a positive discovery when they found out about similar feelings other children had.

Children’s experiences of moving have varied considerably, though. When asked about leaving her home in Lithuania Ieva (age ten) remembered that for her it was a very sad day, also because “*mom was crying all the time*” and she did not know how to react:

*Mom was very sad and I remember that my grandma was also very sad.*

**Interviewer:** *And how did you feel about leaving?*

**Ieva:** *Oh.. (sighing). Well.. I was also sad and with everyone crying around. Yes, a very sad day.*

Povilas (age eight) called his feeling “*very much not a pretty feeling, because.. Because you know nothing and no one will know you there*”. Saulė (age nine) could not decide:

*“Well, actually I was happy and.. Because it is a new place and you will see everything and so on. But I also had to leave Lithuania and it didn’t feel good either. Yeah.. Sad but also happy.”*

It seemed that most of the children have experienced some emotional distress, even if it was more positive than negative. Also, some children could not really could not imagine what was waiting for them or for how long they were leaving. This can also be connected to the lack of information and effort to talk children through the process of migration from parents’ side. When asked if he knew how far Norway was from his home in Lithuania, Paulius (age 8) answered that he knew it was a very long journey “*with a lot of fun on the ferry*” and “*once you leave you can only come back on holidays*”.

**Paulius:** *My father told me that I will not even notice and I am back.*

**Interviewer:** *You did not want to leave?*

**Paulius:** *I didn’t want to leave my cat!*

From this quote it becomes clear that a parent made promises about coming back and tried to make leaving sound better, by telling about “fun on the ferry” for example. Paulius’ reaction was similar to other kids in a way that there were some special people, things, pets or places that children knew they would miss. It was surprising, though, that most of the children were given so little input from parents. Neringa (the mother of Povilas) has admitted that she was more concerned about her son’s integration in the new city, like finding new friends, learning the language, than taking care of how he felt or what he thought before leaving, and was counting on her belief that “*young children adapt quickly, it is more important for family to stick together*”.

Neringa’s assumption is partially right. The interviewed children have lived in Stavanger between 1 and 3 years by the time research was made. Most of them left when they were age 7, others between 8 and 9, thus in quite an early age. After the initial fear,

tense feelings and anxiety, most children adapted to the new place, language, school and people. Juozukas (age nine) and Paulius (age eight), who were interviewed together, were sharing their experiences while interrupting each other:

***Juozukas:** I was so afraid. I couldn't understand the teacher [talking about first day at school]... But now I am used to it already and I can understand everything!*

***Paulius:** I was also afraid and scared, I forgot what I was supposed to do and say. I didn't have any words! It was difficult..*

***Interviewer:** How did your new classmates react to you?*

***Paulius:** Very friendly, although I didn't understand them. On breaks they were inviting me to be their friend.*

***Juozukas:** Mine also friendly. And now we speak Norwegian already.*

Most of the children were mentioning first difficult days at school or when they had to spend the whole day separately from their parents in an unknown and also foreign language environment. However when asked how they felt now, most of them were telling about their new friends, events that they really liked at school or their hobbies after school, like fishing or exploring areas where they lived. Thus, it can be assumed that after getting used to the new environment and making new social connections, most of the children felt better and feelings of anxiety were replaced with new experiences with new friends.

As older children were not interviewed, there was no possibility to compare if they would have had more difficulties to get used to the new home and new country. However it can be assumed that younger children are more adaptable as they tend to go through stages of adaption quicker. Kristina's (mother of Goda and Margarita) remark about her older daughter (15 years old) who was not interviewed for the research might confirm the assumption:

*She [daughter's name] still thinks that she would prefer Lithuania over Norway. I think it is more difficult for her as she was older when we brought them here. Or maybe it's her character, I don't know. She misses her friends in Lithuania and is not so eager to find new ones here..*

It seems that the older daughter encounters some emotional difficulties and feels homesick, which is not the case anymore with the two younger sisters. Goda (age ten)

remembered her first days in Stavanger: “*All I wanted at the beginning was just to go home [Lithuania], just later I started getting used it. Everything new, I got curious to go to somewhere, to see something*”. Margarita (age eleven) has also overcome her initial anxiety as soon as she spent some more time at school:

*On my first day at school I have started to cry, I couldn't understand anything the teacher was saying. But I remember that my classmates tried to help and the teacher was very nice.*

*Interviewer: Do you still feel the same at school?*

*Goda [interrupts]: Now all of her best friends are Norwegian!*

Although it cannot be generalized that older children mostly have difficulties to adapt, but easier transfer from one country to another seems to be the case with younger ones.

In general, children's experiences of migration were more positive than negative. Most of them felt received well at school and liked living in Stavanger. They thought most of Norwegian classmates, teachers or neighbors were friendly and welcoming. Some enjoyed learning the new language and meeting not only Norwegians, but other immigrant children as well. Thus, although challenging, leaving Lithuania and moving to Norway was perceived as a good experience.

#### **4.2. Ties with homeland – transnational spaces**

Lithuanian migrant's children live in a globalized and interconnected world where easy travel and communication enables them to maintain strong ties with Lithuania even after having settled in Norway. Caught in such a bridging environment, Lithuanian children can orient themselves towards Lithuania, towards Norway or towards both. This section investigates if and how they maintain ties with their homeland. Further, it is attempted to explore the emerging transnational spaces children are embedded in, and to analyze how it might be influenced by being constantly exposed to Lithuanian language and matters in the Rogaland's Lithuanian children's activity center.



### 4.2.1. Ties with homeland

In chapter two the notions of transnational migrants who engage in everyday transnational activities have been discussed. It has also been argued that often the main units that engage in those activities are families. Transnational families form a “network society” (see Castles, 2009; Castells, 2000), which reduces the importance of distance. Migration and distance no longer mean the total loss of contact between family members and wider relatives’ networks. Children’s examples shared during the interviews confirm these considerations.

All of the children and parents interviewed acknowledged that they were in frequent contacts with relatives or friends in Lithuania. Most often children named their grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, sometimes already adult siblings that they were in contact with. As the main means of communication children mentioned telephone calls, video calls made using internet programmes, and writing electronic messages and letters. Monika (age nine) was very eager to tell how close she is with her relatives:

*My grandma has a computer, but no internet, so I cannot call her on Skype [internet programme]. She lives very far away, in the village. But I can still call her on the phone. I used to talk to one friend on Skype all the time, but now I talk more with my cousin. Every day!*

*Interviewer: What would happen if you could not talk to them so often?*

*Monika: What do you mean? But I can always call them.*

Monika is taking for granted that she can reach important people whenever she feels like it, which shows in a way how much she is used to constant contact with her relatives and that became a normal routine of her everyday life. Povilas (age eight) admitted that he talks to his adult sister who lives in Lithuania almost every day and sometimes misses her badly:

*Sometimes she is busy and cannot take a call, but she always calls back.*

*Interviewer: Do you miss your sister?*

*Povilas: Yes.. Me and my mom, we talked to her often. Sometimes just saying hi.*

On the other hand, some children shared negative experiences because of losing contacts with friends they were close to. Dovilė (age 10), asked whether she still had

friends in Lithuania answered: “Yes, I still have a couple. We used to talk very often, but now less. I have a feeling that we are parting..”. Similar disappointment expressed Saulė (age nine):

*I remember all of my classmates [in Lithuania]. Especially one best friend.*

*Interviewer: Can you still reach her somehow?*

*Saulė: Well yes, sometimes. Through Facebook [internet website], for example.*

*But.. I think they have tones of other friends already, so.. (sighing).*

Juozukas (age nine) admitted that for him all his classmates and friends in Lithuania “disappear just like ghosts”, when he tries to remember them, but he is still in a close contact with his grandparents. Thus, from children’s narratives above it can be seen how important, but also casual is the possibility to reach relatives and friends left behind.

Despite disappointment because of broken ties with some friends, children could share a lot of stories or facts of what and how their relatives were doing in Lithuania, which shows that they still take part in what is going on there, even while living in Stavanger. On the other hand, the relatives in Lithuania seemed to be well informed in what was going in children’s lives in Stavanger. Most of the children mentioned telling about their ordinary days in school, events they attended or places they went as the main topics covered with their relatives.

*Interviewer: What do you talk about usually?*

*Goda (age ten): I tell how my school day was, what we usually do. Things like that. Sometimes about the weather. About how my dog is doing.*

*Margarita (age eleven): About fishing. And the other day I was telling to X [name of her cousin] how much I hate to wear helmet while biking to school.*

Greeting and receiving greetings on birthdays, holidays or any other occasions were noted as important, too. Especially birthdays and Christmas seemed to be crucial when there were even more conversations, video calls and excitement to share.

All of the children interviewed were traveling to Lithuania from one to three times a year and spending there from several weeks to couple of months. Children’s experiences regarding dwelling between the two places will be addressed and analyzed in

the coming sections, but it is important to mention here that all the children without any exception agreed that they were looking forward impatiently to go to Lithuania again and could name number of things they were waiting to get involved to as well as which people to meet or visit. As Aistė (mother of Vaida and Justina) has summarized it:

*As soon as we are off from work for holidays – immediately to Lithuania. [...] We are running through friends, relatives, events, places.. Those weeks go fast as a dream..*

Aistė's comment shows that not only frequent communication with relatives or friends plays important role, returning to Lithuania is also crucial and expected. It is thus clear that strong attachment and ties with the homeland exist, especially reinforced by easy communication. Once again, due to those close connections it is possible to be actively involved in everyday life of the homeland in ways it could have never been possible in the past.

Taking into consideration children's experiences while maintaining ties with Lithuania, I argue that they get involved in transnational activities, discussed in Chapter 2. Surely, the definitions offered by scholars might seem somewhat too sophisticated to describe children's experiences which are largely limited to straight forward communications with relatives in Lithuania and sharing everyday life stories with them, however I argue that it is exactly maintaining "multi-stranded social relationships that link their societies of settlement and origin, which then makes them transmigrants" (Schiller et al, 1992: ix). A big part of becoming *a transmigrant* also comes from belonging to a transnational family, which as a unit also takes part in local economies across borders or even engages in political life. Children, from their side, participate and play an important role in sustaining transnational linkages. The same as adults, they are not temporary residents as they settle down and lead their daily lives. However, the same they participate in similar activities on their homeland – they maintain connections and are/might be a part of family, local or national events. Whether the same children would continue engaging in the transnational activities at the same degree their parents are (if they are), including "building institutions, conducting transactions and [maintaining] relationship to more than one nation state" (ibid.), is another question. That might depend

on a number of factors, like the continuity of visits to Lithuania, the degree of involvement and integration into Norwegian society as well as parents' efforts to create and nurture an environment where children would be exposed to Lithuanian language, life style or traditions. Thus the following section gives some space for interpretations whether the Rogaland's children's leisure activities center that children attend and where they were interviewed, contributes to children's participation in transnational activities.

#### **4.2.2. Lithuanian children's activity center – a transnational space?**

All of the children interviewed were attending the Rogaland's children's activity center. Although their attendance was not stable and each time the group was slightly different, all of them participated in center's activities at least once a month. While observing children in the center and taking part in several sessions that were led by teachers volunteering there, I have asked myself how being constantly exposed to Lithuanian language, culture and folklore might influence children's perceptions of their homeland. As this particular angle was not addressed in the research questions and I did not interview another group of children, who did not attend the center, any kind of comparison or correlation was not possible. Thus I could only assume drawing on the observations and the interview with one of the teachers that such a space has its particular impact on children's experiences.

Drawing on Pries' (2001) premise that any household, local community and any leisure activities club or restaurant – in other words space where people socialize – could be called a social space, I argue that Lithuanian children's activity center is a social space as well. As it was mentioned in the section 3.3 the center itself has opened its doors at the beginning of the year (2013) and is a work result of two initiative and passionate teachers. It should be mentioned that they volunteer in the center and that their current occupation in Stavanger is other than teaching. Thus, through this initiative they do what they were trained for in Lithuania. The interview with one of the teachers, Rita, proves that the center initially was meant to be a place for children to socialize:

*We had an idea to create a space where children could use Lithuanian language as I knew a number of Lithuanian families and I have heard parents' worries that children might start forgetting their own language. Thus, we thought that such a center could be a place for children firstly to play and then to learn at the same time. Our purpose was to bring Lithuanian children together, to give them possibility to find Lithuanian friends, but also not to forget their own country, language and traditions.*

From this narrative it is clear that the center was not aimed to become a school or any other institution to formally educate children. Although Rita has admitted that some parents had much higher expectations towards teaching Lithuanian language, including constant grammar and literature lessons, and were disappointed when teachers introduced a different vision. However Rita believes that the bond with the homeland, even if primarily maintained through the language, can be better sustained through different activities and using the language only as a tool for children to get to know their country. When asked about her opinion or observations about children's ties to Lithuania, Rita agreed that ties might deteriorate within the time, but children are so exposed to what is happening back in Lithuania – through Lithuanian TV channels that most of the families have, through frequent visits and phone calls – that the emotional distance between the two countries is not really increasing:

*I do not think that they [children] grow apart from their home in Lithuania. They keep telling about their future holidays there, that's what they are waiting for! They tell about when they would go, about their friends, that there is a cat waiting and a grandmother. So there is always this expected time in the future when they travel and then.. then it is "finally back"! (laughing).*

Rita has also acknowledged that the activities that are planned in the center are oriented towards Lithuanian history, culture, folklore and other themes that are connected to Lithuania: *"We just would like them to know that Lithuania exists as such"*. Thus, the center is oriented to embed children into Lithuanian context as well as give a feeling of community while meeting other Lithuanian children. It should be mentioned that the center is a part of Rogaland's Lithuanian community, which is an officially registered community in Norway. Together with their teachers children often attend various meetings and events organized by the community. In other words, through their activities in the center children are also being involved – into wider Lithuanian community in the

region and through these contacts are encouraged and motivated to maintain the bond with their homeland.

Considering the purpose, activities and the practices implemented in the center as well as the wider context of Lithuanian community in the region, it could be argued that the center could be referred to as a transnational social space. As it was introduced in the section 2.1.2, Pries (2001: 24) has defined transnational social spaces as “pluri local social entities [...] composed of social practices, artifacts and symbols with a density and stability relatively high in comparison to other social spaces”. The center can be seen as a social space bringing together children who are in a way dwelling between two localities (this point is elaborated in the following section) and are participating in social practices together. Moreover, they are exposed to a number of artifacts and symbols of Lithuanian culture and lifestyle through the activities that are being provided.

Thus, the center is one more way and space for Lithuanian children to get involved into transnational activities. It could be assumed that the center also contributes to positive children’s attitudes towards Lithuania, considering the goal to show them “that Lithuania exists as such”. More importantly, it could be argued that while engaging into space offered by the center, children have a possibility to maintain even stronger ties with their homeland. As Levitt (2001: 197) summarized it: “the more diverse and thick a transnational space is, the greater the number of ways it offers migrants to remain active in their homelands”.

The following section is turning to the main point of this thesis – children’s perceptions of home. While exploring how the interviewed children perceive their homes and at which sense they live in *transnational homes*, a closer look is taken at children’s experiences in dwelling between the two countries and their perceptions of *home*.

### **4.3. Living in transnational homes – children’s perceptions of home**

In the section 2.3 a questions like what a home is, what it means to be at home, where and why one feels at home were raised. It was then argued that depending on

personal experiences a variety of answers can be produced. The goal of this research is to explore the experiences and perceptions of home of Lithuanian children who are embedded in the context of transnational migration and are no longer tied to a single place: as it is argued in the coming sections they dwell between two countries – Lithuania and Norway. Thus, the question is what happens to the perception of *home* and everyday practices that are associated with home when there is no one fixed place which could be considered as home. This section investigates Lithuanian children's understandings of home and, more importantly, the relationship between their perceptions of home and being a transnational migrant.

#### 4.3.1. What is home?

When answering to questions about what a home is and what makes *a home* homely, Margarita (age 11) understood home as a place “*where you live. Where you feel not like a guest. Where you feel free and you don't have to be polite*”. For Dovilė (age ten) “*home is home when family is there.. where I can eat what I like and just be*”. Similar answers were given by most of the children, mentioning parents, siblings, sometimes pets, as the most necessary “attributes” of their home. Also, a home meant a place for them. Often the place was described abstractly, giving an answer like “*it is a place to feel good and comfortable*” (Ieva, age ten), or “*where I play, sleep, where all of my stuff is, and where I sometimes bring friends if my mom lets me*” (Saulė, age nine). These comments show that for children social relations (with their family members) and physical spaces (where they can act and “just be”) as well as particular material objects constitute their *home*. A corresponding remark was made by Al-Ali et al (2002: 8) as they defined home as a place and home as a relationship between people, a point elaborated more extensively in coming paragraphs. Thus, during the interviews children described home as being where family members live and for most of them, as their close relatives and family members lived in both Lithuania and Norway, home meant being attached and socially related to both places.

Being and feeling *at home* for some children meant back in Lithuania, but also in Norway, and for majority both places were home. Povilas (age eight), for example revealed: “*Home.. (sighing) For me it is in Lithuania. And where I will be.. Whatever I say, but my home is in Lithuania*”. Paulius (age eight) thought that “*actually, I think, my home is in Stavanger. But.. but every summer we are going and staying in Lithuania!*”. When asked about their ordinary day in Stavanger and in any place they were staying in Lithuania children were mentioning similar activities in both places, mostly spending time with friends, playing, shopping and etc. The main difference, however, was that being in Stavanger has also meant “*going to school*” and being somewhere in Lithuania meant “*being on holidays, eating grandmother’s food and meeting old friends*”, as summarized Juozukas (age nine) in one of the interviews. In both cases, though, children were very keen to tell about their everyday routines and experiences. It can be argued that home for them is much more than a house where they live with their families as it also linked to relations, events, routines and shared time with families. Their notion of home is what Blunt & Dowling (2006: 254) calls “a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meaning, and the relations between the two”.

#### **4.3.2. Lithuania and Norway: between “here” and “there”**

All of the children interviewed are travelling to Lithuania at least once a year. Some mentioned travelling two or three times, mostly on Christmas and Easter for shorter stays and for a couple of months or even longer during summer time. As mentioned in previous sections already, usually families are using opportunity to travel when children have holidays at school. Aistė (mother of Vaida and Justina) has mentioned that even if they (parents) cannot leave their jobs for the whole summer, they still send the girls to Lithuania after the school year is over and join them later: “*So that they could stay in Lithuania for as long as possible*”. Aistė has also accepted that it also make things easier, as there would be no one to take care about girls when parents are at work and grandparents far away. Thus sending children to homeland also solves the problem of missing part of extended family, which would usually come to help if the whole family



would live in the same country. Once again, the distance is not an obstacle for family to carry out its usual and ordinary everyday routines, like grandparents helping parents to look after children. It could be argued that it is another example of activities embedded in transnational social space, which in this case is sharing responsibilities and duties among family members who do not reside in the same country. Certainly, as Pries (2001: 18) pointed out, the fact of multi-sited social space, shared by the same family, is not necessarily a transnational one as the same situation is possible with the family living in the same country, but different cities, for example. However, I argue that it is exactly the reason why the mentioned sharing of family's duties across the borders can be called a transnational social space. The family is functioning almost the same way as if they would not have had migrated – the extended family (grandparents) are involved in everyday routines as if the distance across two different countries would not exist. Thus family is adjusting to the new circumstances and is remaining connected relatively the same way they were before.

Being mobile between Lithuania and Norway for the interviewed children seemed as normal and usual as going for trips around Stavanger. Most of the children were sharing their exciting experiences about travelling to Lithuania by plane or ferry and it looked like the actual commuting was an important part of their experiences. When asked about their feeling *at home* in Lithuania and in Norway children revealed twofold opinions. Justina (age ten) was discussing with her sister Vaida (age ten):

*If you are staying in one country for too long, then you forget the language. And then you become Norwegian, for example.*

**Vaida:** *But we are born in Lithuania and it is our homeland. Of course we go everywhere. But we still speak Lithuanian. And we are born there! And..*

**Justina:** *I don't know.. I feel at home here [in Stavanger]. But in X [name of the city in Lithuania] as well. Yes, in Lithuania.*

**Interviewer:** *And why in Lithuania?*

*Vaida: Because I lived there for longer and I am used to it. I am here [Stavanger] for a shorter time. Although.. I wouldn't like to leave everything here either. Then it would be as if nothing has happened.*

Girls' narratives show emerging feelings towards situation of dwelling between two countries and being attached to both of them at the same time. The mother of girls has also admitted that every time they are to back to Lithuania and open the door of their old flat, *"they start running around and smelling everything and touching things – look, how I missed this and that! [...] But the time comes when they want to go back to Stavanger again"*. Similar emotions were apparent in other children's interviews as well. Monika (age nine) kept telling about the food she loves to eat when she is back to her grandmother's place, including some particular dairy products that are not available in Norway, but in the same sentence she adds:

*But I still know that I am going back to Stavanger.*

*Interviewer: And how does that make you feel?*

*Monika: Fine! I think.. I am coming back to grandma every summer.*

Interestingly, children were using *back* to Stavanger - *back* to X place in Lithuania interchangeably. It can be assumed that for most of them both places were as important and there was always "going back somewhere". Rita, the interviewed teacher, has also admitted that children are excited about their home in Lithuania:

*Once we decided to use the new tool Google [the internet search engine] has introduced – when you can "walk on the street" in different places using interactive map, so we were checking different addresses in Lithuania. You can't imagine how excited children got, shouting to one another – "look, look, this is my house, that's the street I walk to school and that's where I walk my dog!"*

On the other hand, as she accepted, children might have very positive feelings towards home in Stavanger as well:

*They find new friends and live with their parents here, after all. Of course, there is this love to Lithuania. Especially I see it from parents' side, which of course influences children at a certain level, too. But there is something.. something positive here, too. And there is no need for them choose for now. Why? If they can have both, in a way..*

Rita's comment is valuable considering two points. First, she mentions the influence of "parents' love to Lithuania". As only three parents were interviewed for this

study and with a purpose different than evaluating parents' role in shaping children's perceptions, it cannot be denied that children are reflecting their parents' views in a way. Parents also bring their kids to the leisure activities center, most probably with the expectation to bring them closer to Lithuanian context. They also make sure children spend almost all of their holidays in Lithuania, thus it can be argued that they stimulate and encourage children's ties with their homeland. While these assumptions are very broad and cannot be backed up with more sound empirical data, it is clear that children are living "in between" two countries, not being sure yet which one is more *a home*. This premise brings the discussion to the second point Rita (teacher) has hinted to – belonging and feeling positively in regards to both countries at the same time.

In the section 2.3 a notion of *transnational homes*, offered by Blunt and Dowling (2006: 196), was introduced. The authors argued that for a lot of transnational migrants the physical and imagined notions of homes are both multiple and ambiguous, especially because of associations with more than one place. Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 6) continued this thought claiming that "'home' has become a space, a community created within the changing links between 'here' and 'there'". Through children's narratives it could be observed how this state of being "in between" is framed in their lives. Firstly, through their relationships with relatives and friends in homeland and in their place of residence – Stavanger, through different home making practices, such as celebrating annual holidays and getting involved in local events in both *homes* as well as constant return journeys and continuous belonging "there" or "to here" or "to both" considerations. However, it is implied that children's lives and relationships are experienced in the same way within those two localities. In the Norwegian context *home* is associated more with stable routines and practices like going to school, spending time with the nuclear family (family and siblings), while in the Lithuanian context *home* is less about daily routines, but more about visiting and spending time with extended family (grandparents, aunts, cousins), thus, based on particular social relations, as well as specific events they come for and sometimes extra ordinary activities "*just because we are back for a short period of time*" (Aistė, mother of Vaida and Justina).

It can be argued, then, that Al-Ali's and Koser's (2002: 6) premise that the transnational context that migrants are embedded leads them to develop pluri- or trans-local understandings of *home*, can be applied to Lithuanian children dwelling between their homes in Stavanger and any towns or cities in Lithuania as well. As Monika has (age nine) revealed it in her interview:

*Interviewer: How do you feel when you are in visiting your grandmother in Lithuania?*

*Monika: Well.. Like a guest, but like at home as well. Both. I am spending most of the time with my grandmother and with I always feel like at home.*

*Interviewer: And when you are with you grandmother, do you also wait to travel to Stavanger?*

*Monika: Yes, I do! Because I live there. But I also like it in Lithuania and I want to come here to meet my grandmother, cousins, aunts..*

Children, the same as adults, are engaging in a number of transnational practices, as it was demonstrated in the previous sections, and consequently their understanding of home is changing as well - from traditional understanding of home as a singular place to a multi-sited space, with a complex combination of social ties and relationships. Considering the length of stay of interviewed children in Stavanger it is too early to predict whether these ties will remain with time, though. However, meanwhile, these children lead their lives in this particular way and the study was an attempt to take a look and gain a better understanding of what it means to have homes across places.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

At the beginning of this thesis, drawing on scholarly contributions from various scholars, I have argued that migration research has neglected children's migration, focusing mostly on adults or families. However, children's experiences and role in migration is as valid as adults' and, more importantly, might be different from adults and therefore is worthy of consideration (Young & Ansell, 2006: 3). Thus in this thesis children were the center of the research, recognizing them as active agents and members of migration, and giving them a space to express their migration experiences. Starting with the initial hypothesis that research participants are highly mobile between Lithuania and Norway, sustaining close ties with both countries and thus having *homes* across places, this thesis was an attempt to gain a better understanding of children's perceptions of home after migrating with their families from Lithuania and settling in Stavanger, Norway.

In order to theoretically frame the mobility and living across countries and how it might affect the understanding and experiences of *home*, the theoretical perspective of transnationalism has been chosen. Using the "lens" of transnationalism the main concepts of transnational migratory movements, mobile families, individual migrants, children and their role in migration have been discussed, finally turning to the notion of home in the context of international migration. Once again, the existing literature that explores the topic of *home* within transnational migrations is oriented towards adult migrants. Thus, a qualitative research interviewing eleven Lithuanian migrant children has been conducted to get an insight from their perspective. The main findings are summarized in the following section. The chapter is concluded with some closing remarks and perspectives for future research.

### 5.1. Summary of main findings

The research has been structured following the research questions, stated in section 1.2. Three main topics were investigated - children's migratory experiences, their

ties with the homeland and children's understanding of home as well as dwelling between the two countries – Lithuania and Norway. Drawing on findings from guided interviews with eleven children, three parents and one teacher, the main conclusions emerge.

**Children's migratory experiences.** Children's migratory experiences were primarily shaped by their involvement in making the decision to migrate as family, the actual leaving Lithuania and getting used to new place in Norway, and establishing and sustaining permanent ties with their homeland. The interviews have shown that children had different roles in making the decision to migrate. Mostly it was the case that they were not involved in decision making at any level. Some have revealed that parents talked to them about moving, however it seemed that children were lacking a sufficient and honest information about what was happening and how it was going to change their lives. A couple of children were "tricked" by parents to come to Norway, who were expecting that not telling about the purpose and length of stay in Stavanger would solve the initial children's reluctance towards the new place as the time runs and they get used to it. The reason behind it could have been a young age of children, as suggested by Coe et al (2011: 31), as parents might have thought about their children in a more protective way and imagine that they act in their best interests. However that should not be the reason to exclude children at all from being a part of decision making.

The transfer between the two countries has caused a considerable amount of stress, as most of the children have admitted. Leaving home in Lithuania for some was a very sad experience, also because they could see the sadness or even sorrow from their parents as well as close relatives who were staying in Lithuania. Similarly, first weeks and months, especially in a foreign speaking schools were stressful. However in general, children's experiences of migration were more positive than negative. Most of them felt received well at school and liked living in Stavanger. They thought most of Norwegian classmates, teachers or neighbors were friendly and welcoming. Some enjoyed learning the new language and meeting not only Norwegians, but other immigrant children as well. Thus, although challenging, leaving Lithuania and moving to Norway was perceived as a good experience.

**Children’s ties with the homeland.** Part of children’s positive experience of transfer between two countries was that all of them maintained stronger or weaker, but constant ties with people left in Lithuania. The interviews revealed that all the children were engaged in daily or at least weekly conversations with their close relatives and friends using a variety of means for communication, like phone calls, video calls, chatting programmes. They were well informed about updates and daily stories of their home places in Lithuania as well as sharing their own every day experiences. Although some children expressed disappointment about broken ties with some friends, frequent travel to Lithuania seemed to be a way to reinforce existing ties. Drawing on these findings, I argue that children engage in continuing transnational activities that allow them to sustain “multi-stranded social relationships in the country of settlement and origin, which then makes them transmigrants” (Schiller et al, 1992: ix). Moreover, ties with homeland is strengthened by attending activities in Rogaland’s Lithuanian children’s leisure activities center where they are constantly exposed to Lithuanian language and artifacts and symbols of Lithuanian culture.

**Children’s perceptions of home.** All of the interviewed children were highly mobile, usually spending at least a month or more of summer vacations in Lithuania or travelling there even more often during the year. While talking about *home* children could distinguish between feeling at home (emotionally) and being at home (physically). However those notions were intertwined when it came to two countries. Both – being and feeling at home – for some children meant back in Lithuania, and less in Norway, but for majority both places felt like home. The main difference was the type of activities they took part in. Being in Stavanger primarily meant “going to school”, while being in any place in Lithuania meant “being on holidays”. Being mobile between two countries is a usual part of children’s life and dividing their time and yearly plans between the two places is an ordinary experience. Thus, I argue that Lithuanian migrant children in Stavanger experience a state of “in between” or being “here” and “there”, the notions elaborated by Al-Ali and Koser (2002: 6). This state shifts children’s perceptions of home

as a singular place to a multi-sited space, with a complex combination of social ties and relationships.

## 5.2. Closing remarks

Research findings have demonstrated that children, the same as adults take a part in migratory processes. Often their acceptance of getting involved in migration practices is taken for granted, assuming that they would adjust to changes in their lives anyway as they are young and migration is “in their best interest”, as interview data revealed. However, in the context of transnational migration, children appear to become active agents in a number of activities, like maintaining ties with their homeland or traveling frequently back for visits. Surely, those activities are largely predetermined by adults, but it is also a case that children are often the reason to stay in close contact and travel to homeland for parents themselves.

The case of Lithuanian migrant children in Stavanger was a small scale research and the group of Lithuanian children interviewed is not a representative of all the Lithuanian children in Stavanger. It can only be assumed, that other children could have similar transnational experiences and be as mobile between Lithuania and Norway as the interviewees of this research are. However, I argue that this study gave a space for children to express their opinions about their personal migratory experiences and their thoughts about home. Thus, the study has fulfilled its goal and contributed to better understanding of children’s perceptions of home within the context of transnational migration. Moreover, the initial hypothesis that research participants are highly mobile, dwelling temporarily in the houses/homes in two countries as well as sustaining close ties with both countries and thus having *homes* across places, was proven through the analysis of data collected during interviews.

It is also important to point out that the study was limited by the moment of interview, meaning that research findings might not be applicable to the same group of children within the time of several years. Increasing length of stay in Stavanger might lead to interviewees changing their minds in regards to their opinions expressed during



this research. Considering the length of stay of Lithuanian children in Stavanger it is too early to predict whether they will continue maintaining the ties they have now with their homeland in the future or how their attitudes towards *feeling at home* will change. It could be a possible field for future studies, though, considering that more factors, such as possible deeper integration into Norwegian society or establishing own families might play a role.

Finally, conducting this research was an interesting and enriching experience from a personal perspective. I was aware of my presumptions regarding the hypothesis of the study and research focus due to the fact that I am Lithuanian myself, living in Stavanger, thus I am exposed to Lithuanian migrants in Norway more than other prospective researchers would be. Moreover, I live a transnational life myself, even if it is due to my studies. I would argue that same as interviewed children I engage in everyday transnational practices and attempt to maintain ties with my homeland. Thus, before going to the setting I have already brought my assumptions based on personal experience. As research findings have revealed, most of my presumptions appeared to be right, although my primary goal was not to find evidence for my hypothesis, it was more about listening to children's thoughts and discovering that they were actually going through the same experiences as I did. This was another proof for me that not only adults are actors in migration, bringing their children along. Children have their own agency and their own personal positions towards migratory processes and hopefully it will be addressed by more scholars in future researches.

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APPENDIX 1: NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICE – NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



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Dan Dyrli Daatland  
Institutt for grunnskolelærerutdanning, idrett og spesialpedagogikk  
Universitetet i Stavanger  
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 13.03.2013

Vår ref: 33628 / 3 / UMR

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.02.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

33628	<i>Immigrant Children's Perceptions of Home: The case of Lithuanian Children in Rogaland</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Dan Dyrli Daatland
Student	Giedrė Gudauskaitė

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

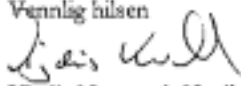
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

  
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

  
Linn-Merethe Rød

Linn-Merethe Rød tlf: 55 58 89 11

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Giedrė Gudauskaitė, Jernalder veien 57-224, 4041 HAFRSFJORD

## APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION LETTER

### **Request for participation in an interview/to give consent to a minor to participate in an interview related to the Master Thesis project “Immigrant children’s perceptions of home: the case of Lithuanian children in Rogaland”**

My name is Giedre Gudauskaite. I am enrolled in the European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR) programme at the University of Stavanger. As a final part of my studies, I am writing a Master Thesis and therefore conducting research as part of it. The research I undertake aims at exploring how Lithuanian migrant children, while being mobile between the country of origin and the country of settlement, construct their sense of home and belonging.

In order to accomplish my goal, I am going to interview 10-20 Lithuanian children who live with their families in Rogaland. Interviews will be conducted either in person or/and in group (focus group), depending on which method the child prefers. Additionally, I will interview parents/guardians and teachers/volunteers who work with him/her at the Rogaland children’s leisure activities center. I will use a tape-recorder and will take notes during the interview. The interview will last up to one hour and will comprise questions regarding children’s experiences while moving to a new country and settling in a new place as well as how they understand and imagine where their home is. Parents and teachers/volunteers will be asked to share their comments regarding children’s reactions to the migration experience and perceptions of home. They will also be asked questions regarding peers and family contacts both in Norway and Lithuania. The time and place for interview will be agreed in advance.

The interview is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw yourself or your child with no explication at any stage you wish. In case you withdraw from the interview, the data collected will be anonymised. The information you/your child provides during the interview will be treated confidentially, and your identity will never be disclosed to anyone at any circumstance. The parents/guardians have the right to pre-check /interview guides before they are handed to a minor. All personal information will be anonymised, the recordings and notes will be deleted when the project is completed by the 30th of June 2013.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, feel free to contact me via e-mail: [giedre.gudauskaite@gmail.com](mailto:giedre.gudauskaite@gmail.com) or call me at 46260995. You may also contact my supervisor Dan D. Daatland, University of Stavanger, tel. 45861571, and course director Mr. Nils Olav Østrem, University of Stavanger, tel. 51831538.

This research has been reported to the Data Protection Official for Research, the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Your time and participation in the research is highly appreciated!

Sincerely, Giedrė Gudauskaitė



**APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION LETTER – LITHUANIAN VERSION****Prašymas dalyvauti interviu/ duoti sutikimą nepilnamečiui šeimos nariui dalyvauti interviu****Interviu bus atliktas kaip magistrinio darbo „Namai – kaip juos suvokia imigrantų vaikai? Rogalando lietuvių vaikų atvejis“ tyrimo dalis.**

Esu Giedrė Gudauskaitė, magistro studijų programos „Migracija ir tarpkultūriniai santykiai“ (EMMIR) studentė. Šiuo metu Stavangerio universitete rašau baigiamąjį magistro darbą, kurio pagrindinis tikslas yra ištirti, kaip lietuvių imigrantų vaikai suvokia kas ir kur jiems yra namai ir kur jie jaučiasi priklausantys – Lietuvoje, Norvegijoje, abiejose ar nei vienoje šalyje.

Tyrimo tikslui pasiekti, 10-20 Rogalando regione gyvenančių vaikų bus pakviesti dalyvauti grupiniuose (fokus grupės interviu) arba individualiuose interviu, atsižvelgiant į tai, kuris metodas labiau priimtinas interviu dalyviui. Tėvai ir Rogalando Lietuviško vaikų laisvalaikio centro mokytojai/savoriai taip pat bus pakviesti dalyvauti interviu.

Gavus dalyvių sutikimą interviu bus įrašomas į diktofoną. Interviu truks apytiksliai vieną valandą, kurios metu vaikai bus pakviesti pasikalbėti grupėje ar individualiai apie tai, ką jie galvoja ir kaip jaučiasi persikėlę iš vienos šalies į kitą ir kur jie jaučiasi namuose. Tėvai ir mokytojai bus pakviesti pasidalinti savo pastebėjimais ir įžvalgomis apie vaikų migracijos patirtį, taip pat apie ryšius su Lietuvių bendruomene Norvegijoje bei Lietuvoje likusiais šeimos nariais. Interviu laikas ir vietas bus sutarti iš anksto.

Interviu yra savanoriškas. Jūs ar jūsų vaikas gali atsisakyti dalyvauti interviu bet kurioje jo stadijoje. Tuo atveju visi iki tol surinkti duomenys bus išslaptinti. Interviu surinkti duomenys bus laikomi ir analizuojami konfidencialiai ir jūsų ar jūsų vaiko tapatybė nebus atskleista jokiomis aplinkybėmis. Vaiko tėvai/globėjai turi teisę peržiūrėti interviu klausimyną prieš pateikiant jį nepilnamečiam asmeniui. Visa asmeninė informacija bus išslaptinta, įrašai ir užrašai bus sunaikinti projektui pasibaigus 2013 metų birželio 30 dieną.

Jeigu turite klausimų, komentarų ar pasiūlymų, galite susisiekti su manimi elektroniniu paštu [giedre.gudauskaite@gmail.com](mailto:giedre.gudauskaite@gmail.com) arba paskambinti man telefonu 46260995. Jūs taip pat galite susisiekti su mano darbo vadovu Dan D. Daatland, Stavangerio universitetas, tel. 45861571, taip pat su studijų programos direktoriumi Nils Olav Østrem, Stavangerio universitetas, tel. 51831538.

Apie šį magistrinio darbo tyrimą taip yra informuotas Norvegijos Socialinių mokslų duomenų tarnybos Tyrimų duomenų apsaugos kontrolierius.

Dėkoju už jūsų šiam tyrimui skirtą laiką.  
Pagarbiai, Giedrė Gudauskaitė

**APPENDIX 4: WRITTEN CONSENT STATEMENT**

**Informed consent given by the participant for the interview**

I am willing to participate/ give consent to a minor to participate in the interview conducted by Giedrė Gudauskaitė.

The interview is conducted in relation to the Master Thesis project, titled “Immigrant children’s perceptions of home: the case of Lithuanian children in Rogaland”.

I have been informed that participation in this project is voluntary and I can withdraw myself or my child with no explication at any stage I wish. I hereby permit this interview.

**Participants name:**

.....

Date.....Signature.....

**Interviewer’s name:**

Giedrė Gudauskaitė

Date.....Signature.....

**APPENDIX 5: WRITTEN CONSENT STATEMENT – LITHUANIAN VERSION**

**Sutikimas (raštu) dalyvauti interviu/ leisti nepilnamečiui šeimos nariui dalyvauti interviu**

Sutinku dalyvauti interviu/ leisti nepilnamečiam šeimos nariui dalyvauti interviu, kurį atliks Giedrė Gudauskaitė.

Šis interviu bus atliekamas kaip magistrinio darbo „Namai – kaip juos suvokia imigrantų vaikai? Rogalando lietuvių vaikų atvejis“ tyrimo dalis.

Esu informuotas(a), kad dalyvavimas yra savanoriškas ir aš ar nepilnametis mano šeimos narys gali atsisakyti dalyvauti interviu bet kurioje jo stadijoje.

**Dalyvio vardas:**

.....

Data.....Parašas.....

**Tyrimo atlikėjos vardas:**

Giedrė Gudauskaitė

Data.....Parašas.....

## **APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Group interviews with children**

1. What is a “home” for you? Can you describe me how you feel when you are at home? What does it mean to be “at home”?
2. Can one person have more than one home? How do you choose where your home is?
3. How did you feel when you had to leave Lithuania? Did you talk to your parent(s) about it? Would like to go back to Lithuania?
4. Does anyone special or whom you missing wait for you in Lithuania? Can you tell me who it is? Do you talk to him/her/them often? What is it you are talking about mostly?
5. Do you like to live here? Do you remember how you felt when have arrived here for the first time? Can you tell me more about it?
6. If I asked - are you Lithuanian or Norwegian? Which one would you pick? Why? What do you have to do be Lithuanian or Norwegian?
7. If I asked - where is your home – in Lithuania, Norway or somewhere else? Which one would you choose? Can you tell me why?

### **Parents**

#### **General questions regarding background and current family situation**

1. For how long have you lived in Norway?
2. What were the reasons to come to Norway?
3. How many children do you have? When did you bring your children here?

#### **Semi-structured questionnaire**

1. What role did the fact of having children play in making the decision to migrate to Norway?

2. How often do you come back to Lithuania? How often do you take your children back to Lithuania? How long do you usually stay?
3. What type of relationships do you maintain with your relatives back in Lithuania? Has your relationship changed after you migrated to Norway? How often do you communicate by using chat programmes, telephone? Are your children also included in this communication?
4. With which country do you have closer ties – Lithuania or Norway?
5. Has your sense of “feeling at home” changed since you have arrived to Norway? If yes, how has it changed? Which experiences has influenced this change the most?
6. Have you noticed the same changes in your children? Could you tell me more about how they have adapted to the place after the arrival? Have you explained them why there is this change happening? If yes, could you elaborate how you have explained that?
7. Where would you think they feel more at home – in Norway or Lithuania? Why Norway/why Lithuania?

### **Teacher**

#### **Semi-structured questionnaire**

1. How many children are there usually coming to the center?
2. Is it the same group of children every time?
3. What is the main purpose of the center?
4. Which expectations do parents have bringing their children to the center? Do any problems, disagreements occur in regards to which purpose should the center serve?
5. What is the routine of the center? What are the main activities/topics covered during the meetings? Is migration to Norway, experience of leaving Lithuania ever a topic of the activities? If yes, could you tell me more about children’s perceptions and opinions?

6. Have you noticed what the attitudes of children towards Lithuania are? Can you hear them talking about their experiences, memories, impressions from visits there? If yes, in which context?

## APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE – LITHUANIAN VERSION

### Interviu su vaikais

1. Ką tau reiškia namai? Ar gali apibūdinti kaip jautiesi kai esi namuose? Ką tau reiškia būti namuose?
2. Ar gali vienas žmogus turėti daugiau nei vienus namus? Kaip pasirinkti, kur yra tavo namai?
3. Ar prisimeni kaip jautiesi kai reikėjo palikti Lietuvą? Ar kalbėjaisi apie tai su savo tėvais? Ar norėtum grįžti atgal į Lietuvą?
4. Ko labiausiai pasiilgsti Lietuvoje? Ar dažnai pasikalbate? Apie ką dažniausiai kalbatės?
5. Ar tau patinka čia gyventi? Ar prisimeni kaip jautiesi kai pirmą kartą čia atvažiavai? Ar gali plačiau papasakoti?
6. Jei paklausčiau – esi labiau lietuvis(ė) ar norvegas(ė)? Ką reikia daryti kad būtum lietuviu(e) ar norvegu(e)?
7. Jei paklausčiau, kur labiau jautiesi namuose – Lietuvoje ar Norvegijoje ar kur nors kitur? Ar gali papasakoti kodėl?

### Tėvai

#### Bendri klausimai apie šeimos padėtį

1. Kaip ilgai jau gyvenate Norvegijoje?
2. Kokios priežastys čia persikraustyti?
3. Kiek vaikų turite? Prieš kiek laiko jie čia atsikraustė gyventi?

#### Pusiau struktūruoto interviu klausimai

1. Kokios įtakos sprendimui atsikraustyti į Stavangerį turėjo tai, kad turėjote vaikų?
2. Kaip dažnai grįžtate į Lietuvą? Kaip dažnai jūsų vaikai būna Lietuvoje? Kaip ilgai jūs ten svečiuojatės?

3. Ar palaikote ryšius su giminaičiais Lietuvoje? Ar šie ryšiai pasikeitė nuo tada, kai išvykote? Kaip dažnai bendraujate telefonu, internetu? Ar jūsų vaikai taip pat dalyvauja šiuose pokalbiuose?
4. Su kuria šalimi jaučiate stipresnius ryšius – Lietuva ar Norvegija?
5. Ar pasikeitė jūsų supratimas apie *namus* nuo tada kai čia atsikėlėte? Jei taip, kaip? Kokios patirtys tai įtakojo?
6. Ar pastebėjote panašius pokyčius ir jūsų vaikuose? Ar galite papasakoti kaip jie prisitaikė čia pirmą kartą atvykę? Ar kalbėjotės su jais apie tai, kas vyksta? Ar galėtumėte plačiau papasakoti?
7. Kaip manote, kur jūsų vaikai labiau jaučiasi namuose – Norvegijoje ar Lietuvoje?

## **Mokytoja**

### **Pusiau struktūruoto interviu klausimai**

1. Kiek vaikų dažniausiai apsilanko laisvalaikio centre?
2. Ar kiekvieną kartą susirenka ta pati grupė vaikų?
3. Koks pagrindinis šio centro tikslas?
4. Kokių lūkesčių turi tėvai atveddami savo vaikus į centrą? Ar iškyla nesusipratimų dėl skirtingų lūkesčių?
5. Kokie užsiėmimai dažniausiai vyksta centre? Su kokiomis temomis dažniausiai dirbate? Ar migracija, persikėlimas į Norvegiją koku nors būdu atsispindi užsiėmimuose? Ar galite papasakoti plačiau apie vaikų nuomones ar išgirstas istorijas?
6. Ar pastebėjote koks vaikų požiūris į Lietuvą? Ar nugirstate juos kalbant apie jų atsiminimus, patirtis, įspūdžius iš kelionių? Jei taip, kokiame kontekste?