

Growing up in transnational families.

Children's perspectives on "good childhood"

Dorastanie w rodzinach transnarodowych.

"Dobre dzieciństwo" z perspektywy dzieci

Starting point of the project

Over the course of the unrestricted freedom of movement within the EU, **labor migration** in Poland has changed: European rather than transatlantic migration is on the rise, and temporary labor migration in particular has increased. This has resulted in not only the increased importance of the **German-Polish labor market**, but also in the creation of a variety of **transnational family arrangements**, strengthening the connection between Poland and Germany.

Families with mothers temporarily working abroad are often the focus of public debates but rarely of scientific research in Poland or Germany, especially from the **children's perspective**. As researchers in the field of childhood studies, we ask with this **multi-method project** how children perceive and evaluate transnational family arrangements and how they define "good childhood."

Research interest and design

Within the **DoDzi-Project**, we are investigating how children interpret and evaluate transnational family arrangements, as well as analyzing **how children view transnational family arrangements in relation to a "normative pattern of good childhood"** – a core concept of our project.

The project combines a **sociological approach** with a perspective from **literature studies** and consists of **three parts**:

A) Book-Analysis: Recent books for children on transnational families are the basis for the first part of the project. The qualitative analysis focuses on the question how transnational families are presented in books for children – as a deviation or a viable form of living?

B) Reception study: Elementary school children in Poland are read aloud to from a book about a child in a transnational family. Following this "reading journey," they are invited to write a letter to this fictional child – giving advice, articulating wishes and comments. This part of the study focuses on the question of how children interpret the presented transnational families and how they position themselves towards such family arrangements.

C) Group discussions: A passage of a book about a transnational family is used as a stimulus for group discussions between children with parents living temporarily abroad and children without such an experience. This part of the study aims at reconstructing children's conjunctive knowledge about normative and non-normative family arrangements.



Objectives

Scientifically, the project enriches:

- the sociological debate on the "normative pattern of good childhood" – from the perspective of children;
- the field of literature studies by offering insights into children's perception of family and transnationality;
- the interdisciplinary discourse within childhood studies;
- research at the crossroad of childhood- and migration studies by reconstructing children's views on transnationality;
- and our understanding of the perspectives of children on growing up in transnational families.

Publicly, the project helps to inform the heated public discourse on children of transnational families by offering empirical findings on children's perceptions of this type of childhood.

Bi-national and interdisciplinary orientation of the project

The project is a collaboration of scholars from Poland and Germany. It includes experts from the field of sociology of childhood and from literary studies. Both teams are anchored in childhood studies.



German research team

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