

International Workshop, April 27-29, 2023, in Essen, Germany

## “Living apart together: Growing up in Transnational Families”

Transnational family life has become both a growing empirical phenomenon and a conceptual lens through which families’ multilocal spaces and relations become visible. The reasons for families to “live apart together” are based on a multitude of individual and collective motives. Depending on the economic, social and cultural capital of the families, their transnational arrangements and practices play out differently. Research so far has mostly focused on the alleged decision-makers, namely adults, who are usually considered the key figures in migration processes. Children and youth in transnational families are often viewed as more passive or vulnerable and subject to their parents’ choices. The planned workshop aims to bring together research that allows for the broadening of the perspectives on transnational arrangements, from various disciplines focusing on childhood.

In the planned workshop, we wish to 1) discuss **current research on (growing up in) the transnational family**, that acknowledges (new, changing or persisting) conditions, figurations, practices, and discursive representations of transnational families in different social contexts, considering both mobile and “left-behind” or immobile actors. 2) Special attention will be paid to **methodological approaches and challenges**, as research in transnational settings often requires solving specific questions about the practical conduct of research and related ethical considerations.

Based on such current research approaches and findings on the transnational family, we aim to 3) initiate a discussion around the **normative concepts of childhood and family**. The extent to which societies consider transnational or mobile families as being at odds with normative patterns of family, childhood and parenthood differs – within societies and between them. We are curious to discuss and compare the variability of evaluations of transnational families on local and global scales. In doing so, we will explore the potential of research on transnational families for the analysis of society and social order more broadly. The following is a list of more differentiated questions on all three concerns, which can (but do not have to) be addressed by presentation proposals:

### 1 Current research on transnational families and growing up therein

#### 1.1 The variety of transnational families

- Which types of transnational family arrangements exist – in different countries or social groups?
- How common are transnational family arrangements – within the elite of a country but also in the poorer classes? What are push and pull factors?
- To what extent is migration a family strategy? Who is involved in the decision process?
- What are benefits and problems for the people who migrate and for those who stay in their country of origin?

#### 1.2 The shaping of transnational family lives

- Which concrete challenges or problems arise in transnational everyday life and care routines? Which resources and networks are activated or gained? And for what?

- What are children's/youth's views and contributions to transnational family life?
- How do children/youth negotiate their transnational family life with their peers/friends?
- What role do transnational arrangements play in the school context?
- In which other social worlds is transnational family life shaped and negotiated?

### **1.3 The media and discursive representations of mobile/transnational families.**

- How are migration and transnationality represented in the media, for example in literature or film? How do books, films (or other media) not only represent but also produce images of the transnational family or transnational childhood?
- Which groups are addressed in which ways or designated as relevant recipients? How do children and youth interpret narrations about transnational families?
- How are transnational families discussed by different institutions, such as educational, public or religious institutions, or by non-governmental or international organizations?
- Which (public) discourses are conducted, which voices are heard the loudest and which remain unheard? Which images of mobility and transnationality do these discourses refer to and against which alternative choices and life plans are they demarcated?

## **2 Methodological approaches and ethical considerations**

- Which challenges (and benefits) arise when fieldwork/data collection stretch over more than one language, locality and/or cultural code and how can they be dealt with?
- Which ethical considerations need to be addressed in research at the intersection of age and mobility? How can transnational children's and youth's informed consent be secured, and how can research be made a safe and participatory space for young people?

## **3 Societal processes of evaluating transnational families**

- Which normative images of mobility and transnationality can be reconstructed for different societies? With which other "moral orders" are they intertwined?
- How are classed, gendered and generational orders in the family challenged, reproduced or adapted in transnational contexts and which factors add to families' (non-)adaptivity?
- How do mobile or transnationally living young people and their families deal with deviance from normative images? How are they marked, hidden, or dealt with?
- How do institutions (daycare centers, schools, social support systems, etc.) deal with mobile/transnational families? What processes of persistence but also of change can be observed or reconstructed?

The goal of the workshop is to bring together scholars from various regions of the world to allow for contrasting analysis of social realities, normative frames and representations of mobile families' and young people's lives. Scholars are invited to submit proposals discussing all stages of research (preliminary results, methodological reflections, or finalized analysis). The workshop program will be composed of keynotes, presentations of participants' research projects, and interpretation sessions to discuss selected data material.

## **Workshop terms and conditions**

### **Time and place**

The workshop will take place at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, from April 27-29, 2023.

### **Costs**

For accepted presenters, workshop participation, travel costs and accommodation will be covered by the organizers. Please note that costs for visa or other expenses cannot be reimbursed.

### **Application procedure and terms of participation**

Please send your proposal of about one page to [jessica.schwittek@uni-due.de](mailto:jessica.schwittek@uni-due.de). Please also include a short note on your career stage and academic affiliation with full institutional contact details. The deadline for application is November 20, 2022. Applicants will be informed shortly after whether their proposal has been accepted.

Accepted participants will be asked to send in their full paper by April 1, 2023, to promote mutual exchange and stimulating discussion among all participants during the workshop. A Special Issue with selected contributions is planned for publication after the workshop.

### **Contact**

For further questions regarding the workshop, please contact Dr. Jessica Schwittek ([jessica.schwittek@uni-due.de](mailto:jessica.schwittek@uni-due.de)).

### **Acknowledgement**

The workshop is organized in the frame of the Polish-German cooperative research project *DoDzi: Growing up in transnational families. Children's perspectives on "good childhood"* and is part of the internationalization and dissemination strategy of the project. The cooperation is funded by the DFG (German Research Foundation) and the NCN (National Science Centre Poland). The principal investigators of the DoDzi project are Prof. Dr. Alexandra König from the University of Duisburg-Essen and Prof. Dr. Dorota Michułka from the University of Wrocław. For further information please visit: [www.udue.de/dodzi/](http://www.udue.de/dodzi/)