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# FROM CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS TO MIGRANT CHILDREN


The focus of this volume is on migrant children. As a research sample, they represent the next consecutive step in the development of research on migration, after men-centered and women-centered approaches.

Switching to children-centered research represents a definite novelty in the approach to migration, since for many decades such research has operated under the assumption that migrants are always adult males (Pedraza 1991, Zlotnik 2003). Both women's and children's participation in migration was considered insignificant. They appeared as additions to or passive beneficiaries of men's decisions to migrate. Therefore, it is correct to say that early studies on international migration were gender and age-biased. Women were not only considered as a negligible part of the workforce (their domestic work for family was not classified as work because it was unpaid), but also as generally inaccessible for researchers because of the language barrier and seclusion within the private sphere.

A definite change came in the 1990s, when the inclusion of women in studies on migration became more numerous. Edward Hofstetter (2005) prepared a vast bibliography documenting trends in studies of female migrants. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, in their book *Age of Migrations*, write about the "feminization of migration" as one of the important trends at the end of the twentieth century. More and more often, women have become pioneer migrants or main breadwinners in a household. This trend is still continuing, and many publications show that women have become a significant part of the labor force concentrated

on domestic service and care work. Immigrant women have been stepping into "newly vacated" local households in richer countries, from which local women have entered the labor market, be it in their own country or abroad (Slany 2010; Slany, Małek 2005).

Research on migrant children – the focus group of this volume – began in the late 1990s as well. Demographers noted that immigrant children comprised the fastest growing segment of the local populations (Hernandez 1999). Researchers primarily analyzed their adaptation to the new countries. Special emphasis was placed on adolescents and their transition from childhood to adulthood, as well as decision-making processes pertaining to defining their identity vis-a-vis the identities of their parents (Berry, Phinney, Vedder 2006). How they cope with decisions concerning the extent to which they should positively respond to the expectations of the new society and also, at the same time, to what extent they should resist the expectations, values and behavior patterns of their family and community, became a central research topic. Most of the research was concerned with school adjustments, but findings were inconclusive. Both positive adaptation outcomes as well as negative results of the adaptation process were presented in the literature (Vedder, Horenczyk 2006). This highly unsatisfactory outcome stemmed from two facts. First, acculturation measures used for children were identical to measures used for the adult population. Secondly, many difficulties attributed to the migration process were rather age than migration-related. Intra-family conflicts between parents and children could serve as an example of conflict existing in both migrant and non-migrant families, but many researchers attributed them only to the situation of children as migrants in a foreign country. In either case, the acculturation of children has been analyzed chiefly as acculturation within a family or school context.

Surprisingly little research has been devoted to the psychological response of children to the experience of migration on the individual level. The changed and still changing situation of children within migratory flows justifies a closer look at the impact of this process on children's situations and well-being. Several reasons for such a decision could be specified here.

First of all, migratory trajectories of children and parents do not need to be, and as a matter of fact no longer are, identical or even parallel. Children migrate not only with their parents, or because of their parents' decision, but more and more often they migrate individually, both voluntarily and involuntarily. Voluntary migrations include educational goals – for example, participation in *Comenius, Erasmus* or *Semester Abroad* programs. Involuntary migrations begin because of war or persecutions – children flee their own countries with parents or as unaccompanied minors in search of safety. Secondly, return migration or

immigration of parents could represent emigration of children who are leaving the country to which their parents had emigrated years before, but in which they were born or have spent almost all of their lives. Thirdly, children are involved in the continuous migratory process even if their parents have already settled in some country or return to their country of origin. The group categorized in the literature as Third Culture Kids could be named as a prime example of this category (www.tckworld.com). Fourthly, children-parent dyads mutually affect their social positions. Migration of children might leave elderly parents unattended, while migration of parents might create the so-called phenomena of *Euroorphans* – children left in the home country while parent(s) migrate abroad.

The extended and changed context of children's migration requires a new psychological approach, crossing the limits of the previous one concentrated on acculturation processes and based on an often-cited anthropological definition of acculturation (Redfield, Linton, Herskovits 1936), which focuses on group acculturation but has been taken mistakenly as a basis for psychological research on individuals (Rudmin 2009). This new approach, so far absent in migration research, originates from attachment theory. This theory was originally based on observation of the relation between a parent/caregiver and a child. John Bowlby (1982/1969, 1973), and his collaborator Mary Ainsworth (1989), noted that attachment relationships are strong and enduring affectional bonds between the attached person – usually the offspring – and his or her caregiver, aimed at maintaining proximity to the caregiver and using him/her as a safe haven during distress and as a secure base during exploration of the environment. Although immediate physical proximity is at first an important component of attachment, later on it normally becomes far less of an issue. Over the course of time, attachment theory has been applied to analysis of affective development beyond the limits of childhood. Partly because of this developmental shift, a psychological sense of "felt security" represents the most viable aspect of attachment in older individuals (Sroufe and Waters 1977). To have an attachment bond with someone means that "feeling of well-being and security are derived from maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world" (Bowlby 1988: 26–27). Bowlby himself pointed out that attachment to a parent figure represents a part of a larger set of systems that influence maintaining a stable relationship with the familiar environment (Bowlby 1973). Because of the intended scope of attachment theory, it began to play an important role for environmental psychology as inspiration and a departure point in reflection on the relation between humans and places.

The first natural experiment which evokes reflection on attachment between people and places was the forced re-settlement of the population of a Boston

suburb. The psychological effects of this relocation has been analyzed in a well-known study by Fried (1963). Research results have demonstrated that for many residents this relocation and loss of familiar environment has resulted in an interruption in the sense of continuity, fragmentation of spatial identity, fragmentation of group identity and a kind of "mourning" which amounted to a feeling of sorrow similar to that experienced after the loss of a loved one.

Some years later, an emphasis on the attachment to places became a focus in human geography. The chief proponent of this approach, Yi-Fu Tuan (1974), coined the term *topophilia* to describe the affective aspects of the relation with geographic space. The emotional bond between an individual and geographic space transforms this space into a "place". Tuan's (1974) approach directed research interest towards the influence of individual experience of residential stability or lack of it on human well-being. Maria Vittoria Giuliani (2003) points out the discussion of similarities and discrepancies in the meaning and function of bonds with places and attachment to people. She stresses the fact that both bonds are persistent over time, they are not conscious until threatened, and in the case of their loss, emotions of grief appear. Paul Marris (1982: 185) also points out that "the relationships that matter most to us are characteristically to particular people whom we love… and sometimes to particular places that we invest with the same loving qualities". For the majority of people, it is one's birthplace that is invested with the greatest affection and provides a sense of security and comfort. Interestingly, high mobility, i.e. frequent disruption of relation to place, was connected in some research results with symptoms of malaise, similar to mental and physical health problems resulting from a destroyed relation with an attachment figure (Stokols, Shumaker, Martinez 1983). It should be highlighted, however, that migration does not necessarily result in breaking attachment bonds with people or places. Transmigrants, as described by Nina Glick-Schiller et al. (1994) and Alejandro Portes (1997), are an example of people living simultaneously in "two worlds": integrated in the host society, but still closely connected to the place of origin.

Nevertheless, attachment theory represents a promising starting point for more detailed and individual-centered, phenomenologically oriented research on patterns of relation between children and places in the course of migratory experience. This is only the beginning of the exploration of psychological dynamics resulting from changes of localities during a life span. An analysis of narrative material, literary autobiographies of children, reveals the variety of meanings and roles that places can perform in the lives of children, with the most frequent feeling of affection associated with security and family love (Chawla 1992; Mateo 2013). An approach based on attachment might help to explore the further phenomenology of children's migration experience and its impact on the

later course of children's lives. This approach to migration in childhood forms the structure of this special issue. Most of the articles collected here are based on qualitative research, and aim at understanding various aspects of the phenomena of migration from the perspective of children.

As was already mentioned, researching child migrants is a challenging task from a methodological point of view due to the lack of accurate methods, lack of experience with researching children, etc. Therefore, some authors have analyzed migrations in childhood retrospectively: they talked with second generation migrants or adults, who had migrated some years before. Although this perspective does not permit the analysis of children's experiences "here and now," it may shed a new light on the long-term consequences of migration in childhood and on the process of biographical work. Most articles devoted to Third Culture Kids are based on this approach. Another strategy, adopted here by researchers dealing with schooling and education, consist in an analysis of law and institutional solutions, often in a comparative perspective. This approach enables us to take a closer look at the policy towards children migrants and at their rights in the host country. Finally, children's situation may be understood and described by interviewing adults: parents, other family members, teachers, psychologists or other professionals working with children.

Some authors, however, did their research with children. For example, Ewa Nowicka interviewed Vietnamese teenagers in Polish schools, Agnieszka Radziwinowiczówna did her research with young Mexican Americans returning to their parents' country, and Luenha Marinho conducted a "family interview" with both parents and children using multi-sited ethnography. Zorana Medarić and Tjaša Žakelj organized focus groups with pupils from Slovenian primary and secondary schools. Behnaz Tavakoli, on the other hand, managed to do interviews with teenage Afghan girls who had fled to Iran. This category of asylum seekers experience intersectional or multiple discrimination: because of their nationality, gender and age. This approach – not only situating children at the center of interest, but also involving them in the research process – seems to be an important contribution to migration studies.

In the introductory article, Dirk Hoerder, co-editor of the volume entitled *Negotiating Transcultural Lives: Belonging and Social Capital among Youth in a Comparative Perspective*, analyzes issues of educational policy and child migrants' identity-formation from a historical and comparative perspective. He demonstrates how curricula constructed by representatives of dominant cultures were (and still are) aimed at transmitting to colonized or immigrant youths the values and attitudes of the dominant culture. Hoerder also explains how colonized or immigrant children have a broader perspective, since they have the ability to switch between at least two cultural contexts or negotiate between them.

His article brings to mind Homi Bhaba's notion of "third space" (Bhabha 1994) on the one hand and, on the other, Everett Stonequist's concept of marginal man (Stonequist 1935).

The contributors to this volume represent various disciplines of social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, educational studies and history. Thanks to its interdisciplinary character, this special issue, as a whole, can be read from many perspectives. One has already been presented – the point of view of attachment theory and the role of social and emotional bonds with family, friends and places in the migration process. The other theme present in this issue – even if not explicitly mentioned in the titles of particular articles – is the agency of children migrants and the structural pressures they face. "Agency – structure dilemma" has been present in sociology since its beginning, but thanks to Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and Margaret Archer, it has become one of the most important questions nowadays. It turns out that analyzing structural pressures influencing migrants' decisions and their agency can shed new light on the migration process, and this perspective is more and more often applied in migration studies (see, for example, Morawska 2001; Geisler 2013; Grabowska-Lusińska 2012). Traditionally, children were portrayed as vulnerable victims of parents' decisions to migrate and their own resilience and agency were underestimated. It should be stated, however, that children's perception of migration, their adaptation and identity-formation may significantly differ from their parents', and therefore they should be researched independently. What is more, their agency can be seen in the process of identity-formation and negotiating between different cultural contexts.

This special issue is divided into five thematic parts. In the first one, entitled "Constructions of Home by Second Generation Migrants" the authors' attention is focused on second generation migrants or those who migrated in early childhood (referred to as the 1.5 generation). Case studies of Mexicans migrating to the USA (and back home), Polish return migrants and Korean migrants in Germany demonstrate a broad spectrum of identity strategies applied by young migrants. It turns out that in the process of constructing their home, identity and attachment to places, they cannot relate to their parents' experiences. Their perception of both their parents' country of origin and their country of residence may be, in fact, very different. Referring to the classic theory of Stanisław Ossowski, one may say that in the process of migration, parents can transmit to children their sense of "ideological homeland," but their sense of "private homeland" will differ significantly, since it is derived from the experience of living "here and now" (Ossowski 1984). Children's "private homeland" is often located in the host country. Therefore, the boundaries between traditional categories of home and host country, migration, return migration and re-emigration are often

blurred. Second or 1.5 generation return migrants come back to their ideological homeland, but may leave their private homeland at the same time. Agnieszka Radziwinowiczówna and Katarzyna Wójcikowska have demonstrated how child migrants' agency manifests itself in influencing parents' decisions about migration, in deciding to return to the parents' country in early adulthood, and in various ways of negotiating identity.

The above-mentioned themes are also present in the second part of this volume, dedicated to Third Culture Kids (TCKs). This category of migrants, rarely described in Polish migration studies, is particular for many reasons. TCKs migrate with parents, highly skilled professionals, because of their mobile careers. As a result, Third Culture Kids experience multiple migrations that are, by definition, temporary. Agnieszka Trąbka analyzes the challenges they face and strategies they apply in the process of identity construction as far as its continuity and consistency is concerned. She also tackles various ways of identification with places and the meaning of attachment bonds. Katia Mace and Liz Winter discuss the implication of migration for development and identity depending on the age when migration takes place. They argue that adolescents are more vulnerable to the negative consequences of transition from one country to another than pre-school children, and that they are more likely to experience "identity struggles" than pre-adolescents. This tendency may be explained by attachment theory: pre-school children's attachment bonds are limited to or concentrated on generational family, so they are not broken when migration takes places. In adolescents' lives, on the other hand, other people, particularly peers, play an important role, and moving to another country means breaking ties with them. Adolescents' vulnerability in the transition process is confirmed by Kornelia Zakrzewska-Wirkus. In her article, she highlights the importance of the migration pattern: not only when migration takes place, but also the number of transitions. She tackles, as well, the role of religious or spiritual coping strategies, especially in their intergenerational dimension. Raymond A. Powell, on the other hand, applies the modern concept of Third Culture Kids to historical and biographical analysis of John Calvin's life and works. He raises the question of whether the phenomena we are discussing are really new, and proves that using concepts and theories from contemporary social sciences may shed a new light on historical analysis. It is worth highlighting that being a Third Culture Kid, associated with postmodern or late modern times, is not an entirely new phenomenon. For example, missionaries' children, children of European aristocracy and colonial administration employees fit into this category.

As has already been mentioned, when parents decide to migrate, children may accompany them or, especially in the case of short-term or circular migrations, stay behind. Both scenarios are discussed in the third part of this volume. Firstly,

Paula Pustułka describes educational strategies of Polish mothers in Britain and Germany, concentrating on the identity issues. She presents four mothering models and highlights the advantages of hybrid models, open for negotiations and integrating elements of different cultures. Secondly, Adela Souralova presents an interesting "care chain" (Hochschild 2000) created among Vietnamese migrants and Czech nannies in the Czech Republic. She explains how nannies acquaint migrant children with the dominant culture, becoming their "door to the majority." The other two articles in this section are dedicated to the problem of the separation of parents and children due to migration. It is worth mentioning that taking gender into account in migration studies has resulted in a great deal of research devoted to mothering in the context of migration, while very little has been said about migrating fathers. For example, "moral panic" connected with so-called "euroorphanhood" has broken out mainly in the context of migrating mothers, and they became the first to be blamed (Urbańska 2010). In the public discourse, women's migrations were perceived as abandoning their families, while the same decisions made by men were treated, on the contrary, as an act of care for their kin. This is one standpoint in the highly emotional and politicized (at least in Poland after 2004) debate about migrating parents. There is, however, a concurrent standpoint: interviews with mothers demonstrate the "centrality of children" in their narrations (see Paula Pustułka's article in this issue). Migration in this light is perceived as a self-sacrifice for the sake of children's happiness and chances in the future, and as an expression of good parenting. Similar conclusions may be drawn from Frances Pine's fieldwork conducted in the 1970s in a village in Southern Poland. The village had rich migratory traditions, and women's migrations were inscribed in the role model of a good mother – hardworking and sacrificing herself for the needs of her children (Pine 2007).

Luena Marinho's article demonstrates the importance of including in research different actors engaged in the migration process. She explains how transnational child-raising arrangements are made between Angola and Portugal by interviewing both the migrating parents and children left at home. Thanks to this, she gives a more complex picture and reveals some discrepancies between these two perspectives. Joanna Kulpińska devoted her article to the same problem, but in a different geographical region. She describes the situation of children left behind in Babica – a small village in Poland known for its migratory traditions. Her article can be read in the context of classic research by Krystyna Duda-Dziewierz (1938).

The fourth part of this special issue tackles the problem of changing educational systems, and of different educational challenges faced by child migrants and teachers working with migrants. Migrating children and their parents have several educational options: local public or private schools,

international or American/English schools and, sometimes, a national school abroad. The choice depends on the child's linguistic competences, planned time span of the migration and the economic resources of the family. International schools, with multicultural staff and students, are claimed to be a friendlier place, where an adaptation process can take place smoothly. Public schools, at least in Poland, have little experience with foreign-born students, who constitute less than 1% of all pupils. Izabela Czerniejewska, who compares international and public schools in Poznań, claims that we should not over-generalize, and that also in public schools migrants may encounter an individual approach and welcoming attitude of school staff. What must be mentioned is the economic aspect as well: international schools, often elite and prestigious, are beyond the reach of most migrants. Monika Rerak-Zampou also compares two types of schools (Polish and Greek schools in Athens) as far as students' adaptation process is concerned. Her article is interesting, as one of the few dedicated to Polish migration to Greece. Małgorzata Kułakowska focuses on post-2004 migrations from Poland to the UK and takes a closer look at the situation of Polish children in British schools. She and Beatrix Bukus also mention the policy of host countries in regard to the collection of statistical data about migrant pupils and their categorization.

Policy is also a theme of the last part of the issue, focused mainly on minor asylum seekers. On the one hand, Behnaz Tavakoli, Zorana Medarić and Tjaša Žakelj reveal examples of violence and discrimination against migrant children in different contexts: Tavakoli focuses on the extremely difficult situation of Afghan girls in Iran, who experience intersectional discrimination, while Medarić and Žakelj concentrate on the violence and discrimination of non-Slovenian pupils in Slovenian schools. Their research also reveals multiple discrimination: because of ethnic origin, because of age or socioeconomic status. This part consists in an example of good practice as well: Katharina Benedetter and Marianne Dobner describe cultural trainings for minor unaccompanied refugees organized by the International Organization for Migration in Austria. They are aimed at facilitating integration of young refugees into a host society and consist in providing them with in-depth knowledge about Austria and discussing with them cultural differences, ways of participation in the host society, etc.

We hope that this issue will be interesting for sociologists, psychologists, and representatives of education studies, as well as for professionals dealing with problems of children migrants, such as teachers, social workers, policy-makers and psychotherapists. We would like to thank all of the authors and peer reviewers for contributing to this special issue of *Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny*.

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