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Intergenerational family relations and migration from a life span perspective

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Due to important socio-demographic changes of the last decades, intergenerational family relations are a highly important topic in the public discourse and in research. These changes refer to phenomena at different stages in the family life cycle – such as, for instance, the younger generations' postponed transitions to adulthood including longer training times and longer financial dependencies from parents, as well as growing life expectancies and the related issues of elder care. In light of increasing migration and mobility in Europe, these issues become highly important also with regard to acculturation. However, research so far has only seldom taken a larger perspective on these issues by combining views on different stages in the life span and in the context of migration.

The present symposium aims therefore to shed light on intergenerational family relations and migration at different stages in the family life cycle.

Starting with the relations between adolescents and their parents, the first contribution by Colette Sabatier and Virginie Avezou-Boutry (France) concentrates on the dual process of enculturation (ethnic and French) of Moroccan second-generation adolescents living in France. Three different identity patterns of adolescents are described both with regard to transmission and maintenance of the culture of origin in migrant families, as well as host national enculturation. Adolescents' identity patterns do not only differ with respect to diverse criteria of acculturation and mother's identity, but also with respect to the family climate and levels of mother-child conflicts.

The second paper by Susana Coimbra and colleagues (Portugal) focusses on the next stage in intergenerational relations, namely between emerging adults and their parents. Several factors that may enhance functional solidarity in families are explored, showing that the most important predictor of intergenerational solidarity is relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, results provide additional support for the assumption that solidarity patterns may – under certain conditions - be transmitted from one generation to the next within families.

Third, Isabelle Albert and colleagues (Luxembourg) move one step further in the family life cycle, by concentrating on two key issues in the relations between adult children and their ageing parents: the balancing of autonomy and relatedness as well as the regulation of support exchange and reciprocity, in Portuguese migrant and native families in Luxembourg. Continuing the lines of reasoning of the two preceding contributions, this study focuses on

similarities and differences in identity constructions of adult children and their parents as well as on aspects of intergenerational support exchange as perceived by both groups.

To conclude, Jaan Valsiner and colleagues (Denmark) draw a more general view on the regulation of relations in family networks, considering different generations as well as the geographical distribution of wider family networks. The contribution focuses peripheral communication patterns (PCP) and their roles in constituting developmental contexts over the life course and as a source of family members' well-being.

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