



# Childhood in German Sociology and Society

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**abstract:** The emergence and progression of childhood sociological research and theorizing in Germany over the last three decades are outlined in the article, thereby showing a growing variety of sociological approaches and publication activities, a development towards international cooperation and institutionalization within the German Association of Sociology. The prevalence of two main orientations is focused on. These are, first, an emphasis on children's agency and self-determinacy, which is characterized by its specific origins in both German postwar history and particular subject-orientated education and socialization concepts; and second, a strong interest in and concern for recent social changes which can be observed in theorizing and research on issues such as the positioning of childhood in the generational order, children's welfare policies, urban environments, the media and market, intergenerational relationships and the formation of identity.

**keywords:** childhood ♦ children ♦ children's agency ♦ social change ♦ social structure

## The Development of Childhood Sociology in Germany

Today, we can look back at three decades of sociological theory and research concerning children and childhood in Germany. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new view on children and childhood seems to have been promoted by the 'Zeitgeist' since several initiatives occurred independently in the German Federal Republic. Family sociologists formulated the need for a 'social policy for children', thereby questioning the position of children in the social and economic structure (Kaufmann, 1980; Lüscher, 1979). Children's increasing use of new media not only

made pedagogues worry about an endangering impact on children; it also encouraged sociologists to analyse the resulting changes in the societal construct of childhood (Hengst et al., 1981). A third factor was the cooperation of about 15 sociologists within the 'Sociology of Education' section of the German Sociological Association. They began in 1980 to study recent 'changes in childhood'. The debates and the resulting book (Preuß-Lausitz et al., 1983) became the nucleus of a number of research projects concerning children's daily life in the following decade, as well as a series of conferences. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a number of social scientists from East Germany joined the group in order to explore the impact of the political changes on children (Kirchhöfer, 1998). In 1994, the then greatly expanded group emancipated itself from the field of educational science, becoming a working group and in 1997 forming the 'Sociology of Childhood' section of the German Sociological Association. In the mid-1990s, the field benefited increasingly from international networks, collaborations and conferences, and the new paradigm of childhood sociology was intensely debated for several years in many meetings and publications.

There is now a huge volume of literature in the field. Since 1993, a regular book series on childhood has been produced by the publisher Juventa, and since 1996 by the journal *Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation* [Journal for Sociology of Education and Socialization]. Concepts and methods of childhood sociology have been explored in theoretical studies (e.g. Honig, 1999) and readers (e.g. Geulen, 1989; Hengst and Kelle, 2003; Hengst and Zeiber, 2005; Honig et al., 1996, 1999; Markefka and Nauck, 1993; Preuß-Lausitz et al., 1990; Zeiber et al., 1996). Surveys provided empirical data (e.g. Nauck and Bertram, 1995; Zinnecker and Silbereisen, 1996), and an increasing number of empirical studies on particular issues (see later) were published. The field became more and more international. German scholars participated in the two great European projects 'Childhood as a Social Phenomenon', of the Vienna European Centre (1987–92), and COST A 19 'Children's Welfare' (2001–6), and also publish increasingly frequently in English and other languages.

Thus the story of the sociology of childhood in Germany is that of a progressively developing subdiscipline. However, in the field of German sociology, studying childhood is still very much on the fringe. I would say that this is not due to a general construction of children as minors in society, but rather to the very high value that is attached to children in modern societies that, however, highlights a different aspect of children's social existence from that focused on in the 'new' sociology of childhood. This highlighted aspect is children's growing up and their function as 'human becomings' (as opposed to 'human beings') (Qvortrup et al., 1994) within

a society of adults. The high value of children's 'becoming' future members of society is mirrored by the emphasis placed on the sciences of education, development and socialization. No doubt it is of great societal importance to focus on these issues, and to conceptualize, organize, continue and survey institutions and measures, and train a large number of professional personnel. In comparison, the call for childhood sociology has been limited, and most scholars who engage in childhood sociology in Germany teach in university departments of education. However, the need to explain the social reality of childhood to educationalists has been growing since the early 1980s, when limitations to further pedagogization and colonization became apparent, and the social reality of childhood was clearly diverging from the traditional image.

The sound of a choir depends on the quality of each singer's voice. However, the quantity of singers is important, too. Quantity depends on the number of teaching and research jobs in universities and research institutes. The number of senior staff specialized in childhood sociology has recently been growing, but it is still rather small. Overall, then, I would like to say that in Germany, there is an excellent theoretically and methodologically elaborated quality of thinking on childhood, as evidenced in the literature that has been produced in the last three decades. However, more specialized younger scholars are needed. For this to happen, increased research funding is absolutely crucial.

### **Emphasis on Social Change**

The shape of childhood sociology in any country is certainly not only the product of particular scientific traditions in theory and methodology but also of societal and political developments in childhood as well as in society at large. From the beginning of German childhood sociology, exploring social changes was a strong focus in most of the theory and research. A general awareness of change may be seen as rooted in the country's history of fundamental social fissures after both world wars. Yet it was particularly the upheavals of economic and information developments and related fundamental social changes which took place first in the 1960s, and then in the 1990s, that generated concern for the impact on children's agency in daily life and the social position of childhood. Scholars identified trends in the changing features of 'modern' childhood, and in educational and public debates these trends were more or less understood as a loss of 'real' childhoods thereby keeping to a romantic vision of the innocent child playing happily in the open air. Hence it became a task for childhood sociologists to point to ambivalences and to explain that childhood is unavoidably an integral part of society, even if

its relation with developments in society may generate risks. Analysing public childhood discourses critically became one of the main research issues from the 1990s onwards (e.g. Bühler-Niederberger, 2005).

A particular interest focuses on historically successive generations and their interrelationships. The characteristics of, and interrelationships between, historically successive generations is a theme which has been taken up a number of times in German childhood sociology. This particular focus has its roots in German history: it emerged from the societal ruptures after each of the two world wars. After the end of the First World War, in the 1920s, the differences between those who were young before and after the break in society became evident, and a sociology of youth emerged which related birth cohorts' social attitudes to their specific youth experiences. Within the sociology of knowledge (*Wissenssoziologie*), Karl Mannheim (1993 [1928]) formulated his famous concept of 'generation', calling those cohorts a generation whose way of thinking and perceiving social reality developed from common experiences in their youth, and who thus shared a generational 'location' in society. Thirty years later, after the Second World War, another sharp postwar rupture of German society again stimulated social scientists to study how recent youth generations were formed (Schelsky, 1957).

In 1980, the aforementioned group of sociologists (Preuß-Lausitz et al., 1983; Zeiber, 2003) shifted attention from generations of youth to 'child generations'. They started by describing their own, the 'children-of-the-Second-World-War' generation's childhood experiences, and compared these to the childhoods of the subsequent cohorts. This comparative view drew attention to social changes that had become evident in contemporary children's lives, and recent social trends in childhood came to the fore. Thus, the focus shifted away from the sequencing of generations in historical time towards the description of recent trends in childhood as a changing social structure, and away from childhood as a transitional life phase towards childhood as a historically changing social phenomenon. This type of study became a key starting point for German childhood sociology.

In the early 2000s, the issue of sequencing generations came to the fore anew. Historical research on the generation of war and postwar children was undertaken in order to study their relations with, and impacts on, the succeeding generations (e.g. Radebold et al., 2008), and family case studies were analysed in order to reveal the transmission of social and cultural capital between grandparents, parents and children (Büchner, 2003). Relating to Mannheim's concept and applying it to societies of today, Heinz Hengst (2005) insisted on a new view of children and adults living together in a society that is changing more rapidly than the generational

succession. He discusses childhood sociologists' binary generation concept and their focus on 'doing generations', and pleads also for analysis of 'doing contemporaries'.

### **Focus on Children's Agency**

The first decade of German childhood sociology was characterized by a particular orientation towards agency, which was rooted in a particular strand in recent German history, namely in the democratization process after the Second World War. Democratization was not broadly implemented in social life until the mid-1960s, when a new generation struggled against the authoritarianism of their elders. At that time, the rebellious generation's strong emphasis on democracy and anti-authoritarianism went hand in hand with changes in the economy, where the growing service sector was in need of a more qualified and autonomous labour force. Both shifts demanded a new educational policy, which aimed at more democratic relations between adults and children, as well as at reduced class distinctions in education. Socialization was now regarded as the main causal factor in child development, and sociologists investigated social inequalities in family and school socialization. Unlike other countries, the German debate on socialization gained a particularly strong subject orientation; in the spirit of democratization, a new form of socialization was pursued as a renewal of society. Functionalist socialization theory imported from Anglo-American sociology was reconceptualized in relation to psychological and philosophical subject and action theories (Geulen, 1977; Hurrelmann and Ulich, 1980). The focus on the self-determined, autonomous child became a predominant educational goal (Preuß-Lausitz et al., 1990).

In the early 1980s, social scientists who began to study children's daily lives empirically followed that prevailing thinking. They conceptualized children as subjects rather than objects of adult treatment, and analysed children's self-determination and agency. In the 1980s and early 1990s, a rather large amount of research focused on children's activities and the performance of agency in their daily lives. It is interesting to note that the domains and aspects of children's activities most investigated in that period were those that were most appropriate to the focus on self-determination. These were settings where there tended to be less adult control over children, such as outdoor places, after-school activities and extra-curricular activities in school and peer relations. Theoretically based research approaches were developed and used in research where children were the source of data. The methods included intercultural and historic comparative biographical studies (Behnken et al., 1989), interview studies (Deutsches Jugendinstitut,

1992; du Bois-Reymond et al., 1994), reconstructions of children's agency in case studies on shaping daily life (Zeiber, 2001; Zeiber and Zeiber, 1994), video observation (Krappmann and Oswald, 1995), ethnographic observations and social-constructivist analyses of children's discourses among peers (Breidenstein and Kelle, 1998).

Thus, in Germany, it is not explicit distancing from socialization theory that characterizes the beginning of sociological research on children and childhood – as in other countries – but rather a utilization of the new educational and socialization concepts and their transference to non-educational research purposes. Not only sociologists, but also many educationalists of that time engaged in studies of childhood following the shift from the child as an object to the child as subject. It may be said that the German childhood sociologists' focus on children's agency emerged first from an educational goal, and followed a development that had already been worked out in the domain of the sciences of the growing child.

In the early 1990s, when childhood sociology in Germany became conceptualized as such and benefited increasingly from international debates, different approaches to children and childhood emerged and were made explicit. The international debate on the non-correspondence between socialization theory and childhood sociology of that time was referred to in order to explain the particular sociological approach to childhood. In that context, the concept of the child as a social actor constructing the life world 'here and now' was emphasized, and contrasted with the socialization and educational concept of the 'becoming child' (Zeiber, 1996). Some researchers highlighted arguments in favour of research from the 'child's perspective' (Honig et al., 1999), while others turned to social-structural or discourse analysis. To put it in Leena Alanen's (2001) terms, a differentiation between a sociology of 'children' and 'childhood' became explicit in the debates of the 1990s.

Not all researchers agreed on a rejection of the socialization approach, since it seemed not to match with the particular orientation towards subjectivity and agency characterizing the German research. In the early 2000s, a debate on what was referred to as 'self-socialization' was started anew, which more or less distanced itself from childhood sociology (Geulen and Veith, 2004; Zinnecker, 2000). However, my impression is that most contemporary German childhood sociologists highlight the usefulness of each perspective, rather than staking out a claim for any particular one.

It has to be mentioned that, in contrast to some other countries, the focus on children's agency in Germany did not come about through critiques of the societal marginality of the child and childhood. Here, children's rights and political participation have been rather on the fringe of most childhood

sociologists' concerns (exceptions include Liebel, 2007), and left to jurists, policy-makers and political practice. During the 1990s, laws were revised in favour of children's rights, and children's participation was promoted in local communities and by establishing children's ombudsmen (*Kinderbeauftragte*) on the local authority and state levels.

### **Changes Revealed in the Development of Modern Childhood**

As already mentioned, a rather large number of empirical studies were undertaken in the 1980s and early 1990s which focused on children's activities in daily life. Since the authors took part in the engagement with the child as a subject which was in favour during that time, a major emphasis was on changes in power relations between the generations, issues of control in daily life and children's self-determination.

What characteristics and trends do these studies reveal? Changes in children's leisure activities were the main issue addressed, not least because of both the increasingly structured pedagogization of leisure time and rapid developments in urban space. In the latter, facilities for specialized and centralized activities had progressed, and motorized traffic had greatly increased. Urban developments in functional specialization and centralization led to a higher degree of spatial separation between children and adults in public space, and bound children's daily lives more to sheltered places and structured activities. Demand for research data on the part of urban planners and social workers enforced this research focus, and teachers and parents were also very interested in learning about how children's environments were changing. As far as children were concerned, urban development was interrelated with the increase of institutionalization of learning and care which – as mentioned above – was due to the increased 'scholarization' of children's after-school lives, as well as mothers' growing workforce participation.

The urban space-related trend analyses indicated that children's life situations and agency were embedded in current overwhelming societal developments, such as institutionalization and individualization processes which, at that time, were also on the agenda of sociology more generally (Beck, 1986). The 'domestication' trend (Zinnecker, 1990) pointed to an increasing spatial confinement of children, while the 'insularization' trend (Zeihner, 2001; Zeihner and Zeihner, 1994) pointed to new demands for children to shape their spatial, temporal and social life individually. Both trends included shifts in the kind of control on children's activities, namely away from personal control towards structural control.



Looking back, I would say that the function of the empirical research carried out in the 1980s and early 1990s was to adapt the image of childhood to the new features of childhood occurring in children's everyday life. Childhood was described as shifting from bourgeois to modernized patterns. The catchphrase was the 'modernization of childhood'. The new sociological interest in childhood focused on phenomena that were related to the limitations of modernity's childhood project, and to its emerging break-up. It became clear that there were limitations to the possibility of complete educational control over children, and of children's complete separation from the working world. It was realized that the organizational principles that govern the world of work, against which children were supposed to be protected in the institutions established specifically for them, affected children in these very same institutions. Personal relationships between children and adults were described as shifting 'away from commanding and obeying to negotiating' (Büchner, 1983) and becoming less hierarchical. Relating to the ongoing impact of audiovisual media, there was debate around the erosion of distance between children and adults. Some authors spoke about the modern image of childhood becoming a fiction (Hengst et al., 1981).

Since the early 1990s, ongoing changes in society due to the expansion of information technology and the global economy have been transforming everyone's daily lives anew. Demands for people to 'individualize' their ways of living have been increasing and changing in character. Thus, the main focus of sociological studies of individualization processes is no longer confined to control and autonomy, but the individual's ways of socializing in individualized and more heterogeneous societies have also come to the fore. As in general sociology, it became a prevailing aim of childhood sociologists to describe and understand how children are affected by, and how they deal with, 'post-structural' situations and demands. For children, too, social belonging can no longer be taken for granted, either in peer relations or in families, and children's identity is less formed by traditional norms than before. In children's lives, more individual effort is also needed to place oneself in relationships to others, and personal identity has to be reconstructed on a permanent basis.

Thus, during the last 10 years, sociological interest in children's leisure activities has shifted from structured activities and rational management of everyday life towards issues of the individual construction of the self, and from children's construction of their specific cultures and their relations to identity scripts offered by the media and the market. As to children's use of urban space, individualized performance of physical skills and related ways of socializing with peers have become of interest over this period. In recent time the individual's construction of identity increasingly includes



modelling and styling the body, and the child's body has become an issue of concern – for children themselves as well as for childhood sociologists (Hengst and Kelle, 2003).

The blurring of societal borderlines, *Entgrenzung*, has recently become a fashionable sociological concept. This is also true for the sociology of childhood. From its beginnings, German childhood sociology has focused on phenomena related to the break-up of modern childhood; now the increased blurring of borderlines between the generations challenges childhood sociologists anew. Many of the current phenomena clearly indicate an accelerating erosion of the generational order. The reduction of 'knowledge distance' between children and adults, due to an accelerated production of new knowledge and to media developments, was already being debated in the early 1980s. Since then, the impact of the media and consumer market on children's culture has grown, and so has the reduction of knowledge distance in some respects. As to school, children themselves disrupt borderlines by media-related learning on their own, as well as by earning money alongside schoolwork (Hengst and Zeiher, 2000; Liebel, 2001). According to Hengst (2005), the former binary opposition of the generations might be seen as less strict, and 'new mixtures of collective identities' are becoming visible. Due to a growing orientation towards the present in society, child development and children's inferior otherness are becoming less important, and the teleological aspect of childhood is vanishing. As far as cultural phenomena and identity formation are concerned, children and adults, as Hengst (2005) argues, are becoming more equal to the extent that both are living in the here and now, as 'contemporaries' (*Zeitgenossen*).

Social change is, therefore, still on the agenda today. However, childhood sociology no longer seems to aim at the identification of major trends. As part of the post-structural period of societal development, today's childhood research rather shows a diversification of issues, motivated by the societal problems of childhood and children in a world that is more obviously impacted by the economy, and which is difficult to live in for both children and adults in a number of new respects, each in their particular positions in society at large and in daily life. Many researchers' current interest in social change is due to children being increasingly at risk. Reinforced by the accelerated changes of an increasingly heterogeneous world, more contradictions come about in children's lives, which are due to mixtures of virtual and real places, temporal stress and boredom, increases in spatial mobility as well as the increased immobility of activities, and media- and market-stimulated competition and lack of money, due to being excluded from paid work. Children are supposed to deal with manifold contradictions in their daily lives; many may succeed; however, studies of children's physical

and psychological health point to a growing number of children who suffer under these circumstances.

### **Children's Position in Social Structure, Policy and the Economy – Changes in the Generational Order**

In the social-structural arena, childcare facilities became an issue of concern in the 1970s when the growing service sector, along with the women's movement, demanded more mothers' employment and institutional childcare. Since then, 'both the demands of modern economic life and the basic political and economical conditions make it difficult for parents to organise their life with children' (Jurczyk et al., 2004: 703). For many years social-conservative family policy was aimed at the protection and promotion of the family as an institution. Not until the late 1990s was Kohl's conservative government forced to deal with children's economic situation, under pressure from local authorities suffering the financial costs caused by increasing poverty among families with children, and also pressure from the European Union to submit data on poverty. In 1998, the expert report on youth regularly commissioned by the government became for the first time a report on 'children and youth', and indicated children's relative poverty. Since the government wanted to suppress the report before the elections, children's precarious situation became a public scandal and was discussed in parliament for the first time. Since then, 'the discrepancy between children's real forms of living on one hand, and ideological constructions of a "good childhood" and the resulting economic and institutional frameworks of children's lives on the other' (Jurczyk et al., 2004: 763) can no longer be denied. Child poverty, the care crisis and the decline in fertility were put on the political agenda by the socialist-green coalition government, and now children and childhood are increasingly debated in the media and have become a central issue for all political parties in election campaigns. Not only is the traditional family policy obsolete, but the educational system is also inadequate, as evidenced by international comparison studies (e.g. Baumert et al., 2000). Both problems call for changes in the organization of the time and financial resources invested in children by parents, on the one hand, and by the state, on the other, and thus for reforms of the societal position of childhood.

How is childhood sociology involved in and affected by this development? Until the end of the 1990s, these issues were dealt with by sociologists who specialized in the family, gender and education, rather than by childhood sociologists. It was well-known family sociologists who questioned children's situation in social structure and social policy (Kaufmann, 1980;

Lüscher, 1979), and later, in the 1990s, family sociologists investigated statistical data on children (Nauck and Bertram, 1995) and discussed related family and childhood problems. They kept their distance from the new childhood sociology's theoretical approaches, as did gender sociologists, since their focus was on the gender inequality surrounding childcare. In family as well as in gender sociology, children were seen as appendages to their parents rather than in their own right; a different view from that of childhood sociologists.

On the other hand, for a long time childhood sociologists did not address the traditional claims of family sociology, and preferred to research issues outside the family, care and educational institutions of modern childhood, as mentioned earlier. This began to change when, in the early 1990s, childhood sociology was defined as such. Influenced by the international 'Childhood as a Social Phenomenon' project, which pointed to the need to look at childhood as a structure of society, the generational order as a whole was then brought into focus. At first, data on children were gathered from the family surveys of the Deutsches Jugendinstitut and from general investigations into poverty. Later, at the end of the 1990s, studies of children's social and economical situation (e.g. Joos, 2001) could be based on data pools, where children were statistical units in their own right. I dare say that to a certain degree it was the new kind of studies on children's high and progressing relative poverty that helped to make children's precarious situation visible to the public. No doubt the reasons for this attention are manifold, including concerns about demographic development. It must also be taken into consideration that the case of children in need always arouses public emotions – a phenomenon that has been investigated by sociological analyses of public and political discourses on children (Bühler-Niederberger, 2005).

The agendas of the childhood sociology section's meetings mirror an increasing attention towards sociostructural problems. While it is true that sociostructural problems were previously the focus of occasional papers, they first became the theme of an entire meeting at two workshops, in 1999 and 2001. These resulted in a book of great importance for the German debate: *Childhood in the Welfare State: Challenges from Society and Policy* (edited by Kränzl-Nagl et al., 2003). More recently, the section's annual meetings have focused on welfare problems: in 2004, 'Family, Work and the State; Blurring and New Borderlines in Childhood'; in 2005, 'Childcare: Aims, Concepts of Quality, and Policy'; and in 2007, 'State, Experts, Privacy – Childhood between the Grasp of Care and Intervention [*Fürsorge und Zugriff*]'.

As I see it, two aspects of the societal generational order have become central topics of contemporary German childhood sociology. First, there are

changes in children's social position and daily lives in a society that is increasingly ruled by criteria of economic production and profit. This comes under the spotlight of the welfare debate mentioned earlier and of research on societal structures and political measures related to children's provision of resources, care and – because of economic needs for more qualifications, and stimulated by the rather poor German results in international comparative school achievement studies – education. Theoretical work is being done on the position of childhood in the changing welfare state (e.g. at the University of Halle by Thomas Olk and Johanna Mierendorff). Other studies explore how children meet the related changes in their daily lives, for instance space and time constraints caused by parents' working times (e.g. at the Deutsches Jugendinstitut in Munich).

Second, there is the generational order as it occurs on the level of norms, values and mechanisms of control. Here, discourses on children and childhood in the media and politics are analysed (e.g. by Doris Bühler-Niederberger at the University of Wuppertal), and the processing of childhood norms in practice is studied (for instance, how medical and pedagogical experts process norms of child development, by Helga Kelle at the University of Frankfurt am Main). Research on childcare (e.g. by Michael-Sebastian Honig and Magdalena Joos at the University of Trier) reveals processes of constructing the generational order within institutional care practice.

The outcomes of studies in these two fields of adult-made generational structures, norms and discourses point to the resistance of the hitherto existing generational structures and norms, and to the demand for changes posed by social developments. In contrast, the aforementioned research on children's own ways of constructing child culture, using media and acquiring knowledge, and on children's ways of experiencing and evaluating their relations to adults, points to a blurring of childhood structures and differences between the generations. I think working further on the tensions between the two sides of the coin will be a challenging task for childhood sociology.

### **Future Prospects**

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, German childhood sociology began to develop in close proximity with educational science. In the universities, childhood sociology is a topic of study in education departments. Thus, many student teachers learn about the sociology of childhood, but only a very small number of sociology students come into contact with or even specialize in it. Educationalists and social workers read the literature rather than sociologists. For a long time,

sociologists left children and childhood exclusively to the educational and developmental sciences, and, to a large degree, ignored the emerging sociology of childhood. In contrast to many educationalists, they did not feel any great need to revise the traditional functionalist childhood concept.

However, there are signs of increasing attention within the field of sociology. Hitherto, the borderlines between childhood sociology, on the one hand, and neighbouring scientific disciplines such as family sociology, gender sociology and social policy studies, on the other hand, had been upheld by all sides. Such disciplinary borders are now beginning to blur, due to the fact that the positions of children and childhood in society are becoming more precarious. Not least the economic pressures on work locations and working times shift the interrelatedness of gender and generation to the fore of all these disciplines, and prompt them to communicate and cooperate with each other. Now, some childhood sociologists have also started to pay attention to issues that are positioned in the field of institutionalized care and learning. The former neglect of early childhood care and of educational institutions by childhood sociologists is on the turn, and the borders between children's situation inside and outside social institutions have become more porous. For example, social processes within childcare facilities are now being investigated in a way that, among other things, aims to reveal the inherent societal generational order. Childhood sociologists are also beginning to study what is happening to children and childhood inside the changing family. On the other hand, family, gender and social policy sociologists are beginning to regard the crises in the German way of dealing with childcare as a matter concerning all family members, including children. Family sociologists are now beginning to seek out the views and findings of childhood sociology, and thereby revising previous conceptions of children and childhood.

In the course of both interrelated processes – the growing problems concerning childhood in society and the blurring of borders between the disciplines that study these problems – childhood sociology might now become more visible in sociology. It also might receive more attention in future public and political debates. One precondition here is that childhood sociologists will be able to deal with the aggravation of the problems of childhood and children in a post-structural and increasingly economy-ruled society in the future. This could be said about other European countries as well, yet in Germany we are particularly struggling with the growing inadequacy of a generational order that is still organized around the social structures of care and education, and which is still alive in predominant images of childhood. More sociological analyses of the recent developments of childhood and the generational order,

as well as critical sociological discourses on the aims and measures of related political means, are needed.

## Appendix

### **Book Series**

Books are frequently published by Juventa Verlag, Weilheim and Munich (serie 'Kindheiten', edited by Michael-Sebastian Honig), and at VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden.

### **Journals**

*Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation* [Journal for Sociology of Education and Socialization], published by Juventa Verlag, Weilheim and Munich.

### **Teaching Programmes**

Study programme (MA) 'European Master's in Children's Rights' at the Free University Berlin.

Study programme (BA) 'Angewandte Kindheitswissenschaften' at Fachhochschule Magdeburg-Stendal.

Study programme (MA) 'Childhood, Youth and Social Services' at Wuppertal University

### **Scientific Associations, Important Research Networks**

Sektion Soziologie der Kindheit der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie

### **Cooperation with Official Institutions**

Deutsches Jugendinstitut ([www.dji.de](http://www.dji.de)); the German Youth Institute is a large non-university social science research institute in Germany, studying the situation of children and youth, and the family.

### **Financing**

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft ([www.dfg.de](http://www.dfg.de)); the German Research Foundation is the central, self-governing research funding organization that promotes research at universities and other publicly financed research institutions in Germany; several childhood sociological projects have financed over the last few years.

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