Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială

Challenges of childhood social research

Daniela Cojocaru

Challenges of childhood social research

Daniela COJOCARU*

Abstract

The papers presents the new challenges of childhood social research and take under discussion the concept of socialization, children's visibility in social research and peripheral centrality of childhood in social research. Based on this theoretical analysis, the article discusses the validity of children voices and the problems (concomitantly ethical, epistemological and methodological) posed by the social research on children and with children.

Keywords: children; childhood; sociology of childhood; social construction of childhood; peripheral centrality of childhood;

The general issues related to children and childhood have been an important study preoccupation of family sociology, whose approach was achieved mainly using the concept of socialization. Starting with the '80s, some European and American sociologists and anthropologists (Qvortrup, James and Prout, Alanen, Thorne, Zelizer, etc.) requested that childhood be included in the chapters on socialization of the family sociology treaties, and they also revealed a chronic lack of proper representation of childhood in sociological debates, suggesting the emergence of an independent research field called the sociology of childhood; this initiates a childhood approach designed to exceed the concept of socialization and an interpretive lens that sees childhood as a social construction, where the children's roles and activities are well differentiated, depending on the historical era and cultural background (James and Prout, 1990, p.8).

---

* Dr. Daniela Cojocaru is lecturer at „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University from Iași, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Blv. Carol I, no. 11, tel./fax: 0040.232201155, Romania. She has experience in child protection and sociology of family, research methodology. Has written the books: *Childhood and construction the parentality. Foster care in Romania* (2008, Polirom, Iași) and with Stefan Cojocaru, *The case management in child protection. Evaluation the services and practices in Romania* (2008, Polirom, Iași). Email: dananacu@gmail.com.

Childhood – a Modern Concept

According to the French historian Phillipe Aries (1962), the concept of childhood is a social construction; he supports the thesis of the inexistence of the idea of childhood in the medieval society and he suggests that distinctive references to children and childhood, as a different universe from that of the adults, can be made only starting with the modern age: „the idea of childhood did not exist in the medieval society; this does not mean that children were neglected, abandoned or despised. The idea of childhood should not be mistaken for the love for children: it refers to perceiving the specific nature of childhood, the specific nature that distinguishes children from adults, even from young adults. This perception was missing in the medieval society". (Aries, 1962, p.125)

Aries supports this lack of differentiation between adults and children based on a series of arguments found in various sources that generally suggest that, regardless of their age, children in the medieval society were considered adults in miniature (they dressed like adults, they played the same games as adults), and they enjoyed no special protection from adults, not even the very young. Aries' opinions were of course questioned, and David Archard (2004, p.22) has two categories of objections:

- those related to the actual interpretation of the written and iconographic documents, which the latter considered rigid, as it does not allow any other interpretive alternatives; and
- those referring to the contamination of the former's interpretations with the values of the modern society; the latter accuses Aries' assumptions of *presentism,* relying on epistemological and ethical arguments: on the one hand, the documents are read using a key resulting from the differences between children and adults from a modern viewpoint (the medieval society did not recognize childhood as we do in the modern world, as they did not possess our concept of childhood), and on the other hand, Aries considers the modern perception as the right one, as it regulates the morally normal and adequate relations between children and adults. The thesis of the moral progress of the modern age is thus considered obvious.

Child's Social Construction in Postmodernism.
Childhood Sociology Perspective

Childhood sociology, relying on the variability and diversity of the children - and childhood - related interpretations in general, during various historical eras and in different cultures, adopts the idea of the childhood's social construction; the childhood sociology project is relatively new; in the '80s, the Danish sociologist Jens Qvortrup deplored childhood neglect by sociological research,

stating that the childhood postulate (as a structural and status component), according to which childhood varies in time and space, depending on the dominant needs and interests of the adults' society, seems so obvious that we might be surprised to notice that it is almost impossible to find a representation of such a viewpoint among sociologists (1987, p.6). This idea of the *improper represen-tation of children and childhood* in the sociological and anthropological research as compared to the psychological and medical research was later tackled in very many childhood sociology papers. In the '90s, A. James and A. Prout (1996, 1997), two British researchers, propose a childhood approach paradigm that can be briefly summarized as follows:

- *childhood is a social construction*, a structural and cultural component of numerous societies, distinct from biological immaturity;
- *children are seen as active social agents* in the societies they live in, as they model structures and processes around them, in their own lives and in the lives of the people surrounding them;
- „the children's social relations and cultures are worth studying through themselves and for themselves, regardless of the adults' viewpoints and preoccupations" (Prout and James, 1997, p.8).

The specificity of childhood sociology consists of the fact that it provides an alternative to the determinist nature of the child's socialization approaches and of the development psychology theories. Corsaro proposes an *interpretive approach of socialization* (1993, pp.64-74) called *interpretive reproduction*; according to this approach, socialization is a reproductive and interpretive process, where each child does not just assimilate the adults' external culture, but he/she contributes to its reproduction by negotiations with the adults and by creative culture production by other groups of fellow human beings, namely children (Corsaro, 1993, p.64).

Childhood and Child Status Research

Mayall describes several childhood knowledge characteristics from the standpoint of the consequences on social policies, especially in the child pro-tection field, of the popularization of the child-related academic preoccupations by development psychology (2005, pp.79-80):

1. Children have been defined as incomplete persons, undergoing a process of becoming, as „projects for the adults' attention" (p. 79), and this definition was included in the *strengthening of the adult's project* of the former's monitoring and surveillance, designed especially to control their „normality"; moreover, an ideal child normality was built on the assumption of the *universality of the child's evolution*, proposed by the staged development paradigm, which was an actual landmark in the deviation monitoring practices used by child protection and welfare policies, built around the desiderata of „observation, classification and

standardization" of the child rearing and care practices (Thorpe, apud Mason, 2005, p.94).

2. Children were considered as not having enough cognitive, social and moral skills, which questioned their ability to make decisions and the trust they should enjoy; this resulted in the legitimization of the adults' right to impose their authority to the children, which meant for instance, given the child protection policies, the institutionalization of the asymmetric power relations between children and adults, whether they were parents, teachers of all types, experts, etc. Jan Mason (2005, pp.91-97) considers that defining children, as compared to adults, as entities *in the progress of* acquiring the adults' skills exposes children to a continuous vulnerability and to possible abuse, from the standpoint of the child protection system designed to protect them. Social policies have generally subordinated the children's interests to the adults' interests; as far as education is concerned, for instance, western policies „subordinate the children's current health and welfare to the production of future useful citizens" (Mayall, 2005, p.80). According to Mason's opinion (2005, pp 91-97), protection policies, instead of regulating the asymmetric power relation between adults and children, by interventions from specialists in this field, actually only contribute to its maintenance or even worsening, by increasing the children's dependence and hence vulnerability. He identifies three ways of achieving this mechanism (2005, pp.89-90): a) through the rhetoric of serving the *„child's best interest"*, which legitimates the adults' decisions supporting „child protection", thus turning the children's biological immaturity into social dependence; b) through the *frequently occurring by force interventions of the professionals in the protection system*, who take advantage of their institutional power and authority in monitoring the parents' behavior, thus achieving an indirect strengthening of the adults' authority over children and childhood; in this process, the child is usually the passive „beneficiary" of this intervention, whose actors are the adults; c) *through interventions meant to take the child out of the biological family and to place him/her in foster families*, when the child is subject to abusive behavior; this intervention however does not change the asymmetric power relations between adults and children, but it redistributes authority, by means of the protection institution, to the foster family, that is to adults; in this case, the child's status is that of a victim that needs protection. The author's argument relies on the results of several researches (Mason and Faloon, 2001, Butler and Williamson, 1994) showing that the definition that children give to security does not correspond to the concept of protection proposed by adults, and the definitions proposed by specialists for the notions of child abuse, molester and molested are not grounded on the children's accounts of their experiences. The latter do not count for the protection system as definition sources, but rather as „victims", and their opinions are present to the extent to which they support and account for the specialists' decision, that is the adults' decision, whose skills and knowledge are considered superior to those of the children's. The strategy proposed by Mason for reducing child abuse through

the philosophy of protection consists of recognizing children as „active competent individuals" and of grating them the right to participate in the decision making process concerning their welfare; „taking the children and their knowledge seriously will mean confronting the structural inequities of the child-adult relations created by the child welfare policy and, in a broader sense, by social policies, as a fundamental child abuse reduction strategy" (Mason, 2005, p.97). Empowering the adults responsible for child care to make decisions in the children's name may be beneficial in certain regards, but it may also have side effects: „the already unequal relation between the care givers and care takers may be exacerbated. The former may have the feeling that they understand the care takers' needs and that they act in the latter's best interest, although the latter may have different values and priorities" (Glenn, 2000, p.92). It is therefore very important that in this process or relation the child, who is the beneficiary of the care services, can express his/her opinions and thus influence the care giving process.

3. The psychological approaches of different individualized cases prevented them from being perceived as a social minority and their excessive individualization led to the blurring of the children and of the childhood as social resource. In social policies, the children's interests are generally subordinated to the adults' interests. A series of recent works describe the childhood „*objectification*" phenomenon that grounds the child protection systems in many developed countries, by turning the children from the subject of the institutional policies and practices into their object, by reducing them to the status of „case", despite the rhetoric of serving the „child's best interest" (Butler and Williamson, apud. Mason, 2005, p.92).

Toby Fattore and Nick Turnbull reveal a contradiction between the managerial efficiency paradigm, employed by the institutional practices of the protection system and care philosophy promoted by the child-oriented institutions. The authors consider that „there is a competition between the managerial techniques treating children as clients and the practices employed by social workers involved in child protection, whose goal is to satisfy the children's needs, as persons" (Fattore and Turnbull, 2005, p.55). The two authors draw a critical image of the social work practices, which focus on the „centrality of the child" and they conclude by saying that: „The function of the social work institutions addressing children is not to promote the children's daily activities, but to guide their progress according to the development scheme formalized in the protection institutions. The children's viewpoints are irrelevant, since children act within these institutions only to learn predetermined skills. According to this scheme, the children have no competence, which makes it necessary for them to be protected, which is actually a proof of their inability to play an active role in society" (Fattore and Turnbull, 2005, p.47). Also, certain works that deconstruct the child protection rhetoric in western society lay an emphasis on the children's marginality in the policies dealing with their welfare, which is obvious in the way the professions

related to child care are seen, regardless of the actual specialty: "Working with children is a rather low status activity, and the work of the researchers that listen to the children and take them seriously, as an *object* of their research, is sometimes ridiculed and discredited because of its *childish* subjects (Kitzinger, 1997, p.173)

To conclude with, we could say that very many childhood sociology works illustrate the development psychology views applied to children as the cause of the current state of childhood, which is in the „waiting room" of adult life, thus denying the children's right of being treated by society as human beings valorized for what they are, and not for what they do or what they will become. The children's invisibility is due to an excessive familiarization of contemporary childhood in the western world, to a „package" child and family image: the children „are invisible, included in the family, and the children become visible to professionals when they deviate, as victims or as threats" (Mayall, p.82).

Children's Visibility in Social Research

Alanen (1988, pp.53-67) speaks of the childhood invisibility in sociologic research as well, due to the joint use of the notions of Family – Child – Socialization; in sociology, the concept of socialization was a „conventional" analytic tool employed to approach the relations between adults and children, which always used a *negative definition* of the child (defined by describing the skills he/she had not yet acquired), while in family sociology works the issues related to children and childhood were „concealed" in the „child socialization" chapter (1988, p.56). The limitations of the theoretical socialization background come from the fact that it activates the „adult's ideological views" (Speier, apud Alanen, 1988, p.57) and makes the conceptualization of children as true social actors difficult.

Christensen and Prout analyze the various child and childhood approaches in several sociological studies, emphasizing four of them (2002, p. 480): *the object child*, *the subject child*, *the social actor child* and *the participant or co-researcher child*. These approaches are actually different ways of drafting definitions for various situations characterizing childhood, which we describe hereunder, as they were analyzed by the authors mentioned above.

The first approach, that of the *object child*, relies on the emphasis laid on the child's dependence on the adult, which means that the latter's (parents, educators, doctors and any other category interacting with the children) description of the children and their universe is considered the most pertinent. This approach directly leads to the development of „a methodology reflecting a sometimes paternalistic authenticity (...), as the goal is the protection of the child basically considered incompetent or vulnerable" (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.480). Although it

tackles aspects of the children's life, this approach promotes the adult's authority, who is not aware of the fact that he/she should consult the child as considers the latter's participation in the research.

Another view dealt with by the two authors is that of the *subject child,* „which acknowledges the child's capacity of person animated by subjectivity and considers this as a starting point șfor the research, our noteț" (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p.480). Although the child's subjectivity, expressed in different contexts, and by various reactions and interactions, is considered, the authors think that this approach should be considered with caution, especially as concerns the child's development and maturity, when analyzing the data. Therefore, further to discussions had with homeless children as comprehensive interviews, it was difficult to rely on their statements, often contradictory and lacking coherence and persistence; they often change their accounts of their personal history depending on various interests and social contexts. When interviewing this category of subjects, it is therefore useful to check the information received using objective data and data source triangulation.

The evolution of the child and childhood approaches in social research reflects the changes occurring in ethics and ideologies, in the socially promoted and validated values. Therefore, Christensen and Prout integrate social action, taking into consideration the child's experience and understanding ability. According to this approach, the adult and the child should receive equal treatment within the research, without operating any distinction between the two categories, and childhood is analyzed by including the child in this action-oriented universe. Although, methodologically speaking, various research methods are considered depending on the child's and adult's characteristics, respectively, the child's approach as social actor focuses on the importance of the latter's voice and the analysis of the social background, whose construction the child witnesses.

The last child and childhood approach, according to the types revealed by the two authors, deals with the ways in which the child is participant and even co-researcher. Inspired by the principle of the affirmation of the child's participation in his/her life, in the making of the decisions that concern him/her, of the child's freely expressing his/her opinions and being consulted when making decisions concerning him/her, the participative approach includes the children's rights compliance ethics. Although the participation principle is not a distinct right in the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child, it comprises the necessary requirements designed to comply with and observe these rights. From this standpoint, the child is seen as an active human being, who has to be „involved, consulted, informed and listened to" (Christensen and Prout, 2002, p. 481), thus becoming a participant in the research process. According to this view, when discussing about children, we should not forget the fact that they are driven by their own interests in their relations with adults, that they are capable of understanding where they live, what are their needs and what are the possible solutions

to their problems, and these should be understood and taken into consideration (Gallagher, 2004, pp. 261).

Standing from these findings, Christensen and Prout say that, when they consider children social actors and participants, researchers should ground their work on an „ethical symmetry between adults and children" (2002, p.482), which generates several implications: a) whether they deal with children or adults, researchers should use the same ethical principles; b) each right or ethic criterion used in relation with the adult should also consider the child's standpoint; c) the equal child and adult treatment should consider the context and the child's particular position. Embracing this perspective of approaching the child in research, many experiments with children as participants were conducted, and their opinion was the starting point for some *advocacy* actions.

An example in this respect is the project „*Our Town*", under the guidance of the *Department of Architecture of the Carnegie Mellon University* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which consisted of the involvement and consultation of 20 children with regard to the elaboration of a plan for changing the neighborhood; this plan materialized in the organization of a playground starting from the children's ideas. The adults were involved in facilitation and data gathering, in writing down all the ideas, acting exclusively as observers. The outcome offered important observations concerning the differences between the representations of children and those of adults in relation to the organization of the children's space, the different modalities of perceiving reality, especially the reality of childhood. Thus, in the design of children we found spaces that encourage and intensify *interactions with adults,* and *safety* and *security* (the space structuring categories, essential for adults) *were* subordinated to this interaction „their intervention șof the children, n.n.ț created an intergeneration public space addressing the needs of those living in the neighborhood and constituting the community" (Gallagher, 2004, pp. 251-262). The playground designed by the children „destroyed" the surveillance places, compelling the parents to interact with the children.

The Peripheral Centrality of Childhood in Social Research

The situation of children in social field research is characterized by Milkie et al. as being paradoxical, and their occurrence as being peripheral in sociologic research: „we could say about children that they are simultaneously in the center and at the periphery of social scientific research on family. Although a large number of works focus on the effects of family on children (for example, the consequences of the parents' separation), most of them disregard the children's knowledge, representations and evaluations on families" (Milkie et al., 1997, p. 220). The children present an interest in social research rather for what they will become, as adults (in the classical theory of socialization or in the growth

psychology research) than for what they represent "here and now" (Kuczinsky, 2003). Morrow (2003, p.117) considers that this marginality of children has a couple of important consequences on the manner in which they are represented in families:

- *the overrepresentation of the influence of adults,* and especially parents, on children, and the disregard of the influence of their equals, be they neighbors, relatives, friends;

- *the overrepresentation of family* through the prism of the categories described by adults (researchers, parents, persons responsible for the social policies) and the total ignorance of the children's perceptions on family. „The children's perspectives can differ from those of adults (…) to a significant extent, and this suggests that, if we look at the defining characteristics of family from the children's perspective, far from referring to structure and marital status (as family researchers could see), family is about mutual support and reciprocity (in other words, about concrete relations and the quality of these relations, as perceived by children)" (Morrow, 2003, p.117).

- *the ignorance of the practical and emotional contributions of children* in the families where they live, this being translated as the ignorance "of the reciprocity and potential interdependence among family members" (ibidem).

The Validity of Children's Accounts.
The Technique of Age Ignorance

Children interviewing poses a series of additional problems for the researcher in comparison with the interviewing of adults, due to the perception of an asymmetric ratio concerning the distribution of power in the relation between the adult and the child; the problems posed by this situation are concomitantly ethical, epistemological and methodological; the fundamental epistemological problem refers to the type of knowledge that the adults can obtain by investigating children, from the position of *outsiders*; then, we proceed to the questioning of the validity of the conclusions and interpretations resulting from the application of standardized methodologies, used in order to capture a world and a culture very different from that of adults. The ethical issues concerning the interviewing of children focus on the asymmetry of the power relation between the researcher (adult) and the child, usually considered as being in favor of the adult; this generates a series of problems concerning the modality in which the interaction must be handled by the adult, without prejudicing the child. Thus, the children are entitled to being consulted about their wish to participate to the research, as data sources, and of denying this participation. An interesting and rather atypical

example is offered by Solberg (1996, pp. 53-65), who questions not the child's right of denying to participate, but his right of participating, despite the interdiction of parents or other adults, responsible for their security and care.

In a study performed in a learning establishment in Norway, aimed at gathering data from pupils (11 and 12 years old children) with the help of interviews and questionnaires, in order to assess the main activities that constitute children's tasks in the domestic environment, the research team faced the adults' refusal of taking into consideration the children's right of participating to the research. For this study, it was necessary to obtain the permission of the school in order to question the children; thus, the consent of the school management, principal teachers, teachers, parents' and teachers' association, and children's parents was requested, and the school did not consider it necessary to obtain the children's approval; in the end, the participating children were the ones who obtained the permission of being a part of the study from the adults in the school or those at home; among those that did not obtain their parents' permission, there were some who expressed their interest and their wish of participating, but the teachers and the principal teachers respected the parents' decision and the children were practically denied the right of participating and of providing data.

Children interviews pose a series of additional problems concerning the validity of their accounts in comparison with those of adults; there are some authors who consider that the concern for the validity of the children's confessions is sometimes excessive, and can raise methodological issues, difficult to overcome, and at times the concern for the accuracy of the children's accounts strongly contrasts with the concern for the adults' confessions, treated with more confidence, in an unjustified manner.

The conclusion of a theoretical synthesis on the studies centered around the validity of the children's confessions, especially when the children are interviewed as part of scientific research and in the context of legal proceedings is that: "just like adults, children can be valid witnesses of their experiences but, at the same time, they can also be vulnerable to the deliberate or unintended deforming influences of others. Many aspects of the context in which children are interviewed can influence the cognitive, socio-emotional and psychological processes of children, and probably the most profound influence is the potential influence of the interviewer (Westcott and Jones 2003, p.119). Psychological research will clarify some of the fundamental motivational or individual factors that „enable some children to remain uninfluenced when facing significant adversity, while others react in other ways in similar circumstances. We do not have enough information about the way in which these differences can affect the validity of the children's accounts when questioned about difficult experiences. Nevertheless, we do know that children and young people can make valid descriptions of the unhappy events they underwent. It is up to the adult world to treat these accounts responsibly and respectfully, identifying the traps originating at the same time

from enthusiast attempts, as well as from sad ignorance" (Westcott and Jones, 2003, p.120). Solberg suggests, as a technical methodological solution, the technique of „ignoring the age" of the respondents, be they children, young people or adults, as a response to the necessity of approaching children in social research, undifferentiated in relation to adults; this suggests a shift of the researcher's attention from „what is" the interviewed subject on what „he does". This ignoring does not deny the differences between adults and children, replacing the traditional methodological approach in growth psychology, which recommends the adjustment of the work techniques and instruments to the various development stages of the child, with an approach that "puts aside what we already 'know' about the differences between children and adults" open to "the exploitation of the significance of age and status in various contexts and situations" (Solberg, 1996, p.64).

References

Alanen L., Mayall, B. (coord.), 2001, *Conceptualizing child – adult relationships*, Routledge, New York.

Alanen, L., 1988, „Rethinking childhood", *Acta sociologica*, 31, pp.53-67.

Archard, D., 2004, *Children. Rights and childhood,* Routledge, London și New York.

Aries, P., 1962, *Centuries of childhood*, Jonathan Cape, London.

Christensen, P., Prout, A., 2002, „Working with ethical symmetry in social research with children", *Childhood*, vol. 9 (4), pp. 477-497.

Cojocaru, D., 2008, *Copilăria și construcția parentalității. Asistența maternală în România,* Polirom Iași.

Corsaro, W.A., 1993, „Interpretive reproduction in chidren's role play", Childhood, 1, pp.64-74.

Fattore, T., Turnbull, N., 2005, „Theorizing representation of engagement with children. The political dimension of child – oriented communication", Mason, J., Fattore, T., (coord.), *Children taken seriously in theory, policy and practice*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and Philadelphia.

Gallagher, C.B., 2004, „Our town: Children as advocates for changes in the city", *Childhood*, vol. 11 (2), pp. 251-262.

Glenn, E.N., 2000, „Creating a caring society", *Contemporary sociology*, 29 (1), pp.84-94.

James, A., Prout A., 1996, „Strategies and structures: towards a new perspective on children2 s experiences of family life", în Brannen J., O2 Brien (coord.), *Children in families: research and policy,* Falmer Press, London.

James, A., Prout, A., 1997, „Re-presenting childhood: time and transition in the study of childhood", în James A., Prout A (coord.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood. Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*, Falmer Press. London.

Kitzinger, J., 1997, „Who are you kidding? Children, power, and the struggle against sexual abuse", James A., Prout A. (coord.), *Constructing and reconstructing*

childhood: contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood, London, Falmer Press, pp. 165-189.

Kuczynsky, L., 2003, „Beyond bidirectionality: bilateral conceptual frameworks for understanding dynamics in parent – child relations", Kuczinsky L.(coord.), *Handbook of dynamics in parent – child relations,* Sage Publications, pp. 3-24.

Mason, J., 2005, „Child protection policy and the construction of childhood", Mason, J., Fattore, T. (coord.), *Children taken seriously: in theory, policy and practice*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London și Philadelphia, pp. 91-97.

Mayall, B., 2005, „The social condition of UK childhoods. Children's understandings and their implications", Mason, J., Fattore, T., (coord.), *Children taken seriously: in theory, policy and practice,* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London și Philadelphia, pp.79-90.

Milkie, M., Simon, R., Powell, B., 1997, „Through the eyes of children: youths' perceptions and evaluations of maternal and paternal roles, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60 (3), 218-237.

Morrow, V., 2003, „Perspectives on children's agency within families. A view from the sociology of childhood", Kuczynsky L.(coord.), *Handbook of dynamics in parent – child relations,* Sage Publications, pp. 109-130.

Prout A., James, A., 1997, „ A new paradigm for the sociology of chidhood? Provenance, promise and problems", în James A., Prout A. (coord.), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood. Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, Falmer Press, London, pp.7-33.

Qvortrup, 1997, „A voice for children in statistical and social accounting: a plea for children's right to be heard", James, A., Prout, A., (coord.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*, London, Falmer Press, pp. 85-106.

Qvortrup, J., 1987, „Introduction", *International Journal of Sociology*, 17(3), pp.3-37.

Qvortrup, J., 2005, „Varieties of childhood", Qvortrup, J. (coord.) *Studies in modern childhood. Society, agency, culture,* Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, pp.1-20.

Solberg, A., 1996, „The challenge in child research: from *being* to doing", Brannen, J. & O2 Brien, M., *Children in families: research and policy*, Falmer Press, London.

Westcott, H.L., Jones, D.P.H., 2003, „Are children reliable witnesses to their experience?", în Duncan, S., Lucey, C., Reder, P., (coord.), *Studies in the assessment of parenting*, New York, Bruner – Routledge.