Commuting bodies – towards a carnal sociology of the daily horizontal transitions of young children

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Commuting bodies – towards a carnal sociology of the field of early childhood education and care

Transitions in early childhood education and care (ECEC) have recently become a more recognized part of child- or actor-centred research in childhood studies. Most work, though, is centred on the question of so called vertical transitions, especially those from day care to school (e.g. Einarsdottir 2002, Corsaro 2005). In this presentation I want to highlight a more under researched part: the daily commuting of children between their different everyday contexts, e.g. the home and diverse ECEC institutions. Already Dencik (1995) highlighted this daily commuting as part of childrens “dual socialisation process” between family and public institutions. Hence, and although there have been several attempts to highlight children’s coping with the differing “cultural models” of family and day care (Brooker 2005), their ”development across institutions” (Fleer/Heedegard 2010) and how we should understand those ”horizontal transitions” as ”learning contexts” in its own sense (Johannson 2005), there is still little research on this kind of mobility in young children’s life. Given to the complexity and diversity of children’s everyday commuting between ECEC and family, the first argument of the presentation is, that focusing those daily crossings can help us to understand the unique contributions that children deliver to the daily accomplishment of the field of ECEC and its internal diversification too. The second argument is a methodological one, which highlights the bodily dimension of how children practice those daily transitions. In regard to Loic Waquants (2015) concept of a ’carnal sociology’ – a sociology ’from flesh and blood’, the presentation explores which conceptual and methodological promises for studying ECEC from the position of the child can be taken from this approach. According to short films of children’s daily commuting practices from the camera-ethnography part of the Luxembourgian CHILD-study (Mohn/Bollig 2015) it will get highlighted how this conceptual tool helps us to take the bodies and the bodily practices of daily commuting more serious, but also discusses the question if and when how, the adult research body can be used as an epistemic instrument in childhood studies.

Keywords: horizontal transitions, camera-ethnography, practices, carnal sociology