

MUNI

Annex No. 11 to the MU Directive on Habilitation Procedures and Professor Appointment Procedures

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Faculty

Procedure field

Applicant

Applicant's home unit,
institution

Habilitation thesis

Reviewer

Reviewer's home unit,
institution

Faculty of Social Studies

Sociology

Mgr. et Mgr. Adéla Souralová, Ph.D.

Masaryk University

Grandchildhood: Practices, Meanings, Relations

Eva Kahana

Case Western Reserve University, Department of
Sociology

I am pleased to offer a review of the above referenced habilitation thesis.

The manuscript by Dr. Adela Souralova makes an important contribution to the literature on intergenerational family ties by focusing on the under-researched and yet very important topic of grandchildhood. The presentation is well-written and scholarly and reflects a sophisticated understanding of complex issues. In addition to portraying a praiseworthy understanding of a complex literature it adds original insights to the topics covered. The manuscript is based on an empirical study of 57 grandchildren who share a household with both parents and grandparents. This study was supported by a grant from the Czech Science Foundation.

Although there is rich literature on the meaning of grandparenthood, there has thus far been little empirical study of grandchildren's experiences. While this study was conducted in the Czech Republic its findings have relevance to the grandchild experience in other countries. The life expectancy of grandparents is increasing around the world, adding salience to this study. Nevertheless, it should be noted that intergenerational households are far less common in other countries, such as the US. Indeed, families that include both grandparents and grandchildren in the US are typically comprised of custodial grandparents and their grandchildren.

The manuscript by Souralova is well researched and considers both theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of grandparent-grandchild relationships. It makes a unique contribution by exploring reciprocity and mutuality in these relationships. Prior writings in this field often focused primarily on grandparents. The author also recognizes the important role of developmental stages in shaping grandparent-grandchild relationships. The detailed and thoughtful review of the literature on grandparent-grandchild relationships in a family context is a special strength of the manuscript. Another major contribution relates to identifying grandchild practices focused on everyday life.

In her empirical study the author sought to answer the question; "How do grandchildren understand the meanings and practices of grandchildhood and their relationships with grandparents" The investigators (Dr. Souralova and her colleague Dr. Michaela Zakova) collected data from 59 households using snowball sampling techniques. Of the 119 interviews completed there were 54 interviews with grandchildren. The grandchildren interviewed were young adults (age 16-30).

Based on their, in-depth interviews, Souralova considers norms, expectations, obligations and responsibilities. The author points to grandchildren's duties that reflect social expectations, but also arise from the child's personal experiences in interacting with his or

her grandparents. She concludes that an Ideal of "good grandchildhood" exists in spite of recognizing diversity in childhood practices. The study utilizes well the rich qualitative information obtained

Overall this manuscript provides valuable insights into the many aspects of grandchildhood. It derives rich detail from verbalizations of grandchildren and paints a textured portrayal of the reciprocity between grandparents and grandchildren. The analysis is well anchored in understandings offered by previous studies. The manuscript may benefit from adding a discussion of the uniqueness as well as limitations of the data. Having chosen young adult grandchildren the study offers insights that are defined and limited by the points in the life course that were studied. Similarly, the focus on a given culture and specifically of multigenerational households further defines and limits generalizability of the data.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

1. Discuss how life course factors are likely to affect the reported experience and actions of "grandchildhood"?

2. Would you expect different patterns regarding "Grandchildhood" in families where grandparents do not share a residence with parents and grandchildren?

3. How is social class likely to affect the experiences and behaviors of members of the three generations?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled **Grandchildhood: Practices, Meanings, Relations** by Dr. Adela Souralova fulfils requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Sociology.

Date: 15/01/2021

Signature:

