Children´s Emotional Geographies of Well-being: The Cultural Constitution of Belonging(s) in the Context of Migration and Digital Technologies

Susann Fegter and Claudia Mock

“My most special place is my home(land) country [“Heimatland”], because there I always feel so comfortable.” The spatial dimension of children´s well-being has been receiving more attention in child well-being research recently. Empirical studies show for example the effects of the built and natural environments on children´s objective and subjective well-being or the subjective meanings that children attach to the concept of well-being in respect to place and space. What is not well understood so far is the cultural dimension of these phenomena and understandings. The aim of this paper is therefore to outline a cultural analytical approach to the spatial constitution of well-being and to provide analytical heuristics to reconstruct the spatial constitution of well-being as a cultural construct in discursive practices that children take part in. The paper also provides an empirical example that illustrates this heuristic approach and shows how belonging(s) are constituted as a spatial construct beyond local and national territories. The paper ends with a summary of how the findings and the cultural approach might inform child well-being research and the spatial (re)constitution of well-being in the context of migration and digital technologies.

Keywords: relational geographies; spatial constitution of well-being; cultural analytical methodology; emotional geographies; discursive practices