CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD IN MIGRATION CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT
Children and Childhood in Migration Contexts
A presentation of the difficulties of defining the childhood and children in cultural and historical studies is followed by a presentation of the different forms of positioning children in the migration process and the making of decisions about them. Each form is illustrated with examples from research projects, based on auto/biographical sources and narrative descriptions of subjective migration experience. The conclusion argues that migration researchers take into account the subjectivity of the "objects" of their research projects and humanize the migrants, especially their children. In this way, the text combines the children in the historical context of Slovenian emigration with the children in the context of immigration to Slovenia today in a united story.
KEY WORDS: the positioning of children in migration contexts, Slovenian emigration, stigmatization of children migrants.

IZVLEČEK
Otroci in otroštvo v migracijskih kontekstih
Predstavitvi težavnosti definicij otroštva in otrok v kulturoloških in zgodovinskih študijah sledi prikaz različnih načinov umestitve otrok v migracijskem procesu in odločitvah zanj. Vsak način je ilustriran s primeri iz raziskav, ki izhajajo iz avto/biografskih virov in narativnih prikazov subjektivne migracijske izkušnje. Zaključek apelira na raziskovalce in proučevalce migracij, da upoštevajo subjektivizacijo »predmetov« svojih raziskav in učlovečijo migrante, predvsem pa njihove otroke. S tem besedilo poveže otroke v zgodovinskem kontekstu slovenskega izseljenstva in otroke znotraj priseljenstva v Slovenijo danes v skupno zgodbo.
KLJUČNE BESEDE: pozicioniranje otrok v migracijskih kontekstih, slovensko izseljenstvo, stigmatizacija migrantskih otrok.

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INTRODUCTION[2]

Children in migration contexts is an under-researched area in Slovenia, and has not yet been conceptualized and worked out with regard to terminology and concepts. There are several open questions such as e.g. what is a child and/or a migrant child; what is a family and how does migration change the concept of family; what are the family or "non-family" migration contexts and what are the historical retrospective constructs of the child and family life. Who are children and who are children in migration contexts?

According to the definition in the latest research by the United Nations, *Children in Immigrant Families in Eight Affluent Countries* (UNICEF 2009), children include everyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. Alongside the various topics covered in this extensive report, such as education, employment, social participation and social inclusion, the category "children" is divided into children, youth, older youth and young adults. For quantitative and statistically-oriented research, division by age is too simple, since it is based on legal and formal definitions of child and on the gradual achieving of the status of adult: from partial criminal liability, independent decision making about employment and the choice of sexual partners, to voting rights, citizenship and full criminal liability.[3] Culturological and historical research, on the other hand, are characterized by age limits being difficult to set and childhood difficult to define.

Despite the fact that modern society is focused on the child, research of childhood is a relatively new topic. The turning point in Europe was Philippe Ariès' book *Centuries of Childhood*, first published in 1960. Ariès posed key questions about historical attitudes towards childhood, about interpretations of childhood in historical and modern times, or in other words, about scientific and social constructions of childhood (Ariès 1962). The modern understanding of childhood and how it is structured is conditioned by the appearance of the institutions of the modern age. Ariès clearly shows how decisive the role of school or the school system is in the structuring of childhood in modern society, as it determined age classes through school classes: child – elementary school, youth – secondary school and adult – higher education. The author of the preface to the Slovenian translation, Bojan Baskar, summarizes the essence of Ariès' presentation of the "appearance" of modern childhood through the interweaving of the process of locking children in schools and the process of grand moralizing, and states that

Ariès of course is part of the history of mentalities, i.e. the historiographic approach

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[3]   The chronological categorization of childhood has changed continually throughout history. The World Health Organization, for example, defines young people as those between 10 and 24 years of age, where adolescents are between the ages of 10 to 19 years, and youth includes everyone between 15 and 24 years of age (WHO 2006: 1).

which explains the modern transformation of the family, school etc. as effects of the transformation of mentalities. And thus were are in fact already dealing with the modern family as a community which is based on the affective crossed bonds between the parent couple and the parents and children. Ariès associated the formation of this model with the scope of family and school education, which constitute separate worlds of childhood and youth. He connected the appearance of the affective family with demographic and economic Malthusianism, i.e. with concepts used by the French in particular to signify the reduction of the birth rate, which was caused by demographic and economic motives. (Baskar 1991: 513─514)

By presenting the historical understanding of childhood, in which he described the mother's ambivalence towards her children in the 14th century and the neglect of children in the 19th century, Ariès set off a wave of criticism, as well as a torrent of studying childhood and its modern variants, which included love of children and the focus of the family around them.

We can set this modern understanding and/or perception of childhood in the context of the migrations that we are speaking about in this paper, i.e. migrations during the mass emigrations from the Slovenian ethnic territory from the beginning to the midpoint of the 20th century. This was the time when the "affective" family and the emotional perception of childhood were formed. Before we talk about that period, let's turn our attention to the 19th century and the conception of childhood as presented in Slovenia by Alenka Puhar in the novel *The Primary Text of Life* (1982). This is to date the sole Slovenian opus that focuses on the experience of childhood as portrayed in the literary and other auto/biographical works of Slovenian authors, as well as pedagogical, medical and religious texts and statistical sources. From statements in them, the author created a tragic image of childhood in Slovenia in the 19th century which is fearfully sad, lonely, and devoid of parental love and care. I will not discuss the methodological and conceptual limitations of such interpretation, but wish only to point out that this book gives us descriptions of migrations of children which should not be overlooked. These are children in a migration context, which is determined by the conditions before the great moralization and scholarization of society, i.e. for children before the appearance of the "Malthusian" mentality and before their being (compulsorily) shut into schools. In the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, many children in the Slovenian ethnic territory were classical migrant labourers. Their parents or guardians sent them from their homes to work when they were still young, even less than ten years old, and for the majority it constituted permanent migration, where there was no possibility of returning home. Accurate data on how many child migrants were strewn "about all of the Slovenian hills and valleys" (Puhar 1982: 347) is not available. Since the economic conditions were difficult, we can assume that there were many, and the biographical and autobiographical literature is also full of descriptions of their experiences. Owing to the economic conditions, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was also the beginning of a period of mass emigration

from the Slovenian ethnic territory, in which children were included mainly as members of families. But not just that.

THE POSITIONING OF CHILDREN IN MIGRATIONS FROM THE SLOVENIAN ETHNIC TERRITORY

There are several forms of positioning children in migration strategies for maintaining the existence and networks of families, which were determined by intimate, personal decisions and political-historical events. I will focus on the five main forms of positioning children in the framework of unforced migrations. The first form is the migration of children together with the family, which is understood to be the most widespread form of migration, and which can occur as permanent, temporary or one or the other – different for individual family members. The second form is a decision by the parents – or by one of the parents – to migrate alone, leaving the children or some of the children at home with relatives, grandparents, neighbours or friends. The thought which leads to such a decision is most often a belief in returning, when living conditions permitted it, or in the reunion of the family, when the children would join them. The third form is returning, when the children return with the parents, or go back by themselves and are inaccurately referred to as returnees, even though they were born abroad. The fourth form of positioning children in migration contexts is conditioned by work performed exclusively by women, i.e. the giving birth to and nursing of children. These children, the "beneficiaries" of this work, cannot be separated from the migration context which also includes children left at home by migrant women. I also have to mention children who migrate by themselves, either by their parents sending them to work or by going abroad themselves. Among all of these forms, this latter is the only autonomous one, since in all of the others the child is included in the elders' or parents' decisions. When speaking about Slovenian emigration, it would be more appropriate to use the past tense for some of these forms. But these forms of child migration, which ended long ago in Slovenian emigration, are continuing in other parts of the world and also continue as a part of immigration to Slovenia in all of the forms mentioned.

I will illustrate the forms of positioning children in migration contexts primarily with examples from the research that I have conducted in the last decade on auto/biographical sources, in which I have found subjective experiences of the migration process and which I based on narrative methods of constructing collective and intimate identities. When we speak of childhood in the context of migration, we are to a considerable extent dependent on adult interpretations of childhood. We are limited to the memoirs, narratives, records, stories and diaries of adults, family migration correspondence and photographs which are described and explained by adults. The majority of the materials can be contributed only by adults and the things that we learn from them are adult perceptions and interpretations of their own or other people's childhoods, of their own or other people's memories.

The "Tenth Child"

The first example connects the end of the 19th century with the beginning of the 20th, and two of the aforementioned child migrant experiences. To the many children who were strewn about the Slovenian hills and valleys, I will add the story of displacement throughout the wider area of the empire of the time.

> She always talked about how she was twelve years old when her father died and she was the oldest of five. And her father had been a carpenter and when he died he had a lot of debts because he had borrowed money to build up his business and everybody said: 'don't worry, just let the debts go, you know, you don't have to pay them back'. But my grandmother said no, that would be a shame, that would be terrible and so she worked to have the debts paid off. But one of the ways that she did this, my mother was twelve when she went to Prague to work in a hat factory, then she also went to Vienna [...] Finally, when she was twenty-seven her mother said she had to come to America, because in America you're going to get rich. So she came.[4]

This description of the fate of a child migrant labourer who moved to the United States when she was twenty-seven was given by her daughter, born in New York. This example shows us that we cannot speak of child migrant labourers only in Slovenian places, since children also went to work in far-flung places, from Prague and Vienna to Zagreb and Budapest. This gives the work migrations of children a broader dimension. To the example of children being sent to work by parents I will add the opposite case, the child's autonomous decision to migrate. According to my findings, this is also the rarest form of migrant decision, i.e. positioning of children in migration contexts.

Independent and alone

In 1906, a fifteen-year-old orphan left her grandmother, with whom she had lived since her parents had migrated to Brazil and never contacted her again. She got on a train, boarded a ship and sailed to America. Alone. In her pocket was the address of some neighbours who had moved to the United States, and she intended to seek help from them in finding a place to live, finding a job, and overcoming the initial difficulties of migration. In accordance with the custom that family and social networks were the basis of the migration process she duly received that help. She became Marie Prisland and she described her path to America, the story of her childhood and her experience as a migrant in her book *From Slovenia to America*, in which she describes her arrival as follows:

> When I arrived in Sheboygan I stayed with our neighbours from Europe who had

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4   All of the excerpts from the stories that I quote in the text (unless otherwise indicated) are from the life stories of women of Slovenian origin that I recorded in various parts of the USA between 2002 and 2008. (Milharčič Hladnik 2003, 2008)

moved into a nice large house. I was served a wonderful dinner consisting of soup with homemade noodles, meat, vegetables, white bread, and even a piece of potica. This was like a Christmas dinner at home (Prisland 1968: 51).

It is particularly interesting that Marie Prisland did not go to Brazil like her parents, but rather went to a place where there was a social network which operated as a guarantor of a successful migrant experience. Her status as a child in a migration context is therefore not only that of autonomous decision and migration, but also includes the form where the parents decide to migrate by themselves and leave the child(ren) behind with relatives, grandparents or neighbours. This was a widespread form of Slovenian migration from the beginning to the second half of the 20th century. At first in many cases it was only the men that left. Their wives and children followed them later, or only some of their children followed, or their wives never joined them; in other words, there was a multitude of combinations for ensuring the existence of the family. Marie Prisland was left with her grandmother by her parents, who migrated together to Brazil, where her mother died, and she never heard from her father again. Her path to the United States, where her plan was to save money for school and become a teacher, seems completely logical and reasonable. She was a success, as Marie Prisland is one of the most notable personalities in the history of the Slovenian community in the United States of America (Milharčič Hladnik 2007).[5]

Those who went and those who stayed

The following case of the positioning of a child is an example of parents taking some of their children with them, but leaving others at home. I was told this story by Jennie Pohar personally, while the Slovenian public read about it in the newspapers. Her first visit to her parents' homeland in 2002, when she met her brother Ivan for the first time, was headline news.[6] As the newspaper article states, her father went to America in 1912, when Ivan was five. Soon afterwards his wife followed with their two youngest children, and she gave birth to their youngest daughter Jennie, my interlocutor, in America. They left their son at home with his grandmother and aunt, with a plan for his uncle to bring him to America. This never happened, because upon the outbreak of the First World War the uncle was drafted into the Austrian army, and he fell in Galicia. Later, Ivan obtained documents from his father with which he could have migrated to the United States, but they were only for him, and not for the family that he had started. Jennie Pohar met her brother for the first time when he was ninety-five and she was eighty-six. They had lived their entire lives apart. The story that Jennie Pohar told me a year later at her home in La Salle differed slightly from the newspaper version.

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[5] The case of Louis Adamič, who also left for the USA of his own will and volition when he was fifteen, is similar. (Žitnik Serafin 2009: 117)

[6] Their meeting at Tabor in Ljubljana was covered by Dragica Bošnjak, *Delo*, 6 March 2002.

I was born in La Salle in 1915 and I will soon be turning 87. When I lived at home, I never thought about Europe that much, because for me that was the old country. I can't explain why, but when I finally went there, no, that's not it, not at all. It was fantastic. My mother always talked about Bled, and Novo mesto and one other town that she always talked about, and we were in Ljubljana. I never thought in all my life that I would see what I saw. She had four children there and when she went to America she left the oldest two, eight and ten years old, behind. My father's mother said: "Why don't you leave two of them here, so we can help you?" And that's what they did. Those two boys never came to America. She always wrote to them, but I never thought that I would ever see them.

I will take the time to analyse these two different stories about the event, since there is a possibility that the journalist misunderstood, and also a possibility that the narrator told the same story differently on the two occasions. Both versions are interesting from the perspective of the positioning of children in migration contexts, as they open up new possibilities for understanding migration decisions. Our expectation that the parents left one (or two) children behind due to fear of the uncertain life abroad turns out to have been false. They left one or two children behind in order to satisfy the wishes of the husband's mother, i.e. the grandparents. This desire was also not necessarily connected with poverty and the children's labour, as we would think at first. It is entirely possible that it was connected with a wish to provide emotional support, for the consolation that the parents needed when their son's family left for faraway America.

Families reunited

Of course the families were most often reunited, with the father migrating first and his wife and children following later. Marie Gombač told me how her family left the town of Čepovan on the Karst in 1935 to join their father in Cleveland after he had lived in the United States for many years. Her story is also interesting because of their motive for reuniting, which does not correspond to the usual motives in migration theory, since the reason or motive is political.

Father came home to visit a few times and sent money, and was planning to return one day, but then he suddenly made a completely different decision. My brother was almost fourteen years old and Mussolini had this huge youth movement, you understand, how to become a good fascist, and that really bothered my father. His son a fascist! When my brother turned 14, he was supposed to go to Rome to some event for young fascists and my father decided that he would not allow that and he came for us. He obtained American citizenship, documents, and this automatically meant that my brother and I were also American citizens. My father hated the Italians, oh, how he hated the Italians!

This testimony about families reuniting reminds us that the great majority of Slovenian emigrants went abroad with a clear plan for returning to their hometown or at least with the intention to return. Some, albeit a minority, fulfilled those wishes, but the murky area of Slovenian return migration never received a great deal of attention from researchers.

Home again?

One notable exception is the research carried out by the associates of the Slovenian Migration Institute and the publication of the results (Lukšič-Hacin 2006), which systematically break down the economic and political aspects of return migration and present the life stories of the people who returned. The stories of the children of Slovenian migrants, especially from Argentina, who of course did not "return", but are nevertheless called returnees, are particularly significant in the context of the child and childhood. These are adults who decided to move to the country of their ancestors, Slovenia, after its independence in 1991. Despite this they are defined in Slovenian public and professional discourse by the fact that they are children of migrants and returnees. As they told researchers:

> I am not a returnee. I was born in Argentina and I came to Slovenia, my grandparents' homeland. [...] We are not "returnees" – we are Slovenes who were born outside the borders of Slovenia – we never lived here before, so we are not "returnees"! (Lukšič-Hacin 2006: 139)

This poses questions about identity, which is among the most relevant questions about children in migration contexts, since it concerns the subjective construction of identity in a new environment. Migrants travel across continents and oceans, and their children embark on journeys from the culture of their parents and communities, from the stories, memories and emotions of their beloved parents into a culture of playgrounds, schools, peers, television cartoons, music and films from the wider environment, where the distances and destinations are not known. Or they travel from the stories and memories into the real environment of a homeland which they have never seen.

The last form of positioning children in migration contexts is conditioned by work performed exclusively by women, i.e. the giving birth to and nursing of children.

Milk and memory

The positioning of children in the migration context of an absent mother, i.e. wet nurses, has undoubtedly received the greatest amount of treatment of all migration aspects of female migration in Slovenia in both the literary and historical theoretical sense.[7] The phenomenon of the "aleksandrinkas", i.e. the emigration of women from the Goriško region

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[7] Recently, aleksandrinkas have also received increasing amounts of political, museological and pro-

to Egypt at the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th century, has to be separated into women who were wet nurses and those who were simply nannies, and between those who were married and left their children at home and single women (Barbič, Brezigar-Miklavčič 1999). The collective memory, in which the tragic motifs of desperate mothers and crying children separated by the "bitter sea" (Tomšič 2002) were deeply embedded through the motif of Beautiful Vida (a symbol of unhappiness and yearning from Slovenian folk ballads t.n.) and newer literary works, has been significantly corrected and amended in recent times. The amendments represent a more complex presentation of the experiences of the aleksandrinkas and their children, in which the one-sided story of suffering and yearning has been augmented with experiences of cosmopolitanism, emancipation and pride (Koprivec 2006; Škrlj 2009).

The status of the children left behind by the migrant mothers was complemented by the status of the children whom these women nursed, cared for and raised, or simply nursed and raised (Koprivec 2008). These are significant acquisitions for the understanding of the subjective experiences of the migration process and for the positioning of children in migration contexts. Daša Koprivec and Katja Škrlj researched the still-existent emotional bonds between the wards and their nurses, even though they are long deceased. Ellis Douek gives a stirring account of the importance of his aleksandrinka nurse, Marija, in his life:

> I suspect that Maria may be responsible for the surge of optimism, almost of satisfaction, which I still experience when struck by adversity – she brought me up to expect a plus in return for each minus, even though for me it has had to be limited to this life, as I do not have the benefit of the necessary dimension to extend my own accounts into the next.
> Some years ago my sister Claudia contributed an article "The Most Influential Character in my Life" to a weekend colour supplement. She described Maria. No doubt my mother would have been mortified had she been alive and she would never have imagined that the influence of such a simple and unsophisticated woman could stretch so far into our later lives. (Douek 2004: 101)

Furthermore, they also called attention to the emotional attachment of the children who were raised, nursed and cared for by aleksandrinkas and the children who were left at home, the so-called "milk brothers" and "milk sisters" and/or their relatives. These people are also getting in touch with each other and meeting each other via the Internet, which is conditioned by the use of the English language as the lingua franca. These are exceptional discoveries for understanding the complexity of the positioning of children in migration processes and the inter-generational and trans-national scope of migration networks and emotional connections. The memories and emotional bonds effortlessly overcome the different centuries, continents, languages and generations.

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fessional attention. In 2009 an event in Nova Gorica was dedicated to them as part of *Srečanje v moji deželi* (Meeting in My Country), an event for Slovenian emigrants.

THE STIGMATIZING OF CHILDREN

At the end I should also mention the aspect of children and childhood which I will call the stigmatizing of children in migration contexts. Stigmatizing occurs at various levels and in various circumstances. The former is demonstrated by the example of the aleksandrinkas, where the shame of their migrant labour is firmly inscribed in the collective memory. As Katja Škrlj writes in her attempt to demythologize and destigmatize the aleksandrinkas:

> Due to various circumstances, the aleksandrinkas became a neglected historical subject, receiving little attention from researchers. The clerical press condemned them, their milieu often rejected them and made various innuendoes, and history paid them scant attention. Thus the image of them was created mainly by literati. Even as literary heroines of male writers they were subjected to condemnation and punishment. The mythological image of the aleksandrinkas was in one way or another reduced to nursemaids or the character of Beautiful Vida. But less than a quarter of all the aleksandrinkas were like this. Not only danger, suffering and moral turpitude awaited the aleksandrinkas in the shadows of the minarets, as the (clerical) press stated repeatedly, but also sophistication, emancipation and happiness. And this was perhaps even more frightening for some. (Škrlj 2009: 185)

The stigmatization of migrant mothers also befell the children that they "abandoned". I use the quotation marks because it is entirely clear that these children were not abandoned, but were cared for by relatives, fathers and sometimes even friends and neighbours. They were abandoned in the ideological interpretations of the Church and the politicians, who tried to persuade people – particularly women – to stay at home and suffer. For this reason the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of aleksandrinkas can now understand the autonomy and freedom of their migrant experiences and feel admiration and pride.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the forms of positioning children in the context of Slovenian emigration are linked mainly to the past. I would like to use the example of the aleksandrinkas to illustrate a modern aspect of the migrant experiences of children – both those who migrate and those who stay behind – and the modern aspects of the stigmatization of migrant children. This is happening all over the world, but it is a mass and widespread – as well as well-researched – phenomenon in the Philippines. The status of Philippine migrant women who go abroad primarily to work as nurses, maids, teachers, child-care givers and cleaning women was studied by Rhacel Salazar Parrenas (2002), but not their status in the foreign countries, but rather their status in the Philippines. She discovered the mechanisms for the specific status of migrant women, who are the subjects of public ideological and political campaigns in the Philippines, where they are stigmatized as being bad mothers who have rejected their children and threatened their families and thus Philippine society. The phenomenon is called the "care crisis". In the Philippine media the stigmatization is supported with citations of studies of children of migrant women who suffer various physical and mental illnesses due to the absence of

their mothers. In her research the author, who based her work on biographical methodology, reviewed the accusations and found a large number of different cases, from children for various reasons experienced the absence of their mother as an irreparable loss to completely satisfied children who respect the efforts of their mothers to enable them to have a better life.

> As national discourse on the care crisis in the Philippines vilifies migrant women, it also downplays the contributions these women make to the country's economy. Such hand-wringing merely offers the public an opportunity to discipline women morally and to resist reconstituting family life in a manner that reflects the country's increasing dependence on women's foreign remittances. This pattern is not exclusive to the Philippines. (Parrenas 2002: 52)

The moral disciplining of migrant women and the stigmatizing of their work has the most deleterious effect on the children on whose behalf the public and political campaigns are conducted. They convince them that there is something wrong with their mothers and their homes and that everything would be all right if they came home.

The stigmatization of children due to the migrant status of their parents is also happening in Slovenia today. As in the majority of European countries, in the last few decades Slovenia has gone from being a country of emigrants to a country of immigrants. The migrant workers mainly come from the countries that once formed Yugoslavia (1945–1991), and their families follow them. The stigmatization of their children is associated with their nationalities, their lack of familiarity with the Slovenian language, foreign-sounding names, and above all with the prevailing stereotypes and prejudices about immigrants from certain countries.[8] The stigmatization is promoted by the media, political hate speech and nationalist cultural discourse, within which multiculturalism and multicultural dialogue have not yet been accepted as positive values. They can also be created and spread by migration researchers. Social scientists and migration researchers can help deconstruct the process of the stigmatization of children of migrants in Slovenia by giving the migrants and their children names and stories in their research, thus subjectifying and humanizing them.

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POVZETEK

OTROCI IN OTROŠTVO V MIGRACIJSKIH KONTEKSTIH

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Množično izseljevanje iz slovenskega etničnega prostora se je začelo na prehodu devetnajstega v dvajseto stoletje in je trajalo približno šestdeset let. Razločimo lahko najmanj pet različnih pozicioniranj otrok v kontekstu (ne-prisilnih oblik) slovenskega izseljevanja. Teh pet načinov pa ne zasledimo samo v slovenskem izseljevanju, prav tako pa niso omejeni zgolj na preteklost. Zanimivo je, da jih najdemo tudi v današnjih oblikah priseljevanja v Slovenijo. Prvi in najbolj pogost način pozicioniranja otrok v migracijskih kontekstih je selitev otrok(a) skupaj z njihovimi družinami, ki je lahko trajna selitev oziroma preselitev, lahko je začasna selitev, ali pa je kombinacija obeh. Drugi način je odločitev staršev ali enega od njih, da migrira sam in da pusti ali pustita otroke doma pri starih starših, sorodnikih ali sosedih in prijateljih. Takšna odločitev je pogosto povezana s prepričanjem, da se bo družina ponovno združila, ko bodo za to dani finančni, stanovanjski ali katerikoli drugi pogoji. Tretjo obliko pozicioniranja otrok imenujem povratništvo in predstavlja raznovrstne oblike vračanja otrok skupaj s starši nazaj v domovino, ali samostojno vračanje v odrasli dobi, ali celo vračanje odraslih v domovino svojih staršev. Celo v tem primeru se v slovenski terminologiji uporablja izraz povratniki, kar je v besedilu posebej razloženo. Peta pozicija je povezana s posebnim delom izseljenk, ki so se v tujini zaposlile kot dojilje, varuške otrok in sobarice. Tukaj so kot otroci v migracijskem kontekstu pozicionirani tako njihovi lastni otroci, ki so jih v večini primerov puščale doma, kot tudi otroci, za katere so skrbele, jih vzgajale ali celo dojile. V zgodovini slovenskega izseljenstva so tudi primeri, ko so otroci migrirali sami in po svoji lastni volji, ali pa so jih na delo v tujino poslali starši. Oblike različnih pozicioniranj otrok so razložene in ilustrirane s primeri iz raziskav subjektivnih migracijskih izkušenj, ki so bile izvedene na avto/biografskem gradivu in z narativnimi metodami. Zaključek opozarja, da so migrantski otroci danes najbolj ranljiv del prebivalstva Slovenije in Evrope in so pogosto žrtve hudih stigmatiziranj in diskriminacij. Predlaga raziskovalcem migracij, da upoštevajo subjektiviteto »objektov« svojih raziskav in humanizirajo migrante, ko jih "proučujejo", še posebej migrantske otroke.