

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Marija Giedraitytė

**THE PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN FROM  
MIGRANT FAMILIES DURING THE MIDDLE CHILDHOOD**

Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation

Social sciences, psychology (06 S)

Vilnius, 2011

The dissertation was prepared during the period of 2004–2010 at Vilnius university.

Scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rasa Bieliauskaitė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06S)

**The dissertation will be defended at Vilnius University Council of Psychology Research.**

**Chair**

Prof. Habil. Dr. Danutė Gailienė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06S)

**Members**

Prof. Habil. Dr. Rimantas Želvys (Vilniaus Pedagogical University, Social Sciences, Educology – 07S)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Loreta Bukšnytė (Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06S)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nida Žemaitienė (Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Public Health – 10B)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rasa Barkauskienė (Vilnius University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06S)

**Oponents**

Doc. dr. Dainius Pūras (Vilnius University, Biomedical Sciences, Medicine – 07B)

Doc. dr. Dalia Nasvytienė (Vilniaus Pedagogical University, Social Sciences, Psychology – 06S)

The dissertation will be defended at the open meeting of the Council of Psychology Research at 2 p. m. 18 March, 2011, in room 201 of the Faculty of Philosophy. Address: Universiteto street 9/1, LT-01513, Vilnius, Lithuania.

The summary of doctoral dissertation was sent on 17 February 2010.

Full text is available at the Library of Vilnius University (Universiteto 3, LT-01122, Vilnius, Lithuania).

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

Marija Giedraitytė

**VAIKŲ, KURIŲ TĖVAI IŠVYKĘ IŠ LIETUVOS, PSICHOSOCIALINIS  
FUNKCIONAVIMAS VIDURINIOJOJE VAIKYSTĖJE**

Daktaro disertacijos santrauka  
Socialiniai mokslai, psichologija (06 S)

Vilnius, 2011

Disertacija rengta 2004–2010 m. Vilniaus universitete

Mokslinė vadovė doc. dr. Rasa Bieliauskaitė (Vilniaus universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, psichologija – 06S)

**Disertacija ginama Vilniaus universiteto Psichologijos mokslo krypties taryboje.**

**Pirmininkė**

Prof. habil. dr. Danutė Gailienė (Vilniaus universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, psichologija – 06S)

**Nariai**

Prof. habil. dr. Rimantas Želvys (Vilniaus pedagoginis universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, edukologija – 07S)

Doc. dr. Loreta Bukšnytė (Kauno Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, psichologija – 06S)

Doc. dr. Nida Žemaitienė (Lietuvos sveikatos mokslų universitetas, biomedicinos mokslai, visuomenės sveikata – 10B)

Doc. dr. Rasa Barkauskienė (Vilniaus universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, psichologija – 06S)

**Oponentai**

Doc. dr. Dainius Pūras (Vilniaus universitetas, biomedicinos mokslai, medicina – 07B)

Doc. dr. Dalia Nasvytienė (Vilniaus pedagoginis universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, psichologija – 06S)

Disertacija bus ginama viešame Psichologijos mokslo krypties tarybos posėdyje 2011 m. kovo 18 d. 14 val. Filosofijos fakulteto 201 auditorijoje.

Adresas: Universiteto g. 9/1, LT-01513 Vilnius, Lietuva.

Disertacijos santrauka išsiuntinėta 2011 m. vasario mėn. 17 d. Su disertacija galima susipažinti Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekoje (Universiteto g. 3, LT-01122, Vilnius, Lietuva).

## INTRODUCTION

**Relevance of the topic.** Parent-child separation in childhood might be considered a risk factor for the well-being of children and might be related to the development of psychopathology (e.g. Rutter, 1974; Cummings, Davies, Campbell, 2000). The effects of separation for children depend on the age of children, the duration and type of separation and other individual and contextual factors (Greenberg, 1999). The most researched form of parent-child separation is the divorce of parents. The results of research on divorce effects for children are controversial: despite often mentioned negative consequences for children, negative developmental outcomes might have been caused not by the fact of divorce itself, but other concurrent conditions (Kline, Johnston, Tschann, 1991; Kline Pruett, Williams, Insabella, Little, 2003; Carobene, Cyr, 2006; Verropoulou, Joshi, 2002; Bretherton, Page, 2006; Kelly, Emery, 2003). It is also well known that for the part of children the effects of divorce are negligible or even positive (Hetherington, Elmore, 2003).

The group of children whose parents are not separated, but live separately because of work migration constitutes a unique opportunity for research on parent-child separation problem. Because of parental work migration children experience separation with one or both of parents, but the experience of this separation might be very different from the one of divorce. If separation due to work migration would constitute a risk factor for the mental health of children, this should be taken into account in health politics and prevention of mental disorders.

There is quite a lot of research on parent-child separation effects during infancy and early childhood and no one would raise doubts about the importance of physical closeness with parents during this period. The period of middle childhood is far less explored. The dissertation allows us to better understand the expression of developmental processes which are going on during middle childhood.

In the studies of children from different family settings sociodemographic and other „external“ factors are often explored (Seltzer, 1991; Adam, Chase-Lansdale, 2002; Winkelmann, 2006). Less attention is given to the representational level of development. Relatively little is known about the internal family representations in middle childhood as well as how they could be related to family processes (divorce, migration) and emotional and behavioral problems.

Migration becomes an increasingly common phenomenon in the modern Europe and in the rest of the world. After Lithuania has joined European Union work migration here reached higher levels than ever. It is known that the number of migrant families is increasing although the exact number of children in these families is difficult to determine because of illegal migration and other factors. Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon, related to political, social and economic changes, and often becomes a topic of scientific discussions.

There is a theoretical base for considering work migration as a factor causing a family crisis, but it is surprising how few studies had been carried out on this topic. It is difficult to talk about migrant families as a group as there is high variation inside this group. The dissertation study sheds light on the adaptation of children of migrant families and thus adds to the existing knowledge about the effects of parental work migration for children.

Research on psychosocial functioning of children in migrant families is important also for practical reasons as mass media is constantly provoking “panics about the effects of migration for children“(Juozeliūnienė et al., 2008). Such exaggeration of the problems of children contributes to further negative sequelae of events – stigmatization and increasing isolation of migrant families in society. Better knowledge about the psychosocial functioning of children in these families would help us to find the best preventative strategies if they are needed.

**Aim of study** – to investigate the psychosocial adjustment of children from migrant families and determine its relations to child’s individual and family context factors.

## **Objectives**

1. To investigate the psychosocial functioning of 7–11 year old children from migrant families and compare it to the psychosocial functioning of children from Lithuania's representative sample and comparison groups (composed according to family and migration status).
2. To investigate internal family representations of children from families with different family structure.
3. To determine the associations between sociodemographic and migration related factors and the psychosocial functioning of children from migrant families.
4. To determine the relations between internal family representations and psychosocial functioning of children from migrant families.

## **Defended statements**

- The psychosocial functioning of children from migrant families is as good as of childrens' from Lithuania's representative sample.
- Internal family representations are a more important factor for the psychosocial functioning of children in migrant families then sociodemographic factors.

**Theoretical background and review of researches.** The dissertation is based on developmental psychopathology approach (Wenar, Kerig, 2006; Cicchetti, 2006). A. Sameroff (2010) unified theory of development is one of the contemporary theories, based on developmental psychopathology approach. Sameroff in his theory provides with a broad description of the development of the child, separate aspects of which were explored in our study. Analyzing the internal family representations of children we used a person oriented approach (Bergman, Magnusson, 1997).

An increasing attention of researchers to the effects of migration for families and children show the relevance and the importance of the topic, but up till now there is lack of studies in this area. Existing empirical data does not allow to firmly claim that children from migrant families are at higher risk for psychological problems (Stevens, Vollebergh, 2008). Children who

experienced parental divorce can be compared to children from migrant families as both family events cause changes in family roles, relationships, economic resources etc.

There is a lot of empirical evidence on the psychological functioning of children who experienced parental divorce. Short and long-term consequences were investigated (e.g. Amato, 2000). The research on divorce falls into two directions which are sometimes even contradicting each other (Bretherton, Page, 2004). Continuing with the first line of research, the attention is paid to short and long-term negative effects of divorce for children. It is stated that children whose parents divorced were at higher risk for psychological, behavioral, social and academic problems when compared to children from intact families (Hetherington, Elmore, 2003). On the other hand, other researches go in line with the concept of psychological resilience. According to this direction, some point out that most children emerge from the divorce of their parents as competent individuals, especially if protective factors are present (c.f. Bretherton, Page, 2004)

Aiming at better understanding of the relationship between parent-child separation and child's psychosocial functioning we base ourselves on attachment theory. This theory provides a way of understanding how external factors (such as parent-child separation) might be related to internal experiences of children (family representations) (Bowlby, 1973). According to this theory, early experience with parents is carried on in the form of internal representations and influences further relationships in life (Bowlby, 1973). The security and flexibility of representations the child holds is related to his later functioning. One of the developments of this theory is the *emotional security hypothesis* formulated by Cummings and Davies (1996). The authors describe the emotional security of the child as a regulational system which is formed in the broader context of family relationships.

According to attachment theory constant physical closeness between the infant and the parents is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for the subsequent successful development of the child. Early childhood is a sensitive



period for the formation of attachment relationships. It might be hypothesized that infant-parent separation can interrupt the formation of secure attachment. Far less is known about the effects of separation from parents during later periods. Taking into account the improving cognitive abilities of the child and a broadening spectrum of important relationships, it becomes difficult to predict the effects of separation on the representations during this period. Summarizing the review of the attachment literature, we agree that early experience together with current events and internal representations of these events together predict the psychosocial functioning of the child (Carlson, Sroufe, Egeland, 2004).

The effects of parent-child separation for children, especially during the middle childhood, remain a topic of scientific discussion – this is reflected in two approaches, one of which underscores protective factors and processes of resilience and the other points to risk and negative consequences. The results of studies exploring the psychosocial functioning of children in the context of migration are not consistent and are difficult to compare because of differences in age of participants, recruitment procedures and methods used.

## **METHOD**

**Participants.** The research sample consisted of 7–11 year old children, their parents / caregivers and teachers. 208 children (from 200 families) in total participated in the study. The participants were recruited from elementary schools in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Telšiai, Druskininkai and Pasvalys. This sample would be considered a sample of convenience. Only children who were given written parental consent to participate were involved in the study. Children were divided into four research groups according their family status (separated or intact) and migration:

1. Children from intact families in which at least one of the parents did not live together because of work migration or has returned not more than 3 months ago (*I target group*, N = 58);

2. Children from separated families in which at least one of the parents did not live together because of work migration or has returned not more than 3 months ago (*II target group*, N = 45);
3. Children from intact families in which none of the parents were involved in work migration (*I comparison group*, N = 29);
4. Children from separated families in which none of the parents were involved in work migration. This group included all families, which were separated or divorced and parents were not living together (*II comparison group*, N = 76).

The mean age of parents / caregivers was 37.89 years (SD 9.32; MIN 20, MAX 74). The mean age of children was 9,0 years (SD 1,20; MIN 7, MAX 11). There were 99 (47,6 %) boys and 109 (52,4 %) girls.

For the comparisons, data from Lithuania's representative sample was used (Žukauskienė and Kajokienė, 2006, 2007).

**Measures.** *Questionnaire on demographic data.* The questionnaire comprised an introductory letter for participants and questions about family structure, socioeconomic status, migration and parenting. There were two types of questionnaires, one for intact and one for separated families.

*Child Behavior Check List (CBCL/6-18) and Teacher's Report Form (TRF/6-18)* (Achenbach and Rescorla, 2001). The questionnaires belong to the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA). The ASEBA questionnaires are widely used for evaluation of children emotional and behavioral problems. Lithuanian forms of these questionnaires have been standardized and the norms are available (Žukauskienė and Kajokienė, 2006; Kajokienė and Žukauskienė, 2007).

*Attachment based coding of Kinetic Family Drawings.* We used Fury, Carlson and Sroufe (1997) coding instructions, which are based on Kaplan and Main's (1986) coding system. The coding system consists of 8 global rating scales (7 points scale): Vitality / Creativity, Family pride / Happiness, Vulnerability, Emotional distance / Isolation, Tension / Anger, Role reversal, Bizarreness / dissociation and Global pathology. A single composite variable

( $\gamma$ ) was derived, according to suggestions of Fury and colleagues (1997), which consist of summed scores on the scales of global pathology and emotional distance with the family pride scale score subtracted from the total. The scales allow evaluating the quality of parent-child relationships and emotional aspects of relationships, which are reflected in drawings. The validity and applicability of this method have been confirmed by other studies (Pianta, Longmaid, Ferguson, 1999; Gullone, Ollendick, King, 2006; Madigan, Ladd, Goldberg, 2003).

In order to increase the reliability of the coding system, drawings were first coded by three experts. During the initial stage, drawings for all 8 scales (7 points scale) were coded by two coders. Agreement was moderate though (*ICC* ranged from .50 (vulnerability scale) to .76 (vitality / creativity scale)). Coding system was revised, disagreements discussed between coders and number of categories reduced from 7 to 5 points scale. Using this revised system, 20 perc. of drawings were coded by three experts. Agreement was much better (*ICC* .71– .97; Cohen  $\kappa$  coefficient between coders ranged from .36 to .89). As the system worked better, the rest of the drawings were coded by two experts. All discrepancies were resolved by conferencing, with only conferenced scores used in subsequent analysis.

**Data analysis.** The data was analyzed using SPSS (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*) version 16.0. and *Sleipner for Windows 2.1*. (Bergman, El-Khoury, 2002).

## RESULTS

### **Psychosocial Functioning of Children from Migrant Families**

*Comparisons with representative sample.* The psychosocial functioning of children from migrant families (both separated and intact) was compared to the representative sample. The comparisons were made separately for parents' / caregivers' and teachers' reports. According to parental reports, children from

migrant families experienced the same or even lower level of emotional and behavioral problems (Table 1.). No significant differences were found when problems were rated by teachers.

Table 1. *Comparisons of CBCL syndrome scales between children from migrant families and representative sample (Student t test)*

CBCL syndrome scales	Migrant families (N = 103)		Representative sample (N = 860)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Anxious/depressed	3.69	2.74	4.54	3.26	-2.53	.01*
Withdrawn/depressed	1.83	1.86	1.82	1.96	.02	.99
Somatic complaints	2.19	2.46	2.06	2.31	.54	.59
Social problems	3.19	2.86	3.65	2.93	-1.51	.13
Thought problems	1.85	2.36	1.90	2.04	-.19	.85
Attention problems	5.03	3.75	5.33	3.40	-.85	.39
Rule-breaking behavior	2.29	2.56	2.52	2.30	-.92	.34
Aggressive behavior	5.71	5.17	5.90	4.74	-.39	.70
Internalizing problems	7.71	6.01	8.42	6.25	-1.10	.27
Externalizing problems	8.00	7.38	8.43	6.60	-.61	.54
Total problems	25.90	19.05	31.16	19.55	.26	.01*

\*  $p < .05$

Normative data (Žukauskienė, Kajokienė, 2006; Kajokienė, Žukauskienė, 2007) allowed us to calculate how many children in migrant families fell within the clinical range according to their psychological problems. We found that up to 18 perc. of children in this group fell within borderline clinical range and up to 11 perc. could be considered as having problems of clinical significance, according to parental reports. According to teachers' reports, fewer children expressed problems of clinical range (up to 7 perc.). The problems of children from migrant families do not exceed the prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems in general children population of Lithuania (Girdzijauskienė et al., 2006).

*Comparisons between family categories.* Firstly, we present a broader description of the four previously defined research groups (based on migration / parent separation). The groups were compared on the age of children, gender distributions and sociodemographic factors (education, subjective financial status and changes of income).

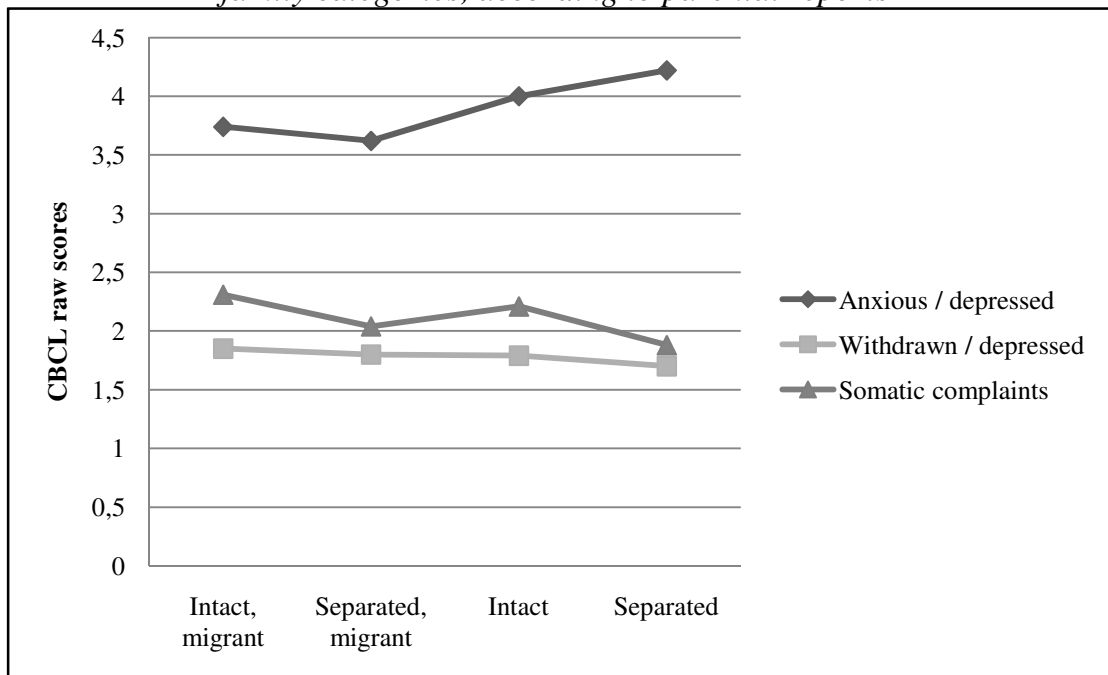
There were no statistically significant differences when comparing groups on the mean age of children (one way analysis of variance,  $F = .26$ ,  $p = .86$ ) and on gender distributions ( $\chi^2 = 3.55$ ,  $p = .31$ ). Median test was used for comparing the groups on sociodemographic factors. The analysis revealed statistically significant differences on education ( $\chi^2 = 28.84$ ,  $p < .000$ ), subjective financial status ( $\chi^2 = 14.25$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and changes of income ( $\chi^2 = 36.36$ ,  $p < .000$ ). The distribution of participant above and below median based of sociodemographic factors is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *The distribution of participants above and below median according to the sociodemographic factors*

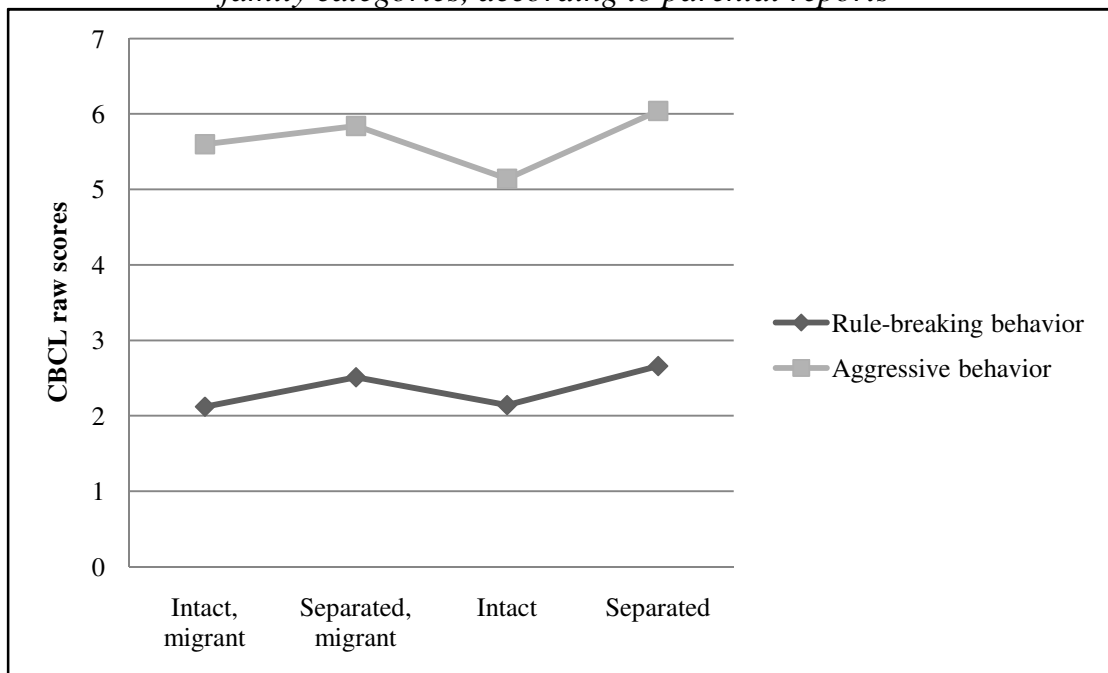
Sociodemographic factors		Family categories							
		Intact, migrant		Separated, Migrant		Intact		Separated	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Education	> median	12	21.1	13	28.9	19	67.9	44	57.9
	<= median	45	78.9	32	71.1	9	32.1	32	42.1
Subjective financial status	> median	27	46.6	7	15.6	12	41.4	19	25.0
	<= median	31	53.4	38	84.4	17	58.6	57	75.0
Changes of income	> median	30	53.6	7	15.9	2	6.9	10	14.1
	<= median	26	46.4	37	84.1	27	93.1	61	85.9

The comparisons of psychosocial functioning of children from four family categories yielded no significant differences, according to parental reports. The mean scores of CBCL scales of internalizing and externalizing problems are presented in graphs (Graph 1., Graph 2.).

Graph 1. Comparisons of internalizing problems of children from different family categories, according to parental reports



Graph 2. Comparisons of externalizing problems of children from different family categories, according to parental reports

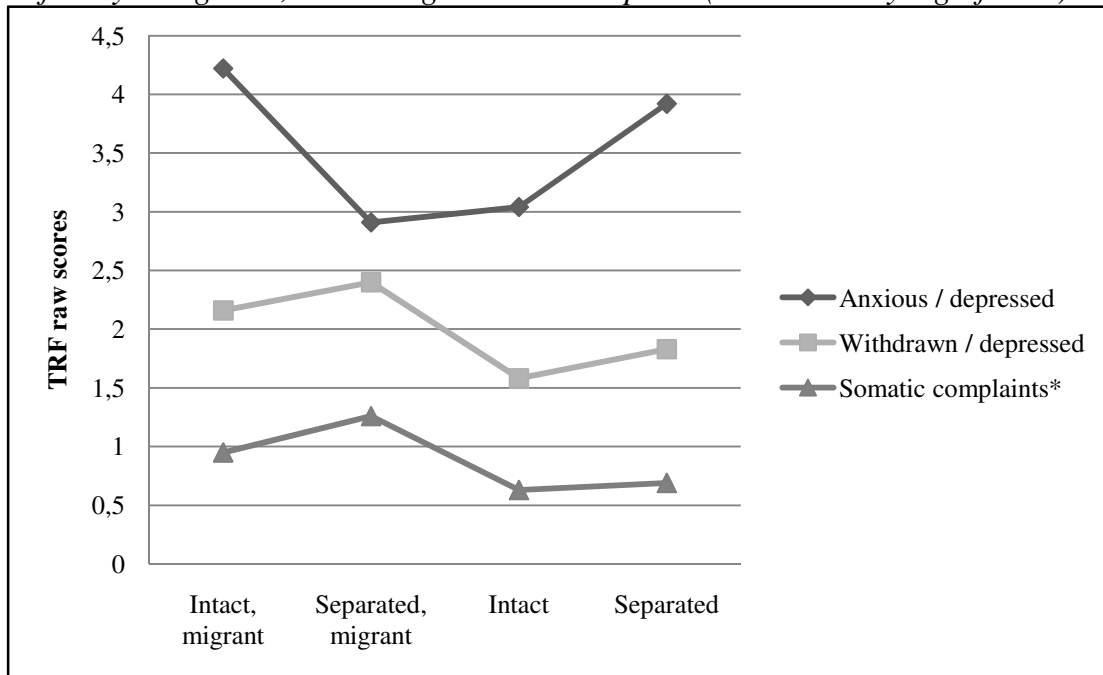


The results of comparisons between groups, based on teachers' reports, were similar to those of parental reports. We found no statistically significant differences between psychosocial functioning of children from different family settings, except for somatic complaints: children from separated migrant

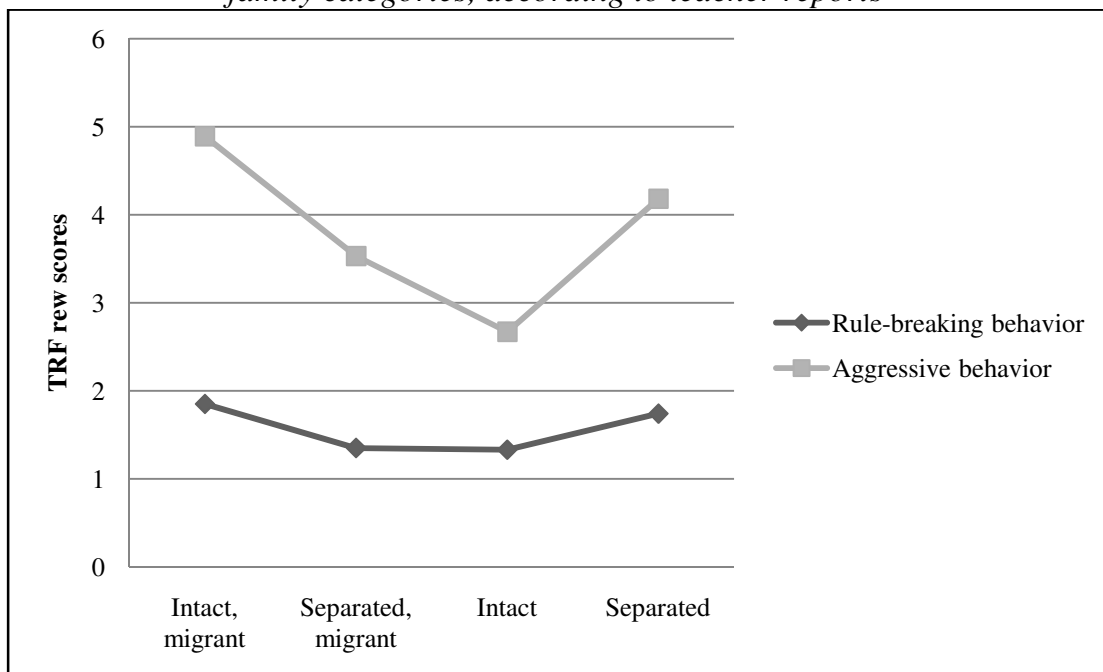
families experienced more somatic symptoms than children from separated non migrant families.

The mean scores of TRF scales of internalizing and externalizing problems are presented graphically (Graph 3., Graph 4.).

Graph 3. Comparisons of internalizing problems of children from different family categories, according to teacher reports (\* statistically significant)



Graph 4. Comparisons of externalizing problems of children from different family categories, according to teacher reports



## **Attachment Representations of Children from Migrant Families**

*Comparisons between family categories.* Attachment representations reflected in children's family drawings did not differ significantly between research groups. We found significant gender differences in attachment representations with girls scoring lower on all negative scales and higher on positive scales.

*Cluster analysis of children's representations.* In order to identify groups of children with specific combinations of representations, cluster analysis was carried out. Cluster analysis was based on the scores of these aspects of representations: vitality / creativity (1), family pride / happiness (2), vulnerability (3), emotional distance / isolation (4), tension / anger (5), role reversal (6) and global pathology (7). Representations of children from the total sample (all family categories) were included in cluster analysis. LICUR procedure was used (Bergman, Magnusson, El-Khoury, 2003). Missing data (in role reversal scale) was replaced with twin-variables. Residue analysis revealed no unclassifiable cases. Ward's hierarchical clustering method based on Euclidian distance was used. The 5 cluster solution was chosen.

Table 3. presents mean age and mean scores of family representations scales of children in five clusters. To verify whether the cluster analysis successfully differentiated groups of children from patterns evident in their representations, mean scores of representations for each cluster were compared. The analysis indicated that five clusters differed on all aspects of representations, included in the analysis ( $p < .001$ ) (Table 3.).



Table 3. Comparisons of children's age and mean scores of family representations between clusters (Kruskal-Wallis test)

Variable	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		Cluster 5		p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Age	9.17	1.18	8.95	1.23	8.78	1.23	9.41	1.19	8.35	.94	.00**
Vitality	3.97	.61	2.11	.65	3.65	.75	4.03	.90	2.83	.65	.00**
Family Pride	3.31	.71	1.55	.60	2.97	.65	4.11	.70	2.04	.48	.00**
Vulnerability	2.31	.47	4.37	.59	3.30	.57	1.87	.75	3.39	.50	.00**
Emotional Distance	2.92	1.16	4.26	.98	3.19	1.13	1.73	.69	4.39	.72	.00**
Tension/Anger	1.72	.62	4.32	.58	3.00	.67	1.76	.89	3.35	.65	.00**
Role Reversal	2.53	.81	3.18	.69	2.73	.96	1.05	.23	1.78	.42	.00**
Global Pathology	1.81	.62	4.29	.73	3.12	.46	1.73	.65	3.22	.52	.00**

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01

Profiles of family representations were interpreted as follows. Cluster 1 consisted of children whose representations were scored relatively high on vitality / creativity (M = 3.97), pride / happiness (M = 3.31) and low on tension / anger scale (M = 1.72) which might be interpreted as positive representations, but at the same time they had average scores for emotional distance (M = 2.92) and role reversal (M = 2.53). This pattern we interpreted as compensated positive representations (Graph 5.). Thirty six children were categorized in this cluster (69.4 perc. of girls, 30.6 perc. of boys, mean age – 9.17).

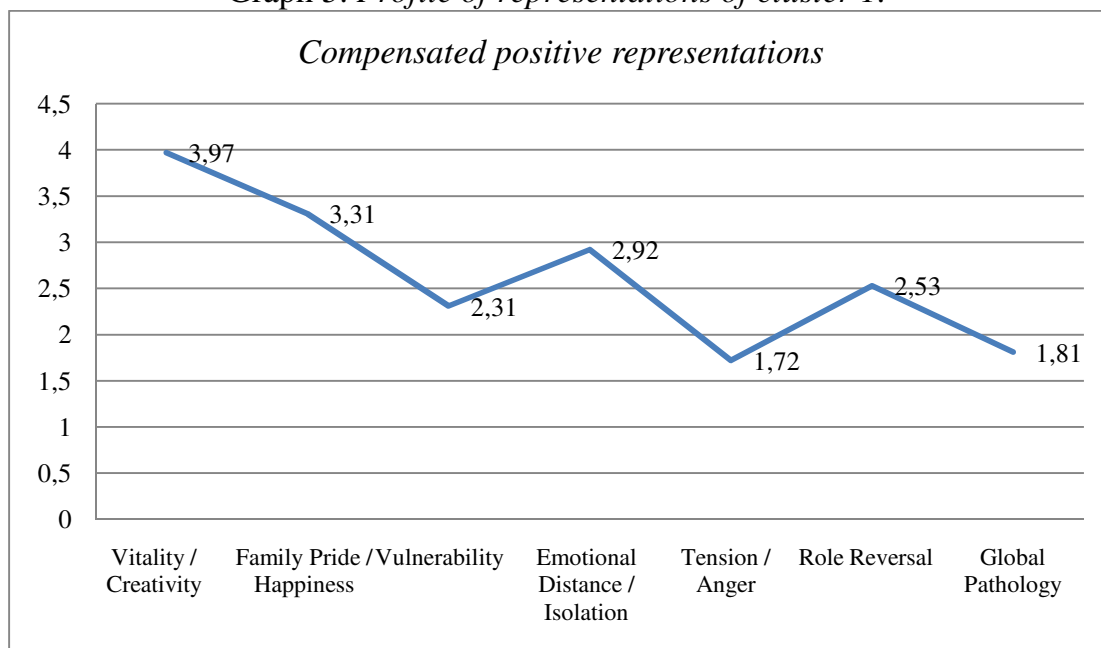
Cluster 2 included children whose representations we coded high on negative scales (vulnerability M = 4.37, emotional distance M = 4.26, tension / anger M = 4.32, role reversal M = 3.18 and global pathology M = 4.29) and low on positive scales. This cluster was seen as being consistent with representations of insecure relationships and we called it a cluster of negative representations (Graph 6.). Thirty eight children fell within Cluster 2 (81.6 perc. of boys and 18.4 perc. of girls, mean age – 8.95).

Cluster 3 consisted of children whose different aspects of representations were all moderately expressed (Graph 7.). This cluster was interpreted as a profile of average family representations. Thirty seven children fell into this cluster (59.5 perc. of girls and 40.5 perc. of boys, mean age – 8.78).

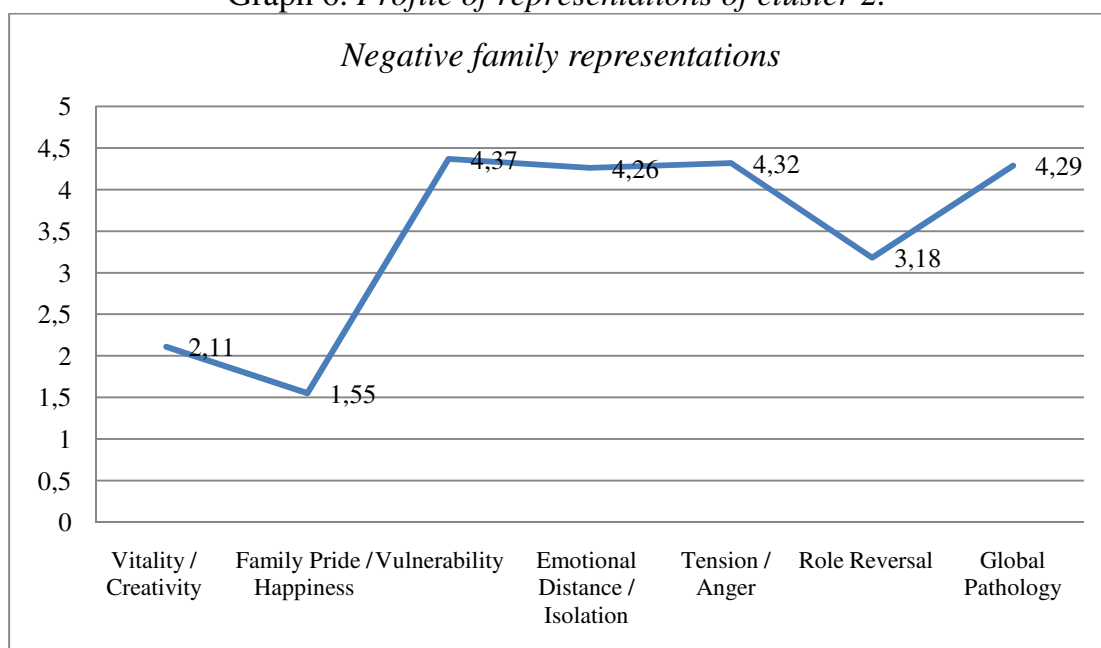
Children grouped into Cluster 4 had drawings with many signs of positive representations (were scored high on vitality / creativity and pride /

happiness) and few signs of insecure representations (were scored low on all negative scales). Such profile of representations was interpreted as positive (Graph 8.). Thirty seven children were grouped into this cluster (67.6 perc. of girls and 32.4 perc. of boys, mean age – 8. 41).

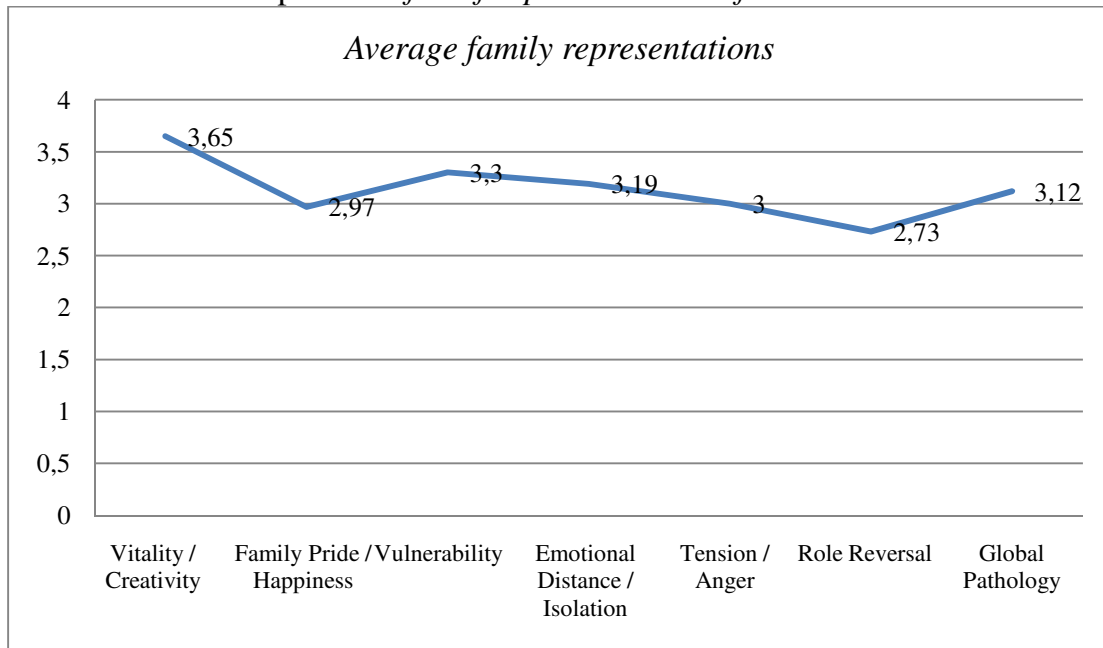
Graph 5. Profile of representations of cluster 1.



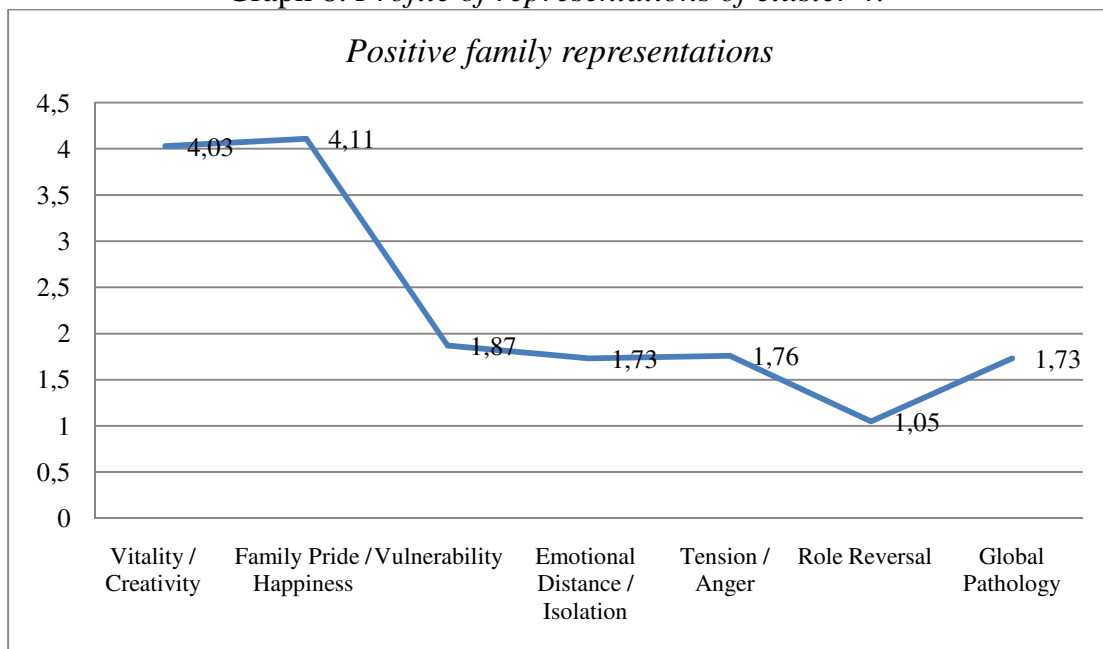
Graph 6. Profile of representations of cluster 2.



Graph 7. Profile of representations of cluster 3.



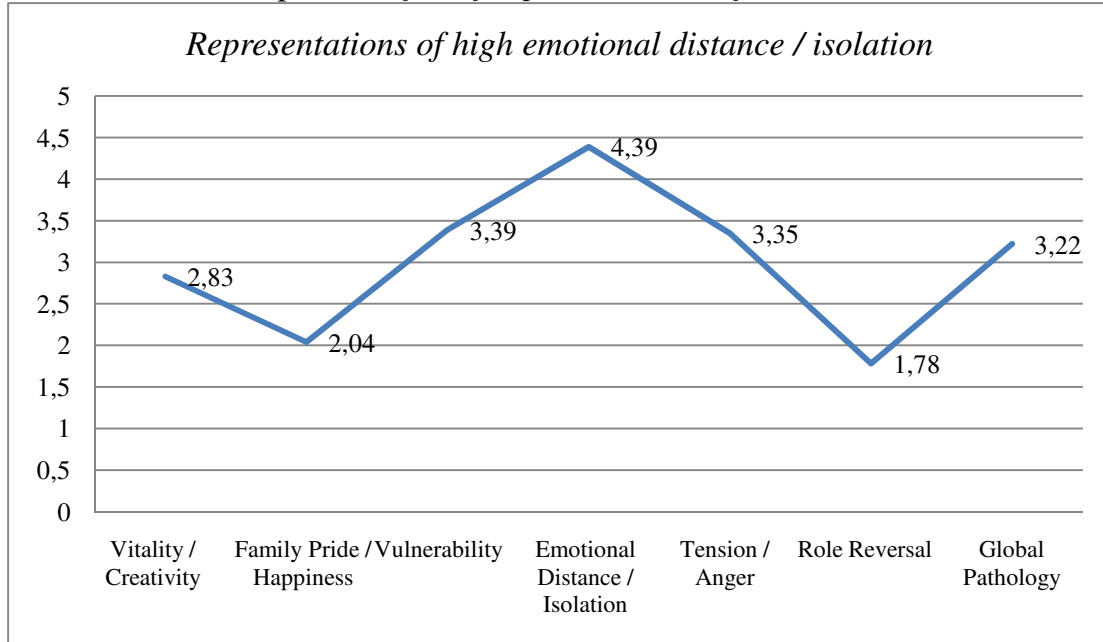
Graph 8. Profile of representations of cluster 4.



Cluster 5 consisted of children whose representations were scored highest on emotional distance / isolation ( $M = 4.39$ ). High emotional distance might be related to avoidant style of attachment. The representations of children in this cluster had less signs of vitality / creativity ( $M = 2.83$ ), pride / happiness ( $M = 2.04$ ) and role reversal ( $M = 1.78$ ). This profile was called a profile of representations of high emotional distance / isolation (Graph 9).

Twenty three children were categorized as having such profile (60.9 perc. Of girls and 39.1 perc. of boys, mean age – 8.35).

Graph 9. Profile of representations of cluster 5.



Children with divergent profiles of family representations were compared by gender distributions, mean age and family status. We wanted to find out whether specific combinations of aspects of family representations were associated with separation experience. The results revealed significant differences on gender distributions and child's age, but there were no differences of family events between clusters (separation, migration) (Table 4.). Children from Cluster 5 (representations characterized by high emotional distance / isolation) were younger than children in all other clusters and children from Cluster 3 (average representations) were younger than children from Cluster 4 (positive representations) (Mann-Whitney U test).

In order to find out whether having distinct profiles of representations would be associated to the psychosocial functioning of children, multinomic logistics was used. We tried to predict belonging to cluster according to CBCL (model 1) and TRF (model 2) syndromes scores. Both models were significant ( $\chi^2 = 52.23$ ,  $df = 32$ ,  $p = .013$  for model 1 and  $\chi^2 = 46.30$ ,  $df = 32$ ,  $p = .04$

for model 2), and they showed that attention problems and withdrawal / depression symptoms were significant predictors.

Table 4. *Comparisons of distributions of gender, migration experience, family status between clusters (Fisher's exact test)*

Variables	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		Cluster 5		p
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Girls	25	69.4	7	18.4	22	59.5	25	67.6	14	60.9	.00**
Boys	11	30.6	31	81.6	15	40.5	12	32.4	9	39.1	
Migrant	15	41.7	17	44.7	20	54.1	18	48.6	14	60.9	.63
Non migrant	21	58.3	21	55.3	17	45.9	19	51.4	9	39.1	
Intact	14	38.9	11	71.1	21	56.8	13	35.1	14	60,9	.16
Separated	22	61.1	27	28.9	16	43.2	24	64.9	9	39.1	

\* p < 0,05, \*\* p < 0,01; 1 – cluster of compensated positive representations, 2 – cluster of negative representations, 3 – cluster of average representations, 4 – cluster of positive representations and 5 – cluster of representations with high emotional distance / isolation.

### **Associations between Sociodemographic and Parenting Factors and Psychosocial Functioning of Children in Migrant Families**

The answers to three questions<sup>1</sup> about involvement in parenting were transformed into one variable called „absent parent's involvement in parenting“ (Cronbach  $\alpha$  for standardized values of this scale was .75).

The results showed that neither sociodemographic characteristics of the families nor involvement in parenting were related to the emotional and behavioral problems of children from migrant families (Table 5.). Only child's gender and number of relocations emerged as important factors for the functioning of children.

<sup>1</sup> The questions were formulated about frequency of talking with person who stayed with the child and frequency of contact (1 – not at all, 6 – several times a week) and about absent parent's influence on decisions about the child (1 – none, 3 – a great deal).

Table 5. *Correlations between sociodemographic and parenting factors and syndrome scales for children in migrant (Spearman  $\rho$ )*

<b>Sociodemographic and parenting factors</b>	<b>CBCL</b>			<b>TRF</b>		
	Internalizing problems	Externalizing problems	Total problems	Internalizing problems	Externalizing problems	Total problems
Education	.03	-.04	-.03	.01	.04	.08
Age	-.19	-.13	-.18	-.17	-.07	-.17
Subjective financial status	.06	.09	.06	-.11	-.01	.01
Changes of income	-.03	.04	.01	.02	-.05	.01
Number of relocations	.24*	.19	.21*	.08	.16	.17
Child's age when parent left	.01	.05	.05	-.13	.01	-.04
Duration of separation (years)	-.04	-.03	-.07	.15	.07	.06
Child's age	.02	.04	.04	-.02	-.04	-.07
Child's gender	-.12	-.34**	-.25*	-.08	-.42**	-.41**
Involvement in parenting	-.06	-.12	-.06	.17	-.08	.03

\*  $p < 0,05$ , \*\*  $p < 0,01$

The analysis of associations of sociodemographic and other characteristics of children and families with family representations showed that gender and involvement in parenting were important factors. Negative correlation was found between involvement in parenting and vulnerability and role reversal reflected in drawings (Table 6.).

Table 6. *Correlations between sociodemographic and parenting factors and family representations of children in migrant (Spearman  $\rho$ )*

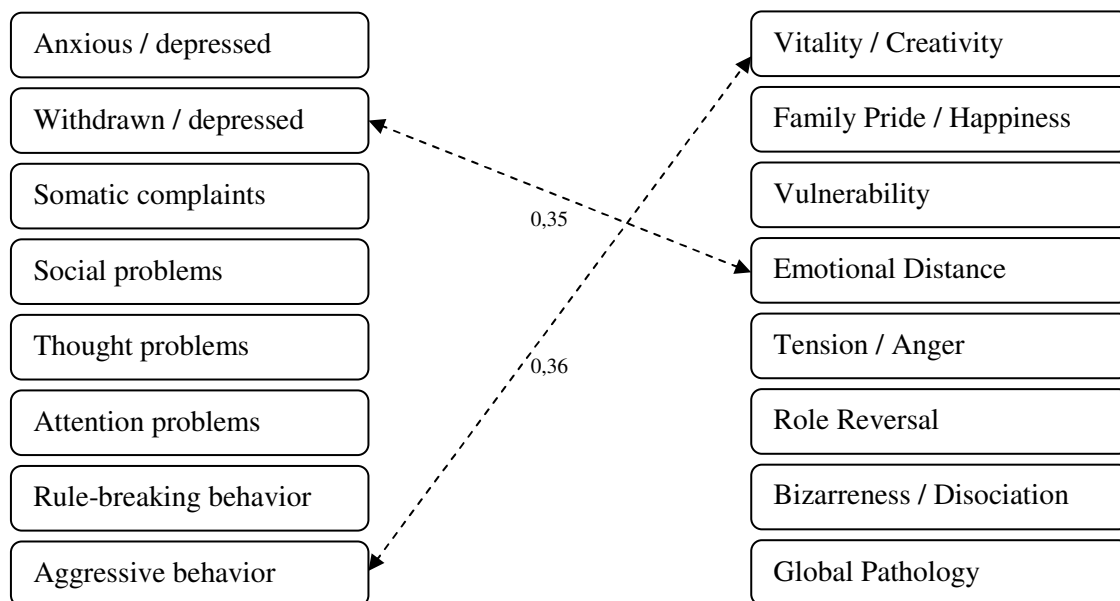
Sociodemographic and parenting factors	Scales of family representations								
	C	P	V	E	T	R	B	G	$\gamma$
Education	-.12	-.18	.16	.15	.15	-.07	.05	.20	.20
Age	.20	.18	-.19	-.11	-.14	-.12	-.10	-.16	-.17
Subjective financial status	.12	-.04	.07	-.04	-.04	-.13	.04	-.06	-.03
Changes of income	-.12	-.03	-.02	.02	.06	-.11	.17	.05	.03
Number of relocations	-.08	.09	-.06	-.09	-.07	-.19	-.10	-.04	-.08
Child's age when parent left	.07	.11	-.12	-.00	.02	-.07	-.07	-.03	-.04
Duration of separation (years)	-.03	.01	.05	-.13	-.11	.05	-.08	-.05	-.08
Child's age	.08	.19	-.11	-.18	-.08	-.02	-.21	-.08	-.17
Child's gender	.37**	.40**	-.46**	-.23*	-.42**	-.29*	-.31*	-.40**	-.38**
Involvement in parenting	.05	.16	-.25*	-.10	-.06	-.27*	.05	-.12	-.14

\*  $p < 0,05$ , \*\*  $p < 0,01$ ; C – vitality / creativity, P – family pride / happiness, V – vulnerability, E – emotional distance / isolation, T – tension / anger, R – role reversal, B – bizarreness / dissociation, G – global pathology,  $\gamma$  – molar index.

## Associations between psychosocial functioning and family representations for children from migrant families

Psychosocial functioning and family representations were related to child's gender, so correlations were calculated separately for girls and boys. For girls, when problems were rated by teachers, the symptoms of withdrawal and depression were related to emotional distance reflected in family representations. Their aggressive behavior was related to vitality and creativity signs of representations (Diagram 1.). There were no significant associations between syndrome scales and representations, when problems were rated by parents / caregivers.

Diagram 1. *Correlations between TRF syndrome scales and family representations for girls (Pearson r)\**



\*  $p < 0,05$

More associations were detected for boys than for girls. When their problems were rated by parents, such associations were found: attention problems negatively correlated with representational vitality / creativity and pride, and positively correlated with most of the „negative“ features of representations. Externalizing problems (i.e. rule-breaking and aggressive

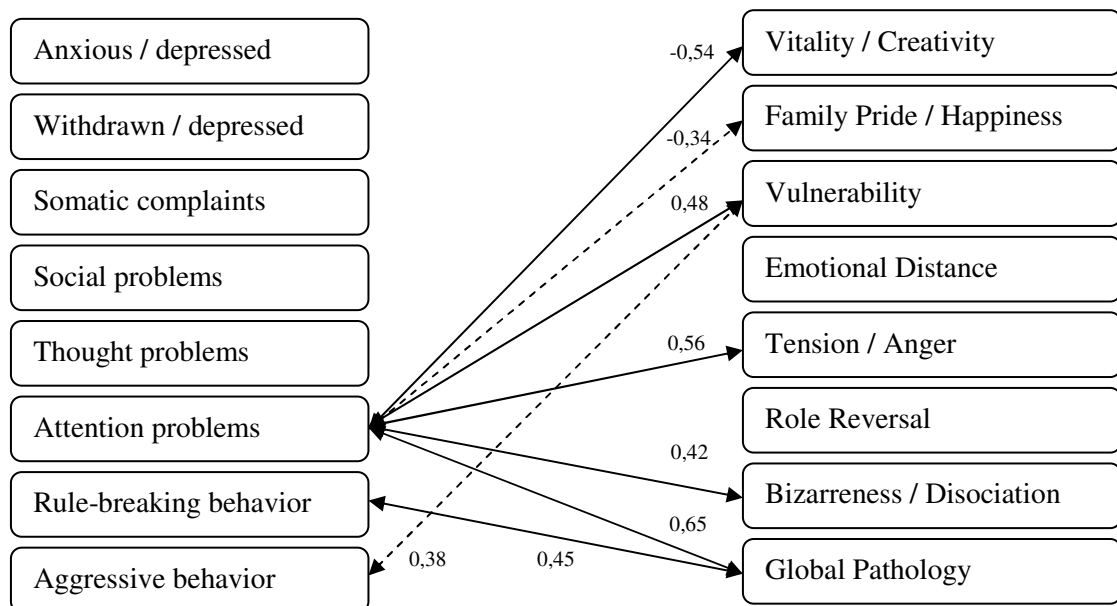


behavior) were related to global pathology and vulnerability respectively (Diagram 2.).

When teachers rated their problems, the associations were found for these syndrome scales (Diagram 3.):

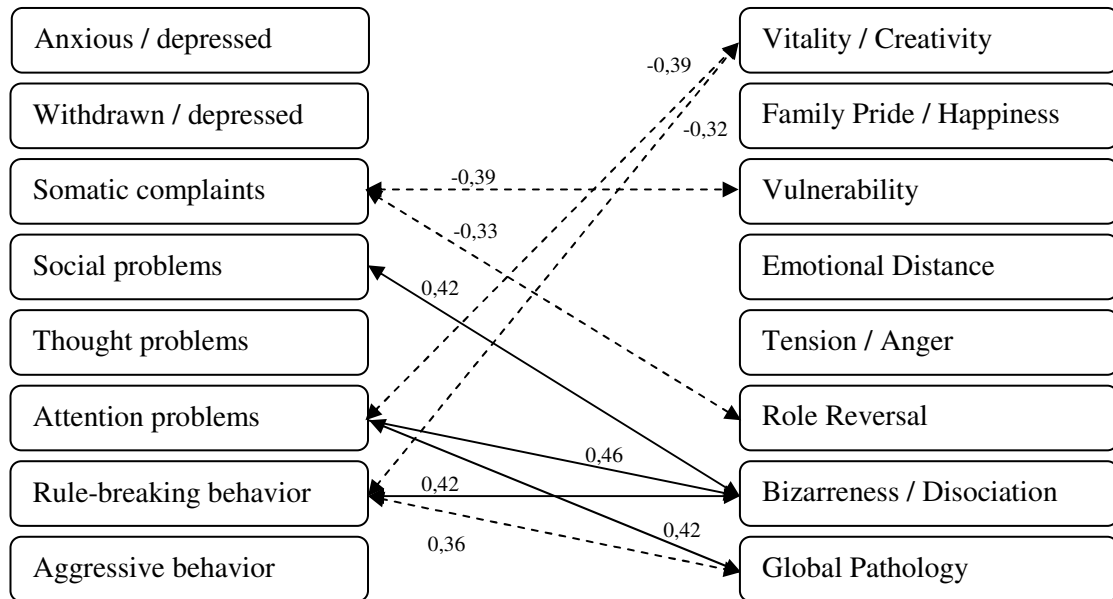
- somatic complaints were negatively related to vulnerability and role reversal reflected in representations;
- social problems were related to bizarreness / dissociation;
- attention problems and rule breaking behavior were negatively related to vitality and creativity and positively related to bizarreness / dissociation and global pathology.

Diagram 2. *Correlations between CBCL syndrome scales and family representations for boys (Pearson r)\**



\* Solid line represents correlations  $p < 0,01$ ; dotted line represents correlations  $p < 0,05$ .

Diagram 3. Correlations between TRF syndrome scales and family representations for boys (Pearson  $r$ )\*



\* Solid line represents correlations  $p < 0,01$ ; dotted line represents correlations  $p < 0,05$ .

## DISCUSSION

Although scholars have expressed concern about the effects of parental migration for children (Maslauskaitė, Stankūnienė, 2007; Juozeliūnienė, Kanapienienė, Kazlauskaitė, 2008; Malinauskas, 2007; Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, Louie, 2002 et al.), this is the first study to document children's psychosocial functioning and family representations during their parents' migration. The results showed that the psychosocial functioning of children in migrant families is of the same level as of general children's population. Interpreting this finding, we want to point to several ideas. *First*, the definition of child's adjustment as the amount of emotional and behavioral problems (or clinical disorder) is relatively narrow and static. Child's psychological health and successful development is best defined as flexibility and constant ability to alter one's behavior according to the new requirements of the surroundings (Talbot, McHale, 2003). Longitudinal studies are needed to find out further developmental trajectories of the adaptation of these children. *Second*, it is possible to hypothesize that separation works as a "stealing factor" (Rutter,

1999). The separation by family members might be felt as a stressing event and make them hold together even stronger in order to overcome difficulties (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, Louie, 2002). It is also important, how well the child functioned before the separation. The results of this study direct us towards the search for processes of resilience in migrant families. *Third*, the results are limited to our research sample. There is a possibility that the worst functioning families did not want to participate (the response rate was around 65 perc.). Our sample consisted mostly of families in which only one of the parents has left and children stayed with their mothers. This created a relatively favourable conditions for children. The adjustment of children might be affected more when they are separated from both parents. In addition, many families felt uncomfortable discussing separation and children's problems because of social stigma related to work migration, feelings of guilt and fear (if the work migration was illegal). *Fourth*, children from migrant families who "have no problems" when they were expected to have them might be so called convenient children. In family systems theory parentification is described (Byng-Hall, 1999) as a type of relationship with the most detrimental effects for the development of children (Marvin, 2003). This hypothesis is partly supported by our finding of negative associations between involvement in parenting and vulnerability and role reversal signs reflected in children's representations.

According to the results of our study, parental migration (which means a change in the child's closest environment) was not related neither to individual aspects of attachment representations nor profiles of them. As the attachment representations did not differ between children who experienced separation during the middle childhood and the ones who did not, it indirectly allows to suggest that representations were formed sometime earlier in life and it was less important what happened during the middle childhood years. Such results go in line with the statement that current circumstances alone do not account for the continuity of development (Carlson, Sroufe, Egeland, 2004).

Family structure is not the main factor for the adaptation of children as this study allows to hypothesize. The study confirmed that family is best understood as a system. Single events can cause changes of functioning at some points in life but family as a whole is more important (Cox, Paley, 1997; Parke, 2004; Cummings, Davies, 1996).

This study is only the first step in understanding the effects of migration for the functioning of children in the long process of searching for risk factors and mechanisms that account for successful development of children (Rutter, 2009). Other studies could include the quality of marital and parent-child relationships as an important variable; attachment history could be controlled for (as it can work as a protective factor); other samples could be investigated (e.g. when a child is separated from both parents because of migration). Taking into account the diversity of the families in migration group, it can be recommended using person oriented strategy and case analysis. Longitudinal studies should be planned in order to find out further trajectories of child development. Analysing the interactions between representations and behavior, interactional models could be applied.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

1. The psychosocial functioning of 7–11 year old children whose one or both parents are working abroad, is of the same level as of children from Lithuania's representative sample. Children from migrant families demonstrated even lower levels of anxious / depressive and total symptomatology as compared to children from the representative sample.
2. The internal representations of relationships of 7–11 year old children from migrant families are similar to those of children who did not experience separation from parents.
3. Separate aspects of internal family representations were combined into profiles characterizing groups of children. Five different profiles of

family representations were detected: profile of compensated positive representations, profile of negative representations, profile of average representations, profile of positive representations and profile representations of high emotional distance and isolation. Groups of children characterized by distinct profiles of representations were differing by gender distributions, mean age and the amount of emotional and behavioural problems, but there were no differences by children's separation from parents experience in these groups.

4. Child's gender emerged as an important factor for the psychosocial functioning of children in migrant families. The psychosocial functioning of boys was less optimal and their family representations contained more signs of insecurity as compared to girls.
5. The psychosocial functioning and family representations of children in migrant families were related to different factors. For their psychosocial functioning, the number of translocations emerged as an important factor; sociodemographic factors, child's age when separation occurred and absent parent's involvement in parenting were not important. Family representations, particularly vulnerability and role reversal, were related to absent parent's involvement in parenting. Other factors seemed to be less related to children's family representations.
6. Family representations of children from migrant family were related to their psychosocial functioning. More relations between aspects of family representations and emotional / behavioral problems were found for boys than for girls.
  - a. For girls, emotional distance reflected in their family representations was related to withdrawal / depressive problems. Vitality and creativity seen in their representations was related to their aggressive behavior.
  - b. For boys, different negative signs of their family representations were related to more attention and total problems. Higher Vitality

/ creativity and pride reflected in their representations were related to less attention problems and rule breaking behavior.

## REFERENCES

- Adam, E. L., Chase-Lansdale, P. L. (2002). Home Sweet Home(s): Parental Separations, residential moves, and adjustment problems in low-income adolescent girls. *Developmental Psychology* 38 (5), 792–805.
- Amato, P.R. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62, 1269–1287.
- Bergman, L.R., El-Khoury, B.M. (2002). *SLEIPNER: A statistical package for pattern-oriented analysis*. Stockholm: Department of Psychology.
- Bergman, L.R., Magnusson, D. (1997). A person-oriented approach in research on developmental psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 291-319.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and Loss: Vol. II. Separation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bretherton, I., Page, T. F. (2004). Shared or conflicting working models? Relationships in postdivorce families seen through the eyes of mothers and their preschool children. *Development and Psychopathology* 16, 551–575.
- Byng-Hall, J. (1999). Family and couple therapy: Towards greater security // *Handbook of Attachment* (eds. Cassidy, J., Shaver, Ph.). NY: Guilford Press, 625–645.
- Carlson, E.A., Sroufe, L.A., Egeland, B. (2004). The construction of experience: A longitudinal study of representation and behavior. *Child Development* 75 (1), 66–83.
- Carobene, G., Cyr, F. (2006). L'adaptation de l'enfant à la séparation de ses parents: sept hypothèses pour une compréhension approfondie. *Canadian Psychology*, 47 (4), 300–315.
- Cicchetti, D. (2006). Development and psychopathology // *Developmental Psychopathology* (eds. Cicchetti, D., Cohen, D. J. ). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1–23.
- Cox, M.J., Paley, B. (1997). Families as systems. *Annual Review of Psychology* 48, 243–267.
- Cummings, E.M., Davies, P. (1996). Emotional security as a regulatory process in normal development and the development of psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology* 8, 123–139.
- Cummings, E.M., Davies, P.T., Campbell, S.B. (2000). *Developmental Psychopathology and Family Process*. NY, London: The Guilford Press

- Fury, G., Carlson, E.A., Sroufe, A. (1997). Children's representations of attachment relationships in family drawings. *Child Development* 68 (6), 1154–1164.
- Girdzijauskienė, S., Lesinskienė, S., Gintilienė, G., Pūras, D., Butkienė, D. (2007). Pradinių klasių moksleivių psichikos sveikatos sutrikimų rizikos ir gerovės veiksniai. *Visuomenės sveikata* 4 (39) 27–33.
- Greenberg, M. T. (1999). Attachment and psychopathology in childhood // *Handbook of Attachment* (eds. Cassidy, J., Shaver, P. R.). NY, London: The Guilford Press, 469–496.
- Gullone, E., Ollendick, T.H., King, N.J. (2006). The role of attachment representation in the relationship between depressive symptomatology and social withdrawal in middle childhood. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 15 (3), 271–285.
- Hetherington., E.M., Elmore, A.M. (2003). Risk and resilience in children coping with their parent's divorce and remarriage. // Luthar, S.S. (ed.) *Resilience and Vulnerability*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 182–212.
- Juozeliūnienė I., Kanapienienė L., Kazlauskaitė A. (2008). Atotolio šeima: nauja užduotis šeimos sociologijai. *Sociologija: mintis ir veiksmai* 1, 119–133.
- Kajokienė, I., Žukauskienė, R. (2007). 6-18 m. vaikų reprezentacinės ir klinikinės imčių emocinių ir elgesio sunkumų sąsajų palyginimas su šeimos socialiniais, ekonominiais ir demografiniais veiksniais. *Psichologija*, 36, 22–39.
- Kelly, J. B., Emery, R. E. (2003). Children's Adjustment Following Divorce: Risk and Resilience Perspectives. *Family Relations* 52 (4), 352–362.
- Kline Pruett, M., Williams, T.Y., Insabella, G., Little, T.D. (2003). Family and legal indicators of child adjustment to divorce among families with young children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 17(2),169–180.
- Kline, M., Johnston, J.R., Tschann, J. M. (1991). The long shadow of marital conflict: A model of Children's postdivorce adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 297–309.
- Madigan, Sh., Ladd, M., Goldberg, S. (2003). A picture is worth a thousand words: Children's representations of family as indicators of early attachment. *Attachment and human development* 5 (1), 19-37.
- Malinauskas, G. (sud.) (2007). Darbo migracijos ypatumai – veiksniai, pasekmės ir tendencijos – Kauno mieste. Kaunas. Europos bendrijų iniciatyvos EQUAL vystymo bendrijos „Dirbk savo šalyje: bedarbių jaunų žmonių, ketinančių išvykti į užsienį, integravimosi į Lietuvos darbo rinką galimybių plėtrą, išsaugojant socialinį kapitalą – šeimą“ ataskaitinis tyrimas.
- Marvin, R.S. (2003). Implications of attachment research for the field of family therapy // *Attachment and Family Systems* (eds. Erdman, P., Caffery, T.). NY & Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 3–27.

- Maslauskaitė, A., Stankūnienė, V. (2007). Šeima abipus sienų. Lietuvos transnacionalinės šeimos genezė, funkcijos, raidos perspektyvos. Vilnius: Tarptautinė migracijos organizacija, Socialinių tyrimų institutas.
- Pianta, R.C., Longmaid, K., Ferguson, J.E. (1999). Attachment-based classifications of Children's Family Drawings: Psychometric properties and relations with children's adjustment in kindergarten. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology* 28 (2), 244–255.
- Rutter, M. (1974). La séparation parent-enfant: Les effets psychologiques sur les enfants. *La Psychiatrie de L'Enfant* 17(2), 479–514.
- Rutter, M. (1999). Resilience concepts and findings: Implications for family therapy. *Journal of Family Therapy* 21: 119–144.
- Rutter, M. (2009). Understanding and testing risk mechanisms for mental disorders. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 50 (1/2), 44–52.
- Sameroff, A. (2010). A unified theory of development: A dialectic integration of nature and nurture. *Child Development* 81 (1), 6–22.
- Seltzer, J.A. (1991). Relationships between fathers and children who live apart: The father's role after separation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53, 79–101.
- Stevens, G.W.J.M., Vollebergh, W.A.M. (2008). Mental health in migrant children. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 49 (3): 276–294.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I. L.G., Louie, J. (2002). Making up for the lost time: the experiences of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Family Process* 41 (4), 625–643.
- Talbot, J., McHale, J. (2003). Family-level Emotional Climate and Its Impact on the Flexibility of Relationship Representations // *Attachment and Family Systems. Conceptual, Empirical, and Therapeutic relatedness* (eds. Edman, Ph., Caffery, T.). NY, Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 31–61.
- Verropoulou, G., Joshi, H., Wiggins, R.D. (2002). Migration, family structure and children's well-being: a multi-level analysis of the second generation of the 1958 birth cohort study. *Children and Society*, 16, 219–231.
- Wenar, R., Kerig, P. (2006). *Developmental psychopathology: from infancy through adolescence* (5th ed). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Winkelmann, R. (2006). Parental separation and well-being of youths: Evidence from Germany. *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 35, 197–208.
- Žukauskienė, R., Kajokienė, I. (2006). CBCL, TRF ir YSR metodikų standartizavimas naudojant 6 – 18 m. Lietuvos vaikų imties duomenis. *Psichologija* 33, 31–46.



## REZIUMĖ

**Darbo mokslinis naujumas.** Vaikų išsiskyrimas su tėvais vaikystėje gali būti laikomas rizikos veiksniu vaiko psichologinei gerovei. Išsiskyrimo poveikis vaikui priklauso nuo vaiko amžiaus, išsiskyrimo trukmės, pobūdžio ir kitų individualių bei konteksto veiksnių (Greenberg, 1999). Viena dažniausiai tyrinėjamų išsiskyrimo formų yra tėvų skyrybos. Tyrimų rezultatai apie tėvų skyrybų sąsajas su vaiko psichologiniu funkcionavimu yra nevienareikšmiai: nors dažnai nustatoma, kad vaikai skyrybas patyrusiose šeimose turi daugiau elgesio ir emocijų problemų palyginus su vaikais iš pilnų šeimų, tai gali būti nulemta ne paties skyrybų fakto, o papildomų sąlygų. Keliamos įvairios teorinės hipotezės, kodėl taip yra, ir šiuo metu jos tikrinamos tyrimais. Taip pat žinoma, kad dalies vaikų psichologinis funkcionavimas sąsajoje su tėvų skyrybomis nepasikeičia ar net pagerėja. Vaikai, kurių tėvai nėra išsiskyre, bet dėl darbo migracijos negyvena kartu, suteikia unikalią galimybę tyrinėti vaikų išsiskyrimo su tėvais patirties problematiką. Dėl darbo migracijos vaikai patiria išsiskyrimą su tėvais ar vienu iš tėvų, tačiau šio išsiskyrimo pobūdis labai skiriasi nuo to, kuris patiriamas tėvams išsiskyrus. Jei vaiko ir tėvų išsiskyrimas dėl migracijos iš tiesų būtų rizikos veiksnys vaikų psichikos sveikatai, į tai turėtų būti atsižvelgiama sveikatos apsaugos politikoje bei psichikos sutrikimų prevencijoje.

Kalbant apie vaikų išsiskyrimą su tėvais, daugiausia tyrėjų dėmesio sulaukė ankstyvosios vaikystės amžiaus tarpsnis – neabejojama, kad kūdikiams ir mažiems vaikams fizinis tėvų buvimas kartu yra labai svarbus. Vidurinėsios vaikystės amžiaus tarpsnis lieka daug mažiau ištirtas. Disertacinis tyrimas leidžia geriau suprasti viduriniojoje vaikystėje vykstančių raidos procesų raišką.

Vaikų iš skirtingos struktūros šeimų tyrimuose dažnai analizuojami sociodemografiniai, ekonominiai ir kiti „išoriniai“ kintamieji (Seltzer, 1991; Adam, Chase-Lansdale, 2002; Winkelmann, 2006), o reprezentacinis lygmuo

retai įtraukiamas. Santykinai mažai yra žinoma apie vaikų šeimos reprezentacijas viduriniojoje vaikystėje – taip pat, kaip jos galėtų sietis su šeimos procesais (skyrybomis, migracija) ir išoriškai stebimais vaikų elgesio ir emocijų sunkumais.

**Temos aktualumas.** Šiuolaikinėje Europoje, o ir visame pasaulyje, migracija tampa vis labiau įprastu dalyku. Lietuvai įstojus į Europos Sąjungą, čia taip pat suintensyvėjo darbo migracija, ir vis daugiau Lietuvoje yra šeimų, kuriose vienas ar abu partneriai yra išvykę dirbti į kitą šalį. Tikslų migracijos paveiktų šeimų skaičių, kuriose auga vaikai, sudėtinga nustatyti.

Migracija yra daugialypis reiškinys, susijęs su politiniais, socialiniais, ekonominiais pokyčiais, ir yra vertinamas nevienareikšmiškai. Apie atotolio šeimas yra sudėtinga kalbėti apibendrintai, nes jos yra labai įvairios. Nors yra pagrindo teigti, jog partnerio išvykimas gali būti vertinamas kaip krizinis įvykis šeimoje, pakeičiantis šeimos struktūrą, o kartu ir šeimos narių vaidmenis bei santykius (Minuchin, 1977; Tallat-Kelpšaitė, 2006), empirinių duomenų apie tai yra stebėtinai mažai. Vaikui išsiskyrimas su tėvais yra reikšmingas įvykis, prie kurio reikia prisitaikyti (Rutter, 1974). Atliktas tyrimas leidžia geriau suprasti šeimos struktūros pokyčių sąsajas su vaiko reprezentacijomis apie šeimą ir psichosocialiniu funkcionavimu.

Praktiniu požiūriu, žiniasklaidos keliamą „emigracijos pasekmių paniką“, t.y. perdėtas vaikų sunkumų akcentavimas, veda prie neigiamų pasekmių – atotolio šeimų stigmatizacijos ir atskirties (Juozeliūnienė ir kt., 2008). Išsamesnės žinios apie atotolio vaikų psichosocialinį funkcionavimą leistų geriau planuoti prevencinių veiksnių poreikį bei kryptį.

**Tyrimo tikslas** – ištirti vidurinėsios vaikystės vaikų, augančių atotolio šeimose, psichosocialinį funkcionavimą ir nustatyti jo sąsajas su individualiais vaiko ir šeimos konteksto veiksniais.

#### **Tyrimo uždaviniai:**

- Ištirti 7–11 metų vaikų, kurių tėvai išvykę iš Lietuvos darbo tikslais, psichosocialinį funkcionavimą ir palyginti su Lietuvos reprezentacinės imties vaikų psichosocialiniu funkcionavimu ir palyginamosiomis

grupėmis, sudarytomis atsižvelgiant į šeiminę padėtį ir tėvų išvykimo faktą.

- Ištirti 7–11 metų vaikų šeimos reprezentacijas atsižvelgiant į vaikų išsiskyrimą su tėvais, nulemtą darbo migracijos ir / arba skyrybų.
- Nustatyti sociodemografinių ir su išvykimu susijusių veiksnių sąsajas su vaikų psichosocialiniu funkcionavimu ir šeimos reprezentacijomis atotolio šeimose.
- Išnagrinėti vaikų šeimos reprezentacijų sąsajas su vaikų psichosocialiniu funkcionavimu atotolio šeimose.

#### **Ginamieji teiginiai:**

- Atotolio šeimų vaikų psichosocialinis funkcionavimas nėra prastesnis nei Lietuvos reprezentacinės imties vaikų.
- Šeimos reprezentacijos yra svarbesnės atotolio šeimų vaikų psichosocialiniam funkcionavimui nei sociodemografiniai veiksniai.

## **METODIKA**

**Tyrimo dalyviai.** Imtis sudaryta kreipiantis į visas Vilniaus mokyklas, o kituose miestuose (Kaune, Klaipėdoje, Pasvalyje, Telšiuose, Druskininkuose) duomenys buvo renkami pagal pasiekiamumą. Tyrime dalyvavo 7–11 metų vaikai, jų tėvai / globėjai ir mokytojai. Iš viso surinkti duomenys apie 208 vaikus (anketų grįžtamumas buvo apytiksliai 68 %). Tyrimo dalyviai (vaikai) suskirstyti į keturias tyrimo kategorijas pagal išsiskyrimo su tėvais pobūdį:

1. Vaikai, gyvenantys pilnose šeimose, tačiau šiuo metu bent vienas iš tėvų negyvena kartu dėl darbo užsienyje arba yra grįžęs iš užsienio ne daugiau kaip prieš 3 mėnesius (*I tikslinė grupė*, N = 58);
2. Vaikai, gyvenantys nepilnose šeimose, be to, šiuo metu bent vienas iš tėvų negyvena kartu dėl darbo užsienyje arba yra grįžęs iš užsienio ne daugiau kaip prieš 3 mėnesius (*II tikslinė grupė*, N = 45);
3. Vaikai iš pilnų šeimų, kuriose nė vienas tėvų nėra išvykę (*I palyginamoji grupė*, N = 29);

4. Vaikai, gyvenantys nepilnose šeimose, kuriose nė vienas tėvų nėra išvykę. Į šią grupę įeina visos šeimos, kuriose tėvai oficialiai ar neoficialiai yra išsiskyrę ir negyvena kartu. Iš užpildytos anketos turi būti aišku, kad vaikai gyvena su vienu iš tėvų (*II palyginamoji grupė*, N = 76).

Bendras vaikų amžius svyruoja nuo 7 iki 11 m., vidurkis 9,0 (SN 1,20). Tyrime iš viso dalyvavo 99 berniukai (47,6 %) ir 109 mergaitės (52,4 %). Bendras suaugusiųjų tyrimo dalyvių amžius svyruoja nuo 20 iki 74 m., amžiaus vidurkis yra 37,89 m. (SN 9,32).

Skirstant atotolio šeimų vaikus (I ir II tikslinės grupės) pagal tai, kuris šeimos narys yra išvykęs, 35 vaikai yra iš šeimų, kuriose išvykusi mama, 58 – kuriose išvykęs tėtis ir 10 – kuriose išvykę abu tėvai. Išvykimo trukmė svyruoja nuo 1 iki 84 mėn. (t.y. 7 metų) (vidurkis 36,37 mėn., SN 31,57). Išvykimo trukmę atėmę iš vaiko amžiaus suskaičiavome, koks buvo vaiko amžius išvykimo metu: jis svyruoja nuo 0 m. (t.y. išvykę nuo vaiko gimimo) iki 10,83 m., vidurkis 5,93 m. (SN 3,04).

Vaikų psichosocialinio funkcionavimo palyginimams buvo naudoti Lietuvos reprezentacinės imties duomenys (Žukauskienės, Kajokienės, 2006, 2007).

**Kintamųjų įvertinimas.** *Tyrėjų sudaryta anketa.* Ją sudaro kreipimosi tekstas ir klausimai apie socioekonominę padėtį, vaikų išsiskyrimo patyrimą bei bendravimą šeimoje. Buvo sudarytos dviejų tipų anketos, skirtos pilnomis ir nepilnomis šeimoms.

*6–18 metų vaiko elgesio tyrimo lapas (angl. Child Behavior Check List, sutr. CBCL).* Klausimynas priklauso ASEBA metodikų grupei, kurias sukūrė T. M. Achenbach su kolegomis. CBCL 6/18 klausimynas yra standartizuotas Lietuvoje (Žukauskienė, Kajokienė, 2006). Jį sudaro 20 teiginių, skirtų vaiko kompetencijoms ir adaptyviam elgesiui vertinti, bei 112 teiginių, kurie leidžia įvertinti vaiko elgesio bei emocinius sunkumus. Klausimyną sudaro 8 skalės: nerimastingumo / depresiškumo, užsisklendimo / depresiškumo, somatinių skundų, socialinių sunkumų, mąstymo sunkumų, dėmesio sunkumų, taisyklių

laužymo ir agresyvaus elgesio. Šios skalės gali būti apjungtos į dvi platesnes – internalių ir eksternalių sunkumų.

*Mokytojo įvertinimo klausimynas (6–18 m.) (angl. Teacher Report Form, sutr. TRF.)*, sukurtas Achenbach ir Rescorla (2001). Tai analogiškas CBCL 6/18 klausimynas, skirtas mokytojų atsakymams apie vaikus rinkti. Klausimynas standartizuotas Lietuvoje (Žukauskienė, Kajokienė, 2006).

*Kinetinio šeimos piešinio metodika*. Vertinant piešinius, taikyta peržiūrėta prieraišumo reprezentacijų kodavimo sistema (Fury, Carlson ir Sroufe, 1997). Ją sudaro 8 skalės: gyvybingumo / kūrybingumo, pasididžiavimo ir laimingumo šeimoje, pažeidžiamumo, emocinio atstumo / izoliacijos, įtampos / pykčio, apsikeitimo vaidmenimis, keistumo / disociacijos ir bendros patologijos. Taip pat taikyta bendro balo formulė  $\gamma = (E + B) - L$ , kurioje E – „Emocinis atstumas/izoliacija“, B – „Bendra patologija“, L – „Pasididžiavimas ir laimingumas šeimoje“.

Piešinius vertino 3 vertintojai. Visų pirma, piešiniai pagal 8 skales buvo įvertinti 7 balų diapazone. Sutapimas tarp vertintojų buvo vidutinis. Siekiant padidinti sutarimą, vertinimo sistema buvo peržiūrėta ir sumažintas kategorijų skaičius (nuo 7 balų skalės pereita prie 5 balų skalės). Vertinant pagal peržiūrėtą sistemą, sutarimas tarp vertintojų buvo patenkinamas: ICC (*intra-class correlation coefficient*) svyravo nuo 0,72 iki 0,97.

**Duomenų analizė.** Visi skaičiavimai buvo atliekami naudojant statistinius duomenų paketus *SPSS for Windows 16.0*. ir *Sleipner for Windows 2.1*. (Bergman, El-Khoury, 2002).

## SVARBIAUSI REZULTATAI IR IŠVADOS

1. 7–11 metų vaikų, kurių vienas tėvų arba abu tėvai yra išvykę iš Lietuvos, psichosocialinis funkcionavimas nėra prastesnis palyginti su Lietuvos reprezentacinės imties vaikų, o nerimastingumo / depresiškumo ir bendrų sunkumų atotolio šeimų vaikai patiria

statistiškai reikšmingai mažiau palyginus su Lietuvos reprezentacinės imties vaikų sunkumais.

2. 7–11 metų vaikų, kurių vienas tėvų arba abu tėvai yra išvykę iš Lietuvos, šeimos reprezentacijos yra panašios į vaikų, nepatyrusių tėvų išvykimo, šeimos reprezentacijas.
3. Vaikų grupėms yra būdingi saviti šeimos reprezentacijų profiliai. Išryškėjo penki šeimos reprezentacijų profiliai – tai kompensuotas teigiamų reprezentacijų profilis, negatyvių šeimos reprezentacijų profilis, vidutinių reprezentacijų profilis, pozityvių šeimos reprezentacijų ir aukšto emocinio atstumo / izoliacijos reprezentacijų profiliai. Skirtingus reprezentacijų profilius turintys vaikai yra nevienodai pasiskirstę pagal lytį, amžių bei elgesio ir emocijų sunkumus, tačiau pagal šeiminei padėtį ar tėvų išvykimą pasiskirstymas esant skirtingiems reprezentacijų profilams nesiskyrė.
4. Vaiko lytis yra svarbus veiksnys atotolio vaikų psichosocialiniam funkcionavimui. Berniukų psichosocialinis funkcionavimas yra prastesnis ir jų šeimos reprezentacijose yra daugiau neigiamų požymių nei mergaičių.
5. Su atotolio šeimų vaikų psichosocialiniu funkcionavimu yra susiję kitokie veiksniai nei su jų šeimos reprezentacijomis. 7–11 metų vaikų, kurių vienas tėvų arba abu tėvai yra išvykę iš Lietuvos, psichosocialiniam funkcionavimui yra svarbus persikraustymų skaičius, o sociodemografiniai veiksniai, vaiko amžius tėvams išvykstant ir išvykusiojo dalyvavimas auklėjant vaiką nėra tokie svarbūs. Atotolio vaikų šeimos reprezentacijose atsispindintis pažeidžiamumas ir apsikeitimas vaidmenimis yra susiję su išvykusiojo dalyvavimu auklėjant vaiką, o kiti veiksniai šeimos reprezentacijoms nėra tokie svarbūs.
6. Atotolio vaikų įvairūs šeimos reprezentacijų aspektai yra susiję su jų psichosocialiniu funkcionavimu. Berniukams šių sąsajų nustatyta gerokai daugiau nei mergaitėms.

- a) Mergaičių reprezentacijose pastebimas emocinis atstumas yra susijęs su užsisklendimo / depresiškumo sunkumais, o reprezentacijose atsiskleidžiantis gyvybingumas / kūrybingumas susijęs su jų agresyviu elgesiu;
- b) Berniukų reprezentacijų įvairūs neigiami požymiai siejasi su daugiau dėmesio ir eksternalių sunkumų. Aukštesnis gyvybingumas ir pasididžiavimas, būdingi jų šeimos reprezentacijoms, susiję su mažiau dėmesio ir taisyklių laužymo sunkumų.

## LITERATŪRA

- Fury, G., Carlson, E.A., Sroufe, A. (1997). Children's representations of attachment relationships in family drawings. *Child Development* 68 (6), 1154–1164.
- Greenberg, M. T. (1999). Attachment and psychopathology in childhood // *Handbook of Attachment* (eds. Cassidy, J., Shaver, P. R.). NY, London: The Guilford Press, 469–496.
- Juozeliūnienė I., Kanapienienė L., Kazlauskaitė A. (2008). Atotolio šeima: nauja užduotis šeimos sociologijai. *Sociologija: mintis ir veiksmai* 1, 119–133.
- Kajokienė, I., Žukauskienė, R. (2007). 6-18 m. vaikų reprezentacinės ir klinikinės imčių emocijų ir elgesio sunkumų sąsajų palyginimas su šeimos socialiniais, ekonominiais ir demografiniais veiksniais. *Psichologija*, 36, 22–39.
- Minuchin, S. (1977). *Families and Family Therapy*. Harvard University Press.
- Rutter, M. (1974). La séparation parent-enfant: Les effets psychologiques sur les enfants. *La Psychiatrie de L'Enfant* 17(2), 479–514.
- Seltzer, J.A. (1991). Relationships between fathers and children who live apart: The father's role after separation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53, 79–101.
- Tallat-Kelpšaitė, G. (2007). Išsiskyrus didelės tragedijos nebus: tėvų ir artimųjų požiūris // Darbo migracijos ypatumai – veiksniai, pasekmės ir tendencijos – Kauno mieste (sud. Malinauskas, G.), Kaunas: VDU Socialinio darbo institutas, VŠĮ Šeimos santykių institutas, 30–34.
- Winkelmann, R. (2006). Parental separation and well-being of youths: Evidence from Germany. *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 35, 197–208.
- Žukauskienė, R., Kajokienė, I. (2006). CBCL, TRF ir YSR metodikų standartizavimas naudojant 6 – 18 m. Lietuvos vaikų imties duomenis. *Psichologija* 33, 31–46.

## **TRUMPA INFORMACIJA APIE DOKTORANTĘ**

Marija Giedraitytė studijavo psichologiją Vilniaus universitete. 2002 m. įgijo psichologijos bakalauro, 2004 m. – psichologijos magistro laipsnį. 2004–2010 m. buvo Vilniaus universiteto Klinikinės ir organizacinės psichologijos katedros doktorantė. Doktorantūros studijų metais yra gavusi Erasmus stipendiją studijoms Ciuricho universitete Šveicarijoje.

Nuo 2007 m. dirba psichologe Vilniaus universiteto Psichologinių tyrimų ir inovacijų mokymo centre (PTMC).

Nuo 2006 m. dirba Mykolo Romerio universiteto Psichologijos katedros lektore ir dėsto įvairius kursus psichologijos studentams, vadovauja kursiniams ir bakalauro darbams.

2004–2006 m. dirbo Vilniaus miesto vaiko ir motinos pensiono psichologe. Yra dirbusi psichologe kelete projektų, buvo studijos „Vaikų išsiskyrimo su tėvais dėl tėvų emigracijos galimos psichologinės pasekmės vaikui“ darbo grupės narė (bendradarbiaujant su Darbo ir socialinių tyrimų institutu).

Doktorantė yra publikavusi mokslinių straipsnių, skaitė pranešimų mokslinėse konferencijose, dalyvavo kvalifikacijos kėlimo kursuose. Taip pat dalyvauja organizuojant Lietuvos ir tarptautines psichologijos konferencijas, rašo psichologiją populiarinančius straipsnius.

Doktorantė yra Lietuvos Psichologų Sąjungos (LPS), Tarptautinės elgesio raidos tyrinėjimų draugijos (International Society for the Study of Behavioural Developmental, ISSBD) ir Europos raidos psichologijos draugijos (European Society for Developmental Psychology, ESDP) narė.

Mokslinių interesų sritis: raidos psichopatologija.

Adresas susirašinėti: [marijagiedraityte@yahoo.com](mailto:marijagiedraityte@yahoo.com)



## **PUBLIKACIJOS DISERTACIJOS TEMA**

- Giedraitytė, M., Bieliauskaitė, R. (2010). Vaikų, kurių tėvai išvykę iš Lietuvos, elgesio ir emocijų sunkumai: palyginimas su Lietuvos reprezentacinės imties duomenimis. *Tarptautinis psichologijos žurnalas: biopsichosocialinis požiūris* 7: 9–28.
- Giedraitytė, M., Lazdauskas, T., Zabarauskaitė, R. (2010). Vaikų poreikių tenkinimas ir psichosocialinis prisitaikymas tėvams išvykus iš Lietuvos. *Visuomenės sveikata* 2 (49), 1–12.
- Giedraitytė, M., Bieliauskaitė, R. (2006). Psichologinis atsparumas vaikystėje: sampratos problematika. *Psichologija* 34, 7–19.

## **PRANEŠIMAI KONFERENCIJOSE DISERTACIJOS TEMA**

- Giedraitytė, M. *Internal Family Representations and Psychosocial Adjustment of Children Facing Temporal Separation with Parents*. The 12th Biennial Conference of the European Association for Research on Adolescence (EARA). 2010 m. gegužės 12–15 d., Vilnius.
- Giedraitytė, M. *Psychological Adaptation of Children with Parents working Abroad*. XIV International Conference on Developmental Psychology (ESDP). 2009 m. rugpjūčio 18–22 d., Vilnius.
- Giedraitytė, M. *Vaikų, kurių tėvai išvykę iš Lietuvos, šeimos santykių reprezentacijos ir elgesio bei emociniai sunkumai*. IV-oji pasaulio lietuvių psichologų konferencija. 2009 m. liepos 2–4 d., Vilnius.
- Lazdauskas, T., Giedraitytė, M. *Pozityvios vaiko raidos galimybės emigracijos kontekste*. Mikro ir makro aplinkos įtaka pozityviosios tėvystės raiškai: geroji praktika, tarptautinė patirtis. 2008 m. lapkričio 20–21 d., Vilnius.
- Giedraitytė, M., Lazdauskas, T., Bieliauskaitė R., Jusienė, R. *Psychological Problems of Children with Parents Working Abroad*. 20-th Biennial ISSBD Meeting. 2008 m. liepos 13–17d., Würzburg.
- Giedraitytė, M., Bieliauskaitė, R. *Atsparumo tyrimų teorinis pagrindas*. III Pasaulio lietuvių psichologų konferencija. 2006 m. birželio 21–23 d., Vilnius.
- Giedraitytė, M. *Atsparumo konstruktas raidos psichopatologijoje*. Jaunųjų mokslininkų psichologų konferencija. 2006 m. balandžio 28 d., Vilnius.

## **ABOUT DOCTORAL STUDENT**

Marija Giedraitytė has studied psychology at Vilnius University. She was awarded a Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 2002 and a Master's degree in Psychology in 2004. From 2004 to 2010 she was a doctoral student at Vilnius University, Department of Clinical and Organizational Psychology.

During her doctoral studies she received an Erasmus grant for the studies in the University of Zürich in Switzerland.

Since 2007 she has been working as a psychologist at the Psychological Innovations and Research Training Center (PTMC) of Vilnius University.

Since 2006 m. she is a lecturer in the Department of Psychology at Mykolas Romeris university. From 2004 to 2006 she was a psychologist at Vilnius Shelter for Battered Women and Children. She has participated as a psychologist in several preventative projects, has been a workgroup member of the study "Possible psychological effects on children from families with parents abroad" (Institute of Labour and Social Research).

She has published scientific articles, has made reports in scientific conferences, raised her professional qualification in scientific courses. She has also been taking part in organizing national and international conferences of psychology, publishes articles on psychology in popular press.

Marija Giedraitytė is a member of Lithuanian Psychological Association, International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development and European Society for Developmental Psychology.

Scientific interests: developmental psychopathology.