Doing family by means of adoption

The depiction of long-term adoption in films for children and young people

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1   Adoption as a prototype

Adoption plays a significant role in society as a form of alternative family formation. Especially in times of diversification of family forms (e.g. Jurczyk 2017: 5), which leads to a lack of a universally valid definition of family, the adoptive family offers clues for the classification of kinship relationships. For example, by looking at adoptive families, it is possible to examine which factors beyond biological descent relationships explicitly make a group of people a family in the first place. Moreover, societal attitudes toward adoption can offer clues to attitudes such as strong biologism (Ruggiero 2014: 35).

The following work relates to underage adoption, the primary goal of which is the creation of a stable family structure for the children involved in it (Bovenschen et al. 2018a: 4). Adoption in this study is consequently defined as a care relationship between at least two people who are characterized by parent-child relationships in terms of age, but who have no biological relationship to each other (Reinhardt 2017: 20). Under examination here are third-party adoptions, which are considered a classic form of child adoption in the sense of child and youth welfare (Fendrich/ Mühlmann 2016: 4). By looking at this example, a contribution can be made to answering the question of family-constituting factors (Fisher 2003: 337). Since each country has its own adoption law, Germany will be used as an example for some points.

The use of the motif of adoption is particularly relevant in children's and youth films, in which the thematization of the creation of a family unit has a dual function. As family entertainment films, children's and youth films have a significant share in cinema production (Kurwinkel/Schmerheim 2013: 9). Thus, these films are characterized by a high complexity of themes and levels of interpretation, which make them interesting for adults as well. Hence, this specific genre reaches a particularly broad mass of recipients (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2010: 12 f.). Based on this, it can

be assumed that the mere depiction of the adoption of a non-biological child in children's and youth films has an opinion-forming effect on a large part of society. For science, such film formats also offer, as a third function, the possibility of gaining insights into a field that is hardly, if at all, accessible (Akremi 2019: 1203).

Due to the exemplary character of adoptions as well as the high relevance of children's and youth films on the formation of opinions, the following question will be examined: How are doing family practices between an adopted child and his or her social parents presented in a cinematic way in children's and youth films?

2   The de-bounded family as an everyday doing family

Since the beginning of industrialisation, a societal change can be traced that leads to an economisation of society (Schimank/Volkmann 2008: 382). The individual is confronted with the imperative of actively shaping his or her entire professional and non-professional life (Voss 2007: 98). These new demands lead, among other things, to postmodern family life being conceived like a business enterprise. With regard to adoptive families, this demand for an active family design can trigger a particular pressure to succeed – namely, in terms of building a sustainable relationship between the children and those adopting them.

As a result of the expanded self-organisation, the gainful employment of adult family members is being dissolved, which inevitably also affects private life and changes the conditions of everyday family life (Jurczyk/Schier 2007: 12 f.). Especially the aspect of the spatio-temporal dissolution of boundaries between work and private life has a strong impact on family and social relationships, as interpersonal contacts are at least made more difficult, and in some cases even prevented (Voss/ Weiss 2014: 42). In adoptive families, parents may initially find it difficult to adjust their lives to caring for the child. When a child is born to the mother, she usually has several months to prepare herself, her environment, and her schedule for everyday life with a child. Adoptive parents often wait months or even several years before they are granted a child, usually relatively unexpectedly from one day to the next, so that they inevitably have to abruptly change their previous personal schedule. This means, e.g., that at least one parent suspends his or her own professional activity for at least one year from the time the child is admitted in order to take over the care of the child (BAG 2019: 56).

Jurczyk (2014) asks how families manage to establish togetherness and provide care. Care must be provided in the form of nurturing, caring, educating, providing, and giving. Jurczyk (2020) traces the doing family to two basic forms of interaction between individual members: balance management and the construction of community (see also Jurczyk et al. in this volume). Specifically, the production performance takes place through common actions and undertakings, through mutual ref-

erence to each other, and through a symbolically charged representation as a family (Jurczyk 2014: 61; Jurczyk 2020: 29 f.). The latter happens, e.g., through rites of passage such as family celebrations and traditions, family-cycle rituals, and everyday life events that have been specially created and installed in a cyclically recurring manner, thus leading to a sense of "we" (Keddi 2014: 97). In addition to the family members themselves, public actors from the economy, churches or associations also have an impact on the production of the family (ibid.: 64 f.). For adoptive families, the youth welfare office and adoption agencies also play an important role.

Due to the constant need for their own production or the complex balancing act that takes place in the process, families represent a system susceptible to disruption (Jurczyk et al. 2014: 12). This is especially true when they are exposed to particular pressures, as is the case, for instance, with the increased pressure to legitimise in foster and adoptive families. Helming (2014) used the example of foster families to discover peculiarities of doing family in families with social rather than biological kinship. A first characteristic lies in the practice that social parents can choose the children, which contradicts the claim of unconditionality with which children should be taken. A second characteristic is that the strangeness of the body must be overcome, which is automatic in a biological-physical kinship. Overall, similarities in appearance or character traits and behaviors must be actively sought and thus established to a particular degree. Social networks, such as family and friends, can play either a supporting or a hindering role in this process. If doing family is already a challenge with young children, adolescence presents a double burden. Children in social families experience a double strangeness during this time. They are neither psychosocially nor biologically like their parents (Helming 2014: 84). Naming, such as mom or dad, therefore has a particularly high symbolic significance in the production of social family (see also Schäfer 2020). Consequently, even more than in biologically determined families, rituals take on an important role in establishing the necessary sense of "we". The casual nature of upbringing, which expresses an acceptance of the child as it is, is equally essential. In summary, it can be stated that the topic of strangeness and the establishment of familiarity has a special and comparatively greater significance in the establishment of social families than in biological ones.

The synopsis of international publications confirms adoption as an important measure of youth welfare and as a good developmental opportunity for the children involved. Most adoptions, over 80 percent, proved to be stable and thus offered the adolescents a permanent new family. Problems were found mainly among late-adopted children who had had difficult experiences prior to adoption (Bovenschen et al. 2018a: 6). In this context, some psychological studies were able to identify a stronger tendency towards attachment difficulties (Van den Dries et al. 2009), behavioural problems (Juffer/van Ijzendoorn 2005) and developmental delays (Brodzinsky/Steiger 1991) compared to non-adopted children. In addition, it was

possible to gather general conditions which speak for or against the success of an adoption. These influencing factors can be found in the individual characteristics of the child as well as in the characteristics of the adoptive family and in the general conditions. On the child's side, the development of family relationships is primarily influenced by the child's age and previous experiences, such as emotional and behavioral problems, sexual abuse or previous relationship breakdowns. Significant influencing factors on the part of the adoptive family are the parenting behavior and the way the child's behavioral problems are handled, a younger age of the adoptive parents, and a short duration of the adopting person's relationship and motives for adoption. The general conditions have a negative impact on the stability of the adoption, especially when the adoptive family was poorly prepared or followed up and the information about the child's history is inadequate (Bovenschen et al. 2018b: 29). These study findings may provide clues to the characteristics of adoptive families and to the establishment of a family unit.

3 The exploratory reconstruction of doing family by means of sociological film analysis

Considering the low level of research, an exploratory qualitative method was chosen (Flick 2017: 27). The aim was to reconstruct the cinematic representation of the relationship between the child and the adopting character, as well as the accompanying attitudinal and opinion offerings that children's and adolescent films offer their viewers to establish familial unity in adoptive families (Helfferich 2009: 21; Kümmerling-Meibauer 2010: 22). In order to examine films qualitatively, sociological film analysis is appropriate (Dimbath 2013: 403). Since there has been little research on the relationship between adopted children and the adopting parents in general and none at all by means of a film analysis of various children's and adolescents' films, an evaluation based on Grounded Theory according to Strauss and Corbin (1999) is suitable.

At the beginning of the analysis, the complete story of the respective film was summarized in order to understand the role of the portrayal of adoption in the overall context (Mikos 2015: 76). Furthermore, an analysis of the most important characters was made in order to be able to include their character in the evaluation (Faulstich 2013: 99 ff.). As part of the contextualization, the year of release, the genre, and the country of origin of the film are also considered. The entire film was examined for the scenes in which the relationship between the adopted child and the adopting person played a role. These sequences were analyzed in view of the image composition and spatial symbolism, as well as the lighting and color design. In addition, the individual settings of the sequences were examined with regard to the setting size, the setting perspective, the sequence of events, the dialogues and

the facial expressions as well as gestures of the characters. Findings from psychology and media studies were considered. The analysis took place with the help of the analysis software MAXQDA directly on the film material, since a verbalization of the impressions would mean a strong reduction of the significant symbols (Gräf et al. 2017: 32; Hickethier 2012: 28).

Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver (2018)

In 2018, the German classic novel Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver by Michael Ende was adapted into a film. The film is a German production by director Dennis Gansel. The two protagonists are the orphan boy Jim Button and the locomotive driver Lukas. Jim is kidnapped as a baby by pirates and accidentally taken to the very small island of Lummerland, which is home to his adoptive mother Mrs. Waas and Luke as well as two other people. Mrs. Waas does not tell Jim for a long time that she is not his birth mother. As time goes on Jim begins to wonder about the fact that he is black and Mrs. Waas is white. When Luke has to go on a journey with his locomotive Jim decides to accompany the locomotive driver and uncover his biological origins. Towards the end of the film, the orphan boy gets the chance to ask a wise dragon about his ancestry. However, he does not use this opportunity. The characters analyzed were Jim Button and Mrs. Waas.

Maleficent (2014)

The 2014 film Maleficent by US director Robert Stromberg looks at the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty from the perspective of the evil fairy. The U.S. production tells how the fairy Maleficent curses the king's daughter named Aurora to prick herself on a spindle on her 16th birthday and fall into a death-like sleep. This state could only be dissolved by the true love's kiss. Thereupon, the royal couple decides that their newborn child should grow up far away from them with the good fairies. In the course of time Maleficent of all people takes more and more care of the girl and becomes a mother figure to her. When Aurora, despite all precautions, pricks herself on a spindle and falls into the predicted sleep, the kiss of her social mother Maleficent turns out to be the saving kiss of true love. The characters analyzed were Maleficent and Aurora.

Despicable Me (2010)

Despicable Me is an animated film, which was directed by the French Pierre Coffin and the US American Chris Renaud in 2010. Needing help with a crime, he adopts three girls named Margo, Edith and Agnes with the intention of returning them to the orphanage after the crime is completed. Over time, however, a close relationship

develops between Gru and the children. Gru's opponent takes advantage of this and kidnaps the girls. As a result, Gru rescues the three children and promises them to never let them go. The end of the film shows how the everyday life of the four becomes normal and they become a family.

4 The doing family in adoptive families in children's and adolescent films

The analysis of the three films shows that the ideal-typical realisation of the doing family in adoptive families in children's and youth films takes place in seven phases:

Stage 1: First contact

The first contact between the adolescents and the accepting persons usually takes place unplanned and without focus on the possible development of a relationship. The prospective parents show a strong distance to the children and the children also behave reservedly. The picture is very different from common adoption practice in Germany. In third-party adoptions the first contact between the child and the adoptive applicants for the purpose of adoption is initiated and accompanied by staff from the respective adoption agency. These check the suitability of the adoptive applicants and prepare the potential parents for their tasks and the specifics of adoption, such as possible attachment problems with the children (Bovenschen et al. 2018a: 51 ff.; Bovenschen et al. 2018b: 38). Preference is given to married couples as parents. Single persons, as is the case in the films, are only granted adoption in special cases (BAG 2019: 53 ff.).

In addition, the personality of the parents is checked for a reflected self-concept and the general life satisfaction as well as the educational guiding ideas are assessed. Furthermore, economic security must be guaranteed (ibid.: 52 ff.). All of these prerequisites are not tested in any way in the three films and, moreover, are not fulfilled in their entirety in any of the films. The dark fairy Maleficent has been deeply hurt and disappointed by Aurora's father, causing her life satisfaction to turn into frustration (M, 00:19:57-00:22:01). She shows no educational guidance and even wants to harm the child with a curse at the beginning of the film (M, 00:30:36-00:33:10). Gru, as a villain, shows behavior deviating from the norms of society. He torments children, e.g., by destroying their toys (DM, 00:03:23-00:04:09), and lies to the three girls at their first encounter by pretending to be an answering machine (DM, 00:05:30-00:06:33). Nothing is known about Mrs. Waas prior to her encounter with Jim. No statements can be made about her general satisfaction with life, her self-concept, or her ideas guiding her education. Moreover, she does not apply for adoption, but is appointed the role of mother by the king of the island (JB, 00:02:28-00:05:06). The economic stability required of adoptive parents in Germany is not explicitly men-

tioned in any of the films, but seems to be present in all three cases. Maleficent, e.g., is the ruler of an empire (M, 00:23:58-00:25:59), Mrs. Waas owns a grocery store (JB, 00:07:04-00:08:30), and Gru has a job as a villain and lives in a smaller suburb, which is why he can be counted among the middle class (DM, 00:04:36-00:04:59).

Overall, it can be stated that the first contact between the children and their later adoptive parents is not only characterised by a very distant relationship and a lack of attempts at relationship building. Furthermore, the portrayal of the primary encounter is very atypical, since in the films it takes place by chance and without the presence of a state welfare authority.

Stage 2: Beginning of the adoption relationship

The beginning of the adoption relationship is clearly verbalized and labeled as such in two of the three films. In the selected films, two of the four classic reasons – involuntary childlessness, altruism, single people, and same-sex couples – for adoption are addressed as triggers for adopting a child (Fisher 2003: 338 f.). In addition, it is noticeable that all three adopting individuals are single. Since none of the films portrays a desire for children on the part of the adoptive parents, it does not seem as if this is the decisive reason for adopting a child. In this respect, the adoption can be understood as a selfless and thus altruistic act.

All three cases differ from our social reality, where adoption is a highly formalised process lasting several months. In Germany, in addition to the employees in adoption agencies, as representatives of the state, the adoptive parents and, depending on their age, the children must consent to the adoption (Bovenschen et al. 2018a: 51 ff.). In Despicable Me, the children are old enough to at least be asked about on whether they want to be adopted by Gru. Moreover, in adoption practice, married couples are preferred as parents. Single persons, as is the case in all three films, are only granted adoption in special cases (BAG 2019: 53). The distant relationship between children and parents at the beginning of the adoption relationship seems very realistic considering the strangeness of the body. This physiological strangeness represents one of the characteristics that distinguishes social parenthood from biological parenthood, as there is no biological-bodily relationship in third-party adoptions (Helming 2014: 77).

Stage 3: Shared experiences

The third phase takes up the most space in this process. In it, the common experiences of the two groups of people are mapped. Experiences that are accompanied by positive emotions, such as happiness, joy or fun, appear to be particularly important for the development of the "we" feeling (Keddi 2014: 97). In this phase, the children's openness and trust in the adopting parent also strengthens. This behav-

ior contributes in a special measure to the fact that the parents cannot escape their own emotions towards the children. In addition, the children reveal interest in the parent, the parent's life and past, and the parent's wishes and dreams, and show gratitude for the relationship and the caring services of the accepting person. The parent begins to protect the children from physical and emotional dangers, such as injustice. In addition, parents provide care for children by, e.g., feeding them, tucking them in, fixing their clothes, driving them to appointments, or putting them to bed. Many of these caregiving activities are perpetuated and, in conjunction with rituals such as family or birthday celebrations, represent an important element in establishing a sense of "we" (Keddi 2014: 97). In addition, parents increasingly show their children more respect and tenderness, signaling to them that they fully accept them.

The significance of the care services depicted in the films, such as the care, support, and upbringing of the children, is an elementary component of the definition of family (Jurczyk 2014: 66). The physical and emotional protection that the social parents provide to their children in the cinematic realizations can be understood as an aspect of care. Furthermore, the importance of the presented common undertakings, actions and rituals is also reflected in the everyday life of social families. Recurring actions, such as family celebrations and traditions, family-cycle rituals, and everyday life events are essential elements in establishing the sense of we in biologically and socially based family forms (Helming 2014: 75; Keddi 2014: 97).

The casualness of parenting staged in the evaluated materials expresses the acceptance of the child by the accepting person (Helming 2014: 86). The unconditional acceptance of the children, which is expressed primarily in the respectful treatment of the adolescents by the parents, is clearly present in the films. In this, the depiction of the production of family contradicts previous research that precisely questions this unconditionality in social families (Helming 2014: 74). Moreover, the films portray the spatial level, especially in the form of cohabitation, as particularly important for familial living. However, the fact that this has to be coordinated to a special extent in times of postmodernity is not addressed (Jürgens 2001: 42).

The aspect of positive emotions as a constituting element remains unconsidered in previous research. In all three films, however, it is of particular significance for the production of family in the adoptive families. Furthermore, the behavior of the children in the analysed data material is striking. This plays an important role in the creation of closeness to the adoptive parents. Thus, the children show openness and gratitude towards the latter, show them a high degree of trust and sometimes also take responsibility for caring for the adults. In contrast, previous research on the success of adoptive families considers children's behavior primarily as a possible disruptive influence in the establishment of a family unit. This is especially true for emotional and behavioral disturbances (Bovenschen et al. 2018b: 29).

Stage 4–6: The crisis

After the phase of shared experiences and growing together, in all three films there is one experience that triggers a crisis in the relationship. This situation is accompanied, especially on the part of the children, by negative feelings such as anger and sadness. Anger is expressed, e.g., in Maleficent, when Aurora confronts Maleficent about whether she knows that there is a curse on her. When Maleficent makes it clear to her that it was her who cursed Aurora, and then approaches her to reassure her, the girl says very firmly: "No! Don't touch me. You are the evil in the world. You" (M, 01:04:48-01:04:55). The emotions shown also express the children's disappointment in the behavior of the accepting persons in both other selected films. The children's trust in their parents is broken, which is why they emotionally distance themselves from them.

In at least two of the three films analysed, the thought of returning to the birth parents plays a role in triggering the crisis. In Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver, the crisis situation arises because Jim realizes that he cannot be Mrs. Waas' biological child due to the difference in skin color. As a result, he decides to go away with Luke to learn about his biological parentage (JB, 00:16:10-00:17:29).

Across the films, the beginning of the crisis is characterised above all by the spatial distancing of the children from their parents. It is remarkable that all three accepting characters willingly let their children go without much argument. Maleficent lets Aurora run away, even though she rides after her in later sequences (M, 01:07:18-01:09:59). Mrs. Waas is asleep when Jim says goodbye to her and leaves (JB, 00:17:29-00:18:11). Gru takes the girls to the car of the home's director, who has come to pick them up (DM, 01:08:03-01:08:54).

With the onset of the crisis, the desire to overcome the distance created by it also sets in. This need is found both on the part of the parents and on that of the children. In addition, feelings of guilt appear and a longing develops in the spatial separation, which comes from both sides.

During the crisis, the parents become particularly close to their children and seem to discover their love for them.

The end of the problematic situation is expressed in the search and finding of physical closeness between the children and their parents. This renewal of physical intimacy, in comparison to the one before the distancing, is increasingly initiated by the parents. Concomitantly, the spatial closeness is restored. The end of the crisis, at least in Despicable Me and Maleficent, is accompanied by the parents saving and thereby protecting their children. In doing so, the bond with the children is restored. The mechanism is shown particularly impressively in the scene where Gru has to risk his own life to regain Margo's trust (DM, 01:19:49-01:21:51). On the emotional level, the reunion between the parents and the children is accompanied by joy and happiness.

In social families, the double strangeness (Helming 2014: 84) has been observed, which can be a stressful situation for the whole family during the children's puberty. However, it involves an identity problem that is grounded in the biological and psychosocial differences with the parents.

The crises shown in the film suggest that a family based on adoption, in contrast to the normal family, is so different from the norm that its creation must be accompanied by problematic situations.

The presentation of the crisis suggests that the breach of trust in children by social parents can have devastating effects on the relationship. Nevertheless, by emphasising the parents' turning to the children, by overcoming obstacles, the making of family can be positively affected. In previous studies, especially a high degree of sensitivity and a secure attachment representation by the accepting persons are considered positive for the production of family (Bovenschen et al. 2018b: 44 f.). This is especially true if the children have attachment disorders due to previous negative experiences, such as a stay in a home (Bovenschen et al. 2018b: 43). This is the case in the films with Despicable Me, in which the three girls were placed in an orphanage before being adopted by Gru.

Since the course crisis is characterised by efforts by the parents for the children and their end is accompanied by physical, spatial and psychological closeness as well as positive emotions, it seems that the relationship between the children and their social parents takes place in crises. Thus, the production of family in adoptive families would be described as a process that virtually requires crisis moments.

Stage 7: Normalisation

In the last phase of the crisis situation, the spatial proximity is consolidated and a close relationship between the children and their parents is established. This is exemplified in the relationship between Maleficent and Aurora, who unite their two kingdoms, that of the humans and that of the moors (M, 01:25:55-01:27:58). The love between the two parties is explicated both verbally and in the form of actions. In addition, the children proudly share their successes with their parents. The depicted actions of this phase involve other people to a particular extent – e.g., Aurora's coronation involves the inhabitants of the moors, the good fairies, and the prince (M, 01:25:44-01:27:58).

The designation of this final phase as normalisation stems from the absence of crisis. To what extent this portrayal is oriented towards the staging of normal families cannot be said without further research. The extent to which it is oriented toward the everyday life of normal families cannot be determined either, as there is no such thing as natural family action (Jurczyk et al. 2014: 11). If the two basic forms of interaction between family members, balance management and the construction of community, are used as a reference, this last stage appears as a successfully pro-

duced family. The spatial closeness combined with the feeling of mutual love depicts balance management. The close relationship and sharing of successes, as well as the inclusion of the social environment in the actions between the children and their parents, can be understood as doing family.

The phase model of cinematic staging

The question about the representation of doing family practices between the adopted child and his social parents in children's and youth films can be answered to the effect that the staging is a process in seven phases, in the course of which the representation of the closeness-distance relationship between the children and the parents, the behavior of the parent towards the children as well as the behavior of the children towards the parents and the representation of the emotions of both parties change. What exactly the changes in the seven individual phases of the ideal-typical staging of the production of family in children's and youth films look like has already been elaborated. A summary illustration of the results can be found in Fig. 1.

Figure 1: Representation of the doing family in children's and youth films (Own illustration)
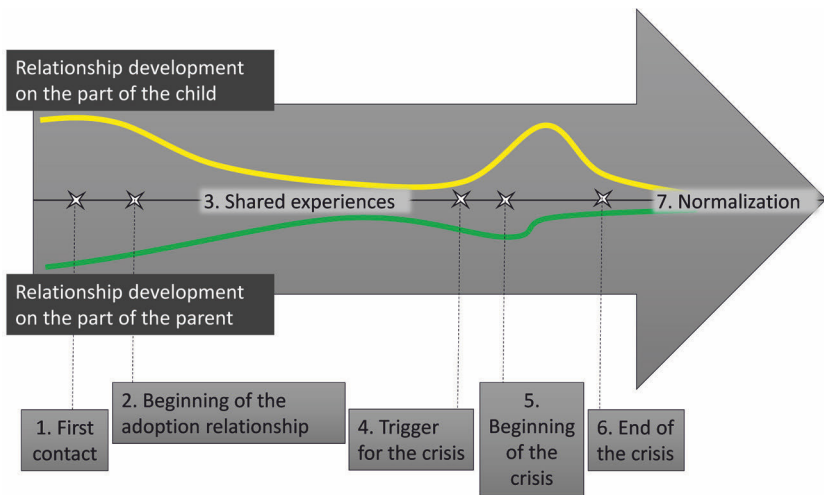
There it can be seen that the relationship between the children and their accepting parents is characterised by a great distance to each other during the first contact. A rapprochement between the two parties begins, which intensifies with the start of the adoption relationship, especially on the part of the children. In the course of the phase of shared experiences, the children and their parents become very close to

each other. The individuals begin to distance themselves from each other as the crisis is triggered. This development is greatly accelerated with the onset of the crisis on the part of the children. The adolescents quickly and significantly distance themselves from their parents. The latter start an opposite movement and become much closer to their children with the onset of the crisis. With the end of the crisis, closeness is also restored on the part of the children and intensifies in the course of the last phase, normalisation.

Through this abstract representation, it becomes clear that the creation of a familial unit in adoptive families is depicted as a crisis-laden process in cinematic portrayals. It appears that the creation of family in adoptive families requires the joint overcoming of difficulties. This can be seen, on the one hand, in the fact that the end of the crisis is marked by special physical and psychological closeness between the children and their parents. On the other hand, it can be deduced from the fact that the final phase of normalisation is staged without conflict.

5 Family constituent factors and research desiderata

According to the present considerations, it seems as if the filmmakers primarily consider shared experiences and overcoming difficulties as family-constituting factors. Furthermore, positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, and fun, during the joint activities and the spatial proximity between the persons are relevant. At the beginning of the relationship, it is mainly the children who overcome the distance through their openness and establish closeness. They also condition the establishment of family through trust in the accepting persons, gratitude to their parents, and interest in and care for the parent. In the course of the crisis, the parents take over the establishment of closeness. They solidify the development of a family unit through caring and protective services, respectful treatment of the children, integration of the children into their daily lives, and overcoming obstacles. Since adoption can be considered a prototype for the new family forms, it can be assumed that the family-constituting factors just mentioned are applicable to all forms of social parenthood. This ideal-typical portrayal of the production of family in adoptive families enters the viewers' attitudes and opinions as well as patterns of action and identity templates as a cultural model (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2010: 22).

The present study can be understood as exploratory regarding family-constituting factors in social families. The results have significance for the representation of the course of the production of family in adoptive families in children's and youth films. To what extent the results can be transferred to the everyday life of social families has to be investigated by means of further research. For this purpose, some suggestions can be found in the following.

The evaluated children's and youth films depict the creation of family in adoptive families as a process that requires a crisis and its overcoming. This is accompanied by a breach of trust between the parents and their children. Further research should be conducted especially in light of the consideration of why relationship development is portrayed as being in crisis. For example, the portrayal of doing family in social families could be compared to that of biologically based kinship relationships in films. Furthermore, it could be interesting for the investigation of family-constituting factors in times of pluralisation of family forms to find out how the crisis-like cinematic staging is received by the audience. This could be analysed separately for members of socially founded and biologically founded families by means of guided interviews. Furthermore, the occurrence, course and overcoming of crises in adoptive families could be examined, e.g. with the help of problem-centered interviews.

Another proximity-generating and thus family-constituting factor in the children's and youth films is the behavior of the children. They show themselves turned towards the parents and grateful and show the accepting persons a great deal of trust and partly also care. In particular, since previous research tends to understand the actions of adolescents as possible disruptive factors, but does not see them as having the responsibility (or position) to positively influence the relationship, the question arises as to what attitude social parents have towards this issue (Bovenschen et al. 2018b: 29). For example, a quantitative questionnaire could be used to determine accepting individuals' expectations of their children. These results could influence the adoption process at several points, such as the selection of adoptive applicants and when problems arise in the production of family.

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