

# **Eco-Cultural Theory in the Research of Trans-National Families and Their Daily Life**

Hille Janhonen-Abuquah

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Hille Janhonen-Abuquah, *Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki*

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# **Eco-Cultural Theory in the Research of Trans-National Families and Their Daily Life**

## **Summary**

How is the daily life constructed when family members live apart? The global mass migration has increased rapidly and thus the family members are spread over different countries, continents. The concept of family changes when it can no longer be connected to one dwelling, one country of origin and to a patriarchal concept of a family. Being a stranger, encountering the others and finding a place – home - in the world puts the families in challenging situations. I look at the trans-national families as actively constructing their daily lives despite the difficulties they face. Eco-cultural theory (Weisner, Gallimore 1989) sees family as proactive, as constantly determining how the limits set by the society, global and national economy and ecology affect the family. The family changes its daily routines in order to accommodate with changes of the environment. Ecological features and changes directly affect the daily routines of a family. Eco-cultural model draws on socio-cultural theory which emphasizes on the socially constructed nature of cognition and mind. Eco-cultural theory has several key concepts: eco-cultural niche, niche features, family culture, family themes, and daily activity settings as units of analysis, family action and accommodation. Eco-cultural model helps to look at the transnational families not only from the point of view of a specific national culture (e.g. Kurdish, Pakistani), but also from the point of view of a family facing a new situation, where they have to adapt. A transnational family has strengths, limits, power and weaknesses. It meets a social world and eco-cultural forces unknown. This approach helps to assess, examine and develop immigration programs from the point of view of the user/newly arrived immigrant family.

**Keywords:** International Migration, Eco-Cultural Theory, Daily Routines, Household Behaviour, Transnational Family

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*Address for correspondence:*

Hille Janhonen-Abuquah  
Faculty of Behavioural Sciences  
University of Helsinki  
PO Box 8 Siltavuorenpenger 10  
00014 Helsinki Yliopisto  
Finland  
Phone: +358 9 191 29791  
Fax: +358 9 191 29780  
E-mail: hille.janhonen-abuquah@helsinki.fi

## **Why study transnational families through an eco-cultural theory?**

This article describes how the daily life of transnational families can be studied through an eco-cultural theory (Gallimore et al. 1989, 1993). This theory allows transnational families to be studied (Basch et al. 1994) not only from the point of view of a specific national culture (e.g. Kurdish, Pakistani), but also from the point of view of a family facing a new situation to which they have to adapt. A key assumption is that all families seek to make meaningful accommodations to their ecological niches through sustainable routines of daily life (Cooper et al. 1998, 112). The eco-cultural model explores categorical concepts such as culture, ethnicity and family in a novel way:

When ethnicity and culture are included in discussions of identity, they are typically treated as separate domains of identity or as static labels rather than as dynamic parts of adolescents' ongoing experiences. How can researchers move beyond the categorical treatment of ethnicity, culture and family? (Cooper et al. 1998, 111).

Eco-cultural theory sees families as proactive—as constantly determining how the limits set by society, the global and national economy and ecology affect the family. The family changes its daily routines as it accommodates to the changes in the environment. These ecological features and changes, either global or local, directly affect the daily routines of a family. For example, the hurricane in New Orleans affected oil prices, the price of fuel went up and, as a result, a mother on the other side of the world had to commute to work by public transportation and the picking up of the children from day care had to be reorganised. Global changes have local effects, and the eco-cultural forces affect the family routines.

The transnational family can be comprehended as a net of emotionally-attached people stretched across the globe (Basch et al. 1994). This net has strengths, limits, power and weaknesses, it meets unknown eco-cultural forces and has to adapt to the new situation. Are transnational families more vulnerable to eco-cultural forces? How do they manage stressful situations that require adapting and re-evaluating their daily life? The approach discussed in this article might help to assess, examine and develop immigration programmes from the point of view of the user – the newly arrived immigrant family.

### **Definition of a transnational family**

The dynamic movement of a family in eco-cultural theory applies well to transnational families, who are in many ways on the move, both physically and spiritually. A respondent in Schmalzbauer's (2004, 1325) study, which is an example of a transnational family study, points out the importance of family: "There is no work in Honduras and without family people have nothing". Family is a transnational survival circuit. Money wiring services are found in Honduran town centres, exemplifying the centrality of these economic flows to the survival of transnational families and communities. 'Community other-mothers' make certain that everyone is taken care of, knowing that if something was to happen to them they too would rely on kin to take care of their children and household. Securing family survival is as important as securing individual survival.

Schmalzbauer's (2004) study is about homesickness, frustration, desperation and paradoxically also about hope, struggle and family loyalty. She studied the role of the family in the transnational migration process and how families actually function in a transnational space, researching the ways in which families negotiate caretaking responsibilities and realised the significance of migration as a family project.

Basch et al. (1994) see transnationalism as a concept that is contradictory to the conventional integration model, which expects migrants to move from one culture to another and gradually adapt to the new environment. Transnationalism, in contrast, emphasises the belief that it is possible for people to belong to several locations at the same time, and thus have a number of identities. These grass-root level relationships are important, from both social and economic perspectives. Transnational migration theory defines transnationalism as

the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes trans-nationalism to emphasize the ways many immigrants today build social fields that cross-geographic, cultural, and political borders. Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships- familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political – that span borders we call ‘trans-migrants’. An essential element of trans-nationalism is the multiplicity of involvements that trans-migrant sustains in both home and host societies. Trans-migrants take actions, make decisions and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states (Basch et al. 1994, 7)

Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, 3) define transnational families as families that live some or most of the time separated from each other yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’ even across national borders. These families could also be called multi-local or multi-sited families, or families living in spatial separation. Transnational families have played an integral part in European colonial and settler histories but have now, due to globalising trends such as the creation of the ‘informational society’ and transnational restructurings of capitalistic production and international trade, become a pronounced part of everyday life in Europe. Today’s transnational families are characterised by a more elastic relationship to their place of origin, ethnicity and national belonging.

Interestingly, Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, 7-11) have paid attention to the class distinction between 'migrants' and 'cosmopolitan transnationals'. Migrants are left waiting and wondering about their residence and citizenship applications, whereas highly educated and skill-endowed cosmopolitan transnationals are actively sought and offered residential privileges or fast-track citizenship. According to Bryceson and Vuorela the word 'migrant' tends to carry class connotation and is applied more readily to people who are considered economically or politically deprived and seek betterment of their circumstances. Transnational families at the higher end of the income scale, who tend to move for financial or status reasons, are seen as being somehow different, bestowing their presence and skills on the receiving nation as opposed to other migrants who are imposing or even inflicting their needs on the receiving country. However, the issues of connecting, mixing and networking are very much the same for both the mass of international migrants and transnational elites.

I have previously remarked that multiculturalism has a dual image; it has both selfish and humane aspects (Janhonen-Abuquah & Palojoki 2005, 367). Selfish multiculturalism can be described as placing high value on fluent language skills, working abroad and building an international career, and co-operation with white, rich countries. The humane aspect of multiculturalism is associated with development aid, receiving immigrants, and co-operation with poor countries. In selfish multiculturalism one is only profiting from the cultural diversity, whereas in humane multiculturalism one tries to consider cultural diversity before acting. The division of migrants into mass international migration and transnational elite migration follows this same type of dualism.

Transnationalism differs from the concept of diaspora, which is a social organisation that has left from one specific location, the place of origin, where the hope of returning remains. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) point out the simultaneity of assimilation and transnationality. They believe that trans-migrants engage in two ways: ways of being (action) and ways of belonging (identity, conscious connection). Remittances are an important part of transnational lives. Levitt states the importance of social and economic remittance in structuring the transnational village: "Social remittance is the ideas,

behaviours and social capital that flow from receiving to sending communities. Remittances are the tools by which ordinary individuals create global culture at the local level.” (Levitt 2004)

The transnational family placed in the eco-cultural model is the survival unit that manages to navigate through rough times and takes care of its members. This navigating is made easier through sustainable daily routines. By understanding these mundane, repetitive, day-to-day activities on a family level, we can also better understand the life and challenges of a transnational family.

### **What is an eco-cultural model?**

Eco-cultural theory is derived from a psycho-cultural model developed by Whiting and Whiting (1975), combined with elements of Cole’s (1991) cultural activity theory. The eco-cultural model was first used with families with disabled children, to look at the changes the family had to face in their daily routine. Weisner and Gallimore argue that it can be used in various settings of family life and in cross-national settings. It has been used with Chinese-American, Japanese-American, and Asian immigrant families, Navajo and Japanese families, Italian families with infants, working poor families facing welfare reforms, and Mexican immigrant families in California. (Weisner 1994, 20). In eco-cultural interventions, the present situation of a family is carefully examined by asking: what are the actions families are already taking that have adaptive value, and where to find slots where the new practices could fit?

\*\* INSERT TABLE 1 HERE \*\*

The eco-cultural theory is complementary to other family ecology theories. One well known family ecology approach, that eco-cultural theory criticises, is Bronfenbrenner’s model (1979, 16-42). Bronfenbrenner emphasises studying the relations among the

multiple settings in which children and their families are directly involved. His model also examines how individuals make their transitions among their different ecological settings. He looks at the influence of external environments on the functioning of families and studies how the intrafamilial processes are affected by extrafamilial conditions (Bronfenbrenner 1986, 723). Eco-cultural theory criticises the holistic perspective in the bronfenbrennerian tradition of research. When everything is connected to everything, it is difficult to find the unit of analysis. Eco-cultural theory also claims that human ecological theories tend to be static and are not able to capture dynamic changes in families. In our view, these previous theories see the role of family members as passive rather than as active agents who are capable of changing, learning and affecting their surroundings. In addition, the eco-cultural theory is distinguished by its attention to the organisation of an everyday routine of family life.

According to the eco-cultural theory, children's constant participation in daily routines is the single most powerful influence on their development. Eco-cultural theory features dynamic family adaptation and construction of sustainable family routine. According to Weisner and Gallimore:

The eco-cultural model draws on socio-cultural and activity theory and research which emphasize the socially constructed nature of cognition and mind. Activities and practices are the constitutive elements of daily routine that produce developmentally-sensitive interaction. Within these activity-created interactions arise zones of proximal development in which more capable individuals assist communicative and cognitive apprentices to perform at levels which they will eventually achieve (Weisner and Gallimore 1994, 13).

### **Hot air balloon flight**

In the following, I use the flight of a hot air balloon as a metaphor for clarifying the eco-cultural theory and showing its power in helping us to better understand the transnational family dynamics (Figure 1). The basic idea behind hot air balloon flight is the temperature difference between the air inside and outside the balloon. This temperature difference causes the balloon to rise or descend. The speed and direction of flight is determined by the air streams. The current of air varies greatly at different heights and the pilot cannot affect them. On the other hand, the pilot can very precisely regulate the height of the balloon's flight and thus steer the balloon.

\*\*\* INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE \*\*\*

Figure 1. Construction of an eco-cultural niche

The key concepts of eco-cultural theory shown in Figure 1 are summarised in Table 2. They are further elaborated in the following chapters. The numbering (nro 1.-6.) refer both to the figure and the table 2.

\*\*\*\* insert Table 2. here \*\*\*\*

Table 2. Key concepts in eco-cultural theory

### *Family features*

A group of emotionally attached people – a family - is in the centre of the eco-cultural theory (Figure 1, Table 2, nro1). Family themes are like aims or aspirations of the family; for example, “providing a normal childhood for the children or keeping the family together”. Family themes are put into practice through daily family activities. The

specific family culture is made out of a combination of family themes. The concept of culture is not seen as national or ethnic culture but as family culture, and it is not a stereotyped view but one that sees the family as unique. The changes in daily routines are steered by the specific family culture.

### *Eco-cultural niche*

I see the transnational family placed in the hot air balloon basket. Although families are strongly affected by social and economic forces, families take individual and collective action to modify and counteract them. From this mix of forces and actions, families construct their eco-cultural niches (Gallimore et al. 1989, 217-218). Eco-cultural niche (Figure 1, Table 2, nro 2.) is closely connected to the concepts of home and socio-space. Huttunen and Tiilikainen have looked at how family is defined from the point of view of multicultural research. Huttunen has looked at the definition of home and how it changes when one is in the place of origin, in exile, on the way to a new home country, and finally in the new country. Huttunen defines home in relation to the outside world. Being at home enables one to do meaningful things, have control over one's own body and life, and be active in one's life. Physical features, a scene understood through various senses, a house or place to live, family and relationships are all various aspects of 'home' -- and it has cultural, ethnic, and national notions as well. Home is not necessarily the same in memory, at present, and in the future one hopes for. Home changes according to time, space, opportunities, and restrictions. Past, present, and future homes exist in relation to each other. When one is strongly attached to the past home, one wishes to return there in the future. If one is content with the present, one hopes to build the future in the present home. (Huttunen 2002, 328-329)

By way of example, Tiilikainen has studied the daily life of Muslim women in the Helsinki area through an ethnographic research framework. In diaspora, Somali women create their home by combining several places and locations into a place like home. Daily

routines, social memory, extended family, Islam, ritual, language, and collaboration with other women play an important role in building such a home in a new land (Tiilikainen 2003, 282).

Home, therefore, does not necessarily refer only to a reified place of origin or homeland but may also be a place of belonging and identification that changes as individual life trajectories change. Personal ties give meaning to this place, and it develops through time. Olwig (2003, 7) reminds us that home has a central role as a locus where respectability is both displayed and gained. Sending regular remittances is done as a duty but also to gain respect in the local community. For men it is important to build a house in the place of origin. The notion of home has thus taken on a new meaning. Carrington (2002) sees the contemporary family as a socio-space that is characterised by an imagined community, the construction and maintenance of social bonds and support networks. In the socio-space, it is possible to operate across time-space boundaries: family members may no longer be in the same local time and place, but they are able to utilise technologies such as e-mail, the Internet, and telephone to provide instant access.

### *Niche features*

Niche features are like the statistical facts describing the family. (Figure 1, Table 2, nro 3.) They provide the fringe area where the family action can take place. The niche features are interconnected and hierarchical. These features can be either positive resources or negative constraints. A good education and high salary are not necessarily resources, and a low income is not automatically seen as a constraint. The valence of features depends on the meaning a family gives to them (Gallimore et al. 1989, 222). Below is a list of eco-cultural features specific to families of children with developmental delays.

- family subsistence and financial base
- accessibility of health and education services
- home and neighbourhood safety and convenience

- domestic tasks and chore workload for family
- child care tasks
- child play groups and peers
- marital role relationship
- social support
- father's role
- sources of parental information and goals

The niche features presented here by Gallimore (1993, 186-187) might have a slightly different emphasis in transnational families. Perhaps contact with citizens from the new home country and access to information about the new home country would play an important role in organising sustainable daily life in the new setting.

### ***Family action***

Families proactively construct their family ecology and routine, families shape as well as they are shaped by the social world around them. Meaningful daily routine, sustainable daily life is one that has moral and cultural significance and value for family members.

According to Weisner et al. (2004, 3) sustainable routines of daily activities (Figure 1, Table 2, nro 4.) share at least four of the features explained below.

- A) 'Social ecological fit' means to find stability given family resources, competing interests and goals, and to be able to juggle and balance these resources in a functional adaptation. It does not mean more resources, but it means that the available resources roughly match and support the activities that the family weaves into a daily routine. The family ecology fits with the available resources.
- B) Parents have to assess competing interests of family members. 'Congruence and balance' show the results of parental efforts to fit their routines to individual

- needs and competencies of different family members. It balances inevitable family conflicts.
- C) Parents try to organise their routine in a personally, culturally and morally correct way. In whatever ways families respond to their concerns about their children, will they feel that they have made the right choices? The right choices are those that are more 'meaningful' and which fit with morally and culturally significant values and goals. It has meaning with respect to goals and values.
- D) Sustainable daily routines require adaptation and are a dynamic process, but frequent change in a chaotic, unpredictable daily routine is not a sign of sustainability and thus 'stability and predictability' are required. It provides some stability and predictability for family members.

In the Finnish context Jokinen (2005, 158-159) has studied the concept of daily life, and she sees five paradoxes: daily life is everywhere but is difficult to find; it is both easy and light but also tiresome and difficult; daily life is praised and despised; women command daily life but it is a burden for them, whereas men have an easier role in daily life but do not quite master it; and the ordinary daily life sustains life but also closes others out, rejecting outsiders. Jokinen (2005, 47,160) defines a good daily life as having routines, a homely atmosphere and a rhythm or speed that one is in control of. These features are easily seen in house chores: routine, unremarkable and habitual doing, making things homelike, a clear division of labour, and adjusting the outside speed and demands to one's own rhythm.

Daily routines are the point of contact between individuals and the surrounding cultural and ecological environment. In eco-cultural theory, good daily life or the sustaining of a daily routine is defined by saying that it is meaningful and reasonable, and congruent with deeply felt convictions. We describe here the concept of sustainable routines of daily activities as smooth, easy flowing and satisfying.

### **Accommodation**

Daily activities also reveal how the accommodation (Figure 1, Table 2, nro5) takes place. Accommodation refers to the proactive, social construction actions of the family in adapting, exploiting, counterbalancing and reacting to many competing and sometimes contradictory forces: income needs, health, domestic workload and the like. Such accommodation can be unconscious, and the forces that drive the families may be only dimly perceived by the parents. The accommodation process in the eco-cultural model has many similarities with Berry's (1992) acculturation model and Ong's (2003) cultural citizenship – ethnic assimilation concepts.

Berry (1992) explains the process of transforming from one culture to a new one with a model of acculturation. 'Integration', according to Berry, is the situation where one keeps her own identity but also has close contact with the new culture. If the immigrant group is not welcomed by the majority culture, Berry talks about 'segregation'. In 'separation', the minority group decides to keep away from the majority culture. 'Marginalisation' is the situation where one is no longer part of one's own culture but does not belong to the new culture either. In 'assimilation' one gives up their own identity and adopts the new culture as their own. Assimilation is defined as a situation where one gradually adapts to the surrounding environment, gives up parts of their own culture and starts following the habits of the surrounding culture.

Successful integration often requires that one, in some form, keep strong cultural ties to one's own place of origin. Ong (2003, in Johnson) introduces two divergent views of integration and citizenship: 'cultural citizenship' and 'ethnic succession'. Cultural citizenship refers to the right to be culturally different from the nation's dominant norms, yet included as full and equally valued citizens. The Swedish-speaking minority in Finland could be an example of this. Ethnic succession suggests that, through the trials and hardships of each generation, successive generations will rise to a higher level and eventually be equivalent to the mainstream in terms of citizenship.

## **Crossing boundaries, worlds and cultural borders**

Eco-cultural theory does not emphasise the social interaction between the eco-cultural niche and the outside world (Figure 1, Table 2, nro 6), however, as Cooper et al. (1998, 113) have also noted. In our view, this issue needs to be discussed further. For example, the study of one's 'multiple worlds' (Phelan et al. 1993) and the study of cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang 2003, 59) provide additional theoretical tools that help to fathom these interactions better.

Phelan et al. (1993) have described in their studies how students, in particular, move from one social network to another. They use the term 'world' to describe how students navigate across the multiple contexts of their lives. In their model, a lot of attention is paid to the borders between these worlds and how they are crossed. Key resources are people – such as parents who are involved in school or teachers who know parents and friends – who move along the students across these boundaries, or facilitate the border crossings, although many students are left to navigate across their worlds alone.

These borders are also further elaborated in a study by Cooper et al. (1998, 114 - 115). They found concepts like 'gatekeeping' and 'brokering' useful in explaining the activities of the respondents. As Cooper et al. state:

We found that students were challenged to navigate across their multiple worlds and must negotiate with brokers who help them and gatekeepers who create difficulties for them, as well as relying on themselves. Cooper et al. (1998, 115)

In addition to navigating across these different worlds, a certain amount of cultural intelligence is also needed. Earley and Ang (2003,16) claim that the challenge for an international sojourner is that most of the cues and behaviours that are familiar at home may be lacking in the new cultures, so entirely new interpretations and behaviours are

required. This ability is cultural intelligence, which is an individual characteristic. Earley and Ang (2003, 64-65) see an 'emic construct' when cues have their basis within a given culture and are only fully appreciated and understood within this context. An emic construct gains meaning from its context and, fully absent from its contextual interpretation, cannot be appreciated. For example, witnessing a crowd of noisy people holding long sticks and gathering by the lakeside around a large bonfire at midnight in the middle of summer can have a totally different interpretation if it is not understood as part of a Finnish Midsummer celebration. An 'etic construct', on the other hand, has characteristics that exist across cultures and is universal; for example, all people have certain cognitive functions such as memory and recall, and social institutions like marriage and mourning of a lost loved one. Earley and Ang's emphasis is on an etic aspect of intelligence that provides individuals with the capacity to operate across various cultural boundaries. (Earley & Ang 2003, 16)

## **Conclusions**

This article has described how to conceptualise daily transnational life through an eco-cultural theory, using the metaphor of a hot air balloon flight. This conceptualisation helps to see daily family life from a dynamic point of view. The hot air balloon does not fly haphazardly, nor is it under full control. There is a need to see the family members as active agents who are to some extent capable of influencing their own activities. This metaphor also helps to visualise the very essence of transnational families: there are both local and global forces which prevent as well as facilitate the daily activities.

When concepts like gatekeeping and brokering are added to the model it is possible to capture even more accurately the important interaction between the family and the outside world. These concepts emphasise the active role of different people: gatekeeping is an active process, and in order to change the situation, one has to be able to influence the gatekeeper, the subject. Likewise, brokers are also active subjects who can help

families to better their lives. How can transnational families be helped to get in touch with these persons? How can gatekeepers become brokers?

By using this theory we can see the unit of analysis changed, and families and their daily activities are seen as more dynamic. The eco-cultural theory uses the daily activities as units of analysis (Gallimore et al. 1989, 217). The activity settings of the daily routine can be analyzed from five different angles: who is present (1. Who?), what are their goals and values (2. Why and what reasoning), what are they doing (3. What?), what are their motives in relation to the action (4. How and why?), what are the rules and laws regulating the situation (5. What limitations?). By analyzing daily activities, the social construction of an eco-cultural niche can be revealed.

The empirical applications of the eco-cultural theory are beyond the focus of this article, but we see this theory as being very fruitful also in this manner. Eco-cultural research methods used in previous studies have been based on interviewing, home visits procedure and observation. Weisner (2002, 276) claims that the eco-cultural family interview provides a window into children's and families daily routines and activities.

Every cultural community provides developmental pathways for children within some ecological-cultural (eco-cultural) context. Cultural pathways are made up of everyday routines of life, and routines are made up of cultural activities (bedtime, playing video games, home work, watching TV, cooking dinner, soccer practice, visiting grandma, babysitting for money). Activities are useful units for cultural analysis because they are meaningful units for parents and children to understand, they are amenable to ethnographic fieldwork, systematic observation and interviewing methods, they are what children and parents experience and they crystallize the important aspects of culture. Activities include values and goals, resources needed to make the activity happen, people in relationships, the tasks the activity is there to accomplish, emotions and feelings of those engaged in the activity, and a script defining the appropriate, normative way we expect to do that activity. (Weisner, 2002, 276)

However, there is a lot to do in developing data-collection methods that are applicable in studying the everyday on-going activities. The eco-cultural theory has inspired us to develop a five-step research method to capture the daily moment. This research method will be discussed elsewhere.

Finally, I see that the Government bodies and NGOs working in the field of immigration will benefit greatly from transnational research that uses the eco-cultural approach. The knowledge gained from transnational family studies can be applied in the numerous integration projects. This will result in more emphasis being paid to the unique family and its immediate needs and the projects will thus perform more successfully.

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<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>Gallimore et al. (1989, 1993, 1994)</b>	Families with disabled children	USA (California)	Explored the changes the family had to face in their daily routine
<b>Määttä (1999)</b>	Children with special needs	Finland	The family is seen as an expert in the education and rehabilitation of children with developmental delays.
<b>Taanila (1995, 1997)</b>	Children with special needs	Finland	Explored changes in the work of health care professionals. The expertise does not only lie in the hands of health care professionals but also within the family.
<b>Lowe and Weisner (2004), Lowe et al. (2004)</b>	Low-income families	USA (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)	This study seeks to understand why low-income families' use of program-based child care and subsidies for such care is often low and/or episodic.
<b>Cooper et al. (1995)</b>	African American and Latino youth in academic outreach programmes	USA (northern California)	Students were challenged to navigate across their multiple worlds and negotiate with brokers who help them and gatekeepers who create difficulties for them, as well as relying on themselves.

Table 1. Eco-cultural theory used in previous studies

	<b>Key concepts</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Hot air balloon metaphor</b>	<b>Concepts in previous research</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family features</b>  Family culture  Family themes	- Combination of family themes  - The aims and aspirations of the family	- Pilot and other people sitting in the hot air balloon basket  - Basket  - Tightly woven basket that keeps the family members together	-Familyhood (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002)
<b>2</b>	<b>Eco-cultural niche</b>	- Place where a family tries to maintain a comfortable and sustainable daily life -home	- Hot air balloon flight	- Proximal home environment (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1986) - Socio-space (Carrington 2002, Olwig 2003) - Home in multicultural research (Huttunen 2002, Tiilikainen 2003)
<b>3</b>	<b>Niche features</b>	- Structure and framework of the family -E.g. domestic tasks, child care tasks, child play groups, marital role, social support, father's role	- Colorfully striped balloon	
<b>4</b>	<b>Family actions</b>	- Sustainable routine of daily action A) social ecological fit B) congruence and balance C) meaningful	- How the burner is heated regulates the temperature inside the balloon and thus regulates the height of the balloon	- Five paradoxes of daily life: e.g. daily life is everywhere but it is difficult to find (Jokinen 2005)

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		D) stability and predictability		
5	<b>Accommodation</b>	- Adapting, exploiting, counterbalancing and reacting to many competing and/or contradictory forces	Finding the wanted height	- Acculturation model Berry (1992) - Cultural citizenship – ethnic assimilation concepts Ong (2003)
6	<b>Ecological forces:</b>  <b>Daily interaction:</b> Personal level  Institutional level	- Limiting factors and resources, constraints and opportunities set by society/ environment national and global politics and economy	- Different airstreams at different heights that determine the direction and speed of movement - Winds and air streams causing the balloon to drift	- Gatekeeping and brokering (Cooper et al. 1998) - Cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang 2003) - Multiple wolds (Phelan et al. 1993)

Table 2. Key concepts in eco-cultural theory

