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Is Sociability Conducive to Good Life? Migrants' Leisure Pursuits in Relational Perspective

The search for a better life is often seen as one of the key motivations to migrate. The question rarely asked is how migrants envisage their good lives and what they consider good (and bad) in the migratory situation (for exceptions, see e.g. Cathedral 2016; Simoni 2017). Migrants' leisure can provide insights into migrants' imaginaries of good life. It can also help answering the question of if and how the lives lived by migrants are considered good or bad, by migrants themselves and by others. Among leisure pursuits, one of the key wilfully selected activities is sociability – building and maintaining relations with others. It can be considered pragmatic (and interpreted as an investment in social capital), but oftentimes sociability seems to be an end in itself, and as such qualifies as a relational good (Donati 2018).

In the proposed paper, I will analyse how migrants view the relations with various others in leisurely contexts, what they consider good and bad about the relations with others in the migratory situation, and if and how, according to them, relations with others contribute to living a good life. In the analysis, I will rely on the material from the ethnographic studies among Polish migrants in the UK and the US that I conducted between 2010 and 2014.