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Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing

Springer Reference

Geographies of Children and Young People

Volume 9

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Geographies of Children and Young People is a Major Reference Work comprising 12 volumes that pulls together the best international reflective and innovative scholarship focusing on younger people. Volumes 1 and 2 establish and critically engage with the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological groundings of this geographical sub-discipline. Volumes 3–11 provide in depth thematic analysis of key topical areas pertinent to children's and young people's lives: space, place and environment; identities and subjectivities; families and peer groups; movement and mobilities; politics and citizenship; global issues and change; play and well-being; learning and labouring; conflict and peace. Volume 12 connects both academic, policy, and practitioner based work around protection and provision.

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1. Establishing Geographies of Children and Young People
2. Methodological Approaches
3. Space, Place, and Environment
4. Identities and Subjectivities
5. Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations
6. Movement, Mobilities, and Journeys
7. Politics, Citizenship, and Rights
8. Geographies of Global Issues: Change and Threat
9. Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing
10. Labouring and Learning
11. Conflict, Violence, and Peace
12. Risk, Protection, Provision, and Policy

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Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing

With 41 Figures and 6 Tables

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Series Preface

Geographies of Children and Young People now constitutes a major subdiscipline within Geography. This is a very exciting and influential time in its development. Hence, it is important to capture the dynamism, depth, and breadth of the subdiscipline within a Major Reference Work (MRW). Springer Major Reference Works are produced in such a way that updating and editing of the online version can be done every few years. This means that the publication does not fix the data, debates, and delivery but rather moves and evolves with the subdiscipline itself. The intention and expectation of this MRW is that this substantive collection will be *the* go-to resource for scholars, educators, and practitioners working with children and young people.

While founding scholarship was published in the 1970s and 1980s, the dramatic expansion of research and publication in the field really began in the late 1990s and has continued exponentially. The last decade has witnessed a substantive increase in graduate student research projects and a surge in university-level teaching related to children's and young people's geographies. It is therefore extremely timely that this 12-volume major reference work has been produced. Together as Editor-in-Chief, Volume Editors, and Authors, we have developed the largest single collection of geographic work focusing on children and young people in the world. Intellectually, the work reaches beyond geography to the wider social and behavioral sciences; many of the authors in the series are not geographers, and so, the collection is healthily and engagingly transdisciplinary. Anyone working with children and young people will find chapters that connect very effectively with their own interests. Specialists as well as graduate and tertiary education students will find relevant work distributed throughout the MRW or locate everything they might need within one thematic volume.

This Series was founded on certain key intellectual and political principles. Working with young people and children within the academy has not always been easy nor a straightforward pathway for academics. It has taken time for scholars to convince their colleagues of the following: that children and young people really matter; that they should not be marginalized by the academy; that they have competency and agency and play important roles in society; and that they should be taken seriously as people regardless of age or size. This 12-volume collection is material evidence of the academic importance of children and young people in our

world. The MRW is determinedly international in approach, in authorship, and in content. The huge diversity of nations and territories explored in the collection as well as the geographic locations of author contributors is a real testament to the commitment of the Editor-in-Chief and Volume Editors to be genuinely international. Children and young people are everywhere on the planet, hence it is imperative that this Series reflects that ubiquity. Drawing from scholars and scholarship from within and about the majority world has been a key achievement for each volume. Another aspect of inclusivity relates to authorship. Foundational, well-established, and early career scholars are all well represented throughout the volumes.

The 12 volumes work collectively as a series and also stand alone as single books. The volumes are lengthy and contain between 25 and 35 full chapters; each volume is an excellent resource of expertise, content, and analysis. Volume 1, *Establishing Geographies of Children and Young People*, is designed to pull together some of the foundational work in the sub discipline; demonstrate the emergence and establishment of particular philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual themes; and capture the diversity of geographic work on children and young people as it connects with other sub- and disciplinary approaches. This volume presents the key founding elements of the sub discipline. Volume 2, *Methodological Approaches*, explores the grand array of methodological approaches and tools that children's and young people's geographers, and other social and behavioral scientists, have worked with, adapted, and invented. Chapters explore research practices, techniques, data analysis, and/or interpretation. Working with younger people in research demands different ways of doing research and hence addressing the complexities of power relations. Methodologically, innovation and experimentation have been very important. *Space, Place, and Environment* (Vol. 3) takes these three central geographic concepts and debates and extends them. The volume is structured around five subsections: Indigenous Youth – Space and Place; Children, Nature, and Environmental Education; Urban Spaces; Home Spaces and Homeless Spaces; and Border Spaces. Several of these themes are explored in fuller depth in subsequent specialized volumes. Volumes 1 and 3 will be particularly useful starting points for readers less familiar with geography as a discipline. Volume 4, *Identities and Subjectivities*, is designed to focus on the stuff of life and living for younger people. The chapters examine who young people and children are and what their social identities and subjectivities mean in the context of their spatial experiences. The volume explores identity formation and the spatial meaning of identities and subjectivities in relation to a broad range of social relations. The chapters explore how young people's senses of selfhood and belonging emerge through complex processes of inclusion, exclusion, and marginalization and the important role played by representation, discourse, and creativity. In Vol. 5, *Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations*, the focus is on the ways in which children and young people are relationally connected with others. Section I demonstrates that familial relationships and the spatiality of the home are extremely important in all children's and young people's lives, even though the patterns and structures of families and the spaces/places of home vary geographically and temporally. Section II innovatively examines the complexities

and spatialities of extrafamilial intergenerational relationships and the complex meanings of age relationality. Section III emphasizes children's and young people's relationships with one another. This includes work on geographies of emotion and affect, bodies and embodiment.

The mobility turn in geography has been highly influential in the social sciences. Children's and young people's geographers have been significant in the paradigmatic shift around mobilities and immobilities. In Vol. 6, *Movement, Mobilities, and Journeys*, contributors examine the role children and young people play in these "travels" in a range of diverse global contexts. The chapters collectively provide theoretical, empirical, and methodological insights and examples of actual movement combined with analysis of a range of complex contexts, spatialities, and temporalities that facilitate or hamper mobility. Volume 7 takes us into the realm of children and young people as political beings. *Politics, Citizenship and Rights* explores the political geographies of younger people in order to bring analytical attention to intricacies of the *policies* that specifically affect young people and children, alongside the *politics* at play in their everyday lives. Divided into four sections, the volume interrogates the spatialities of the rights of the child, children and young people's agency in politics, youthful practices and political resistance, and active youth citizenship. Volume 8, *Geographies of Global Issues: Change and Threat*, unites three broad research themes that are often examined separately: economic globalization and cultural change; international development; and children and young people's connections with climate change, natural hazards, and environmental issues. What pulls these themes together is the recognition that younger people are important actors and agents within these processes and that their engagement/disengagement is crucial for the planet's future. In Vol. 9, *Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing*, important, well-established, but often contentious foci of children's sand young people's lives are examined conceptually, temporally, spatially, in practice, and through representation. Many of the debates about children's embodiment revolving around obesity, unfitness, wellness, and neglect are relatively new in the social sciences, and geographers have played important roles in their closer scrutiny. Volume 10, *Labouring and Learning*, provides an integrated and multidimensional approach to understanding what learning and laboring mean to children and young people. The two concepts are explored in depth and breadth in order to capture the variance of what work and education mean and how they are practiced in different places and at different times through childhood and youth. Key thematic areas for this volume include social reproduction, transitions, aspirations, and social and cultural capital. In *Conflict, Violence and Peace* (Vol. 11), the emphasis is on the ways in which children are impacted and affected by, and involved with, highly problematic and fragile conditions of war, violence, conflict, and peace. As more and more younger people experience a range of conflicts and social, economic, and political violence, it is essential to examine what happens to them and what roles they play in processes such as asylum, child soldiering, terrorism, counterterrorism, ending conflict, and building peace. Volume 12, *Risk, Protection, Provision and Policy* serves to connect academic research and policy and planning that affects children and young people. Policy, planning, and provision are

often purportedly about reducing risk and offering protection but are also associated with the control and containment of younger people, particularly spatially. The chapters explore the ways in which policies at different scales affect children and young people in terms of their access to space and their life chances.

This Series is an extremely rich, varied, and vibrant collection of work centered on geographies of children and young people. Just as children and young people bring vibrancy, diversity, and complexity to our worlds, so this MRW is designed to showcase, deepen, and develop the geographic scholarship that captures, albeit partially, the fascinating social heterogeneity and diverse spatialities of children's and young people's lives.

National University of Singapore, Singapore   Tracey Skelton
May 20, 2015   MA Oxon, Ph.D.
                                                                          Editor-in-Chief

Preface

The volume on play, recreation, health, and wellbeing within this series consists of two interlinked sections: the first on play and recreation and the second on health and wellbeing. Each section includes a rich variety of conceptual and empirical work by researchers working in diverse geographical contexts, and within diverse methodological and conceptual traditions. Both these sets of topics are important concerns for researchers working in the subdiscipline of children's geographies. While the two sections contain common themes, it is also important to view these topics separately in order to avoid any reduction of the value of play and recreation or understandings of wellbeing to instrumental developmental-medical approaches. Some of the chapters within these interlinked sections address directly these instrumental understandings of play, recreation, health, and wellbeing that dominate policy approaches, some contributing to these understandings and some critiquing them. However, other chapters do not start from this position and offer a range of alternative methodological and theoretical approaches to understanding children and young people's play, recreation, health, and wellbeing. These include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research designs and theoretical developments in geography such as feminist, poststructural, critical race, disability and queer theory, more-than-representational theory, and approaches which acknowledge the role of more-than-human actants in the lifeworlds of children and young people.

Within the section on play and recreation, three key themes draw the chapters together. First, many of the chapters offer a critical theorization of play and recreation which challenge taken-for-granted academic, policy, and popular understandings. These chapters, in particular, emphasize the importance of a geographical approach in the development of more critical approaches, through demonstrating the need to take seriously the spatialities of children's play in challenging nostalgic and developmental understandings, and through highlighting the role of more-than-human worlds in children's play. The second theme in this section relates more directly to the spaces that are designed or designated for play and recreation. Particular emphasis in chapters in this theme is placed on outdoor spaces, playgrounds, cultural activities, and urban space. This attention to space allows further challenge to any normative understandings of play and recreation drawing attention to the ways in which play and recreation is mutually constituted by and of the social, material, and historical spaces in which play and recreation take place. Thirdly, other

chapters in this section focus on the everyday playful and recreational practices and mobilities of young people. In contradistinction to some of the spaces discussed in the previous theme concerning spaces specifically designed for play, these chapters demonstrate the ways in which play and recreation intersect with, disrupt, and subvert normative uses of often highly regulated adultist public space. The spaces discussed in these chapters include often banal everyday spaces, public space, shopping malls, and spaces of media consumption. The chapters offer insights into children and young people's playful engagements with these spaces and the differentiated affordances of these spaces for, for example, young wheelchair users. Play is conceptualized here in its broadest sense, and these chapters also include discussions of identity play in relation to celebrity culture and the sometimes dark spaces of digital transgression and grief tourism.

The second section of the volume, on health and wellbeing, also seeks to challenge normative understandings – this time of wellbeing. There are three themes which run through this section. First, chapters in this section draw on the significant influence of the social studies of childhood in children's geographies to highlight the ways in which children and young people are knowledgeable actors in the context of health and wellbeing. Here, chapters on diverse contexts, including children's use of medicines, adolescent anaphylaxis, and young people's drinking geographies, demonstrate the multiple ways in which children and young people care for their own and others' health and wellbeing. The second theme in this section moves on from these discussions of agency to challenge dominant policy and media representations of children and young people. In particular, these chapters question the ways in which young people are seen as "risky" or "at risk" in relation to public health concerns around obesity, food, sex education, and smoking, which often emphasize risk to future adult populations. These chapters challenge the ways in which concern for children in such campaigns intersects with other discourses of class, race, gender, nationhood, questioning the framing of young people as "at risk," and offering alternative approaches. The third theme within this section is one of space. Here chapters discuss questions of health and wellbeing in relation to children and young people's embodied experiences of everyday spaces, including spaces of the home in the context of domestic violence and family life in relation to alcohol consumption, and also discuss institutional spaces, including spaces of mental health care, secure care, and clinical space. Across these spaces, the chapters illustrate the range of ways in which microgeographies articulate with politics at larger scales to impact on the lives of children and young people in different and intersecting ways.

Across both sections of the volume, the chapters extend key theoretical developments that children's geographers have been at the heart of, including intergenerational approaches and moves to emphasize and retheorize agency in a way that recognizes children's role as actors in a wide range of everyday contexts. While nearly half of the case studies that the chapters draw on are from the UK, there is also an impressive range of other national contexts discussed, including Canada, New Zealand, USA, Finland, Sweden, Singapore, Malaysia, Benin, and the Netherlands, and several chapters which provide case studies from multiple countries. What becomes evident reading the volume as a whole is therefore the diversity of

conceptual positions possible within geographies of children and young people and what emerges is a caution against universalizing and normalizing ways of thinking about play, recreation, health, and wellbeing. In this sense, putting play and recreation together with health and wellbeing is a risky strategy given the dominance of medico-developmental approaches to both. However, herein also lies an opportunity – a chance to more playfully engage with ideas of health, wellbeing, and recreation that centres on children and young people and may offer new understandings of these topics for adults too. Children's geographers with the range of methodological and theoretical tools on offer are well placed to do just this.

Liverpool, United Kingdom   Bethan Evans
Northampton, United Kingdom   John Horton

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About the Editors

Bethan Evans Dr. Bethan Evans is Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Liverpool, UK. She is a Feminist Geographer whose research specialisms lie at the intersection of embodied geographies, critical geographies of health and illness, and geographies of children and young people. Bethan's research has been funded by research councils including the British Academy and ESRC. Bethan's main research interests relate to the development of critical geographies of fatness through work with fat activists, and to work on the (bio)politics of health and education policy. Bethan completed a B.Sc. and Ph.D. in the Department of Geography at University of Liverpool before taking up posts as Research Associate and Lecturer there. She then worked as Senior Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University and Lecturer in Human Geography and Medical Humanities at Durham University before returning to the University of Liverpool in 2011.

John Horton Dr. John Horton is Associate Professor in Human Geography and Research Leader in Social Sciences at the University of Northampton, UK. He is a Cultural Geographer with a research specialism in relation to children and young people's geographies. He is Editor of two international academic journals: *Children's Geographies*, and *Social and Cultural Geography*. He is coauthor of the book *Cultural Geographies* (Routledge, 2013), and Series Editor of a new major book series on Spaces of Childhood and Youth (Routledge, 2015–20). John has been Principal or Co-Investigator on more than 30 funded research projects with children, young people, and families in the UK. For example, he has been Co-Investigator on major interdisciplinary research projects funded by ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) and AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council). John's major research interests relate to children and young people's play and popular culture, spaces of care and service-provision, and

everyday geographies of sustainable urbanism. Before moving to the University of Northampton, John completed a B.Sc. and ESRC-funded M.Sc./Doctorate in the School for Geographical Sciences at the University of Bristol.

Editor-in-Chief

Tracey Skelton is Associate Professor of Human Geography in the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore. She was previously Professor of Critical Geographies at the University of Loughborough in the UK. The essential elements of her research career focus on people who are socially, politically, and intellectually excluded. Her early work focused on the Caribbean and issues of gender and racial inequality, feminist geographies, and methodological analysis. She has contributed to culture and development debates, particularly through her longitudinal research on the island of Montserrat. Recently, A/P Skelton returned to this field of scholarship through research with volunteers and host organizations in Cambodia as part of a major comparative and collaborative project on development partnerships. She was the principal investigator of a major comparative urbanism research project on the livability, sustainability, and diversity of four Asian cities: Busan in South Korea, Hyderabad in India, Kunming in China, and Singapore.

A/P Skelton is a recognized international leader in the subdiscipline of children's and young people's geographies. In particular, her work has served to challenge the invisibility and marginalization of young people from geographic academic research at the same time as it has demonstrated the rich and varied ways in which young people live their lives both spatially and temporally alongside, but differently from, adults. Her research work has been funded by key research institutions such as the Economic and Social Research Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK; the Faculty of Arts and Social Science Academic Research Fund and the Global Asia Institute, both of the National University of Singapore; the Australian Research Council; and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

A/P Skelton was a founding editorial board member of the international journal *Children's Geographies* and has been the Viewpoints Editor since 2005 and became the Commissioning Editor for Asia in 2010. She is on the editorial boards of the following journals: *Geoforum*, the *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, Geography Compass*, and *ACME: International Journal of Critical Geographies*

(open access). She has coauthored 2 books, edited 3 collections, guest-edited 2 special journal issues, and published more than 70 journal articles and chapters. She is a passionate teacher and graduate supervisor. She is committed to the politics of research dissemination in accessible formats, in particular to enable the participants in her research projects to understand and recognize their coproduction of knowledge whether through specialized small-scale workshops, translation of reports into local languages, or production of audiovisual materials.

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Introduction to Play, Recreation, Health, and Wellbeing in Geographies of Children and Young People

Bethan Evans and John Horton

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Abstract

The introduction chapter provides an orientation and companion piece to the wonderfully rich array of chapters collected in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing. It draws attention to three themes discussed by chapters in the section on play and recreation: a critical theorization of play and recreation, spaces designed or designated for play and recreation, and the everyday playful and recreational practices and mobilities of children and young people. In relation to the section on health and wellbeing, the following three themes are outlined: children as knowledgeable actors in the context of health and wellbeing, challenging dominant policy and media representations of children and young people's health and wellbeing, and the everyday and institutional spaces of children's health and wellbeing. The chapter also draws out some of the key contributions of children's geographies to understandings of play and recreation, health and wellbeing in relation to intergenerational approaches and

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agency, and introduces the range of theoretical influences and geographical contexts covered by the chapters in this volume.

1   Introduction

The volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing, from the Geographies of Children and Young People series consists of two interlinked sections, each focusing on a broad topic which has been of central importance in the development of geographical research with children and young people. Section 1 focuses on children and young people's **play and recreation**, while section 2 focuses on children and young people's **health and wellbeing**. Each section includes a rich variety of conceptual and empirical work by researchers working in diverse geographical contexts and within diverse methodological and conceptual traditions. Both these sets of topics are important concerns for researchers working in the subdiscipline of children's geographies. While there has been some work to extend play to adults (e.g. Edensor et al. 2012; Woodyer 2012), children's geographies remains the subdisciplinary area within which the majority of work on play has taken place. Work on health and wellbeing is not similarly concentrated within children's geographies. However, these concepts are key concerns for geographers working with children and young people in diverse contexts and, at a more fundamental level, as Bourdillon (2014, p. 497) has recently suggested, "most academics who undertake childhood studies do so because they are concerned about the well-being of children." Both play and recreation and health and wellbeing are also enshrined as rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989, see Skelton 2007) and are often both taken for granted as sociopolitical goods. When articulated together (as well as separately), play and recreation and health and wellbeing are often normatively discussed in both popular and academic discourses, with developmental-medical discourses dominating in articulation with moral panics about children, young people, and families. This means that play and recreation are often framed as solutions to concerns about health and wellbeing rather than as intrinsic rights. For example, active play is often called for as a solution to concerns about obesity (Hemming 2007). Some of the chapters in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing touch on these instrumental approaches to play and wellbeing but all attempt to move, in different ways, beyond such normative ways of thinking about play and recreation and health and wellbeing. Reflecting broader work in children's geographies, the contributions to the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing do important work in critically and conceptually reflecting on both sets of ideas (play and recreation and health and wellbeing), making clear the complex spatialities involved and challenging any simple

instrumental approaches. The chapters in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing explore, through a wide range of foci and case studies, what play and recreation and health and wellbeing mean in the context of the lived experiences of children and young people's lives. The diversity of conceptual positions, methodological approaches, and geographical-historical contexts present in even this limited cross-section is remarkable and should caution against universalizing and normalizing ways of thinking about play and recreation and health and wellbeing. Key concerns of the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing's two sections are as follows.

1.1   Section 1 – Geographies of Children and Young People's Play and Recreation

The first section of the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing showcases an international range of leading edge geographical research focusing on children and young people's play and recreation in diverse contexts. Play and recreation have been major, longstanding foci for geographers working with children and young people, and this section offers something of a cross-section of the rich diversity of topics, issues, intellectual challenges, and methodological approaches present within this very large body of research. Three key themes, which recur widely in geographical scholarship about play and recreation, are prominent in the chapters collected here.

First, many of the chapters are particularly concerned with the critical theorization of play-itself and recreation-itself. Notions of "play" and "recreation" are widely deployed and taken for granted in popular and academic discussions about children and young people but, on reflection, the meanings and usefulness of these terms are unclear and contested. As a classic text by the psychologist and play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith (1997, pp. 1–3) argues,

> we all play occasionally, and we all know what playing feels like. But when it comes to making theoretical statements about what play is, we fall into silliness. There is little agreement among us, and much ambiguity. . . Obviously, the word play stands for a category of very diverse happenings

Indeed, as the sociologist Thomas Henricks (2008, p. 157) argues, terms like play and recreation can be used to denote happenings as vastly and peculiarly diverse as,

> throwing snow balls with a group of friends. Building a sandcastle. Playing a kissing game at a middle school party. Saying a tongue twister faster and faster. Finger painting. Taking a swing at a moving ball. 'Strutting your stuff" on a dance floor. Telling a joke. Pulling a prank. Dressing up in crazy clothes. Wagering at a casino or racetrack. Making your doll do whatever you want. Surfing. Fantasizing about someone romantically. Doing a crossword puzzle. Holding your breath longer than you have before. Teasing your younger brother. 'Bluffing' in a game of poker. Collecting ceramic frogs. Making the biggest splash possible at a public pool

Geographers working with children and young people have contributed significantly to conceptual reflection upon the diverse spatial phenomena which are habitually labeled as "play" or "recreation." Geographical scholarship in this context has taken a wide range of forms, variously inspired by wider theoretical and critical work in social and cultural geography (see Aitken 2000, 2001; Gagen 2000; Thomson and Philo 2004; Harker 2005; Rautio 2013; Woodyer 2012, 2013), participatory playwork (see Lester and Russell 2010; Russell 2012), and/or sociological and ethnographic research (see James 1998; Corsaro 2014). A number of vivid, distinctive, sustained conceptual discussions of play are included in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing. For example, in ▶ Chapter 2, "Ludic Geographies," by Woodyer et al., critique the limited attention to spatiality in play research outside academic geography and call for geographers to do more to challenge prevailing media and academic portrayals of play which are frequently aspatial, uncritically nostalgic, and problematically wedded to developmental understandings of childhood and youth. These critiques challenge geographers to develop innovative, creative, and playful – or "ludic" – ways of thinking, writing, and researching about play and recreation. ▶ Chapter 3, "Children's Relations to the More-Than-Human World Beyond Developmental Views," by Rautio and Jokinen, develops a parallel critique of normative developmental and representational understandings of play. They call for geographers to notice the considerable social-material-spatial complexities of play and recreation via an evocative case study of events of children's play with/in snow. ▶ Chapter 4, "Playful Enterprises," by Denise Goerisch, makes two further important conceptual contributions, via a case study of young people's involvement in youth organizations such as Girl Scouts, calling for consideration of the historical construction of youthful play and recreation, and also how children and young people themselves conceptualize play and recreation. Meanwhile, writing from a quite different conceptual tradition, ▶ Chapter 5, "Children's Geographies for Activity and Play: An Overview of Measurement Approaches" by Oliver et al., evaluates some commonly used empirical approaches to conceptualizing and auditing relationships between environmental features and children and young people's mobilities, play, and recreation behaviors.

Second, several chapters in this section are focused upon spaces which are explicitly designed and/or habitually designated for play and recreation. A number of chapters summarize, and seek to extend, large established bodies of research about designated play-spaces like playgrounds (McKendrick 1999; Gagen 2000; Thomson 2005, Ferré et al. 2006, Hendricks 2011), early childhood settings (Russell 2010; Dyment and O'Connell 2013), school grounds (Tranter and Malone 2004), youthwork settings (Russell 2013), and natural or adventure play environments (Lester and Maudsley 2007). For example, ▶ Chapter 6, "Outdoor Environments as Children's Play Spaces: Playground Affordances," by Aziz and Said, provides an introduction to research about the properties, qualities, and play "affordances" of formal playground provision vis-à-vis informal "play grounds" where children and young people make their own play opportunities. ▶ Chapter 7, "Children's Play in Urban Areas," by Sruthi Atmakur, also provides a review of

evidence comparing "traditional" designed urban playgrounds with alternative, informal "looser," "manipulable" play opportunities in built environments. ▶ Chapter 8, "Children and Young People's Participation in Cultural Activities," by Johansson and Hultgren, shifts the spotlight to designated play-spaces in institutional settings for preschool children. Through a discussion of theoretical literature and ethnographic research, the authors consider the ways in which spaces of care, learning, and "carnivalesque" playfulness are constituted. ▶ Chapter 9, "Playful Approaches to Outdoor Learning: Boggarts, Bears, and Bunny Rabbits," by Tracy Hayes, is located within a tradition of research and practice in spaces of youthwork and outdoor learning. Hayes provides both a contextual overview of playful practices in these settings and an affecting argument for the use of playful, creative methods in academic practices (look out for pesky boggarts!). ▶ Chapter 10, "Development of Nature Playgrounds from the 1970s Onwards," by Verstrate and Karsten, directs attention to another form of designated play-space: the landscaped natural play environment. Through a case study of nature playgrounds in the Netherlands, the authors highlight how play-spaces are constituted and shaped by social-historical contexts, demographic change, and contemporary norms in relation to childhood, youth, and risk.

Third, many chapters in this section are centrally concerned with the everyday playful and recreational practices and mobilities of children and young people. The ways in which children and young people's everyday play and recreation intersect with – and often disrupt, subvert, and clash with – conventional, normative uses of public spaces has been a major concern of much geographical research (Valentine 1996a, b; Matthews et al. 2000; Punch 2000). The contested and ambiguous presence of children and young people (as feared-for "angels" or feared-about "devils," in Valentine's (1996a) classic formulation) in highly regulated adultist public spaces is a recurring motif in many chapters collected here. However, the sheer diversity of contexts, politics, and playful practices present in this section should preclude any sense of childhood and youth as universal experiences. Case studies range across geographies of children and young people's everyday practices of hanging out in Finnish shopping malls (▶ Chapter 11, "Young People's Play with Urban Public Space: Geographies of Hanging Out," by Pyyry and Tani), improvised play in New Zealand backyards (▶ Chapter 15, "Variegated Nature of Play for Auckland Children," by Kearns et al.), adventure sports in Finnish parking lots (▶ Chapter 14, "Spatial Resistance of Alternative Sports in Finland," by Harinen et al.), and walking in the English countryside (▶ Chapter 13, "Rural Youth Identity Formation: Stories of Movement and Memories of Place," by Leyshon). In addition, ▶ Chapter 18, "Play and Learning in Benin," by Emilia Licitra, discusses the importance of ethnographic and anthropological work to geographical research, presenting a case study of children's everyday play experiences in northern Benin. When juxtaposed, the diversity of practices, politics, and experiences of children and young people in these different contexts is marked. ▶ Chapter 16, "Young Wheelchair Users' Play and Recreation," by Michelle Pyer, provides an overview of the everyday physical and social barriers encountered by young wheelchair users and provides further evidence of the diverse, often profoundly inequitable, geographies

of children and young people's play and recreation practices. The ways in which children and young people's play and recreational practices are changing in many contexts because of changing technologies, transport habits, and social-cultural norms has been another major concern for many geographers (Karsten 2005; Mackett et al. 2007). ▶ Chapter 12, "Children's Play in Their Local Neighborhoods: Rediscovering the Value of Residential Streets," by Paul Tranter, ▶ Chapter 17, "Public Open Spaces, Children's Independent Mobility," by Moushumi Chaudhury et al., and ▶ Chapter 15, "Variegated Nature of Play for Auckland Children," by Robin Kearns et al., provide evidence reviews relating to children and young people's declining independent mobility in the minority world over the last century. These chapters also summarize a range of emerging evidence about health, wellbeing, community, and social-cultural impacts of shifts towards automobility and heightened regulation of children's play and recreational mobilities. Finally, many social scientists have explored children and young people's playful and recreational engagements with popular, media and consumer cultures within this context (Buckingham 2007, 2011; Horton 2010, 2012, 2014). Two examples of new scholarship from this interdisciplinary context are included in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing. ▶ Chapter 19, "Popular Culture, Identity "Play," and Mobilities: Young People and Celebrity," by Allen and Mendick, explores the significance of popular cultural media celebrities within many young people's lives, noting that popular cultural media constitute a resource for young people's "identity play." ▶ Chapter 20, "Geographies of Trolls, Grief Tourists, and Playing with Digital Transgression," by Crowe and Watts, highlights the complex, and sometimes hauntingly dark, spaces afforded by new online and digital media, with a particular focus on young people's "transgressive," but often playful and creative, practices of "trolling" and "grief tourism." Both of these chapters call for geographers to engage in more careful, subtle, detailed (and indeed *playful*) research in relation to children and young people's everyday recreational and playful practices.

1.2   Section 2 – Geographies of Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing

The second section of the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing collates a range of geographical research focusing on children and young people's health and wellbeing. At the same time that geographical work on children and young people was developing in the 1990s and early 2000s (Matthews and Limb 1999), significant changes were also taking place in medical geography seeing a shift towards new geographies of health and wellbeing (Kearns and Moon 2002; Hall 2000; Parr 2002, 2003, 2004). This brought a broader understanding of wellbeing into geography and while wellbeing remains a complex and contested term (Atkinson and Joyce 2011) it has enabled a focus on a broader spectrum of lived experience and of spaces and encounters beyond a focus on the causes and incidence

of ill-health. Wellbeing thus, as Atkinson et al. (2012) explain, is fundamentally geographical:

> Wellbeing, however defined, can have no form, expression or enhancement without consideration of place. The processes of well-being or becoming, whether of enjoying a balance of positive over negative affects, of fulfilling potential and expressing autonomy or of mobilizing a range of material, social and psychological resources, are essentially and necessarily emergent in place.

The chapters explore health and wellbeing in these broad terms across a range of different macro- and microgeographies. In particular, there are three key themes which run throughout the chapters in this section of the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing which illustrate some of the parallels between children's geographies and new geographies of health and wellbeing.

First, several of the papers argue for recognition of children as knowledgeable actors in relation to health and wellbeing. The recognition of children and young people as agents has been a core tenet of children's geographies (Holloway and Valentine 2000). This sees parallels in the development of new geographies of health and wellbeing in the decentering of medical knowledge and a shift to instead take seriously the embodied knowledges and lived experiences of people beyond those claiming medical authority (Parr 2004). However, as Colls and Evans (2008) and Evans et al. (2011) illustrate in relation to children's healthy eating initiatives, much (public) health policy and research fails to recognize agency in intersubjective and intercorporeal relations, remaining informed by individualistic models of responsibility which either continue to exclude children and young people as active in health decision making or place blame on children, holding them accountable for "irresponsible" behaviors in the same ways as adults (Ruddick 2006). Several of the chapters challenge this and offer more positive accounts of children's agency in relation to health and wellbeing. For example, ▶ Chapter 21, "Children and Medicines," by Hampshire, questions the idea that medicines should be "kept out of the reach of children," using this phrase often found on medicine bottles as evidence of the dominant assumption that children are vulnerable and in need of protection (Holloway and Valentine 2000) and that children and young people are merely passive recipients of medicines and health care. The chapter argues that children and young people often are active in taking responsibility for their own medicine, yet policy and legal regulations neither recognize nor support them to do so effectively and safely. As such, the chapter calls for further engagement with children and young people as "therapeutic citizens," actively involved in their own health care. Gallagher et al. do this in ▶ Chapter 22, "Geography of Adolescent Anaphylaxis," in which they argue that anaphylaxis is a disruptive force which confounds expectations about risk and safety in particular spaces, drawing attention to the challenges of mobility for young people with anaphylaxis. Moreover, they discuss the management of risk and responsibility in relation to anaphylaxis as a form of biopower in the lives of young people. ▶ Chapter 23, "Young People's Drinking Geographies," by Wilkinson, similarly moves beyond any simplistic framing of responsibility and risk,

this time in relation to drinking behaviors. Instead, this chapter discusses the multiple ways in which young people care for their own and others' wellbeing while drinking alcohol. Moreover, Wilkinson's chapter moves understandings of children and young people's agency further by considering the relations between human and nonhuman actors through the lens of actor-network theory. This does important work to challenge any individualistic notion of agency by instead considering the ways in which the material and more-than-representational elements of drinking spaces may shape young people's alcohol consumption experiences and the performativity of drinking and drunkenness in nondeterministic ways.

Secondly, and related to framings of responsibility and agency discussed above, a common theme among the chapters in this section is a move to challenge dominant policy and media representations of children and young people in relation to health. Questioning the ways in which particular social groups are labeled as more or less "healthy" or "risky" is a core feature of critical health geographies (Parr 2004; McPhail 2009; Rawlins 2009) and recent work in children's geographies has particularly highlighted the ways in which children and young people are targeted in preemptive health policies as a result of the framing of children as future adults (Evans 2010; Evans and Colls 2009; Evans et al. 2011). The majority of the chapters in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing extend these debates in some way, drawing attention to the intersectional politics through which children and young people are framed as vulnerable or risky in relation to health and wellbeing. For example, ► Chapter 24, "Moral Geographies of Young People and Food: Beyond Jamie's School Dinners," by Pike and Kelly, explores the battlegrounds of school dining rooms in relation to concerns about children and young people and food. They particularly focus on media framings of school food and children's health in the UK in relation to Jamie Oliver's "School Dinners," subsequent programming and associated media coverage. Drawing theoretically on Stuart Hall and Michel Foucault, they particularly question the classed discourses that inform ideas about good/bad and responsible/irresponsible eating and who should/ could be an actor in media programs that overwhelmingly target children from poor/ disadvantaged families. In doing so, the chapter raises important wider questions about the framing of responsibility for health/wellbeing in the context of wider classed politics. ► Chapter 25, "Mediating Young People's Knowledge: Framing School-Based Sexuality Education in New Zealand and Canada," by Coleman et al., similarly explores the framing of children and young people as "at risk" this time in relation to sex education in New Zealand and Canada. Like Pike and Kelly's chapter, this chapter also draws attention to the space of the school as a space of intervention in health campaigns. Through analysis of print media they demonstrate that the voices of young people are silenced through a politics of intervention which frames young people both as risky and as vulnerable and in need of adult control. Moving beyond the school, ► Chapter 26, "Governing Futures and Saving Young Lives: Willful Smoking Temporalities and Subjectivities," by Qian Hui Tan, on young people and smoking in Singapore similarly demonstrates the ways in which young people's agency in relation to public health concerns is seen as problematic – framed

as risk. This chapter uses Sara Ahmed's work on willfulness to challenge the ways in which young people who choose to smoke are framed as willful and in need of protection from themselves. All of these chapters raise important questions that also relate to the previous theme in terms of the recognition or problematization of children and young people's agency in relation to health and wellbeing and children and young people's rights in the face of interventions which aim to protect the health of future adults.

The third theme that runs through the chapters is one of space. Two subthemes are evident everyday spaces and lived experiences; and institutional and clinical spaces. In the first of these, papers follow the shift from medical to health geography which saw attention move from larger scale epidemiological studies, to the everyday, experiential and embodied spaces of health and wellbeing (Kearns and Moon 2002; Hall 2000; Parr 2002, 2003, 2004). Children's geographies has similarly drawn attention to the lived realities of small scale and microgeographies (Ansell 2009; Holloway and Valentine 2000) with particular attention to the spaces of the school, home, street, and play-spaces. Here, many of the chapters explore the relationship between home and public space in terms of children and young people's relative safety or risk. This is key to many of the chapters already discussed above, for example, Gallagher's chapter on anaphylaxis which demonstrates the ways in which "risk" and "responsibility" inform young people's mobilities. The chapter which perhaps most clearly complicates any simplistic division between safety and risk in relation to home/public space is ▶ Chapter 27, "Children's Corporeal Agency and Use of Space in Situations of Domestic Violence," by Alexander. A theme of agency runs strongly through this chapter alongside one of space as the chapter considers the agency of children who are survivors of domestic violence, complicating any simple division between home and public space in terms of understandings of risk and foregrounding children's resilience and agency in finding spaces of comfort in violent contexts. This moves debates beyond a simple framing of children as "victims" which means that the voices of child survivors of domestic abuse are often unheard to allow children to inform more nuanced and complex understandings of the lived experiences of domestic abuse. Far from passive victims, the chapter illustrates the multiple ways in which children resist, cope, and survive during and in the aftermath of domestic abuse. This more nuanced research which centers children as agents has clear implications for practice in supporting child survivors of domestic violence. Complicating the perception of home as a safe space in contrast to risky public space is also key to ▶ Chapter 28, "Alcohol Consumption and Geographies of Childhood and Family Life," by Jayne and Valentine, which considers the ways in which parents and carers emphasize home as a "safe" space to introduce children and young people to alcohol. As the authors argue, this oversimplifies understandings of health in relation to drinking and means there are missed opportunities to teach children about a range of drinking spaces/places and relations. As mentioned above, Wilkinson's chapter also on young people's drinking geographies extends this, exploring the ways in which spaces beyond the home are important for young people's alcohol consumption.

Space is also important in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing through a focus on institutional spaces. As noted above, both Pike and Kelly's and Coleman et al.'s chapters draw attention to the school as a site of intervention in health campaigns and school space is central to much work in children's geographies. Other chapters in this collection extend the range of institutional geographies (Philo and Parr 2000) beyond the school. For example, ► Chapter 29, "Mental Health of Looked-After Children: Embodiment and Use of Space," by Callaghan et al., adds an important geographical perspective on space in children's everyday lives to a literature dominated by psychotherapeutic approaches. In particular, they raise the importance of spaces of "home and belonging" for looked after children whose lives are often mobile. ► Chapter 30, "Children's Spaces of Mental Health: The Built Environment as Places of Meaning," by Crafter et al., similarly explores institutional spaces but in this case in relation to the built environment and spaces of outpatient Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In particular, they explore how meanings associated with what it means to be a "child" are reflected in the built environment often opposing ideas of the "normal" child with the "dangerous" child service user. In ► Chapter 31, "Locking Up Children and Young People: Secure Care in Scotland," Schliehe explores space in a more extreme setting. This chapter offers a nuanced and important reflection on the spatial articulation of care and control in institutions often considered the last resort for young people deemed to present a risk to themselves and others. In the context of the clinical space of fertility clinics, ► Chapter 32, "Geographies of Maternal Obesity, Eugenics, and the Clinical Space," by McPhail and Hunynh, explores the ways in which risk to future/unborn children plays a part in discussions of maternal obesity. Here, future children's wellbeing is evoked prior to conception in a preemptive politics which the authors suggest constitutes a form of eugenics, limiting the reproductive choices of mothers labeled as obese. ► Chapter 33, "Alternative Childhood Obesity Treatment in Age of Obesity Panic," by Ward, offers a more hopeful clinical context surrounding fat wellbeing, describing an alternative obesity treatment program which challenges some of the dominant stigmatization of fat bodies.

While these chapters pay attention to the microgeographies of these everyday and institutional spaces in relation to health and wellbeing, it is important to note that they also do more than just pay attention to the microscale (Ansell 2009) and many of the chapters demonstrate how these microgeographies articulate with geographies at larger scales. For example, Tan Qian Hui's discussion of young people's willful smoking subjectivities is situated through discussion of the framing of young people as "polluting presences in a supposedly clean-and-green Singapore," while Pike and Kelly's discussion of class in relation to media representations of school food are situated within the discourses surrounding austerity politics in contemporary Britain. The different clinical encounters surrounding fat bodies in chapters by McPhail and Hunynh, and Ward are also situated within a wider "war on obesity." Almost all of the chapters (particularly those on institutional spaces) also discuss children and

young people's lives in relation to national and international health policy. Thus the chapters in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing illustrate that, as Ansell (2009), 204 argues:

> Policies are made and events take place beyond children's perceptions that they cannot comment on, yet profoundly shape their lives. The political spaces from which children are physically absent are as important as those in which they are present.

At the outset of this editorial, we noted that Health and Wellbeing are enshrined in the UNCRC. As Skelton (2007) explains, this convention is framed around three Ps: provision, protection, and participation. Looking across the three themes outlined above in relation to this section of the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing, what is evident is that the relationship between these three is often tense in the context of health and wellbeing. While many spaces, policies, and interventions are framed around providing care *for* children and protecting children, this often articulates in difficult ways with children's participation as a framing of children and young people as "at risk" may negate or make problematic any recognition of their agency. This is not to say that children and young people do not need care and protection (Skelton 2007), but as the chapters in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing illustrate, Children's Geographers are doing important work to complicate this and offer more nuanced understandings of the articulation of agency, responsibility, and risk across different geographies.

1.3   Conclusion: Key Questions

As this is an introductory chapter, rather than offer any conclusions, we suggest some key questions. As you read the chapters in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing, we invite you to consider the following questions.

- How are the concepts of play recreation, health and wellbeing important to topics you are researching or studying?
- Which aspects of play recreation, health and wellbeing are distinctive to children and young people? How do children and young people's geographies of play recreation, health and wellbeing vary over space and time?
- What aspects of play recreation, health and wellbeing are important areas for future research? Are any aspects of these topics *not* covered in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing?
- A wide range of theories and methods feature in the volume on Play and Recreation, Health and Wellbeing: which of them do you find most useful in thinking about play and recreation, health and wellbeing?

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Part I

Geographies of Children and Young People's Play and Recreation

Ludic Geographies

2

Tara Woodyer, Diana Martin, and Sean Carter

Contents

Abstract

In many ways, twenty-first century (western) childhood may be characterized by a cacophony of moral panics. Spatiality is pertinent, if not central, to these moral panics, not least those concerning contemporary children's play. Yet, despite this, the presence of spatiality within play research beyond the geographical discipline is, at best, marginal. This chapter examines how geographical work is well placed to challenge problematic characteristics of agenda-setting discourses about children's play. This is not restricted to the marginal presence of spatiality but extends to the nostalgic reification of "innocent" play, the valorization of a developmental approach, and a limited apprehension of embodiment and materiality. The chapter begins with an overview of geographical work that has favored the outdoor spaces of the playground, street, and neighborhood and emphasizes how children's independent spatial mobility has changed over time. It then introduces more recent and emerging trends, namely, attempts to (1) position children's play within a broader context and stress its contribution to the

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reproduction and shaping of "adult" society and (2) recognize vitality as the intrinsic purpose and value of play and the role of materiality, embodiment, and affectivity to this. While it is shown there is much to celebrate in relation to geographical research on play, it is argued that geographers could and should do more to better understand play from the player's perspective and challenge the prevailing direction of play research beyond the discipline.

1   Approaching Play from a Geographical Perspective

This chapter examines the crucial role of a geographical perspective in understanding children's play. It is intended as an introduction to problematic characteristics of agenda-setting discourses about children's play – such as the marginal presence of spatiality, the nostalgic reification of "innocent" play, the valorization of a developmental approach, and a limited apprehension of embodiment and materiality – and how geographers are well placed to challenge these.

In many ways, twenty-first century (western) childhood may be characterized by a cacophony of moral panics. Concern about all numbers of aspects of contemporary children's lives abounds: malnourishment and obesity, a solitary, sedentary, screen-based lifestyle, wanting family relations and chaotic domestic routines, deficient schooling and poor future prospects, and a lack of civility and societal regard. Spatiality is pertinent, if not central, to these moral panics: children and young people being in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people. Not eating as a family at the dinner table, not running and climbing outdoors, not being in bed at the appropriate time, poor educational and play infrastructure, and the anonymity online interaction affords, posing a threat and being at risk in public space. Combined, these concerns have spawned what Palmer (2006) refers to as "toxic childhood syndrome." Such concerns about western childhood hold relevance for children globally. The western social construct of childhood has been exported to further reaches of the globe, shaping responses to and interventions in children's lives in the Majority World.

The pertinence of spatiality to moral panics about childhood is particularly evident in concern about contemporary children's play. In the face of growing concerns about child safety and the lure of a vast screen-based children's culture, children are seen to have retreated from outdoor space. This retreat has signaled a diminishing engagement with nature and the rich, independent, exploratory play it affords and is marked by campaigns to encourage outdoor play. Take, for example, UK-based initiatives such as Play England's "Love Outdoor Play" campaign, which

included the creation of an interactive map of local play spaces across the UK, and the National Trust's 50 Things To Do Before You're 11¾ challenge, which encourages children to explore outdoor environments and get closer to nature by doing things such as building dens and skimming stones.

These initiatives are, in large part, a response to disenchanted images of contemporary childhood fueled by nostalgia for forms of play more readily characteristic of days gone by, typically related to a more independent spatial mobility. This nostalgia is an admixture of adult imagination and memory, a romanticism shrouded in the mysticism and innocence of childhood (Philo 2003).

Despite the centrality of spatiality to contemporary concerns about children's play, its presence within play research is, at best, marginal. In a recent scientific compendium on children's play, Meire (2007, 73) noted how research on children's geographies "could be an enormous enrichment to the study of play." However, this research is yet to be registered in many chief perspectives on play. This is regrettable as geographical work is well placed to challenge problematic characteristics of agenda-setting discourses about children's play, notably: the marginal presence of spatiality, the nostalgic reification of "innocent" play, the valorization of a developmental approach, and a limited apprehension of embodiment and materiality. Rather than simply bemoaning the lack of attention geographical research on play has received, this chapter critically reviews the dominant trends within this work and stresses how it could and *should* do more to expand the geographies of play we critically engage with and challenge the prevailing direction of contemporary research on children's play beyond the discipline.

Currently, research on children's play is characterized by the valorization of developmentalism. Play is viewed through an instrumental lens, seen as a learning process preparing children for adult life. It has no purpose in and of itself but derives its meaning from what it will equip a child to do in the future. However, broader considerations of play, as something more than merely the activity of children, have cast it as noninstrumental. A trivial, superfluous activity is set in opposition to seriousness and productivity and thus something, in many ways, to be contained, particularly within adult behavior. To these seemingly paradoxical approaches to play, we might usefully add a third: theories of ambiguity. This approach stresses play as a fluid and polymorphous process without stability of either meaning or content (Sutton-Smith 1997; Woodyer 2012). This understanding opens up the possibility that play can have its own internal coherence and meaning neither purposeless nor brought into relief only by what it might enable one to accomplish in the future. Play is not an activity separate and distinct from conventional adult behavior but rather flows through various events, practices, actions, moments, and ages, making it part of the everyday life of both children and adults. By drawing attention to the ambiguity of play, this chapter demonstrates how geographical research might begin to challenge the problematic characteristics of agenda-setting discourses about children's play noted above.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of geographical work that has favored the outdoor spaces of the school ground, street, and neighborhood and emphasizes how children's independent spatial mobility has changed over time. This

geographical overview critiques broader contemporary research on play in two important ways. Firstly, it laments the limited apprehension of spatiality in work to date. Secondly, it begins a critique of the prevailing valorization of developmentalism within contemporary play research, which is woven throughout the chapter. The following sections introduce research relating to children's domestic play with toys and popular cultural forms to continue this critique in two ways. Firstly, by stressing how children's play is embedded in and helps to shape wider social relations, practices, and processes, and, secondly, by valuing the vitality that play affords in the here and now, as seen through the lens of embodiment. The chapter concludes by outlining how geographers could and *should* do more to explore these last two aspects of play.

2 The Great Outdoors: A Review of Play Within Children's Geographies

While the indoor retreat of children is commonly held as a contemporary trend, there has been an increasing domestication of childhood since the late eighteenth century. During the Industrial Revolution, the "domestic" took on an unprecedented symbolic resonance as workplace and home space were divided into separate spheres. The home became a moral haven in a rapidly changing, volatile, and incomprehensible world. Children were central to this "modern domestic ideal," which was based on the nuclear family. Zelizer (1985) charts the transformation in the economic and sentimental value of children that this moral process of domestication entailed. It is during this time that the economically "worthless" but emotionally "priceless" child, a figure that has become essentialized in contemporary understandings of western childhood, emerged. The introduction of child labor laws and compulsory education gradually ushered children into a new unproductive and domesticated world of childhood.

The idea of the home as the "proper" space for children is reflected in the construction and externalization of risk by both parents and children. As perceptions of public space are becoming more threatening, not least due to the considerable media attention given to cases of child abduction and murder, drug deaths among young people, and bullying, the boundary between home and outdoors is becoming more strongly defined. The perceived risks of children's use of public space have prompted their participation in public life to be increasingly controlled and limited by adults via a plethora of legal, parental, and material restrictions. These limits to children's autonomy embody contemporary western ideas about childhood as a time of innocence and dependence and children as an immature, naïve social group.

Yet, the notion of children being "out of place" in public space is not limited to ideas of children's vulnerability. As Valentine's (1996a, b) work clearly shows, contradictory ideas about children as either "angels" (at risk in adult-controlled space) or "devils" (whose unruly behavior risks the hegemony of adult-controlled space) produce different concerns about children's use of public space in the global

north. This is particularly striking when the two concerns collide, as was the case with the murder of toddler Jamie Bulger by two 10-year-old boys in 1993. Although these contradictory ideas about children being out of place in public space stem from different historical roots, they reproduce the same spatial ideology.

Given the pervasiveness of this ideology and the level of contemporary debate it has generated, it is not surprising that geographical research has primarily focused on children's use of outdoor space at the expense of accounts of domestic play. Studies have examined children's use of school grounds (Hemming 2007); parental concerns about children's use of public space (Valentine 1997); intergenerational change in children's use of neighborhoods (Tandy 1999); variations in children's independent spatial mobility according to differences in locality, gender, age, and class (Valentine and McKendrick 1997); discourses of curfew (Collins and Kearns 2001); young people's appropriation of "the street" (Matthews et al. 1999, 2000); and use of, and movement between, spaces within their neighborhoods (Tucker 2003).

Despite a growing trend toward the restriction of children's use of public space, geographies of play cannot simply be reduced to a trend toward curtailment and impoverishment. There has also been a move toward the diversification and commodification of "indoor" play. To this end, geographers have examined the spaces of the youth club (Skelton 2000), the after-school club (Smith and Barker 2000), and commercialized leisure spaces (McKendrick et al. 2000). While the latter are a direct reaction to discourses of fear about dangerous streets, they do not simply induce a loss of children's freedom to public space. Since the 1990s, the development of "add-on" indoor and outdoor playgrounds and "stand-alone" indoor soft play centers has asserted children's right to play space in parts of the built environment previously perceived as adult domains (McKendrick et al. 2000).

With the prevailing geographical focus on play beyond the home, particularly outdoor play, domestic spaces of play – the private environments of the home and the garden – have been unduly neglected. This is seemingly problematic if children are indeed spending an increasing amount of time in the home. However, geographical research on outdoor play is instructive as "[s]treet play" remains disturbingly out of sight in most research [on play beyond geography], with attention focused on public playgrounds, school playgrounds, and day care centers (Meire 2007, 73). In uniquely addressing how children play in their neighborhoods and how they move between places while playing together, geographical work "[pulls] play out of its secluded 'children's settings'" (Meire 2007, 73). In doing so, this work emphasizes the importance of spatiality to discourses on and practices of play. It highlights the difference that place makes to understandings of children and childhood, the importance of the different sites of everyday life in the making and remaking of children's lives and identities, and the role of spatial imagery in ideologies of childhood (Holloway and Valentine 2000).

It also challenges a valorization of developmentalism evident within wider research on play. Geographical research on play is firmly situated within the "new social studies of childhood" in that it actively seeks to move beyond a preoccupation with the forces of socialization by paying explicit attention to children's everyday

practices of living (Holloway and Valentine 2000). Rather than approaching children as "human becomings" – immature, naïve beings waiting to be shaped into fully human adults through the process of socialization – geographers recognize children as human beings in their own right. This is evidenced in attention not only to the importance of spaces beyond the school and public playground in children's lives but also in the social variations, tensions, and microgeographies central to play (Jones 2000; Thomson and Philo 2004), children's performativity of age and gender differentiation within play (Karsten 2003; Tucker 2003), and children's negotiations of parental restrictions on access to public space and their self-imposed limits to spatial mobility (Valentine 1997). Children's social agency is also a strong theme in historical geographies of playground reform (Gagen 2001, 53), a movement largely represented as "something created *by* adults *for* children."

There is much to celebrate, then, in geographical research on children's play, with its attention to the heterogeneity and agency of children. Notwithstanding these attributes, a closer inspection of this work reveals a series of oversights. Firstly, the absorbing character of playful activities is often eclipsed in empirical studies. Secondly, research has tended to examine children's use of particular environments rather than exploring their creation of new, imaginary spaces of play, which are often shifting and transient. Thirdly, a focus on outdoor spaces has precluded examination of the importance of toys and popular culture in children's lives. Fourthly, in stressing the social agency of children, this work has also (unintentionally) presented a cultural world that is the preserve of children. As a consequence, there is little engagement with broader conceptualizations of play within studies of urban design and practice (Stevens 2007) or as a vehicle for social transformation (Benjamin 1986), conceptualizations that can productively inform understanding of children's ludic practices and their wider cultural significance.

The following section begins to expand upon these ideas by drawing attention to how children's play is embedded in and helps to shape wider cultural sentiments and practices. This is evidenced through reference to research on children's play in both Minority and Majority World contexts, with both mass-produced toys and found objects. In addition to developing a challenge to developmentalism, this section starts to allude to the wider contribution of ludic geographies to the discipline beyond a specific concern with *children's* geographies.

3   Adult Worlds and Child Worlds: Pulling Play Out of a Social Vacuum

Although many toys represent the "adult world" of particular societies in miniature (e.g., toy kitchens, toy work benches, etc.), play in itself has seldom been looked at as part of broader social and cultural worlds beyond a concern with children's appropriate socialization. Similarly, a noninstrumental approach to play creates a distinction between the childish world of play and the adult world of real life. It is precisely this separation of play from other spheres of life and its reduction to mere

fun or learning experience that allow for the role of play in the reproduction and shaping of economic, political, social, and cultural life to remain unquestioned.

Theories of ambiguity, which view play as an activity that flows through various events, practices, actions, moments, and ages, allow us to understand the entanglement of children's ludic geographies with wider contemporaneous sociocultural, economic, and political climates and cultures. Children's playful practices are not merely reflections of the world in which they live but also constitutive of it. More than mere vessels passively consuming ideas and practices through a process of socialization, children contribute to the circulation of sociocultural and political discourses and, potentially, counter-narratives, through their ludic practices. In this section, two case studies – children's play with "war toys" and children's enrolment of found objects in role playing – are used to illustrate how play is embedded within and contributes to the wider sociocultural, economic, and political fabric of everyday life. This is seen through children's active and conscious enactment of social and political roles.

Children's war play is a topic of perennial interdisciplinary debate (Carlsson-Paige and Levin 1990), yet little attention has been paid to the ways in which war toys are material cultures mirroring and reproducing specific geopolitical discourses (although see MacDonald 2008; Carter et al. 2016). An anthropological understanding of war toys asserts that their existence is justified by the presence of conflict. As Fraser (1972, 232) puts it, "[i]t is inevitable that an age [and a society] which has known wars should produce soldiers and war-toys." However, the ways in which war toys help to normalize cultures of militarism by domesticating and sanitizing particular geopolitical logics and technologies are yet to be fully examined.

By making war and conflict banal-like, children's play contributes to the constitution of certain geopolitical climates. This was particularly true during the Cold War. Children's collecting and mastery of toy rockets in play helped to activate and sustain the technologies of strategic advantage in relation to stockpiling and missile launch. As MacDonald (2008, 627) argues, "[t]oys like this both assume and impart serious technical competence, not only in terms of fine motor skills but also as an analog of 'real' military field knowledge." The ambiguity of play is central to this process:

> Is this a rocket or a missile, a weapon or a vehicle? Is this about war or peace, space exploration or the Cold War defense of capitalism? Or something else altogether? It is all of these things, of course; the toy is propelled by the ambiguity. [. . .] [T]his 'doubling' of the [rocket] in 'real life', as weapon and as exploration vehicle, is opened up through play; and moreover, such a mundane practice actually helps sustain these dual geopolitical logics of rocketry in the first place. (MacDonald 2008, 626–627)

These toy rockets did not merely reflect the sociopolitical life of their period but were constitutive of the geopolitical climate and culture of their time. Toys, like these rockets, make geopolitical logics and military hardware intelligible and, moreover, sanitize them by means of miniaturization and bringing them into a

domestic context. Play with them naturalizes specific geopolitical anxieties, and perhaps most importantly, creates a space for children to fashion a proprietary sense of the future. In the case of Cold War rocket play, the rocket launch represented the conquest of geopolitical space, "[c]hildren thus became geopolitical agents through their mastery of the missile event" (MacDonald 2008, 626).

Similarly, Action Man enthusiast, Tim Matthews, recalls his childhood play with action figures during the time of the Falklands War and how TV news bulletins informed his play:

> I was nine years old in 1982 when Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands…I had maintained a keen interest in everything military since toddlerhood. Suddenly war that I had read of in storybooks or heard on cassette tape was being beamed almost live into the living room.

He continues,

> I was gripped by images of Britain's brave servicemen fighting the pitched battles of our country's last brief, but ferocious conventional war on British soil. *As they fought, I re-enacted the scenes on the living room carpet with my Action Men* (Matthews 2012, emphasis added).

Here, Tim was not merely playing with his action figure but enacting the overseas conflict he watched on TV. In so doing, he contributed to the circulation of geopolitical narratives bound up in this conflict.

Increasingly, cooperation between the defense and toy industries is seeking to foster the kind of entanglement seen in Tim's play. VE Day 2009 saw the launch of a new range of military action figures – HM Armed Forces – at the Royal Air Force base in Northolt, UK. This range is directly licensed by the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD), with outfits and accessories tooled on actual field equipment to ensure authenticity and realism. The range forms part of a wider MOD-led program of activities to generate public support for the military through raising the profile of the British Armed Forces, initiated at a time when they were heavily engaged in the "war on terror" in Afghanistan. As part of this wider program, including an annual Armed Forces day, military-focused charities, and pop concerts, HM Armed Forces toys may be seen to contribute to wider training in institutionalized homage to militarism, literally bringing the message home.

Jerry Healy, marketing director of Character Options who produce the range said at the time of the launch: "I think there is so much excitement about the range as it's important to have the right products for the time and I think the new ranges have really hit the psyche of the nation" (Toys n Playthings 2009, 24).

The link between action figure play and contemporary events is evident in the sales trends which registered the Infantryman action figure in a desert combat of exposure of the outfit as the best-selling product of the line. Healy explained: "This was pretty much as we expected, given the amount of exposure of the military in this camouflage across all media throughout the year" (Toys n Playthings 2010, 26).

These examples clearly show how children's war play does not merely reflect the dominant geopolitical discourses of the time but also allows children to become part of broader practices and cultures through the enactment of those discourses, and thereby, the circulation of particular values and ideas. Children are thus constitutive of wider cultural and political orders. Moreover, while play scripts may mimic familiar sociopolitical narratives as seen on TV or read about in books and comics, each enactment of these practices is original and open-ended, containing the possible "spark of recognition that things, relations, and selves could be otherwise" (Katz 2004, 102). As Machin and Van Leeuwen (2009, 58) argue, children may disrupt discourses and ideas of enmity made available to them through various media in their play. Through experimentation with rules and roles, children may renegotiate the meaning of the "bad guys"; they may not necessarily resemble the "bad guys" that the west has called "terrorists" and "Islamic fundamentalists."

Katz (2004) provides an instructive threefold categorization of the relationship between play and social transformation, which challenges the reduction of play to social reproduction. Firstly, playing is altered by social transformation; children absorb and reflect changes in their playing. Secondly, playing marks social transformation; it exaggerates aspects of change. Thirdly, playing itself can be transformative; it allows children to experiment with social roles and sociocultural and political-economic practices. This process of social transformation can be seen in the following two examples taken from Katz's (2004) rich ethnography of children's entangled geographies of work and play in a Sudanese village. The ethnography was conducted at a time when the political-economic and sociocultural changes associated with industrial capitalism were beginning to affect village life.

Katz recounts the game of "store," which typically involved both boys and girls setting up a number of small shops in a shaded area. The wares consisted of "found objects" – "vials discarded from the village dispensary, tomato paste tins, can and bottle tops, dirt, wads of mud clay modeled into such things as bread and other foodstuffs, batteries and battery tops, bottles, goat dung…" (2004, 103) – used to represent commodities. In addition to the stores, children would set up several restaurants and a commercial well. "China money" – shards of broken crockery – was used as the medium of exchange. While many of the socio-material practices enacted by the children in this game were familiar to them from village life, their play did not simply reproduce the social world around them. "[T]heir enactment involved the children in stretching their knowledge of local commercial exchange and imagining some of its ins and outs" (Katz 2004, 103). The village itself hosted but a single restaurant, and the children's store stocked not only the standard dry goods available in the village but also more exotic imports. Their game embodied a scale and intensity far exceeding that of the commercial enterprises apparent in the village. The historical transformations wrought by industrial capitalism were not merely absorbed in the children's play. Rather, their play marked this social transformation by exaggerating aspects of this change and, moreover, began to suggest possible avenues of further change for the village. "At the very least [the children] domesticated capitalism as they outfitted themselves as new subjects of its terms" (Katz 2004, 102).

The transformative potential of play is also seen strongly in the game of "house" where young girls actively carve out the possibility of future social roles different to those of their female elders.

Girls made houses by delineating an area with stones or sticks and crafted grass dolls dressed in scraps of cloth. The doll selves would then undertake a range of household chores – cooking, cleaning, and childcare – mimicking the daily activities of village women. In addition to these domestic chores, the dolls also went to the fields to fetch water and collect firewood. This is a socio-material practice that was familiar to the girls, an important task that children were largely responsible for in their daily lives. However, in the area of Islamic Sudan where the research was conducted, it was thought improper for women of childbearing years to be seen in public away from their household compounds. In weaving these different practices together, the girls created a space for social roles and community practices to be reconfigured.

The games of "store" and "house" demonstrate how political, economic, and sociocultural changes in society are not simply absorbed into play through a practice of mimicking. Rather, children's play also enters into these societal transformations in different ways, offering the possibility of disrupting discourses and reconfiguring relations and social practices. Play, then, is as much about invention as mimicking, experimenting with how relations and selves might be otherwise. As Katz (2004, 102) remarks, "[m]aking that so is not child's play, of course", yet "play is not immaterial to the task."

Taken together, the various examples in this section clearly show that play does not exist in a social vacuum but is connected to a network of meanings and wider cultural frames that allow children the chance to reproduce and possibly renegotiate the adult world around them. It is precisely play's polymorphous and ambiguous nature that opens up spaces of enquiry into play's broader cultural influences and significance. Not only do these examples show how children's play is part of broader cultures, but also how it contributes to them. Toys and play do not merely reflect cultures, as an anthropological view point would assert, but are also vehicles for the circulation of values and ideas, *and* potential counter-narratives enacted by children and the ways in which they choose their play scenarios, toys, and outcomes. Adopting an approach that sees play as embedded in and contributing to wider "adult" cultures and processes of social change challenges the valorization of developmentalism within play research by asserting children's capacity as social actors in their own right in the here and now. Similarly, recognition of play's entanglement with broader processes of social change provides a corrective riposte to cultural commentaries on play bound up in nostalgic idealizations of the past.

4 Valuing Play in and of Itself: Materiality, Embodiment, and Vitality

Attention to the material dimensions of play is instructive in appreciating play's positioning within wider sociocultural, economic, and political frames, and yet to date, apprehension of embodiment and materiality has been limited within play

research. There is growing geographical appreciation of the materialities, bodily practices, and affectivity of children and young people's social and cultural lives (Colls and Hörschelmann 2009; Horton and Kraftl 2006). This is particularly evident in geographical research on play that recognizes the phenomenon as "irreducibly, a practice" (Harker 2005, 51; Thrift 1997; Woodyer 2008, 2012). Play's practical – material and embodied – character is "felt in its prioritizing of the non-cognitive and more-than-rational, its embodied nature, its heightening of the affective register, its momentary temporality, its intersection between being and becoming, and its intensity" (Woodyer 2012, 319).

Growing appreciation of materialities, bodily practices, and affectivity is also evident in geographical work on the entanglement of popular cultural phenomena within children's lives. This entanglement has been glimpsed in a wide range of child-focused research: Ninja Turtles in research on out-of-school play spaces (Smith and Barker 1999), the Simpsons in research on youth identities in post-socialist states (Hörschelmann and Schäfer 2005), Sylvanian Families in research on rural communities (Houlton and Short 1995), and Spiderman in research on preschool spaces (Gallacher 2005). As Horton (2012, 5) argues, these "multiple, fleeting, oblique empirical glimpses" are yet to amount to a focused sustained engagement with the significance of popular cultural forms in children's lives. However, the limited geographical work explicitly focused on children's engagement with popular cultural forms stresses just how "intimately, complexly, and constitutively" these phenomena are implicated in young people's everyday geographies (Horton 2012, 4; Woodyer 2013). This is seen in the taken-for-granted presence of popular culture (in its various material manifestations) in everyday geographies, the constitutive role of popular cultural forms in children's social relations, and the intimate entanglement of popular cultural forms in daily routines (Horton 2012). The following example is indicative:

> 8-year-old Matthew recalls his day's activities. "I got up, played PlayStation. Had breakfast, played PlayStation. Went to school. Came home, got changed, played PlayStation. Had dinner, played PlayStation". As he speaks, his expression changes from one of indifference to one of glee, a smile spreading across his face and a hint of laugher in his voice.

The ubiquity of particular popular cultural phenomena is often remarkable, with the levels of knowledge and care children frequently develop about that phenomena proving striking. Such forms have a real currency to them, not only in their material form, but also in relation to knowledge about them. There is an urgency in how they are engaged with and the care expressed for them. There is a vitality to the social relations and practices they constitute. Recent empirical studies conducted by geographers have begun to demonstrate just how intensely a phenomenon "preoccupies and animates many [young people]" (Horton 2010, 2012, 5).

This is not to suggest that attention to children's popular cultural forms is new. There is a long-standing body of scholarly work on such phenomena within cultural and media studies. This work addresses these phenomena in four main ways: as suites of representations, as behavioral or psychological stimuli, as props for

consumer agency, and as indicators of broader social-historical trends such as
"glocalization" (Horton 2012). Yet, within this work, popular cultural phenomena
are typically figured as "a fairly singular, coherent, and consistent global event"
(Horton 2012, 6). In contrast, geographical research – with its attention to every-
dayness and spatialities – has revealed: the peculiar ambiguities evident within and
frequently constitutive to play, the affective vitality and embodied performativity of
play of various kinds (Harker 2005; Woodyer 2008), and the complex materialities
and spatialities of such popular cultural phenomena seen in its constitution of
everyday spaces, relations, and routines (Horton 2010, 2012; Woodyer 2013).
Geographical research in this vein, then, has much to offer broader studies of
play and popular culture through its close attention to material, bodily, affective,
and spatial characteristics that are effaced or best remain implicit in accounts
stemming from media and cultural studies.

One example will be used here to bring together this sense of play as practice and
the significance of popular cultural forms in children's lives: magical role playing.
This example highlights the vital character of play and the embodied processes that
go into making this experience.

> 12-year-old Daisy begins to explain her imaginary travels to Ethrole Castle of Enchantment
> and Mysticism:
>
> "We travel there. It's on an island and we have to go there with these divers and we
> swim there, and then we go to the castle and we do things like power control and disguise."
>
> She explains that the castle is a school for advanced witches and warlocks where
> students learn to use feelings rather than wands to generate magic. She demonstrates how
> to generate force fields with her friend. They stand facing each other, arms slightly
> outstretched in front of their torsos. They begin to mirror each other's movements as they
> move slowly from side to side in accord to Daisy's instructions:
>
> "Side, back…"
> "[My force field's] not strong enough."
> "We need to do it for longer."
> "We need to wait till there's a tingle in our fingers."
>
> They repeat the process, concentrated faces giving way to expectant expressions.
> There's a sense of anticipation in the room, felt not only by the players but also the
> observer. Voices begin to rise in pitch and volume:
>
> "I'm starting to get it!"
> "My face is red!"
> "Okay ready, I've got it! Ready?"
> 'Yep"
> "POW!"
>
> As Daisy's friend extends her arms toward her in one swift movement she falls back
> against her bed with enough force to make an observer wince. Laughing, she exclaims,
> "Aargh, you got my left leg."

Four key points can be drawn from this example. Firstly, the different means
through which popular cultural phenomena make their presence felt in playful
practices; secondly, the vitality experienced by the players engaged in such activ-
ities; thirdly, how imaginative spaces are folded within spaces of the everyday to
real effect; and fourthly, the pivotal role of embodiment in the production of such
imaginative spaces of play.

While this play centers on the bodily practices of the two girls, rather than an explicit engagement with a particular popular cultural form, it unfolded at a time when Harry Potter – a story following the perilous pursuits of a young orphan who, with the help of friends from his school of magic, seeks to defeat the wizard who killed his parents – was immensely popular, breaking records for book and box office sales. It is possible to ascertain similarities between the narrative created by Daisy and the narrative created by the author of Harry Potter, J.K. Rowling. This play was also part of a wider cultural practice that involved the creation of additional magic schools, crafting of wands and talismans, growing herbs for potions, writing magical tales, and "traveling" to magical spaces from the school playground and public park (Woodyer 2013). The popular cultural phenomenon of Harry Potter was made material in various ways, not least in the girls' bodily practice.

The imaginative space of Ethrole Castle, where magic is not only possible but commonplace, is *sensed* in the everyday space of Daisy's bedroom as a result of the shared bodily – or intercorporeal – practice of the two girls. It is actively produced through their experiencing and feeling bodies, which produce an affective force – a transpersonal sense of vitality – that animates the space in which it is experienced. The everyday space of the bedroom literally quivers with an affective energy so strong that even the adult observer is not benign to its effects. This affective force is produced through the two girls' bodies being in relation, through the shared rhythmic comportment and haptic sensuality of proximity. This force is felt as the expectant tension of their bodies. Their shared anticipation structures the encounter between the two girls' bodies. They become disposed for action in a particular way as they will something to happen. Through this thoroughly embodied encounter, the girls' bodies become open to the possibilities of an imaginative field of potential.

Daisy reaffirms the importance of embodiment and affectivity in the creation of magical spaces when discussing the difficulty of accessing Magic Land, the larger space within which Ethrole Castle is located:

> The thing is, when we first joined magic you can't hear what's going on in Magic Land and then you can't see what's mostly going on, and then it develops as you get more advanced. . . [W]hen you're in Ethrole Castle it's even harder, erm, so I've had to translate for my friends.

Here she is describing a process of "tuning in" to the imaginative play through which magical spaces unfold. Access is reliant on a sensory receptivity, responding to not only that which is cognitively recognized by the players but also that which is "felt"; being responsive to the subtlety of gestures, including shifts in posture and complicit glances (Harker 2005). As the player becomes competent in responding to affective sensibilities, they experience a shared intimacy with others, a felt under-standing that enables them to "go with the flow." This transpersonal flow is ener-gizing, providing the players with a sense of vitality. The subjective experience of such vitality is the internal purpose and intrinsic value of play, which lends it significance in the lives of young individuals (Lester and Russell 2008). Geograph-ical work demonstrates that this playful vitality is not restricted to children's

activities but can be experienced by adults in clubbing (Malbon 1999), dance (Thrift 1997), and videogaming (Woodyer 2008), each understood as a mode of play.

This emphasis on vitality is not to deny play an extrinsic value nor the knowledge and skills that can accrue through the act of playing. Daisy had a strong sense of identity as a witch, defining herself in contrast to "muggles" (non-magic people, a term also used by J.K. Rowling) and teaching peers how to generate magic. This identification extended beyond playful moments of flow, into her sense of self-identity, and helped to shape relations with her friends and wider peers (Woodyer 2013; Malbon (1999) also explores this in relation to clubbing).

Importantly, though, the above example demonstrates the significance of the often more-than-rational character of play. As Aitken observes, "play . . . does not fit well in the rational, instrumental logic that pervades the abstract conceived spaces of today's world" (2001, 180). Early writings that address play as a phenomenon fundamental to the human condition, rather than an activity specific to children, also emphasize the sense that play exceeds rational regimes (Huizinga 1949). Appreciating this more-than-rational character and the significance of vitality as the intrinsic value of play offers an important critique of the valorization of developmentalism within play research and a corrective riposte to the limited apprehension of embodiment and materiality within play research to date.

5   Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that a geographical approach to play has much to offer the wider field of play research, principally its consideration of the spatialities of play and the challenge it presents to the prevailing valorization of developmentalism.

By addressing the spaces of the street and the neighborhood and commercialized leisure spaces, geographical research has wrestled play from child-specific sites of socialization and asserted the importance of those parts of the built environment previously perceived as adult domains in the lives of children and young people. In doing so, geographical research not only marks the marginal presence of spatiality within play research but also emphasizes the problematic nature of this inattention. A place is shown to make a difference to understandings of children and childhood, different sites of everyday life are shown to be important in the making and remaking of children's lives and identities, and spatial imagery is shown to play an important role in ideologies of childhood.

It is through its explicit attention to children's everyday practices of living, rather than being preoccupied with learning and socialization, that geographical research challenges the prevailing valorization of a developmental approach within play research. Children are approached as social actors in their own right, with due attention given to the social variations, tensions, microgeographies, and performative practices central to play.

While there is good reason to praise geographical research, this chapter has also shown how such work needs to push these avenues further. The spatial focus of attention to children's everyday playful practices of living needs to be extended to include domestic environments and imaginative spaces. While the latter may be transient and fleeting, they are often of great significance in the lives and identities of children. This extended focus requires greater attention to the important role of toys and popular culture in young people's playful practices and the embodied and affective aspects of play. By building on the limited yet insightful work in these areas, geographers can challenge the limited apprehension of materiality and embodiment in agenda-setting discourses of play. This is important for recognizing the internal purpose and intrinsic value of play to children in the here and now.

An extended focus on children's engagements with toys and popular culture also offers an important opportunity for challenging nostalgic reifications of "innocent" play. A better appreciation of the mechanics, purpose, and value of domestic play, particularly play involving mass-produced branded toys or popular cultural forms, can provide a more grounded cultural commentary on contemporary children and childhood than that offered by disenchanted images based on nostalgically infused anecdotes. Research that addresses the continuing importance of toys that do not constitute a popularized brand or fad in children's lives is also important in this regard. While not necessarily possessing the same forms of currency, playthings such as cuddly toys and pencil cases (Harker 2005) and found objects such as stones (Rautio 2013) are nonetheless bound up with particular forms of ubiquity, urgency, and vitality.

Through attention to the materialities, spatialities, and affectivity of play, geographers are also well placed to develop appreciation of the wider significance of play beyond its value to children. This significance is seen in the ways in which play is embedded in and contributes to the shaping of wider geopolitical climates, cultures, and processes of social change. This chapter has also begun to suggest how and why play is not only of significance in children's lives but is also fundamental to human experience across the life course through the sense of vitality it provides (Woodyer 2012).

In sum, taken in their various manifestations, ludic geographies have a great deal to offer both in the wider geographical discipline and in the broader field of play research. Firstly, they challenge the problematic characteristics of agenda-setting discourses of play relating to spatiality, developmentalism, nostalgic reifications, and materiality and embodiment; secondly, they stress children's important role in the reproduction and shaping of wider society; and thirdly, they emphasize the importance of the more-than-rational to the human condition. There is much to celebrate in relation to geographical research on play, but geographers could *and should* build on emerging areas of interest to do more to better understand play from the player's perspective, appreciate that play is not the discrete activity of children, and challenge the prevailing direction of play research beyond the discipline.

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Children's Relations to the More-Than-Human World Beyond Developmental Views

3

Pauliina Rautio and Päivi Jokinen

Contents

Abstract

In this chapter children's relations to the more-than-human world are explored beyond the developmental framework of the autonomous individual child agent. The social and material, temporal, and spatial existence of a snow pile is used as an anchor – both a concrete and a conceptual one – in discussing an assemblage of more-than-individual subjectivities. It is argued that in viewing children's activities in their everyday life surroundings only in terms of what they might mean – either to the children themselves or in relation to their development – we risk losing the part of our ongoing existence that cannot be mediated, the ongoingness that matters nevertheless. The ongoing mattering of a snow pile is discussed through taking into consideration the entire event, the sociomaterial assemblage that the children take part in, or exist as parts of, virtually seizing to

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be individual children for the duration of the event. When snow, children, wooly mittens, scarves, boots, snot, rocks, ice, frost, dark nights, and lampposts to name but a few partaking elements convene, they produce a shared deterritorialization. As result, the children in the midst can be thought of as if freed from being viewed as individual representatives of a developmental phase, freed from being viewed as "growing up," and freed from one's doings viewed as "meaning" something other than what sustains the activity.

1 Introduction

This chapter is intended to work as a lead-in to discussions about children's relations to their daily environments, especially beyond the hegemony of developmental views. These discussions are sourced from the fields of children's geographies, educational research, and childhood studies. The way of thinking about children and their environments promoted in this chapter, as *relational assemblages that matter ontologically*, is of key importance to (children's) geographers interested especially in themes of play and recreation. This is because an understanding of children in relation to their daily environments does not only increase knowledge of the nature of those environments, nor about children's playful interactions in them. It produces new knowledge about children per se, about the possibilities of being of a certain kind, and about ways in which children actually engage and enjoy play at this very profound ontological level – losing their selves and becoming one with a swarming assemblage of snow pile action. Furthermore, geography as a discipline stands a chance of producing new information about children's lives beyond developmental views, and beyond humanism which still reign most of educational research, mostly due to pressures of accountability to national political stakeholders.

Snow and snow piles are both magical and mundane. In the North of Finland where the authors write, the first snowfall, around November, is greeted as a small miracle by children each year. Adults welcome the extra light at the time of the year when daylight lasts for 2 h at best. And Christmas, a considerable national holiday in a country of little religious diversity, is just around the corner. Early winter snowfall is thus a sign – a promise – of many things cultural as well as natural. The sightings of first snow plows indicate the budding formations of snow piles. As the winter progresses and depending on snowfall, these piles will gradually grow higher, all the way up to 3–4 m, requiring already very heavy machinery to top them up each morning. By the time they reach about 2.5 m, usually around February, the magic of snow has slowly faded and the everydayness of it has kicked in. The pulling on of three layers of pants, the heavy boots, and the frostbitten cheeks and fingers have lost all of their novelty arguably for people of all ages.

The mornings after heavy snowfall when the plow has not yet made it to your road cause deep sighs and reluctant and unplanned exercise routines. As spring progresses, the melting of snow is followed with gratitude. Streams and puddles are signs – promises – of the nightless summer approaching. And the very last to disappear are the piles of snow, stubborn traces of an already absent winter.

Somewhere within the middle age of an average snow pile, between 1.5 and 4 m high, and before the slow dripping death in early May, however, children and snow piles get along.

In this chapter children's relations to the more-than-human world are explored beyond the developmental framework of the autonomous individual child agent. The social and material, temporal, and spatial existence of a snow pile is used as an anchor – both a concrete and a conceptual one – in discussing an assemblage of more-than-individual subjectivities. The chapter is thus a response to the calls for de-individualization made within recent early childhood advances; in the words of Affrica Taylor, Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, and Mindy Blaise (2013, p. 81):

> For us, the notion of the autonomous individual child perpetuated by child development theory is not only an illusion, it is also a grossly inadequate conceptual framework for responding to the challenges of growing up in an increasingly complex, mixed-up, boundary blurring, heterogeneous, interdependent and ethically confronting world.

Another call, stemming from children's geographies, is that of sustaining focus also on how things matter rather than only on what they mean (Horton 2010). Due to the prevailing developmental approach to children's lives, their doings are often subjected to meanings ascribed by the ones who are beyond the developmental phases children are viewed as representing: parents, educators, and fellow adult citizens (e.g., Burman 2007; Morss 1996; Fendler 2001). What matters or doesn't matter to children, regardless of what it means in retrospect or to an onlooker, is what is rarely taken into account. To be able to do this, however, there needs to be an elaborated understanding of the distinction between mattering and meaning.

In this chapter the two mentioned calls are seen as intertwining and as indicative of similar and simultaneous shifts in human and social sciences at large. The call to dismantle and reconfigure discourses and practices of individualism and anthropocentrism and the focus on ontology or being, evident in "mattering," rather than emphasis on epistemology or knowing, are both projects that react to the fact that these enlightenment-born ideals are often treated as objective truths rather than historical discursive constructions.

The discussion in this chapter draws upon recent individual studies by the authors, completed in the North of Finland (see Rautio 2014; Rautio and Winston 2015). These studies were designed leaning on theories that welcome everyday life unpredictable multiplicities, complexities, and connections as opportunities for creating new knowledge and reconfiguring old subjectivities – namely, recent poststructural theories of childhood and education (e.g., Jackson and Mazzei 2012; St. Pierre 2008; Davies 1996; Davies and Gannon 2009; Somerville et al. 2011; Maclure 2006). As the two studies also question the agents in everyday events as

invariably human individuals, they situate within the so-called postdevelopmental (Edwards et al. 2009) approaches as well as employ the adjacent or overlapping post-humanist or (new) materialist approaches (e.g., Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi 2010; Fenwick et al. 2011; see also Rautio 2013).

2   Why Does It Matter What Matters to Children?

In what has been called an "age of meaning," the epitome and carrier of meaning is language (e.g., Soames 2005; Ricoeur 2004; St. Pierre 2008), and the making and communicating of meanings is virtually equal to existing. Businesses that can emotively brand their products to convey meanings survive (Vossoughi 2009). People who can read between the lines and decipher "true" meanings and explanations are taken to exhibit "intellectual behavior" making them stand out from machines that cannot (Loizos 2009). "But what does it (really) mean?" has fueled psychoanalytically tuned everyday life interpretations to the extent that it feels suspicious to think that something could be taken at face value.

In this quest to find meanings, could "meaning" itself have become equivalent to "value" somehow? If something does not seem to have a meaning, or the meaning cannot be expressed linguistically for some reason, is it in danger of being deemed trivial, i.e., of little worth or relevance? Why else would childhood scholars, for instance, be so concerned about (1) finding out what childhood activities mean in general and/or (2) finding out what childhood activities mean for children themselves in particular? There seems to be a business of making meaning in order to make something important and thus speaking on behalf of it as legitimate.

The twentieth-century flourishing of developmental theories in (educational) psychology could be seen as either the chicken or the egg to the obsession over meanings ascribed to children's behavior. The prevalence of developmental approaches to childhood has both created and kept maintaining a yardstick for "scientific" and "justifiable" (Edwards et al. 2009; Graue 2005; Cannella 1997; Ryan and Goffin 2008). This yardstick requires that all be explained – receive meaning – in relation to a developmental stage or phase while these stages in themselves or the very notion of "development" remains unquestioned. Many scholars are ready to leave this framework behind as just a culturally and historically conditioned discourse among others, but the legacy is hard to challenge let alone overcome.

Most things arguably both matter and have meaning. Meaning is often the retrospectively assigned attribute to a practice that took place because it mattered. Meanings can be speculated or imposed by anyone, and mattering is only for those involved in the moment. Yet, mattering and meaning do not necessarily settle as a linear and/or causal connection in which mattering would always precede meaning. Meaning can be ascribed also to things that did not matter to those involved, and – perhaps more often – things that matter don't necessarily mean much in retrospect.

How many of childhood scholars working with young children have provided their participants with drawing sets or cameras? How many have observed that

while enthusiastic about drawing or photographing, the end results – drawings and photographs – are not that important? While the drawing mattered, the drawings have little meaning. Children agree to talk about the drawings or photographs – researchers consider these objects as eliciting their meaning-making – but what happens to the actual objects is often of little relevance to children. The moment that mattered would have passed. Yet, for researchers to "scientifically" and credibly argue that drawing (art) has a place in, say, a curriculum, it seems they must retrospectively assign a meaning to either the practice or the end result rather than argue that the practice simply matters in itself. Like this: spatial drawing is related to children's perspective taking skills (Ebersbach et al. 2011), drawing is a symbolic form of practicing cultural communication (Pinto et al. 2011), and drawing supports early writing acquisition (Mackenzie and Veresov 2013).

In their research of children's mobilities in new-build urban developments, John Horton and his research group (Horton et al. 2013) found out that while children's mobilities were intensely bounded by parents/carers, children were intensely mobile within these boundaries – and that this mobility was of constitutive importance to daily lives of these children. The mobility in question was walking, "just walking." An earlier study by John Horton (2010) discussed ways in which children's popular culture matters. How the "ostensibly banal, fun, faddish, lowbrow and 'childish'" things, often mass-produced and ill-fitting to nostalgic renderings of childhood, remain understudied but nevertheless matter greatly in some children's lives. How are we to argue on behalf of things and activities like this? On behalf of things that do not seem to have a point, a purpose, or a linguistically conveyable meaning? On behalf of things that "just" matter? Whether it is walking or biking around or obsessing over the right kind of toy or keeping that stone you picked up.

Take a case example of excavating meaning in order to advocate something children quite universally enjoy doing – drawing and painting. In her study Heather Malin (2013, p. 7) has a worthy goal of questioning the prevalent "vision of children as uncorrupted and unintentional conduits of creativity" and to argue instead that children create art from similar premises than do adults: based on their intentions and motivation derived from earlier experiences. Malin wishes to speak on behalf of children's art making and notes that little research on children's art making breaks away from the developmental paradigm which emphasizes adult perspectives to the activity. One of the reasons she grants to prevalent adult perspectives is that children under about 6 years old usually cannot express meanings related to their activity when prompted. Malin proceeds to study children older than 6 and collects her data by observing children, talking to them about their art making, as well as examining their art products. She succeeds in coding meanings that children ascribe to their own practice.

Heather Malin's (2013) theoretical framework situates within sociocultural learning theories. Her approach thus offers conceptual tools for focusing on learning and growing up as not only individual psychological processes but socially shared and culturally relevant. Yet, even with those tools, the focus remains on individually assigned meaning-making. To further contest the individualistic and

meaning-centered developmental discourses, a range of so-called postdevelopmental approaches has emerged (Blaise 2005).

Those questioning the role of developmental knowledge in the field of early childhood education point out that developmental knowledge can be thought of as one discourse among others (e.g., Edwards et al. 2009; Cannella 1997; Ryan and Goffin 2008; Mayall 2006; Burman 2011). It is a theoretical concept and an approach that in itself shapes and produces certain kinds of childhoods. In its simplicity a compelling example by Edwards et al. (2009) is the age grouping of children in practices of education. The fact that research on multiage grouping has focused largely on developmental issues is telling of the prevalence of developmental views as the unquestioned standard (ibid., p. 56). That children are thought to develop and mature according to their linear age, through certain phases, and that this development is best aided or controlled by grouping same age children together, is nothing but a discourse which remains undisputed to the extent that educators, parents, and even children themselves take the developmental view as a scientific fact (see also Mayall 2006). It is also a discourse that makes it difficult – or at least trivial – to study things without aiming to uncover meanings or purposes that relate to individual or social development.

Topics of study such as snow or air (Banerjee and Blaise 2013) easily evaporate not only in real life but in the current hegemony of developmental approaches. Simultaneously using the terms "mingling" (Rautio 2014) and "comingling" (Banerjee and Blaise 2013) in their attempts to surpass this hegemony, Rautio, Banerjee, and Blaise focus on sociomaterial processes of "becoming-with," that is, on not only individual but also the social and in particular the material or more-than-human engagements in constituting life and growing up. The conceptual tools such as "becoming-with" point to onto-epistemologies that exceed individual human beings: to be and to know is not only an individual matter nor only a social or cultural matter, but it is thoroughly more than a human matter. Therefore, to consider meanings becomes if not irrelevant at least remains beside the point of interest. And shifting away from meanings is consequently indicative of decentering the notion of "voice" in research as representing an individual human view. Tracing the mattering of encountering snow piles in this way is thus an attempt to question the humanist underpinning of the celebrated notion of "voice" in social scientific or human sciences research – especially in relation to "voices of children."

3   Snow Piles as Comprising More-Than-Subject Voices

Along with the so-called new social studies of childhood came a foundational principle of including children as active participants in not only research but in the functions of the societies in which they live (e.g., Kraftl 2013; Mannion 2007). Children's points of view or their "voices" became prey to any ethically and politically minded researcher and the methods with which these voices could be elicited still flourish (e.g., Hill et al. 2004). While many were quick to admit that

there were adult-imposed limits to children's voices, the idea of an authentic voice of a child individual stuck nevertheless (Kraftl 2013; Mannion 2007; Hill et al. 2004).

It can be argued that the very concern for letting children speak for themselves in order not to make them "other" from the vantage point of adults leads to a kind of "othering" regardless. This is because the notion of an authentic voice is built on an understanding that the individual is categorically separate from others. To simplify somewhat that adults cannot speak for children is to say that children are an isolated "other" in relation to adults. To go beyond othering through idealizing an authentic view of the child, Greg Mannion (2007, p. 406) suggests that "voice" be "reframed as the study of and in the *spaces* of child-adult *relations*."

Similarly Elizabeth St. Pierre's (2008) deconstruction of "voice" as a discursive formation in qualitative research illustrates how the very notion is often understood as not only phonocentric but as arising from a view of an individual – rather than relational – subject who is "conscious, stable, unified, rational, coherent, knowing, autonomous, and [an] ahistoric humanist individual" (2008, p. 319). With a political and historical review of the notion in feminist research, Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2003) notes that to get past the humanist individualism of "voice," we might need to take up a less bounded notion of "rhizovoice." Understood as rhizomatic, there is no single origin to a voice but an ever unfolding multitude or partial voicings (Jackson 2003, pp. 706–707).

In thinking with snow piles, the authors suggest going also beyond the human/ more-than-human divide in reframing "voice" or the view of the child. To coin yet another prefix to "voice" is perhaps unnecessary, but to make the idea communicable, the term "more-than-subject voice" is used. Following the rhizomatic logic of how Jackson presents rhizovoice, the more-than-subject voice is essentially a voice that does not originate in any single individual subject but arises from an assemblage of elements – as if there was one complexly clustered subject that echoed a "voice." This is further clarified through thinking about snow piles as these kinds of clusters: as comprising traces of more-than-subject voices.

Gayatri Spivak (2013, pp. 484–499, 2005) writes of traces as material suggestions that something else was there before. Like tracks in the snow, something left them, possibly an animal, but it could also be someone pretending to be an animal, or it could be that they are just random marks made by wind and falling snow. Contrasting traces with signs, she points out that signs like language carry a promise – of a relatively fixed meaning – whereas traces are essentially open and offer endless possibilities for meanings, even meanings yet unheard of, outside of the performatives of culture. Traces are thus constitutive or life-generating rather than regulative and definitive or life-diminishing (Spivak 2005, pp. 106–107). As such, traces or trace-like elements most definitely matter even if often deemed trivial in the absence of readily applicable meaning.

Snow piles can be thought of as traces or clusters of traces. Unlike most physically monumental elements in our everyday lives, snow piles are curiously void of prescribed meaning. They are a problematic excess, a stow-away form for snow, a by-product of there being cars, in effect a material negative of cars.

Snow piles are still and relatively static traces of fast-moving people, traces of people going to places. But in themselves, snow piles are close to meaningless, to the point of being simultaneously monumental and yet as if invisible. In many ways the snow piles are never there. They cannot be found in maps; there are no signs pointing to them; they don't have names or functions in themselves – they lead nowhere nor lend themselves for any particular use, save sliding down the sides of them.

Snow piles are also hard to pin down as to what they are; rather they seem to entail a diversity of inbuilt binaries and hybridity. As physical elements of natural substance, snow piles are both natural and man-made, both material and social simultaneously. Snow as an element is ephemeral and solid, cold and warm, wet and dry, and hard and soft. Snow is water yet undrinkable; in most cases it is safe to land on but dangerous if a chunk big enough should land on you. Located at ends and sides of roads and car parks, snow piles are never at the center, yet always inviting.

When adults observe children drawn to snow piles, we see exercise, physical challenges, motoric development, social bonding, and the like – we tend to observe meanings and purposes. Snow from school yards is often plowed to a pile inside the yard, offering children opportunities to engage in meaningful activities with each other and getting much needed exercise. A long-standing winter favorite during school recess is a game of "Claiming the mountain" where children start off at the foot of a snow pile and race each other to the top. Whoever conquers the pile first is in the position to start throwing the others off the pile in an attempt to maintain his/her position at the top. Needless to say, this pastime has also caused concern in schools, and sometimes the awkward solution is that there is a whooping snow pile in the middle of the school yard, yet it is forbidden to climb it.

Not much is invested in snow piles, and they don't thus have much value as such – as distinct, individual, independent elements. They are not attached to or missed; they are found (again and again). They seem to matter to children in a more temporary and unmediated, instant way. Holding back the urge to come up with meanings and purposes, we can reframe snow piles and children as one hybrid cluster, a cluster of traces – or one more-than-subject voice – which in Spivak's (2005) terms is constitutive rather than regulative of life itself. Snow piles can be thought of as generating life, as generating a "voice" which is always more and other than the sum of the individual (human) subjects. It is rather that the human subjects take part in one more-than-subject voice and become one clustered snow pile subject in the event of climbing and being with a snow pile.

In favor of alternative or blurred conceptualizations of what a (human) subject or a person is, Nick Lee (2008) problematizes the notions of "voice," "identity," and "agency" in our (mainstream social scientific) understanding of what a subject or a person is. He simply asks us to think about a sleeping human being as the topic of research: most of our social scientific conceptual tools will fail us. At the moment of sleep, the subject in question can hardly be thought of having agency or expressing his or her identity or having a voice. Lee envisages two options. Either social scientific research accepts the awake/sleep threshold, sticks to the former, and leaves the latter to natural sciences. Or it can reconsider and reinvent its main

conceptual tools such as voice. Lee compares the awake/sleep threshold to that of child/adult in contemporary childhood research.

To be able to discuss sleep itself, or to address the point of view of a child, Lee (2008, p. 60) argues that social scientific research needs to take "a view of the 'person' as an emergent property of certain open-ended interactions between a hybrid assortment of elements." Lee does this, again quite simply, with the help of the classic idea of a "transitional object" from D.W. Winnicott (1971). Our sense of self and our personhood transgresses our physical existence as bounded creatures. Lee goes on to thoroughly discuss and criticize Winnicott's ontological commitments that stem from a clear inside/outside division and do not settle well with post-structuralist theories which often set out to blur clear divisions. He nevertheless retains that we can still gain insights into what an a-humanist person could be from Winnicott's ideas of how transitional phenomena contribute to making a person – "becoming-person." And how personhood, or being a person, can be thought of as a "temporary emergent property of certain affective interactions" (Lee 2008, p. 73).

Now imagine a whopping snow pile with children on top. It's dusk; the temperature is well below freezing; the children are clad in snowsuits, boots, mittens, and scarves, have red cheeks, and carry slides, sticks, stones, or snowballs in their hands; their feet carving into the snow pile; their voices both loud and muffled by the snow. To grasp how this matters to children, we might need to go beyond ascribing meanings to individual or social behavior through listening to individual children's voices. This is where Spivak (2005, 2013), Jackson (2003), and Lee (2008), among others, have taken us.

In Spivak's (2005) terms, snow piles can be thought of as traces which are life-generating as opposed to signs that are regulative. This is to say that snow piles are open enough to defy set meanings and purposes. Jackson's (2003) idea of a rhizovoice leads us to consider children as getting a partial "voice" through partaking in the life that the snow pile as a trace generates. Each child would not possess an essential and authentic individual voice, but a more-than-subject voice would echo as result of the life generated. And finally Lee's (2008) idea of temporal interactions with hybrid elements in the process of becoming-person, a snow pile with children can be framed as a site for experiencing oneself as more and other than a single individual child.

4 Snow Piles as Sites of Ongoing Mattering

Children's ways of interacting with their material surroundings are often unplanned, momentary, and seemingly trivial (Rautio 2013). This can be either romanticized as an ability to seize the moment or problematized as having little recognized (political) agency. As far as piles of snow go, we can argue that children claim spaces and places that are available to them or ones that provide them partial invisibility from adults – a space of their own. All of this might take place, have meaning, and might also matter, but it might also be – as John Horton and Peter

Kraftl (2006) argue – the ongoingness of the interaction with all of the elements involved that matters. Or, as Leander and Boldt (2012, p. 22) describe, literacy-related activity: "not as projected toward some textual end point but as living its life in the ongoing present, forming relations and connections across signs, objects and bodies in often unexpected ways."

Both Horton and Kraftl (2006) and Leander and Boldt (2012) are fueled by a desire to surpass the evident developmental psychological or rational explanations in order to be able to imagine "what else might be going on" (Leander and Bolt 2012, p. 22). This desire leads the mentioned academics to focus on what is taking place as interactions unfold rather than only describing in retrospect what took place. To make a rough division for the sake of the argument at hand, the former addresses how events and activities matter, whereas the latter addresses the meanings that can be given to them afterward, as if from outside of the event. To grasp this difference is to view the every day and of ourselves as "both mediated and not reducible to mediation" (Leander and Boldt 2012, p. 32). In viewing children's activities in their everyday life surroundings only in terms of what they might mean – either to the children themselves or in relation to their development – we risk losing the part of our ongoing existence that cannot be mediated, the ongoingness that matters nevertheless.

We could think of the ongoing mattering of a snow pile through taking into consideration the entire event, the sociomaterial assemblage that the children take part in, or exist as parts of, virtually seizing to be individual children for the duration of the event. Deleuze (in Jackson and Mazzei 2012, p. 87) conceptualizes this kind of event as a "shared deterritorialization." The example used is that of a wasp and an orchid producing each other through a "shared deterritorialization" in which both are freed from the categories that essentialize them in the "World As We Know It" (Massumi 1992, p. 105). The wasp becomes a part of the reproductive system of the orchid, and the orchid becomes a part of the feeding habits of the wasp. When a shared deterritorialization is produced by snow, children, wooly mittens, scarves, boots, snot, rocks, ice, frost, dark nights, and lampposts to name but a few partaking elements, the children in the midst can be thought of as if freed from being viewed as individual representatives of a developmental phase, freed from being viewed as "growing up," and freed from one's doings viewed as "meaning" something other than what sustains the activity.

To study ongoingness and mattering requires a corresponding conception of how the basic components of research can be reconceptualized. Scholars in the postdevelopmental and/or posthuman or materialist vein have been productive in rethinking the tenements of mainly qualitative research. Elizabeth St. Pierre (2008) decenters and deconstructs the notions of "voice," "narrative," "experience," and "data," all the while pointing out that she is continuing a work begun by, e.g., Lather (1993) on "validity," Jackson (2003) on "voice," and Pillow (2003) on "reflexivity" and her own earlier work on the "field" (St. Pierre 1997). After all of the rounds of deconstructing what qualitative research is, from a post-structural vantage point, the term "post-qualitative" has emerged (see, e.g., the special issue of Qualitative Studies in Education, Vol 26, Issue 6, 2013). Post-qualitative is portrayed as the

successor or challenger of humanist qualitative methodology where knowing is privileged over being and representational logic has it that words or research text or data can stand in for the world (Lather and St. Pierre 2013).

A post-qualitative understanding of research practices as performative aims at an understanding of research and methods in particular as productive rather than representative (e.g., Barad 2003; Banerjee and Blaise 2013). The objective of research aimed at mattering is thus not to represent what matters but to represent (to make present) mattering. The understanding of data then is that data does not represent any single or collective "voice." This stems from a Deleuze-Guattarian perspective, where texts, including research data, "are not 'about' the world; rather, they are participants in the world" (Leander and Boldt 2012, p. 25).

An attempt by one of the authors to study matterings rather than only meanings in children's everyday lives is a study with 5–12 partaking children between 5 and 8 years old. Eleven meetings took place, and the 12 participated children were provided empty wooden boxes that they could fill with anything they wanted and bring to our meetings. The meetings were little more than a vast empty space and a shared timeframe. What animated these encounters were the crisscrossing relations between many contributing things: humans (including the researcher), the boxes, the things in the boxes, the space, the furniture, the air quality (sometimes cold, sometimes hot), the lighting (half working, half flickering), the clothes, the surfaces (smooth floor, rough walls), and so forth. It became soon evident that the children did not initiate action nor did the objects brought in the boxes – which was the researcher's as-if hypothesis – but things took place as a result of much more complicated entanglements. And more importantly it was not only "things taking place" but a whole vibrant child-thing ensemble that came into being as more than the sum of its parts.

The data in another study by the second author of this chapter emerged in a school context in instruction preparing for basic education, targeted at children with a variety of different migrant backgrounds. With particular interest in the pedagogy of "new literacies," the researcher's eye was caught in the arrival of winter, the first snow, and how children's quilted trousers would make a whispering sound when they were moving around in literacy-related activity in the school corridor. Rather than describing literacy events as projected toward certain predefined textual end points (such as "learning to read" by decoding the letter-sound correspondence), the study would ask *what else might be going on in literacy events*. Similarly as Leander and Boldt (2012) claim in their (Deleuze-Guattarian) rereading of the pedagogy of multiliteracies, literacy activity is seen as saturated with affective sociomaterial intensities that escape "the rational control of meanings and forms" (ibid.). Literacies are explored as discursive-material assemblages formed of both humans (children, teachers, researcher, parents) and nonhumans (smartphones, pencils, seasons, quilted trousers).

Rather than simplicity and predictability in childhoods or adult-child relations, it is the unpredictable multiplicities, complexities, connections, and hybridities that are, in these approaches, taken as opportunities for creating new knowledge and transformation of practices (Maclure 2006; Burman 2007).

5　　Conclusion: Snow Pile Children

There is no universal "child," nor a homogenous "childhood," rather multiple and relational childhoods and children – just like there are individuals in any other age group. This much has been convincingly argued at least for the past 20 years in the fields of (critical/new) childhood studies across disciplines (e.g., Cannella and Soto 2010). Yet, children often continue to be faced in societies as if representatives of their age-dependent developmental phases and undergoing homogenous childhoods that are often categorically, materially, and socially separate or different from the possible "adulthoods" (e.g., Burman 2007; Morss 1996; Fendler 2001).

The educational discourses available to parents are almost ubiquitously dominated by the discourse of development, and obsessing over enhancing normal-scale development is inscribed in twentieth-century parenting (Mayall 2006). This is to say that against better advice from childhood studies, children are still mostly viewed and treated as "in the waiting room," as inherently "other" rather than as competent and complete subjects and members of societies.

In discussing why it is so difficult to rethink childhood outside of developmental discourses, Berry Mayall (2006) points out that as children have become central in both families and most global minority societies within the past century, they have – individually and collectively – become the objective of massive interventions (see also Hendrick 1994). According to Mayall (2006), the following need to monitor and influence children's development has led to the demand of ever better parenting skills, especially those of the mother. She continues to highlight childhood as a political issue and theories about what children need or how they develop as stories and practices created by adults – psychologists, educationalists, other professionals, and parents – within a political, social, and historical climate, and increasingly within a globalized market. With ever-increasing investments to children, by societies and individual families, the demand for professional knowledge increases. This demand is high especially for "scientific" knowledge, and what counts as scientific tends to be regulated in ways that do not accommodate postdevelopmental or post-qualitative discourses (Lather and St. Pierre 2013).

Within educational sciences, the academics who envisage alternative discourses to developmental psychological ones are established and rigorous scholars, yet too few and far between. Social sciences and fields such as children's geographies could stand a better chance in diversifying the discourses about what childhood is and what matters in it, sometimes without clear meanings and purposes. Many human geographers are already engaged in reconceptualizing human/nature relations as "situated" (Instone 2004), "hybrid" (Whatmore 2002), and "socionature" (Castree 2005), realizing the interdependencies of human and more-than-human nature (Taylor 2011).

Children on top of snow piles, with all other social and material elements required or there by chance, can become snow pile children. They are freed, for a moment, from themselves as individuals, from other people's thoughts and meanings, from being human, and from representing a certain developmental phase: "Her [insert skill here] develops when she climbs that pile." Snow pile children are

not only individuals and not only humans, rather one clustering and temporal subject which has one collective more-than-subject voice. This voice screams both "I am not here (in the way that you think I am)" and "Let me be."

5.1   Postscript

Half a year later, it is an exceptionally hot summer day in July, at least hot for the North of Finland. Everybody heads to the beach as sunny days like this are a rare delicacy. Adults sunbathe and children swim, wearing practically nothing and screaming of joy in the gentle sound of waves lapping. Two mothers walk in the water, warm sea up to their calves and the soles of their feet touching the soft sand bed. Their small children are engaged in their own water activities, one playing crocodile and the other covered in plastic swimming rings, vest, and toys, yet just wandering around in the warm shallow water. The other mother is very concerned about her son not focusing on *learning to swim* but merely wandering in the water, wearing his brand new plastic swimming equipment without taking it into use. "You should also play crocodile so that you will learn to doggy-paddle," urges the mother, as any caring and responsible parent would. There it is, right in the middle of the most beautiful and relaxed summer day: the unchallenged discourse of development in all its shackling power.

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Playful Enterprises

4

Denise Goerisch

Contents

Abstract

This chapter first will discuss the concept of play as children's work historically then expand upon current geographic debates on the liminality of play and work spaces among young people and finally through empirical evidence illustrate how and why young people conceptualize play and work through a study on teenage Girl Scouts leading playful activities for younger Girl Scouts. Early twentieth-century psychologist, Susan Sutherland Isaacs, defined play as "child's work" in that play has the potential to create exploratory and practical situations for children, usually with limited guided assistance of adults. Isaacs' model of play has been appropriated by significant pedagogical institutions and is often replicated in youth organizations as a way for children to develop strength and skills that will be useful throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Isaacs may have questioned the utilization of adult-directed play and adult-assessed goals of play, characterized by youth organizations, and may have argued for more child-centered play. As youth organization members grow older and may no longer identify as children, they may take on the role of adults in playful spaces, creating a liminal space between play and work as well as

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between childhood and adulthood. The liminal spaces of work and play become sites for both anxiety and empowerment for young people as they continually shape their own identities and a sense of self. As such, young people potentially disrupt the spatial binaries between child-centered and adult-directed play.

Keywords

Play • Teenagers • Work • Young people • Youth organizations

1 Introduction

For the past 20 years, geographers, specifically children's geographers, have investigated play practices and spaces to better understand the (re)production of identity and agency among children (for an overview see: Horton et al. 2008; Robson et al. 2013; Tisdall and Punch 2012). By studying play, geographers gain invaluable insight into children's perceptions of broader sociocultural processes such as work and civic engagement. However, discussions on the role of young people or rather teenagers are surprisingly absent from these dialogues, perhaps because teenagers are somewhat at a disconnect within the subdiscipline of children's geographies, more generally (Weller 2006). The absence of teenagers in discussions of play may also contribute to social misconceptions regarding teenagers' and young people's nonparticipation in imaginative or narrative play due to play's normative association with childhood. These conceptions are primarily rooted in the belief that teenagers are considered adults by some societal standards but are also considered to be children based on their lack of authority, autonomy, and agency in certain spaces. Teenagers, therefore, are caught in between the spaces of childhood and adulthood, which makes it difficult to negotiate their roles across different sociocultural spaces, especially in regard to children's play spaces. As teenagers often take on the responsibilities of adults while also engaging in child-like play, they occupy a liminal space wherein the boundaries between work and play become increasingly blurred and contested. Through this examination of the geographic intersections of work and play, this chapter ultimately will expand upon contemporary debates in the perceived inclusivity and exclusivity of work and play spaces.

Among the first to question the distinctions between work and play was Susan Sutherland Isaacs (see Isaacs 1968). In *The Nursery Years* (1929), Isaacs' most well-known work, she described play as children's work in that play enables children to develop essential life skills through self-exploration with limited adult facilitation. Today, education scholars and geographers such as Katz (2004), Ditton (2014), and Goerisch and Swanson (2015) discuss the ways in which play allows for children to develop life skills while challenging the defining spatial binaries between work and play. While geographers have investigated how children may learn to work through play (see Katz 2004), few scholars have examined how play can be conceived as work among children and young people, specifically teenagers. As such, this chapter seeks to examine the contentious spaces between work and play historically in Western cultures as well as drawing upon work of Isaacs and

illustrating through empirical evidence how young people engage with and nego-tiate such tensions in play spaces.

This chapter will explore the roles young people employ in playful spaces by first introducing historical perspectives of work and play as well as discussing the work of early twentieth-century educator and psychologist, Susan Sutherland Isaacs. In the second part of the chapter, there will be a discussion of contemporary geographic debates on the liminal and often tenuous relationship between work and play among young people. The third section of the chapter will discuss the results from a study on teenage Girl Scouts who engage with younger scouts during playful activities that ultimately the older scouts profited from. The chapter will conclude with possible interventions geographers can undertake in the geographies of play and work including the exclusionary practices of play and work spaces for young people.

2   Historical Perspectives of Play and Work

Western cultures often define childhood through socially prescribed binaries between play and work. Based upon Victorian ideals and principles, children of privileged backgrounds were seen as precious and in need of protection from societal and environmental ills (Valentine 1996). As such, the world of the child became the world of the home, specifically a playroom filled with toys, games, and books rather than the workplace and public street. Other than school, play was one of the most significant bridges to the outside world for children as it prepared children for their roles as future citizens. While children were actively learning to *become* adults through play, play was and still is to a degree, often been conceived as spatially separate and distinct from work.

Despite the presence of child labor laws in varying forms throughout American history, children have always worked, whether inside or outside the home. Children who were not in positions of privilege were and remained in the workplace during the turn of the twentieth century even though child labor laws had been in effect. The workplace for working-class and impoverished children also extended into the home as children were often active members of the household, fulfilling domestic duties and obligations, especially when a parent or guardian was absent (Zelizer 1985). Due to work spaces permeating both the public and private spaces of children and young people, working-class and immigrant children living in urban centers were limited to where they could play; this was more often than not in the street and perhaps away from supervision from adult family members or older siblings, a space wherein children also worked, either by lawful or illicit means. For many of these children, the street became a space wherein work and play coexisted, sometimes in tandem.

American education reforms in the early part of the twentieth century sought to provide an alternative to the street by providing a separate space to *play*. Play-grounds were created to promote physical exercise for mainly working-class and immigrant children while under the supervision of adults. Within these spaces, free

play was limited; free play can be broadly defined as play that is freely chosen and personally directed by the child (Woolley et al. 2006). Free play was limited due to adults, namely, members of reform-oriented agencies facilitated much of the play. Instead, playgrounds hosted facilitated play activities, in which adults enabled, assisted, and promoted certain play discourse as way to control and regulate children. The activities at playgrounds, such as marching and gymnastics, endorsed American ideals surrounding citizenship, patriotism, and gender and, as such, shaped subjectivities as children's bodies conformed to dominant constructions of American childhood through facilitated play (Gagen 2004). For example, girls were required to participate in dance activities. It was argued that dancing provided physical exercise with the intent to improve girls' physical health in order to become healthy mothers to healthy children in the future, and, second, it was believed to instill grace and discipline that will prepare the girls for the lives as American women (Gagen 2004). The playground movement was much more about assimilation and shaping children into the American ideal rather than giving children the freedom to play which was mostly due in part to overwhelming fears of recent influxes of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. While children of middle-class families had play spaces within their homes and were given some opportunities to engage with free play, adults still sought to inscribe society's ideals and principles, regarding work and citizenship onto children, in order to shape children in their image and perpetuate hegemonic perspectives on whom children should become.

Work and play may have been conceived as two separate spaces for children and young people; however, middle-class families admired the moral principle of labor at an early age. Middle-class families praised the virtues of work, duty, and discipline in fear of overindulging their children and enabling idleness. To prevent laziness, families sent their children to youth camps during the summer or enrolled them in youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts or Camp Fire Girls in the early twentieth century (Miller 2007). Much like the playgrounds, summer camps and youth organizations of the 1910s and early 1920s were supervised by adults and promoted American ideals surrounding citizenship, patriotism, and gender roles. For example, at boys' summer camps, boys from wealthier families would often be placed in positions of leadership and power within their cabins and during games, while working-class or immigrant boys, whose attendance was made possible by various charitable organizations, were placed in more subservient roles at camp (Paris 2008). Camp hierarchies were meant to prepare both groups of boys for their future roles as adult American men. For the more privileged boys, this meant going on to attain military or political leadership or inherit the family business. For the marginalized boys, camp hierarchies prepared them for their roles as members of the work force or as military soldiers. Camp hierarchies based on class and ethnic identity existed at girl summer camps as well but all girls participated in activities that emphasized domesticity and motherhood (Slyck 2006). Adult camp leaders and organizers largely constructed and regulated these camp hierarchies and activities. The structure and operation of camps were heavily influenced by the work of educator and psychologist, G. Stanley Hall, who linked childhood development to

evolutionary theory and perpetuated social Darwinist ideologies. He argued that pre-adolescent children were akin to *savages* that needed to be civilized through Christianity, patriotism, physical exercise, and, most importantly, adult guidance and influence (Johanningmeier 2008). Hall believed if children went through the proper life states that society would ultimately benefit from the transition, creating a morally and physically superior society (Demos and Demos 1969). However, his contemporaries questioned the validity of considering child development in terms of stages of civilization as Hall widely ignored sociocultural influences on an adolescent's growth and that children have some agency in regard to their own development.

By the 1920s, Hall's theories were widely critiqued and challenged by other educators, namely, Jean Piaget and Susan Sutherland Isaacs, who argued that children were creators of knowledge and capable agents of action based on their acquisition of knowledge (Aitken and Heman 1997; Isaacs 1999; McCullers 1969). However, Piaget, not unlike Hall, argued that child development wherein a child moved from one stage to the next should be perceived as a biological metamorphosis (Piaget 1956). Whereas, Isaacs believed educators and parents were to provide guidance in play (as well as more formal educational spaces) but not to overextend their mentoring responsibilities. This much more reflexive and mediated form of education was best illustrated through Isaacs' conception of play as children's work, wherein children learn by play, rather than solely through adults.

Isaacs argued through a psychoanalytic framework that play, specifically free play, enabled children to explore the world and develop skills without the repression of inhibition. However, simply allowing children to play freely could also result in aggression and extreme rivalry; therefore, freed instincts could actually inhibit a child's development of self-expression. Isaacs advocated for the inclusion of some adult mediation but encouraged adults to be reflexive of their roles while engaging in play with children. She argued that adults, educators, and parents must see children as they are and not as what adults would like the children to be (Drummond 2000). She argued that children had an inherent ownership and right to play. Furthermore, she claimed that play contributed toward a fulfilling education and that the educators' or parents' role were to announce the children's activity and to meet the spontaneous interests of the children, which offer all the opportunities needed for their education (Drummond 2000). Based on her experiences as a researcher and educator at the Malting House School at Cambridge in the 1920s, she argued that physical environments and educational techniques should be shaped to encourage children's emotional and intellectual growth.

Isaacs believed that children should have agency and control over their own growth through playful activities. She further argued that play and children's activities are most fruitful when they are rooted in concrete and practical experiences as children need tangible experiences to develop skills (Drummond 2000). According to Isaacs, play, especially narrative or imaginative play, is significant not only for the child's creative intentions but also for the child's growing sense of reality, scientific attitudes, and growth of reason. In this regard, play, according to

Isaacs, is children's work as they gain invaluable skills and experience and benefit from the socialization among children.

Isaacs' theories on play have been widely popularized, but many educators conceive of play as not a mediated, liminal space where children and adults seek to reflect on their own experiences and emotions. Play is constructed as a separate and distinctive space where there are no direct benefits and that play only exists for the sake of enjoyment and amusement (Smith 2010). Perhaps, work and play spaces are defined as separate space in order to keep the worlds of adults and children or young people separate, which perpetuates essentialist views on who is considered an adult and a child. Additionally, by constructing spaces as uniquely associated with adults or children inadvertently assigns value to those spaces albeit in different ways. Adult work spaces are often depicted as productive spaces, wherein adults are actively contributing to the economy and society as a whole. Play spaces also have value, however, rather than being seen as productive spaces; they are seen as (social) reproductive space due to their association with children and as a nurturing space to allow children to grow and become adults. Through this association, play spaces are not as valued as work space despite the potential for children to form their own sense of identity and grow as individuals (Aitken and Herman 1997). Additionally, reproductive or domestic spaces are routinely devalued as they are represented as not contributing to society, or actually being considered work space, despite being an essential part of the economy and society (Domosh 1998; Gibson-Graham 2006). Constructing work and play spaces as distinctively associated with adults or children not only ignores the work adults regularly perform in play spaces and the ways in which children and young people transgress into work spaces. Isaacs suggested that adults could learn more from observing and engaging in play and become better educators; so in this context, play *should be* work, which will be expanded on upon later in this chapter in relation to teen Girl Scouts working in play spaces.

Historically, the spaces between work and play may have been constructed as two distinctive spaces in order to maintain adultist and essentialist visions of childhood as well as regulate and control children of working-class and immigrant backgrounds in order to assimilate them into American culture. Despite the distinction, the lines between work space and play space are contested as children must work to become adults, citizens, or workers. Geographers still critique the role of play in a child's development and growth; however, the discussion of how work and play intermingle throughout adolescence is surprisingly absent.

3   Defining Geographies of Work and Play

Despite the breadth of work on the geographies of work (Ettlinger 2003; Gidwani and Chari 2004; McDowell 2011) and the geographies of play (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Thomson and Philo 2004; Woolley et al. 2006), there is a lack of scholarship on the intersection between the two. Geographies of work broadly focus on the everydayness of work (England 1996), the value of work (Boyer 2003), politics and policy (Swanson 2007), power

relations in the workplace (McMorran 2012), and identity politics and bodily performances (McDowell and Court 1994). With some exceptions, geographies of work are overly represented as adult spaces (for exceptions see Bosco 2010; Swanson 2010), whereas geographies of play are almost exclusively occupied by children. Geographies of play generally emphasize the everydayness of play (Thomson and Philo 2004), the value of play (Aitken and Herman 1997), politics and policy (Smith and Barker 2001), power relations in play places (Horton 2012), and identity politics (Woolley et al. 2006). Even though geographers who study work or play investigate similar themes within these two subfields, few have linked to the two discourses.

Play may be conceived as an ordinary activity, but as a concept, play has been the subject of much debate among geographers, educators, and other scholars. For example, Lauwaert (2009) broadly defines play as the sum of varying play practices that consists of both the material and nonmaterial and relationships or connections with objects and others. Geographers investigate the spatiality of these relationships or connections and seek to map the different stakeholders or actors within play spaces (i.e., children, young people, adults, etc.), the varying play practices, and the intentions and discourses related to play. Despite the breadth of scholarly opportunities associated with the geographies of play, there is a general absence of play scholarship outside of the subfield of children's geographies. As some have noted (Harker 2005; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014), geographers, perhaps unwittingly, reinforce the essentialized relationship between play and childhood and that as geographers, there is a need to dissociate play as solely the space of children as children are not the only individuals or groups that engage in play or occupy the spaces of play. Associating play with only one group, namely, children, ignores others such as teenagers, thus further marginalizing their roles in playful spaces and placing limitations on what constitute play. Doing so can potentially widen the divide between work and play, can influence children's and young people's development, and can have an impact on society as a whole.

Geographers often define play based on two contributing factors: (1) the activities and (2) the players. While a definition based upon these two descriptors is useful, boundaries are established to determine what is a playful activity and who is allowed to engage in play. Outlining play through activity implies that play is an act of *doing* as well as not in a state of idleness. For example, hanging out or walking in a group is often not considered play, despite both activities wherein the individuals, specifically children and young people, are in a state of doing, but also a state of being, as they define themselves through these actions and spaces (Thomson and Philo 2004). Western society mainly defines play as organized, stimulating, tangible, and wholesome and that adult's hope is that young people (or children) at play are (and should be) engaged in merriment and delight (Thomson and Philo 2004). This form of play can be categorized as facilitated play as adults or other actors (e.g., teenagers) have a hand in the design and discourses that shape play activities and spaces. Limiting play to an "organized, tangible, and wholesome" activity may potentially dismiss and exclude variations of what some, including children, consider to be playful activities including dreaming, wishing, hanging out with friends,

or running in the street at night. These rigid definitions also deny the spontaneity and creativity of play, which have the potential to engender what Thomson and Philo call disordered/idle spaces. Children and young people who occupy these disordered or idle spaces are sometimes labeled as deviant or unproductive as they are often not under the supervision of adults or occupying adult-created play spaces that have intentions to control and regulate children's bodies (Valentine 1996), which is not unlike the motivations of the playground movement at the turn of the twentieth century.

Play, at least in a Western context, is overwhelmingly an adult construct developed to assist adults in controlling children and young people. Therefore, *doing* implies an act that has a linear progression with a beginning and an end, but by defining play as a state of *being* implies that play is a constant with few temporal or spatial boundaries and has no external goals (Smith 2010). By conceptualizing play as a state of being rather than a state of doing, play comes to define those who engage in it as well challenge the temporal and spatial limitations placed on play by adults or teenagers. This is not to say that facilitated play has a negative impact on children and young people or that divergent play, play that deviates from instructions or supervision, has an inherently more positive effect on children and young people. Horton (2012) argues that despite Pokémon being an example of facilitated play, children tend to transgress these types of play practices such as playing in spaces not deemed suitable for Pokémon like the classroom or playground, which unsettle contemporary normative sociocultural constructs of childhood. While playing Pokémon in the classroom may be perceived as a divergent or transgressive play practice, Pokémon can promote exclusivity as some children were not allow to play or trade cards with others based on their gender or ethnicity. Both facilitated and divergent plays have the potential to stimulate emotional and intellectual growth and development as well as form valuable networks and relationships. However, all actors, including children, young people, and adults, need to be reflexive in their engagements as both facilitated and divergent could be just as damaging on all the actors. Conceiving play, as is an activity or rather an act of doing, ignores the possibilities of narrative or imaginative play.

Play, particularly imaginative play, can be conceptualized as an activity that helps individuals grow intellectually by developing life skills that have the potential to be used throughout their lives as an added benefit, in addition to any physical health benefits, and promotes a general feeling of well-being. Indeed, play is important site for development of various cognitive skills such as language and language comprehension and for experimentation and creativity. Narrative play allows children to form a sense of self as well as make sense of their own lives and learn empathy through imagining how others might feel (Cattanach 2007). Imaginative play contributes to a self-portrait, which the child or young person can reflect upon, think upon, and potentially change. Pretend play or role-play, whether based in reality or the imaginary, conveys the experiences and ideas of children and young people. Imaginative play is potentially transformative experience not only for children and young people, who are often considered the main actors in pretend play, but also for the adults.

Adults help children order their experiences through the use of imaginative play processes, creating a collaborative experience. Working with stories and narrative play means that there is collaboration between child and adult where what happens in the sessions is co-constructed between the two. It is within these spaces that the spaces of work and play become conflated. Despite play and work coexisting within the space, this does not mean work and play are still not two distinctive activities. As play spaces become increasingly commodified and institutionalized, adults have more control over such spaces (Smith and Barker 2001). Some of these commodified and institutionalized spaces include those of youth organizations and after-school programs. Parents believe these types of play spaces to be beneficial in that they are intended to extend social networks and develop social skills in a structured, supervised space (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014). More importantly, parents believe that these spaces are fun, making the everydayness of children's lives more enjoyable. While the children and young people in the study below do find organized and supervised spaces to be enjoyable, they also conceive of these spaces as work spaces due to their structured nature and objectives.

Despite some recent work on adult interventions in play spaces (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2014), the majority of scholarship on geographies of play has focused on children as the players. In this regard, play has become synonymous with childhood. Doing so has marginalized young people and teenagers' engagement in play spaces. Indeed, much of the work on teenagers has emphasized political engagement (or lack of) (Skelton 2010), policy (Ansell et al. 2012), societal perceptions of delinquency (Aitken 2001), and territoriality (Thomas 2005). This is not to say that geographers have completely ignored play space among teenagers and young people. However, play in these spaces is constructed through hanging out, shooting pool, playing video games, or watching TV; in other words, spaces are often perceived as idle, unstructured space by society. Categorizing teenagers and young people's play spaces as idle infers that those spaces are unproductive and unvalued, which is not necessarily the case. These spaces potentially establish essential social networks, a sense of agency, and allow young people to develop vital life skills, thus making them productive spaces (Plows 2012). Despite some geographers highlighting the importance of idle space as play space for young people and teenagers, there is still a lack of scholarship of young people and teenagers engaging in imaginative or narrative play. This may be due in part to the in-between space of childhood and adulthood where teenagers and young people exist, not quite belonging to either one, and by societal standards, it would be inappropriate for teenagers and young people to occupy the spaces of children like play spaces. However, by taking on the roles of adults in play spaces, teens and young people are able to access such spaces, but due to their proximity in age to children, children may still question their authority and/or challenge teens' participation in play. The study below will highlight the tensions that teenagers and young people experience while engaging in play spaces with both children and adults.

If play spaces have been almost exclusively seen as spaces for children, then work spaces (at least in the Western context) have been predominately associated with adult spaces. However, where play and work spaces do intersect is wherein children

and young people *learn to labor* (Willis 1977). Much of the literature on this intersection has emphasized children and young people learning to work through play. Most notably, Cindi Katz's seminal *Growing Up Global*: *Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives* (2004) highlights this intersection wherein Sudanese children play role-playing games based on their knowledge of agricultural and commercial practices in their village. Doing so revealed a shift in agricultural and commercial practices due to the introduction of a development project that dramatically changed the pastoral landscape. Additionally, she observed children and young people playing while they are working, for example, a group of boys who were herding sheep and watching them graze would occasionally stop and play a game similar to jacks but with camel dung. Katz goes on to describe children's labor was often playful, while "their play was often goal directed and worklike" (p. 67). It is through examples like these that Katz demonstrates that play and work are intimately intertwined and that indeed play is children's work as children to embody their future roles as participants in a global economy. Furthermore, it is through these conflated spaces of work and play that children and young people develop a sense of self-agency and develop perhaps a much more nuanced understanding of the world than they could ever gain in a formal educational setting. However, much of the work/play or play/work that these children engaged in was unpaid and the benefits were either the gain of practical knowledge or to assist the household economy. This is not to say that children were not paid for some tasks or services but they were not necessarily paid to play. In Western society, unpaid labor is significantly undervalued and depreciated. In the same vein, since the returns on play are not immediate or even visible to many adults or even children themselves, play is undervalued as site of social and economic significance.

For many educators and geographers, play is beneficial for children and young people in that it aids in their social and economic development. As American society has become increasingly capitalistic, play has become a multibillion business and often this play is dependent on children participating as consumers rather than producers. The Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) has made a multimillion dollar business that is dependent on the intersection between play and work space: the Girl Scout cookie sale. While this paper only tangentially relates to the cookie sale, the Girl Scout is one of the few spaces in which children and young people see the immediate returns on play by integrating with work. In doing so, the Girl Scouts challenge dominant perceptions of how work and play are defined as children, and more specifically, teenagers make a profit from playing. The teenagers in this study perceive play as work, which further challenges what constitutes work and play in American society.

4 Geographies of Play as Work in the Girl Scouts

For over 100 years, the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) has blended work and play together, by teaching essential life and leadership skills through play, which many youth organizations in the USA have done. Unlike other

American youth organizations, the Girl Scouts have turned this fusion of work and play into an annual multimillion dollar business: the annual Girl Scout cookie sale. In preparation for the sale, girls, ages 5–17, role-play customer interactions, play games to learn to manage their money, and complete craft projects to show goal progression. When scouts sell cookies, they are to sing songs at their neighbor's door or lead cheers in front of grocery stores to entice customers to buy cookies (see Goerisch and Swanson 2015). As the scouts grow older, they quickly learn that their teenaged bodies are not a welcome sight in public space as they are no longer the cute, little scouts the public has come to adore during the *cookie season* and have to find other means to fundraise for their troops. For example, older scouts, who are typically scouts aged 12–17, may host playful and educational workshops to younger scouts to raise money. Therefore, older scouts make a business out of playing with younger scouts, which legitimizes their presences in both spaces of work and play. It is within these fused spaces of work and play that teenage scouts are able to negotiate their role as both child and adult, further challenging hegemonic notions of who belongs in spaces of work and play in Western society. To illustrate these tensions, this chapter will highlight two vignettes that feature older scouts working in play spaces: the first highlights the tensions of liminality between adolescence and adulthood for the teenage scouts in play space and the second demonstrates how play spaces can be sources of aspiration for teenagers.

In the winter of 2011, Senior Girl Scout Troop 1157 (a group of ten 14- and 15-year-old girls) hosted a workshop to teach 80 Brownie scouts (7- and 8-year-old girls) how to sell cookies in San Diego, California. The workshop highlighted five business and life skills that the Brownies were to learn from the cookie sale: goal setting, decision-making, people skills, money management, and business ethics. For 3 h, the ten senior scouts played games, sang songs, engaged in narrative and imaginative play, and did art and crafts. Apart from some guidance from their scout leader, Lucy, the troop developed most of the activities for the workshop. The senior scouts felt incredibly proud that they organized such a grand event in which they were in charge of supervising and teaching over 70 little girls. While the seniors were indeed in a position of authority and seen as a source of knowledge to the younger scouts, the seniors experienced playful moments of merriment with the Brownies, even though they were technically working.

Cassia, a 14-year-old scout, taught the Brownies how to perfect their people skills by engaging in several role-playing scenarios. Cassia asked the girls to practice how to engage with a customer while on the phone, which to Brownies, talking on the phone, was considered to be somewhat intimidating based on their timid reactions. Cassia pretended to be a customer on the other line of a disconnected old touch-tone phone. However, she was not just any customer. She relished at the opportunity to pretend to be President Barack Obama, who was no easy customer. The Brownies timidly asked the "president" if he would like to buy a box of cookies, to which he replied that he was trying to watch his weight because First Lady Michelle Obama said he needed to. The Brownies were frozen and did not know how to react to the president's response. The president was about to hang up the phone when one of the parents, who were also present, suggested the Brownies

to ask Mr. Obama if he would like to donate to Operation Thin Mint, a program that donates cookies to American military troops overseas. The Brownies explained Operation Thin Mint to the president and asked if he would like to donate. The president gleefully responded he would like to donate a thousand boxes of cookies to the troops! The girls thanked the president and said goodbye. Cassia commended the girls on handling such a stressful situation and that it takes a lot of courage to speak to an adult of such importance.

Here, both Cassia and the younger scouts engaged in imaginative play by pretending to be either someone else or by being in a nearly impossible situation like selling cookies to the President of the USA. It is through this imaginative play that the girls were learning to work: handling a difficult customer and taking an order on the phone. For the younger girls, the play was work in that they were trying to accomplish a goal, and for Cassia, playing this game with the girls was her job for the day. Perhaps, the most significant part of this interaction is that Cassia was going to let the girls fail at their goal of selling the president cookies. By failing, the girls learn (1) that failure happens and it is all right to fail and (2) how to handle oneself when one fails. This is an example of the guided mediation in play situations that Isaacs theorized and supported. However, the adults in the room thwarted Cassia's efforts. By forcing their ideas onto the younger scouts, they not only controlled the outcome of the play scenario but also undermined Cassia's authority and ultimately her role as a facilitator of play. Cassia handled the situation as best as she could by staying in character and ignoring the parents completely. In doing so, this play space highlights the liminality of teenagers in play space. While a teenager may engage in play with children and may be perceived as an "adult" by children, the adults perceived Cassia as a child and not an adult. Therefore, the "adults" in the room reestablished the boundaries between work and play for teenagers.

Play was central to learning about business ethics in the cookie sale, which for many younger scouts is an unfamiliar concept. Erri, a 15-year-old, and Amelia, who was almost 16 at the time, decided to teach the Brownies what it means to play fair by engaging in some imaginative play of their own. To demonstrate what it means to play fair, therefore demonstrating the meaning of ethics to 7- and 8-year-olds, Erri led a game of "Green Light, Red Light." The game is played as players move forward as quickly as possible when "green light" is called by the caller but must stop when "red light" is called, and whoever moves passed the caller wins and becomes the caller if play continues. If a player moves when "red light" is called, the player must start over. Amelia played the game with the girls but cheated: for example, Amelia would go when red light was called and Erri would not call her out. After Amelia won the game, the girls were fairly perceptive and declared that Amelia cheated and that it was not fair. Erri then led a discussion on what it means to be honest and play fair and how those concepts translate to the cookie sale. Erri led another activity wherein the girls threw an inflated beach ball to one another that had falsehoods about the cookie sale (e.g., when to sell, where to sell, or selling online, which is prohibitive according to GSUSA) written all over it. When a girl caught it, she had to say what was wrong with the statement and state the correct one. Both the seniors and the Brownies

experienced much enjoyment with this activity. It should be noted that unlike Cassia, there were no parents present for Amelia and Erri's activities. This was partly because they were outside and it was quite cool (by Southern California standards), so the parents decided to have coffee and snacks in the adjacent building.

In this situation, Amelia and Erri both actively engaged in play with the children to help facilitate a discussion on fair play. Here, play directly contributes to the Brownies' understanding of fairness and honesty. It was through the imaginative play of the seniors by overexaggerating their roles as cheaters that the Brownies understood how frustrating and upsetting cheating is. If Amelia and Erri had only discussed business ethics or done the ball activity described above, the importance of playing fair and by the rules may not have been as effective and may not have been as fun for both the Brownies and the seniors. The Girl Scouts emphasize a *learning by doing* or experiential learning framework wherein scouts obtain knowledge from engaging in various activities rather than through simply lecture or discussion.

Both Erri and Amelia as well as the rest of the older scouts who contributed to the workshop viewed the workshop as a job but also as a product to sell the younger scouts. Faith, a 15-year-old scout who led an activity on goal setting, astutely notes:

> . . .the idea that our brownie cookie workshop, didn't it start off with us like just looked at the sheet for the five skills and were able to come up with a way that we can teach people these skills and it turned into this workshop and Girl Scouts taught us to think of new and creative ways to get an idea or a *product* out which if you guys ever, if we ever want to go into business or advertising like it would be awesome to be a Girl Scout. (emphasis added; Focus group, May 7th, 2011)

By viewing the workshop as a product, Faith has commodified play, making it a product to sell to the younger scouts. Faith even goes on to describe the Girl Scouts as a company and they *work* for Girl Scouts through the cookie sale and the workshop. For the scouts in this study, the workshop they hosted was their main source of fundraising for the year as by societal standards they are too old to sell cookies and do not sell as many cookies as younger scouts (Goerisch and Swanson 2015). The scouts of Troop 1157 as well as many teenage girls in the USA may not have many labor skills beyond their roles in the home (caregiving, domestic responsibilities, etc.). All the older scouts said they gained invaluable skills from hosting the workshop such as leadership, time management, and budgeting. Many of the scouts mentioned they wanted to go into education when they grew up or into business; therefore, many of the skills gained from the workshop and Girl Scouts more generally will benefit them throughout their lives, not to mention that the scouts benefit from the workshop more directly in that they profited from it as they charged the Brownies for the workshop. Therefore, teaching children through play was a skill that the scouts could easily make money from, which is somewhat ironic in that careers in all levels of education at least in the USA are drastically underpaid. Furthermore, what does this say about gendered career expectations for girls and young women in the USA?

As the older scouts financially benefitted from play, this challenges how geographies of work and play are conceptualized. For some education scholars (see Smith 2010), play should have no immediate goals or objectives, but by enmeshing the spaces of work and play, play can have a direct goal beyond the more abstract benefits or outcomes. However, play does not need to have immediate outcomes to be considered work. As the older scouts mentioned, the skills they gained from their playtime with the Brownies can be applied to other parts of their life and future career aspirations. Indeed, play is young people's work.

5   Conclusion

Susan Sutherland Isaacs believed that play is children's work. It was through this framework that children are enabled to develop a sense of self and explore the world around them. In doing so, work spaces become enmeshed into children's play spaces, challenging how geographers and education scholars come to define and redefine play and work space. Recognizing the blurring of play and work space may place more value on play spaces as spaces wherein children and young people are seen as active and engaging citizens in their own right rather than what they are supposed to become in the future, namely, adults.

Just as Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2014) have called upon geographers to examine the role of adults in play space, geographers also need to investigate further the role of young people and teenagers in play space. By further examining the complex roles of teenagers in play spaces, geographers can potentially make the connections between play and learning in the research agenda in children's geographies and geographies of work. Much in the vein of Katz, geographers and not just children's geographers need to further examine the intersections of work and play and not just spaces exclusively coded as play. Youth organizations, after-school programs, and summer camps can be a source of exploration of the concept of "play as work," especially as there are adults, teenagers, and young people in those spaces who may make a living from play. Furthermore, children's geographers can be more inclusive of teenagers and young people, specifically in the Western context, when investigating play space. By understanding the viewpoints of teenagers and young people on play and perhaps by extension work, new insights on the conceptualization of play and work can emerge. Additionally, by exploring the role of teenagers in play space can further challenge how geographers and others construct childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

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Children's Geographies for Activity and Play: An Overview of Measurement Approaches

5

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Abstract

Physical activity is fundamental to child health and development. Evidence suggests that environmental features may promote or hinder children's participation in physical activity, in particular active transport and independent mobility. To date, a clear understanding of the relationships between environmental factors and children's activity behaviors remains equivocal. An essential component of understanding children's geographies and related outcomes is the ability to accurately assess the environments and environmental features that matter to children. Current measures include geographic information systems-derived features, audits, user perceptions (via surveys), and photographic data collection. An overview of these measures is provided, including discussion on strengths, weaknesses, and implications for research.

1 Introduction

Globally, physical activity (PA) guidelines recommend that children aged 5–17 years engage in at least 60 min of PA every day (World Health Organization 2010). Moderate-to-vigorous PA is important for children's mental and physical health, including cognitive development, self-confidence, social skills, bone health, motor skills, physical fitness, healthy weight, and protection against chronic diseases later in life (World Health Organization 2010). Light PA provides health benefits in children such as improved blood pressure, insulin, and cholesterol levels which are relevant in overweight children who are at risk of developing the metabolic syndrome (Ekelund et al. 2012). Encouraging PA early in life is crucial as physical inactivity and sedentary behaviors (and their comorbidities) track throughout the lifespan (Jones et al. 2013). Active travel such as walking and cycling to school and other destinations (e.g., shops) provides children many PA opportunities throughout the day (Schoeppe et al. 2013). Simply walking to and from school can add on average 20 min of PA to a child's day (van der Ploeg et al. 2008). Emerging evidence has further shown that children's independent mobility (e.g., active travel without adult accompaniment) positively impacts PA (Schoeppe et al. 2013). Children's independent active travel and outdoor play bring psychosocial, cognitive, and developmental benefits via social interactions with peers, spatial and traffic safety skills for navigating in public spaces, and maturity in regard to decision-making (Schoeppe et al. 2013).

Key environments for children's travel, exploration, and play are the home, playgrounds, child-specific institutions, and home range (Van Vliet 1983). Home range, also called territorial range or activity spaces, captures children's relevant neighborhood areas (e.g., streets, parks, facilities). The local neighborhood environment provides children important spaces for independent walking, cycling, and outdoor play. However, this is influenced by various built environmental factors such as traffic speed/volume, proximity to destinations, neighborhood walkability, street connectivity, residential density, and land use mix (Ding et al. 2011). For example, the presence of safe and aesthetically appealing parks and playgrounds within walkable distance from the home can promote children's active travel and outdoor play. Children residing in neighborhoods with higher levels of greenness are more likely to engage in outdoor PA than those living in less "green neighborhoods" (Grigsby-Toussaint et al. 2011). Neighborhoods conducive to active modes of travel typically have pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic lights, street connectivity, mixed land use, and a variety of destinations within walking distance (Loptson et al. 2012). These features characterize urban rather than suburban or rural neighborhoods (Loptson et al. 2012). Hence, children's activity spaces can differ between inner urban, middle suburban, outer suburban, and rural neighborhood areas (Van Vliet 1983). For example, Australian children living in urban areas have higher levels of independent active travel on the school journey than those living in rural areas (Carver et al. 2014). Van Vliet (1983) found that the greater proximity, street connectivity, and walkability to school, shops, sport, and leisure facilities in urban compared to suburban or rural areas promote children's independent territorial range. Mixed land use also increases children's ability to reach destinations on foot rather than by car (Ding et al. 2011). Furthermore, high-density residential neighborhoods with sidewalks available increase the likelihood that children travel actively to school (Ding et al. 2011). However, while grid-pattern street networks with high density of destinations facilitate active travel, the presence of cul-de-sacs tends to increase free active play in children (Loptson et al. 2012). Distance is a strong predictor of children's walking and cycling to school and other neighborhood destinations (Ding et al. 2011). For children, walkable distances range from 250 to 1,600 m (Villanueva et al. 2012). Having several destination types within walking or cycling distance of the home is associated with a greater territorial range for children's independent mobility (Carver et al. 2014). However, even if destinations are in walkable distance, children may not be allowed to travel them actively if the journey requires to cross busy roads (Trapp et al. 2012).

The social environment may also influence children's neighborhood activity. Parental attitudes about appropriate distances for children's independent mobility can determine how far away from home children are allowed to walk, cycle, and play outdoors. For example, Carver et al. (2014) found that only a third of Australian children were allowed to roam alone for more than 15 min away from home, while approximately 50 % were allowed to do so with friends. Furthermore, parental concerns about neighborhood safety and complex daily family schedules can impede children's independent active travel and play in the neighborhood

(Prezza et al. 2001; Schoeppe et al. 2013). Parents' confidence in a child's capability to be physically active and safely navigate on roads increases the probability of children's walking for transport (Trapp et al. 2012). Furthermore, strong neighborhood relations and a sense of belonging and community can alleviate parental concerns about neighborhood safety (Prezza et al. 2001).

In developed nations, few children circulate freely in their neighborhoods and play with peers in open spaces without the supervision of adults (Prezza et al. 2001). Compared with previous generations, children are being granted significantly less freedom for independent active travel and play in the local neighborhood (Schoeppe et al. 2013). The reasons are manifold but predominantly driven by changes in the built and social environments.

An essential component of understanding children's geographies and related outcomes is the ability to accurately assess the environments that matter to children and associated features. This chapter provides an overview of methods used to measure children's geographies for activity and play, with a focus on measures of built environment factors that may promote or impede children's PA, active travel, and independent movement. It is worth noting that this evidence base reflects the experiences and geographies of children in developed countries, due to a paucity of research from other nations.

2   Measurement of Children's Geographies for Activity and Play

2.1   Characterizing Places

There are differing operational definitions of what constitutes a local neighborhood (Colabianchi et al. 2007). Examples include predefined spatial units such as census tracts or postal codes, circular (Euclidean) buffers around geocoded locations, and road network buffers (Colabianchi et al. 2007; Oliver et al. 2007). Predefined areas and circular buffers around geocoded homes may not accurately represent the spatial areas children walk, cycle, or play in (Oliver et al. 2007). For example, circular buffers may include areas with natural features such as rivers, lakes, and cliffs or built features such as railways and suburbs with poor street connectivity. These neighborhood features may not be conducive to children's walking or cycling for transport. Therefore, some studies have used road network buffers to define walkable neighborhood areas. For example, a polygon-based road network buffer has been applied to define 1-km areas around home locations (Oliver et al. 2007). Using this definition, the endpoints of all possible journeys up to 1 km along the road network are used to form the vertices of an irregular polygon that defines the traversable area within 1 km of the home location. The polygon-based approach tends to include environments that are not suitable for walking, such as industrial areas. Therefore, a line-based road network buffer has been suggested where a specified width of 50 m is placed around a line of a road network

buffer to more accurately include walkable residential areas including public sidewalks (Oliver et al. 2007).

The choice of buffers influences associations between environmental factors and children's behaviors. Hence, some researchers have attempted to determine the appropriate buffer size by investigating the persistence of associations between built environmental factors and PA across various buffers, or researchers have examined threshold distances for active travel to destinations (Colabianchi et al. 2007). Commonly used distances for creating buffers appropriate for children's activity behaviors are 800–1,000-m or 1,500–1,600-m buffers around the home (Colabianchi et al. 2007; Panter et al. 2010). One rationale for selecting these geographies is that they correspond to an easy walking distance, although little empirical evidence exists for defining an easy walking distance (Colabianchi et al. 2007). Perceptions of what an appropriate walking distance is can differ between children and parents. For example, Timperio et al. (2004) found that the average walking distance parents perceived as appropriate for 5–6-year-olds to walk was 1,500 m, and for 10–12-year-olds, it was 1,600 m (Timperio et al. 2004). In comparison, Colabianchi et al. (2007) reported that the average walking distance 12th-grade children (approximately 17 years of age) would be willing to walk was approximately 1,200 m.

Traditionally, children's activity spaces have been conceptualized around a neighborhood buffer of an 800–1,600-m radius from the home (Panter et al. 2010; Villanueva et al. 2012). However, recent research has shown that these traditionally defined neighborhood buffers also imprecisely represent children's actual movement in the neighborhood (Villanueva et al. 2012). Compared with predefined neighborhood buffers, measures of children's actual activity spaces may provide a more accurate picture of children's movement in the local neighborhood. For example, Villanueva et al. (2012) found that only 25–50 % of children actually walk or cycle within 800–1,600-m radii. Reasons may be that children travel only in specific directions from their home rather than in different directions around their home, depending on local facilities available (Villanueva et al. 2012). Moreover, the perception of neighborhood boundaries would likely be different between children, adolescents, and adults. For young children, busy roads and direct routes can represent barriers to active travel to neighborhood destinations. This may be because a high level of route directness is often associated with greater traffic flow, and children may not be allowed to travel on busy roads (Panter et al. 2010).

The most frequently reported places for children's PA and play are yards or gardens at home, followed by friend's/relative's yards and parks and playgrounds (Van Vliet 1983). More girls than boys are active in the yard at home, whereas more boys than girls are active in other public open spaces such as a sports field (Veitch et al. 2008). An Australian study showed that the mean distance children traveled to get from home to the closest park was 590 m. However, the mean distance children traveled to get from home to the park they actually visit was 1,736 m (Veitch et al. 2008). This shows that parks and playgrounds closest to the home may not necessarily be the most appealing travel destinations for children (Van Vliet 1983).

The four most frequently reported places Australian children aged 8–12 years walk or cycle independently are their own street, nearby shops, nearby streets, and friends' houses (Veitch et al. 2008). Veitch et al. (2008) showed that 32 % of Australian children travel less than 100 m from home without an adult, 32 % travel 150–999 m, and 36 % travel more than 1,000 m away from home, whereas the territorial range is greater in 10–12-years-olds compared to 8–9-year-olds.

2.2   Geographic Information Systems

Geographic information systems (GIS) are tools that facilitate the analysis of spatial data. They enable researchers to characterize places and to better understand relationships between the environment and behavior. In recent years researchers have increasingly used GIS to measure the built environment surrounding participants and assess its relationship with PA. Over time, these spatial built environment measures have become increasingly sophisticated and complex. The following paragraphs introduce GIS-based built environment measures, discuss some recent child-specific measures, and discuss issues and trends in the use of GIS to measure the built environment related to children's PA and play.

PA researchers use a number of GIS-based built environment measures (Brownson et al. 2009; Ding et al. 2011). The choice of measure is typically based on the research question and data availability. Accessibility measures are one of the most common types of measure, capturing the "potential for interaction" at a given location. Examples include access to parks and access to recreational destinations. Density measures are calculated by dividing the number of features by either an area or length; for example, dwelling density is the number of dwellings per square kilometer. Other GIS-based measures commonly used in PA research include measures of land use mix, which assess the number and diversity of different land uses in an area, and measures of the street pattern, traffic, crime, sidewalk coverage, slope, and greenness. Sometimes several built environment measures are combined into a composite measure. An example of this is the walkability index, which typically combines dwelling density, street connectivity (a measure of street pattern), and land use mix to produce a combined measure (Leslie et al. 2007). Each of these built environment measures can be evaluated for administrative areas and also around individual's residential addresses. In addition to there being a variety of built environment measures, there are often a number of different methods that can be used to calculate each measure. For instance, access to parks could be calculated as the distance from a participant home to the closest park, or it might be calculated as the area of park within a certain distance from a participants' home.

Children's PA research has focused on four locations where children are active: at home, the commute to and from school, at school, and the residential neighborhood. The measurement of the built environment with GIS differs for each of these locations.

Environmental correlates of active travel to school have been the subject of a concerted research effort. A range of GIS measures have been used to characterize the environment, as summarized in a recent review (Wong et al. 2011). Many of the measures are standard built environment measures such as population density, street connectivity, and walkability. Most of the studies reviewed measured the environment around the child's residential neighborhood. This is a limitation, since it is possible that the school and part of the route a child is required to travel to school fall outside the residential neighborhood. Only 5 of the 14 studies examined the environment along the child's route to school, and none of these used the actual route to school. Since this review researchers have started to investigate different environmental characteristics of routes to school modeled using GIS and along actual routes to school measured using global positioning systems (GPS) combined with GIS (Buliung et al. 2013; Harrison et al. 2014). These studies have shown that environmental characteristics along the modeled and actual routes are different. Harrison et al. (2014) argued that this means that the additional expense of acquiring GPS data is important to better assess built environment and also to better understand how behaviors and environment interact.

To date, GIS has not been used to create measures of either the home or school environments. Maitland et al. (2013) suggest that future research on both indoor and outdoor home environments could draw on GIS methods used to measure outdoor built environment, and one possibility is to use GIS to measure house and yard size. When it comes to school environments, there have been several studies using GPS in combination with PA monitors to assess the location of PA within the school (Dessing et al. 2013; Fjørtoft et al. 2010). While GIS is used to visualize and analyze the GPS and physical data, it hasn't yet been used to develop measures of the school environment. There is potential for GIS methods and remotely sensed satellite imagery to be used to assess the microenvironments of home and school. Possible measures include greenness, concreted areas, tree canopy/presence, and the size and layout of playgrounds and gardens.

Children's PA has been examined in relation to various features of the neighborhood built environment such as parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, slope, greenery, and street pattern. Many of these measures are not specific to children and are the same as those used to examine adult PA. While this is appropriate in most cases – for example, measurements of dwelling density, slope, and greenness are likely to be the same regardless of the age group of interest – sometimes the standard built environment measure may not be appropriate for children and child-specific measures are needed. Sometimes child-specific measures simply require changing the scale at which the measures are calculated, for example, distances that young children can be expected to walk are likely to be shorter than those of adolescents and adults. In other instances, it might be more appropriate to develop the built environment measure specifically with children in mind.

The development of child-specific GIS measures of the built environment for PA research is relatively recent. Rigolon and Flohr (2014) developed a measure of park accessibility for children and youth using weighted spatial network analysis. Parks were classified by the presence of formal and informal play amenities and also on

the presence of vegetation creating enclosed spaces, which determines the level of intimacy. Intimacy is important for play because children prefer places that have some privacy from adults (high level of intimacy), and on the other hand, adults like places that can be supervised.

Researchers have also started developing child-specific walkability indices. These indices draw on aspects of adult walkability indices and from surveys/ qualitative research that have identified features of the environment important to children's walking. Giles-Corti et al. (2011) developed an index comprising street connectivity and road hierarchy (proxy for traffic). Rigolon and Flohr (2014) developed a youth-appropriate walkability index that included speed limit (proxy for traffic), presence of tree canopy (proxy for street trees), and the presence of a sidewalk.

Researchers have also modified accessibility indices designed for adults so that they relate specifically to children. The Neighbourhood Destination Accessibility Index (NDAI) is a composite built environment measure that assessed adult's ability to access destinations important for PA (Witten et al. 2011). Recently, Badland et al. (2015) refined the NDAI to create an accessibility index specific to children – the NDAI-C. The NDAI-C comprises 35 different destinations in nine domains – these are the same domains as NDAI, with an additional "airport" domain added. The domains and destinations for the NDAI-C were derived from empirical evidence on destinations that children travel to. Each destination was weighted based on the frequency of destinations reported in children's travel diary data.

The child-specific measures presented here reflect a trend toward increased specificity of GIS-based built environment measures. This is particularly relevant when trying to understand how the environment influences children's PA and play, since the "first-generation" GIS measures have tended to be developed for the general population or with adults in mind. While the impetus for more specific GIS measures has come from researchers (Giles-Corti et al. 2005), these more refined measures have been made possible by several factors: advances in GIS methods, greater processing power, improved spatial data availability, and empirical evidence from other data sources (e.g., surveys and travel diaries). Within this increased specificity, there is also potential to develop microscale measures of the environment that focus on locations particularly relevant to children, for example, the home environment, the school environment, and the route to school.

2.3   Audits

Audits are systematic observations of neighborhood environmental features that can be used to quantify physical environmental features that may relate to children's PA, roaming, play, and active transportation within a predefined area. Compared with user surveys, environmental audits offer unobtrusive quantification of features that are not biased by individual resident perceptions. Audits expand on

GIS-derived quantification of environments by enabling capture of current environmental status and temporal elements such as conditions of sidewalks. Optimally, a systematic process is undertaken to developing the audit tool, training auditors, implementing the instrument, and coding the data. A multitude of environmental audit tools exist; detailed reviews are provided elsewhere (Brownson et al. 2009; Sallis 2009), with many freely accessible on the Active Living Research website (http://activelivingresearch.org).

Environmental audits are generally classified within four main groups: transport related, parks and public open spaces, schools, and home. Choice of tool(s) will depend on the population group, behavior of interest, and environment being assessed. Home and school audits generally assess either child, parent, or teacher behaviors; policies, rules, and practices; or quality of activity programs provided. Some audits also include presence of environmental features (e.g., grassy field, playground); however, in terms of measuring children's geographies for children's activity, no audit exists to assess either environment in detail.

Transport-related audits focus primarily on environmental features hypothesized as associates of transport mode. Street segments are usually the environmental unit of measurement – comprising both street sides from the start to end of the street or for one block between intersecting streets. Street segment selection can be undertaken randomly or purposively within a specified boundary. In the context of children's activity, purposeful selection may be undertaken of streetscapes along routes commonly traveled by children (assessed by GPS or self-report) or GIS-derived routes (e.g., home-school using the shortest road network) or of streets around schools or relevant neighborhood destinations. Such purposeful selection can be helpful to explain mismatches between GIS-derived routes and actual routes or to facilitate a greater understanding of why, all things being equal, some routes or street destinations are more frequently utilized by children.

The presence (or absence) of features such as pedestrian and cycling infrastructure (sidewalks, cycle lanes) and safety design elements are assessed. While designed as quantitative and objective measures, some audit items still require a gauge of perception or opinion, often relating to the quality or aesthetics of a feature. In general, most transport-related audits do not cater for assessment of child-specific environmental features per se. This is perhaps reflective of the environments being assessed – which predominantly prioritize efficient movement of cars, cyclists, and pedestrians through spaces, as opposed to facilitating children learning to cycle, playing en route to school, and so on. In contrast, park and public open space audits provide ample consideration of factors that may pertain to children, such as presence of playground equipment. Detail varies significantly, with compromises between comprehensive data collection and efficiencies of implementation. For example, the Environmental Assessment of Public Recreation Spaces (EAPRS) has 646 items (Saelens et al. 2006), while the PA Resource Assessment (PARA) is a 49-item audit of features (play equipment, bike rack, etc.), amenities (e.g., drinking fountains), and incivilities (e.g., dogs unattended) (Lee et al. 2005). A shorter audit, the Children's Public Open Spaces Tool (C-POST), is a 27-item tool that has been successfully undertaken in 1497

Melbourne parks to examine associations between public open space elements and neighborhood socioeconomic status (Crawford et al. 2008). Consistent with transport-related audits, park and playground audits also generally require a level of subjective rating. For example, in the EAPRS (Saelens et al. 2006), auditors are asked to rate perceived safety within the park and in the surrounding neighborhood. Likewise, coding for all amenities, features, and incivilities in the PARA requires the auditor to code features as not present, poor, mediocre, or good (Lee et al. 2005).

When data from environmental audits are combined with GPS and objective PA data, spatiotemporal locations of PA intensities can be established – enabling the identification of environmental features and settings where increased activity may occur. This process is costly, time-consuming, and labor-intensive, requiring specialist equipment and researcher expertise. Alternatively, a limited number of audits facilitate the simultaneous capture of activity intensity and environmental features from the auditor perspective, for example, the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (McKenzie 2002) and System for Observing PA and Recreation in Natural Areas (Sasidharan et al. 2014). Both can be used to simultaneously assess demographic characteristics and activity of people as well as environmental features in real time, using momentary time sampling. Although labor intensive, such tools provide the capability of objectively identifying characteristics in local neighborhood settings in relation to activity. As the researcher is required to "guesstimate" participant demographics, these data may be most useful for descriptive purposes only.

Audits can be time-consuming – limited evidence shows that street segment audits take in the order of 10–20 min each to complete (Badland et al. 2010; Brownson et al. 2009). While there is substantial loss of resolution and detail with implementing abbreviated instruments such as the PARA and C-POST, the efficiency provided by these tools makes them useful for implementation in larger studies. Stringent auditor training and assessment must be undertaken to ensure appropriate observation skill levels; adequate comprehension of jargon and concepts; and ensuring intra-rater and inter-rater reliability within, and ideally across, studies. To mitigate these issues, emerging research has harnessed virtual auditing methodology, using Google Street View to remotely assess environmental features. A comparison of physical and virtual audits of 48 street segments in four neighborhoods using the Systematic Pedestrian and Cycling Environment Scan showed a 22 % reduction (33 min over 12 street segments) in the average audit time, as well as reduced travel expenses (compared with Internet bandwidth) (Badland et al. 2010). Results between the two audit methodologies were, for the most part, in agreement (ICC $\geq$0.70). Although a more efficient process, virtual auditing is nonetheless reliant on maintenance of current imaging data. Strategies to enhance this methodology include utilizing supplementary data sources (e.g., GIS) to corroborate or augment existing data.

Although there is some consistency in features measured (e.g., sidewalks, presence of playground equipment, etc.), the wide range of audits, elements assessed, and coding protocols make it challenging to compare across studies. Exacerbating this are the inconsistencies in aggregating data and deriving summary

scores. Van Vliet's work on the "four environments" for young people, being home, playground, child-specific institutions, and "home range" (all other places youth spend time in their neighborhood) (van Vliet 1983), would suggest that one audit alone would fail to capture the full gamut of environmental features that may be important for children's activity, roaming, and active play – for example, traveling to and "hanging out" at shopping centers, abandoned spaces, etc. Not all audits have been assessed for reliability, and establishing inter-rater reliability within studies is important. Moreover, child and youth perceptions about environmental features are not captured in these audits – it is plausible that both perceived and actual environmental features are important to consider in understanding children's geographies.

2.4   Child Surveys

Objective assessment procedures, such as GIS and systematic audits, can provide important descriptive information about the physical environment; however, understanding the impact these environments have on PA requires some interaction with the resident population. The majority of current knowledge about PA and the built environment has been gathered using customized self-report questionnaires and interviews. Such techniques, although subjective in nature, provide insight into the perceptions people have of their surrounding environments. Information about local destinations, access to services and facilities, and perceived neighborhood aesthetics, utility, and safety can be collected in conjunction with self-reported PA or mobility patterns. Ideally, subjective survey data would be combined with objective GIS or audit data to evaluate the behavioral responses to the observed environment.

Numerous survey instruments with a focus on the PA environment have been developed and implemented in adults (Brownson et al. 2009). While surveys suitable for use in youth populations are less prevalent, Reimers et al. (2013) identified 13 questionnaires designed to assess perceptions of the PA environment in young people ranging from preschoolers to adolescents. Of these, most were developed in the USA (seven), with two in Europe, two in Australia, one in Hong Kong, and one in Iran. Ten studies assessed the test-retest reliability of their surveys, with ICC estimates ranging from 0.48 to 0.89, and Cohen's kappa statistics ranging from 0.31 to 0.90, over periods of 6–27 days. Surveys by Erwin (2008), Huang et al. (2011), and Hume et al. (2006) showed the highest level of test-retest reliability. Fewer studies examined convergent validity, with only two showing acceptable estimates (Ommundsen et al. 2008; Rosenberg et al. 2009). A notable limitation of the current body of knowledge is the transferability of existing surveys between populations. For example, environmental surveys developed in the USA may not be accurate and reliable in European children (and vice versa).

The most widely used environmental survey related to PA – primarily due to its association with the International PA and the Environment Network (IPEN) – is the Neighborhood Environmental Walkability Scale or NEWS (Cerin et al. 2006).

This survey was initially designed in 2002 as a 98-question instrument for assessing the perceived environmental characteristics that contribute to neighborhood walkability: a relatively recent construct that describes how supportive an area is for walking (and PA in general). An abbreviated 67-question version (NEWS-A) was subsequently developed in 2006 using multilevel confirmatory factor analysis. In 2009, the NEWS-A survey was adapted specifically for youth (NEWS-Y) (Rosenberg et al. 2009). There are two revisions of the NEWS-Y, one intended to be self-administered by adolescents aged 12–18 years and the other to be administered to parents of children aged 5–11 years as a proxy report (Rosenberg et al. 2009). Both revisions assess nine subscales: land use mix (diversity and access), pedestrian and automobile traffic safety, crime safety, neighborhood aesthetics, walking/cycling facilities, street connectivity, residential density, and recreation facilities. Standardized scoring protocols accompany the survey that can be used to aggregate individual responses into indices representing the walkability subscales.

In 2009, Rosenberg et al. (2009) evaluated the test-retest reliability and construct validity of the NEWS-Y in three participant groups: (1) parents of children aged 5–11 years, (2) parents of adolescents aged 12–18 years, and (3) adolescents aged 12–18 years. The test-retest reliability of the nine walkability subscales was adequate in all three participant groups; ICC estimates ranged from 0.56 to 0.87 in parents of children, from 0.61 to 0.78 in parents of adolescents, and from 0.56 to 0.87 in adolescents. Furthermore, the NEWS-Y walkability subscales showed significant associations with a number of self- or proxy-reported physical activities, including the frequency of walking to/from school, doing PA in the street, walking to a park, walking to shops, and doing PA in a park at least once a week. The detection of relationships between these neighborhood-based physical activities and perceived environmental attributes supports the construct validity of the NEWS-Y.

A shortcoming of traditional environmental surveys (such as the NEWS-Y) is the reliance on children or parents to form abstract visualizations of their neighborhood when responding to each item. This process will inevitably lead to recall errors of particular environmental characteristics and/or the exclusion of attributes that are important for predicting PA. Furthermore, child surveys do not provide detailed neighborhood mobility data such as the distance to regular destinations, the routes traveled, modes of travel, and the number of travel companions. The emergence of free online mapping services has provided researchers with a method to capture this mobility information while facilitating participant recall of their surrounding environment. As part of a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) or online questionnaire, participants are presented with an interactive map of their neighborhood via a web browser or other customized software. Participants can then perform a range of supervised tasks such as locating regular destinations (e.g., home, school, friend's houses, shops, parks) and activity places, plotting common travel routes, and delineating their perceived neighborhood boundary or independent roaming area. Using free software such as Google Maps (maps.google.com), detailed street maps can be alternated with satellite images to assist children or parents to identify and record key environmental features or locations.

Another advantage of interactive mapping techniques is the ability to evaluate nonresidential environments. Limiting data to the residential environment could lead to an incomplete and potentially erroneous understanding of the effects of environmental exposure on daily PA (Zenk et al. 2011). The Visualization and Evaluation of Route Itineraries, Travel Destinations, and Activity Spaces (VERITAS) is a web-based computer application that harnesses Google Maps functionality to search for, visualize, and geo-locate activity spaces, routes between locations, and area delimitations of interest in both residential and nonresidential environments (Chaix et al. 2012b). Tailored questionnaires can also be integrated into the software to collect perceptual and sociodemographic data. VERITAS can be customized for use in a range of population groups and has recently been used to assess the relationship between environmental exposure and health in the RECORD Cohort Study (Chaix et al. 2012a).

The Finnish innovation SoftGIS is another method that utilizes interactive mapping technology combining "soft" subjective data with "hard" objective GIS data (Brown and Kyttä 2014). The latest version of SoftGIS, the Maptionnaire tool (http://mapita.eu/en/), allows researchers to create surveys that can combine map-based and traditional survey questions. Respondents can mark places, routes, and areas both online and using iPads and smartphones. The collected data can be visualized using online, interactive tools, and data can be extracted in many different formats. SoftGIS surveys have been used to identify children's localized meaningful places (including distance from residence), perceived environmental fears, environmental likeability, activity of school travel mode, mobility licenses, and territorial range (Kytta et al. 2012). Data collection can be administered in computer-equipped classrooms or by allowing children to participate directly from their home. SoftGIS surveys with children have corroborated the earlier findings about positive associations between urban density and active school travel mode. Also distances to the meaningful places of children were shorter in more dense settings (Kytta et al. 2012) as well as the diversity of environmental affordance for children (Broberg et al. 2013a). A closer look at urban settings included the observation that dense urban residential structures promoted independent mobility but not active transport and that single-family housing structures promoted both independent mobility and active transport (contrary to studies using traditional measures) (Broberg et al. 2013b). Replication of the SoftGIS methods in other populations is now required to determine if these trends are specific to Finland.

A key shortcoming of interactive mapping systems is that their relative complexity is most effectively managed in the form of a CAPI or researcher-led classroom session, which requires considerably more time and expense than remotely administered self- or proxy-reported questionnaires. Furthermore, the detailed positional data obtained from interactive mapping requires a greater level of data processing expertise to manage and interpret. As with traditional GIS measures, spatiotemporal location of activities cannot be assessed using interactive mapping; however, the integration of technologies such as accelerometry, GPS, or ecological momentary assessment could add another level of functionality that would provide a comprehensive understanding of children's environmental exposure, mobility, and activity.

2.5   Wearable and Stationary Cameras

Over the last 10 years, small, lightweight, and relatively inexpensive wearable cameras with long battery life have become available. As such, they have started to make a contribution to research characterizing PA environments (Doherty et al. 2013). These wearable cameras can be worn on a lanyard or clip and take first-person perspective images. They are able to record between 2 and 5 images every minute for up to 16 h each day (2,000–3,000 images per day is usual). This occurs passively, without any intervention from the user. Examples include the SenseCam, the Autographer, and smartphones with a custom application installed.

When downloaded to image viewing software, photo data gives a visual "picture-book" record of the environment that the wearer was in. This can reveal information about the built environment, as well as transient features such as pedestrian levels or sidewalk or cycle lane obstructions. The cameras can either be given to research participants or worn by researchers as an audit tool. Images can be analyzed individually, aggregated to characterize a journey, or used as a prompt tool in a recall interview.

Wearable cameras have been used in a variety of health-related research studies, including studies of the PA environment. Mavoa et al. (2013) used them to compile a comprehensive list of features in the built, natural, and social environments. From the same research group, Oliver et al. (2013) used SenseCam to study work-related active transport journeys. Images were coded for presence of environmental features hypothesized to be related to active transport. Significant differences in the presence of features were found between walking and cycling journeys.

Cowburn et al. (2010) conducted a UK pilot study in 14–16-year-olds wearing SenseCam on the journey to and from school. They investigated differences in the environment in terms of food purchasing opportunities when travel was by walking, cycling, or riding in a car or bus. Barr et al. (2013) have conducted a similar study in Otago, New Zealand, to investigate children's exposure to food marketing across multiple everyday settings.

In a Californian study, Sheats et al. (2013) used wearable cameras to investigate perceptions of the built environment in 11–14-year-old Latino adolescents. Participants took a "usual" 45–60-min walk around their neighborhood wearing the device to record images of positive and negative environmental features. Examples of positive features were "bus stop shelters, greenery from trees, and personal safety signage." Examples of negative features were "a barbed-wire fence, obstructed sidewalks, and overflowing dumpsters."

It should be noted that wearable camera research has certain limitations. The devices are comparatively expensive, and it takes considerable time and resource to annotate (code) and analyze the visual data. In addition, images can often be uncodable due to being obscured by clothing or other people or due to low light levels.

There are also important ethical issues and challenges involved with capturing these passive image data. Of particular importance are images of third parties who may not have consented to the research study. For example, nonparticipating peers of children may be photographed during the journey to or from school. Children

may forget to remove or turn off the cameras in instances where photography is inappropriate. With adult participants, it is recommended that the individual be shown their images and given the opportunity to delete any prior to these being made available to the researcher. Issues arise, however, with child participants – such as determining whether it is appropriate for parents to also screen and delete images or whether this is an invasion of privacy for the child. When using these units with children, the consent of parents is required, and the use in a school setting will often require complicated permissions from schools, teachers, parents, and class members. Detailed verbal and written instructions can help participants to utilize the units appropriately. These issues are described in detail by Kelly et al. (2013). The issue of identifying participants or third parties is also at the forefront of wearable camera research; procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality are vital.

Go-along interviews are another possible area for wearable camera research. Go-along methodology has been employed with New Zealand children participating in the Kids in the City study (Oliver et al. 2011). In this study, a trained youth interviewer accompanied participating children on individual neighborhood walks to places of interest or meaning. Routes and destinations were determined by the children, who also wore a GPS unit for quantification of the route taken and took photos of environmental features of importance to them. Throughout the walk, the interviewer also asked the child about the route and destinations chosen and prompted them for their perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the spaces visited. Interviewers wore a Dictaphone on a lanyard to record the interview, which was later transcribed and coded for themes arising. While no SenseCam was worn at the time of the go-along interviews, the concurrent use of GPS enabled a member of the research team to later retrace some routes while wearing a SenseCam, enabling image capture of features along the full route that may not have been captured from the child-derived images.

Another visual approach has been to observe PA environments with stationary cameras at important sites such as key junctions. Hipp et al. (2013) used historical data from webcams in Washington, DC, to monitor features such as traffic, cyclist, and pedestrian before and after built environment changes. These images are less personal and have fewer privacy issues. As such the investigators were able to use crowd sourcing to substantially reduce the coding time of millions of images.

Research to date suggests that wearable cameras and webcams will play a complementary role to existing measures in the context of the PA environment. Future research is likely to use the richness of the visual data to enhance researchers' ability to quantify and qualify exposures and determinants of interest.

3 Conclusion

The physical environments in which children spend time can play a significant role in their development, health, and well-being. Places that may be important to consider in the context of children's outcomes include school, home, transport

Table 1 Overview of measures of children's geographies

Measurement tool		Geographic information systems	Audits	Surveys	Camera
Data source		Database	Auditor	Participant	Participant
Example metrics		Density (dwelling, intersections, etc.), land use mix, indexes (e.g., walkability)	Environmental quality; presence of features	Environmental perceptions; use of environments and features	Environmental quality; presence of features
Location(s) assessed	Home	Y	Y	Y	Y
	School	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Routes (when combined with GPS)	Y	N	N	Y
	Transport/ streetscape	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Public open spaces	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Neighborhood	Y	N	Y	N
Strengths	Objective	Y	S	N	Y
	Temporal data	S	Y	S	Y
	Unobtrusive	Y	S	N	N
Weaknesses		Reliant on data availability and quality; high data processing and analytical resourcing required; no agreed best practice for neighborhood boundaries	High researcher burden; compromise between audit detail and costs		High data processing and analytical resourcing required; ethical considerations

N no, *S* in some cases but not all, *Y* yes

routes, neighborhood destinations such as parks and playgrounds, and the broader neighborhood as a whole. Accurate assessment of these environments is needed to clearly understand relationships between these variables and determine factors for intervention for improved outcomes for children. A range of methodologies exist, from subjective questionnaires (e.g., surveys of child and parent neighborhood perceptions) to objective quantification of physical features (e.g., GIS) that may relate to improved outcomes for children (see Table 1 for an overview). Both along this spectrum, and within specific methodologies, there is a wide gamut of approaches undertaken, with consequential divergence in research findings. Moreover, complexities exist when considering the neighborhood as a whole – agreed best practice for defining child-specific boundaries and buffers is lacking and urgently needed.

Mixed methodologies can enhance assessment of children's geographies, but can add complexities to data treatment and aggregation that may make this approach unfeasible for smaller studies. Technological advancements and innovative implementation of technologies will likely lead to better objective identification of physical environments and features that are important and meaningful for children. As noted earlier, it is important to recognize that this work is derived from research conducted in the developed world. As such, this does not necessarily reflect the experiences and lifeworlds of children living in less-developed countries.

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Outdoor Environments as Children's Play Spaces: Playground Affordances

6

Nor Fadzila Aziz and Ismail Said

Contents

Abstract

Play in outdoor environment is crucial for children's healthy development and learning because it creates meaningful, enduring environmental connections and increases children's performances. However, the extent of children's engagement in outdoor play and the way they can learn through play is strongly influenced by the physical and social contacts with the outdoor environments.

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However, the design of children's outdoor environment commonly did not address the children's needs and preferences, which results to low engagement with the environment. It is due to the lack of understanding on child-environment transaction relationship through play. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide a discussion on the transactional relationship of children's play through the concept of affordances. It discusses how children perceive the properties of the environments in terms of its functionality and playability and how they view the outdoor environment as their "*play*" *grounds*. The concept of affordances in children's play not only informs about the properties and attributes qualities of environments but also indicates the children's abilities to coping with and adapt to the environmental affordances. The child-environment transaction through play also indicates the level of actualized affordances in the environments and the degree of person-environment fit (P-E fit). In sum, the understanding of child-environment transaction is crucial in the creation of better environment for children's "*play*" *ground* that can optimize their play experiences. The concept of affordances is not only relevant to environmental psychologists but also to geographers, planners, and designers. The relational properties of affordances and the developmental dimension of environments (Heft 1988) can provide the geographers, planners, and designers with insight into how to manage and manipulate the physical environment in supporting different human activities and experiences (Ward Thompson 2013).

1   Playgrounds versus *"Play" Grounds*?

Playgrounds are the designed spaces that usually include equipment for specific uses and users. It is the places where people, especially children, will go to do enjoyable things. However, playgrounds are normally designed and governed by adults and, therefore, dominated by adult influence. According to Ferré et al. (2006), playgrounds normally are designed with high restriction to the number of users and primarily consist of children aged 3–10 years old. The designs of spaces and equipment normally are not appropriate for other potential users such as younger children, and adolescents make the spaces less utilized by these age groups. Another issue is the reflectance of users' basic needs on the design of playgrounds (Ferré et al. 2006).

In contrast with "*play*" *grounds* or play spaces, it can be anywhere and almost everywhere that children found by themselves as a playing platform, a space, or corner that fulfills their playfulness and curiosity, and without the control of adults.

Table 1 The key distinction between playgrounds and "*play*" grounds

	Playgrounds	"*Play*" grounds
Definition	The spaces are specifically designed by adults for children to play (places for children)	The spaces are not specifically designed for children to play, but children found the spaces as places that can afford their play activities (children's places)
Features and uses	Equipped with equipment for specific uses and users	Various natural and man-made features available in the spaces offered various play and uses for children and others
Opportunities for play	Children's play is restricted because the spaces are normally designed and governed by adults	Children have freedom to create their own play activities without the control of adults

They are the places where children perceive that they can afford their play activities. It is not limited to specific activities; indeed the children have freedom to create their own activities depending on how they view the potentials of the play grounds and its affordances. In other words, playgrounds are places for children and play grounds are children's places (Rasmussen 2004). Table 1 summarizes the key distinction between playgrounds and "*play*" grounds.

2 Children's Play in Outdoor Environment

Play is a quintessential childhood activity which is both a need and right of children and is central to their well-being. Play should be fun, passionate, spontaneous, self-initiated, and purposeless (Piaget 2007) because the activity itself is more crucial than the outcome. This means the experiences that children gain through play, such as doing, exploring, discovering, failing, and succeeding, are more meaningful. Children's association with a range of playful activities can contribute to their physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development (Pellegrini 2009) and enhance their problem-solving abilities and creative thought (Kellert 2005). Therefore, play is a valuable and enjoyable activity which is also a process through which children learn without being taught (Piaget 2007).

Play is the primary mechanism through which children become familiar with their environment. Play allows children to stretch themselves cognitively, physically, and socially. Children rely on their imaginations while playing, and they learn to use their thoughts to guide their behaviors. Historically, the majority of play took place outdoors, where children created imaginary worlds of their own. Playing in outdoor environments that offer various affordances can stimulate their senses and generate their cognitive skills. The outdoor environment offers unique opportunities for children to engage in active and creative play as well as a ground where they can interact with friends.

Therefore, play has been central to the study of children's outdoor environments. In recent years, there has been a growing discourse regarding play in outdoor environments as both a need and a right of children. It is due to dramatic change in children's lives where children have lost the freedom to actively and independently play in their neighborhoods and cities. Children today have also lost opportunities to have contact with nature in their daily lives. The erosion of opportunities for children's outdoor free play and interaction with the natural environment is due to rapid urbanization in many developed and developing countries. Many cities have become negative places to live, especially for children, due to the increasing amount of street traffic, badly planned urban environments, pollution, and other hazards that have contributed to a diminished access to the outdoor environment. These phenomena have also contributed to the increase in concerns on children's safety and health. This has led to adults' misconceptions about the risks and values of play for children, especially for those who live in cities.

Children's growth and development in outdoor environments are influenced by children's interaction patterns in environmental friendliness. Specifically, children learn about the outdoor environment through three modes: cognitive, affective, and evaluative (Kellert 2002). Cognitive development begins with the recognition of play spaces, followed by the discovery of the spaces' features and affordances (Kyttä 2002). Affection signifies the positive feelings for and emotional attachment to a place (Kellert 2002), and awareness and sensitivity to the physical and environmental factors are requisites for affection. Cognitive and physical contact with the elements in the outdoor environment generates children's sensitivity to the functions of those elements. Frequent exposure to the outdoor environment thus allows children to become sensitive to the properties of features. Consequently, frequent and repetitive physical experiences trigger a positive feeling toward the environment. The evaluative development refers to the way in which children perceive the features of the environment as valuable materials, which they utilize as and shape into play tools. During repeated interactions with particular materials, children become familiar with, appreciate, and are aware of the absence or presence of those materials in nature.

Previous studies have shown that children perceive distinctive differences in different outdoor environments that offer different affordances for their activities (see Table 2). It is their relationship with the physical and social environments that structures their perception and shaping of the potential environmental affordances (Kyttä 2002).

3   Play as a Transactional Process Between Environment and Children

Children's play in an environment is viewed as a transactional process between them and the environment because the relationship is dynamic in an interactive system, where the components cannot be taken out of context (Kyttä 2003; Werner and Altman 1998). Figure 1 illustrates the transactional process of children's play from the perspective of ecological perceptual psychology. The theories of

Table 2 The affordances of children's outdoor environment

Types of environment	Authors	Major findings
Neighborhood	Kyttä (2002) and Veitch et al. (2006)	Home yards and immediate surroundings in the neighborhood become the important resources of affordances for children's active play, by offering them the opportunity for independent activities, compared to other places in the neighborhood
	van Andel (1990), Min and Lee (2006), Veitch et al. (2008), and Castonguay and Jutras (2009, 2010)	Neighborhood outdoor spaces, such as local parks and designed playgrounds, are the psychological valued setting for children due to their psychological affection and distinction experience
School ground	Powell (2007), Ozdemir and Yilmaz (2008), and Dyment et al. (2009)	Good landscape features associated with various natural elements in the school grounds promote physical activity and offer options for active, imaginative, and creative play that appeals more broadly to children of varying interests and abilities, as well as affording social interaction and cognitive development
Playground	Hart and Sheehan (1986), Heusser et al. (1986), and Herrington (1998)	Playgrounds with complexity and variety of elements provide an opportunity for manipulation, exploration, and experimentation, which provides the opportunity to learn and develop cognitive awareness, social skills, and motor skills. Contemporary playgrounds commonly lack these elements and are perceived as neither fun nor challenging
Street	van Andel (1990) and Holt et al. (2008)	Streets with increasing traffic were the main areas of danger for children, but children value the streets for the wide range of activities, creativity, and sense of fantasy they offer in children's play
Public places	Lennard and Lennard (1992)	Good public spaces could promote children's affection, interest, and participation in cities and towns. However, the environment of many cities and towns frequently represents a form of sensory deprivation for children

(*continued*)

Table 2 (continued)

Types of environment	Authors	Major findings
Natural environment/ setting	Fjørtoft and Sageie (2000)	A diverse natural landscape with miscellaneous composition and structures has the qualities to meet children's need for a varied and stimulating play environment and improved motor skills and environmental disposition

Ecological Perceptual Psychology
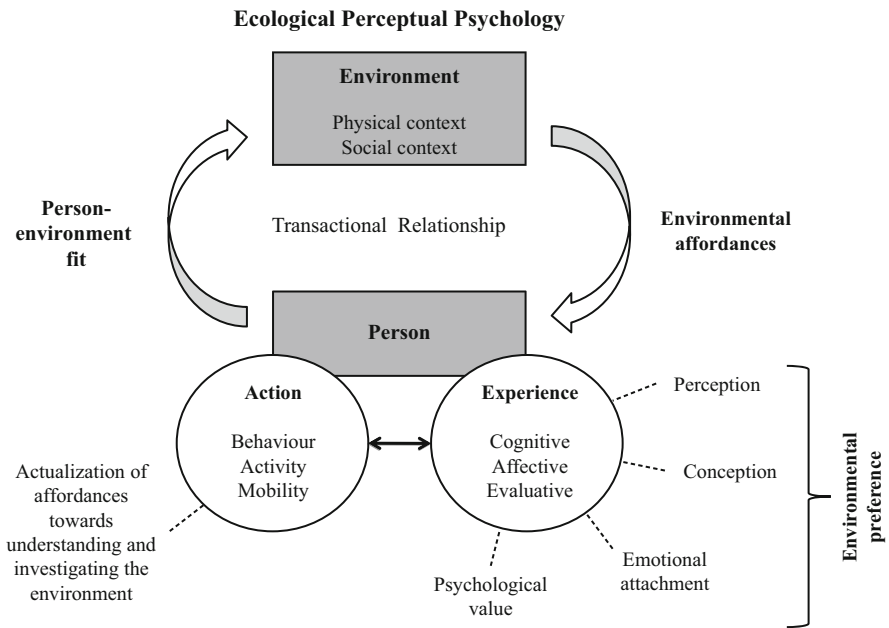
Fig. 1 The transactional of person-environment relationship from ecological perceptual psychology perspective

affordances and the person-environment fit (P-E fit) operationalized the transactional process. The former focuses on people's environmental preferences through ecological cognition on the environmental affordances, while the latter is viewed as a means of identifying the immediate nature of people's environmental preferences by adjusting their behaviors to fit with the environment in fulfilling their needs.

Transactional studies stress that both person and environment play an active role in an interactive relationship, while the context includes physical and social phenomena, which are referred as the material and sociocultural reality (Kyttä 2003). As persons are perceptive in their environments, so they are capable of influencing

and changing those environments. Likewise, the physical and social contexts of the environments also influence people's behavior and being (Kyttä 2003). Therefore, in transactional research, people and environments are interrelated components that mutually define each other. Thus, they cannot be explained separately as they represent the whole interactive system underlying a phenomenon that occurs in a certain place and time.

James J. Gibson's ecological perceptual psychology is an example of a transactional framework. In ecological perceptual psychology, the environment is an ecological and dynamic system which is described in psychologically meaningful ways, and the person is considered a responsive organism who purposefully engages with his or her surroundings. The environment is a multidimensional structure associated with values within an ecological structure that permits a person to perceive and act upon the possible actions available in the environment. In this respect, the functioning person is conceptualized as being in a specific environmental context, a component that is inseparable from their environment. This is because the perceptual psychology of a person is based on the ecological information gained from the environment through their relationship with it. This relationship forms an ecological reality and then an entity (Kyttä 2003).

The transactional relations between person and environment form the person's perception about the environment, which has a power to influence their behavior, activity, and mobility. In addition, perception is oriented toward finding environmental affordances. When perception and action interact, action reveals new affordances, and this perception of the new affordances in turn generates new actions (Kyttä 2003). Therefore, perception is fundamental in ecological perceptual psychology because it is inseparable from the corresponding intentional activity.

According to Kaplan (1987), the perceptual information a person receives from an environment and that influences his or her actions in transactional relations are the basis for that person's environmental preferences. In this case, perception is viewed as a type of fundamental cognition in ecological perceptual psychology that directs a person's affective and evaluative functions and so determines his or her actions. Normally, people tend to prefer or be attracted to environments that offer them opportunities for action, that is, environments that afford their activities (Kaplan 1987). For example, Kyttä (2003) found that the formation of environmental preferences by children is linked to the functional activity performed by children in the environment. In other words, the actualization of affordances in an environment can contribute to children's environmental preferences. Her finding continued the consistency of findings from studies on children's environmental preferences since the 1970s (Chawla 2002), which can be explained by the concept of affordances (Kyttä 2003). Moreover, the characteristics of a physical environment also are identified through environmental preference studies (Kyttä 2003) where people's actions are motivated by their preferences as a desire to understand and investigate the environment (Kaplan 1987; Kaplan et al. 1989).

The transactional approach is crucial in studies of children's environments since children's views and preferences toward the environment differ from those of adults as they have different needs, aspirations, and behaviors. The understanding of the

integration of children's actions and experiences with their environmental preferences consequently provides information in the planning and design of child-friendly environments (Kyttä 2003).

4   What are Affordances?

Affordances are a theory introduced by Gibson in 1966, which he referred to as the properties of the environment that can offer and influence the person who engages with it. The properties can be beneficial or unbeneficial to the person depending on how the person perceives its functions. Therefore, both the environment and people complement each other in the concept of affordances, which suggests the transactional relationship of both components. The concept matches with the framework of ecological perceptual psychology (Gibson 1979; Kyttä 2002), which suggests that people shape the environment and are shaped by their environment. With children, the shaping of the environment depends on the environmental affordances as perceived by the children (Kyttä 2002).

Affordances refer to the functionally significant properties of the environment, which are perceived through the actions and the perception of individual affordances (Gibson 1979; Kyttä 2004; Heft 2010). Affordances can be any objects, surfaces, substances, or places. The theory also stresses that action and perception are two inseparable components in the process of perceiving the environmental affordances. Gibson (1979, 127) said, "We must perceive to be able to move around, and we must move around to be able to perceive" the information available in the environment as it is the key element for the individual's action and perception (Ward Thompson 2013). Hence, affordances include properties from both the environment and the perceiver (Kyttä 2002) in the interactive relationship; the former is known as perception and the latter is known as action (Kyttä 2003).

According to Heft (2010), the properties of the environment are both objectively real and psychologically significant. Therefore, the perception of affordances that occurs through functional activity in the environment can provide a psychologically relevant concept for analyzing the evolving child-environment relationship (Kyttä 2003). In studies of children's environments, researchers have normally used the theory of affordances to explore how the children perceived and used their environment in terms of its functional properties, especially in the outdoors. As adults, we perceive the elements in the environment from the point of view of aesthetic values, but children value the elements, either the natural or designed features, from the point of view of "affordances" and "playability" values (Heft 1988). For example, from a study conducted at primary schools in Malaysia, a group of children perceived that a bottle can replace the function of a ball when the real ball is not available for their soccer game. They performed their pseudo-soccer game at a mini hall beside the canteen or building's corridor, with the tables at the mini hall or edges of the corridor as the goal posts (see Fig. 2). However, the environmental affordances may differ from one child to another as they perceive

Fig. 2 (**a**,**b**) The children utilized the mini hall and corridors as play spaces for pseudo-soccer, and (**c**) they used recycled bottles to replace the real ball

the functional properties of the environment through their own experiences with the environment. Therefore, affordances are also unique for each individual and each specific group of people (Kyttä 2003).

4.1   Level of Affordances Indicates the Qualities of Environment and Children's Relationships with Environment

In relation to children's engagement with their environment, Kyttä (2003) made a distinction between two levels of affordances: potential and actualized. Potential affordances refer to an infinite number of possible affordances of an environment or object (Kyttä 2003), which exist without having to be perceived. The extent of potential affordances is defined by the individual's qualities, such as physical skills and bodily proportions, as well as social needs and personal intentions (Kyttä 2003). Therefore, potential affordances are different for each individual, group of people, and situation (Kyttä 2003; Storli and Hagen 2010). However, once the potential affordances are encountered through the individual's independent mobility, action, and perception in the environment, they are known as "actualized affordances" (Heft 1988; Kyttä 2002, 2003, 2004). Therefore, "potential
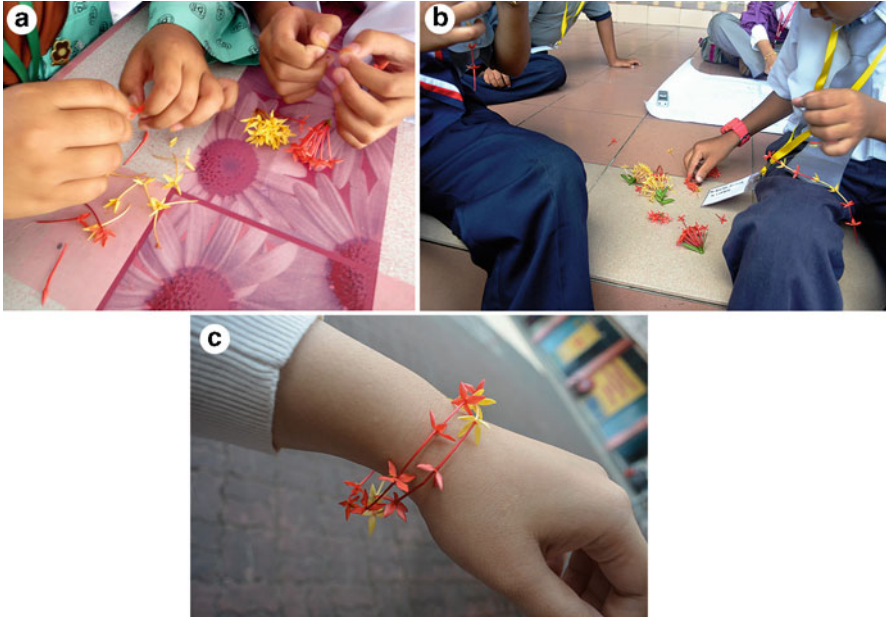
Fig. 3 (**a**) The girls demonstrated the jewelry-making process. (**b**) A boy competed with his friend to create longer jewelry. (**c**) A final piece of self-made jewelry

affordances become qualities of the environment, and the actualized affordances become individual relationships with the environment" (Kyttä 2003, 49). In other words, the qualities of the environment (potential affordances) are notable only when the person engages with the environment, which means the actualization of affordances has occurred (Heft 1989). Potential affordances of different "*play*" *grounds* may vary. For example, children playing in the stream and orchard will perceive different affordances. At the stream, the children perceive boulders at the river as climbable features that afford scaling, sitting, looking out from, and hiding, while the orchard may afford the children to pick and eat the fruits.

There are various levels of actualized affordances: perceived, utilized, and shaped (Kyttä 2002, 2003). Perceived affordances are what an individual recognizes when observing the environment, and they determine the usability and functionality of the environmental features. Utilized affordances are the opportunities that exist and can be occupied through direct physical interaction with the environment. However, shaped affordances involve the manipulation of environmental features, which change the environment's properties – either functions or forms. For example, the children at a primary school in Malaysia perceived that the *Ixora* sp. flowers can be manipulated to make jewelry (see Fig. 3). They gained shaped affordances when they manipulated the structure of the flowers by pulling out the flower's pistil and inserting the stamen of one flower into the pistil of another flower to make the jewelry. During the process of making the jewelry, they

engaged with perceived affordances, such as recognizing the *Ixora* sp. plants, either the red flowers (*Ixora* "siamensis") or yellow flowers (*Ixora* "dwarf orange"), and utilized affordances, such as plucking the flowers.

In relation to the concept of children's play in outdoor environments, children's engagement in perceived affordances involves performatory and exploratory activities, while shaped affordances involve productivity activities. Using the example given previously on the process of making jewelry form *Ixora* sp. flowers, exploratory activity involves recognizing and searching the *Ixora* sp. flowers; performatory activity involves plucking the flowers; and productivity activity involves pulling out the flower's pistil and inserting the stamen of one flower into the pistil of another flower. The activity gives them an opportunity to communicate with peers and perform it in a sense of competition. They sometimes performed the activity in a group and competed with each other to produce the longest jewelry or in the shortest time. There are many ways of making the jewelry; they can make it with all red flowers, all yellow flowers, or a mixture of red and yellow flowers and can make it either long or short. Through the process of making the jewelry, they improved their concentration and skills. The way children change the properties of the environmental features enables them to perform their activities as desired by them.

4.2 Level of Actualized Affordances Indicates the Extent of Child-Environment Fit

Person-environment fit (P-E fit) or congruence is defined as the match between person and environment within a particular situation or setting (Edwards et al. 1998). Conflict or stress does not arise from the person or environment separately, but in accordance with the fit of both components (Edwards et al. 1998). In other words, the fit between the characteristics of a person and the characteristics of their environments can influence a person's behavior, motivation, and mental health. For example, children and adolescents are not likely to be very motivated in environments that do not fit their psychological needs (Ozdemir and Yilmaz 2008), which results in dissatisfaction. In the opposite case, a person's well-being can be enhanced by improving the fit between person and environment. Therefore, P-E fit has been considered as the basis for a person's well-being from the environmental psychology perspective.

P-E fit theory was originally developed by French and Kahn in 1962 and later was refined by other researchers, such as Caplan, Harrison, Edwards, and Cooper (Edwards et al. 1998). The theory was extensively used especially in studies of psychology and personality in organizational settings but seldom used in environmental psychology studies. However, among the earlier attempts to incorporate the theory of P-E fit into children's environments was Kyttä (2003), who operationalized the theory through the concept of affordances. She suggested the actualization of affordances requires fit; the higher the number of actualized affordances, the better is the child-environment fit and the environmental child friendliness. Therefore, the actualization of affordances also involves a process of

adjustment between children and their environment in creating a better child-environment fit. In addition, children's participation in environmental planning is also viewed as an attempt to enhance the child-environment fit and children's well-being (Kyttä 2003). Hence, P-E fit is an essential criterion for environmental child friendliness of children's "*play*" *ground* environment. The relationship between the number of actualized affordances and the child-environment fit in describing the degree of environmental child friendliness will be explained further in Sect. 6.

5   Factors that Influence Level of Actualized Affordances

The use of environments by children and adolescents can be explored through environmental preference research because environmental preference is the motivational basis for a person's actions (Kaplan 1987; Kaplan et al. 1989; Hartig and Staats 2005) and the actualization of affordances. The studies on environmental preference are mainly concerned with the motives for spending time in preferred places (e.g., Malinowski and Thurbert 1996; Matsuoka and Kaplan 2008; van Andel 1990) and the effects on people's well-being (e.g., Hartig and Staats 2005; Korpela et al. 2002).

Study by van Andel (1990) has suggested that place preference is related to the function and use of place, that is, its affordances. A preferred place is likely to be used, and conversely, it is unlikely to be used if it is less preferred. Hence, the factors that influence environmental preferences are the factors that also influence the actualization of environmental affordances. Variation in environmental preferences may be due to the characteristics of the physical environment, varying human needs, the possibilities of meeting the needs in an environment, and other individual or social factors. Therefore, the level of actualized affordances at different "*play*" *ground* environment may differ according to its physical characteristics and how they attract children's preferences and fulfill children's needs.

5.1   Characteristics of Physical Environments

Stephen and Rachel Kaplan, along with Roger Ulrich, are among the pioneers in environmental preference studies (Kyttä 2003). Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) listed the coherence of information and the legibility, complexity, and mysteriousness of the environment as being the factors that influence the variation in environmental preferences. These are the characteristics of the physical environment, and the way a person can perceive the environment depends on their capacity for obtaining and processing the available information (Kyttä 2003).

In a coherent environment, the movement and use are predictable because its orderly and organized space is explicable (Kaplan et al. 1998). Size, texture, form, and tone of colors can organize patterns into comprehensive units of forms and enhance the environmental coherence. For example, the outdoor environment such as a play field is perceived as "*play*" *grounds* by children because of its coherent

environment that supports their team games. On the other hand, Kaplan et al. (1998) referred to the distinctiveness of an environment as legibility. A legible environment is normally created by a composition of elements, such as vegetation, paths, and walls (Kaplan et al. 1998), which form a focal point that can attract a person's attention (Ulrich 1983). For children's play grounds, the focal point can be a play equipment (e.g., removable blocks and climbing structure) that triggers children's movements and actions in the outdoor environment. However, an environment with varied and rich environmental features is considered complex because it encourages exploration (Kaplan et al. 1998). The level of environmental complexity is determined by the number of independent features perceived in a scene, and normally, an environment with moderate levels of complexity is the most preferable (Ulrich 1983). An environment with complexity is full of surprises and can create a sense of mystery (Zhang and Jin Li 2012). Finally, the sense of mystery in an environment can trigger a person's exploratory behavior and interest as they keep going (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989), which enhances their satisfaction. Zhang and Jin Li (2012) classified these characteristics of physical environments as the environmental attractiveness that influences children's behavior in neighborhood environments.

5.2 Human Nature Needs

According to Matsuoka and Kaplan (2008), human nature needs are directly linked with the physical features of the environmental setting, which include aesthetic preference, contact with nature, recreation, and play.

The aesthetic preference includes a range of topics related to the basis of preferences toward the characteristics of the environment including scenic beauty, degree of cleanliness, and pleasant sounds and smells (Matsuoka and Kaplan 2008) and also a negative view of nature, such as scary, disgusting, uncomfortable, or even unsafe. The aesthetic characteristics of the environment play an important role in the formation of environmental preferences. They can spark an immediate emotional reaction in a person, indicating whether the environment should be approached or avoided. Ulrich (1983) referred to it as the immediate nature of environmental preferences. According to Malinowski and Thurbert (1996), aesthetic preferences differ among children of different ages. Older children and adolescents tend to appreciate the environmental aesthetic values more than younger children do. However, children's aesthetic preferences on the natural environment are based more on its appearance but not necessarily for its usability if the functions and benefits of the environment are unknown. Study by Bixler and Floyd (1997) found that children's preferences for a natural environment decrease with negative sensitivity and negative emotions, such as fear of animals, plants, weather, and sounds or of getting lost. In other words, an aesthetic preference is not enough to make children use a certain environment unless they are familiar with the environment.

Humans also desire to have contact with nature in a variety of ways, such as viewing nature or directly engaging with and experiencing nature (Kellert 2005).

People, especially adults, commonly express a greater preference for the natural environment due to its restorative effect on their health and well-being (Korpela et al. 2002; Hartig and Staats 2005; Ulrich et al. 1991). Restoration through personal engagement with natural features and the environment is a form of emotional and mental self-regulation through a cognitive process (Korpela et al. 2002). For children, contact with nature is crucial for their healthy development, intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically. A considerable amount of literature has reported the benefits of connecting children with nature. Children's engagement with nature can develop their capacities for analytical problem solving and their critical and creative thinking skills (Kellert 2005) while increasing their concentration, confidence, and personal skills, such as social skills and self-efficiency, language and collaborative skills (Moore and Wong 1997), and a sense of wonder and imagination. These positive impacts particularly happen when children play in a natural environment. This is because children experience and judge nature not by its aesthetics, but rather as a stimulator and experiential component of their activities (Sebba 1991).

Therefore, children prefer an environment that offers opportunities for recreation and play. The idea is closely related to Gibson's theory of affordances (1979). Environments that attract children normally offer greater affordances for their active play (Castonguay and Jutras 2010; Kyttä 2003; van Andel 1990). Children also prefer environments that challenge their abilities and capacities while they are playing (Kyttä 2003). Hart and Sheehan (1986) found that the traditional playground, associated with various elements that offered more functional play activities, was most frequently utilized by children as compared to the contemporary playground. An environment that lacks complexity, variety, and opportunities for children to manipulate and explore will result in a lower preference and utilization by children. Children's needs for recreation and play actually are related to their needs for restoration. Functional activity may be restorative for children in rather the same way a natural environment provides a retreat for adults (Korpela et al. 2002). Even children appreciate the natural environment in terms of how it can afford their functional activity (Sebba 1991) and serve as a retreat for them. Their ability to perform play activities which result in feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment, and fascination suggests that their action itself is a reward and a form of restoration for them (Kyttä 2003).

5.3 Human-Interaction Needs

The presence of other people to play with becomes the significant factor for whether children (van Andel 1990; Veitch et al. 2006; Castonguay and Jutras 2010) and adolescents (Lückmann et al. 2011; Louv 2006) like and utilize an environment. This is related to the opportunity to meet (Veitch et al. 2006; Castonguay and Jutras 2009; van Andel 1990) and socialize with others, especially peers. The presence of other people indicates the importance of social interaction for the utilization of an environment and a person's place preferences. In a study by Veitch et al. (2006),

most of the children drew and took photographs of places in their neighborhood that indicated their common meeting places with peers. However, the presence of other children can also have negative effects on their place preferences (van Andel 1990). For example, children may avoid places where they are bullied by other children and where their play is disrupted.

Regardless of the significance of social interaction as a basis in human life and environmental preferences, the need for privacy in children's environments should also be recognized (Lowry 1993). As well as social spaces where they can interact with peers, children also need quiet spaces and private places that serve as refuges for a child or group of children to withdraw from social interaction when desired. Quiet spaces offer comfort and serve as a place for children to self-regulate and refresh themselves (Lowry 1993), while private places support quiet exploration with close friends and are not noticed by adults (Lowry 1993). However, these design features are not always present in children's environments. The provision of a variety spaces that can afford personal and social interaction (i.e., public, semi-private, and private spaces) is important to reflect a different level of human-interaction needs.

5.4 Other Individual and Social Factors

Substantial evidence also points to the influence of individual and social factors, such as personal experience, social norms, and cultural values, in shaping a person's environmental preferences (Malinowski and Thurbert 1996), including those of children.

Demographic factors, such as age and gender, are among the common factors that influence children's place preferences. Older children and males are more independent regarding outdoor play, while young children's access to outdoor environments typically is limited to their own home's yard, a neighbor's yard, or the street directly outside their home (Prezza 2007; Castonguay and Jutras 2009, 2010), which indicates low independent mobility. Gender differences are not associated with different children's spatial abilities, experiences, and enjoyment but rather with the widespread social stereotype that allows males greater freedom to explore the environment. Therefore, girls were found to be more active in the home yard, while boys tended to be active in sporting settings and private vacant areas which are located away from their home (Min and Lee 2006).

Children's preferences for particular settings are also influenced by their different experiences in and resulting psychological affection for those settings (van Andel 1990; Min and Lee 2006). Children's familiarity and proximity with a place become important factors for outdoor play and place preferences (Castonguay and Jutras 2009) as children are likely to repeat their visit to a place which gave them good experiences and psychological affection. Furthermore, children's use of an outdoor environment is also influenced by their attitude to active play; either they are an "indoor kid" or an "outdoor kid." Indoor kids seldom play outdoors; they

prefer sedentary activities like video or computer games, drawing, and watching television at home (Veitch et al. 2006).

Social restrictions, such as parental safety concerns, become the main factors that restrict children's autonomous mobility to play independently in outdoor environments (Veitch et al. 2006; Prezza 2007). Parental safety concerns are mainly related to a fear of strangers, the dangers of crime and traffic (Min and Lee 2006; Veitch et al. 2006, 2008; Castonguay and Jutras 2009, 2010), and exposure to negative cultures. This social factor appears to limit children's ability to play away from home without adult supervision. Hence, it reduces the range of children's environments as their place preferences. The limited opportunity to wander independently has limited their chances of finding a suitable place for self-regulation and of creating emotional bonds to the environment. Children's independent mobility is one of the factors that influence the actualization of affordances in children's environments. Children's independent mobility shrinks significantly with the increasing degree of urbanization (Kyttä 2004).

6 Types of Children's "*Play*" Grounds

The number of actualized affordances actually is not an assurance for children's favorite places and vice versa. The actualization of affordances and children's preferences are two essential components in the child-environment transactional process. Therefore, it is important to understand the relationship between these two components in recognizing the types of children's environments or "*play*" *grounds* that can afford their play activities.

Figure 4 shows a model describing the hypothetical types of children's environments that emerge from the variation of children's place preferences and the number of actualized affordances. There are four types of children's environments: (i) friendly environment, (ii) adapted environment, (iii) restrained environment, and (iv) neglected environment. The varying environmental situations of the model are interpreted on the basis of the degree of P-E fit between the potential affordances of the environment and children's place preferences. The degree of P-E fit then determines the number of actualized affordances in the environments. The higher the degree of P-E fit between the environmental affordances and children's preferences, the greater the actualization of affordances. As illustrated in the model of children's environments (see Fig. 4), the friendly and adapted environments are most likely to be the environments that can support children's play. This is due to the greater number of actualized affordances that occur in those environments compared to the limited number of actualized affordances in the restrained and neglected environments.

A friendly environment is the environment most preferred by the children. Such an environment not only offers an extensive number of potential affordances, but also the potential affordances fit well with the children's needs and preferences. The higher degree of P-E fit results in a greater number of actualized affordances. Children have more freedom and a sense of control to perform their preferred activities in this

The Degree of Place Preference
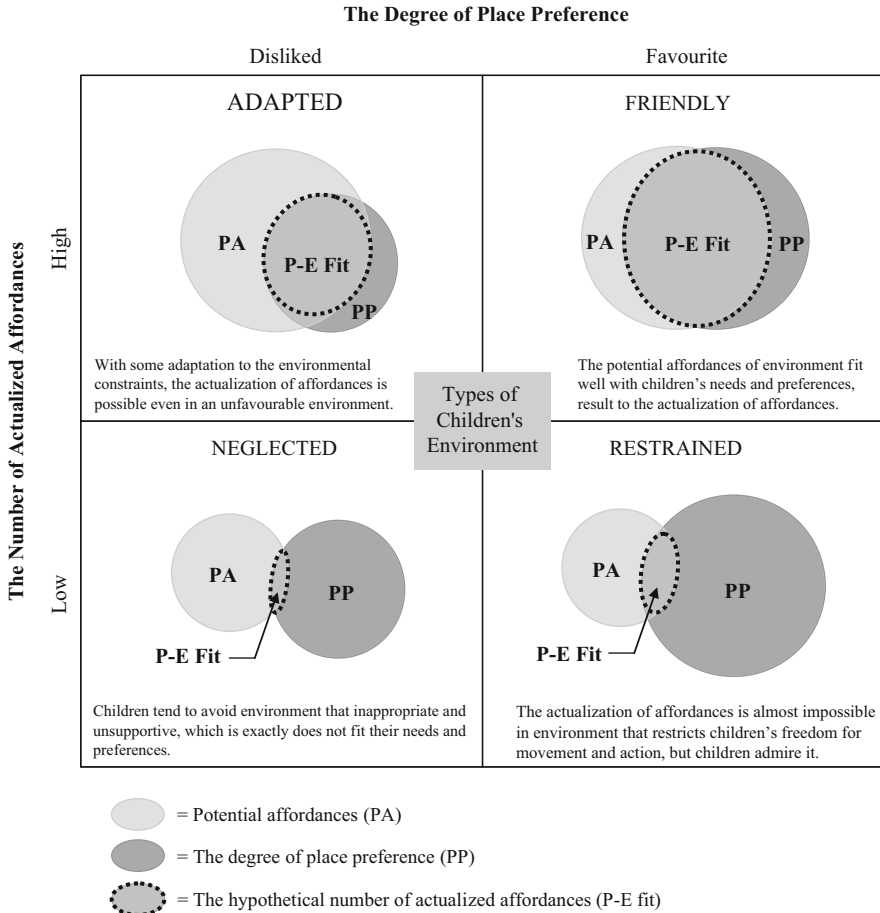
Fig. 4 A model describing the hypothetical types of children's environment from the variation of children's place preferences and the number of actualized affordances

environment as it offers fewer constraints. A friendly environment normally is not only attractive, safe, and comfortable but also offers higher number of affordances and degree of accessibility for children's play. The characteristics of the friendly environment provide the highest possibilities for children's independent mobility toward the actualization of affordances. The properties and attributes of the environments not only trigger the children's preferences but also afford their play activities.

Regarding the adapted environment, the children disliked the environment but still perform their activities there. The environment offers quite an extensive number of potential affordances, but due to some environmental attributes that do not fit the children's preferences, such as inadequate facilities, uncomfortable and unsafe, thus results in a lower preference among the children. Such an environment is inappropriate and inadequate, but it might be the only available environment that

can afford children's play. The children perceive the potential affordances and make some adaptations to the environmental constraints to enable them to perform their play activities. Therefore, the actualization of affordances is possible even in environments that children do not like. The examples of adapted environments are streets, staircase, and vacant land. For adults, we might perceive the environments as inappropriate for children's play; however, for children, the environments might become among the places that can afford their play. In this context, the children modify the places' functions and their own behaviors to make it suitable for new purposes and make it fit with their needs. Therefore, the environments become as part of their "*play*" *grounds* with several affordances.

In contrast, in the restrained environment, children normally demonstrate greater preferences for the environment, but the actualization of potential affordances is limited due to some restrictions. Its environmental characteristics attract the children's preferences and trigger the children's interests in play. However, they do not have freedom to access the environment, which limits their movement and action. The condition results in a lower number of actualized affordances. The example of a restrained environment is school field. Children may perceive the school field as a place that can afford their physical activities with peers while at school, but they could not perform their play activities because the school regulations prohibit them from playing on the field without a teacher's supervision, especially during recess. This situation normally results to the feeling of dissatisfaction among children but they still desire to play at this type of environments.

The neglected environment is the environment least liked by the children. It is the environment that the children tend to avoid due to its unattractive environmental characteristics and limited number of potential affordances. This might be due to the inadequate attention given to the environment, such as lower maintenance, and thus, it had been neglected. The environment most probably does not fit with the children's needs and does not offer any attractions for the children's play. The environment was not only inappropriate for but also unsupportive of the children's activities.

This model can be applied to children's outdoor environments in identifying the level of child friendliness of an environment. When applying this model, the places that represent each type of environment may differ depending on how children perceive its potential affordances and the environmental characteristics that influence their preferences. This enables researchers and designers to plan the improvement strategies for children's environments as the variation of children's environments in this model is related to the degree of its environmental characteristics that influences the actualization of affordances and children's place preferences.

7   Conclusion

The quality of life and of the environment can never be improved without an understanding of the person-environment relationship. In the context of children's environments, there is a need to understand children's perceptions about their

"*play*" *ground* environment. An understanding of children's perceptions will lead to an understanding of their emotions, needs, preferences, and interactions. It is an essential part of the process of creating a child-friendly "*play*" *ground* environment that will offer more meaningful play experiences for children through an encouraging engagement and interaction with the environment. Therefore, the concept of affordances helps the researchers, geographers, planners, and designers to understand the child-environment transaction through their behavioral and perceptual responses when they are playing. It is crucial because the key factor that influences the actualization of affordances and children's preferences for outdoor environments as their "*play*" *grounds* is the transactional process between children and their environment itself. These happen only when children directly engage with their environment and actualize its affordances through their functional activities. If not, the affordances of outdoor environment cannot be actualized because children do not have access to the environment and cannot perceive the affordances even in an attractive and safe environment.

Also, studying children's play and the child-environment transactional process through the concept of affordances also indicates the properties and attributes of the environment that influence children's behavior and interactions. The properties and attributes also influence children's place preferences and the actualization of environmental affordances. Children's place preferences and the actualization of the environment are linked to their needs for recreation and play, environmental aesthetics, contact with nature, and social interaction. In addition, the individual, physical, and social factors also influence the degree of children's interaction with their environment. For planners and designers, these information will provide insight into how to manage and manipulate the physical environment in supporting different children's activities and experiences. It is based on the understanding of child-environment transactions that then leads to the subsequent development of research into landscape and environmental preferences in order to improve the environment for children.

For geographers, the understanding of different types of children's "*play*" *ground* environment will provide insight about places in which children's play happens, considering some places are not purposively designed for children to play. This can help us to deconstruct adults' perception about play and "*play*" *grounds* for children since children utilize the environment differently from adults. This is due to children's propensity for playing in the environment rather than working or taking leisure. Geographers could do more to study not only children and their "*play*" *ground* environment but also to ask the children on how they perceive the environmental affordances, in terms of its potentials and constraints for play. It will provide insights about geography of play and hence about the nature of play itself from the perspective of children.

The way children view the environment is always different from adults. The children also learn best through play especially in an environment that fits their needs. The problems occur when adults do not understand these and try to design the places for children without considering the children's needs and preferences. Hence, children's participation in the process of planning and designing their

environment is crucial to the creation of ideal "*play*" *grounds* for play. Certainly, they are good sources of information about the design and planning of the environments they occupy because they are aware of the spatial features of their environments and are able to make choices accordingly.

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Children's Play in Urban Areas

7

Sruthi Atmakur-Javdekar

Contents

Abstract

This book chapter provides a critical review of literature related to children's free and manipulative play in urban areas with a peek into possible future directions for children's play. Recognizing that play is fundamental to the development of a child, and that it has value when driven voluntarily and freely, children's free play that encourages exploration, curiosity and imagination are

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examined. Nature provides quick access to a wide range of materials, heights and textures that encourages children to manipulate and make sense of their worlds through play. In this light, the chapter explores opportunities and challenges in urban settings that afford or restrict free and manipulative play; and also critically reflects upon designed play spaces including "adventure", "loose parts", and "traditional" playgrounds.

1   Introduction

The words, "play" and "children" are inseparable and children's right to play is rightly recognized as one of the fundamental rights by the *United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN CRC). By 2050, around 70 % of the world's population will live in urban areas and children currently living in urban areas are estimated at almost half of the world's population. Also, it is estimated that children born into existing urban populations account for around 60 % of urban growth (UNICEF 2012). Rapid urbanization already poses significant challenges on issues related to protection, provision and participation of children living in urban areas. While the importance of play for children's holistic development is a given where play is recognized as one of the many fundamental rights of children, this does not necessarily inform policies related to city planning and design aside from the building of new playgrounds and providing recreational programs in major cities (Hart 2002). It is then necessary to critically look at opportunities in urban environments for children's play. With a focus on free and manipulative play of young children rather than organized sports and formal games of older children, this chapter begins with an introduction to the importance of play for all children highlighting the value of free and manipulative play. Next, the opportunities for free play in nature and cities are explored, followed by a section on designed environments in urban settings that "provide" settings for children's free and manipulative play. Afterwards, the challenges brought by urbanization on children's free and manipulative play are investigated before a critical reflection on the future of children's play in urban areas. The objective of this book chapter is to provide not just a tertiary review of literature, but also critically narrate a case for future directions in the field of children's free and manipulative play in urban environments.

2   Value of Play

Everyone's childhood is nurtured by play. The words, "play" and "children" are inseparable and children's play is universally understood as important for holistic development of a child. From the early nineteenth century many philosophers and

scholars in the field of child development have developed theories to understand why children play and how play influences child development. Drawing from Mellou's (1994) work (as cited in Stagnitti 2004) classical theories of the nineteenth century explained the existence and purpose of play based on informal observations and philosophical reflections (Saracho and Spodek 1995; as cited in Tsao 2002), while modern theories developed after 1920 made efforts to explain the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual functions of play in child development. Early classical theorists stipulated that children play to expend surplus energy (Spencer 1878), restore energy or relax (Lazarus 1883), or that play is a product of evolutionary biological process (Hall 1920), or that play helps to build adaptive skills needed in adult life (Groos 1985).

Modern theories associated play with exploration where play was seen as a stimulus seeking behavior, tackling the distinction between exploration and play; and that play contributed to not just physical but also social, emotional and intellectual development of a child. For example, arousal modulation theories of play described that exploration occurred in novel situations where the child asked, "What can this object do?"; and that play occurred in familiar situations where the child asked, "What can I do with this object?" (Berlyne 1960; Ellis 1973; Hutt 1985). Additionally, psychodynamic theories stressed the role of play in the social and emotional development of children (Freud 1961; Erikson 1985); and cognitive developmental theories demonstrated that play allows for healthy development of a child in all aspects such as cognition, language, social/emotional behavior, problem-solving skills, ability to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and understand cause – effect processes (Piaget 1962; Bruner 1972; Sutton-Smith 1967). Further, Vygostsky (1967) stressed the importance of social and cultural context in understanding the importance of play in the development of a child. Socio-cultural theories of play focused primarily on play as socialization where children practice social roles and norms through play (Mead 1934); and make-believe play where children's play is based on make-believe functions of objects, actions and roles of people, stressing that play is the meta-communicative context of cultural and personal reality of an individual (Bateson 1955).

Though there are several theories proposed to understand child development in the context of play, it is important to acknowledge that there is no stand-alone theory that explains sufficiently any aspect of child development; and that each of the above theories provide frameworks within which child development and behavior can be better understood (Hughes 1999). Empirical research investigating play behaviors of children typically classify play into cognitive and social categories reflecting different stages of child development based on the age of the child. Cognitive categories of play include functional, dramatic/symbolic, constructive and games with rules (Isenberg and Jalongo 2005; Piaget 1962), and social categories of play include solitary, parallel, associative and cooperative play (Parten 1933). While there are broad social and cognitive categories of play, Hughes (1996) work, *"A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types"* classifies play into 15 different categories. Table 1 assimilates cognitive categories of play in relation to taxonomy of play, as proposed by Hughes.

Table 1 Cognitive categories of play and taxonomy of play

Functional play	Dramatic/symbolic play
1. Rough and tumble play	1. Symbolic play
2. Deep play	2. Socio-dramatic play
3. Locomotor play	3. Dramatic play
4. Object play	4. Fantasy play
5. Exploratory play*	5. Imaginative play
	6. Role play
Constructive play	**Games with rules**
1. Creative play	1. Social play
2. Mastery play	2. Communication play
3. Exploratory play[a]	

[a]Exploratory play allows a child to manipulate behaviors such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects, assessing its properties and possible ways to play with the object such as stacking blocks

Categorizing play as reflected in the table above outlines that functional, dramatic/symbolic and constructive play often reflect play behaviors of younger children that are free and manipulative in nature and that "games with rules" reflects play behaviors of older children. Play is voluntary, incidental and is a means with no end product. This inherent quality of a child to play freely and explore one's surroundings is valuable to children's development and distinguishes free play from organized games and sports (Hart 2002). Games with rules, provides opportunities for children to interact with their peers in social settings and gives them an opportunity to learn the social rules and regulations (Woolley With et al. 2006). Given that the focus of this chapter is free and manipulative play of younger children and not organized games of older children, one should keep in mind that the word, "play" from now onwards refers to "free and manipulative play" of younger children.

Play both reflects and boosts children's development and while scholars have long established the connections between play and child development, particularly with young children (see Hughes 1999), research over time has proven the physiological and psychological benefits of play amongst children belonging to early and middle childhood.

Research demonstrates that children's physical activities involving running, climbing, and jumping in outdoor spaces during play benefits a child's physical growth and development including muscle growth, development of heart and lungs, and physical development of other vital organs (Clements 1998; Pica 2003). Studies also demonstrate a strong correlation between vigorous play activities and increase in nerve connections in the brain. Also, there is correlation between play and vital sensory and physiological simulation, that in turn results in increased nerve connections (Gabbard 1998). The significance of children's play is well known and valued for it's health benefits and contributions to children's physiological growth and development; however, play is seldom valued for the development of children's understanding and thinking (Hart 2002).

Through play, children gain collaborative negotiating skills, confrontation and resolution of emotional crises, the management of conflicts and development of

moral understanding. Gray (2013) affirms that through free play, children are able to solve problems, make decisions for themselves and become emotionally resilient. In a sense that, through play, children learn to cope with fear, anxiety and disappointment (Hayward et al. 1974). Additionally, the ability of play to provide opportunities for children to socialize freely in a common physical space is unique, serving as an important contribution to children's social development. Hart (2002) remarks that free play in public spaces is important for the development of civil society and hence, for democracy. Simply put, play affords children the choice to engage in recreation and leisure by themselves or with others, hence contributing to development of social identity. Further, scholars have long established the benefits of imaginative play and pretend play to impact social cognition, foster creativity, development of linguistic and academic competence and also allow children to imitate and interpret adult behavior (as cited in Clements 2004). Evidently, play allows children to explore their surroundings, thereby, fostering creativity, resourcefulness, inventiveness and flexibility that are necessary for children's growth and development (Hart 2002).

The value of play towards children's holistic development is a given where play is universal and more importantly, culturally constructed across different contexts. Vygotsky (1967) highlighted the importance of social and cultural context in understanding play behaviors of children, stressing the importance of understanding "children in relation" to their context. Research with children across varied contexts including India, Taiwan, Japan, Polynesia, Puerto Rico, Argentina, South Africa, United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, Poland and United States provides insights about the social and cultural construction of children's play demonstrating the types of places, and everyday objects that children play with; thereby, constructing and making meanings of their contextual social worlds (Roopnarine et al. 1994; Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002). The "*Growing up in an Urbanising World*" (2002) project investigates children's worlds where they are able to play creatively and build culture; thereby, reflecting the various material and social realities of children's worlds through play as a universal language. Particularly, Katz's (2004) in her ethnographic work of children growing up in Howa village in Sudan serves as an example to strengthen the current discourse of children's play and the meanings play holds across cultures. Through daily accounts of children in a largely agrarian society, Katz (2004) unpacks the fine line between work and play for children in Howa village and how play becomes work and work becomes play, thereby, contributing to their local environmental knowledge and skills related to agriculture and husbandry. These examples reinforce the existing discourse of the universality of play, where play is socially and culturally constructed across different societies.

It is evident that play is universal and important for holistic development of a child and is thus, rightly recognized as one of the fundamental rights by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). The UN CRC emphasizes that children all over the world have a right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. Given that one of the most

important aspects of human development is play, which ensures physiological and psychological development, and that the UN CRC emphasizes every child should be able to develop to the fullest, Article 31 of the UN CRC on play rightly states:

> Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

Every child, irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, ability, has a right to play, leisure and relax. Research shows that children who do not have the opportunity to play, owing to their physical or psychological abilities, lose their chance to develop their emotional intelligence, self- esteem, self-confidence and independence (National Playing Field Association 2000). Given the benefits play has to offer, lack of play can significantly impact the development of a child. National Playing Fields Association defines play as "freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behavior that actively engages the child" (2000). During free play, children tend to touch, explore, manipulate and experiment with their environments to understand their world (Hart 2002). In a sense, children are active agents and not passive recipients in their environments, who continually make sense of their worlds (Holloway and Valentine 2000) and expand on their social and cultural understanding by engaging in play.

3   Nature or Natural Environments Afford Free and Manipulative Play

Most times, the idea of free play is associated with playing outdoors in an unstructured manner where children have access to natural environments (Moore 1986; Moore and Wong 1997; Hart 1979; Moore and Marcus 2008). According to Hart (2002), the diversity of natural environments affords an array of play opportunities for children in comparison to any designed play space.

Likewise, Clements (2004) remarks:

> The most successful outdoor play experiences usually involve the child's free choice, which is self-motivated, enjoyable, and process-oriented. Experiences in nature such as collecting leaves, throwing stones in a pond, jumping over small brush or logs, building sandcastles, collecting sticks or nuts from the ground, or creating hiding spaces challenge the child's imagination and reasoning abilities. (p. 77)

The concept of nature in the field of children's geographies is associated with elements that are found in nature including trees, leaves, animals, rocks, mounds, sticks, mud, dirt, water and similar natural materials (Alerby 2000; Derr 2002; Pollio and Heeps 2004; Sebba 1991, as cited in Linzmayer and Halpenny 2014). Typically, such environments with access to natural elements for children's outdoor play in urbanized areas appear in the form of parks, playgrounds, backyards, greenways, botanical gardens, community gardens or similar pockets or corridors

of designed green spaces, as noted by Williams (1995) in *"Outdoor Recreation and the Urban Environment"* where children can climb trees, feed fishes, build sand castles, run freely in the open (Kong 2000) amongst the many other recreational opportunities. In urban areas, nature takes forms to suit human needs. For example, Singapore faced clearance of dense tropical forests to make way for human needs owing to urbanization where nature took various forms in the built environment of the city, including specially designed parks, specifically planted trees and green cover along roads, building walls covered with creepers (Kong 2000). More recently, current discourse in the field of landscape architecture points to landscaped gardens on rooftops or neighborhood parks or greening of school yards that have gained popularity in highly urbanized areas where there is minimal access to nature. In a sense, natural environments as designed by human needs replace nature in urban areas.

Like children's play that is socially constructed across cultures (Vygotsky 1967), the concept of nature also is culturally and socially constructed (Evernden 1992 as cited in Kong 2000; Castree 2001; Demeritt 2001; Greider and Garkovich 1994, as cited in Linzmayer and Halpenny 2014). In this light, given that children are active agents making meanings of their life worlds through play, it is necessary to recognize that children's play experiences in natural environments is in a complex way, socially and culturally influenced. Thus, the construction of life worlds by children during their play in natural environments are not in isolation but is in fact a fusion of built, natural and socially constructed elements (Linzmayer and Halpenny 2014). Recognizing this idea of natural environments, it is then important to specifically understand the benefits of playing in natural environments and why children need access to spaces that have natural elements.

The benefits of playing in natural environments go beyond solving the well-known problem of childhood obesity. *"Healthy Planet, Healthy Children: Designing Nature into the Daily Spaces of Childhood"* by Robin Moore and Clare Cooper Marcus (2008), draw on latest research findings to reinforce the physical, mental and social benefits of children playing in natural environments. According to the authors, children independently establish territories and share experiences with friends in special places, thereby, demonstrating heightened self-esteem and positive mental health (Moore and Marcus 2008). Relatedly, studies about children's play confirm that natural environments offer a stimulated conditions affording a wide array of play experiences, thereby reinforcing positive behavior in children (Moore and Wong 1997), reduce Attention Deficient Disorder (ADD) and "allows for healthy attention functioning" (Moore and Marcus 2008). Furthermore, Chawla (2007) establishes the correlation between childhood experiences of nature to environmental stewardship in adulthood including taking action against climate change and other environmental issues. Particularly, in the last decade, Louv's influential work, *"Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder"* (2005), has drawn attention to the increasing reality of nature-deficiency in children and how the lack of exposure to nature can negatively impact children's growth and development.

Despite the many benefits of children's free and manipulative play in natural environments, the issue of limited accessibility to nature or natural outdoor play

spaces due to urbanization has for long been a burning issue in studies related to play, children's development, environmental psychology, children's geographies, urban planning and city design (Jacobs 1961; Hayward et al. 1974; Doxiadis 1975; Ward 1978; Hart 1986; Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002;Hart 2002; Moore and Marcus 2008). Rapid urbanization continues to modify the social and physical environments in urban areas; thereby impacting children's free and manipulative play needs. "Accessibility to rich, diverse, accessible sustainable landscapes in the residential districts where children live and the lack of independent mobility and rich environmental experiences at a neighborhood level" (Moore and Marcus 2008, p. 155) greatly inhibit children from having direct experiences of being in an environment that offers a wide range of play materials to freely explore, manipulate and learn about the world that they live in.

4   Urban Settings Afford Free and Manipulative Play

By 2050, around 70 % of the world population will live in urban areas and children living in urban areas are currently estimated at almost half of the world's population. Also, it is estimated that children born into existing urban populations account for around 60 % of urban growth (UNICEF 2012). Rapid urbanization already poses significant challenges on issues related to protection, provision and participation of children living in urban areas. While the importance of play for children's holistic development is a given where play is recognized as children's fundamental right; however, this does not necessarily inform policies related to city planning and design aside from the building of new playgrounds and providing recreational programs in major cities (Hart 2002).

Earlier, children living in cities had the luxury to step out of their homes and play on the streets, sidewalks or in their neighborhood parks. Jane Jacobs in her classic book, "The Death and Life of Great American cities" critically examines the use of sidewalks as play spaces by children living in an urban neighborhood.

Jacobs (1961) states,

> They slop in puddles, write with chalk, jump rope, roller skate, shoot marbles, trot out their possessions, converse, trade cards, play stoop ball, walk stilts, decorate soap-box scooters, dismember old baby carriages, climb on railings, run up and down. It is not in the nature of things to make such a big deal out of such activities. It is not in the nature of things to go somewhere formally to do them by plan, officially. Part of their charm is the accompanying sense of freedom to roam up and down the sidewalks, a different matter from being boxed into a preserve. (p. 86)

The freedom to use sidewalks as a stage to engage in the act of play – one that is incidental, creative and instinctive – with available play materials holds a value of its own when compared to playing with fixed equipment in a boxed playground designed between buildings. Today, Jacobs's vision of children playing on sidewalks almost seems like an urban fantasy given the increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic and other ill-social factors in cities. Recognizing this urban

fantasy, scholars in the field of child development, children's geographies, environmental psychology, urban planning and city design have for a long time questioned about the dying phenomenon of children's play on streets and sidewalks; and continue to seek alternatives play spaces in cities.

One of the early research studies by Hayward et al. (1974) recognize social and environmental factors that impose restrictions to children's play in outdoor settings in cities and ask concerning questions that are relevant even today.

> Questions include:
> "Where and when can children play?"; "What happens to children's play when these (outdoor spaces) opportunities diminish?"; "As their choices and free play opportunities become more and more limited, how do they learn about themselves and their abilities, about their world and their relationship to it?"; and "What possibilities exist for children in the city to find places to meet others, to explore their environment, to aid in constructing an image of themselves and the world?" (p. 132)

In the current climate of rapid urban growth, research scholars struggle to find solutions or ask similarly critical questions related to the complexities surrounding children's outdoor play in cities. City planners, architects, landscape architects and designers have long contributed to play opportunities for cities in the form of well-designed parks and playgrounds where children are able to exercise their right to play. Traditionally, cities offer playgrounds with popular fixed play equipment inside parks as alternative play spaces for children. Jacobs (1961) notes that Garden city planners built play spaces in the interior enclaves of super blocks, thus coming up with a solution to keep children off the streets and safe from the ills of cities. Supporting research related to children's play in cities, Hart (2002) reaffirms, "Playgrounds were invented as a device for getting children off the street, away from bad influences and under the control of known socializing agents." (p. 138).

Further, playgrounds severely limit play opportunities for children over a period of time. Jacobs (1961) notes that children above 6 years of age get bored of the same central space in residential buildings. Importantly, research studies examining the use of outdoor spaces for children's play establish that children dislike being segregated away from the adults' worlds into playgrounds and that children prefer using spaces in the city for play such as streets and sidewalks (Jacobs 1961; Lynch 1977; Moore 1986; Hart 1986, 2002; Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002). The trend to contain children in playgrounds across cities isolates them by restricting their *"interactive relationships with family, friends and neighbors"* (Hart 2002, p. 138) Moreover, removing children from the everyday worlds of adults by devising playgrounds also indicates the lack of visual connect by adults to children, thereby, compounding to existing parental concerns of children's safety. Jacobs (1961) suggests people's surveillance in urban neighborhoods to establish safety for children playing outdoors – on streets or sidewalks. Jacobs's well-known surveillance concept of "eyes on the street" could serve as a popular safety measure for urban neighborhoods. There is a need for designing urban neighborhoods offering free and manipulative play opportunities for children to be able to play, explore with friends and socialize outside of their homes within a safe distance. In a

response to providing opportunities for children's free play close to where they live, Hart (2002) urges for safe and welcoming neighborhoods that respond to children's preferences of play.

Despite this, there is an increasing trend to build playgrounds to provide for children's play in growing cities. Hart (2002) recognizes that as cities develop, there is a tendency for children to be "increasingly contained" and that this is the irony of "development" – "development" here translates to increasing number of boring playgrounds. The irony continues to add complexity of providing play spaces by challenging architects, landscape architects and designers in building playgrounds for children that engage them in creative and self-directed play. A detailed discussion on the subject of designed playgrounds is explored in Sect. 6.

Bringing play opportunities closer to where children live by creating safe and welcoming neighborhoods that respond to children's preferences of play seems do-able in sub-urban areas of cities in developed nations where children live in urban neighborhoods with access to pedestrian walkways and can walk to a nearby park or playground. Research indicates that well designed pathways in urban neighborhoods help in improving the design of pathways that can help children explore their outdoor natural environments (Cox 2013). The author argues that urbanization has led to limited opportunities for children to connect with nature and that careful design of pathway corridors with respect to pathway location and landscape quality shared pathways could help children re-connect with nature (Cox 2013). The green pathways help connect children with nature and provide opportunities for free play; however, this is practically feasible where pathways are located along green belts in urban neighborhoods (Moore and Marcus 2008; Cox 2013).

But the demands of high-density housing faced by growing urban agglomerations (UNICEF 2012) urges new residential development to take form of high-rise residential living. Keeping this in mind, then, what are the opportunities for children living in high-rise residential buildings with respect to outdoor play? As noted earlier, children get bored of playgrounds as they feel contained and segregated from the world of family, friends and neighbors. Critiquing northern European countries for not building high-rise apartments for families under the pretext that children tend to not go out and play, as adults cannot be visually connected to their children, Hart (1986) stipulates that thoughtful design in high-rise apartment buildings can influence outdoor play. There is limited empirical research that investigates the relationships of the quality of children's outdoor play in high-rise residential buildings. Mackintosh (1982) examined children less than 10 years of age living three types of high-rise apartments in New York City. Three types of high-rise included:

(a) Single high-rise building with no integrated development for children's play where only 14 % of the children had parental permission to play outdoors;
(b) East Midtown Plaza has plazas and elevated playgrounds and is built in an integrated way afforded 73 % children freedom to play outdoors; and

(c) Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, an older development that has grass, no thorough roads, fenced play spaces and security guards; only 39 % children were allowed to play outdoors.

Mackintosh's research founded that children's ability to play outdoors (via parental permission) was largely dependent upon the design of the apartment buildings itself. The integrated development – East Midtown Plaza – with elevated playgrounds on the second floor has access to only residents of the building, which meant that children could play without adult supervision. Another reason for the success of children's access to playing outdoors was that parents were able to watch their children from their windows, thereby, being visually connected and were ensured of their safety. (1982; also cited in Hart 1986).

The complexities of residential living in urban areas are well established by scholars in the social sciences who work with low income communities in cities across the world (Lynch 1977; Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002). Life in cities also reflects experiences of poverty, exclusion, poor housing opportunities and lack of basic infrastructure including water, sanitation and electricity. It is estimated that about one-thirds of the world's population lives in slums and that by the year 2020, approximately 1.4 billion people will live in informal settlements and slums (UNICEF 2012).

Research has founded that children living in poor informal settlements, play in unhygienic conditions but have more freedom to play outdoors, close to their homes where they are watched by adults when compared to children living in middle-class or higher-class areas of the same cities (Lynch 1977; Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002; Hart 2002). Also, scholars indicate that play is amongst the top priorities for those living in poor conditions where issues of health, education housing and basic infrastructure take precedence (Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002). Recent community assessment results of the *Child Friendly Places* methodology during 2013–2014 implemented in six low-income communities and four schools of Mumbai and 27 communities in Bhavnagar city in India, validate the same. Preliminary analysis of 5392 children, young people and community members across both cities recognized the lack of play opportunities and spaces (Wridt et al. in press).

It is clear that children grab opportunities to play almost anywhere and that play happens in children's lives where they live. Particularly in developing countries, there is research that investigates the material conditions of the types of places where children living in low-income communities play (Lynch 1977; Bartlett et al. 1999; Chawla and UNESCO 2002). But there is limited research related to children's play in contemporary middle- or high-income residential buildings in cities of developing countries. Empirical research is needed to investigate the relationship of the physical design of the urban built environments to children's play in middle and high income housing of high-rise apartment buildings in cities of developing countries. Specifically, how and what types of opportunities and environments in high-rise residential buildings afford free and manipulative play for children?

In a search for designed environments in urban areas that encourage children to play freely and manipulate their environments, currently, well-designed playgrounds – though they contain and segregate children from adults' worlds – are increasingly on the rise. Architects, landscape architects have particularly shown interest in the development of plays paces that engage children in a creative manner by providing them with different elements that allows them to build their own play space. Designers hope to create elements for free and manipulative play as diverse as the elements – materials, heights, color and texture – that are found in nature. The next section explores attempts made by designers to offer creative forms of free and manipulative play for children living in urban areas.

5   Design of Free and Manipulative Play in Cities

Post World War II, adventure playgrounds were created in cities of northern Europe whose objective was to provide outdoor free and manipulative play opportunities for children from urban and inner-city neighborhoods (Marcus 1970; Staempfli 2009). Adventure playgrounds are unstructured, "loose parts" play spaces, where play workers provide an array of scrap materials to enable children direct their own play. Architect, Simon Nicholson, first introduced the idea of "loose parts" in the built environment in the 1970s to foster one's creativity. The theory of loose parts states,

> In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibility of discovery are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it. (Simon 1971)

When the theory of loose parts is applied to children's play areas, the palette of different manipulative elements added to a play space offers a rich environment that encourages creativity and invention. Adventure playgrounds offer the same, where children have an opportunity to explore different materials that include wood, nails, water, brick, sand, open fires and dirt. At adventure playgrounds, "play workers" or "play facilitators"or "play associates" are specifically trained to understand the value of play and enable children to freely explore the wide range of materials by allowing children to take considerable risk during play (Marcus 1970; Staempfli 2009).

There are limited empirical studies that provide evidence about children's preference and heightened sense of creativity and imagination in play spaces with loose parts. An early comparative study of three types of children's playgrounds – traditional, contemporary and adventure – revealed children's preference of type of play space. Children preferred playing in adventure playgrounds when compared to contemporary and traditional playgrounds (Hayward et al. 1974). Also, adventure playgrounds managed to keep children engaged over a longer period of time (median length of stay time – 75 min) when compared to contemporary playgrounds (median length of stay time – 32 min) and traditional playgrounds (median length of stay time – 21 min). Though children enjoyed playing in adventure playgrounds when compared to traditional playgrounds, parents were apprehensive

about adventure playgrounds with respect to risk during play and aesthetic appearance of the play space (Hayward et al. 1974; Staempfli 2009).

Over the years, adventure playgrounds evolved from junk backyards to sophisticated play spaces with animals, small gardens and readymade loose parts across cities in Europe and North America. Staempfli (2009) notes the contrast in the evolution of adventure playgrounds in European and North American cities. In some European cities, adventure playgrounds attempted to bring in "nature" into the play space by introducing animals and community gardens, where children had the opportunity to care; while cities in North America improvised adventure playgrounds in indoor and outdoor settings with "ready-made play structures in controlled play environments" (p. 271).

Over time, the concept of adventure playgrounds soon transformed into "loose partsplaygrounds". The idea of "playground in a box," popularly now known as "Imagination Playground"designed by U.S. architect, David Rockwellin collaboration with Dr. Roger Hart in New York City. Dr. Hart's expertise in children's play, helped support the design and development of a portable play space where children have the freedom to exercise their imagination by building with loose parts (Cardwell 2007). Similar to adventure playgrounds, trained play workers encourage and support children's free and manipulative play in imagination playgrounds – a set of 75 large foam blocks enclosed in a portable box and put to use in an empty school play yard or public playgrounds. The blocks are smooth edged, weather resistant (heat, water and mildew), biodegradable and recyclable. When complemented with sand and water, the large foam blocks encourage children to think out of the box and immerse themselves in imaginative play that boosts their creativity (Cardwell 2007, 2008; Jost 2010).

There is deliberation that imagination playgroundcould really be a type of adventure playground but with safe, manageable and aesthetic "loose parts". Jost (2010) attempts *'A brief history of "loose parts"'* supported by the "theory of loose parts" by Simon Nicholson (1971) that reflects the journey of adventure playgrounds earlier known as junk playgrounds from 1930s to New York City's Imagination Playground built in 2010. Typically, adventure playgrounds work well for children who are 8 years and older. However, the imagination playground serves children from the age of two and a half or three years. On this note, Hart believes that imagination playgrounds are different from adventure playgrounds (Jost 2010). Possibly, David Rockwell's contribution to children's play spaces fits partly into the category of contemporary playgrounds that are designed by architects or landscape architects based on children's preferences. Contemporary playgrounds have different forms, varied textures and multiple heights designed in an aesthetic manner (Dattner 1969; Friedberg and Berkeley 1970; Hayward et al. 1974) state that contemporary playgrounds are:

> ...somewhat sculptured, frequently based on sand or concrete forms, and may include cobblestone mounds to which slides are attached, tunnels under walls or mounds, and a tree house or platforms above the ground. They may contain some conventional playground equipment. (p. 134)

Hart (2002) critiques that imagination and creativity lays only with the designers of traditional playgrounds with fixed play equipment, as rigid play spaces have "no opportunities for children to modify or move equipment in any way" (p. 146). Playgrounds with loose parts including the Imagination Playground truly allow for children to explore and build play spaces based on their inventiveness. In this light, the Imagination Playground's debut in New York City, which was earlier a parking lot adjacent to South Sea port museum now serves as the foundation to children's journey of creativity and curiosity as a well-designed and planned play environment. During a visit to New York City's Imagination Playground, Jost (2010) notes that the physical design is, "an infinity symbol or perhaps a peanut" (p. 85) where three different play elements – water, sand and sound – are integrated with "A sinuous ramp that defines the northwestern edge, and a series of steps that double as an amphitheater carries the form through on the southeastern side". (p. 85). Jost further describes, "To the north is a sand area. On the south is a sort of wading pool/ spray pad and hybrid with flowing water feature that children can dam. And in the middle are an interactive sound sculpture, an open wood deck, and a giant metal crow's nest, which houses the restroom and provides a place to store the loose parts." (p. 85). Each physical element of the playground is designed to signify the history of docked ships in the vicinity – "The playground's wood decking is meant to recall the ships that once docked here, as is a series of masts with pulleys and burlap bags attached that children can play with" (p. 85).

What is common between adventure and imagination playgrounds is the issue of funding. The economic challenge of maintaining play workers compounded with risk during playas perceived by adults in today's society led to a decline of the earlier adventure play spaces in North American cities (Simon 1971, Hart 2002). Despite the funding challenges in maintaining earlier adventure playgrounds, European cities have managed to sustain these playgrounds with the help of community volunteers and business donations for play related materials including construction scrap materials (Staempfli 2009). Likewise, though imagination playgrounds claim to cost less (10,000 USD) (Jost 2010) when compared to traditional playgrounds (millions of dollars), the reality ofsecuring funding to sustain play workers over time is inescapable. Despite funding constraints, imagination playgrounds fare better than earlier versions of adventure playgrounds with respect to parental concerns of risk during play and unaesthetic appearance of play spaces; since, the design of loose parts in an imagination playground are firmly soft, smooth-edged, weather resistant large foam blocks that come in an attractive shade of blue.

Critically, given the age group served and well-designed play environment that affords manipulative play with loose parts, imagination playgrounds appear to fit closer to the idea of contemporary playgrounds rather than adventure playgrounds. Yet, contemporary playgrounds do not need play workers to facilitate play, unlike imagination playgrounds. In a nutshell, if portable boxes with loose parts require designed play spaces and play workers to function efficiently, then the concept of "playground in a box" or "imagination playground" fits somewhere between adventure and contemporary playgrounds.

In dense urban settings, like New York City, the ability to play freely with loose parts in well-designed playgrounds is a creative alternative for children who do not have the luxury of access to nature's diverse material palette. When visited, the imagination playground appears as a box of crayons that affords children to create their own drawings through play by themselves or with others – a different pursuit for creativity, everyday. For now, David Rockwell appears to have contributed to a new trend towards the design of children's play spaces in urban playgrounds.

A type of play space that is yet to gain attention in theprocess of design of "mainstream" playgrounds are "inclusive" playgrounds. Inclusive play spaces are created by (a) The application of Universal design principles that ensures equitable use and access to a wide range of play opportunities for children with varying abilities; and (b) Providing opportunities for social interaction in the inclusive play space amongst children with and without disabilities (Casey 2005; Goltsman 2001). Research examining play opportunities for "all" children indicates heightened sense of awareness about the importance of play for children with different abilities and the creation of inclusive play spaces in developed countries of the global north when compared to the global south (Atmakur 2013).

Some examples of organizations that create inclusive play spaces include:

(i) Successful not-for-profit organizations such as "Shane Inspirations" in the United States focus exclusively on providing play opportunities to foster inclusive play. The organization brings together community members, government agencies, and a team of professionals – architects, healthcare professionals, and child care experts to build inclusive play spaces.

(ii) In a similar way, but at a smaller scale, "Unlimited Play", another not-for-profit organization initiated by a family in Missouri, United States, created their first inclusive playground in partnership with local government agencies, community members, and key professionals in design and healthcare.

(iii) Also, "Play England" in London aims to provide play opportunities for children and young people in England. The Community Playbus and Limes Community and Children's Centre are two specific examples of inclusive play opportunities created by the organization.

(iv) "Kilikili" in the fast growing city of Bengaluru, India, aims to create inclusive play spaces by collaborating with children, design professionals and government agencies (UNICEF 2012, Atmakur 2012).

(v) The "Friendship Park" in Ra'anana, Israel offers accessible play provisions, and also organizes structured social activities on specific days of the week that brings together children with and without disabilities to play and interact with each other. The park also offers social programs and workshops in the aim of creating awareness and an inclusive society.

(vi) Bradley's Fun For All Playground in North Carolina was also initiated by a parent group, who helped build an inclusive play space for all children in their community to play together.

(vii) "Boundless Playgrounds" helps build inclusive play spaces in the United States and Canada.

(viii) "Hayward Adventure Playground" for children with disabilities in London, England creates inclusive play spaces that offer children with disabilities an opportunity to play by taking risks through play.
 (ix) Playground for all Children in Queens, New York City (Dien 1991).

   Though inclusive play spaces theoretically are meant to afford for children with and without disabilities to play together, in reality, seldom do children with varied abilities (or disabilities) to play together. There is limited research that examines the relationships of loose parts in promoting play for all children with different abilities. Laurie Dien's dissertation research examined the possibilities and challenges of using toys and "loose parts" at the "Playground for all Children" in Queens, New York City. During Dien's fieldwork, the playground was staffed with play workers, but due to funding restraints, play is currently no longer facilitated for all children in this specific playground. Results from the study indicated that use of loose parts encouraged manipulative, constructive and dramatic play opportunities amongst children with different abilities, but opportunities for social interaction and being together in one physical space by different groups of children who were abled differently, was seldom (Dien 1999).
   The challenges in providing play opportunities for children to direct their own play keeping in mind the needs of children with varied abilities are complex. The design of inclusive play spaces is primarily by the caretakers of children with disabilities who seek opportunities for their children to engage in play (Atmakur 2012).

6   Gatekeepers of Free and Manipulative Play in Cities

6.1   Play Workers Supervise Free Play

Regardless of the efforts of adventure playgrounds and imagination playgrounds to provide opportunities for children to manipulate with loose parts and play freely, the notion of play workers or facilitators "supervising" children's "free" play with "loose parts" is questionable. In a critical review of playgrounds in New York city, Hart (2002) rightly points out that playgrounds offer only a "range" of possibilities in a "contained" space for children's spontaneous play; and further challenges that when adults (here, play workers) prescribe or guide children during play, then it is not truly play. The meaning of play that it is "freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behavior that actively engages the child" (NPFA 2000) is then misguided. Importantly, the ability to manipulate one's environment largely depends upon the range of elements available and the freedom to transform the environment *without* (emphasized here) adult intervention (Hart 1979, 1986). Though the large foam blocks of imagination playgrounds encourage children to build their own play space in playgrounds, the influence of adults informing a play setting for children to engage in collaborative play in particular ways cannot be

overlooked. There is need for recent empirical research that explores how play workers "facilitate" children's free play in imagination or adventure playgrounds.

6.2 Parental Control of Physical and Social Climate of Children's Play

While the question of play workers' facilitation of free play is under deliberation, it might be worthwhile to explore the well-established view that parents or caretakers, primarily, influence where, when, and with whom their children play. In earlier writings, Hart addresses the influence of children's outdoor play by parents, stating, "parents create the physical space (consciously or unconsciously) for their child to socialize in particular ways" (1986). This is particularly true for children living in cities, whose outdoor play is severely restricted due to social and environmental factors of urbanization. Parental apprehensions to let their children play outdoors on streets and sidewalks is caused by perceptions of safety related to crime, increase in street traffic and pedestrian density on sidewalks (Jacobs 1961; Hayward et al. 1974; Lynch 1977; Bartlett et al. 1999; Wridt 2004; Staempfli 2009). Also, social factors including lack of awareness about the importance of play by adults – parents and caretakers – also limit opportunities for children to freely play outside (Bartlett et al. 1999). Research related to inclusive play opportunities for children, in metropolitan cities of developing countries such as Bengaluru in India, also resonate with the lack of parental awareness about the importance of play (Atmakur 2012).

6.3 Environmental Barriers

From early on, research related to urban planning for children living in cities, highlight the decrease in children's access to playing outside of their homes on streets and their ability to independently access public spaces (Cunningham and Jones 1999; Tranter and Doyle 1996; Wridt 2004; Staempfli 2009). These studies, anecdotal evidence and experiences of living in cities, validate the decline in children's outdoor play on streets and sidewalks. Urban agglomerations continue to demand high-density housing, that increasingly puts pressure on available decreasing open space (Hayward et al. 1974). Research studies related to play opportunities for children living in high-rise residential buildings indicate that open space around the buildings are planned for security and maintenance and use by adults. Furthermore, signs in the physical environment in urban settings including streets, high-rise buildings and public parks impose further restrictions on children's play. Signs include, no ball playing; no bike riding; and no playing on the sidewalks (Hayward et al. 1974). Even today, most residential neighborhood pocket parks in Bengaluru city, India, were recently modified to suit the needs of adults for walking and exercise. Children's play is restricted to a rectangular sand box with limited fixed play equipment including swings, see-saws and slides. The signage at the entrance of these neighborhood pocket parks clearly restrict "playing in the park" (See Fig. 1 below).

Fig. 1 Signage outside neighborhood parks in Bangalore, India

6.4   Adults Design Play Spaces for Children

The earlier discussion about creative tools offered to children where they can build their own play space with the help of "loose parts" in nature-like settings, adventure playgrounds and imagination playgrounds already establishes the benefits of child-directed play. Though free and manipulative play fosters creativity, imagination and encourages children to make sense of the worlds that they live in, it is interesting to note that most times, adults design playgrounds and play spaces and also "facilitate" children's play (as established earlier in loose parts playgrounds).

Adults direct and design children's ability and degree to which they can exercise physical and social control in the designed play spaces. Research reveals that there is a tendency for children to find designed playgrounds boring (Hart 2002). Hence, children tend to not use these designed playgrounds for their play and recreation and crave to be a part of the adults' world and improvise play in settings that are "designed for adults" (Hayward et al. 1974; Ward 1978; Moore 1986; Hart 1986, 2002). Hart (2002) criticizes city officials and municipalities about designing playgrounds that "contain" children in order to keep them safe from street traffic and other corrupt influences of the city. Further, Hart states that traditional playgrounds designed by designers fail to provide an environment that stimulates children's play needs and underscores that segregating children from the "daily life of their communities" is not constructive for the development of civil society (2002).

6.5 Play Space Accessibility

There are two primary concerns with respect to "play space accessibility" in cities:

(i) *Walkability to a play space:*
   Parents' perceptions of safety restrict children's mobility in urban neighborhoods. Children tend to rely on caretakers to drive or walk them to a playground in proximity to engage in play by themselves or with other children.
(ii) *Children's varied abilities:*
   Play provides the opportunity needed by every child to develop holistically, and children with disabilities are no exception to this. But children with disabilities face various challenges in their environments restricting opportunities for play. These challenges arise from the type of disability and the severity that the child is faced with, and the child's physical and social environment. Play barriers for children with varied abilities:
   (a) Environmental barriers – ability to access the play space itself.
   (b) Social barriers – societal attitudes towards children who have varied abilities.

Cities in most developed countries design playgrounds at minimum to afford for children with physical disability (child with mobility impairment and uses a wheelchair) to be able to access the play area. However, the challenge lies in providing play opportunities for children who have varied abilities. The application of Universal Design principles to play spaces and equipment facilitates inclusive play, which means "all" children with varying abilities can "joyfully experience and participate in outdoor play" (Casey 2005). Inclusive play spaces are created by (a) Removal of environmental barriers –application of Universal design principles that ensures equitable use and access to a wide range of play opportunities for children with varying abilities and (b) Removal of Social

barriers – providing opportunities for social interaction in the inclusive play space amongst children with and without disabilities. In simple words, inclusive play spaces not just offer equitable and flexible use of play equipment and a space for play, but lays emphasis on social inclusion too (Casey 2005; Goltsman 2001; Atmakur 2012, 2013).

During play, interaction between children with and without disabilities alleviates the "attitudinal barriers that relegate persons with disabilities to society's margins" (Atmakur 2013). The lack of recognizing that play is important (as noted earlier) and societal attitudes of play towards children with varied abilities continue to act as strong barriers to children's play. Despite the design and planning of few inclusive play spaces that are designed keeping children's varied abilities in mind; these play spaces are not easily accessible for children due to attitudes of societies at large (Atmakur 2012).

7 Future of Play for Children in Urban Settings

7.1 Providing Free Play Opportunities Close to Homes

The critical issue remains that as cities continue to grow, the need to create new and attractive play spaces for children (including children with disabilities) will escalate. It is important to acknowledge that playgrounds in urban areas tend to segregate children from adults and that parents or caretakers will influence the ways children play. Hart (2002) urges to keep in mind that solutions for children's play opportunities must consider that children need to play in spaces where they are close (at least, visually) to their care takers so they are able to freely explore their surroundings by themselves or with friends. Also, when cities are planned in ways where children cannot navigate their surroundings, the ability to access play spaces is a dependency on parents or caretakers. Hart (2002) rightly states, "Relying on public playgrounds too far from family, friends and neighbors becomes a planned affair that does not fit well with this concept of play." (p. 138) Solutions for children's play immediately outside of their homes in urban settings include:

(a) In Netherlands, few streets – woonerven– are reclaimed by pedestrians that allow no vehicular traffic all year round. These streets, also known as living yards, allow for children to explore their surroundings through play. Relatedly, such closed off streets in the United Kingdom are known as "Home Zones" (Hart 2002; Moore and Marcus 2008)

(b) Similarly, summer time in New York City calls for the closing off some streets from vehicular traffic and encouraging children in the neighborhood to bring their toys out to play. This initiative is called "play streets" is not a permanent solution, but provides for children's free play outside their homes. (http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/living/phys-playstreets.shtml)

(c) Hart recognizes Jacob Riis's "vest pocket parks" that were started in 1897 encouraged residents to collaborate and facilitate "small play areas in the backyards of dense housing" (2002, p. 140)

7.2 Integrating Nature in Design of Spaces Close to Homes

"Children need conditions within which they can direct their own activities as much as possible. Given their limited range, a safe diverse setting close to home is necessary. The natural environment is more diverse than any expensive play equipment." (Hart 2002) Apart from play opportunities close to homes, it is necessary to provide play spaces with natural elements (including sand, water, plants etc.) for children to play. Children's sense of curiosity and imagination is heightened in natural environments that afford a myriad of play opportunities. In dense urban areas, creative free play solutions close to where children live including, high-rise apartment buildings and urban residential neighborhoods are of prime importance. Moore and Marcus (2008) provide recommendations to integrate nature into residential environments close to where children live; these include, citywide greenway networks, alleys, clustered housing and shared outdoor spaces, and woonerven or home zones. Also, garden-like spaces for play that allow children to experience some elements of nature, close to their homes are ideas that requires exploration in dense urban residential settings (Hart 2002).

7.3 Listening to Children's Ideas and Preferences into the Planning and Design of their Environments

Apart from providing play opportunities close to home, what is needed, Hart (2002) urges is to design children's immediate play environments based on their preferences of play. With expertise in listening to children and working with children across the world, Hart (2002) states, "Children's playground design has seldom been based on observing or listening to children. Adult theories of what children need for their development have been influential, however." (p. 145). The UN CRC calls for "children's perspectives to be heard on all matters that concern them". This means that perspectives of children's play needs should be listened to and play environments should be "inclusive" of all children. Thus, while planning and designing for children's play spaces, listening to children with varied abilities is also necessary to accommodate a range of play activities that can afford all children.

Studies show that children as young as 6 years of age are capable of evaluating their environments and explaining their preferences including, likes and dislikes and also are able to create a plan for action to bring changes to their physical environment (Moore 1986; Hart 1979; Wridt et al. in press). It is impressive that

three inclusive play spaces in Bengaluru city, India, designed by a local play group – Kilikili – hosted "design parties" for children with different abilities, so adults could understand children's preferences of play (Atmakur 2013).

8 Conclusion

Given that nature offers a palette of possible activities for children to explore freely at their will, the challenge to provide play spaces with natural elements close to homes by listening to children's needs of play is of utmost importance. In cities, the focus remains on the design of built environments to create spaces that afford free and manipulative play and not just playgrounds that require planned visits by caretakers. In swiftly changing times of rapid urbanization, where high-density residential buildings are on the rise, creative free and manipulative play solutions in these built environments close to children's lives, are the need of the hour. When built environments are integrated to afford free and manipulative play, children's urges to explore their physical environments and build their social worlds by themselves or collaborating with friends of their choice is fulfilled. The benefits of free and manipulative play are boundless, but finding solutions to achieve play settings in urban built environments for children is one that needs attention.

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Children and Young People's Participation in Cultural Activities

8

Barbro Johansson and Frances Hultgren

Contents

Abstract

As play is often regarded unproblematically as something children do, this chapter explores manifestations of play in relation to participation as observed in an ethnographic study of children's activities in a preschool setting. Drawing on the works of Deleuze and Guattari and of Bakhtin, the analysis makes use of concepts such as lines of flight, the in-between, and the carnival. Using a number of examples, it is discussed how these concepts reveal some of the functions and complexities of play such as resistance, flight, and approaches to learning in relation to institutionalized cultural activities. It is concluded that by recognizing

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the functions of play, institutions caring for children can be encouraged to afford spaces for children where they, themselves, can create playful and carnivalistic places.

1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to ongoing conceptual debates within the research on geographies of play by bringing together the work of Bakhtin with theories of Deleuze and Guattari. In Deleuze and Guattari's work, agency is ascribed not only people but also space and materiality. The concept of in-between, that is central to the analysis, is relevant for scholars who want to problematize play in relation to space. The empirical data comes from a 3-year research project on preschool children's participation in activities organized by cultural institutions, such as libraries, museums, and preschools. Play was not initially the primary focus of the project and in everyday life play is often regarded simply as something that children do. In the research project, however, the significance of play emerged, and it took several shapes and forms, sometimes as resistance, as flight, as approaches to learning, as pleasurable, and as destructive – all aspects that have been attended to by geographers as well as other researchers on children's play. Interest in play as a particular aspect of participative processes for very young children was thus awakened.

How play is defined depends, of course, on whose vantage point is taken. In schools, for instance, play is often defined as a tool for reaching learning goals. In anthropological research, a wider view of play is usually taken as having a value in its own right and as characteristic of ways in which children approach the world. In this chapter, play in its anthropological sense is considered in relation to participative processes in cultural activities and investigated with the aid of concepts drawn mainly from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Olsson (2009) but also from Bakhtin (1991). As a consequence of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, participation and other children's rights, such as the right to play, have to be considered in political decisions and public services. Participation has therefore become a core concept for Swedish municipalities and for institutions that offer services for children, but it is also a concept that is difficult to operationalize in meaningful ways (Hart 1997; Shier 2001; Gallagher 2008; Sandin 2011). The challenge for cultural institutions is to develop activities and environments that afford very young children and their caregivers the possibility to be involved in dynamic and ongoing participative processes. In Sweden, for instance, it is common that institutions offer activities such as song and story times, plays, guided tours, and handcraft workshops to children, and these types of activities can become rather routinized happenings offering little in the way of genuine participation

where children have some influence over the course of events. In this chapter, different manifestations of play are explored in relation to cultural activities in a number of vivid examples and, in doing so, hope to contribute to insights on the concept of play itself and on how to design participative cultural activities and spaces for children.

2   Conceptual Starting Points

It is a truism to state that children play. This is what adults say that children do, and it is what children themselves say that they do. But what is this activity we call play and which is often regarded as a space of freedom where children are in charge? In common understanding, play is associated with children and includes "pretending" and "as if"; it is seen as a social activity engaged in for enjoyment and as a form of social and intellectual training. Moreover it can be described as characteristic of childhood itself, "children's normal and spontaneous activities" as it is formulated in *Norstedts Swedish Dictionary*. Adults assume that when children have "free" time to spend, then what they do is "play," an activity that is different from the seriousness of adult life, according to geographers Thomson and Philo (2004). Cultural and geographical research on play broadens and challenges some of these assumptions, in particular, the idea that play belongs exclusively to childhood, that play is a preparation for adult life, and that play is synonymous with fun and happiness (ibid., Harker 2005). This article will concentrate on play in relation to participation and explore how definitions of play, as well as of playing, might offer lines of flight and increased space for action, not only for children but also for adults, environments, and things. The question that guides our discussion is *By which means and in what ways can free spaces, "spaces in-between," emerge in children's play?*

Even though play in common thought is associated with childhood, play researchers have long claimed that play does not exclusively belong to childhood. Historian Johan Huizinga (1945) coined the term "homo ludens," the playing man, and stated that play first and foremost is aesthetic in nature. Intensity, fun, and an ability to enthuse lie at the core of play, and he lists several features of play: it's freely chosen, includes pretending, is limited in time and space, creates order, creates tension, continues as long as everybody agrees, and is surrounded by mystery. For Huizinga, play is any human activity that implies the creation of another reality. Sports, church services, spectacles, trials, and even war can therefore be classed as play according to Huizinga's definition.

Another scholar that has had a great influence on play research is philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (1991) and his idea of the carnival, which is used to express the subversive potential of play. Bakhtin, reflecting on the conditions of life in the Middle Ages, argues that laughter and the vernacular culture of laughter constitutes a world of form and expression that stand in opposition to the official and the serious. During the Middle Ages, people's lives were socially organized in clear hierarchies that were regulated according to indisputable values based on work,

strictness, and tradition. Parallel to this public life, there was a complementary, inofficial life where people, through laughter and the burlesque, broke with the conventions of public life. Rites and spectacles, literary comic scripts, and vulgarities of vernacular language, including swearwords, blasphemies, and insults, all manifest the comic aspects of the world (ibid.:16). Within play research, the concept of the carnival has been used to discuss how public truths and values are turned upside down, authorities are mocked, and strict and common sensicals are replaced with tributes to the grotesque, the festival, and the different. The core of the carnival as life form is its collective cheerfulness, play, and the festival, which become goals in themselves and permits people to express their skepticism, questions, and criticism (Øksnes 2011; Johannesen and Sandvik 2009). It is easy to see similarities between the hierarchical social order of the Middle Ages and the age order of the present where children are subordinated to adult power but where there are innumerable opportunities to find creepholes and spaces in between where power can be challenged.

Within folkloristic research, play has been of interest for at least 60 years. Iona and Peter Opie carried out an extensive survey of British children's games and oral culture during the 1950s and 1960s (Opie and Opie 1959, 1969). Like Huizinga and Bakhtin, they define play from the departure point of the joy that arises when you step out of the ordinary world into a play world. A true game, according to them, is one that frees the spirit (Opie and Opie 1969, p. 1). They worked within a tradition of collecting folk culture in danger of extinction due to the rapid transformation of society, and their work contains records of more than 2,500 games from over 10,000 children, organized in genres and accounted for in all their variations. Reflecting the spirit of Rousseau, the Opies convey a somewhat romantic view of children's authentic play culture as something that should be protected from adult involvement. However, their attention to the environment in which children's play and games take place is of interest to the theme of this chapter. They claim that children prefer places away from adult control, deserted and disordered places such as dumps and scrubby copses, but at the same time are drawn to adult-defined spaces, such as streets, where they challenge adult notions of order and peace (Opie and Opie 1969; c.f. Jones 2000; Thomson and Philo 2004).

Huizinga's description of play as a general human approach to life is taken up by several subsequent researchers. The child culture researcher Beth Juncker (2010) argues that if play is solely associated to childhood, there is a risk that the child-adult dichotomy is further reinforced. Other play researchers have used Huizinga's theories to emphasize the bodily and sensory aspects of play and to develop the idea of play as a natural part of life with its own meaning (Aitken 2001; Kjær 2005). Geographer Christopher Harker (2005) suggests that, instead of trying to define "play," we should pay more attention to "playing," as a fluid and polymorphous process of becoming. He stresses that playing is an embodied activity, where not only humans but also objects, environments, sounds, and ideas affect and are affected in the performance of playing (ibid., Deleuze 1988).

Bakhtin's theories have been taken up by Scandinavian scholars in folkloristic and educational research (Kjær 2005; Øksnes 2011; Johannesen and Sandvik 2009;

Dolk 2013). Dolk 2013.207, for instance, cites Bakhtin in order to illustrate how a group of preschool children collectively use humor to subvert their teacher's attempts to organize a discussion. Kjær (2005, p. 45) uses Bakhtin to discuss the fact that concrete situations always have touch points outside themselves, and these activate and concretize cultural potential – thereby facilitating the creation of something new. Johannesen and Sandvik (2009, p. 23) describe children's sense of humor in Bakhtian terms, for instance, by describing children's "anti-official cheerfulness" as a way of challenging power by moving the limits for what can be said, when, and by whom.

In this chapter these sources are used to discuss children's play in relation to the concepts of *places-in-between*, *lines of flight*, and *the carnival*. These concepts help us to analyze the ways in which play can transcend dichotomies such as child-adult, increase possibilities for action, and open spaces where the unexpected can happen. Positions such as adult-child, man-woman, work-play, and fact-fiction create different segments in society and are, according to Deleuze and Guattari, unstable and preceded by movement (flows of belief and desire which can lead to positioning and repositioning). They describe society as constituted by the juxtapositions of unstable segments where "leakages" occur between segments, thus producing "lines of flight" through which transformations can occur – such as the deconstruction of subject positions (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Line of flight is a concept that not only encompasses the unexpected but which can also increase spaces of action for all involved, allowing new connections to be made. Actors include not only people; things, spaces, and discourses can also contribute to the opening of lines of flight.

The in-between can be envisaged as the space between segments where lines of flight can open up (Olsson 2009, p. 60). The concept of the in-between is used within research both in temporal and spatial terms as well as theoretical (Saltzman 2009, p. 15). The in-between in terms of the spatial and temporal exists between defined units; where the in-between is what is left when everything else has been framed and decided. They can be found, for example, in forgotten spaces within an organized room, and they are characterized by being less supervised and therefore open to different interpretations and activities (Jones 2000; Thomson and Philo 2004). Theoretically, the in-between is a space that lacks an identity of its own and is understood on the basis of what it is *not* (Grosz 2001, p. 91). The in-between challenges dualistic thinking and is, in fact, the space where something interesting happens, according to Deleuze och Guattari (1987).

In their book on the participation and influence of young children, Johannesen and Sandvik (2009) describe the in-between as a space that can emerge between dichotomies and which renders the contrasts of dichotomous thinking less clear. They argue that the exclusionary effects of dichotomous thinking hinder us, for example, from seeing what adults and children have in common: that adults and children can be both strong and weak, or social and private depending on situations and relationships. They also suggest that the in-between emerges behind the backs of adults where children can experience participative processes in contexts where adults have no control or cannot see, for instance, while playing. Using the concepts of lines of flight and spaces in-between makes it possible to acknowledge the

myriad of happenings in events which were perhaps not thought of, pre-planned, or considered important.

2.1 Play: What Children Do

While children's play is sometimes brushed off as a superficial or time-killing activity, play researchers Bishop and Curtis (2001) find that children's play traditions often build on creativity, artistry, and complexity. Play, they maintain, can be inherited and improvised, rule-bound and adaptive, collaborative and competitive, as well as universal and local. In their anthology on children's play, childhood researchers Bragg and Kehily (2013) describe play as culturally situated, reflecting adult society's structures and values. Play requires, it would seem, a cultural competence where "play patterns, story patterns, movement patterns, song patterns, improvisations – and the ability to use them all" are included (Juncker 2010, p. 257). In this description, play emerges as something far from intuitive and as a progressive dynamic movement, but a movement that does not necessarily require a goal or objective beyond play itself.

Much of what takes place in children's play is made invisible. Conceiving of play as "children's normal and spontaneous activities" means that everything that a child does, when he/she chooses for him or herself, is lumped together under the concept of play. What then, do adults do in their normal and spontaneous activities? Well, they communicate with each other, entertain themselves, work, think and analyze, learn things and destroy things, etc. Children also do all of these things but much of it is rendered invisible because these wildly different activities are understood as play in their case. Thomson and Philo (2004) saw in their study of the activities of Scottish children aged 8–9 that children's own concepts of play included a range of activities that took place in various spaces, not only those designated to children. Johannesen and Sandvik (2009, p. 82) state that much of what is said of children under the age of three give the impression that small children do not think:

> When you show photos of young children in some activity at preschool it is interesting to observe the reflections of teachers and student teachers. In response to the question "What do you see here?" focus is usually on the children's feelings. Above all that they are having fun or a nice time. We very seldom get the response that they are engaged in something interesting or thought provoking. When the question is pursued, the response is usually that they are playing. Words such as working, studying, investigating and learning are very rare in this context. (Johannesen and Sandvik 2009, p. 84, *our translation*)

Everything that children do, with adultcentric eyes, tends to be interpreted as "play," as activities carried out for pleasure. One consequence is that the doings of children that are not concerned with fantasy and fun are rendered invisible and that children are exoticized in relation to adults. Children's own choices of activities embrace much more than fun and pretend games. In play, children can amuse themselves, learn and theorize about the world, they can experience and

express feelings of all kinds, and they can devote themselves to caring for each other or to oppression and excluding techniques, all under the cover of just playing. Play is, in this respect an in-between space that children can furnish for themselves.

2.2 Play: A Common Human Activity

The view of play as something that children do thus opens possibilities for children to follow lines of flight out of adult control. Opie and Opie's studies (1959, 1969) offer catalogs of stories and games in which children find a multitude of ways to "free their spirits." But the Opies also pay attention to play as an always-present possibility, which might lead to conflict with adults.

Children enter play worlds on their own initiatives, entertain themselves, explore, and learn in ways that oppose adult agendas. If this happens in adult-defined settings, with no room for children's own initiatives, antagonism may arise between what adults want children to do and what children actually do. An understanding of children's laughter could explain the difference: When children play in spaces provided for them, laughter becomes the sign (The Sign itself) of a happy childhood and it gives adults pleasure to hear it. However, when children themselves take over a space for playing, their laughter becomes problematical and can signal the resistance of the oppressed to the generation order when children redefine situations on their own initiatives.

These two approaches to children's play, play as an assigned space, "what children do," and play as a space that children create for themselves "a common human activity," make up the departure point of the following analyses of examples from our fieldwork in a preschool. In the following examples from the research project, play is explored in relation to the concepts outlined in this section. The examples include episodes where children take over forgotten spaces, episodes where children among other things "do gender" through play and resist authority using the carnivalesque or redefinitions, an episode where children make use of objects to escape from adult authority, and finally an example of how they create space for the carnivalesque in an organized song session. Our intention, through the examples, is to provide material for an understanding of how lines of flight and spaces in-between can emerge, thus extending children's participation. But first we will give a background to the empirical examples.

3 Background and Method

The research project, *Culture together with children*, was connected to the establishment of the *Children's Culture Centre* (CCC) to be located in the central library of a Swedish municipality. Politicians and staff from the local cultural institutions aimed to create a place for young children and parents where the threshold to culture would be lower than to more established institutions, such as

museums. It was envisaged as a meeting place where the visitors, children, and their caregivers would be able to exercise some influence through participative processes. Participation and integration were therefore key words in the mission goals of the CCC project. The research project followed the process of establishing the center, using ethnographic methods to investigate children's and parents' perspectives on cultural activities. The results were related to research on childhood, participation, and empowerment (Christensen and James 2000; Mayall 2002; Kellett 2010) and reported in a number of publications (Hultgren and Johansson 2011, 2012, 2013; Johansson and Hultgren 2014). The second part of the project entailed visiting different fields and carrying out participative observations of children in different activities in other environments than the CCC. Here, interest was particularly focused on children and families who did not normally visit the CCC. Observations were carried out at a preschool, where the parents of all the children were immigrants who had lived a relatively short time in the country. The objectives of this part of the project were to investigate what children enjoyed doing by exploring how they interacted with each other, other people, artifacts, and places in institutional settings. Children's play in relation to cultural activities thus became a central focus for this part of the project, and the insights generated by this exploration were expected to further contribute to the design of the CCC.

The empirical material on which this chapter is based is taken mostly from the second part of the research project and consists of field notes, photographs, and video sequences collected at the preschool. Children up the age of about 5 have been observed in a number of different situations, both when they participate in organized activities and in "free play," i.e., the time allocated by the Swedish preschool curriculum for play. Occasions of free play were also observed at the preschool. In the analysis, different manifestations of play have been identified and analyzed with the help of the conceptual framework outlined in the next section.

Parents and staff involved with the children were fully informed about the project both orally and in writing. They were requested to sign a written agreement to their own participation, permitting the children to take part in the project. Each child who was old enough to understand the question was asked individually if he or she would like to take part in the project by helping the researchers to better understand what children liked to do. They were also informed why the project was being conducted and that they could drop out at any time.

4   Redefining Unclaimed Territory

Preschool is a learning environment and daily routines as well as children's play are often organized according to predefined learning goals. Studying lines of flight in preschool events therefore requires that we pay attention to moments where something unexpected happens, moments where people, things, and environment assemble in new and unplanned ways. The environments that children occupy are

designed by adults and differ by giving greater or lesser opportunities for the children to define the location on the basis of their own interests. In geographer Owain Jones' words, locations may be more or less "otherable" (Jones 2000, p. 30). For a site to attract activity and creativity, it should therefore not be perceived as complete, but "otherable," possible to change based on the children's desires and the current situation.

With a departure point in the idea that children are the co-constituents of their own worlds and spaces (Cloke and Jones 2005), children in the study were observed with the idea of exploring what those worlds might look like. In such a world children may want to define places and the things in it themselves, as the example below reveals. The example is taken from a preschool where 4- and 5-year-olds are playing in the preschool's grounds:

> Lenita is drawing something in the sand and I ask what it is, 'a fish'. 'Have you seen a fish like that?' 'Yes, there' says Lenita and points. We go to where she is pointing and I see that someone has dumped an aquarium next to a bush. It's empty except for a little gravel and some water. Lenita takes a stick and starts to prod the gravel looking for fish and soon some other children join in and help her to dig and search. They fantasize about where the fish have gone, 'maybe somebody ate them!' 'a cat!', 'a ghost!'. (Field notes)

The children were occupied by the aquarium for quite some time and dug through the gravel with great energy. On another occasion, a researcher asked some boys to photograph things and places in the preschool environment that interested them, one of which was a gridiron covering an underground ventilation system from the nearby buildings:

> Zakaria leads the way to a gridiron in the schoolground. He wants to photograph it. It is made of iron, with a radius of about 40 cm, circular, heavy and arched above the grass; there is a smell of sewage. Warm foul-smelling air belches up from the underground. It's exciting. The children pose on the gridiron. I take the picture because Zakaria wants to be in the photo. (Field notes)

The school ground included an ordinary playground area with swings, a sandpit, a slide, and a climbing frame as well as a grassy slope with some boulders and large stones in it. The children's play extended far beyond conventional uses of this area. Their interest was often captured by things that an adult would normally pass by without seeing: a small butterfly-shaped leaf; an overgrown, littered area on the other side of the fence, full of scrap metal, weeds, and sticks that the children could "just destroy things with!" as one 5-year-old longingly described it, or, as in the example given, an old aquarium that someone had dumped in the playground. These possibilities for play seemed to elude even the most experienced of the preschool staff, and this is perhaps not as strange as it might seem.

Opie and Opie noted that children showed a predilection for neglected and disordered places as well as for adult-defined places such as streets, which the children were able to occupy for their own purposes and in conflict to adults (Opie and Opie 1969). Cloke and Jones (2005) likewise conclude that the ability of

children to lay claim to places and things that adults have neglected or made unavailable to children represents territories that children can colonize (if only in fantasy) and where they can live out their "otherness to adult ordering and adult expectations" (ibid, p. 330). Spaces and things elected by children for their own play and which lie outside adults' immediate control seem therefore to afford children the possibility of going with the flow of their own desires. In the examples above, the children were relatively free to make their own discoveries and to test their own theories. A line of flight emerged, which the children, as well as the things, the environment, and the researcher, could follow.

5   Playful Creation of Gendered Subjectivity

Visits to the preschool afforded opportunities to watch the children during free play in the playground. Sometimes the preschool staff took part in the playing or initiated games for the children, and often the children played on their own under the supervision of the staff. Three 5-year-old boys often played together:

> The boys are playing tag, Zakaria is chasing Aydin and catches him. 'I got the thief!' The game gets wilder and wilder, 'I'll kill you!' shouts Zakaria and he transforms to 'fire man' who belches out fire from his mouth and throws lightning flashes from his fingers. A moment later he is the 'lion man' who roars and frightens people. (Field notes)

On one occasion a researcher asks the boys if they could help her to understand what it is like to be a child by showing them where and what they liked to play, which they gladly agree to do:

> Aydin, Zakaria, Farid and Ibrahim are playing by the boulders. The boys are chasing one another and 'pretend fighting'. Aydin wants to be the karate man and is rather rough. Still, they tumble around and have fun until Zakaria yells that his lip is bleeding. The game stops abruptly but Zakaria says that he is angry because his mittens are muddy. He says that his mother will be angry when he comes home with dirty mittens. [. . .]. Farid suggests to the researchers that he can film the 'fighting', he takes the camera and runs round the other boys in a professional manner filming them, he even does a little vault in the air, throws himself on the ground, and films the boys from a beneath perspective. Aydin asks the researchers to photograph his lion's gape, he roars so his lungs nearly split. (Field notes)

The boys create a space for playing where they take on attractive roles and build up an exciting course of events where they decide what happens. This group of boys was particularly interested in lions, played them, painted them, did puzzles with lions in them, talked about lions, borrowed books about lions, and adored the film *The Lion King*, which was a frequent topic of conversation. Danger, excitement, and the exotic attracted them in their fantasies, and plans for playing were not negotiated in advance but emerged spontaneously. Their play could arise and subside and take new, unexpected directions. In the example above, the game stopped when one of the boys was hurt. However, by drawing attention to his

mother's anger over additional washing (and not to bleeding lips) the more violent aspects of the game were toned down without laying blame on anyone. It may be assumed that the characters in the game were inspired by media. This was true even on a meta-level, for example, when the game stopped and a child came up with the idea of redefining the "pretend fighting" to a film shoot. Farid's suggestion of filming activities changed the character of the game in a matter of seconds. Even the researcher was role-cast as either provider of props in the form of camera or as the audience, and something new was created.

A line of flight opened that altered the positions of all involved; the children became actors and a film director and the researcher managed the props and became viewer. Farid's movements were skillful and self-assured; he looked the part. The other children allowed themselves to be filmed; they posed, they demonstrated high kicks for the director, and they saved each other from "the enemy." One of the boys transformed into a wild, roaring lion that the others consequently demonstrated their respect and fear for. Farid also played out the power relation afforded by possession of the camera. He directed by commanding the boys to act in certain ways so that the film would be "cool." He demonstrated his director talents just as the others demonstrated their acting prowess for the "audience," i.e., the researcher.

The excerpt is a good example of play as something that "children do." At the same time, we saw that within the frames of the playing, the boys communicated in words as well as with their bodies; exchanged information and learned about popular culture, filming, and photographing; appropriated the researcher's equipment; expressed feelings; negotiated hierarchies; and handled pain. Not least, they performed a traditional boyishness.

In the following example, two 5-year-old girls construe a joyful space in-between by doing gender and identity in a playful and carnivalesque way. This preschool worked actively with sign language as none of the children were native speakers of Swedish:

> Three girls pass by in princess outfits and the teacher asks them to tell the researchers their names. One girl says 'Tott!' and then points at her friend and says 'Nott!'; all three giggle delightedly. The teacher smiles and asks 'and *what* are you?' She makes the sign for 'boy'. '*Princesses*!' they say decidedly and laugh. The teacher is persistent and makes the sign for 'girl' and the girls laugh even more but agree in the end by nodding, yes, they are girls. (Field notes)

Even though gender-coding is endorsed by the preschool teacher and the girls act in a particularly gender-coded way, they are able to find a free space. This example contains aspects of power and of the carnival. The girls, in a humoristic way, challenge the teacher by refusing to present themselves politely and correctly to the visitors and neither were they interested in responding in a pedagogical way to the teacher's question. They stick firmly to the idea that they are princesses, thus resisting the invitation to behave as good pupils. The situation, including the girls, the teachers, the researchers, and not least the princess outfits, offers a line of flight from performing an expected and sanctioned pupil subjectivity.

6   Escaping Adult Authority Through the Means of Material Objects

Thomson and Philo found that children may "reject formal, adult designed sites of play in favour of carving out their own informal and disorganized spaces from the adult world around them" (Thomson and Philo 2004, p. 126). The children in their study were 8–9-year-olds and had more opportunities for roaming the streets on their own, finding places for their play and socializing. Our study shows that it is possible even for younger children, supervised by adults, to create these disorganized spaces in the middle of an adult-defined structure. In an ordinary preschool activity such as painting, a picture where the outcome is more or less predefined and the norms and regulations familiar (each child sits on a chair and wears a plastic apron, paints are to be shared, and the table is protected with a plastic tablecloth, etc.), lines of flight can still open as the following excerpt from field notes demonstrates. Two 4-year-olds are occupied with investigating tubes of paint that the researchers had taken along to an observation. The children had been asked to paint and talk about things they liked doing. The intention was to later analyze their paintings together with sound recordings and video sequences, and it was hoped that the material as well as the conversations would give the researchers some insights on how a cultural room for children in the local library could be designed. Things did not work out quite as the researchers had planned:

> Darya starts by squeezing out a little glittery paint on the paper but she doesn't get much further. She plays with the tubes. She sorts them and picks out the colors she likes, pink and purple. She places the tubes carefully on the table and orders them in different shades of pink and purple. She hums *Itsy bitsy spider* loudly while she works. After a while one of the researchers asks her a little impatiently 'Are you going to do your painting?' [. . .]. Now Darya discovers a piece of foam in the tube carton and starts to experiment with it. She squirts out paint on it, she uses several tubes and creates a little pile of paint, and then she spreads the paint over the paper. She concentrates on her work of investigating colors and the tubes. She discovers that she can get more paint out of the tube if she bends it. She says she is going to make 'balls of paint'.

The painting in this case became a soggy, olive-brown creation, but there was no mistaking Darya's interest and concentration on her project as she examined the colors, the consistency of the paints, the tubes themselves, and the effects of the paints on the paper. Her interest in first ordering the colors while she mumbled to herself "pink, dark pink, purple, more purple" created a kind of meditative bubble around her, which hindered others from interrupting her. This is perhaps an example of what Deleuze and Guattari (1987 in Olsson) describe as the flow of desire, a transforming force that changes the relation between place, things, and people, if only momentarily. The situation described above was probably new for Darya, the researchers were not her usual preschool teachers and no conditions were set on how the tubes of paint should be used – in contrast to the usual situation where teachers have to be careful with their resources – and Darya took the opportunity to experiment. Her concentration and humming effectively fended off any attempts to limit her activities, and a

line of flight opened not only for Darya but also for the people, the room, and the things in it.

For the girl the product itself did not constitute a goal but the process itself transformed into a space where other things could happen. What seemed to be of interest to Darya in this process was to experiment with the tubes and colors. The researchers, on the other hand, found themselves in a situation where they could either attempt to stick their original plan or decide to join the children in their projects. What emerged as somewhat problematical was the way in which the researchers were influenced by expectations that were built into this particular pedagogical milieu: children should not be allowed to "waste" or "play" with expensive materials. As responsible adults, the researchers were uncomfortable about breaking with the preschool's norms, neither did they wish to alienate the staff to their research project. Nevertheless, the situation was dealt with by allowing it to transform into an experiential workshop, and the children used the colors, tubes, the piece of foam, crayons, paper, and the researchers themselves in explorations of the materials' properties and the situation's possibilities. The researchers abandoned their original plan and chose instead to take part in the child's project by giving up control of the materials and their request for a product and following Darya's line instead.

The excerpt can also be analyzed from the perspective of "laughter culture" and carnival. The session was organized in a way that permitted the researchers to "use" the children's supposed interest in play (in this case in the shape of drawing freely). But the girls hijacked the session and, with the help of the material that the researchers had equipped them with, turned it into another kind of play situation, defined by them. The humming and the smudging together of colors is equivalent to carnivalesque laughter, having no other purpose than instant pleasure.

In their experimentation together with the children, the researchers learned that when the children were asked what they like to do, they expressed what they liked to do here and now, "paint!" as one of the girls declared. Olsson (2009) suggests that one way of retaining flexibility in an institution is for staff to deliberately develop their ability to being open to the present moment in work with children. A similar view is expressed by a member of the reference group for the CCC project:

> [It's about] finding new ways to challenge the children every time they come [. . .], listen to what they say about the room, what thoughts they have about the place, play with those discussions, talk to them, watch the smallest ones, how do they move in the room? What interests them? You have to be sensitive to children, that's the only way for adults to understand what can be done with the room, what kind of things you can bring into it (Interview with member of reference group).

The excerpt above concerns how professionals, through sensitivity to children's play and learning, can secure the flexibility of an organization. Olsson also recommends that activities for children are planned so that lines of flight *can* open and so that everything, including people, can take up new positions. A prerequisite for the mutual participation of adults and children in the development of places for children is adult sensitivity toward children where the common goal is to create a

place where joint ventures can be pursued and where the adult-child dichotomy can be transcended.

7   Creating Space for the Carnivalesque in Song and Story Sessions

At the preschool, song sessions were arranged for the children each week under the leadership of a song teacher from the town's culture school (a centralized school where children from all the local schools can take music, drama, and dance lessons, during the school years). On this occasion the children were practicing for a Christmas concert:

> The song teacher, Mia, starts straightaway with a Christmas song. The eldest sing along enthusiastically and they know the words. Ilias is particularly eager and Darya and Mirza sing loudly and clearly. Mia doesn't stop, even for a moment, song follows upon song. Ilias tries to suggest *Twinkle, twinkle little star* and little Basim wants to sing about Santa Claus, but Mia hushes them, mildly but decidedly. She puts her finger on her lips demonstratively. She has two little Santa glove puppets with her. No-one is allowed to touch them. The bigger children sing along and do the movements, the smallest children sit still and watch. (Field notes)

The song session is like a circus performance where attention is not allowed to waver but where one number immediately follows on the last. The song teacher holds eye contact with all the participants and includes everyone in this common project. Everyone participates but no one can exercise any influence. The program is fixed beforehand and no new suggestions are accepted. However, a closer look reveals that adult control was not absolute; the field notes continue:

> Some of the children, who had practiced the songs before the song teacher arrived, are starting to get tired. Basim is angry and wants to leave so Silva, one of the teachers, holds him firmly on her knee. After a while he waves cheerfully to Mia and shouts 'Good bye!' very clearly. Mia ignores him. It's a little embarrassing and Basim seems to think that his idea is a success for he shouts 'Goodbye!' enthusiastically several times, until Noura, one of the other teachers, says something sharply to him in Arabic and he falls silent. Jamil is lying flat out on the floor as if asleep, Marko withdraws behind my back and rests unobtrusively. (Field notes)

Even if the general impression is that the extent of the children's participation was merely to take part in a predefined activity, it could be observed that participation through resistance was available as an alternative. Declining to take part is one way: lying on the floor, withdrawing. But resistance could also be expressed in terms of carnival as Basim did when he challenged power with his "good-byes" in a humoristic way, a tactic that often disarms adults (c.f. Johannesen and Sandvik 2009). It would seem that in the well-structured activities that are a part of preschool life there is always the potential to resistance in the form of play. Øksnes (2011, p. 150) argues that the social order of real life is not challenged in carnival

play but tends to work as a form of quiet resistance to existing social relations. There are always spaces in between and lines of flight always open where "the grotesque, play, fun, the discarded and the tabu-laden are cultivated" (Øksnes 2011, p. 157) and where something new can emerge.

8 Play for Learning and Learning for Play

It is clear in the material that children need shifting impulses such as film, body contact, stories, clothes, and an appropriate place to stimulate their fantasies. In role-play and in what might appear to be chaotic forms of play, the children in the examples experiment and they embody their observations of the world, which includes the incorporation of their knowledge of popular culture.

Not least in educational arenas, play is often assigned a role of promoting learning. Researchers that work in the tradition of Huizinga and Bakhtin oppose this approach. Juncker (2010), for instance, argues forcefully that:

> We never play to learn! We learn in order to be able to play, to be open to a cultural reality, to be stricken with joy, being together, engagement, grief – to soak it up. What we're looking for here is driven by personal desire and personal interest. (Juncker 2010, p. 261 *our translation*)

However, not only the definition of play but also the definition of learning is being challenged by researchers influenced by Deleuze and Guattari. Educational researcher Liselott Olsson's (2009) definition of early childhood learning lies surprisingly close to Juncker's description of play. Olsson describes learning as movement and experimentation, processes that are open, ongoing, and potentially transformative driven by "desires" generated through interactions within specific situations (Deleuze and Guattari 1984). Early childhood researchers Dahlberg and Moss (2005) comment on learning in institutional contexts in the following way:

> If learning and life are about conformity to norms, if surprise and uncertainty are programmed out – then knowledge is endlessly recycled in a process of transmitting prefabricated meaning and life stultifies in endless repetition. (Dahlberg and Moss 2005, p. 116)

In the kind of mechanistic learning processes described above, the dichotomy between children and adults emerges clearly as it is usually adults who formulate the learning goals that children are expected to strive toward. Library researchers Lyn McKechnie and colleagues (2006), for instance, have studied how children learn how to behave in public places like libraries, learning to be quiet, to walk rather than run, and to sit in a circle facing the leader of a story time session. Play, on the other hand, argues Singer et al. (2008, p. 180) "provides a counterweight to all the adaptations expected of young children." For this reason, it is important to look more closely at different manifestations of play in order to understand their

purposes and how they function. Learning could, as Olsson (2009) suggests, also be the target of a re-understanding that blurs the borders between play and learning and point to the possibility within both to generating lines of flight. A view of learning as movement and experimentation and driven by desire and curiosity lies close to the heart of play, which is also desire driven and experimental.

Olsson (2009) maintains that institutions can find themselves in situations where the staff work increasingly with the children as "adults in the becoming," and she implies that preschools put more effort into creating competent school pupils than in working more openly and unreservedly with learning. The Swedish education researcher Säljö (2005, p. 249) in fact warns against these tendencies in schools: "institutionalized activities risk becoming conservative and will have difficulties in taking on new ways of working." Breaking with traditions that are usually embodied in the construction of rooms and spaces for children entails, at least in part, that aspects such as cultural practices in interplay with the design of spaces are rendered visible for those working with children.

9   Conclusion

Examples of children's spontaneous play and of structured cultural activities have been given above in an examination of the prerequisites for participation afforded by the interplay between play and learning in institutionalized contexts. The children in the examples given were inspired both to play and to learn through whatever was available to them – things, other children, adults, the affordances of place, stories derived from popular culture, and educational activities – and they created meaning through the associations and connections they made in interaction with these things. Different manifestations of play have been explored, which draw attention to spaces in between that, potentially, can arise. This is, in part, the space that adults create when they designate children's own activities as "play" and entails that children can do many other things (not all of which are accepted by adults) under the cloak of play. Here it is the concept of play itself which assists children in their flights from the places that adults have created for them and which we call childhood (c.f. Olsson 2009, p. 146). The other type of spaces in-between are those that are always available within adult-created organizations and where children can take the initiative, either obtrusively or unobtrusively, to challenge adult power. Consequently, not everything that adults designate as play is play and there is no adult power so dominant that it completely eradicates children's possibilities to play. Observations in the research project outlined in this chapter reveal that participative processes can flourish in places and situations characterized by a sensitive and trustful approach to children where adults acknowledge children's inherent will to make sense of the situations they are a part of. Such acknowledgment comes to expression, for example, in the way in which environments and activities are organized and designed.

Olsson (2009) argues the pedagogue's task is "to propose a content of knowledge to be worked upon, the important thing being how and when this content of

knowledge is approached." (Olsson 2009, p. 28). Correspondingly, in a study of children's play, Hakkarainen and colleagues (2013, p. 224) recommend that early childhood institutions become involved in actively joining with children in developing imaginative play through "flows of mutual experience" in order to reach a better understanding of the children's position and point of view. By focusing on movement and experiment, Olsson also argues that adults can take children's desires and motivations seriously, that is, children's own theories and agendas in their meetings with things and the people around them.

Through the study of children's play, it can be concluded that there are many things that adults in preschool and cultural institutions can do to promote children's participation in cultural activities. It is shown how adults can function as facilitators and limiters and how they themselves are limited or free in their (different) roles as adults in the lives of children. By making visible norms and expectations, traditional values and how they influence current debates on the upbringing and education of children together with the limitations of institutional approaches formulated through syllabi, goals, and rules, we can better understand what it is that steers activities. In situations where several institutions can collaborate, many resources can be made available to children, which do not have to respect borders between different art forms or between high culture and pop culture. Pop culture seems to be a natural part of children's lives and contributes in creating common stories and creative materials that are highly accessible to children. This is a circumstance that can be made more use of by cultural institutions; for instance, libraries' could introduce artifacts from museums to children, theaters can loan out library books, and museums can organize film workshops. Artifacts from libraries and museums can be presented in exciting ways that inspire play in the same way that pop culture does. The challenge is to create places with a built-in receptiveness to the ability of children to occupy them on their own terms and in communication with listening adults.

Equally, or perhaps even more important than adults' measures to promote children's participation, are the actions that children initiate in opposition to adult plans. However benevolent adults are in the participation projects they initiate, children can only take part on the conditions that adults offer. Educational researcher Klara Dolk (2013) draws on Bakhtin to discuss children's unruliness which, she claims, is a key to real participation. Participative projects that are carried out in preschools and cultural institutions build on certain understandings of the place, of those who occupy it, and what norms and values that should guide the activity. These pre-understandings and their inbuilt power relations are invisible until someone refuses to submit to them. She writes that "the unruly children, just by behaving "wrongly" in relation to norms and values, can contribute to a revitalization of democracy in preschool" (Dolk 2013, p. 241, *our translation*). Dolk stresses the crucial role of imagination and its ability to challenge the limits of what is regarded as reality and asserts that children, through their (unruly) play, highlight norms and values, point beyond them, and thereby make visible possible ways to change (ibid. 244). The conclusion to draw from this is not that schools and other institutions should turn into carnivals, but that they should find out how to

afford space for children themselves to create playful and carnivalistic places (Øksnes 2011). Opening up for the carnivalistic dimension of life can, as has been argued in this chapter, enable the creation of spaces in-between for both children and their adults.

For cultural researchers, geographers, and others interested in theory development concerning children's play, the concepts and perspectives discussed in this chapter could be problematized as well as further developed. Key areas for further research include power dimensions of children's play as well as its disordered and destructive elements (Thomson and Philo 2004; Harker 2005), the embodiment of play, and the agency of bodies and things (Harker 2005; Holloway 2014). A third area might be how to include children's voices in research, at the same time as the variations among them are acknowledged (Holloway 2014). It calls for methodological diversity and development, e.g., in developing methods for children's co-research (Brembeck et al. 2010) and will, in extension, entail that children's conditions and experiences are allowed to inform our understandings of modern society. Moreover, intersectional analyses, in which "age," "gender," "class," etc. are considered more broadly, would help to capture some of the diversity and complexity of children's play at the same time as we have to realize that we will probably never grasp the phenomenon completely.

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Playful Approaches to Outdoor Learning: Boggarts, Bears, and Bunny Rabbits

9

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Abstract

This chapter adopts a playful approach to explore outdoor learning for young people, utilizing a fictional story to engage the reader's attention. It outlines the core concepts of youth work and considers the importance of emotions within outdoor learning. These concepts are then applied to outdoor learning experiences, through an interpretive, hermeneutic process of asking questions and suggesting possible answers. The reader is also encouraged to consider their own interpretations of the story and to consider its potential application within

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their own practice. The chapter starts and ends with a gentle challenge to readers from one of the characters within the story, aiming to make reading this an interactive, thought-provoking experience, whereby the reader reflects on their own experiences and begins to engage in the wider debate of how to support others to develop an awareness and appreciation of the world around them. It encourages the use of creative, playful activities within outdoor learning and the value of storytelling as a method of engagement. Arguably one of the most dominant underlying assumptions in outdoor learning is the need to be challenged to "step out of your comfort zone." This chapter offers an alternative perspective and invites the reader to come into a comfortable, safe discursive place and join in a playful exploration of outdoor learning.

Keywords

Outdoor learning • Young people • Nature • Stories • Creativity • Playfulness • Youth work • Comfort

1   Introduction

This chapter draws on literature from a wide range of disciplines including experiential, outdoor, and adventure education; environment; child development; and play, as well as from children's geographies, which itself has a diverse foundation (Kraftl et al. 2014). As a result it represents an eclectic and amorphous body of literature which aims to encourage readers to engage in the wider, interdisciplinary debate of how adult ideas of childhood serve to construct the socio-spatial organization of outdoor learning experiences for children (Holloway et al. 2010). In the last two decades, there has been both a rapid decline in the number of outdoor play spaces for children and young people and a fundamental change in the types of play, with a massive increase in indoor and technological games (Bingley and Milligan 2004). Its relevance to children's geographers is that the subdiscipline of children's geographies has long been recognized as a place that utilizes creative methodologies, resulting in "…diverse, challenging, exciting, creative, and interdisciplinary work" (Kraftl et al., ibid.) This chapter pays homage to, and further develops, that tradition.

A gentle challenge from Bear: "Before reading further, please take a little time to think about the adventures you had outdoors as a child. Where did you go? What did you do? Who was with you? What was your inspiration for doing this – why did you go outside? Now, if you are sitting comfortably, I will share one of my stories with you."

"28…29…30! Coming, ready or not!" Bear removed his paws from his eyes, turned away from the tree trunk against which he had rested his head, and stared intently into the wood. Where were they hiding? Agreeing to play hide and seek with Boggart and Bunny Rabbit had seemed a good idea, but now he was beginning to have doubts. It was so dark at night in the woods. There were strange noises and weird shadows, and he felt alone and scared. With so many wonderful hiding places, how on earth would he find them?

Trembling, he shuffled forward, eyes peering into the gloom. . .suddenly he spotted a flash of white! It was Bunny's tail – found her! She was trying to hide behind a large rock near the edge of the path, squirming her body into the soft, peaty soil. But as the moon's rays pierced the leafy canopy, the light caught the white of her tail, making it sparkle and glow. She giggled as she realised she'd been spotted and cheerfully skipped over to Bear's side. One down, one to go: but at least now he had Bunny to help him look. He felt instantly braver, with Bunny by his side.

Together they scoured the wood, Bear gazing up high into the branches, was Boggart hiding there? Bunny bouncing down into the hollows beneath the trees, under the bushes, deep in the ditches. . .but Boggart was nowhere to be seen. "Stay near the path", they'd decided. "No more than 30 seconds away from each other – important to stay safe" they'd agreed.

Bear cursed loudly, and shook his head. How could he have been so stupid? Everyone knows that Boggarts can't be trusted to play fair! And they are experts at hiding: you can go a lifetime without ever seeing one, in fact most people do! Grumpily, Bear called out "Boggart, we give up, you win!" Bunny tiredly hopped up and nestled into his arms as they began the long walk home.

"Boo!" Boggart landed on the path in front of them, making them jump. "Whose turn is it to hide next?" Bear scowled and carried on walking. . .

The path through this chapter starts with a story as a means of engaging the reader's attention and encouraging them to participate in this conversation about playful outdoor learning, interpreted through creative writing. The path wanders on to consider each of the three characters in turn, offering possible interpretations by asking three questions: What does this character represent? What does this character contribute to the story? What perspective is embodied in this character? It will then move on to consider the story as a whole and the characters' interactions within the story, introducing some of the themes/concepts embedded within and emerging from it. In the hermeneutic tradition of "questionableness" (Nixon 2014), the chapter will end, not with conclusions, but with more questions to encourage further contemplation. To finish there will be another gentle challenge from one of the characters in the story (more of that later). The author's purpose in utilizing a story in this way is threefold: to encourage readers to engage in the debate of how to support young people to develop an awareness and appreciation of the world around them; to consider barriers that may prevent young people accessing outdoor places; and for each reader to consider their own role – what do they do to (dis)encourage young people to develop a sense of belonging in outdoor places.

2   Setting the Scene

The story that introduces this chapter is an example of the way metaphorical stories, fables, and fairy tales can be used to explore how to facilitate outdoor learning in a way that helps to develop a positive relationship with the natural environment. Using stories is an approach with which most people feel comfortable, a familiar method used since "ancient times" based on a recognizable, shared language "that contributes to shared meaning" (Forest 2006, p. 2). The events selected to make up a story may be real, imaginary, or partway between the two (Winter et al. 1999).

This story is based on a simple childhood game that can be instantly recognized by most people: hide and seek. It feels familiar and safe; however, within it are some complex issues to be explored, including fear of the dark/unknown/being alone; comfort/discomfort outside; experiential/sensory learning; labeling/stereotyping; (mis)trust; leadership and teamwork; sense of place and of belonging; role of the facilitator; types of activities and emotional responses to them; planning/health and safety/risk assessments; and dealing with the unexpected! It also encourages consideration of the use of creative, playful activities within outdoor learning and the value of storytelling as a method of engagement.

3 What Is Outdoor Learning?

Outdoor learning is a term that encompasses a wide range of activities including play, school ground projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, as well as personal and social development programs (IOL 2014). This chapter focuses on youth work that occurs outside of school/college, acknowledging that much of current youth work practice takes place within these formal settings. This is further defined as youth work which takes place outdoors. Youth work has the core aims of participation and active involvement; equity, diversity, and inclusion; partnership with young people and others; and personal, social, and political development (Smith 2013). Perhaps the most defining, and some would say sacrosanct, characteristic of youth work is that it is a voluntary relationship: young people choose whether or not to participate. When considering young people, it is important to take a holistic view: to understand what happens during this transitional phase of a person's life account must be taken of their earlier experiences and their social, cultural, and political contexts. This phase of a person's life marks the transition from childhood to adulthood, a boundary crossing: when "... childhood ends and adulthood begins is obscured by the luminal period of youth" (Valentine 2003, p. 38). Children's geographers understand childhood as a process: it is not a phase to be grown out of; it is a part of a lifelong process that shapes and defines a person.

4 Play, Recreation, and Nature

Like childhood and youth, play, recreation, and nature are all contested, culturally specific words that encompass a wide range of concepts (Barker et al. 2009) – each is worthy of a book in its own right! For the purpose of the dialogue here, the words will be applied in the following way: **play** is defined as free play:

> ... children choosing what they want to do, how they want to do it and when to stop and try something else. Free play has no external goals set by adults and has no adult imposed curriculum. (Santer et al. 2007, p. xi)

The focus here is on playfulness, the mood state that facilitates and accompanies "playful play." It may not be observable in behavior – playful individuals are not necessarily playing, even though they are in a playful mood; we can *think* playfully as well as *act* playfully. It is a way of generating new thought patterns in a protected context (Bateson and Martin 2013). To illustrate this point, this chapter is written in a playful way, with a view to enabling readers to feel comfortable and safe, yet at the same time gently challenging their existing thought patterns and encouraging them to think about things in a slightly different way. **Recreation** can be defined as "something people do to relax or have fun. . .activities done for enjoyment; refreshment of strength and spirits after work; *also* a means of refreshment or diversion" (Merriam-Webster n.d.). Moving on to the third term, there are many different definitions of **nature**, and it is a highly contested concept, which is not explored in-depth here; instead this chapter uses the everyday definition of nature as the physical world and everything in it (such as plants, animals, mountains, oceans, stars, etc.) that is not made by people, as well as the natural forces that control what happens in the world. This definition does not ignore that much of what is thought of as a "natural environment" is actually manufactured, molded, and manipulated by humans: it does however provide some parameters for the discussion being held here.

Bringing together play, **recreation, and nature** creates playful activities that occur outside of school/work in an outdoor "natural place." This natural place can be a woodland, field, hillside, or beach: the place as such is not necessarily important; it is how it is perceived by the people that are using it as somewhere different from their non-recreational places (work, school, etc.). It is a place that allows people to relax, have fun, socialize, and enjoy themselves – to refresh their spirits in a natural environment. The restorative powers and health benefits of nature are commonly acknowledged, and many people will state they feel better when they are outside (Ulrich 1984; Hartig et al. 1991; Kaplan 1995; Pretty et al. 2005; Fuller et al. 2007). However, the lives of many westernized children and young people do not allow much space for contact with the natural environment (Louv 2005; White and Stoecklin 2008; Ridgers et al. 2012): their lives tend to be more urban, indoor based, and ". . .much more structured, supervised and scheduled with few opportunities to explore and interact with the natural environment. . ." (White and Stoecklin, ibid., p. 5). This trend is one element of what is seen by many as an alarming deterioration in children/young people's understanding and appreciation of the world they live in: this is explained in detail by Sue Palmer in *Toxic Childhood* (Palmer 2006), a book in which she urges parents, carers, and those who facilitate learning to enable their children to play outside more. However, Ridgers et al. (2012) emphasize that while parents may be concerned that their children have fewer opportunities to play, they also have increased concerns regarding risk: ". . .the changing nature of play is closely linked to societal changes in safety attitudes" (Ridgers et al. 2012).

In many of the current debates, experience of nature is conceptualized as (dis) connection to nature or (dis)connectivity; it has been suggested that in contrast to older people, many young people do not have a connection with nature; indeed they

have an "alarming lack of awareness of even the basic elements of nature" (Bendon 2009). This increasing disconnectivity is of serious concern to geographers, environmentalists, and educationalists alike, and there are theories such as nature deficit disorder, biophilia/biophobia, and disconnection from nature that have been developed with the intention of highlighting and hopefully addressing this issue. Despite this, "…children are disappearing from the outdoors at a rate that would make the top of any conservationist's list of endangered species if they were any other member of the animal kingdom…" (Muñoz 2009, p. 20).

The awareness of the diminished opportunities for direct experience of nature during childhood highlights the irreplaceable role of children's direct experience of nature as integral to their healthy growth and development referred to as the "naturalistic necessity" (Kellert 2012) and as "Vitamin N" (Louv 2011). Experience of nature can take several forms including direct experience (e.g., unstructured play and contact with wild places, self-sustaining nature), indirect experiences (such as structured/facilitated contact with "managed" nature that "requires ongoing human input for its survival, like a garden, a potted plant, or a pet"), and representational experiences of nature, for example, through story, toys, computer, or images (Kellert, op. cit., p. 133). The story used here is a representational experience of nature; however, the characters are also composites of young people encountered by the author through her lived experiences as a practitioner and researcher – and as a parent. Utilizing representational characters adds a little distance to the discussion: it averts the viewpoint away from individual human beings and enables the story to be located within a range of different contexts and cultures; in other words, it has been simplified to enable the spotlight to remain more tightly focused.

Utilizing nonhuman characters – real and imaginary – is a recognized method to explore emotional, moral, social issues (Winter et al. op. cit.): the characters can be viewed as a set of actors that embody the author's perspective; each character serves to highlight a particular aspect and their interactions bring out the meaning of the story. Through the processes of writing and sharing fictional stories, it is possible to examine values and to explore (interpret) experiences – to move toward an understanding of their meaning. In contrast to the fictional stories of A. A. Milne, in this story Rabbit represents fun, good-naturedness, and spontaneity, not bossiness; Bear represents safety, security, and responsibility, not the infant self as represented by Pooh Bear. Boggart represents … well that is for the reader to interpret/define at this stage, although some guidance will be provided later in the chapter.

5   The Characters

This section will address each character in turn, in the order in which they appear, addressing the three questions asked earlier: What does this character represent? What does this character contribute to the story? What perspective is embodied in this character?

5.1 Bear

What is a bear? It can be defined as "any one of a group of large and heavy animals (scientific family name Ursidae) that have thick hair and sharp claws and that can stand on two legs like a person" or as "something that is difficult to do or deal with" (Merriam-Webster n.d.) as in a *burden to bear*. Metaphorically both definitions could be applied to this character: the bear in this story can be seen as dependable, sensible, and responsible, all of which carry an inherent sense of duty and burden. Bear could be interpreted as a real animal or as a toy: that is, purposively left open to interpretation, depending on the context and audience for the story. It could also be seen to represent either the role of the facilitator, the one responsible for "managing" the activity, or it could be a peer, alongside Bunny and Boggart, with joint responsibility for the activity. It is again deliberately left open to the reader's interpretation, allowing the story to serve more than one purpose and to be used as a discussion prompt in a range of contexts.

Characters and personality traits that could be seen to be represented by Bear include a love of rules and structure; dislike of unpredictability and the unexpected; respect for health and safety; risk averse; strong sense of fair play and justice; and thoughtfulness and caring – although perhaps a tendency to being grumpy when things don't go as planned. This character is seen to gain strength and confidence from having a companion, feeling braver when there is someone with whom to share the game. It could be argued that this character is representative of those who prefer to stay within their comfort zone, with things that are familiar and who like to be in control of proceedings.

Indeed, Bear's explicit contribution to the story is as the "director" of the game – the game starts and ends when Bear says so, whether the others are ready or not. These simple words, an integral part of the game of hide and seek, could be interpreted in a threatening way. The bear's inner monologue provides the reader with an understanding of events leading up to this point: how the rules and parameters of the game were agreed between the three characters. But it also provides an insight into Bear's implicit contributions to the story: identifying (labeling?) Boggart as untrustworthy: "Everyone knows that Boggarts can't be trusted to play fair!" In this way, Bunny and the readers are encouraged to align their perspective with that of Bear, in a manner that reflects how cultural norms and stereotypes are established. This statement is backed up with evidence that links the lack of visibility of Boggarts with their untrustworthiness.

5.2 Bunny Rabbit

The rabbit here is named as Bunny indicating that it is more likely to be a toy than a mammal (which would simply be called a rabbit or if being scientific *Oryctolagus cuniculus*). This character represents the personality traits of good humor, friendliness, enthusiasm, and playfulness. Inherent within the character's description is youthfulness and lack of guile: Bunny is seen to "go with the flow," happy to

snuggle into Bear's arms when tired, and to finish the game when directed by Bear. Implicit within this character are more contentious issues of gender and power imbalance as both Bear and Bunny have specified genders: Bear is male and Bunny is female. As a female, she giggles, her tail sparkles in the light, and she is cheerful and happy to be looked after/cared for by the bigger, stronger male character.

This character's contribution to the story is as a counterbalance to Bear: they can be interpreted as opposites of one another. While Bear appears uncomfortable outside in the wood at night, Bunny is at ease in the natural environment: "...trying to hide behind a large rock near the edge of the path, squirming her body into the soft, peaty soil." However, she is also silent, except for a giggle. The story does not provide much insight into her thoughts; she appears to make little impact save for making Bear feel braver. Like the other two characters, there are a number of concepts and perspectives that may be interpreted as embodied within this character, for example, (dis)empowerment, confidence/lack of confidence, (in)dependence, team member as opposed to team leader, and conforming to expectations (social, cultural, gender based).

However, this character can also be seen to provide an introduction to nature in that many people's first contact with the natural world is through a toy or a fictional character in a story. Natural places, such as woodland, are places that are "...perceived though a rich and complex mix of both good and fear-inducing myth and imagination" (Bingley and Milligan 2004, p. 48). This is a good point to pause on the path and briefly explore another important concept embedded in this character: keeping it real.

In 1956, Rachel Carson urged parents to take their children outside as "A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful... full of wonder and excitement." She emphasized that "Daily, intimate, sensory experience is essential to keep that wonder bright for a lifetime..." (ibid., p. 42–43); the early companionship of a responsive adult is the best way to make it happen. Her words have been echoed and added to over the years by many others including Richard Louv and most recently by the National Trust, a UK-based conservation charity. They emphasize that it is important that children are encouraged to explore and discover a sense of wonder outside. And yet children can also inspire adults, enabling them to take a different perspective and to rediscover the world through their eyes. Adults just have to be able to get down to a child's level, put down the mantle of sophistication and maturity, be responsive, and remember how to play (Hayes 2013). The world looks, smells, feels, sounds, and tastes different when using this approach: it's more fun! The character of Bunny encourages readers to get down and squirm in the earth and to jump up in the air – to explore enthusiastically.

5.3   Boggarts

What does this character represent? Boggarts are fictional characters that require imagination to bring to life and to interpret. To help explain, here is another short story, which was used to inform the character described here:

> Stories have been told about a race of little people called Boggarts for at least a hundred and fifty years. . .some reports say they can be as small as fifty centimetres high while others say they are more than twice as tall. Because Boggarts are so small, people think they are weak but this is not so. Inside their small bodies there is a tremendous amount of special energy which allows them to perform tasks with such speed and accuracy that it has all the appearance of magic. They are not spiteful or dangerous and they never mean to hurt anyone deliberately; but they do have a great sense of fun which, sometimes, leads them into serious mischief and it is at these times that some people say they dislike them. However, all the reports say that Boggarts are always bright and cheerful and that they love singing and dancing. (Mills 2000)

This more traditional description of Boggarts is in sharp contrast to their more celebrated appearance in the Harry Potter novels, in which J.K. Rowling (1999, p. 101) presents them as "a shape-shifter. . .it can take the shape of whatever it thinks will frighten us most." In this story the Boggart represents the unexpected, a sense of mischievousness, and perhaps an inability to understood/follow agreed rules – but it is not intended to be scary or frightening. Boggart in this story is purposively non-gendered, thus leaving it open to interpretation/imagination, allowing the story to be used in a range of contexts, to provoke discussions over different themes.

This character contributes an air of unpredictability to the story: it is not clear when or how Boggart is going to make an appearance or on what terms. When Boggart appears, it is sudden and not welcomed by Bear: "Boo!" Boggart landed on the path in front of them, making them jump. "Whose turn is it to hide next?" Bear's response to this is to walk off, without replying. Bunny is complicit in this decision, while Boggart is excluded. Boggart is left behind, and it could be surmised, perplexed, and bewildered by the turn of events: surely the aim of the game is to be successful at hiding? Isn't that how the game of hide and seek is won?

There are a number of concepts and perspectives that may be interpreted as embodied within this character, for example, inclusion/exclusion; lack of comprehension/awareness of rules, wanting to challenge and test rules; and competitiveness – is Boggart prepared to "bend" the rules in order to win the game? These are best explored by bringing the characters together within the story.

6 The Story: Playing Together Outside

Considering the story as a whole, the three characters are clearly very different from each other: in fact the reader may question whether it is likely that such diverse personalities would ever choose to play a game together. However, everyday situations like this do occur: groups of children and young people are brought together – sometimes through a school-based intervention and sometimes because a family member has decided it would be good for them to do something positive outside of school (e.g., scouts, guides, youth group). Alternatively it may be through a specific targeted intervention, for example, because they have all spent time being looked after by statutory authorities or because they have been identified as having some kind of social, emotional, or behavioral support need. If the last

option is adopted as the basis for interpreting the story, it is possible to play with the idea that Bear is suffering some form of mental ill health such as anxiety (which could explain his apparent discomfort at being alone in the dark); Bunny could be lacking in self-confidence, demonstrated by inability to express her own opinions (where is her voice in this story?), and Boggart could have a developmental disability such as autism "...that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them" (The National Autistic Society 2014).

Moving on to consider the characters' interactions within the story and the themes/concepts embedded and emerging from it, as identified earlier, there are some complex issues to be explored that have emerged from this rather simple story. Indeed it is the simplicity of the story that allows a plurality of interpretations and multiplicity of potential meanings. This section will explore some of these in more detail and will make some links to practice in working with children and young people outside and specifically to the core concepts of youth work: equity, diversity, and inclusion; participation and active involvement; partnership with young people and others; and personal, social, and political development. It will consider the importance of emotions within outdoor learning; however, the reader is also encouraged to consider their own interpretations of the story and to consider its potential application within their own practice.

7   Emotions and Relatedness

Outdoor educators need to allow sufficient space and time for people to be in nature, not just to do things in or to nature, in a way that is meaningful and relevant for them and enables them to reflect on their experiences and to make sense of them (Hayes 2014). This sensemaking draws on emotional responses – to the environment, to people, and to activities. Emotions shape our understanding of self, culture, and actions: they are intersubjective, sociable, and relational. In everyday language, emotions may be referred to as "feelings" and self-reported as "I feel." Emotions (feelings) come from within, belong to us, and represent "our experiences of, and responses to, the natural and social world" (Wentworth and Yardley 1994: Theodosius 2012, p. 63). They can be thought of as a strong, instinctive feeling, with a role in controlling thoughts (reasoning) and behavior. Within this chapter, the focus is on what "ordinary people" refer to as emotions, making use of everyday language rather than that used by specialists in the study of emotions (Baumeister et al. 2010; Agnew et al. 2010).

Emotions are *conscious feeling states*, highly differentiated and normally experienced one at a time, involving a bodily response, such as physiological arousal. The same arousal may be experienced differently by people, depending on the cognitive label they attach to it. This is illustrated by the way the three characters respond differently to the game of hide and seek in the wood. Emotional states tend to develop and dissipate slowly, in contrast to the more fleeting, automatic affect, which can be subtle and possibly unconscious. Affective reactions can come

(and go) within a fraction of a second. There are various terms used to represent the different conscious emotions, for example, joy, fear, anger, surprise, and wonder. These states tend to be slow to arise and to dissipate. There are many emotions implicit within this story: Bear feels anxious, scared, brave, and grumpy. Bunny feels playful, happy, and enthusiastic. Boggart's emotions are not so easy to discern: they could be mischievous, competitive, excited, thrilled, or defiant – it is much more open to interpretation and thus to debate.

Within this discussion, it is important to consider automatic affective reactions: these may initially be created by emotions, and the affective memories and associations can have an effect on future actions. People learn to choose their behavior according to the emotion they expect (want) to feel. For example, when feeling sad, there can be a corresponding behavioral response that seeks to make oneself feel better: a more positive emotion is the goal, rather than a change in behavior. This is where reflection can be of use: reflecting on actions can enable an individual to "extract a relevant lesson or moral for the future, and change their behavior on subsequent occasions" (Baumeister et al., ibid., p. 129). Research also suggests that emotions can be beneficial to learning: information with emotional impact is arguably better remembered than other less emotional information. Also, emotional states may help to improve attention, so that the individual identifies with, and concentrates on, the most relevant aspects of an event. Again, relating this back to the game, if the characters take time to reflect on the events and to discuss them with each other, the relevant aspects identified (e.g., misunderstanding, feeling afraid of the dark) will differ from those first established (Bear's annoyance and Boggart's confusion).

The implication for this is that educators and facilitators of learning need to consider the emotional impact of their teaching, particularly when delivering outdoor learning with the aim of strengthening connections to nature. Put simply, emotions matter. One of the biggest, arguably most debated issues regarding emotions is how to measure them. What is measured, how, and why? Many empirical studies make use of self-reported scaling exercises, often using a Likert scale: "Responses to rating scales are easily collated, easily coded, and easily analysed, allowing researchers to get on with Studies 2 and 3 (and 4...)..." (Agnew et al. op. cit., p. 6). This is an approach used in many studies into young people's connections with nature, for example, RSPB's Get Outdoors campaign (RSPB 2013). This organization has an online survey which asks 16 questions with five answers for respondents to choose from. Is this emphasis on "measurement" or on the need to quantify emotions, driven by the apparent preferences of journals for multiple empirical studies and replicable research, over more theoretical and philosophical research? Or a reflection of the efficiency of self-reported scaling assessments and questionnaires in comparison to more labor-intensive demands of other forms of research such as observation and interviewing?

In a critique of the preponderance of self-reports within psychology, Baumeister et al. (ibid., p. 15) highlight this issue stating: "So that is behavior today...Ratings and more ratings. Occasionally making a choice. Reading and taking a test." Some forms of self-reporting can be more useful for exploring issues, for example, narrative stories and semi-/unstructured interviews which allow more opportunity

for participants to use their own words to identify their feelings, without the need to measure or rank their answers. A relational approach to emotions is more concerned with the interface between self and social structure; overlapping emotions in a milieu; what emotions do, rather than what they are; using sociological theory to guide analysis; and investigating emotions in situ as they occur during sequences of interaction (Walby et al. 2012).

8   Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The one-size-fits-all, off-the-shelf package approach to outdoor learning, as espoused by the need for challenge and risk, for "stepping outside of your comfort zone," does not always work: for some people, it may work for some of the time, in some contexts; for others, it may create anxiety, distress, and discomfort, when it would be more beneficial to enable them to enjoy space, peace of mind, and comfort. Whenever satisfaction of expectations is achieved, anxiety dissolves, generating a feeling of being in a comfort zone – safe, complete, free from risks, and in peace with ourselves (Zacharias 2012, p. 1). This can be a strong position to work from, as a learner and as a facilitator of learning in others. This story can be seen to challenge the "urban myth" in outdoor education that encourages people to move outside their comfort zone, to stretch themselves, as a way to achieve effective learning.

What is actually meant by the term "comfort zone"? Is this a model or a metaphor? This is a highly contested and debated matter, much of which falls outside the scope of this chapter; here it is taken to represent a model often used within adventure and outdoor education literature as the basis for personal growth and transformation (Brown 2008). However, as Davis-Berman and Berman (2002 in Brown, ibid., p. 11) argue: "...the greatest amount of change comes when participants feel safe, secure and accepted." This is of utmost importance when working with young people who are experiencing some form of social exclusion and whose everyday lives may already be full of stress and challenge. This is often recognized in work with infants and young children; why does life become so much more serious for older children and young people? In westernized countries, people are defined/categorized on the basis of the age of their physical bodies (Valentine et al. 1998, p. 2) with inherent societal and cultural expectations of age-appropriate behavior. Around about the age of 11–13 (coinciding with puberty for most young people), the focus shifts from playful stories, and environmental awareness, to citizenship and environmental stewardship: young people are encouraged to become more responsible. Does this lie behind the apparent disconnection that young people may have with nature? Is it more a case of being disenchanted with nature, and overburdened with its problems, than of being disconnected? Are young people opting to disconnect as a way of protecting themselves at a time in their lives when they face so many other challenges and changes?

The inherent dualistic nature of contemplative (gentle, safe) and adventurous (risky, scary) experiences makes it a challenge for facilitators to do both. While some would argue that there is space and time at the top of a mountain, after the

climb has been achieved, to contemplate and reflect, there will always be others who prefer to contemplate and reflect as they go and are perfectly happy not to reach the top of the mountain. "Does success in including one group come at the expense of excluding another?" (Labonte 2004, p. 119). This is a valid and important question. Brown (2008, p. 11) suggests:

> Let us provide students with favourable conditions for authentic and meaningful experiences where they are challenged in an appropriate manner and suitably supported by those with a genuine interest in their learning. . .

Taking their argument a step further, it can be argued that facilitators need to enable young people to feel comfortable outdoors, to feel a sense of belonging. Facilitators should remember the power of curiosity, awe, wonder, and imagination in stimulating the senses, to allow space for curiosity, undirected attention, and natural inspiration. There is a growing awareness of the need for enchantment and for increased attention to ". . .reenchantment – the phenomena of sensory, emotional, and non rational ways of connecting with the earth's living systems" (Barlett 2008, p. 1077). This awareness is reflected in a worldwide movement toward more playful activities outside for all ages, not just for those of preschool and primary age (e.g., Louv 2011; Children and Nature Network 2014). These are concepts embodied within Bunny, who is clearly still enchanted with, and by the natural world: in many ways, she is an enchanting character!

This is a viewpoint increasingly being recognized by others in the field of outdoor education (e.g., Nicol 2013) and the wider world of education. At this point it should be acknowledged that the language used to structure and categorize this work is problematic: who gets to define outdoor and adventure education? Is it outdoor education or education outdoors? Education or learning? And what is meant by outdoors anyway? (Zink and Burrows 2008). In this chapter adventure is defined as experiences that are unusual and exciting, may sometimes be daring, at a level appropriate and relevant to the individual. This definition recognizes that for some people an adventure in their back garden can be as effective a learning experience as climbing a mountain. This differentiation is arguably also the central tenet of social inclusion.

9   Participation and Active Involvement

There are many potential barriers to participation, some political, some social, and some cultural, and the focus here is on when doing gets in the way of being in nature:

> In significant ways, students' experiential contact with the natural world is being curtailed and shaped. . .when they are "allowed" outside, their contact is structured, prescribed and limited. . .the kind of inductive learning that arises from relatively unstructured, outdoor activity is increasingly marginalized. (Roberts 2012, p. 99)

Sometimes people are so busy doing things, learning new skills, and undertaking high-risk activities that there is not sufficient time allocated for just being there. Outdoor learning practitioners may be afraid of inactivity, of allowing participants to become bored, fearing (often with good cause) that it will lead to misbehavior (as demonstrated by Boggart perhaps?) or worse, dangerous behavior. Is their challenging behavior actually a coping mechanism, a form of communication? Are educators actively listening to them? And if they are, how are they acting on what they hear? How do they respond to challenge? It is important to take account of values and beliefs: these influence what and how educators teach, and they influence what form of knowledge is selected and how it is organized and subsequently delivered to other people. As an example, the author of this chapter became a practitioner in outdoor settings because she likes being outdoors, she is more comfortable in the wood than in a classroom, and she chooses to make use of stories because she likes stories: however, she must not assume that others feel the same.

The conversational path meanders on to explore the relationship between exclusion, participation, and underrepresentation, by defining the terms in order to apply them to social inclusion:

- Participation measures observed behavior – it is the percentage of all people doing a certain activity who belong to a specific group.
- Representation is a meta-statistic – it is the ratio of "the participation of a specific group in a certain activity" to "the proportion of that group in the background population as a whole."
- Exclusion expresses how people feel (their perceptions) (OPENspace 2008).

Participation and representation can be quantified using data from statistical surveys; however, exclusion cannot automatically be inferred from underrepresentation; a group that is identified as underrepresented may not feel excluded, if it has full access to opportunities to participate, but still declines (chooses to opt out). It is the concept of exclusion that is particularly interesting, as it is based on perception, and it is subjective and individual – it is personal. It is not possible to ascertain from the story if Boggart feels excluded by the actions of Bear and Bunny; however, it is a possibility to consider.

10   Partnership with Young People and Others/Personal, Social, and Political Development

These two core concepts of youth work are in many ways interwoven and inseparable. Youth work represents a partnership with young people, their families, and their communities. It is based on the principle of voluntary engagement and recognizes that young people are not isolated individuals: they are part of much wider familial, social, and cultural networks. As an outdoor educator, attempting to satisfy the demands of such diverse participants, to be socially inclusive and mindful of diversity, can prove to be a challenge too far. When the work involves

very diverse groups, for example, family groups including 5-year-olds and 50-year-olds, some with disabilities, is it possible to create programs which are truly accessible to all? Perhaps, if the educator works in a way that is responsive to individuals, is needs led, and is tailored to the specific needs of the specific participants. However, this means that all involved need to sign up to shared aims and objectives, which is not always possible in practice – as demonstrated by Boggart in the game of Hide and Seek.

11   Conclusion

This chapter has adopted a playful approach to the topic of outdoor learning making use of a simple, fictional story; however, there is a serious side to this. When nature, culture, and family are experienced as an interwoven entity, the connections and attachments made can be very strong and meaningful: these are connections made with each other and with nature. Starting with soft toys, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes, the world of nature can begin to be explored with children, introducing them to some of the creatures with whom they live and helping them to feel a sense of familiarity and desire to learn more. As they grow and develop, there are progressively more opportunities to make this real, to take them outside, and to let them play – and it can be so much more fun if teddy (or rabbit) comes too! Perhaps children who know how to play in nature, and who value these experiences, will be more likely to grow up keen and able to play with their own children in a similar way (for discussion on memories of childhood experiences and impact on adult behavior, see Chawla 1990; Waite 2007). But what happens to those less fortunate, those who find themselves surrounded by adults who are "grown-ups" and who are not responsive, and people who have forgotten (or perhaps never knew) how to play? What about those who live separately from their families or whose families are overwhelmed by dealing with more pressing concerns? Does early disconnection result in lifelong disconnection from nature? Does this in turn impact on social and political decisions about nature? What happens to the young people who enter adulthood never having experienced nature in this way? Who helps them to discover the wonder and then keep it bright (Carson, op. cit.)? These questions are all potential areas of research for geographers of children, youth, and families.

There may be an answer to the last question: practitioners, facilitators, teachers, grandparents, carers, and peers; they can all do their bit to help by providing outdoor experiences, in diverse guises. However, is this enough? Is it possible to remember to be childlike (perhaps even childish?) in among dealing with the requirements for professionalism and responsibility to ensure everyone stays safe and that desired outcomes are met and learning can be evidenced/measured? How can opportunities like this be provided for young people for whom such activities may appear to have little relevance and who may cynically perceive them as too childish, after all, they're nearly adults? One way found to be effective by the author has been through intergenerational work: helping to set up a teddy-bear hunt

for younger siblings can be great fun for teenagers and result in more creatively hidden bears and thus a more interesting experience for younger ones. Then afterwards, it is an experience that can be relived through sharing stories, each with their own perspective as hider or discoverer of the bears. Stories serve as a connection, linking experiences through the time and space that separates them: stories (and cuddly toy animals) can help people to understand and to enjoy time spent in nature.

Utilizing stories can help to develop a sense of belonging, of familiarity, and of comfort – to engage, captivate, and encourage participation. Stories enable people to make use of their imagination and reflections, and they can linger in the memory long after the experience, helping to make the link from the outer world to the inner world and can be adapted to the specific context and culture. This approach can be used with people of all ages – from small children to adults; however, there is less time to do this with toys! A favorite toy from early childhood makes a good companion for those initial adventures: someone to share the stories with, to hang on to when feeling scared, and to cuddle when tired and sleepy. Unfortunately, for most (author excludes herself from this), a cuddly rabbit is usually outgrown well before adolescence, consigned to a dusty shelf or tucked away in a cardboard box at the back of a cupboard. However, a chance discovery while looking for something else (a pair of walking boots perhaps?) can unlock the memories, allowing the discoverer to relive the experience and remember the wonder of nature – to renew the connections.

12 Final Words: Continuing the Conversation

A playful challenge from Bunny Rabbit to the readers of this chapter: "My questions for you: within your own life, do you make time and space for play? Are you a good role model? By allowing others to see you play, you may inspire them to do the same. If you are a facilitator of outdoor learning experiences, do you encourage your participants to make use of their imaginations? Finally, do you share your stories, and listen when others tell you theirs?"

Boggart, Bear, and Bunny Rabbit would really like to hear from readers of this chapter with answers to these questions; they can be contacted via the author, who would also love to continue the conversation.

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Development of Nature Playgrounds from the 1970s Onwards

10

Lianne Verstrate and Lia Karsten

Contents

Abstract

In this paper we will analyze the sudden growth of nature playgrounds at the beginning of the twenty-first century within both big cities and smaller towns in the Netherlands. We try to understand this new interest in nature-like play in the context of three developments. First are the stricter regulations on play equipment. The implementation of the new European safety demands in 1997 evoked a lot of extra costs for municipalities and NGOs who tried to find ways to avoid the regulations. Nature playgrounds were defined as nature in the first place, and as such they didn't have to apply to the strict safety rules. Thus, nature playgrounds became relative cheap solutions for children's play. Second is the increase of the self-organizing middle-class professionals. In many

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neighborhoods, young parents weren't satisfied with the play possibilities for their children, and in their position of both professional and parent, they started to build green playgrounds as an alternative. Third, the choice for greener ways of playing is related to "new" notions of bringing children closer to nature and teaching them how to take risks. Play in a regulated natural environment would facilitate children best. Empirical examples are drawn from interviews with volunteers, nature playground protagonists, and NGOs. In addition, a wide variety of documents have been analyzed from websites to policy documents and newspaper articles.

1   Introduction

In 2000, one of the first nature playgrounds in the Netherlands was opened in Rotterdam. Instead of a traditional playground, the "Speeldernis" offers no slides and swings, but a chance for urban children to get reacquainted with nature. The 1 acre large plot is designed as a large adventure garden, with stepping stones, huts, rope bridges, and muddy wetlands. It is located between the neighborhoods Spangen and Nieuwe Westen on the site of an old building playground. The Rotterdam municipality and a committee of professionals (among others pedagogues, urban planners, and landscape architects) initiated the plans, created a design, and built the Speeldernis (Meulmeester and Veltman 2002). Funding was provided by the city, and the playground is managed and maintained by a private-public cooperation of municipal support, volunteer work, and subsidized labor. Almost 15 years later, the Speeldernis is attracting ever-growing numbers of visitors from all over the Rotterdam region, through memberships, school and daycare trips, birthday parties, and individually sold day tickets.

The concept of the nature playground has developed quickly and has steadily spread to other parts of the Netherlands. In 2014, 75 operational nature playgrounds are listed on the website of Springzaad (an open network consulting on all issues related to children and natural play). These playgrounds are part of a larger, and gradually expanding, infrastructure aimed at the accessibility of green and nature for (sub)urban children varying from green schoolyards to playing forests and polders, edible gardens, adventure trails, and ecoparks. In this chapter, the recent rise of nature playgrounds in the Netherlands will be explored: why did this phenomenon gain so much attention and support?

The aim of this study is to unravel the sudden rise of a new kind of play facility. In so doing, playgrounds are not regarded as simple spaces but as the outcome of a complex interplay of social, physical, and financial factors. Welfare policies influence a playground's funding options. Sociodemographic factors influence which actors will be involved in creating playgrounds and which children will play there.

Urban planning policies not only determine where a playground can be located but also how it will fit into a wider infrastructure. Social notions of "the right type of play" influence the outlook, regulations, and daily life on the playground. In short, this chapter illustrates how designing, building, and managing a simple-looking space, such as a children's playground, are part of a complex process. Geographers and other professionals interested in playgrounds will be able to draw from this Dutch study to further broaden their view on the development of recreational spaces. Yet, before exploring the recent boom in nature playgrounds, a brief background to the issue of playing children in urban settings is needed to contextualize this case study in the literature.

2   Literature: (Sub)Urban Children, Play, and Nature

The recent rise of nature playgrounds provides a turning point in the history of play space, especially considering developments that have changed Dutch childhoods over the past 20 years. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s, local municipalities played a large part in initiating and supporting neighborhood playgrounds (Verstrate and Karsten 2011), which were run by voluntary organizations; they gradually started to withdraw from this function with the decline of the welfare state. Funding to playgrounds and other recreational facilities was cut back (Selten et al. 2000). During the 1970s and 1980s, many Dutch middle-class families with young children, like elsewhere in Europe, left the city for a suburban neighborhood away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Only a small group of children with a relatively lower socioeconomic position, among them many migrant children, had been left behind to grow up in an urban setting. City children became an easily overlooked minority. At the same time urban public space was shrinking due to the growing number of private cars and parking spaces. Urban policies became directed to the building of compact cities which made the available spaces for playing outdoors only less. This trend can be witnessed not just in the Netherlands but also in other Western urban regions (Bourke 2014; Hume et al. 2005; Louv 2007).

Concerns about the marginalization of play spaces stimulated the Dutch Socialist Party to propose a law on play space to parliament in 2003. Every city would have to draft a plan to ensure that a minimum of 3 % of all public space was dedicated to play spaces. Based on a norm devised by the Dutch Organization for Playgrounds (NUSO), this law was the subject of discussion for 4 years. Despite the fact that it was never approved by parliament, most municipalities are now working with a "room for play" policy in which the 3 % norm is included. But in times of recession, playgrounds are not high on the municipal agenda and especially in newly built suburbs are an ad hoc facility – only constructed if budget still allows it. Playground consultancy companies offer handy catalogs where municipalities can pick "ready-to-order" play equipment. This ensures that the 3 % norm is easily reached on paper, but "does not guarantee the creation of interesting play spaces for children" (Bouwmeester 2006).

Places to play are a necessary condition for outdoor play, but seducing children to play outdoors turned out to be increasingly difficult. Children's play in all Western countries has undergone significant changes. Whereas children used to spend a lot of hours playing outdoors, they started to spend more and more time inside the home playing with media entertainment – watching television, surfing the web, or playing computer games (Kahn and Kellert 2002; Schouten 1998). In addition, a growing group of children participates in all kinds of scheduled recreation and enrichment activities, such as taking music lessons and attending creativity courses (Hollowat and Pimlott-Wilson 2014; Karsten 2015). Today, the hours children pass indoors with little or no physical activity give way to concerns about the health of future generations (Maller and Townsend 2006; Chawla et al. 2013; Chawla 2014). Within this context of growing concerns, struggle for outdoor play space, and changing play behavior, the Dutch nature playground movement started to thrive from the early 2000s onward. Within the here reported study, three international trends are identified as influential on the further development of the nature-play movement.

First, the shifting views on children's safety in Western societies. Especially in urban settings, children have become regarded as not able to navigate the public domain by themselves – worries about the busy traffic and "stranger danger" (the fear that their child will be abducted or mistreated by "strange men") take a dominant place in the minds of present-day parents (Holloway and Valentine 2000; Chawla 2006; Schwebel 2006). Worries about safety put more restrictions on places where children are allowed to play. They were supposed to play on spaces that are supposed to be relatively safe: playgrounds, which lead to the isolating of children from the perceived "dangers" in the public sphere (Tovey 2007). On top of these safety regulations for play, objects became more strict. The growing dominance of safety first claims was however always contested. The Dutch nature playground movement was one of the parties that advocated adventurous, free, and sometimes risky play facilities for children. In this paper it will be highlighted how they handled safety regulations in nature playgrounds.

Second, despite parental worries about children navigating the urban domain, more families came to live in urban environments. Young urban professional parents (yupps) (Karsten 2014) value the city for its proximity to jobs, social contacts, and facilities. Those new urban middle classes are transforming urban neighborhoods through their daily activities of work, childcare, and recreation. They have the skills to organize change. In raising their children, the new middle-class parents actively engage in shaping the public domain – whether on a small scale by creating informal playgrounds on their sidewalks or on a larger scale by their consumption patterns and lifestyle choices. The trend of new middle-class families reclaiming the city as a place to live is not limited to the Netherlands, but can be witnessed in other Western cities as well (Lilius 2014; Hjorthol and Bjornskau 2005; Authier and Lehman-Frisch 2013; Jarass and Heinrichs 2014). As will be further explored in the results section of this paper, the nature playground movement is firmly embedded in the daily life of these new middle classes.

Third and lastly, the rise of nature playgrounds cannot be seen separately from an international focus on sustainability, ecology, organic lifestyle, and "going green." Children and their lack of connection to nature have become the object of public

concern, not just for parents but also for national governments (Gill 2014; Woolley 2009; Bowler et al. 2010). As a result, a countertrend can be witnessed, in which being eco-friendly and natural is deemed as an important part of raising future generation: breastfeeding policies, sustainable children's toys and clothing, "Green Schools," neighborhood recycling programs, healthy and organic food programs at schools, "green" and "farm" daycare centers, et cetera (Nedovic and Morrissey 2013; Derr and Lance 2012). An interesting connotation for researchers interested in the "back to nature" movement is the definition of "nature," which is often left void and taken for granted. It is important to note, when working in this field, that the term is a social construct with a definition that is subject to debate. For example, in studies researching the benefit of nature to children's upbringing, nature is classified as "any space with greenery" (Bowler et al. 2010), yet in more militant back-to-nature movements, the term is used to mean not just greenery but a state of being untainted, wild, and free (Louv 2007; Gill 2014). On top of this movement, nonprofit organizations, such as the "free-range kids" and "leave no child behind" movements, are campaigning to parents to stop "helicopter parenting" and let children explore their own environment without constant supervision. Also, the notion that present-day children rarely engage with nature and therefore do not know where apples, milk, and meat come from has been taken up by nature preservation organizations. Natural heritage committees worry about a generation that will grow up without an emotional connection to nature and might not see the point of preserving nature as adults (Chawla 2006).

3 Research Methodology

A case study in the Netherlands has been carried out, based on both desk research and semi-structured interviews. Through extensive web-based research, a wide variety of documents were studied: professional literature, policy documents, funding and permit applications, photographs, building plans, annual reports and playground reviews, municipal and federal documents, and newspaper articles. In addition 14 semi-structured interviews have been held. In 2010–2011 the first seven interviews – ranging between 1 and 2.5 h, often during a visit to nature playground – were conducted to gain more in-depth information on the creation, management, and day-to-day life on the playground. In addition, two interviews were held with a board representative and a project leader of the Dutch Organization for Playgrounds, the NUSO. On top of this, five interviews were held with nature playground protagonists active in other fields, for background information on the movement: nonprofit organization Jantje Beton, a researcher at the Alterra Institute (Wageningen University), aldermen involved in supporting nature playgrounds, and a landscape architect. In 2014, this qualitative data was updated by phone interviews, in which the previously interviewed nature playground board members were again questioned about the status quo of their playground – what had changed in the last 4 years, and had they been able to reach all their goals? These narratives about individual playgrounds are used to illustrate and explain the national phenomenon in more detail.

4   Managing Safety and Risks on the Playground

When studying contemporary Dutch playground policies, the strict regulations considering play equipment in the public domain are striking. The professionalization of playgrounds had started as early as the 1960s, when courses for volunteers in first aid, safety on the playground, "working with children," child development, and administration were widely offered to people volunteering on playgrounds. In the same decade, the first reports concerning children's safety on playgrounds were published (Baay 1960). The results from these exploratory reports stated that a lot of playgrounds offered unsafe and unhygienic environments, in which accidents were no exception. Not only bad maintenance proved to be the culprit, but also the way play equipment was designed and constructed was a cause for hazardous situations on playgrounds. In 1985, the first manual advising on playground safety was published and concluded that, while the development of a manual with guidelines was a step in the right direction, more structural implementations were necessary (Bouwmeester 2006; Raad 1985). Because of a lack of national regulations, every municipality and district had its own policies. It would eventually take the joint efforts of the state Department for Welfare, Health, and Culture, the NUSO, *Stichting Ruimte voor de Jeugd*, several committees, playgrounds, politicians, academics, social workers, and planners, before a Law on Play Equipment was finally implemented in 1997.

The law describes the safety demands on a playground as follows: "...that, within the confines of reasonably expected usage, it [play equipment, L.V.] should not provide dangers for the safety or health of individuals" (Tweedekamer der Staten Generaal 1996). These regulations apply to both existing and new play equipment and during their complete lifespan. This means that the manager of a playground now had certain obligations: to install and manage everything safely and keep a maintenance journal for each item of play equipment. Also, every item of play equipment, whether old or new, has to have a certificate (*keurmerk*) to ensure that it was constructed while adhering to safety regulations and norms. In earlier years, neighborhood playground organizations often used to keep their costs low by building and renovating play equipment themselves, but the Law on Play Equipment has largely put a stop to these practices. All play equipment nowadays is ordered from catalogs and designed by specialists because of the mandatory certification mark. Ordering play equipment from other countries is no longer possible, because the Netherlands only validate their own national certification mark. This practice ensured a safer play environment, but also made a playground a relatively expensive undertaking.

The law states that safety should be assessed by periodical controls on playgrounds. These inspections are conducted by specially appointed playground consultants and institutes, who study a play space's safety standards, check the log books, write reports, and provide advice for existing and future playground volunteers. In extreme conditions, they can advise the municipality to close down a certain playground because of safety hazards (Bouwmeester 2006, p. 15). A handbook on playground safety and management was published by the Institute

for Consumers and Safety and the NUSO to help playground workers navigate the law and construction norms on play equipment (Bouwmeester 2006).

In order to establish the role of safety and risks in a nature playground context, it is vital to first answer the question – what exactly defines a nature playground? An abundance of professional literature on nature playgrounds acknowledges the importance of finding a definition to prevent the concept from becoming void of meaning (Leufgen and Van Lier 2007; Lobst et al. 2009; Wagenaar et al. 2012; Both 2006; Van den Berg 2007): "we have to be careful that not every set of swings, placed in a natural setting, receives a nature playground status" Leufgen and Van Lier (2007, p. 5). Despite the fact that all these publications develop different definitions and concepts, there are a number of overlapping similarities to be found (NUSO 2008).

In a nature playground, the landscape of the terrain is the most important type of play equipment. Instead of providing an interesting background for play equipment, here the natural environment is the main attraction (Fig. 1). When studying designs of existing playgrounds, a number of common characteristics stand out. Playing with water is included in every nature playground: from creeks, to pump systems or just muddy banks are central to designs. Stepping stones are used to allow access to little islands and invite children to build dams and mud pies. Furthermore, straight lines or asphalted paths have no place in the design for a nature playground. The large role of vegetation, trees, plants, and shrubs is evident when visiting a nature playground – children play on fallen down logs, climb trees, and pick fruits and berries. Apart from offering free play in and with a natural environment, nature

Fig. 1 A sunny Saturday afternoon at nature playground "het Weitje," Hardinxveld-Giessendam. The bushes in the back also belong to the playground and are landscaped as a "wild terrain" with climbing trees, flowers, and places to build huts (Photograph Playground "Het Weitje," Hardinxveld-Giessendam)

Fig. 2 Is it a tree or not? The cow was made by adapting the natural form of a single tree in nature playground 'de Takkenbende,' Deventer (Photograph L Verstrate)

playgrounds always offer some sort of education on natural processes of growth and decay, the origins of food, and the role of local wildlife (bugs, rodents, rabbits, bees, et cetera) for the ecosystem. This description offers characteristics that all nature playgrounds adhere to – nature as the main event – but most of the existing playgrounds offer a mix of both a natural setting and a selection of play equipment. The interesting thing is that these types of play equipment largely fall outside of the 1997 Law on Play Equipment.

The law only applies to play equipment, but most nature playgrounds use materials that invite children's play (*speelaanleidingen* or play invitations) to supplement the natural surroundings. Traditional play equipment is explicitly designed for play (e.g., slides, seesaws, and climbing frames) and therefore falls within jurisdiction of safety regulations and has to bear a certification mark (Bouwmeester 2006). In contrast, nature playground committees create a playground from natural sources: climbing poles, stepping stones, huts built by children themselves, and adapted natural resources are all examples of *speelaanleidingen* that are not regulated by the Law on Play Equipment (NUSO 2008). For example, in 2010 on playground "de Takkenbende" in Deventer, a local artist was hired to shape tree trunks into climbing structures (see Fig. 2). It is important to note that more general safety standards do still apply to nature playgrounds, such as norms on adequate falling distances, blunt edges of play equipment, soft floor surfaces, water quality and depth, et cetera.

The distinctions between play equipment, play invitations, and "nature" are often unclear and the subject of many discussions. An example that illustrates the confusion of playground volunteers is that of the tree. A climbing frame, constructed out of wooden logs, evidently is regarded as an item of play equipment and is therefore subject to the law. But how should a fallen down log or a live

climbing tree be qualified? They do not count as play equipment, as long as "normal" maintenance, such as cutting branches, is adhered to. Yet, this does not end the matter: "But keep in mind: one can turn a log or a climbing tree into an item of play equipment, if a direct invitation to use the tree for play ('a sign') or if constructions like rope ladders, extra climbing supports, a banister, et cetera, are added" (NUSO 2008, p. 35).

These distinctions may seem like trivial debates, but for people involved in building or managing a playground, they are essential. As nature playgrounds mostly qualify as "nature" first and playground second, they are largely excluded from the rather rigorous safety inspections and checkups, do not have to keep log books for every item of equipment, and, while adhering to general safety norms, are still allowed to build play items themselves. NUSO project leader Cees Kramer stated in 2011 that traditional playground organizations were not always happy about this: "They [traditional playgrounds, L.V.] have to play it by the rules, undergo inspections, follow mandatory courses et cetera. Then these new nature playgrounds show up, do their own thing and do not have to follow all the rules, which can be very frustrating for people who often have to keep a 'normal' playground running on a tight budget." In comparison to regular playgrounds, nature playgrounds profit from their position in the margins of regulations; maintenance on nature playgrounds is notably less time and cost consuming. Also, since there is no need to purchase expensive play equipment, a nature playground is relatively cheap to construct. (The construction of a traditional playground costs roughly between E300,000 and E500,000, while a nature playground can be built on a E100,000 budget.)

Through their sustainable profile and the ways they use natural resources to create play invitations, nature playgrounds have found a way to bypass the Law on Playgrounds and Play Equipment. The fuzzy conceptualization of play equipment versus "nature" can provide confusions for nature playground organizations, but at the same time facilitate a more open and relaxed way of working. Nature playgrounds are not operating on the outside, but in the margins of the law – in the gray area between safety and risks, regulation, and free initiative. In a time when creating a traditional playground is an expensive and complex undertaking, nature playgrounds offer an easier alternative. During interviews in 2014, playground protagonists noted that traditional neighborhood playgrounds have also started to utilize this margin in the law, by implementing elements of "natural play" within existing playgrounds. With innovative ways to sidestep strict safety regulations and a low time and cost ratio, nature playgrounds sound like relatively easily developed public facilities. Nevertheless, the next paragraph will demonstrate that the path to create a nature playground hardly runs ever smooth.

5   The Rise of the New Middle Classes

As seen before, Dutch local governments gradually withdrew from the production, management, and support of playgrounds, which meant that the contemporary issue of play space for children leans even heavier on the shoulders of civil organizations

than it did in the years before. As described by NUSO's chairman Kramer in 2011, "parents have started to take matters into their own hands."

Everywhere in the country, small groups have picked up on the issue of nature playgrounds. In Dedemsvaart, a former kindergarten teacher used her experience in children's play to think up a "nature discovery garden." (See www. dekleinetuinman.nl.) In Nijmegen, a couple – he a biologist and she an early learning specialist – was inspired by the German *Waldkinder* movement and started *Struin*, an ecological after-school care system. In Sliedrecht, an employee from Nature and Environment Education Centre *De Hooizolder* dreamt about creating an exciting natural play space on a "boring" field: nature playground *De Woeste Weide* opened its doors a year later (Van der Hoek and van Herrewegen 2005). Most existing nature playgrounds were thought up and conceptualized by individuals, small-scale neighborhood initiatives, or nongovernmental organizations with a sustainable profile.

The previously discussed new middle classes feature heavily in the nature playground movement. A wide variety of (sub)urban professionals with young children has been involved in adapting their neighborhood: teachers, communication, ICT and PR specialists, researchers, pedagogues, civil servants, et cetera. Nowadays, a certain amount of skills and knowledge is needed to guide a plan for a nature playground from a mere concept, through the development phase, to the actual realization of the plans. In a suburb neighborhood of Groningen, a young father used his career in journalism to write a clear-cut plan for a playground, and once it was opened in 2004 utilized his network in local media to generate publicity. One of the founders of the previously discussed Leiderdorp playground used to work as a communication officer for Schiphol airport and was involved in municipal politics. The chairman of playground *'t Weitje* in Hardinxveld-Giessendam explained how his work as a company researcher for a multinational has helped him in playground work:

> I'm used to writing reports and doing research. I just followed the same process: conduct literature research to find out more about a phenomenon and then writing a very detailed plan. I used the company format to write down our plans for the playground, and made it as specific as possible. What kind of play equipment we wanted to use, how much it was all going to cost. With this report, the municipality could not ignore us anymore, knew that we meant business and had to deal with us now.

Not only writing up plans but also presenting your case for the municipal council, writing funding requests to sponsors, submitting applications for all the necessary permits, and the general ability to navigate complex procedures all require a certain level of knowledge and professionalism. Interestingly, it is not only the expertise of the people themselves that proves to be crucial but also the professional and social networks they uphold and how they are able to mobilize them. In the case of playground *'t Weitje*, the board is made up of a group of close friends, who wanted a place to play for their own children. In 2011, every Saturday morning, the board members were working on the playground lot and, according to their chairman, "have lots of fun working with digging machines in the mud" (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 The playground board at work landscaping the terrain, 2007 (Photograph Het Weitje, Hardinxveld-Giessendam)

But the board also uses their wider social networks: the building of the club house was overseen free of charge by a local architect, a friend of one of the board members. Also, when communications with the local municipality turned hostile, someone had a very good corporate lawyer in their network, who was willing to write a defensive letter for the playground organization. In 2014, the playground has expanded its network even further: there are more volunteers involved in maintaining and supervising the playground, local sponsors (banks and businesses) have been attracted for funding, and primary schools make use of the playground during field trips.

These young, (sub)urban professionals are well aware of the ways they can use their professional and social networks to work toward the goal of developing a nature playground for their neighborhood. The NUSO also sees a trend here:

> In the old days, people used to be part of the same volunteering project in their neighborhood for years and years. Now, that type of volunteer work has almost entirely disappeared. The 'new volunteering' is different: instead of committing long-term to a time consuming project, people do little things that require expertise, such as building a website for a playground and then moving on. (Interview chairman NUSO 2011)

The "new volunteering" thrives on the extensive networks of the new middle classes. Yet, to develop a functioning nature playground does require a more intensive and time-consuming approach from a small group of dedicated individuals. Most nature playgrounds are run by a public-private initiative, made up of a civil society organization (neighbors, teachers, professionals, or an NGO focused on sustainability and the environment) and public governance (departments of the local municipality). Small-scale civil groups almost always are collaborating with

their municipalities to create and maintain their nature playgrounds. Sometimes it is the city council that plans a nature playground and then enlists a civil organization to build the playground, such as in Rotterdam district Hoogvliet, or builds a playground and then hands its over to be run by volunteers (playground *Woeste Westen*, Amsterdam), but most of the times a civil group needs public support to realize their playground plans. (A foundation focused on sustainability and environment, called Ark, developed the Ruige Plaat playground for the district council. After it was constructed and functioning well, Ark handed the playground over to the district for future management and maintenance (www.ark.eu).)

In studying nature playgrounds, an image arises of a complex and often strenuous relationship between local municipalities and these small-scale initiatives. For example, the Leiderdorp nature playground had been scheduled for opening in 2007, but was delayed for more than 3 years by permit applications, funding issues, and a noncooperative municipality:

> I have presented our plans for the city council, together with Sigrun Lobst [landscape architect for *De Speeldernis* in Rotterdam, L.V.] to show them that we are not the first people with this idea and how well it works in Rotterdam. Then we were told that the municipality did not want the responsibility of the playground, because of the large area of water in our plans: a child might drown. There are lots of "normal" playgrounds here next to water in Leiderdorp, and they do want to take responsibility for those. How is that more dangerous than our water? We experienced the same in the field of permits. "We've got a group of crazy individuals here, what should we do with them?" It was also an issue that someone else, other than exclusively civil servants, wanted to develop something for the city. Something really nice in essence, but also with an unknown and exciting development process. (Interview chairman Leiderdorp playground 2010)

Construction on the playground plot had finally begun in the spring of 2010, and playground *De Dwarstuin* was opened in the following year. According to the playground board, the relationship of the playground with the municipality has improved since then; the playground has proven itself as a neighborhood asset, drawing in large numbers of parents and children: "they know who we are now." A knowledge gap on what a nature playground would entail was an important facture in the lack of enthusiasm in most municipalities. Still, like other recreational facilities, nature playgrounds rarely receive municipal funding.

Despite a gradual acknowledgment of nature playgrounds as facilities in most Dutch cities, communication problems are still reported as an issue in 2014 – nature playground organizations simply want to start building and open a playground as soon as possible. Municipal departments move with a more sluggish pace and take months to process to permit requests. Construction on the Nijmegen nature playground *Struinlandje* was stopped in 2010: "I had a good relationship with department of Welfare and Sports and they said we could start digging, but apparently we needed to get a permit from Public Works too before we were allowed to build. Nobody ever told me (Interview chairman playground Struinlandje 2010)." As a result, the playground was delayed and finally ready for opening in late 2013.

Besides navigating the bureaucratic sphere, acquiring funding can be a complex process in its own right. First, an organization can write to several national,

regional, and local funds, which support children's play, sustainability, or other green projects. Sponsorship by local branches of commercial companies is widely used to supplement other funding. Banks, garden tools manufacturers, insurance agencies, cosmetic companies, and also local shops and entrepreneurs often donate an annual amount to nature playgrounds:

> We are a very cuddly initiative to support, something locally based, focusing on children and sustainability is of course very trendy nowadays. We try to stress that point in funding applications. (Interview board member *Takkenbende* in Deventer 2011)

Other ways of finding funding are often more creative, such as organizing a second hand furniture and clothing sale, going door to door, getting local primary schools, Scouts and daycare centers involved in sponsored sports competitions, et cetera. Even after all these efforts, budget is often tight and a lot of landscaping and construction is done by board members and neighborhood volunteers themselves. Furthermore, without (much) municipal support and/or funding, maintenance and supervision is mostly carried out by a network of volunteers.

The building and management of nature playgrounds are a complex undertaking, requiring a certain amount of knowledge, networking skills, motivation, and professionalism. The new middle classes, finding their neighborhood lacking in places to visit with their children, started their own playgrounds, creatively applying useful links in their social and professional network when needed. Relationships with local governments have improved since 2010, but can still be strenuous due to budget cuts, political shifts, and drawn-out bureaucratic processes. But it is not just a pragmatic persuasion that motivates these professionals to get involved in nature playgrounds; the next paragraph focuses on children's play in relationship with nature and shows its connection to the wider eco-trend of the past decade.

6   A Return to Nature: Slippery Stones, Muddy Shores, and Poisonous Plants

In Dutch (sub)urban neighborhoods, plots of unregulated, wild, overgrown, or unkempt land have become almost nonexistent. Climbing in trees, picking flowers, or building huts is not allowed in many places. All land, fields, woodlands, parks, and natural preserves are either publicly or privately owned and often use signs to explain the rules to visitors (Louv 2007): "No venturing outside the paths," "No open fires and smoking," "It is forbidden to pick flowers, branches, and shrubs," "no swimming," "it is forbidden to disturb the peace and quiet, or disturb birds and game," and "no dogs allowed without a leash." This tight regulation of the public domain has also had its effect on children's playgrounds. Simple, standardized, and low-maintenance play equipment, such as a slide, a sandbox, and one or two *wipkippen* are often the only things for children to play with within walking distance (Opbroek 2011).

Fig. 4 Two boys playing in the mud at nature playground Leiderdorp (Photograph Nature playground Leiderdorp)

As discussed previously, the steady growth and interest in Dutch nature playgrounds is part of the much larger, international eco-trend of the past decade. In the Netherlands, the rise of play facilities with a natural or eco-friendly starting point is an important part of its spatial manifestation. During interviews with board members of nature playgrounds, it quickly became clear that they not just wanted to create a place to play for local children but that the type of play itself was an important consideration. These parents wanted their children to venture away from the traditional sandboxes, slides, and swings and play in a stimulating environment (Fig. 4). For example, when discussing planting plans, the chairman of the Leiderdorp *Dwarstuin* playground stated in 2010:

> We will plant fruit trees to show children that fruit does not come pre-packaged from a supermarket. It sounds like the biggest cliché, but if you ask young children "where does food come from?" you will be shocked to hear their answers. We are also planting bramble bushes for two reasons: one is revenue, children can pick fruit and take it home, and the other is that it makes a great natural barrier to keep out vandals. [. . .] In the meadow, we want to encourage children to pick flowers. The flowers will also attract bees, which will lead birds to the playground. Let the children see what kinds of birds live here, how flowers and fruit grow!

Someone who would go even further in his views on natural play is the cofounder of Struin – the first Dutch ecological daycare center for primary school children, located in Nijmegen – and its accompanying nature playground *Struinland*. Children are picked up from school in small groups through the use of a group bicycle, which was designed especially for the job. Struin children always play outdoors regardless of weather conditions, and only in case of a severe

thunderstorm are the activities moved to an indoor location. Supervisors bike their group of children to local nature preserve areas (forests, river wetlands, lake beaches) for an afternoon of outdoor play. Since 2010, *Struin* has expanded to two more daycare locations and opened its nature playground. For its chairman the educational element of his nature playground is crucial:

> I have not removed poisonous plants in certain areas. Why? They grow outside the playground too. When we are outside with the children now, we show them different types of plants in a playful way. For example, we make poisonous 'witch soup' and edible soup from nettles and other things. That way they will learn themselves. The playground has supervision during opening hours of course, and we will keep poisonous plants away from the littlest ones, but that is all. [. . ..] A good variety of plants and wildlife is essential, so we are monitoring that. Another thing I would like to do – if possible - is bring in a dead animal's carcass and just leave it in a corner of the playground. That way, other animals are attracted and children can see how quickly things decay; it is beneficial for their understanding of life and death. (Interview Chairman playground Struinland 2014)

In comparison, other nature playgrounds carefully monitor and remove poisonous plants not only to prevent accidents but also to keep accountability clear and concise (Nelissen 2013). Yet even at *Struinland*, a supervisor keeps a watchful eye on the children and provides education about which plants are poisonous and which are not. In 2014, De Gruijter stated that despite his aspirations, current regulations still do not allow decaying of animal carcasses on the playground site.

The idea behind nature playground ideals is that children should grow and develop through experiences in natural environments. They should learn how to take risks again, "instead of sitting inside playing video games" (interview founder *Onlandje* in Groningen, 2011). A general *laissez-faire* on the playground is adopted. "If you fall from a stepping stone, you are going to get wet and dirty. When it has rained, tree trunks are wet and slippery and difficult to climb. If you fall from a tree in our playground, you might break something. That is not what we want to stimulate, but it is important that children regain that sort of knowledge" (Interview chairman '*t Weitje*, Hardinxveld-Giessendam 2014).

However, the balance between offering an exciting natural environment and the wish to keep children safe can be a complex struggle for nature playgrounds. Despite advocating risk-taking and learning-by-doing, nature playgrounds have to adhere to national safety guidelines for public places. Also, the matter of accountability (who is responsible when an accident happens?) ensures that nature playgrounds have to be careful in their decisions on designs, plants, and daily management: poisonous plants are (generally) removed, a supervisor keeps an eye on playing children during opening hours, all water is shallow and carefully monitored on quality, sharp edges of climbing trees are smoothed to avoid accidents, and shrubs are cleared to ensure better "sight lines" and enhance "social safety" (Nelissen 2013). Nature playgrounds offer children a chance to get reacquainted with nature, but it is a carefully regulated type of nature. The risks that the terrain provides are highly managed, offering children a regulated and controlled version of the natural environment.

7   Conclusion

In this chapter, the quick rise of Dutch nature playgrounds was explored; it grew from a handful of playgrounds in 2000 to 75 in 2014 and was backed by nonprofit organizations catering to "natural play" and national nature heritage affiliates. The nature playground movement in the Netherlands has firmly caught on. Against a backdrop of an increasing number of young families and a lack of playing facilities in (sub)urban neighborhoods, nature playgrounds filled a niche within the existing public domain. The rise of the Dutch nature playground movement can be understood in the context of three developments.

First, the stricter regulations on playgrounds and play equipment (1997) meant that all Dutch playgrounds had to adhere to new safety demands. From then on, playground building and management became a complex undertaking. Nature playgrounds are defined as "nature" first and "playground" second, so are in an interesting position on the margins of the laws on safety. Since 2010, even traditional neighborhood playgrounds have started experimenting with natural materials as ways to circumvent the strict regulations. Although the NUSO reported in 2008 that accidents on Dutch playgrounds had halved since the implementation of the Law on Play Equipment (NUSO 2008), both professionals and scholars are questioning if the islanding of (sub)urban children in risk-free areas has not gone a step too far. If children do not learn how to catch themselves when falling down, how will this influence their development into adults? Are taking certain risks not part of growing up? (Chawla et al. 2013; Papma 2013; Yet even nature playgrounds are careful in their offering risky play to children – adult supervision is common, so that unwanted or dangerous behavior can be quickly stopped. The balance between risks and freedom of play on the one hand and providing safe environments for children on the other remains a precarious one. An interesting question for anyone working in the field of children's play is how to find an equilibrium in this matter that appeases to children, parents, and professionals. How do you convince parents that they need to let their children play unsupervised, in a risk-management society? How do you get children to leave their tablets and laptops behind?

Second, the involvement of the self-organizing middle-class professionals is an important part of the Dutch playground movement. Parents, who are unsatisfied with their children's options in playgrounds, decide to apply their professional knowledge and skills to starting a nature playground. They rely on contacts from their social and professional network, which are crucial in getting the playground up and running. In their work on nature playgrounds, these young urban professional parents (yupps) are actively involved in giving meaning to and shaping the public domain of their (sub)urban neighborhood. The relationship between the civil organization of the playground and the local municipal government is another important factor, which has seen some gradual improvement in the period between 2010 and 2014; yet, due to different ways of working and communication problems between citizens and the city, the development of a nature playground can still be a long stretched-out affair. In further research, it would be interesting to focus more in detail on the ways these new middle classes use and shape their living

environments. Welfare state policies are a thing of the past in most Western countries, so community initiatives and projects gain more ground. Comparative research between play projects may help to discover what conditions are (not) helpful to create successful long-standing play provisions. Particularly important seems to be the handing over between generations. What happens to these voluntary efforts and community drive when the children of the first-generation activists reach the age of teenagers?

The development toward self-organization is part of the neoliberal policies in Western Europe and – more specifically in this case study – the shift to the "participation society" (*participatiesamenleving*) in the Netherlands. With the gradually shrinking of welfare state policies, the government expects a more active stance of its citizens (Van der Linden 2014). Citizens are supposed to make their own choices in life, with only a facilitating role for government institutions (Spiers and Duyvendak 2013). Critics of this model have remarked on its tendency to benefit already capable and knowledgeable citizens and exclude marginal groups in society (Plantenga 2007; Folkerts 2014). This does apply to the Dutch nature playground movement as well. This study reveals that while the nature playgrounds themselves are open to all neighborhood children, its founders, board members, and volunteers tend to be white, middle-class, well-educated professionals. And with nature playgrounds mostly located in suburban neighborhoods, many children growing up in low-income urban neighborhoods do not have access to the new recreational facilities. There is a risk that the provision of nature playgrounds in the Netherlands is serving the (sub)urban elite only.

The third factor in the nature playground movement, the choice for greener ways of playing, is related to "new" notions of bringing children closer to nature. As described, Dutch nature playgrounds can be seen as part of a larger Western trend to turn "back to nature" through ecological awareness and greening of lifestyles. Especially when it comes to children and child-rearing, worries about increasing obesity levels, a lack of a relationship with the natural environment, and not enough time spent simply playing outdoors are high on the agenda. Gill 2014; Woolley 2009; Bowler et al. 2010). However, even nature playgrounds, which strive to provide adventurous and "free" play for children in a natural setting (to show children what "real nature" looks, feels, tastes, and smells like), offer a highly regulated and preplanned environment. A nature playground is a space where children are allowed to be loud, dirty, and experimental, but within fixed limits. Its design decreases risks of natural play to acceptable levels, by the removal of poisonous plants, sharp edges, and deep water. The resulting nature playground offers a supervised, child-proofed, and highly stylized interpretation of "nature" and "the wild," often an echo of "that part of barren wasteland" on which playground protagonists themselves have played during their childhoods in the 1970s and 1980s. A more thorough study into the role that the social constructs of nature and "the right play" have on current development of playgrounds would be an interesting addition to the field. Every adult generation projects its vision of an ideal childhood playground onto the next generation. But contemporary children would benefit from a different approach, which also tries to take their interests into

account. What do children themselves think of nature playgrounds? Are there any possibilities to connect new play equipment (e.g., gaming, use of smartphones) with playing outdoors in nature-like settings?

This study into the young Dutch nature playground movement has presented an ambiguous picture of children's place in the public domain. Play spaces are becoming more regulated, formalized, and "islanded," even if the recognition that (sub)urban children are in need of more unstructured and stimulating spaces has firmly settled in public opinion. Nature playgrounds offer a compromise between traditional neighborhood playgrounds and the dominant nostalgic image of playing in nature: a safe, structured, supervised, twenty-first century interpretation of "wildernis," where children can reconnect with the natural environment, away from the concrete jungle indeed, but not quite as "free-range" as some protagonists would like.

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Young People's Play with Urban Public Space: Geographies of Hanging Out

11

Noora Pyyry and Sirpa Tani

Contents

Abstract

This chapter looks into young people's hanging out in the context of urban public space. Against a reviewed background of earlier research, the phenomenon is explored by discussing the privatization of public space that is taking place in Western countries. Due to "security talk" and widely shared notions of "safety," young people have few opportunities for independent mobility. Young people's lives are often highly scheduled with school and organized activities, and they are pushed to spend even their limited free time at places specifically appointed for them. They are thus spatially planned "out" from the public. As a result of this development, shopping malls and other commercial spaces that are considered safe have become important scenes in the geographies of hanging out. For that reason, the chapter gives special attention to hanging out that goes on in consumption spaces and the ways in which young people negotiate the boundaries of public and private. This discussion is connected both to

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considering young people's rights to the city and to evaluating urban spaces by their "tightness"/"looseness." Finally, hanging out is approached as play with urban space. While hanging out, young people "actively do nothing" and are thus open to changes of direction and to encounters with people and places. They creatively carve out space away from the adult gaze and, though often only momentarily, make "loose spaces." Hanging out thus adds to cultivating lively, mixed-use cities.

1 Introduction

This chapter explores an important realm of young people's urban life: hanging out with friends in public space. Hanging out is particularly interesting because of the critique of social order it entails. While hanging out young people escape the seriousness of the adult world. This is especially important, since today young people's lives are often highly structured around family life, school, and organized hobbies. Young people spend most of their time in activities that are planned and monitored by other people, most often adults. Time to just be without set goals or adult supervision is getting scarce. While teenagers normally have more freedom for independent mobility than younger children, their presence in public is often seen as a problem or threat, and therefore attempts are made to spatially exclude them (Lieberg 1995; Valentine 2004). Despite this, young people hang out in the city with their friends – even in places where they do not feel especially welcome. The social element of hanging out is important, since together with their friends, young people get to be playful and negotiate their rights to different spaces and ways of being in the city (Pyyry 2014). In this chapter, hanging out is approached in the context of urban public space, but the "geographies of hanging out" often do cover private spaces, as well. Indeed, the concept of public space is understood widely here; it often extends to private spaces such as shopping malls and other commercial places, which, even when they are privately owned, may often be used in similar ways as public spaces and can thus, at least momentarily, be transformed by young people's presence (Pyyry 2014; Tani 2014).

The geographies of hanging out are explored first by giving a brief overview of research relating to the subject. Then, the spatial elements of hanging out are explored. The focus is on urban space, although young people obviously also hang out in rural environments (see, e.g., Nairn et al. 2003). Discussion on "security" and the privatization of public space in Western countries is connected to probing the politics of public space and young people's rights to the city. Special attention is given to the role of commercial spaces in hanging out. The chapter then looks at some strategies that have been used "to plan young people out" from public space. This discussion relates to

evaluating urban spaces by their tightness/looseness. Finally, hanging out is approached as creative play that entails the potential to make loose spaces and cultivate vibrant, mixed-use cities.

To reflect on the theoretical viewpoints to exploring the geographies of hanging out, vignettes from two case studies are illustrated in this chapter. Fieldwork for the studies was conducted in two urban areas of different scales and contexts: Helsinki, Finland, and San Francisco, USA. The aim was to shed light to the varying policies of regulation and to the actual use of public space by young people.

In the Finnish case, hanging out was studied as an ongoing dialogue between teenagers who spent their free time in a shopping mall and its surroundings in the city center of Helsinki (Tani 2014). Nine girls and six boys took part in the research in 2010. The participants (15–19 years old) were asked to take photographs on their hanging out, after which the photographs were used in photo-elicited interviews conducted with them. In the interviews young people told the researcher about their hanging out, about their reasons for spending time in commercial spaces, about their ideas of the mall as a hang-out place, as well as about their encounters and confrontations with other people while hanging out. In addition to the material produced by the young people, some adults were also interviewed: these included some local police officers, youth workers, and management of the mall.

In the US study, participatory research was conducted with teenage girls on their hanging out practices and the engagements that are formed with places while spending time in the city. The fieldwork took place in San Francisco in the spring of 2012 with ten participants from 12 to 13 years of age. The research was conducted partly in school premises but separately from schoolwork. Themes relating to hanging out were discussed with the researcher in various encounters. After doing mind mapping on hanging out, the participants conducted photo walks in the city during which they took pictures of their hanging out and places that matter to them. These were later discussed in photo talks with the researcher (Pyyry 2013). The participants also drew mental maps of San Francisco and organized a photo exhibition at their school as a closure of the project.

2   Earlier Research

Spatial elements of young people's hanging out have previously been studied in the context of both urban outdoor and indoor spaces. Lieberg (1995), for example, investigated young people's hanging out in suburban and city center surroundings. He was interested in finding out what types of spaces "peer group-oriented" young people found attractive for hanging out, what kinds of activities were connected to their favorite hang-out places, and what were the possible differences between girls' and boys' ways of using these spaces in their free time. Based on his empirical study conducted in Sweden, he identified two types of spaces – or ways to use spaces – that were important for young people: they needed both special *places of retreat* and *places of interaction*. With places of retreat, he referred to teenagers'

need to withdraw from the adult world to the world of their peers. These places could be created, for instance, by gathering in parks with other young people and thus reclaiming the space as a kind of a "backstage" space. Lieberg was referring to Goffman's metaphor of theater, where the individuals in the city could be seen as actors on stage and backstage of a play (see Goffman 1963). With places of interaction, he referred to young people's need to gather in places where they could see and be seen, to put themselves on display, to meet, and to confront the adult world – by using Goffman's terms, in these places, young people were "on stage" for others (Lieberg 1995, p. 740).

Young people's ways of using outdoor spaces have been studied by many researchers (e.g., L'Aoustet and Griffet 2004; Valentine 2004; Gearin and Kahle 2006; van Blerk 2013). L'Aoustet and Griffet (2004) investigated young people's hanging out in a public park in Marseille in southern France. Based on their ethnographic study, the researchers stressed the importance of hanging out in teenagers' lives as a way in which they learned to live together and socialize with their peers. For these young people, the park was not just a place that offered a break from daily routines but also a place for kinesthetic experiences such as various types of play and sports. At the same time, it was also a place where people from different generations could meet each other and negotiate the ways in which the space was used. Young people rarely came to the park alone but usually with their friends from school or their neighborhood.

Gearin and Kahle (2006) studied perceptions of parks and other urban green spaces in Los Angeles and compared teenagers' and adults' visions of the issue. They found out that young people emphasized the importance of spaces where socializing and relaxation was possible, while adults were stressing the need for recreation-oriented parks planned for young people. In young people's visions, it was important that park spaces offered opportunities for multiple uses, both for activities and informal gatherings. They were also interested in spaces that were often overlooked by the adults; these included, for example, some alleyways and tunnels in the area.

Territoriality has been understood as a means of group forming and a statement of belonging. Hanging out has sometimes been looked at in relation to adult attempts to restrict young people's ways of being. This kind of "intergenerational conflict" has been reported, for example, by Pickering and colleagues (2012), who conceptualize hanging out as a way to construct place attachment and social identities. In their study that was based on a fieldwork carried out in six British cities, it was illustrated how territoriality worked as a "super place attachment," increasing young people's feelings of knowing "everyone" in their neighborhood and being safe there but also limiting their mobility.

Some of the existing literature on young people's hanging out has concentrated on tracing the connections of subcultural styles and identities with spaces where free time is spent (e.g., McCulloch et al. 2006) and on the processes of territorialization (e.g., Childress 2004; Leonard 2006; Travlou et al. 2008; Pickering et al. 2012). McCulloch and colleagues (2006) studied young people spending their free time in outdoor spaces in Edinburgh and Newcastle, UK, and found out

that a sense of belonging to a group was usually important to young people. The researchers also found social background to be a notable factor in young people's experiences of youth cultures. In their study, youth subcultures did not seem to be as fluid as some other researchers, especially Bennett (1999), have suggested.

Also van Lieshout and Aarts (2008), who conducted their study among youth and immigrants in the Netherlands, suggest that public spaces are important settings for strengthening "group identities." Spending time in the public – at parks, streets, and commercial spaces – offered these young people some freedom (away from parental supervision), but it also made it possible for them to maintain anonymity among other users of the same space (van Lieshout and Aarts 2008, pp. 501–509). Public spaces were important for these people because they served as social gathering places, where "things can happen."

Today, commercial spaces are popular gathering places for young people. Already in 1992 Margaret Crawford wrote about the growingly important role of shopping malls in Western culture in *The World in a Shopping Mall*. Crawford (1992) argued that the ethos of consumption is now a part of every sphere of life. By consuming, status is shown to others. This is especially noticeable with teenagers, who do not have an official status in the society yet. Hierarchies that are shown through style (and consumption) have become highly important. Advertisers have picked on this and they now market an endless amount of products to children and teens.

Yet, in one of the very early studies of shopping malls as hanging out places, Anthony (1985) found out that teenagers who spent a large amount of their free time in commercial spaces did not use much money while they were hanging out. This study in Los Angeles hence showed that even when hanging out takes place at a shopping mall, it is not always (directly) connected with consumption. Hanging out is first and foremost a social phenomenon. Still, the intensity of advertising and the consumption culture that surrounds young people while hanging out should not be underestimated. In large part due to the notion of "security," young people are pushed to hang out at shopping malls and other commercial places that are considered safe. Before exploring hanging out at these privatized spaces, young people's rights to the city in the era of "security talk" are considered.

3 Security Talk and the Privatization of Public Space: Young People's Rights to the City?

The leisure time of Western youth has become heavily regulated and young people are not allowed to explore their environments as freely as before. Adult control and surveillance have greatly increased in children's lives in the past decades (Gill 2008). When they gain age, teenagers often have more freedom for independent mobility without parental supervision, but they are placed under other forms of regulation and surveillance. "Security" has become a fashion word and the spaces for exploring (the world and the "self") are getting scarce (e.g. Katz 2006, Koskela 2000).

When fear is directing adult thinking and urban planning, there is a danger of trying to keep young people closely supervised at all times. Especially girls from lower social economic backgrounds have fewer chances to spend their free time in the city – they do not have the money to be hanging out at private recreational spaces (that are regarded as safe), and they also have less freedom than boys to explore their environments due to stereotypical gender expectations and the perceived dangerousness of the city. Young people quickly internalize commonly shared ideas about danger and safety. Media reports of crimes against children help further socialize young people into the security talk. Pyyry (2015, pp. 157–158) illustrates an interesting event from a research encounter with one of the teenage participants in San Francisco:

> Reflecting on her everyday routes a participant told me: 'My mom is very protective . . . so I realize that I really do only go to places that are kind of routine . . . so for the past three years we have been going out to the same 24th Street Starbuck's.' We went on to talk about the issue of safety and how parents are often afraid of letting girls walk in the city on their own. Suddenly, a man rushed in and interrupted our discussion by telling her: 'Excuse me, your mother is outside in tears. You don't have your phone on!' To which she replied: 'I do have my phone on!' The man (her father, as I later learned) continued: 'Well, you're not answering . . . I'll be back in five. Keep your phone on!' She told me that both of her parents knew where and when the interview was taking place. She explained that this type of supervision is normal in her life.

As the girl's words suggest, fear leads to reduced use of urban space. Girls, and young people in general, end up having limited options for independent mobility. This development has had negative impacts on young people's well-being (Gill 2008). Limited opportunities to use urban space can also be a result of labeling young people as dangerous or threatening. This way, their discrimination is legitimized. Teenagers have come to suffer from the dualist nature of the security talk; they are seen as either a threat or helpless and pure victims to be saved (Valentine 2004). Aitken (2001, pp. 33–36) points out that young people are often seen to be somehow essentially closer to nature and thus wild – and a little threatening, too. When we think of teenagers, we easily think they should be controlled exactly because of this wild nature. Most of the places where young people spend their time at are controlled by adult surveillance: schools, playgrounds, gyms, and malls are all under the adult gaze. Many Western cities and towns have implemented curfews for young people. Malone (2007) has called today's youth "the bubble-wrap generation," since many young people are growing up in highly controlled environments, with very little left to their own imagination. Free, open-ended, public spaces where young people can *be* different and find alternative ways of expression seem to be diminishing from Western cities (Pyyry 2014).

The opportunities for youth leisure are also getting heavily privatized. Especially in the USA, many recreational areas charge people for entering. This places a large part of the population as outsiders. When public spaces are being privatized, it is reasonable to ask what this means for young people. Jackson (1998) has talked about the domestication of public space: risks of unplanned encounters are reduced

and the familiarity of privatized places promoted. Malls and other commercial places, like cafes, bring the feeling of home to urban space. Because of their perceived safety and the seductiveness of consumerism, they have become the "living room" of many (urban and suburban) young people today. Many parents feel comfortable letting their teenage children hang out at malls that bring the suburbia (they are safe and clean) to the city – or a little bit of a city (many people in one place) to the suburbia. Although a mall can be conceptualized as public space – because it often functions as a city center – it still is privately owned, and the exclusion of the unwanted is a part of its success. The mall offers its customers a controlled, pleasing, and safe space that seems public and inviting but is not that for everyone. Sibley (1988) has called this action of selecting the "public" *the purification of space* (cit. Mahtani 2011).

   This development has had an enormous effect on urban planning. There are more and more spaces in city centers that resemble malls. Not only city centers but also hotels, office buildings, and museums mimic the format of the mall. Most museums today offer visitors vast opportunities for purchasing various objects connected to the actual art displayed at the museum, making the experience very similar to strolling through a mall. The fact that cities are turning into shopping malls affects everyone spending time or moving through urban space. Theorists like Foucault (e.g., Crampton and Elden 2007), and many after him, have recognized the role of architecture in constructing subjectivities. Bickford (2000, p. 356) states that contemporary practices of city building that claim to add to the safety and cleanness of urban public space are dangerous because they lead to segregation. As the public domain has become more and more commercial, young people, among others, are expected to demonstrate their viability as consumers to rightfully enter it. When leisure time is being heavily programmed (by adults), there are no "real excuses" for young people to be hanging out in public. Harris (2004, p. 164), among others, convincingly argues that the terms "customer" and "client" are replacing "citizen" in health care, education, living, and employment, so that people now have to negotiate their rights as individual consumers with private companies dealing with all these fields in many countries. For young people today, this situation is all they really know. In the next section, hanging out in these consumption spaces is explored in more detail.

4   Consumption Spaces and Hanging Out

As mentioned in the introduction, young people do not have much time to just hang out with their friends. One girl in San Francisco explained that she sees her friends outside of school and organized activities only "probably once or twice every other weekend, but it's hard because this generation has a lot of activities, all my friends have their soccer games as well as, like, other activities and tournaments." When she does meet her friends to just hang out, it usually takes place at someone's home or at a shopping mall. The situation was similar with the other participants of the

study. The amount of organized activities, together with the internalized ideas of safety, directs young people's hanging out practices. It is easy to meet at the mall, where most parents feel comfortable letting their teenagers spend time at. Also, as a girl in Helsinki described, shopping malls are often "established" meeting places for young people: "and because all the friends are here, so it is of course more interesting [to be] here than at home or in my neighborhood" (Tani 2014, p. 10).

Ergo, shopping malls are accessible to most young people. But the lure of a mall is not accidental. Advertisers and planners are clever in seducing people with the new and creating a cozy, homelike atmosphere (Pyyry 2014). Also, the shopping mall offers a climatized and stabilized environment throughout the year, whether the need is for an escape from winter or the relief that air conditioning brings in warmer regions. Vanderbeck and Johnson (2000) studied young people living in economically distressed neighborhoods in a southeastern city in the USA. In this case, the shopping mall was favored because it brought young people a feeling of possibilities and choice that their everyday surroundings could not offer. The role of shopping malls should hence be examined in the broader context of young people's lives yet with keeping in mind the power of the consumption culture.

There is great variation between countries and cultural contexts in considering young people's rights to use shopping malls to hang out. This depends on shared understandings and definitions of public space. As mentioned before, some researchers have defined consumption spaces as "public" even though they are normally owned and monitored by private companies (e.g., Vanderbeck and Johnson 2000; Thomas 2005). By this definition, the researchers want to highlight the fact that despite the private ownership, people use these spaces as if they were public. Malls today include elements that are considered part of public life, such as streets (or pathways that are build to look like streets), "parks," libraries, chapels, and employment offices, together with museums and other cultural attractions to invite even the most demanding of audience. In this regard, they can be considered to be public space. Many private companies also rent office space from malls, so there might be hundreds of people who will spend their entire day inside a single mall: have lunch, do their grocery shopping, and run other errands there. Some malls have housing built inside them, so they truly are a world complete in itself (Crawford 1992).

Other researchers, however, have emphasized the blurred character of public-private divide in shopping malls. In many countries, for example, in Australia, as Voyce (2006) has shown, increased surveillance and various exclusive practices have turned public spaces increasingly private in many shopping malls and gated communities. However, Voyce has also noted that the private ownership does not necessarily mean that people would treat these spaces as such; they can therefore be called semipublic spaces or "quasi-public properties." For example, the shopping mall, despite it may be privately owned and effectively monitored by security companies, is dependent on maintaining some elements of openness, since the "access by the public is the very reason for its existence" (for the definition of the quasi-public properties, see Gray and Gray 1999). At the same time, however, as

Voyce (2006, p. 277) has noted, the owners of a shopping mall can decide to exclude "whomever they wish from their property," i.e., purify the space for their purposes.

Young people hanging out at shopping malls often test the boundaries of private, semipublic, and public spaces with their presence. Even though they usually do not cause any harm to the building or other users, they can be easily excluded from the space. Some of the reasons for evicting young people from malls can be their (perceived) loudness and their habit of gathering in big groups on busy walkways, thus blocking the way of other people. Shopping malls offer youth groups a convenient setting for meeting up, as one girl in Helsinki explained: "this is an opportunity; here you can have as many friends as you like; if I'd like to invite twenty friends to our place, it would be a bit difficult. It is easier here" (Tani 2014, p. 10).

Often, young people's need to socialize with their peers is acknowledged, but they are still labeled as "not welcome" by many. This controversial attitude toward young people may reflect their positioning in-between "childhood" and "adulthood": they are not considered to be children but not yet adults either. The framing of young people contradictorily both as innocent "angels" who still need adult protection and as obnoxious little "devils" who question the existing norms of the society can be seen in reactions they cause while hanging out in urban space (see, e. g., Malone 2002; Valentine 2004; Weller and Bruegel 2009; van Blerk 2013; Brown 2013). Matthews and others (2000) explored the importance of a shopping mall as a location for teenagers' hanging out in the East Midlands of the UK. They concentrated mostly on the confrontations between young people and adults who were using the same commercial spaces. It was shown that young people's presence was often regarded as inappropriate or uncomfortable by the adults. Hanging out and being visible despite the unwelcoming adult reactions were seen as an act of asserting a right of presence. The shopping mall worked as a "third space" for them; it was a place where, according to the researchers (2000, p. 292), young people could "construct their identities" with their peers and, by doing it, "question the spatial hegemony of adulthood."

Young people's hanging out in commercial spaces also questions the boundaries of "public" and "private." It is important to bear in mind that there is often no clear division between public and private space, rather, the boundaries are fluid. This is not to say that the privatization and regulation of public space have not been an intensifying trend for a long time in many countries (see, e.g., Davis 1990; Sorkin 1992; Mitchell 1997, 2003), as was described earlier. Still, hanging out at shopping malls or other commercial spaces is not all about consuming. It is, first and foremost, about being with friends and having fun. Therefore, by hanging out, young people can momentarily interfere with the atmosphere of consumption: they replace it with a mood of friendship and play (Pyyry 2014). Hanging out as a form of playful spatial criticism will be attended to later on, but before that some examples of efforts to actively keep young people out of public space are illustrated.

5   Efforts to Plan Young People "Out"

Aitken (2001, p. 151) points out that when young people are kept in acceptable "islands" (places appointed specifically for their use), they are spatially outlawed by society. He stresses that it is important for young people to have time and space to just hang out with their friends without ready-made schedules, away from adult supervision. Despite a growing awareness of this need, policy-makers and urban planners are often eager "to plan young people *out* of public spaces" (Skelton and Gough 2013, p. 460). "Planning out" can be done by creating tightly regulated spaces with design. In the context of young people in the city, this effort is visible, for example, in places that are especially catered for them. For example, skateboarding and parkour parks are normally designed so that the planned purpose of the space is easily identified from the physical looks of the place. Even when young people value these special places and have, in many cases, participated in their planning, they still do not see them as substitutes for urban public spaces – streets, squares, and others – which they use creatively for hanging out. This has been shown by, e.g., Woolley and Johns (2001) and Chiu (2009) in the case of skateboarding and by Ameel and Tani (2012) in the context of parkour. On the contrary, young people think that both kinds of spaces are needed: specially planned parks can be perfect for rehearsing tricks and building up basic skills that have to do with a sport, while the street and other public spaces are needed for social interaction and just hanging out.

"Planning out" can also be realized by strictly excluding young people from public space. This can be done, for example, by introducing some bylaws, by using some prohibition signs ("no skating," "no rollerblading," "no loitering"), by building physical obstacles (e.g., skate deterrents), or by using some other ways that could make young people leave a place (see, e.g., Woolley 2006). Classical music has been used in many places where young people are not welcome. Another attempt to keep young people away by using sounds has been a British invention, the *Mosquito*, a device producing a high-pitched sound that cannot be heard by older people but is uncomfortable to young ears (Walsh 2008). Young people are also often excluded by constant control by the security staff of commercial spaces. All these attempts can be seen as part of the process where boundaries between public and private spaces have turned increasingly blurred and where multiple strategies to keep unwanted people out from these spaces are used. These include, for example, gated communities, curved benches (preventing their use for sleeping), sprinkler systems to hose the lawns or stairs in order to prevent people to sit down, etc. (see Németh 2009; Brown 2013). A teenage boy in Helsinki described this common system of eviction: "last year when we were sitting there [on the stairs near the main entrance of the complex] the guard hosed the stairs when we were blocking the way, he told us to leave and then they hosed them" (Tani 2014, p. 17).

For many young people who hang out in shopping malls, the blurred boundaries of public and private spaces, even when they may be unnoticeable for adults using the same space (and who are welcome there), are often *felt*. This invisible spatial

politics is indeed highly *affectual*: young people are made to feel that they are not welcome at shopping malls or other places. Often just an unwelcoming glance from a sales person or security guard is enough. As one girl in San Francisco framed it, "they're not as civil [to teenagers]." In the case of the research conducted at the mall in the city center of Helsinki, the young respondents were very aware of the area that was under the control of a private security company and where regulative practices were under the control of the police. There were cases reported by youth workers of occasions where young people were playing cat-and-mouse games with security guards: sometimes when young people were evicted from the mall, they left for a short while and then entered through another entrance. Often young people simply "jumped over" the invisible line that divided the private space monitored by the guards and public space where they felt they had a right to be. With these actions, young people were playing with not only the patience of the guards but also with the elasticity and "tightness" of the space. In the next section, the concepts of tight and loose space are approached in the context of hanging out in the city.

6   Loose and Tight Spaces in the City

In addition to looking at urban spaces through the continuum of public and private, they can be evaluated by their potential for diverse use. This potential can be explored by analyzing the looseness/tightness of a space. These concepts were first used in the literature of the 1970s architecture and interior design (Sommer 1974, cit. Franck and Stevens 2007). The concept of "tight space" was connected to the so-called hard architecture. This referred to spaces with only one possible usage: the space was designed so that it could be used effectively for its purpose, but at the same time, other applications or possible ways to use it became difficult or even impossible. Traditional churches and classrooms serve as examples of this kind of tightness: chairs were placed in rows so that the people sitting there were facing the same direction, toward a priest or a teacher, who could speak to all the listeners from the front of the room. In its most inflexible mode, furniture could be bolted to the floor so that it could not be moved at all. In "soft architecture" the idea was the opposite: spaces were designed so that they could be used for multiple purposes and therefore the furniture had to be moveable and reorganizable when needed.

Later on, Franck and Stevens (2007) have applied the concepts in urban studies. For them, tight spaces refer to spaces that are planned only for one type of use and where other possible uses are either not possible or at least not tolerated. Well-ordered public spaces are often exclusive; they feel safe and welcoming only to a relatively small group of people. However, in certain situations the planned tightness of a space seems reasonable; for example, traffic runs smoothly when different modes of transport have their own lines and all the users know how to act and are willing to obey the rules. There are, however, also situations where challenging the tightness of a space becomes understandable: for example, market squares or

pedestrian streets may be used not only for their primary purposes (markets for selling some items; pedestrian streets for walking) but also for something else. Often the presence of buskers and street vendors is tolerated in cities, sometimes even welcomed. The loose boundaries create an easy access to the scene and make the space inviting for people to play games and just have fun. These types of spaces are not strictly zoned for any particular single use, and they allow for a wide range of activities from selling and buying to social interaction. Many of the elements in these spaces are semifixed (like push carts, stools, umbrellas, and self-made signs), and the sensory world is complex and often intriguing. Commercial activities and hanging out enmesh. The space becomes interesting due to the diversity of use, due to its looseness. In urban spaces that are used in multiple ways, a single activity can draw in others and create a spontaneous environment, where possibilities for expression flourish. Both adaptability and flexibility are important aspects of a loose space, but according to Fernando (2007, pp. 56–68), especially adaptability is central in enabling different uses of spaces without requiring any permanent changes to their form or scale.

Also Franck and Stevens (2007, p. 2) emphasize that the physical character and its planned use are not the most important elements in defining looseness or tightness of a place but "it is people's actions which make a space loose, with or without official sanction and with or without physical features that support those actions." Spaces can be considered truly loose only if they are open to all people. A loose space thus has little to do with landscape but everything to do with accessibility. From the viewpoint of teenagers hanging out in public, tightness and looseness can be explored on the basis of what kinds of reactions their presence will cause to other people. When young people spend their time, for example, in shopping malls, and when they are allowed to be there, the space in the mall space can be regarded as loose and tolerant. Even when the premises are originally designed for commercial purposes, it can be understood that some of their users (in this case, the young people) may have other intentions and they may be left in peace there.

Teenagers test the looseness of spaces with their actions. They may use the space in an unconventional way: they often spend their time in cafés of a mall without buying anything, or they may sit on the floor or stairs close to the lively walkways (see Tani 2014). Sometimes they are chased away from there by the security of the mall, but often they return after a short while. When this type of cat-and-mouse game is continuously repeated and when the young people's presence may be gradually more tolerated, their action (or inaction, see Pyyry 2015) can make the space looser. In some other cases, reactions that their presence can cause in other people can be the opposite: their hanging out may be seen causing some disturbance – they being too loud or maybe using the commercial space without spending any money there – and therefore they can be evicted from the mall. When this happens repeatedly, the space has become tighter. Next, hanging out is approached as play "with" the city, as a noninstrumental way of being that entails the potential for spatial transformation.

7   Hanging Out as Creative Play with Urban Space

Studying hanging out from adult perspectives has sometimes included attempts to find "meanings" for the phenomenon. As a consequence, hanging out has often been framed instrumentally as serving a purpose of some kind. Well-meant analyses have explained the importance of spending time with peers from some developmental perspective. An underlying idea of social and emotional development and "growth" has guided the thinking. Yet, as Lee and Motzkau (2011) note, young people's lives should be considered important as such, and they should hence not be conceived primarily as "human futures." Horton (2010) also points out that young people do not generally talk about their lives by reflecting on *meanings*. Rather, they focus on how things *feel* and, by this, show what *matters* to them. So, hanging out matters even when it might not seem to mean that much. Often hanging out with friends is simply fun. This feeling is essential, since much of life is experienced through everyday practice such as hanging out, and playfulness can foster ethics and care (Bennett 2001).

Stevens (2007) talks about "urban play," when he explores the ways in which people extend the boundaries of everyday life. He distinguishes adult play from children's, since for a child, play is the primary function she/he is supposed to pursue. It is thus accepted and even cherished. It is also a supervised action that often happens at specially appointed areas. Children's play is encouraged in Western cultures – often because it is considered important for their "development" and "growth" – but the rules get tighter when people gain age. Young people's play, especially in the form of hanging out, is often labeled as unwanted "loitering." Teenagers are entering the world of adults and are often supposed to use even their "free" time for something purposeful. Mere play is generally seen as opposite to the behavior of adults, since it involves actions that are noninstrumental – play is wonderfully purposeless. It is contrasted with productive work and it often involves encounters with strangers. Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 157) note that in their liveliness, cities are full of possibilities for improvisation and play. Hanging out in the city often taps into these possibilities.

Because it requires (and makes) time and space for changes of direction, playfulness can be regarded as openness toward one's surroundings (Pyyry 2014). Therefore, rather than being a specific form of behavior, playfulness should be understood as a "mode" that can be cultivated toward anything in life (Thrift 2000, p. 221). Rautio and Winston (2013, p. 2) underline the "relevance of playing conceptualized as intra-active: re-entangled and complicated, undefinable and deindividualistic." Conceptualized these ways, play can be considered valuable as such, instead of thinking of it as an instrument for "development" or "progress" of children toward maturity. Play, and similarly hanging out, is then critique of the idea of always having to be productive. Therefore, playfulness as a mode of being does not need to be viewed as a means to any developmental or transformational end but rather as receptivity toward the world that can foster ethical sensitivity and care for others, human and nonhuman (see Bennett 2001).

While hanging out, young people often enter this flexible mode of playfulness. They meet their friends, often just shifting from one location to another. What matters is being together. Sometimes just sitting in a cozy place talking is enough, as one of the participants in San Francisco described when discussing a photograph: "This is the Starbuck's on 24th street. This is probably the place my friends and I go to most often, because we can relax and talk without being bothered. It is comforting to know there is a place like that." Hanging out is important precisely because it is the rare time when young people can simply be together without having any predetermined goals. Even when young people spend time at shopping malls or other commercial spaces, they often do not have fixed plans for shopping or other "activities." Rather, they "actively do nothing" (Pyyry 2014). In this mode, it can be argued that young people are affectively engaged with their surroundings and receptive to what is going on. While hanging out, young people are generally open to changes of direction, to the new and unpredictable, and to encounters with people and places. Hanging out can be understood as creative involvement with urban space: young people make the city their playground via everyday practice. Often they do this without much reflection. Just as skateboarders or parkour practitioners (Ameel and Tani 2012) use space creatively, groups of young people are creative in figuring out ways to carve out space away from the adult gaze to make places their *own* (Pyyry 2014).

By escaping the adult supervision, young people create *backstages* where they feel relaxed to hang out (Lieberg 1995). Sometimes they take over and appropriate space for themselves, by action but often by their mere presence. Typically these backstages are parking lots, tunnels, hidden corners, hallways, and so on. But bubbles of privacy can be built even under the adult gaze: backstages can be formed while being *on stage* – sometimes loud music is enough to create a feeling of privacy at a shopping mall or other crowded places, as one girl in San Francisco described when talking about a food court at a mall: *It's a cozy environment*, *as in*, *you know there are a lot of people there and everybody's sitting*, *everybody's talking*. *It's definitely comfortable.* She added: *I guess the noise sort of adds to the atmosphere*, *cause I find when it's quiet*, *it's really awkward*...*cause you don't wanna*...*be heard*. In this place, she feels, *you sort of blend in*, *so you don't feel too out there*, *like the only one talking* (Pyyry 2015, p. 159). Building a backstage can hence be just momentary, and it is created together with everything that goes on there and then. Hanging out happens "with" the space: young people are affectively engaged with their surroundings and the space produces them just as they produce the space (Pyyry 2015).

Claiming and appropriating space through play and creative engagement with the city can transform the space toward openness. When the city is used in nonconventional ways, it can gradually become more welcoming to different kinds of use and people. Hanging out entails the power to disturb taken-for-granted routines and boundaries and can therefore add to the liveliness and vibrancy of the city. Looked at this way, hanging out can be understood as a practice of everyday spatial criticism that has the possibility to loosen urban space (Pyyry 2014; Tani 2014). With small, momentary practices, young people take and make spaces, play

with them, and have fun. Although momentary and often unnoticed, these everyday practices are important: they are powerful, because they are repetitive and ongoing. Without romanticizing the potential of these practices, they should be recognized as part of the power relations of everyday life (Pyyry 2015). Just as all spaces, also spaces of hanging out are complex and fluid: they change over time and, as stated, sometimes by the moment. Even spaces that may seem fixed and finished have the potential for change (Horton et al. 2011). Private spaces are transformed toward "public" by hanging out – by bending the written and unwritten rules young people push the boundaries of accepted behavior. Loose spaces are created.

8   Conclusion

In this chapter, the geographies of hanging out were explored first by taking a look at earlier research. In the past decades, hanging out has been studied through the themes of identity and group formation, the related aspects of territoriality and belonging, often as a social but also a spatial phenomenon.

Against this background, the chapter looked at the increasing privatization of urban spaces and young people's rights to be hanging out in the (privatized) public. Because city centers and places for youth leisure are in a process of being heavily commercialized, spaces for just hanging out are disappearing from Western cities. Also, young people's lives are often highly scheduled with organized activities, and they are not allowed to explore their environments as freely as before. Although the geographies of hanging out are complex and young people spend time in many types of places in the city, the role of commercial spaces is central today. This is due to shared and tightened notions of safety but also to the seductiveness of advertising and the consumption culture that surrounds young people. With very little spare time on their hands, it is easy to meet at the mall, where most parents allow them to hang out without supervision. For this reason, hanging out at shopping malls and other consumption spaces should be studied more in the future. Another theme in need for closer examination is the materialization of "security talk" and the effects that it has on young people's everyday practices.

Shopping malls are privately owned and monitored. This places young people under constant adult surveillance, not only at home, school, and organized activities but also while hanging out with their peers. Young people are often evicted by security guards or made to feel unwelcome in more subtle ways by using prohibition signs, *Mosquito* devices, hosing, or simply by arrogant treatment. Young people are planned "out" from public space. This process includes efforts to keep young people in places that are specifically appointed for their use (skate parks, parkour parks, youth clubs, etc.). Research on these highly affectual and often invisible acts of spatial (bio)politics would open up discussion on different people's rights to the city and on acceptable use of urban space.

Despite the monitoring, young people question the adult rules and test the boundaries of private and public with their presence: they play cat-and-mouse games with security guards, gather in large groups, "loitering" and not consuming,

and interfere with the atmosphere of consumption. In this chapter, hanging out was approached as creative play with urban space. Rather than understanding play as a type of behavior, playfulness is a "mode" that can be developed toward anything in life. Play is noninstrumental, wonderfully purposeless, and important in itself. While hanging out, young people "actively do nothing" and are thus open to improvisation, to encounters with people and places. They imaginatively carve out space away from the adult gaze and make "backstages" for themselves. Hanging out hence entails the potential for spatial transformation. By their action, or rather inaction, young people create momentary loose spaces by engaging with these highly normative places. Therefore, in addition to encouraging young people's participation in planning processes organized by adult decision-makers, their existing ways of involvement should receive more attention from geographers and other researchers.

The privatization of public space has greatly affected urban planning. There are more and more spaces in cities that look and feel like shopping malls. These highly functional and regulated spaces, together with many single-function places, like playgrounds and skate parks, make monitoring (young people's) lives easier. This can add to the perceived safety of the city. But if the city consists mainly of spaces of separate functions, it will be not only unequal but also boring. Complex, multilayered urban spaces are much more interesting and they help foster heterogeneity. Clearing space for young people's hanging out helps in cultivating lively, convivial urban spaces for others, as well. When the city opens up for diverse use, the coexistence of different people becomes effortless and appreciated. New knowledge of the ways in which children and young people dwell with their everyday urban spaces is needed in order to promote everyone's right to the city.

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Children's Play in their Local Neighborhoods: Rediscovering the Value of Residential Streets

12

Paul Tranter

Contents

Abstract

Residential streets have the potential to be a critically important space for children's recreation, arguably more important for their well-being than the special purpose spaces adults have designed for children's play. However, not only have residential streets been largely lost to children as play space, they have attracted relatively little attention in children's geography and related disciplines compared with other urban spaces such as school grounds, playgrounds, and shopping malls. The loss of access to their residential streets has significantly reduced children's opportunities for creative, self-directed, spontaneous, and

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interactive play, with negative consequences for their health and well-being. Tranter and Doyle (Int Play J 4:81–97, 1996) made a case for reclaiming the residential street as play space for children. This chapter further develops this case and shows how many of the ideas in this chapter have been taken up in more recent research, and some of their recommendations for policy and practice have been implemented in cities throughout the world. In many cities, there has been a rediscovery of the function of the street beyond its role as a conduit for cars; the street is now seen, legitimately, as a place for social interaction, learning, and play. While cars still dominate most residential streets, the case remains strong for the argument that children's play on residential streets has immense value for children's well-being. In addition, reclaiming the street for children is likely to benefit their parents as well as the wider environment and community. These arguments need to be clearly articulated if there is to be a cultural change that allows children, and their right to play, to be seen as more important than the desire of motorists for speed in residential streets.

Viscountess Nancy Astor tells the House of Commons in 1926:

> There is no more pitiable sight in life than a child which has been arrested for playing in the street... Though these children may be fined, we stand convicted. (Astor 1926)

1 Introduction

Much of the geographic research on children's health and well-being has focused on two interrelated themes: parents' interventions to reduce their children's exposure to risk and the declining levels of children's well-being over recent decades in many nations. Parental interventions typically involve reducing children's freedom to independently explore their local neighborhoods and cities and replacing child-organized activities with adult-organized and adult-supervised activities. Declining levels of child health and well-being can be seen in levels of physical activity, opportunities for unstructured play, particularly outdoor play, levels of overweight and obesity, and children's sense of social connection and mental well-being (Burdette and Whitaker 2005; Freeman 1995; Karsten 2005; Stanley et al. 2005; Whitzman et al. 2010). Children are getting "fatter, sicker, and sadder" (Gleeson 2006). In addition, there has been little change in children's agency (Freeman 2007). The changes in the use of residential streets that have occurred over the last few decades can be seen as an important causal factor in these declining levels of well-being. Children's use of residential streets provides a fertile area for

geographical research, as it brings together a range of themes affecting the well-being of children, attitudes to risk and freedom, the transport and land-use systems of cities, and the contemporary culture of consumption. While the residential street has been problematized as a "dangerous" place for children, this also had the effect of reducing the child-friendliness of cities, as well as their livability for all city residents.

The increased emphasis on individual responsibility within neoliberal societies is an important factor in understanding the loss of the residential street as play space. When streets are perceived to have become more dangerous (through increased traffic or other dangers), and parents are expected to respond to these dangers, the responses available to parents operating as individuals are limited to protecting their own child by removing them from the street, giving them more indoor and adult-organized activities and providing supposedly "safer" mobility for their children as passengers in cars. The collective impact of these individual decisions is the creation of a vicious circle in terms of children's well-being. Parents become caught in "social traps," where they feel they can't let their children walk to school because of the dangers created by other parents who drive their children to school (Tranter 2006). Parental fears and concerns for their own children lead to an increase in traffic and hence an increase in the real dangers to children from cars. This also leads to a fall in natural community surveillance, which increases fears for children playing in these spaces (Weller and Bruegel 2009).

If parents are able to respond collectively to the perceived dangers of the street, they may well come up with alternatives to driving their children everywhere. This is what has happened with the growing trend toward using and legitimating streets as places for playful children (and adults) rather than simply as movement corridors for cars. Tranter and Doyle (1996) made a case for reclaiming the residential street as play space for children. This chapter uses some of their ideas to reexamine the value of the residential street as play space and what may be (and what has been) done to reclaim the residential street for children and non-motorists of all ages.

Although the car lobby is still extremely powerful, the cultural context for making streets more child-friendly has changed markedly since the publication of Tranter and Doyle's 1996 paper. There is now growing and widespread support for 20 mph streets (in the UK) and 30 km/h streets in many European cities, stronger restrictions on parking, and wider introduction of play streets and "Home Zones" – "a group of residential streets designed so that the street space is available for social uses such as children's play, while car access is also allowed" (Gill 2006, p. 91). This is all occurring within a global context of increasing awareness of the impacts of our lifestyles and transport and land-use systems on climate change, as well as the growing awareness of the likely inability of consumerist societies to maintain their economic growth (Miller and Sorrell 2014). The implications of this change in the culture of residential streets for the well-being of children have attracted remarkably little attention, possibly because of the implied (and arguably flawed) assumption that private car-based transport will continue to retain its dominance over more sustainable (and child-friendly) modes of transport.

2   Lost Streets: Lost Freedoms

Researchers have long argued the value of streets for social contact and civic activities (Jacobs 1961). However, these functions have largely disappeared from residential neighborhoods in the USA, Australia, and many other nations. As Donald Appleyard observed, streets in the USA have "become dangerous, unlivable environments, yet most people live on them" (Appleyard 1980, p. 106). Appleyard argued that streets should be redefined "as sanctuaries; as livable places; as communities; as resident territory; as places for play, greenery, and local history" (Appleyard 1980, p. 106). Appleyard also identified the key criteria for what he called protected neighborhoods, including lower speeds and volumes of traffic, reduced noise and accidents, and right of way for pedestrians.

In many cities throughout the world (or the Western world at least), fewer children use the streets for play than a few decades ago (Allin et al. 2014; Living Streets 2009). (There are some notable exceptions, as discussed below.) Not only are fewer children using the streets for play, children are also less likely to use the streets for independent mobility (Shaw et al. 2013). Declines in children's independent mobility over recent decades are evidenced by the changes in the mode of transport to school. Australian data for children aged 5–9 indicate that while in 1971, approximately 58 % of these children walked to school, that had fallen to 26 % in 2003, with the percent being driven increasing from 22 % to 67 %(Van Der Ploeg et al. 2008). Similar trends are evident in other nations (Barker 2006; Hillman et al.1990; O'Brien et al. 2000). Children in many Western nations are much more likely to be driven to school, their friends, sport, and other places than they were a few decades ago. In Toronto, Canada, the increase in car trips for 11- to 15-year-olds was 83 % between 1986 and 2001, in contrast to a rise of only 11 % in car use by adults (Gilbert and O'Brien 2005). This loss of children's independent mobility, and its replacement with car-dependent mobility, can be seen as a loss of play opportunities, because when children move through their neighborhood, their movement is not simply a matter of transport. Even the journey to school can be a playful experience if children are allowed to walk:

> this does not mean that they walked in the adult sense of the word … children were observed jumping, climbing, skating, sliding, chasing, sitting, leaning … they played along the way to any destination as they investigated, with mind and body, every opportunity presented by the street cum gymnasium. (Abu-Ghazzeh 1998, p. 826)

3   Why Aren't Children Playing in the Street?

The reasons for the loss of the street as a play space for many children are complex. They relate to:

- The role of traffic engineers in the design of residential streets (for cars)
- The cultural construction of streets as being an inappropriate place for children

- Parents' concerns about traffic and other dangers
- Over-parenting
- The individualistic responses of parents toward children's safety
- The decrease in the strength of local community networks
- The lack of appreciation of the value of play
- The role of new information technologies
- The introduction of curfews to keep children off the streets

The main reason for the gradual removal of children from the streets has arguably been the increasing dominance of private motor vehicles (Hillman 1999). Related to this is the way in which streets (even residential streets) have been designed largely with the safety of motorists in mind, which encouraged higher traffic speeds and a psychology where motorists see the street as "their" territory. While these trends had a direct impact on children's safety, they also prompted parents to accept the responsibility for their children's safety by keeping them "off the streets." A famous British road safety poster from the 1970s epitomized the view of the streets as a place for cars only, using a picture of a child about to step on to the street, with the caption "One false move and you're dead" (Hillman et al. 1990). Research has clearly demonstrated the impact of traffic volumes on the use of streets:

> There is empirical evidence that traffic speed and volume reduces physical activity, social contacts, children's play, and access to goods and services. (Mindell and Karlsen 2012, p. 232)

It has not only been traffic danger that has been a concern for parents; increasing fears for personal safety have developed. This has been exacerbated by the lack of use of residential streets by people of all ages, partly in response to traffic danger, but also to the closure of local schools, shops, and services and hence people's reliance on motor vehicles for access to these places. In addition, with the de-zoning of neighborhood schools, many parents choose to send their children to the "best schools," even if this means longer car journeys (Morris et al. 2001). The consequence of the lack of use of the streets (apart from cars) is that the streets become seen as dangerous for children, in terms of the fear of assault and molestation. The lack of people walking on the streets reduces the strength of local communities and the likelihood that other adults could keep a watchful eye on children they know. Changes in parental attitudes to allowing children freedom to explore their own neighborhood independently can be partially attributed to the breakdown in support networks and community cohesion (Furedi 2002), which in turn is related to the reduced presence of children in the streets.

Another important factor in parental attitudes relates to the way that children have been conceptualized as vulnerable, dependent, and incapable of taking responsibility and of managing risks themselves (Malone 2007). This, along with a desire by parents to give their children the best chances of success in a consumerist world, has led to the phenomenon of over-parenting or as it is sometimes called "helicopter parenting" (Talbot 2013).

This conceptualization of children as "at risk" in outdoor environments also exposes them to long-term risks that are poorly understood by many parents. These risks are linked with a lack of physical activity, increased levels of overweight and obesity and associated health problems, and a lack of the awareness needed to evaluate risks that comes from a lack of exposure to social and environmental challenges that occur during playful interaction with their own neighborhoods (Gill 2007).

The negative stigma associated with streets as a place for children is identifiable at least from the 1920s in the USA, as can be seen in this assessment of the leisure time of New York children:

> It is during this time which these children spend on the street in unsupervised and uncontrolled activities that they are exposed to the worst elements of city life. There is the danger of auto-mobile accidents in the streets. Gang life with its own standards and controls functions in forming patterns of behavior. The child is free to find excitement in delinquent activities. (Robinson 1936, p. 493)

Another study suggested "undirected street play tends to develop disrespect for the law and cunningness in social relationships" (Reeves 1931, p. 609).

Yet while a negative view of the streets was clearly identifiable, there was also a recognition at this time of the value of play streets: "play streets, playgrounds, and parks staffed with trained workers are essential" (Robinson 1936, p. 493) and also of the attraction of streets to children as a play space: "even if the children are not compelled to play in the streets through actual congestion, they are apparently inclined to do so, unless a strong counter-attraction is provided" (Reeves 1931, p. 607).

Something that was not predicted in these early studies was the impact of information technology on children's use of the streets. The popularity of iPhones, iPads, Xboxes, and PlayStations has intensified children's use of indoor spaces and their isolation from their residential streets.

As if there were not enough forces leading to the removal of children from the streets, there has also been legislation to support this process. Not only have children been removed from the streets through the threats of traffic danger and other dangers, and the competing attractions of indoor activities, but also in some cases authorities have implemented street curfews for children aged under 10 years. As Matthews et al. (1999) explain, this "has been fuelled by discourses which present a vision of a society escalating toward lawlessness and moral decline." Rather than curfews, more inclusionary strategies are needed that encourage the incorporation of children into communities and "challenge the hegemony of adulthood upon the landscape" (Matthews et al. 1999, p. 1713).

Two broader considerations that are important for explaining the gradual removal of playful children from the street are that children are seen as a low political priority, and play itself is not highly valued. Children's rights to participation are rarely understood. Most planners and politicians understand the value of protection and provision rights, even though in our attempt to protect children

(e.g., from traffic) and to provide for them (e.g., recreation), adults unwittingly make cities less child-friendly, for example, when they drive their children to organized activities. Children's views on the use of residential streets are rarely acknowledged or even sought out. If they were, then we would realize that "streets are favoured by children and they are often intentionally chosen as play space" (Galani and Gospodini 2013). Even though the right to play has been recognized in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31), many planners and policy-makers see the right to play as an optional dimension of children's lives.

While play is now recognized as being of fundamental importance for children's development (physical, intellectual, social, and emotional), many city planning and policy decision-makers regard play as a frivolous activity, and adult-organized activities such as sport are seen as superior (Hart 2002, p. 136). However, this situation is likely to be damaging for children; sport is not play and should not be seen as a substitute for it (Freeman and Tranter 2011). The loss of the street as a play space for children has meant a reduction in play, which can be seen as having negative consequences for children.

4   Does the Loss of the Street as Play Space Matter?

Should we simply accept that children's lives are different now and that with progress comes increased motorization and increased organization and scheduling of children's (and adult's) lives? Such acceptance seems to have been the default response by many people in Western societies, judging by the overwhelming response of adults in terms of their strategies in keeping children off the streets. However, researchers and activists have made strong arguments regarding the value of the residential street as play space.

The so-called progress that has enabled the growth in car ownership and use is associated with a number of claimed benefits for children. Many children now have a much wider range of activities (and places) that they can be taken to in the course of their daily lives than they could without access to the mobility provided by their parents (or other adults) with the use of cars. Yet these perceived benefits should be weighed against a range of disbenefits for children and indeed for whole communities. These disbenefits include a loss of access to their own neighborhood and community, a loss of a sense of place (Engwicht 1992), reduced levels of independent mobility and the associated negative impacts of this on health, and the loss of opportunities for local play. For the parents, an important cost is the considerable extra time demands created by constantly having to drive children to the various activities that they are now engaged in. Research in the UK found that the time parents spend looking after children had quadrupled over the 25 years between 1975 and 2000 (from 25 to 99 min per day) (Future Foundation 2006).

Both parents and children suffer when the street is lost as a play space. New terms have become part of the language to describe childhood, including indoor children,

backseat generation, and turbo-childhood (Karsten 2005; Malone 2007). An Australian study found that children while active were spending only 10 % of their time in "play," and 5 % of children claimed to have no outdoor play (Malone 2007).

It is difficult to precisely document the decline in children's outdoor or active free play due to the lack of longitudinal tracking of children's play (Holt et al. 2015). However, Allin, West, and Curry report a Play England survey indicating that almost one-third of UK parents "do not let their children play outdoors due to fears of accident or injury and one half due to fears of 'stranger danger.'" Another recent UK study commissioned by "Living Streets," based on interviews with parents of 5- to 10-year-old children, and pensioners with grown-up children, showed how outdoor play on streets had changed over the last three generations. Nearly half of today's children had never played on streets. In contrast, 47 % of those over 65 years of age recalled playing on the street every day, and only 12 % had never played on the street (Living Streets 2009). Declines in children's outdoor or free play in the USA, Australia, and NZ have been reported over recent generations in several recent studies (Carver et al. 2008; Clements 2004; Ergler et al. 2013; Gray 2011; Mitchell et al. 2007).

Much of parents' time is now spent ferrying children to and from organized sporting events, which are organized into specific time periods. Many children travel considerable distances to engage in a competitive sport for an hour or less with children they may not see again: "It's exhausting and inconvenient, not integrated into people's lives the way that play used to be … I hear a lot of complaints from parents and children both about the tiresome mechanics of making it all happen" (Goodyear 2012). Another study, involving interviews with 40,000 Australian children aged 7–14 years, found that 87 % participated in some form of organized sport, despite sport being low on their list of priorities (Malone 2007). The study also identified the yearning for more free or unstructured time for children to do their own thing (i.e., play).

In spite of the dangers (and the fears) associated with children's use of the streets (outlined above), children choose them for their play. In contrast with residential streets, children rarely favor parks and playgrounds as spaces for play: "ever since playgrounds were first constructed here [New York] at the turn of the century, children in this city, as in others, have shown far less interest in them than planners anticipated" (Hart 2002, p. 136). Hart believes that the main motive for the development of playgrounds was the idea that children playing on streets represented a threat to society. Playgrounds can be seen as a way to get children off the streets into a contained environment:

> Playgrounds were invented as a device for getting children off the street, away from bad influences and under the control of known socializing agents. This is part of a wider trend in Europe and the USA since the nineteenth century to segregate children from the adult world and to stream them into age groups in all aspects of their life. (Hart 2002, p. 138)

The main beneficiaries of this strategy are not children, but motorists, whose freedom to use the streets is less impaired when children do not share the space.

Not only are streets regarded as inappropriate as play space, but children are now increasingly denied the opportunity to use local streets to independently access the "legitimate" play spaces of parks and playgrounds.

To make cities more child-friendly, what is needed is not more playgrounds, but a greater effort in making the environment around children's homes safer for play. This is particularly important for young children, who are more dependent on the environment immediately surrounding their home to meet their needs for play and exploration (Abu-Ghazzeh 1998).

Children have a preference for play on the streets, and many studies have shown that children do play on the streets, even if their presence on the streets now is far less than in previous decades. In a study of 17 streets in older parts of Melbourne in the late 1970s, researchers found that front yards were important for children, yet most play occurred in the street itself (Gehl 1980). Researchers in Sydney investigated children's evaluations of their environment in suburbs throughout the city. They discovered that when 9- to 11-year-old children were asked "What's good" about their neighborhood, high on the list of "good things" was "quiet streets for play, bike riding" (Homel and Burns 1986). The opportunity to move and play freely within their own environment is recognized by children themselves as a positive indicator of an urban environment (Chawla 2002). Research with children makes it clear that they would like to be able to explore their neighborhood streets "if the streets were safe and if they had more free time" (Malone 2007, p. 518). In a recent Melbourne study, more than one-third of parents reported that their children usually played in the street (Veitch et al. 2006). "Playing in streets is a cultural phenomenon, observed all over the world – in some countries more intensively than others, offering children benefits that cannot derive from any other urban space" (Galani and Gospodini 2013, pp. 1177–1178). These benefits are summarized in the following section.

5   Advantages of Streets as Play Space

The value of residential streets as play space has been summarized by several researchers (Appleyard 1980; Fotel 2009; Hart 2002; Jacobs 1961; Karsten and Van Vliet 2006; Matthews et al. 1999; Thomson and Philo 2004; Tranter and Doyle 1996), as well as organizations lobbying for children's right to play, including *Playing Out* which provides "a resource for anyone who wants children to be able to play out in the streets where they live" (Playing Out 2014c). (The Playing Out website includes a link to the Tranter and Doyle (1996) paper in their list of research and articles.)

Under the appropriate conditions, streets provide stimulating play activities where it is arguably most needed by children – within walking distance from children's homes. As Tranter and Doyle (1996) explain, this is particularly important for younger children, especially girls, whose home range is usually more restricted than for boys. Children who can safely play on their local streets are not dependent on their parents to drive (or accompany) them to local parks or sports

grounds. Street play provides an alternative outdoor activity for children who have no interest or capacity for organized sport. This is particularly important for some adolescent girls, for whom structured team sports are seen as overly competitive activities requiring physical skills that not all young people have. When children are limited to engaging in adult-organized activities or play in formal playgrounds, this reduces their opportunities for unstructured play "particularly the kind of free play that develops really important life skills, their physical well-being and their sense of belonging" (Playing Out 2014c).

Allowing children to play in their streets also allows children to develop a sense of place (Engwicht 1992; Jacobs 1961) and to get to know their neighborhood. It allows children to engage in play that they want to participate in, where they have control over the rules and format of their games, in contrast with organized sporting or cultural activities, where children are obliged to play by the rules designed by adults. The hard surfaces of the street are also ideal for many ball games, from informal cricket and football to handball and tennis. Street play provides for considerable flexibility and for the creation of children's own play space features. For example, they can bring play objects (e.g., balls, furniture) from their homes to use in games in the street. Streets also provide opportunities for creative and imaginative play:

> Traditional street play is good for kids, and fun for kids, precisely because it allows them to figure out how to use their environment in creative ways on their own, or maybe with the help of adults who are doing their own socializing on the street. Kids call the shots themselves, making a tree first base and a manhole cover second and the streetlamp third. They figure out how to make fair teams, learn which scoring systems work and which don't. They learn which grown-ups they can count on to retrieve a lost ball, and how to knock an errant football down from the branches of a tree. They get to know each other by creating something together. (Goodyear 2012)

Street play helps give children the opportunity to explore their social relationships and begin to understand their place within the local community. Children develop a sense that they are an important and valued part of the local community, rather than being alienated from it. If the streets are safe enough for children to play in, they are also safe enough for children to use to walk or cycle to other play spaces in their neighborhoods: to experience some level of independent mobility that would not be available to them otherwise. This independent mobility is of value for children's social, physical, and emotional development, as well as their socialization with the community. While street play provides children with freedom, it also provides them with a greater feeling of security in their play as parents, and other adults can keep an eye out for children or listen for any signs that their children may need support.

Residential streets are also important for the recreational activities of older children and teenagers. Parkour and skating are two examples of how older children use the streets in playful ways. Parkour is an activity where the aim is to get from A to B in the most efficient way, using only the power of the human

body, and with the aim of keeping momentum without causing damage. It is a form of movement usually practiced in cities and involves seeing the potential for movement in a different way from how it is viewed by most people (Gilchrist and Wheaton 2011). Parkour differs from traditional sporting activity in that it is more inclusive and less competitive and rule bound and provides risk taking with bounds: in short, it is more "playful." Parkour has been seen to have potential in encouraging youth engagement in their local community, as well as physical activity and well-being in ways that traditional sport fails to achieve (Gilchrist and Wheaton 2011).

As well as benefits for children, there are clear benefits for adults in neighborhoods where children can safely play on the streets. Parents stand to benefit from reclaiming the streets for play. In the short term, they benefit from increased freedom from the time pressures associated with having to transport children to organized play activities. In the longer term, they are likely to appreciate the greater resilience and independence created by allowing children to play. Allowing the street to be used for play allows adults to have contact with children that might otherwise not be available to them. The segregation of adults and children has been identified as problematic by several researchers. For example, playgrounds have been critiqued as contributing to "childhood ghettoization" (Matthews 1995). Arguing in a similar vein, Gillis (2008) used the metaphor of "islanding" to highlight the way in which childhood is now fragmented, invisible, and separated from community life (Moore 2014, p. 154). Using the streets as play space effectively eliminates such "islanding." When streets are used for play, as the Playing Out organization explains,

> Playing in the street increases a sense of community by bringing neighbours of all ages together. It encourages feelings of belonging and shared responsibility. These qualities can increase the safety of the neighbourhood.

The quality of the local environment is also enhanced when children play locally in their streets. When this play takes the place of adult-organized activities such as sport, this can significantly reduce motor vehicle trips and related health impacts (e.g., pollution). When streets are safe enough for play, children are also more likely to be allowed to walk or cycle to school, which can have significant effects on reducing traffic volumes. Anyone who has noticed the significant reduction in traffic congestion in many cities during school holidays will understand this point. In the morning peak in the period between 8.30 am and 9.00 am, trips accompanying children to schools constitute 21 % of the total trips made by all people across Melbourne (Morris et al. 2001).

When children use streets, this also helps to develop stronger local ties between adults, as children are very effective at breaking down the learned reserve between adults. Thus, in a situation where children play on the streets, it is also more likely that local adults will know local children. All of these features of streets as play space make them attractive places for play.

6   Reclaiming the Residential Street as Play Space

Tranter and Doyle (1996) made a number of suggestions about how the residential street might be reclaimed by children as a play space. These strategies included:

1. Lower motor vehicle speeds in residential streets, in association with the development of area-wide schemes of traffic calming, rather than just individual streets.
2. The involvement of professionals other than traffic engineers in the design of streets. Tranter and Doyle also advocated working together with local residents, including children, to design play environments in streets.
3. The widespread dissemination of the idea that children playing on the street encourages stronger communities, with potential benefits for adults as well as children.
4. The introduction "play streets" in all new residential developments.
5. A change in terminology away from "traffic calming" to "play streets" and the active encouragement of the use of streets as play space, rather than simply providing the conditions for this to occur (Tranter and Doyle 1996, p. 93).

Many of these suggestions have been acted on, at least in particular contexts, as outlined in the subsections below.

6.1   Lower Speed Limits and Area-Wide Traffic Calming

Lower speed limits are arguably the quickest and most cost-effective strategy for making streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, including children. 30 km/h speed limits have been introduced in a growing number of European cities, with a city-wide 30 km/h limit introduced into Paris by the new mayor in 2014 (Britton 2014). Nearly all streets in Paris will be 30 km/h apart from a small number of major axes (50 km/h) and the city ring road (70 km/h). One of the first places to introduce a city-wide 30 km/h limit was Graz, in Austria, where the 30 km/h limit was introduced in 1992, on all but some major roads with a 50 km/h limit. The planners and politicians introduced the lower speed limits even though the community did not support their introduction. After 2 years, the lower speed limits had majority support from residents (including motorists) who appreciated the increased livability of the city (Hoenig 2000). Not only was there a 24 % reduction in accidents, but there was a marked increase in cycling and other forms of active transport (Woolsgrove 2013).

In Britain, the organization *20's Plenty for Us* is a not-for-profit organization advocating that 20 mph (32 km/h) be the default speed limit on residential and urban streets. This organization has been instrumental in achieving a situation whereby "an estimated 12.5 million people in the UK now [live] in areas implementing or committed to widespread 20mph limits" (Brake: The Road Safety Charity 2014). To increase the effectiveness of lower speed limits, some form of

traffic engineering treatment is usually added, though this can be as simple as some painted lines across the entrance to a street, or down the side of a street to make the road appear narrower.

The logic of 30 km/h speed limits can be linked to the laws of physics, as well as the psychology of feelings of safety. The law of kinetic energy explains why pedestrian fatality risk is a function of the impact speed "with the fatality risk at 50 km/h being more than twice as high as the risk at 40 km/h and more than five times higher than the risk at 30 km/h" (Rosén and Sander, 2009, p.536). As well, the likelihood of avoiding any collision is much greater at lower speeds due to the much lower stopping distances at 30 km/h compared with 50 km/h. Most motorists have little appreciation of the huge increase in risk associated with even slight increases in driving speed (Svenson et al. 2012). Svenson et al. (2012, p. 488) illustrate how a 30 km/h speed compared with 50 km/h could mean the difference between a child not being struck by a car (30 km/h) and being killed or seriously injured (50 km/h):

> We assume a reaction time of 1 s and at a speed of 30 km/h a car will travel 8.33 m during that time before the brakes start to apply. If the speed is 50 km/h the corresponding distance is 13.89 m. This is a little longer than the total stopping distance from 30 km/h (12.75 m). This means that a driver who could stop from 30 km/h in front of an obstacle would hit that obstacle at a speed of 50 km/h if she drove at 50 km/h under the same conditions.

This study also identified that drivers were "overly optimistic" about their ability to stop quickly and showed little understanding of the impact of higher speeds on their stopping ability. When drivers were asked what speed the car would hit the child, the judged speeds of impact were always underestimated. The authors suggested that this was an important consideration in attitudes to speed limits.

Despite the seemingly overwhelming logic of the above argument in support of 30 km/h speed limits, travel behavior change specialists understand that telling someone that there is only a 5 % chance of being killed if you get hit by a car traveling at 30 km/h is unlikely to engender a massive mode shift to walking and cycling. More important is that when cars are traveling at 30 km/h or lower, this results in a change in the psychological feel of the streets: they feel safer. When this occurs, more pedestrians (adults and children) use the streets, thus contributing to a safety in numbers effect (Jacobsen 2003). Parents feel more confident allowing their children to play in (or beside) the street, both because of lower speeds, but also because of lower fears of other dangers due to greater passive surveillance by people in a community where people know each other as a result of frequent interactions.

An important feature of the introduction of 30 km/h zones is that it is usually implemented across large areas of cities, if not the entire city. The "area-wide" traffic calming that Tranter and Doyle (1996) recommended is now a standard practice, at least in many European cities where the needs of non-motorists are given more consideration. This means that the culture of the entire city begins to change to one in which children and active transport users have priority over cars, and streets once again become places where walking, cycling, social interaction, and playing become legitimate uses.

6.2   Traffic Engineers and Other Professionals Designing Streets for Play

Researchers have known for a long time that street design influences children's use of the streets. One clear example of this is the research on cul-de-sac street designs, which reduce child accidents significantly while at the same time encouraging greater use of the street by non-motorists: culs-de-sac have been found to be an important predictor of children's outdoor play (Ben-Joseph 1995). However, cul-de-sac design is not likely to provide the whole answer to reclaiming streets for children's play. One limitation is that this design does not bring children from a wide area together. For this to happen, a design that is more permeable for pedestrians and cyclists, but less so for motorized traffic, is more successful (Biddulph 2011).

Tranter and Doyle identified as problematic the fact that traffic engineers have the main responsibility for the design of residential streets. Two important developments go some way to addressing this issue of the dominance of the traffic engineers. The first is that there are now new guidelines for traffic engineers in some nations for the design of streets. The second is the introduction of new models of street design, where other professionals (e.g., urban designers) as well as children have had an impact.

The origins of a new approach to the design and use of streets can be traced back to the *Traffic in Towns* report by Colin Buchanan's team in the Ministry of Transport, published in England in 1963. This team introduced the radical ideas of "specific street zones called environmental areas or rooms," where motor traffic could be segregated from pedestrians or to slow motor traffic to allow a mixing of pedestrians and motor vehicles (Ben-Joseph 1995, p. 505). These ideas proved to be unacceptable to the dominant ideology of the time in Britain, which favored the strategy of promoting economic growth through building roads and motorways. The *Traffic in Towns* report did, however, have considerable impact in mainland Europe: Dutch and German planners refer to Buchanan as "the father of traffic calming" (Ben-Joseph 1995, p. 505). His ideas led to the development of the "Woonerf" or "living yard" concept, where cul-de-sac designs led to the safe coexistence of children playing and slow traffic, where "motorists would feel as though they were driving in a 'garden' setting" (Ben-Joseph 1995, p. 506).

While the ideas of Colin Buchanan and his team may not have gained favor in Britain in the 1960s, a new approach to innovative street design emerged in the UK with the release of "The Manual for Streets" by the Department for Transport in 2007 (Biddulph 2011). This was crafted to encourage a flexibility in the use of streets by a greater variety of street users and to embrace a new urban design agenda where, for example, there is a "greater concern for the visual qualities of streets," as well as amenity and social interaction, and "the place function of streets may equal or outweigh the movement function" (Biddulph 2011, p. 4). The *Manual for Streets* was heavily influenced by the observed impacts of "Home Zones" which had been implemented from the late 1990s in Britain (Gill 2006).

As well as new approaches to traffic engineering adopted by the traffic engineers themselves, the second development that challenged the dominance of traditional traffic engineering was the increasing contributions of other professionals to the design of residential streets. Urban designers and landscape architects have worked together with local residents (including children) to design play environments in their streets, while also allowing (controlled) access for motor vehicles. There is a marked contrast in the goals of various professionals engaged in the creation of streets. This is clearest between traffic engineers and urban designers, but also evident in the differences between landscape architects, planners, and civil engineers (Hamilton-Baillie 2004, 2008). Traffic engineers operate in ways that legitimate the status quo, sometimes without doing so deliberately. An example of this is their use of traffic crash data that suggest that our streets are becoming safer (with fewer pedestrian deaths), which ignores an important reason for the lower deaths – the removal of people (including children) from the streets.

As well as involvement in street design by architects and urban designers, a range of approaches, some inspired by the arts community, have been adopted to encourage a reconstruction of the meaning of residential streets. These have been variously referred to as psychological street reclaiming or behavioral street reclaiming (Engwicht 2005; Fotel 2009). Strategies such as storytelling and child-led walking tours have been used to help communities accept new approaches to the design and use of streets. One community in Kansas in the USA used storytelling from local personal narratives to make their case for the introduction of "Complete Streets" (where equal priority is given to all modes of transportation including automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians). They used pictures of their community, roads, and sidewalks to illustrate the severity of conditions or to describe how local children were unable to cross streets to play because of the danger posed by unsafe roads and sidewalks (Dodson et al. 2014). In another example, a community cultural development organization in Brisbane, Australia, developed a project titled "The Walking Neighbourhood Hosted by Children" (Hickey and Phillips 2013). In this project, children aged eight to twelve led walking tours for groups of adults through an inner city neighborhood known as being child-unfriendly. As well as promoting walking as an arts experience, this project helped to raise awareness of issues of child safety and their active citizenship (Phillips and Hickey 2013).

There are many other examples of using the arts to aid the process of psychological street reclaiming. An example on the Playing Out website illustrates the power of small changes in residents' behaviors to change the use of streets, sometimes gradually, even over a period of years. Two members of a Bristol performance and arts company ran a project they called "The Place I Call Home Spills into the Street" which explored questions such as "Do you want to make your street a more playful place?" with people in their own neighborhoods and to find out whether small creative actions could stimulate new ways of seeing and using streets. One participant explained:

I sat out on the step to do some crochet while the children played in the front garden. I guess it was an unusual sight; one neighbour even asked if we'd been locked out! I stuck with it though, adding some tentative chalk drawing . . . After about 3 years of doing these small things, it's become really normal and I have regular chats with most of my neighbours. My children, ages five and eight, are able to play outside independently, and they are often joined by other local children. They can get their bikes out of the garage, chalk, play football, hide, hunt for wildlife up the lane and hang out the front. They know everyone in the street and do a good job managing emergencies such as a bike crash. The best part is that they choose when to do all these things. (Playing Out 2014b)

6.3   Disseminating the Idea That Children Playing in the Street Encourages Strong Communities

Research on social capital has identified the role of children in developing social connections between people (Offer and Schneider 2006; Weller and Bruegel 2009). Social connection has been identified as critically important in the health and well-being of individuals and communities (Kawachi et al. 1999; O'Brien 2003). Tranter and Doyle (1996) argued for the widespread dissemination of the reasoning that children playing on residential streets would foster the development of stronger neighborhood-based communities. Research indicates that when Home Zones are established, adults spend more time in the street compared to the time spent in traditional streets. Importantly, however, this is thought to be largely a response to the presence of children playing in the street (Biddulph 2011).

Roger Hart has powerfully extended this argument to include not only local neighborhood communities, but whole societies:

There are two major reasons why play should be a priority for city governments: first, play is important to children's development and, second, free play in public space is important for the development of civil society and, hence, for democracy. (Hart 2002, p. 136)

Hetti Fox, a New York resident who actively promoted the use of streets in her neighborhood as play space for children, made a similar argument:

"I sometimes wonder if this city is squandering its young people by not fighting to keep neighborhood life intact," she said. "Every species creates an environment where it protects and nurtures its offspring. If you don't, then you're saying we're not really a city." (Gonzalez 2009)

6.4   The Introduction of "Play Streets" in All New Residential Developments

New residential developments typically have a higher percentage of children than more established areas. Tranter and Doyle (1996) advocated "the application of the

'play street environment' concept in all new residential developments." In Britain, many new estates are now being built from scratch with the principles of Home Zones in mind, and "shared streets" (based on the Woonerf concept) are now seen as "a workable alternative to the prevailing street layouts in new suburban sub-divisions" in the United States" (Ben-Joseph 1995, p. 504). Ben-Joseph supports this argument by pointing out that shared streets reduce the cost of new subdivisions, as more space is allotted to housing and less to streets, and densities can be increased without compromising privacy. "There is no doubt that shared streets would be suitable for residential street layouts in the United States. Tailoring it to American standards would be a matter of innovative design and appropriate application" (Ben-Joseph 1995, p. 512). This argument likely applies to many nations with low density, car-dominated cities.

6.5   A Change in Terminology Away from "Traffic Calming" to "Play Streets"

Traffic calming was a term that became popular among planners and engineers in the 1990s. Traffic calming was a controversial strategy, which sometimes prompted angry reactions from residents. Tranter and Doyle suggested a change in the language used to change the physical design of streets and to replace "traffic calming" with the term "play streets." Although "play streets" is not a term commonly used to designate streets that are permanently available for children to play (such as in Home Zones), the term has been widely adopted to indicate the temporary closure of local residential streets to motor vehicles to promote their use as play spaces.

The idea of play streets is now undergoing a resurgence, with play street movements having considerable success in cities such as New York and London; see Figs. 1 and 2. The concept of "play streets" as temporary play spaces for children can be traced back to the 1920s or even earlier. In New York, by 1920, 60 streets were closed to allow children to play during certain hours, a strategy that was seen at the time as important for the "rights of play and child welfare" (Gaster 1992, p. 41). In Britain, the first official play street legislation was enacted in 1938, and by the 1950s there were 700 play streets across England and Wales (London Play 2014a). Though they had almost disappeared in Britain by the 1980s, they experienced a revival from 2008, and in 2012, Hackney became the first borough to reintroduce official play streets. The organization – "London Play" – hopes that children will be inspired by the play streets program to revive the culture of play that existed many decades ago (London Play 2014b). As a mother involved in a play street in England explains: "A little bit inconvenient for motorists, but a very small price for kids to be able to come out and play" (Gilbert 2014).

Like London, New York has encouraged some neighborhoods to reclaim their streets for children's play, at least during some daytime summer hours. The city even has a "play streets" program:

Fig. 1 Play street in Pemberton Road in Haringey, north London, September 2014 (Photo by London Play)

Fig. 2 Loose materials in a play street – Tylney Ave in south London, September 2014 (Photo by London Play)

> Play Streets allows communities to open up their streets to pedestrians for play on a recurrent basis. It is a quick and low-cost way to create active play space and is a health measure that directly targets our city's most important at–risk population—children. (New York City Parks 2014)

Similar schemes can be found in other parts of the world, such as Belgium, where *Speelstraat* programs operate. These work in much the same way as the play

streets in Britain or the USA, where residents formally request the city government to temporarily close off a residential street to enable children to play.

While play streets programs are an important part of the change in culture that will enable the reclaiming of the street for play, they are not without their critics, who point out that they have to conform to a rigid agenda when the streets are not available to play, and they often have adults in charge of structuring children's games. In one case, local police told the organizers that the play street had to stop at 5 pm, yet:

> Those hours after 5 are special . . .That's when parents come home from work and can play outside with their children. (Goodyear 2012)

One important limitation of the play streets program is that there is the danger of making so many rules that "children playing on the streets" is seen as something unusual and which can only be allowed under extremely regimented conditions. Arguably, it would be much better to have an acceptance that entire residential areas are spaces where children can legitimately use the street and that drivers must always be aware that children (and others) could be using the streets for play or simply for walking and cycling. The organization "Playing Out" recognizes these limitations, arguing:

> We are aware that the current model is not the long-term answer . . . but until a real culture of playing out is restored it is good to feel that there is a way to realize some of the benefits of street play right now. (Playing Out 2014d)

Tranter and Doyle also advocated for the active encouragement of the use of streets as play space, rather than simply providing the conditions for this to occur. This active encouragement has occurred with several schemes in different nations, all of which challenge the conventional view of streets as places for motorized traffic.

7 Schemes for the Encouragement of Children's Play on Residential Streets

Examples of radical approaches to encourage children's play in the street include Woonerven in the Netherlands (Ben-Joseph 1995; Eubank-Ahrens 1985), Home Zones in Britain (Clayden et al. 2006; Gill 2006), Shared Streets (Ben-Joseph 1995; Hamilton-Baillie 2008), and Complete Streets, where equal priority is given to all modes of transportation (e.g., the USA) (Dodson et al. 2014; LaPlante and McCann 2008). All of these approaches recognize the multiple roles that streets play in community life, including the lives of children, and evidence shows that they increase the likelihood that children will play in the streets (Biddulph 2011).

Perhaps the most radical example of shared space is extending a primary school playground across the street in Noordlaren, a small village in the Dutch province of

Groningen. A conventional traffic engineering approach to this issue would be to clearly segregate the children from the traffic, perhaps by using a more substantial wall or higher fence between the play space and the street. Instead of taking the conventional approach, the local authority tried a counterintuitive approach. They removed the existing wall and let the school playground extend across the street. The only separation between the school and the street is a low (knee-high) single rail fence decorated with multicolored balls:

> There are no road markings, signals or signs. Bright yellow benches extend into the road area. It's as if motorists are driving through a playground. Dutch traffic engineer Hans Monderman persuaded parents and teachers that making the playground more, not less, visible was the surest way to slow drivers down. Suddenly aware of the school, they would think: 'I am a guest here' not 'I am in charge.' (Allianz 2014)

The idea worked, traffic speeds fell substantially, there were no accidents, and children had a better understanding of traffic (Hamilton-Baillie 2008). The extension of the children's school play area onto the street provides a powerful example of the possible value of turning conventional wisdom about traffic engineering and road safety on its head (Monderman et al. 2006).

Perhaps this idea of turning conventional wisdom on its head could even be applied to the standard approaches to making streets safer for children, including the formal designation of play streets, with specific speed limits and legislation. In the Netherlands, there is a move away from any formal speed limits in residential streets, and the concept of "naked streets" (streets with no signs at all) is gaining acceptance, thanks to the innovative influence of people like Hans Monderman (Monderman et al. 2006). In the Netherlands, some road safety policy-makers are even questioning the concept of the Woonerf. Steven Schepel, Head of the Road Safety Directorate at the Dutch Ministry for Transport and Public Works commented that "the whole city should be one erf [courtyard]" (Hamilton-Baillie 2002).

This view echoes the argument of Tranter and Doyle (1996) that while local schemes (including Woonerven, Home Zones, Shared Streets) have value in challenging the culture, such schemes have limitations. There is a need for city-wide policies that challenge the dominance of the car. Isolated traffic calming or Home Zones are ineffective when car ownership and use continue to increase. Home Zones are not easily implemented across the entire city. While they have arguably helped to change the view about all streets being for cars, they have had minimal impact on the child-friendliness of large sections of cities. When specially designated streets in Home Zones, Woonerven, or Complete Streets appear, this can imply that drivers must drive carefully in these zones, but it is acceptable to drive less carefully in other parts of the city.

As well as street-specific approaches, a broad suite of policies is needed to overturn the dominance of the motor vehicle in cities. These policies include making all forms of active transport (which includes public transport) viable, safe, and attractive to citizens of all ages. It may also require the realization and

dissemination of the fact that private cars do not have the advantages that we think they do. For example, when a holistic assessment of transport is undertaken, rather than saving time, it can be seen that cars steal our time, our money, and our health (Tranter 2014).

8   Conclusion: The Future of Children's Play Spaces

For geographers concerned with children's play, health, and well-being, an important future challenge is the ability to take a broader and more holistic view of children's lives and the issues that affect them. The challenges for children's geographers include becoming more alert to the ways in which children, and in particular their shrinking and increasingly adult-controlled lives, have been affected by a set of interrelated changes in society. If children's geographies are to have real impacts on policy and practice, issues must be considered beyond the areas where children's views and rights have traditionally been seen as important (e.g., in the design of children's spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and leisure centers for children and young people). Every aspect of city management and planning has impacts on children's lives, either directly or indirectly.

An important focus for future children's geography research is the exploration of the broader social, economic, and political context that has led to the loss of the street as play space and the changes in these broad forces that may facilitate a revised production of urban space and an eventual reclaiming of this space by and for children. "As we move further into the twenty-first century, humankind will be faced with a series of traumas, many of which are as yet unimagined" (Wilson and Arvanitakis 2013). Some of the challenges we face are already becoming evident. Rising urban populations and increasing densification of our cities are global phenomena. In the context of bigger, more dense cities, if children are to have access to spaces for play in their own neighborhoods, the conventional playground is unlikely to be a solution, as competition for space intensifies. New ways of using spaces in the city for play will be required. In some US cities (e.g., Houston and Detroit), over 70 % of the urban space is made up of streets, while in the UK it is around 30–40 % (Hamilton-Baillie 2004). As the "Playing Out" website explains:

> Streets constitute the vast majority of public space in the city. To see them only as places to drive and park cars is to massively undervalue them. Streets can and should be places where people can sit, talk, read, play and walk – and even sing and dance if they want to! The only way this will happen is if we start to use them differently. (Playing Out 2014a)

It is perhaps not too challenging to imagine a future where the private motor vehicle is no longer the dominant form of transport in cities, either due to the collapse of national or global economies (making the car unaffordable for mass urban transport) or due to the realization that this continued reliance on cars is incompatible with the goal of reducing the negative effects of climate change.

Reclaiming the residential street as play space could be an important strategy in achieving two important goals. First, it could help prepare cities (and citizens) for a future where cars are replaced by more sustainable forms of transport – a more just distribution of mobility rights (Fotel 2009). More importantly, it could accelerate the move to the sustainable modes of transport, which are also the child-friendly modes. Walking, cycling, and public transport are child-friendly for three reasons: children prefer them, children can use them independently, and when adults use them, this does not make the city less child-friendly (as happens when adults use cars). Thus, when sustainable modes become dominant, this could then help to generate a virtuous feedback loop, where the growth in child-friendly transport modes supports a public movement toward a city-wide approach to childhood, where the whole city becomes a place that children can playfully and safely explore. Such an approach would produce benefits for the health and well-being of children and all city residents.

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Rural Youth Identity Formation: Stories of Movement and Memories of Place

Michael Leyshon

Contents

Abstract

Memories are central to our sense of identity and the ways in which individuals construct the meaning(s) of place. This chapter will argue that for young people the experience of living in the countryside has a history and a "meaning" and that their histories are embedded in a sense of movement and an emotional response to place. Internalized meaning provides an anchor point from which young people tell different stories to themselves and others of their temporal encounters in the world. Memory enables individuals to locate different spaces, pasts, and futures in particular locales. However, the identities that young people make are neither fixed, timeless, or geo-specific, rather they are the spontaneous assemblages of meaning drawn from a diversity of memories, emotions, movements, ideas that represent an "outpouring" of being in/out of place. The processes by which meaning is understood and articulated in these encounters with place (s) and other people are central to individual understandings of themselves and

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places. This chapter brings together current work on identity theory, particularly that of Henri Bergson, and mobility to examine critically the stories rural youth tell to help them explain their place in the world. This chapter explores three themes. Firstly, it outlines the role and function of memory in creating a sense of identity. Secondly, it discusses how individuals create memory images that are woven through with understandings of place. Finally, it offers a way of reconciling the inherent fluidity of the selfhood project through exploring how young people move through spaces.

1   Introduction

Place becomes known through a combination of beliefs, values, and emotions and is at the very core of our understandings of belonging and identity. This distinguishes it from material space, which is a physical presence that shapes the contours of our lives and can be written with human action. Current academic interest in place has helped to counteract "the silencing of emotion in both social research and public life" (Anderson and Smith 2001, p. 7). Unpacking the role of the emotional in the construction of young people's place and identity contributes to our understanding of the question, "to what extent might an appreciation of emotional geographies – the ways in which our affective experiences of self and others contextualized temporally and spatially – change and enhance our understanding of how the world works?" (Wood and Smith 2004, p. 533). Further, by examining the ways in which emotionality is patchworked into space and time to create "hybrid landscapes with other places" (Jones 2005, p. 217), this chapter investigates how various identity positions are produced and transferred into lived mobile spatialities. In so doing, the chapter examines how self, representation, places, and emotion get appropriated into the articulation of events.

Contemporary research on young people who grow up living in the countryside has begun to shed light on their complex lifeworlds by illustrating how they become marginalized in place (Giddings and Yarwood 2005), how rural youth claim and utilize places (Matthews et al. 2000), and how they draw upon and create a symbolic moral order of the countryside to construct their identities (Leyshon 2008; Dunkley 2009). The aim of this chapter is to move beyond the scope of these and other studies by exploring the everydayness of rural youths' lives to illustrate how small performances structure, nuance and give meaning to their lives. This chapter therefore responds to Horton's (2014) recent call to explore the everyday practices of young people, in this case, by examining critically how rural youth encounter the countryside through a mobile "walking" body. This chapter draws upon recent work on both walking and youth by Leyshon (2011), Middleton (2011), and Horton et al. (2014, p. 112) to illustrate that "just" walking "matters" to young people.

This chapter begins by reviewing how rural young people are positioned in the world, before detailing the emotional and/or affective understandings of space. The chapter then offers an account of the methodological approaches underpinning the articulation of these accounts. Following on from these practicalities, the chapter lays out the theoretical underpinnings of how memories of place help shape, through retrospection and reflection, an individual's identity. Empirically, the chapter focuses on a case study drawn from a wider body of research examining young people's sense of belonging to place. The paper concludes by discussing the creation of temporary and fluid axes that connect the multiple lines of experience, defining place, memory, and emotion.

2   Situating Rural Young People

The lives of young people in the countryside are now of increasing interest to social scientists from a variety of theoretical perspectives. The recent growth in academic research on rural youth can broadly be divided broadly into two distinct subgroups. The first group focuses on rural youths' leisure lifestyles (Dunkley 2009) and the second, addressing social inequality and the necessity for social policy interventions into the lives of young people (Smith 2004). Although these studies have helped to shape and define the subdiscipline they rather problematically focus on labeling rural young people as "human becomings" instead of human "beings" (Uprichard 2008). The term "becomings" refers to the dynamic process, involving increasing cognitive, emotional, and social capacity, through which young people constantly move forward on their way to adulthood. As Blatterer (2008, p. 2) argues, "adulthood is the destination of adolescent development; and it replaces idealism with realism, rashness with prudence, lifestyle experimentation with career orientation, self-centeredness with responsibility and commitment for self and others." This way of defining rural youth can be interpreted as seeing them as less than adults and not yet in possession of all the qualities or features required for full adulthood. This view is extremely future oriented and focuses attention on how to address young people's anticipated future needs and hence fails to capture rural youth as individuals in their own right in the present time.

The lives of rural youth are often subject to stereotyping, for example, bored youths causing trouble. As a result, their needs and wants are often overlooked. Perhaps more problematically, researchers working with young people treat them as a group hermetically sealed from others and rarely portray their interactions with other groups of adults or indeed other groups of young people. While such work draws attention to the issues young people experience, it presents them as "static" actors among flows of interactions. This type of research frequently neglects to frame young people as social agents in the here and now, with feelings and memories that actively help them to make sense of the world moment-by-moment. As identified by Mulder (2007), there is a clear research and policy imperative to consider more closely how young people live their lives in the

countryside or, as Panelli (2002) puts it, how they construct and negotiate a sense of self, rural knowledges, and social relations and come to understand place. To this end, an epistemological shift is required to move rural youth studies beyond examining interconnections to one of more-than-being in place, positioning young people through their memories and emotions. Without exploring young people's emotional connections to place a fuller understanding of their lives cannot be achieved.

A number of geographers have tried to address this understanding through exploring how rural young people experience their worlds through multidimensional factors, such as age, gender, sexuality, etc. A series of innovative papers, in particular by both Matthews and Leyshon, have sought to break new ground in conducting research with rural youth, as active agents in the formulation of their own lives (Matthews et al. 2000; Leyshon 2008, 2011). This understanding of rural youth hinges on the idea that the relationship between memory and place is dependent upon the accumulation of experiences, including complex social inter- actions, both with and within (rural) places (Travlou 2007). This approach views young people as active producers of culture and not passive recipients of adult constructions (Leyshon 2008). Importantly for this chapter, this understanding challenges the rather simplistic assumption that rural youth will "inherit" from their parents and peers an unproblematic notion of the "countryside" as stable, civil, and predicated on ideals of community.

Proximity to the countryside is still highly valued by those referring to them- selves as rural youth, as they draw on traditional constructions of the countryside to define some part of themselves (Giddings and Yarwood 2005). To explain this process, Cohen (1986) usefully refers to the "mask of similarity" by suggesting that young people symbolically and imaginatively construct themselves as "similar" to each other. As Vanderbeck and Dunkley (2003) and Leyshon (2008) have discussed, this action revolves around a simple dualism: urban/rural. So powerful is this dualism that it affects everyday life and effects how rural youth define themselves. Such dualisms are best thought of as a list of bearings or conventional devices that serve to reference and guide those who deploy them. In terms of the body, the dualism is constructed as a countryside body being organic, self- determined, high culture, coherent, and moral, in comparison to an urban body being inorganic, passive, low culture, fragmented, and deviant (after Lewis 2001). Drawing on this dualism, rural youth actively make attempts to reject the effects of modernity (Leyshon 2008) by stressing continuity and resisting change. In this way, rural youth bind themselves together and spatialize their identity in what Durkheim refers to as a "mechanical solidarity" (after Jenkins 1996, p. 105). However, their boundaries are not static, they are fluid and dynamic and require sustained main- tenance by the individual. Through recognizing young people in their own right, separate but not detached from adults, embodied-in-the-now, this chapter will capture some of the unique individual differences and socio-spatial complexities of young people's lives.

3   Emotion and Memory in Place

Geographical studies of memory have significantly increased in the recent years and have provided a concentration of research into a variety of subject areas such as landscape (Wylie 2007), historical events (Della Dora 2008), and environmentalism (DeSilvey 2012). Although all these investigations have been useful in enhancing geographical understandings of memory formation, there is still a significant lacuna in the extant literature concerning the lives of young people. Firstly, children and young people are virtually absent from these studies. There are a few exceptions, for example, in the work of Leyshon (2011), Leyshon and Bull (2011), and Leyshon and Tverin (2015). Secondly, memory is often investigated in relation to memory processes, whereas my focus here is to illustrate how memory is mobilized into a practice of self through both the creation of memories as well as the recall of affect. Thirdly, as Jones (2011, p. 7) states, geographers have become increasingly interested in a "fantastically complex entanglement of self, past spatial relations and memory in current life." If memory has the potential to explore notions of childhood and self then it is vital that this entanglement can be, in part, unraveled. Hence, this section focuses on attempts to disentangle that multifaceted fusion of past, present, self, others, landscape, and affect by exploring how memories are created through affective practices.

As Davidson and Bondi (2004, p. 373) note "Clearly our emotions *matter*. They affect the way we see (hear and touch. . .?) the substance of our past, present and future; all can seem bright, dull or darkened by our emotional outlook" [emphasis original]. From this quotation it is clear that "the emotional" is crucial to the processes that make place(s) matter; that place is simultaneously more-than and less-than rational. And yet, this "more-than or less-than rational cannot be reduced to a range of discreet internally coherent emotions which are self identical with the mind of an individual" (Anderson 2006, p. 735). Such emotional responses are embodied and cognate, they shape and are shaped by encounters with people and the more-than-human world. As such, young people are always encountering their own lives, in places and in moments. These encounterings, or becomings as Damasio (1999) suggests, are produced in a flux of spatial-temporal sensory experiences interwoven with memories of past events. The construction and retrieval of memory is, however, a vastly complex set of electrochemical embodied processes of which only a few are understood or known. It is perhaps because of this complexity of the intermeshing of emotional and sensory responses that memory appears to be largely absent from contemporary personal accounts of landscape. Indeed, personal narratives of historically situated memories of places are often elided in favor of instantaneous sensory or "affective" accounts as an explanation of place.

"Affect", after Spinoza and Deleuze, has gained greater influence in geographical debates in recent years (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly 2004). Such work on affective geographies suggests that the limits of the body can only be defined

through the experience of its performance. This is not to suggest that there is a continuum or linear progression between affect and cognition, immediacy and experience or a universalistic self-experience of affect. Instead each "modality is radically *relational*: a passing determination of different types of relation that is never self-contained or fully self-present in an individual body existing "in" space or "in" time" (Anderson 2006, p. 737). However, constructing experience "out" of space and time ignores the role of memories and histories of bodies: "to put it simply, affective registers have to be understood within the context of power geometries that shape our social world, and thus research in this field requires an engagement with ... different bodies having different affective [and memory] capacities" (Tolia-Kelly 2006, p. 213).

To address, in part, this lacunae in understanding situated knowledges of young people requires the recognition that memory and affect are conjoined. The affective qualities of bodies become interwoven with memories in a process of assemblage. This is a messy process in which self, time, place, and emotion become appropriated into the articulation of events. Hence there is an emotional quality of "place memory" that impacts on the body and initiates postperceptive meaning of places. Affective moments become remembered, and shaped by, embodied references, which in turn reconfigure our notions of self and identity. In this context, how young people are able to reconcile and process their memories of self with the undeniable reality of personal change and maturation is undertaken. To answer this dialectic of selfhood-as-sameness and selfhood-as-temporal-difference requires viewing the self as situated within an iterative context of introspective (re)interpretations of personal memories. However, rendering meaningful these personal memories of experiences in the world inevitably relies on expressing them through text. It can be argued that the textual encounter, specifically in the case of this chapter through images and words, is not simply an interpretive mechanism, or indeed a post hoc (re)imagining of an encounter, but rather an intrinsic process essential to our personal understandings around memory, place, and selfhood. Identity can therefore be understood through an engagement with various sensory modes of being as well as the textual understanding of these affectations.

As a consequence of the increase in affective and emotional geographies, there has been not only an increased focus on the post- and extra-sensual but an accompanying movement away from the hegemony of sight and visual methods. The intention here is to capture the creative processes of everyday life whereby young people become embedded in the social structure of places and how they learn to be themselves, challenge and/or accept their lives. This is achieved by exploring how, through new contacts and experiences both visceral and tactile, individuals produce their own identities and histories of life that are both sensed and, importantly, represented. What is illustrated through the case studies in this chapter is the way that emotional and affective encounters with the more-than-human world can become both crystallized and mobilized through photographs, verbal descriptions and utterances, and how images and words are part of the raft of representations that document the emotional resonance of affective encounters. The next section briefly

highlights the mechanisms used to access these emotional geographies of sub-jectivities by introducing how the reflective and introverted process of autophotography was used to gain insight into these close-up experiences of the world.

4 Method, Memory, and Image

This work stems from a variety of research projects undertaken by the author with young people over the last 10 years which broadly examine how the more-than-human world is encountered, remembered, and authored. Methodologically, the research has drawn on a series of close ethnographies including a variety of autoethnographic techniques – participant directed photography, both stills and video, as part of a narrative process that has sought to examine the tensions, complexities, and inconsistencies of everyday life. Disposable still cameras or video cameras were given to young people with the instruction to photograph, or film, their experiences of rural life. Such methodologies reach into spaces that are not (at least physically) occupied by the researcher (Young and Barrett 2001) as the participants create images which are between "public" and "private" spheres. The images produced are not public as part of art, media, or other forms of visual culture; they are private, personal images, in the vein of holiday snaps or aide-memoires and therefore subject to different systems of esthetics. However, as a consequence of the research process, they shift from the private to the public domain. These images were then used as part of an interview system in which young people discussed, commented on, and annotated their pictures/video. All the young people involved in creating these "image-stories" described themselves as being rural youth (see Leyshon 2008 for further details) even though they, and others, often contested that positioning. The resulting stories depict routines and repeating moments in the young people's life histories giving insight into their lived realities of "rural" space(s). Furthermore, the artifacts pictured within the images were loaded with sentiments that are more than visual, thereby creating an image which visualizes the intangible (Emmison and Smith 2000). Therefore the images can be considered as moments in the narrative that become "departure points" from which the story can be (re)built.

5 Placing Memory

The concept of collective memory has been accepted as an important component in making meaning about space (Hoskins 2007). In particular, much geographical work has highlighted the way that spaces become "haunted" by the resonances of those who have gone before (McEwan 2008). This significance of the memory of events is not exceptional; Edensor (2008) observes how the timbre of past events infuses the mundane practices and spaces of our everyday lives in his examples of the working-class spaces of Manchester. Similarly, Crang and Travlou (2001,

p. 173) identify how collective memory creates a "pluritemporal landscape" of Athens where the multiple histories of Athens are overlaid to generate the contemporary landscape. However, while this attention to collective memory highlights the multiple spatialities and temporalities of the here and the now, it tends to prioritize major events and prominent individuals. Alongside this collective memory, there is a wholly more personal process of memory, which defines space and place and identity by way of life stories. This personal memory and the repetitive encounters with landscape infuse much of Ingold's (2000) thinking around *dwelling*. This work highlights how the *hauntings* of mundane spaces are not limited to the echoes of grand events but are equally reliant on the largely inconsequential actions of individuals – the biographical moments of ordinary lives – or what Lorimer (2003) terms "small stories." It is the role of memory in defining and evolving these "small stories" of young people's lives that are detail below. In so doing, it is acknowledged that memory – what is remembered and how it is remembered – is important in defining the ways in which rural youths' "affective experiences of self and others are contextualized temporally and spatially" (Wood and Smith 2004, p. 533).

In contrast to much of the work mentioned above, Henri Bergson focused on individual rather than collective memory. Similarly, this chapter pays attention to the young person as an individual in the process of remembering. The intention is to draw out the significance of individual experience rather than the social, to focus on the everyday rather than the extraordinary. This is an attempt to recognize the way that representation and emotions are drawn together on a personal level in understandings of space and place. In an effort to develop this approach to understandings of affected experience, the following is a discussion of three core concepts in Bergson's work: *Duration*, *the Image*, and *Memory* itself.

In his earlier work, *Time and Free Will*: *an Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, (2012 [1889]), Bergson developed a concept of *duration* (Guerlac 2006) in which he underlines the temporality of existence. Bergson's *duration* is underwritten by a notion of "qualitative multiplicity." This multiplicity suggests that each "moment" is different not in quantitative terms but in terms of its relational constitution. In his later work, *Matter and Memory*, Bergson (2005, p. 66 [1908]) raises the significance of memory for the individual's understandings of space, place, and identity, suggesting that without memory we have nothing but "simple signs of the real." For Bergson, therefore, without the interpretive framework of past experience, the multiple stimuli of the now are meaningless. This referential role of memory ties neatly with the "qualitative multiplicity" of *duration*; that the perceived "signs of the real" are made significant through the connection to a past and an anticipatory future. This is not to conflate the concepts of perception and memory or to suggest that they operate on a temporal continuum. According to Bergson, memory and perception can only be understood as an interaction, and intuitive interplay between past, present, and future. Memory, therefore, is crucial to how we respond to stimuli which constitute the here and now.

Bergson suggests that there are two forms of memory, one based in the corporeal (central nervous system) and one based in representation (process of learning).

The corporeal memory goes beyond simple responses to particular stimuli; they include the performances and bodily processes, which were imprinted long before our birth as a consequence of evolution. Therefore, it is proposed to use the term *reflex memory* as it incorporates all the forms of bodily memory, from the evolutionary memory which maintains life to habitual responses to certain stimuli. Bergson's second form of memory – that based in representation – is temporally anchored (it is the remembering of particular events); however, it is not spatially anchored. It is dispersed, fluid, and unfixed; present, but only apparent when drawn upon either by conscious or unconscious thought. This reemergence of the spatially unfixed memory is what Bergson calls the *memory-image*. In Bergsonian terms, *the memory-image* is neither an actual thing nor merely an appearance – it bridges the gap between the real and the ideal (Guerlac 2006).

These memory-images are accumulations of meaning and are glimpses of being; they are hypothetical, momentary, and unintelligible (except in conceptual terms). The memory-image then is the reemergence, the respatializing of memories at particular times. It is constantly changing and constantly reaching out along the temporal lines of existence connecting different pasts to the now and onto imagined futures through a process that can be referred to as *narrative memory*. Returning to Bergson's concept of representational memory (that is, the memory of particular phenomena or episodes in their temporal context), he refers to this temporally (but not spatially) fixed memory of particular events as "the memory of imagination" or "regressive memory." They are regressive as they are dislocated from the present. This framing of dislocated memory as regressive has led Bergson to be (possibly unfairly) criticized (notably Lefebvre 2002 [1961]) for implying a linear understanding of time (Fraser 2008, p. 340). Regardless of whether Bergson intended a linear conceptualization of time, this "regressive memory" implies a programmatic process of remembering. As a consequence, the concept of a "memory-image" to highlight both the temporality of memory and the processes of remembering through the narration memories can be deployed as an explanatory tool. Narrative memory focuses on the process by which the memories are drawn upon to constitute particular memory-images thereby giving insight into the understandings of the self in situ. This argument therefore centers on the tensions between the memory-images and the processes by which young people make sense of space, place, and identity. In essence, while these memory-images are to a certain extent spontaneous they are also used to make accounts of identities coherent and meaningful.

6   Movement and Memories: Walking in the Countryside

The evidence presented so far in this chapter has imaginatively and physically placed young people in the countryside. In this section I consider, through the metaphor and physical act of walking, how young people situate themselves in the countryside. As Falk (1995) noted, bodily acts that are obvious, ordinary, and repetitive often receive little academic attention. Yet, as Wylie (2005) and Middleton (2011) have convincingly argued, the act of movement through walking is

pivotal in shaping everyday life; it is one of the ways in which we come to know place(s).

Giving serious consideration to everyday walking or "pedestrian practices" (after Middleton 2011), Horton et al. (2014) argue, opens a space to critique the significant canon of literature on childhood and way finding that calls attention to the apparent recent decline in the spatial range that young people travel independently. This research is often deployed as a commentary on the sedentary lifestyles of young people and draws attention to the perceived problems that "staying-in" produces. Through "not going out" young people's inactivity becomes instrumental to arguments on childhood obesity, the loss of spatial knowledges, and critiques of modern parenting practices through which children are frequently transported by cars to specific locations. These debates can be enlivened through drawing on "new walking studies" (Lorimer 2011) to illustrate how walking has both a material and imaginative effect on the body and is instrumental in a variety of relations into which young people enter and negotiate the countryside. For many young people walking was their main mode of transport. The body is therefore an essential component in the way young people perform their identity and "grounds" young people in a sense of belonging. Their stories are not necessarily time specific or indeed without time but rather are constantly reworked in an ongoing encounter of self through movement and flows that has a depth that cannot be determined. Stories are by nature temporal, they do not have to be consistent or preclude the holding of contradictory perspectives but they do provide a glimpse of how rural youth define their sense of place. A storied-self, it can be argued, can only be understood through an interpretation of "contexts" and how images of intimate and personal landscapes produced by rural youth give a partial window onto their lives. There is a preexisting, fundamental mutuality between young people and the environment that shapes their memories. Memory is either brought to a point where it can be immersed in the countryside, or is already immersed in the countryside. Although walking is temporal and is often simply a means to an end, the process itself is as important as the arrival or departure, as its tactility helps link young people to place.

Young people in this study discussed at length that they regularly walked in the countryside, some simply to exercise the family dog, others to catch a bus to school or college. Yet for a number, walking had a far more important role in their lives. Some walked for pleasure, others to become invisible and to escape the regulation of village life by adults, and some others to connect themselves to the land. While walking was not enjoyed by all those I interviewed (Dave "couldn't be bothered" (personal diary)), most of the young people spent a great deal of their leisure time walking, as Colin stated in his personal diary "I walk a hell of a lot but the thing is, I like walking" (no date). However, why might young people continue to walk when seemingly every aspect of the earth has been traversed, recorded, reproduced, taught, and understood? If we already know all there is to know about the topography of a land, the histories of it, the ideals of its people, and the societies which sustain them, the act of discovery must surely seem an increasingly rare occurrence. In such times of abundant information, it may seem futile to hope to add to this store

of information. Yet young people are walking in order to know a place, despite the fact that all that may be discovered has already been captured and indexed, because they cannot know a place simply through these systems of information. Although young people may not be discovering literally "new" material things through walking, the knowledge they discover is situated within a phenomenological explosion of multiple sensory experiences and Bergsonian memory-images that may be new or repetitious to them, depending on the nature/purpose of the walk. In other words, upon actually traversing the countryside and discovering, there occurs a verification of the information through a process of coding and recoding. In order to verify memory, a young person needs to travel. It is in this search for a "truth" that young people locate themselves in place.

According to Ingold (1993, p. 46), there is an everyday relation to nature wherein knowledge gained from nature "is essentially practical: it is knowledge about what the object affords." Here, Ingold is drawing directly upon Gibson's (1979) ecological theory of perception and especially Gibson's concept of "affordance." As such different environments offer a range of possible actions. Although Gibson's concept is rather environmentally deterministic, crucial here is the idea that the possible actions reflect the capacities and limits of the body. An area of flat ground thus "affords" a variety of actions – lying, sitting, standing, crawling, hopping, and jumping. Through reworking Gibson's concept of affordances, Michael (2001) suggests that the environment, as a set of surfaces, does not determine what we may do; it merely "suggests" an array of possible actions. These affordances are not orientated toward a passive, sedentary perceiver (as is common in cognitivist, Cartesian models of perception) but to an organism that actively and intentionally explores the environment in an ongoing engagement. Costall (1995) has effectively extended Gibson's notion of affordance by socializing it. Indeed, affordance becomes intrinsically social insofar as for people, activity is always culturally invested. As young people move through the countryside, the affordances they perceive reflect their circumstances as embodied, memoried beings. This is captured in Jan's (Upland Meet) personal diary:

> I love walking in the countryside, its so beautiful. Last night we [family] walked up Harley Hill and then down into the valley. Its too early for the blue bells, but in a month or so it will be a sea of blue. I like to come here a lot to think and just wander.

Jan frequently walks in the countryside not only for the pleasure of witnessing nature but also to resolve the issues in her life. Jan informed me that she felt "under threat" from recent incomers moving into the village and the prospect that in time she would be socially excluded. By walking she felt a sense of renewal and connection to the land. A connection that was both a practice and a memory. Importantly, practices are crucial to the social meaning of landscape: it persists only so long as there are people continuing to practice those activities associated with a particular place. For rural youth to walk is to be part of place, for walking

requires a (shared) knowledge of the countryside and a (moderately) healthy body. Take the following example:

Rebecca: I just go out into a field sit down have a fag, chill.
Becky: Yeah we chat and watch the world go by.
Rob: Like foxes?

In the above example, the object of the young person's wanderings is to confirm the spirituality of a place. Through a personal engagement with the countryside, the young people claim they are restored or becalmed. It is not a specific geographical place that they are trying to define but rather a place in the "natural" order of things. It is not solely about the earth per se as their walk is imbued with spatial memories of the countryside. On their walks, young people are making explicit claims to the countryside as medicinal, organic, inclusive, and a tool to help them resolve conflict. Through contact with place they attempt to heal themselves. Here knowledge becomes a map or a memory-image; through walking known paths and routes, spiritual enlightenment can be physically found – this is analogous to a pilgrimage in search of a relic (the good country-side) (Coleman and Elsner 1995). In this way, the pilgrimage becomes a reading of landscape – the reading of rural signs and symbols is not simply the pilgrim's comprehension of the landscape but also involves the journey itself, the prepara-tions for it, and indeed the journey back. The act of pilgrimage in this way is a spiritually sustaining one, which has far reaching effects outside the physical boundaries of the countryside's presence. It is a movement impelled by the potency of the visual image, yet is justified in the transcendence of the viewing subject and viewed object that comprise the ritual. For the young person, this transcendence manifests itself in a number of ways. The fundamental transfor-mation that occurs in them is a greater understanding of their significance with the countryside.

Through walking the countryside young people seek to establish a place within it. This effort requires corroboration from peers and other members of their community and relies on the exchange of knowledge further than the viewing gaze of the young person themselves. Rural youth collectively affirmed the places they visited by discussing stories and knowledges gained on their travels; this is illustrated in the following dialogue.

Paul: We [mother and brother] used to walk up and I remember actually when I was little [aged 9], the same old ruin. Hum when I was a kid hey (smiles and laughs). But it's my ruin, well its all of ours really, but only locals know where it is and you've gotta walk there.
Me: Do you still go there?
Paul: Yeah, umm when I feel depressed, it helps ... sometimes you meet someone up there, talk, it gets me out the house.

Through visiting the ruin of an old farm house, Paul retraced a familiar route not only physically but through his memory, back to a happier time in his life. Young people frequently spoke of specific sacred sites in their villages, a tump (a low hill), a castle ruin in the woods, to the ponds in a lower field, tangible places of previous insignificance suddenly acquire a reference that makes them "holy" (Jones and Cloke 2002). The valorization of some places by rural youth has a spiritual significance – usually explained as a simple act of discovery while out playing but nonetheless casts the site as an important place for them to visit.

In the above examples, affordances are not simply between bodies and natural surfaces but are moderated by other everyday entities – the copresence of others and the deployment of memory. Walking is specifically linked to places of retreat that are seen as natural. These reshape the affordances of nature by expanding the range of possible actions available to the young person. When we take walking into account in the lives of young people we begin to see cascades of affordances; for example, being able to walk requires the freedom to do so, the space to walk into, the ability to path find or negotiate changing terrain etc.

7   Wandering to Belong

Rural youth spend a significant proportion of their leisure time simply wandering the countryside on foot. Many explained that they walked the countryside in an effort to feel a sense of belonging, especially as they felt constrained and marginalized by adults within the villages in which they lived. As Colin explained to me:

Me: What do you like doing in the countryside?
Colin: Just wandering, just walking around sort of thing, umm ..over fields, in woods, on roads, there's a few footpaths between fields.. Umm .. getting out the village, umm .. discovering new bits I haven't seen before, you know just wandering, just out walking sort of thing, just going for a walk.

Young people who wander, neither driven by an itinerary nor specifically following a route in search of enlightenment are not searching for a truth like a pilgrim. The wanderer has no object to apprehend, nor specific destination to his/her walking. With no rationale through which to journey, the travels of the wanderer are often disordered. The spaces s/he traverses begin by being vague and indistinct and cannot be categorized; it cannot be viewed, collected, and archived easily. Instead s/he spends their time wandering spaces of supposed insignificance to the outside observer. The wanderer travels until s/he is enlightened or unearths a connection with an object or place that acts as a referent or a locus for their sense of self. By wandering and being transient in the countryside, some rural youth find stability and order. They no longer observe adult boundaries and de jure forms of ownership, and public/private space, as they exert a moral ownership of the countryside. This

morality is embedded in the "memoried" practices of the countryside and beyond the reach or knowledge of incomers.

Some rural youth wander in a defensive measure of "keeping to themselves." As Lucey and Reay (2000) point out, keeping to yourself is a tactic for keeping others out. Such defensive strategies, by which everywhere outside the haven of the home can be seen as threatening, take a heavy toll on the everyday practices of a young person. While Daniel is a gregarious, confident young man at school, in the context of his village, the outgoing aspects of his personality retreat behind the fearful defense of "keeping to yourself." He is referred to by his peers as a "geek," "gay," "muppet" and/or a "train spotter," and he is often physically bullied at the youth group meetings. Although he would rather not mark himself out as different from his peers, he feels as an outsider and to maintain his identity he physically and psychologically distances himself from other young people.

Joe, a self-styled computer geek, also deploys walking as a self-exclusionary strategy. He is actively excluded by the other young people in the village as he is frequently referred to as a "nerd" or described as being "odd," but Joe finds consolation in his othered position by identifying with unknown others in the village and beyond. To explain how he felt Joe took me on a walking tour of the village.

Joe: I walk around a lot on my own
Me: Why's that?
Joe: It's just better that way ... I don't mind being on my own, I like it,
            it's safe.

In the above dialogue, Joe is able to affirm and normalize his identity by being alone. He walks in the countryside to the ponds to help him make sense of the village and to find a place within it and although he views himself as different, and recognizes that he is viewed as different, he continues to struggle to fit in and he continues to walk.

To walk is a metaphor for Bergson's memory-image; although the journeys are fragments, instantaneous moments that appear dislocated, they are temporal memories inherently connected to a variety of locales and moments. As these memories of movement illustrate, they provide the young people with a sustainable identity located between home and elsewhere through creating a "hybrid landscapes with other places" (Jones 2005, p. 217). Each with a multiplicity of temporal meanings, and different meanings which can reemerge, become respatialized in the variety of the contexts which constitute the now. Rural youth are living with inconsistency, the overlaying of space with the multiple meaning that memory affords. Their *pluritemporal memories* are made up of a multiplicity of *memory images* in part drawn from movement, elsewhere, and the multiple places of their villages.

This is not to suggest that these embodied performances do not have cognitive memories attached – they were learnt – but rather that their senses and synapses have become attuned so that the memory is no longer anchored as an "event" per

se. Identifying memory as a component of a wider system of understanding place through both perception and recollection permits investigation of how these sentient geographies interplay with the representational geographies of cognitive memory. This enables an engagement with the liveliness of representational experience. However, such memories do not occur outside of representation. The images do not capture the wider experience but serve as a point of departure for memory. In this way, the self is produced within the lexicographic processes of memory combining affectation, emotion, and memory to produce a sense of place. The self is produced fluidly within an internal narrative dialogue made between relations of signs and symbols and the emplacement of those signs and symbols within memoried relational systems of knowing. This occurs in a continuous and iterative process of sensing, identifying, interpreting, (re)presenting, and making meaning. Place is fundamental to this process as it provides a position from which the self can move and speak to itself as well as others, by situating self-knowledge within a corporeal and physical geographical space.

8   Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have explored how and why rural youth walk in the countryside to illustrate how movement contours and delimits their daily lives. The aim here has been to determine the extent to which an understanding of movement and memory can provide a useful framework for capturing everyday spatial encounters. As such, the chapter has done two things; first, it has unpacked Bergson's theory of memory to examine the role that memory plays in the construction of the self, second, it has demonstrated how walking enables young people in their construction, articulation, and maintenance of identity; how the interplay between the remembered as the "here and now" is overlaid with the there and then. This understanding hinges on the idea that the relationship between identity and place is dependent upon the accumulation and co-constitution of memories and visceral experiences, in the production of memory images that include complex social and tactile interactions and emotional stimuli, both with and within places.

Rural youth employ tactics of negotiation that enable them to "do" their identity and find a place, both socially and physically, for themselves in the countryside. Some walk the countryside in search of intimate connections to places, in part through drawing on their memories of the countryside. Their search is imaginative, tactile as well as visual and encompasses a host of places from woods to barns to fields. Walking the countryside in this way becomes a ritual performed in spaces invariably beyond the view of adults. Their spatial identity therefore ebbs and flows across boundaries into alternative and, in part, liberating spaces. By keeping mobile, rural youth produce a temporal zone to experiment with different ways of being. In this way, walking becomes a constituent component for creating the self and offers an explanatory tool of the lived experiences of how young people shape and form their identities. The memory-image is an essential part of this process. The memory-image is a spontaneous reemergence of reflex and cognitive memories and

is an active process continuously reaching out along various lines of experience. In this way, memories enable individuals to configure their place in the world on a moment-by-moment basis. Yet memories are not simply drawn from the past into a present, they are creatively brought into new conscious realms of being.

To conclude, future research on the identity and lifestyles of rural youth could be further enlivened through a progressive move away from large-scale single-issue research such as young people's use of drugs and alcohol or educational performance, for example, to research that is more holistically concerned with the everyday lives of young people themselves. In particular, research could explore how small encounters with peers, institutions, materialities and others are repetitively played out and recorded and reproduced by young people in their memories and narrative constructions of self. By examining critically the more mundane elements of rural youth's lives, researchers will be able to reconcile instrumental accounts of youth culture and rural society with more recent affective and reflexive memoried experience of place.

Geographers working in this area, and researching rural youth geographies more broadly, could reflect upon how the case studies in this chapter demonstrate that memory should be viewed as a creative space in which identity and place are defined. Young people choose how memories are used, altered, and rejected in a process of construction that is not an ordered replication of "how things happened." What different memory-images provide are assemblages of pathways and objects which can be used, shaped, and interacted with to create a logical and coherent sense of self through an evolving and fluid encounter with the world. These memory images are to a certain extent spontaneous, in essence "found"; however, the way that they are put together is an articulation of their meaning. This fluid interpretation of memory offers the potential to interpret and bring meaning to periods of radical transformation, from childhood to adulthood, in the lives young people. Walking and memory are therefore not pure phenomenology, but rather a form of reflexive hermeneutical phenomenology in which young people tenaciously attempt to contain the dynamics of temporal life by producing a framework for themselves from which to move and navigate through the complexities of their existence.

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Spatial Resistance of Alternative Sports in Finland

14

A. Rannikko, V. Liikanen, and P. Harinen

Contents

Abstract

Alternative sports practiced by urban youth offer an interesting opportunity to analyze negotiations regarding common spaces. In this chapter, such negotiations are approached from the conceptual angle of generation, which takes into account the Mannheimian generation of "fresh contact" campaigns against adult-like, normative, and formally functional meanings in the use of urban space and its platforms. The study contributes to the public discussion in which young people are considered physically passive or lazy. Much vital

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exercise takes place outside traditional sports venues on streets, in parking lots, and in city gardens.

The chapter is based on previous publications and data from a 3-year research project that focuses on young Finnish practitioners of alternative sports. The research material consists of qualitative data gathered in an online survey, ethnographic observations, and ethnographic interviews conducted in Finland from 2012 to 2014.

The interpretations, definitions, and implementations of the spatial resistance of alternative sports are manifold. Young alternative sport practitioners collectively take over public spaces through attempts at negotiation and momentary testing. However, they do not usually recognize their acts of spatial takeover as resistance. Thus, the spatial resistance of alternative sports is largely silent and connected to the hierarchies of youth and adulthood.

Keywords

Alternative sports • Generation • Hanging out culture • Lifestyle • Public space • Resistance • Sport culture • Urban space • Youth sport

1   Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate how sports hobbies encourage youth to congregate in public spaces, despite public policy tendencies restricting their presence (Breitbart 1998). It participates in the discussion about geographies of play and recreation by analyzing the meanings that the practitioners of alternative sports assign to their actions of turning regulated public spaces into venues for alternative sports. The analysis adds the viewpoint of alternative sports practice to the geographers' debate about generational hierarchies of public space. The alternative sports practiced by the participants in the study presented in this chapter are skateboarding, inline skating, freestyle scootering, parkour, contemporary circus, and longboarding.

Recent discussions about young people's lifestyles and well-being in Finland have included concerns about their lack of physical activity and their constant "hanging out" or "loitering" in malls, bus stations, and other public spaces. These representations of the leisure activities of contemporary youth differ from the traditional, even nationalistic, visions of healthy and physically competent future adults of "the healthiest nation of the globe in 2015" (Terveinkansa), which are promoted in the intensive and varied practicing of sports.

Concerns about physical activity are based on claims that too few Finnish youth get enough physical exercise to be healthy, too many spend too much time sitting down, and too many drop out of organized sports in their teens (European Youth Portal 2013; Aira et al. 2013). These concerns have resulted in nationwide projects aimed at increasing physical activity on Finnish schooldays (e.g., the project Liikkuva koulu [Finnish Schools on the Move]) and improving the retention of teenagers in sport clubs

and teams (Kaikki pelaa [Everyone Plays]), but the problem is far from being solved, especially if the intensity of public concern is taken into account.

However, views of hanging out and loitering have not been uniform. Discussion about the presence and behavior of young people in public spaces sometimes has developed into a heated debate on rights and restrictions and the problems and possibilities of youth leisure activities in public spaces. Youths hanging out in malls have been seen as disturbing and undesirable, and attempts to curb them have included high-pitched, teen-repellent devices, poster campaigns underlining parents' responsibility for the whereabouts of their children (Vanhempainliitto), implementing a security policy, and rendering places unusable for youth activity (e.g., removing benches, destroying skateboard spots, etc.). These restrictive actions have met vocal and emphatic opposition from people (including youth workers and researchers) who see the visibility and presence of youth in public spaces as an important, traditional part of their citizenship (Salasuo et al. 2012; Kivijärvi 2014).

Many forms of so-called alternative or lifestyle sports, the popularity of which has been on the rise among young people, touch on both issues: the physical activity of young people and the presence of youth in public spaces. The practice of alternative sports involves much physical activity in terms of time spent exercising to develop coordination and motoric skills (Liikanen et al. 2013; Harinen and Rannikko 2014). Certain conventions of the so-called traditional sports world have been called into question, particularly the understanding of the spaces where sport is practiced (Rinehart 2000). Locations where lifestyle sports are practiced are often new or repurposed spaces, both urban and rural (Wheaton 2013). Moreover, they are often public and sometimes less conspicuous. They are created through seeing public space in unexpected ways and by occupying spaces originally built for other purposes. Most have undergone some kind of "creative street phase," where a public space has been used to develop a certain sport (Wheaton 2004; Bäckström 2005; Harinen et al. 2006; Silvennoinen 2006; Ameel and Tani 2007; Rannikko et al. 2014). Hence, we can give new meanings to city space through the conceptual lens of Karl Mannheim (1974/1927), which sees a "fresh contact" of the young generation with its social and societal surroundings.

The ways in which young people use and take over space reveal the existing power hierarchies of public areas. Examining these hierarchies reveals their purposes (Kuusisto-Arponen and Tani 2009). This chapter focuses on the meanings that the practitioners of alternative sports give to the act of taking over public spaces and examines the kinds of power relations that are visible in these acts. It investigates how spatial resistance is interpreted, defined, and carried out. In this analysis, public space consists of streets, walkways, parking spaces, squares, and other urban environments that were not planned to accommodate sports, as well as skate parks, parkour parks, and other open spaces where alternative sports are practiced. The aim is also to identify youth sport activities that are not always recognized in official statistics and public concern.

2   Sport, Space, and Struggle

This chapter acknowledges that spaces are created and constructed through practices, symbols, and meanings. When public space is approached as a social phenomenon, it cannot be separated from power, resistance, or struggle. Societal hierarchies become visible in space, which is an arena of negotiation and an object of physical and symbolic takeover, as well as a target and producer of different and conflicting interests and views (Lefebvre 1991; Haarni 1997; Massey 2005).

The "fresh contact" of the young generation with their environments often encounters resistance because adults usually monopolize public spaces. The young people who are present are seen as out of place, occupying space that rightfully belongs to others (Sibley 1995). They are expected to follow the rules that adults have defined and to respect the adult users of public spaces, that is, they are expected to exhibit the proper behavior dictated by adults (Valentine 1996). Young people are best accepted as users of public space when they use money and act as consumers (Woolley and Johns 2001). This also applies to alternative sports. In a study on skateboarding in Philadelphia, skateboarders and skateboarding were supported only when they offered an exchange value for the city. In other words, users of space that are not "rational," "appropriate," and "profitable" are often excluded from public spaces, which, in principle, are open to everyone (Nemeth 2006). "Urban play" is allowed but mainly during organized, temporary events that do not disturb the efficiency flows of the city. Moreover, occupying public space for alternative sports is different for different genders (Bäckström 2005, 2013).

Despite the generally tight nature of city space, certain spaces may be loose regarding their potential for different uses. Loose and tight spaces are not fixed but potential objects of reinterpretation (Franck and Stevens 2007; Ameel and Tani 2007; Kuusisto-Arponen and Tani 2009). Spaces that are reinterpreted or the use of which is redefined have been called found spaces (Rivlin 2007). Urban homogenization, namely, the tendency to turn cities into clean and safe places, does not allow excitement, variety, and anarchy (Woolley and Johns 2001). In the case of alternative sports, this unconventional movement is a way to take over public space; by doing so, the homogenized character of the city is called into question.

For many young people, exerting an influence over public space also entails an attempt to create familiar or homelike qualities in otherwise unwelcoming spaces. Despite adult (and researchers') attempts to impose theories of social change or conscious resistance to youth influence in public space, young people's creative interventions in space may, as importantly, be modes of survival, depending on seizing opportunities for play, recreation and accessing new resources (Breitbart 1998).

It is important to note that spaces for alternative sport are in flux (Woolley and Johns 2001). They may be regarded as reinterpretations of urban space because they create areas where play is allowed: public space enables creativity where it is traditionally considered impossible. Hence, alternative sports, such as parkour, form new relations with the urban landscape (Ameel and Tani 2007; Silvennoinen 2006). Young people who practice alternative sports see potential in spaces that

previously are not considered appealing or creative (Ameel and Tani 2012a). However, not every space is viable for the process of converting to a venue for alternative sport. For example, according to Woolley and Johns's (2001) study on skateboarding, skateboarders consider that four things characterize a good skate spot: accessibility, trickability, sociability, and compatibility. The same study defined skateboarding as "an active pursuit that requires a place they can call their own (symbolic ownership) and make their mark in."

Alternative sports are usually practiced in uncontrolled action spaces, which are referred as the "fourth space" of youth. These include spontaneous actions in casual contexts outside home, school, and organized leisure activities (e.g., Kivijärvi 2014). The fourth space, in particular, offers young people the possibility to take over spaces that are originally planned for adult use, even though this rarely happens without resistance. In the fourth space, alternative sports, such as skateboarding, may be considered to promote antisocial behavior that should be controlled (Chiu 2009). Without adult control, youth are considered at risk and a risk to the societal order (Harrikari 2008). Therefore, attempts are made to control alternative sports. Examples are the indoorization of alternative sports (Salome 2010) and the construction of special spaces (e.g., skate parks) (Chiu 2009; Kuusisto-Arponen and Tani 2009). These processes aim at the prohibition of alternative sports in public spaces (Woolley and Johns 2001) and can be seen as ways to bring young people back under adult supervision by normalizing the activities of youth (Chiu 2009). Hobbies are usually considered activities that keep young people off the streets (Hoikkala 1993), but in the case of alternative sports, hobbies take the youth into public spaces, which is not welcomed by everyone.

Lefebvre (1991) claimed that the struggle over space is located at the level of everyday action, in this case, loose leisure action. A specific form of the resistance of alternative sports is the use of public space. Why do skateboarders insist on using public space even though skate parks have been offered to them? According to Chiu (2009), skate parks lack an atmosphere that contests authority and promotes creative spatial practice. They are thus linked with isolation, exclusion, boredom, and regulation. Moreover, "skating in skate parks is a conformist way of using space within a designated area" and seems to question the idea of skateboarding. This relates to the discussion about authentic spaces, which are often viewed as equals to public space. For instance, for skateboarding street is a significant symbol (Chiu 2009; Salome 2010).

Loose leisure spaces have been considered counter-spaces, that is, contradictory spaces that question conventional world orders (Lefebvre 1991; Wheaton 2007). As a physical performance, skateboarding tends to make tight spaces loose, reshaping the regulations of public space, questioning the power structures that limit citizens' right to public space, and reshaping material spaces (Chiu 2009). Also practicing parkour has been seen as loosening public space through urban play (Ameel and Tani 2012b). As the most "traditional" alternative sport, skateboarding has even been regarded as a critique of capitalist space because skateboarders often occupy spaces without participating in consumption or production (Borden 2001; Chiu 2009).

3 Methods and Materials

The research material consists of data from an online survey targeting young people who practice alternative sports ($n = 557$), fieldwork notes based on ethnographic observations, and ethnographic interviews, all of which were conducted in Finland. The research material was collected in a research project called "Diverse spaces and practices of sports" (2012–2015). The alternative sports practiced by the participants in this study are skateboarding, inline skating, freestyle scootering, parkour, contemporary circus, and longboarding. These sports were selected because of their relatively recent emergence, popularity among young people, demographics, lack of organization, and the use of public and unconventional spaces.

The wide set of qualitative data was analyzed using a theoretically selective lens, with particular attention to language that according to phenomenological hermeneutics, can be interpreted as expressions of spatial campaigns and negotiations. The method of analysis could be termed "dialogical thematization." The research material was inductively categorized into themes, which then were reorganized, based on the theoretical discussion of the topic, as presented above (Koski 2011). The analysis focuses on power hierarchies in the use of public space. In principle, public spaces, such as streets, parks, and skate parks, where alternative sports are practiced, are open for everyone to enter. However, the practitioners of alternative sports might present a different view.

The online survey was conducted in late 2012 using convenience sampling. The survey invitation was distributed through websites, online forums, and email lists used by the practitioners of alternative sports. All respondents between 12 and 29 years of age were included in the survey. The number of respondents in the survey ($n = 557$) was satisfactory and seemed credible in terms of the geographical and age distributions of the practitioners of each sport. The web questionnaire included both multiple choice and open-ended questions about forms of everyday practice, social networks, and views of lifestyle, accessibility, hierarchy, and competition in different sports. The data gathered from the open-ended answers to the survey questions were used in the analysis of alternative sports' struggle for space. Quantitative data from closed questions were used to explore spatial patterns and needs.

The interviews were conducted with ethnographic fieldwork within the period of 2 years. The interviews concerned mostly peer interaction, learning, spaces, and the meaning of sport. Participant observations and interviews were not carried out in the communities of the practitioners of every sport included in the online survey. Participant observations were conducted only in the practitioners communities of parkour, skateboarding, freestyle scootering, longboarding, and inline skating. In addition, the number of interviews varied: skateboarding = 8, parkour = 5, longboarding = 4, contemporary circus = 2, inline skating = 1, and freestyle scootering = 1. Hence, the analysis of small amounts of data or only one interview was based mainly on answers to the questionnaire.

4   Spaces of Alternative Sports

Before proceeding to analyze how alternative sport practitioners take over public space, it is worth to briefly investigate what are the actual places where alternative sports are practiced. The spaces and places of alternative sports are multiple and vary across different sports. The common element among the six studied sports is that they are often practiced in spaces that were not built and designed for them. There are no specific, labeled spaces for some of the studied sports, such as longboarding. Figure 1 shows the spaces survey respondents used for their sports hobby. Although spaces built especially for the sport are popular, other public or semipublic spaces are widely used as well. Alternative sports are often practiced in schoolyards, parking places, walkways, and parks, for instance.

   One factor increasing the popularity of for-sport spaces is the conscious effort of directing young people toward sport parks and halls, away from roads, streets, and parking lots (Hoikkala 1993; Chiu 2009; Kuusisto-Arponen and Tani 2009; Salome 2010). Even though the street is symbolically important for alternative sports (Chiu 2009; Salome 2010), it often takes less effort to use spaces that are built or addressed to each sport: a skate park is easier to occupy than shared urban space. The cold, snowy, and long Finnish winter explains a lot of the popularity of indoor sports halls: skateboarding and longboarding, for instance, are almost impossible on snow and ice.

   The public not-for-sport places most often used by practitioners are spaces made familiar by classic alternative sports imagery. Walkways, yards, parking places, and parks are spaces in which the accessibility, sociability, and compatibility desired by practitioners converge adequately (Woolley and Johns 2001). These are also places with other common uses, shared by other members of public, and therefore typical
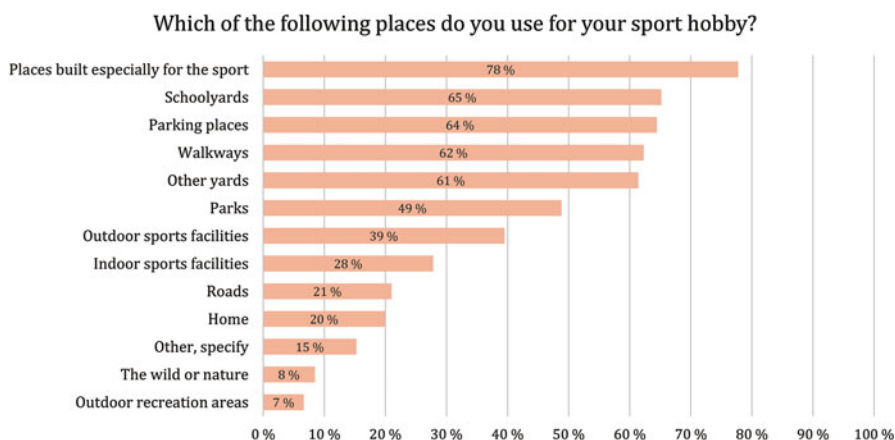

Fig. 1 Training places of alternative sports

Image 1 Screenshot of an online newspaper article "School gets a new life by night" (Grönholm 2013). Photo caption says: "Peter Korpelainen from Moscow skates on the stairs of Taivallahti elementary school by twilight. The school janitor has swept the stairs clean, because [he/she] knows that skateboarders like the spot. Many skateboarding films have been filmed on the stairs"

locations for struggle over space between young people and adults, practitioners, and non-practitioners, as will be discussed later on in this chapter. Specific locations come with some specific context and characteristics. For example, the type of place most often used by practitioners, the schoolyard, has particular features: it is often a trickable space, commonly deserted outside of school day hours, but often also under particular supervision by school staff or municipal officials. The contexts in which alternative sports take over schoolyards range from strict prohibition of alternative sport use to undisturbed sport practice or even school staff supporting practitioners (see Image 1).

Practitioners of alternative sport see public space as a complex composite which includes both static and stable as well as flux and adaptable elements. On the one hand, alternative sport practitioners consider public space a platform which they may reshape to meet the purposes of their sport. On the other hand, they often take
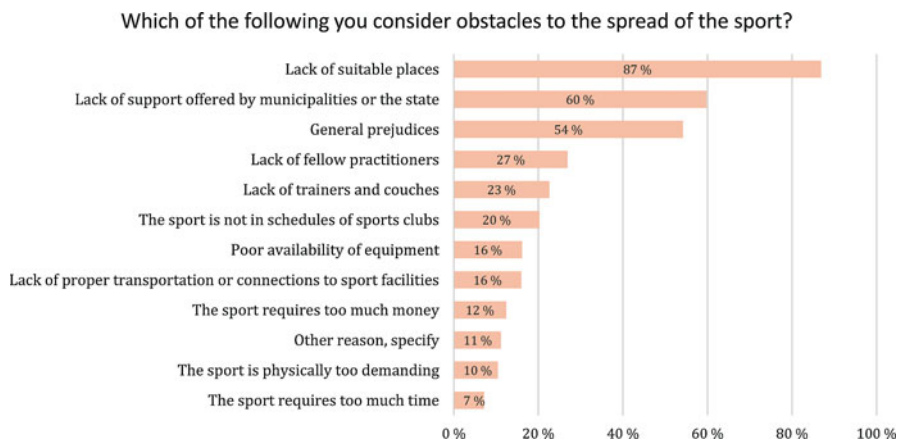
Which of the following you consider obstacles to the spread of the sport?

Obstacle	Percentage
Lack of suitable places	87 %
Lack of support offered by municipalities or the state	60 %
General prejudices	54 %
Lack of fellow practitioners	27 %
Lack of trainers and couches	23 %
The sport is not in schedules of sports clubs	20 %
Poor availability of equipment	16 %
Lack of proper transportation or connections to sport facilities	16 %
The sport requires too much money	12 %
Other reason, specify	11 %
The sport is physically too demanding	10 %
The sport requires too much time	7 %

Fig. 2 Obstacles to the spread of sport

public space as given: they practice their sport by taking into account the given conditions, adapting to and compromising with them. Adaptation is a central principle, for example, in parkour:

> It is like, well, it hasn't been defined so clearly, but at a local level we think that you've got to use your head in a sense of taking into account your surroundings, also in social terms. As an athlete, as a traceur, your task is to adapt to your surroundings in all possible ways, including showing respect towards these other people who are present here. (20-year-old traceuse in an interview)

Yet, once it has been asked what kinds of obstacles to the spread of their sport alternative sport practitioners see, it becomes clear that despite the tendency to direct young people away from the streets, the quality and quantity of facilities specially built for alternative sports are not satisfactory in the opinion of the practitioners. In the online survey, lack of suitable places was the most often mentioned obstacle to the spread of alternative sports as Fig. 2 indicates. When municipalities have built skate parks without consulting skateboarders, parks have often ended up rather unsuitable for skateboarding, mostly because of designers and builders' lack of knowledge and understanding on skateboarding. There are parks with some constructions that are not skateable at all, because, for instance, there is not enough space for landing tricks. Furthermore, alternative sport practitioners expect other support from municipalities and the state and consider the present level of support insufficient.

Spaces of alternative sports are in flux, as urban wanderers move around and find new spaces. One of the most important factors based on what alternative sport practitioners choose their spaces is the creative potential spaces hold. Different spaces offer different possibilities for developing skills and invention of new tricks. This leads to the use of multiple spaces, both not-for-sport and spaces planned for sport. Practitioners' relation with spaces of their sport is built through self-development, creative actions, and inspiration (Rannikko 2016, forthcoming).

5   Alternative Sports Taking Over Public Space

5.1   Negotiating Resistance

Young people who practice alternative sports generally consider that action spaces are shared with others who practice alternative sports – either the same or another sport – as well as with people who use the spaces in a conventional manner, such as parking for cars and roads for driving and walking. The experiences revealed by the young alternative sport practitioners indicated that conventional uses of public space are valued higher than alternative uses. Thus, the practitioners of alternate sports are often sanctioned for disturbing the public peace.

Negotiation also occurs regarding whether places that are planned to accommodate certain alternative sports, such as skate parks, should also allow other alternative sports. One skateboarder said, "It's a skate park, it's for skateboarding." This view often leads to the subtle marginalization of freestyle scootering and inline skating. In one park, sports other than skateboarding are simply forbidden, and in another, freestyle scootering might be allowed only during certain hours. In a third park, skateboarders unofficially dominate although officially it is open to everyone, and skateboarders have decided not to use a fourth park because other sports are practiced there. In any case, the spaces for alternative sports are multiple, yet all share certain rules that should be respected:

> When you are skateboarding in a skate park or a skate hall, you should pay attention on other skateboarders, for instance give space to others if they need it, everyone should have their turn, and if someone is filming, don't bother them. If you go out to the streets, take care that you take all the litter away with you, don't cause disruption or danger to other people, and if someone drives you away with reasonable arguments, you should leave a decorous way. Moreover, you should generally behave well and use common sense so that you won't give a bad picture of skateboarders. (23-year-old skateboarder, an open-ended answer from the questionnaire data)

As this participant indicated, spaces for both alternative sports and other purposes should be respected according to the shared knowledge of the users who congregate there. Respect is considered a central condition for the continuation of sports practiced in shared spaces. This can be seen as one reason that alternative sport practitioners take over spaces through compromises and negotiation. They aim to maintain a good dialogical connection with those who are the most probable opponents of their actions. When alternative sport practitioners talked about respect, it often meant giving space to others. Some spaces, such as graveyards, are simply forbidden according to the norms of the communities of alternative sport practitioners because they respect their importance and sacredness.

The participants' responses indicated that they felt that someone else set the rules regulating the use of public spaces. These spaces were seen as belonging to adults, not youth (Sibley 1995; Valentine 1996). Those acting against conventional space norms are treated as suspect, and their possibilities of using public space are limited. The alternative sport practitioners in this study seemed aware of this, and

they tried to avoid conflict as often as possible. Hence, the ways in which public space is occupied also follow the rules and regulations of adults as a sort of response or an action of talking back to the misgivings. Behavior that is deemed proper facilitates the "publicity management" of alternative sports.

> *You shouldn't practice parkour in places where something might get broken. Let's not cause so called bad blood in people and fool around, because it will negatively affect the reputation of our sport.* (27-year-old traceur, an open-ended answer from the questionnaire data)

Moreover, being and doing in public space is legitimized by societally acceptable arguments, such as developing yourself, your body, and your skills and learning new, perhaps useful, tricks. In some cases, the notion that alternative sport practitioners are doing "real sports" instead of just hanging out is emphasized to legitimize unconventional performances in public space. Often the relation to so-called usefulness is complicated and, in the case of parkour, fundamental:

> *Well, parkour is interesting in that sense that it's not really sport but also a philosophy and a lifestyle, at least that's how it all started. So the idea is kind of a motto that you should be strong to be useful. So when in western countries people like to go to gym so that they'd have large biceps and they'd look good, but anyway, if they had to lift a small child and carry her for a kilometer, they wouldn't have the strength to do that. So the idea on parkour is to do everything keeping in mind your personal limitations and that everything you do should have a meaning.* (20-year-old traceuse in an interview)

Hierarchies within alternative sports communities and between different alternative sports are also constructed by negotiating attitudes toward other people. Those who do not follow, know, or respect the spatial etiquette of alternative sport communities are chastised, especially if they are placed lower in the power hierarchies of sport. Those regarded as unaware or ignorant are often the youngest practitioners. Older practitioners say that they are guiding younger ones to learn the etiquette of their sport, one way or another. It also seems that older practitioners justify alternative sports in public spaces more easily because they meet with less suspicion than the younger ones do.

5.2 Experimental and Momentary Resistance

Public space is occupied through momentary takeovers: alternative sport practitioners pay short visits to various urban environments in order to see how long they can stay there – if they can stay at all. The practitioners thus become urban wanderers who take over some places for a second or less while they pass by and from time to time stop for a moment somewhere else. Hence, alternative sports are practiced in loose spaces as the practitioners move quickly from one spot to another (Woolley and Johns 2001).

The takeover of public spaces – or of other people's private spaces – is for these young people momentary, experimental, and testing. If a takeover attempt is not

successful, the practitioners go somewhere else. The right timing is important because the ownership of public space is the most easily questioned during quiet hours when (barely) nobody uses it (Woolley and Johns 2001). Some spaces may be occupied very briefly because if the practitioners stayed there longer, they would provoke pointless resistance.

> *It often is like that if you go to some courtyard you already know that you won't be able to stay there long, someone will chase you away soon.* (24-year-old skateboarder in an interview)
>   *I would like [to ride scooter] in parking garage if the guards didn't chase me away.* (13-year-old scooter rider, an open-ended answer from the questionnaire data)

Even though alternative sports are often very visible and noisy because they are practiced in public spaces, their creative potential is not apparent to others. A subcultural gaze is required to visualize how everyday space may be used for alternative sports and how much imagination, as well as physical effort, it takes to manage it. The subcultural gaze enables momentary and unexpected takeovers of public space in ways that other users of public spaces cannot foresee.

> *I walk along a street and all the time my eyes and mind look for something new to skate on, even if I had walked the same route a thousand times before. Skateboarding is about sports, social interaction and finding your own creativity. In principle, even art. A person who does not skateboard cannot understand it; it is a whole separate world.* (25-year-old skateboarder, an open-ended answer from the questionnaire data)

A similar phenomenon can be recognized in spaces where different alternative sports are practiced, such as skate parks. Skateboarders, inline skaters, and scooter riders of various ages negotiate their right to use skate parks, which seems to occur within an implicit social hierarchy. Older skateboarders usually take over parks, and younger scooter riders are able to occupy only the space that is left for them. That space might be large for a short while, but after a minute or 2, it shrinks again. When skateboarders are not present or are taking a break, scooter riders are able to use the entire park, but when the skateboarders return, based on their sovereignty, they take over as much space as they wish. On the other hand, skateboarders might avoid skate parks when they know there are many scooter riders present, and they would rather use them during late hours when nobody else is there. The skateboarding space transfers briefly into a scootering space and then again back to a skateboarding space. Thus, hierarchies of alternative sports practiced in the same environment become visible in the takeovers of space, particularly in how, when, for how long, and by whom the shared spaces are occupied.

5.3   Collective Resistance

Alternative sports are often described as individualistic and as negating traditional team sports (Wheaton 2013). However, the empirical data analyzed in this study

showed that most alternative sports are in many ways social and collective endeavors. Friends and peers offer a gateway for young people to begin practicing alternative sports, which are most often practiced in peer groups (usually small and familiar ones) and in communities formed around shared interests. The practice of the alternative sport brings strangers together and enables them to share a bond, which is highlighted as "mutual respect" or a "sister or brotherhood" based solely on the practice, lifestyle, and supposition of shared experience. Alternative sports also provide a backdrop and an excuse for hanging out in public spaces, making loitering more legitimate and purposeful, thus making these activities easier to defend. Relationships inside the group affect organization, motivation, and the perceived hierarchies in the practice of the sport. The practitioners often described their history and personal development in terms of deepening social relations and growing confidence and poise inside the sport community. These can also be seen as key factors in the transformation of an alternative sport into a lifestyle sport (Wheaton 2004).

This collective aspect is instrumental to the ability of alternative sport practitioners to take over public spaces. The interviewees reflected that a large group carries collective strength and thus makes it possible for a set of practitioners to dominate or control spaces; without peers and mates, it would not be possible. This holds true both in common public spaces with regard to adults and other users of the space and in the struggle between different sports for the use of parks and areas created for the practice of sports. Shared action in a familiar group gives young sport practitioners courage and the boldness to assert their presence in a contested public space. However, the group also sets common rules and principles for the use of spaces and definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior in them. Among the Finnish practitioners of alternative sports, these rules often stress that deliberate disturbance, mischief, and drawing negative attention to the sport are to be avoided.

> They behave very irritatingly. They are always about twenty and they all just take over space, I mean these scooter riders, and they demand even more space. I hate them. (24-year-old skateboarder in an interview)

The young practitioners of alternative sports described their sports hobby as a fluid transition between active sport exercise and socializing, as well as hanging out in the spaces used for practice. As a central part of alternative sports activity, hanging out is also a way to occupy public space, which was also noted widely by other youth researchers (MacDonald and Shildrick 2007; Tani 2011; Kivijärvi 2014). Peer relations and togetherness are important for the motivation and commitment in alternative sports and are seen as "natural" aspects of this alternative lifestyle. Combined with the aforementioned rules of conduct, these statements formed a functioning discourse for defending the use of and presence in shared spaces by the sport practitioners. By emphasizing their benevolence toward other people in common spaces and their normal, natural, or human needs for peer interaction and gatherings, the practitioners justified their presence in terms often used in conflict resolution in adult society.

The collective takeover of public spaces can be seen as resistance carried out in both the power exerted in group action and the courteous negotiation of terms between practitioners and the adult society against which they supposedly have to defend themselves. It appears that the youngest practitioners, particularly scooter riders, are the most likely to use collective action and a quantified majority to take over spaces to practice their sport.

> *I mean this young age, and that they [scooter riders] haven't developed a skill to read the situation to understand when is someone else's turn. And because they are so many they just take over this whole place.* (24-year-old skateboarder in an interview)

Other practitioners regard this as caused by the lack of understanding of the spatial etiquette of alternative sports (Rannikko et al. 2014) although it might be the only way for the youngest practitioners to have the right to public spaces. The scooter riders emphasized the spatial otherness of skate parks, which they emphasized as being the space of skateboarders:

> *[In this town] skateboarders don't like scooter riders, so we can't be at the half-pipe if there are skateboarders, because they say that half-pipes belongs to them. There should be a half-pipe for scooter riders as well.* (12-year-old scooter rider, an open-ended answer from the questionnaire data)

6   Conclusion

> *I think it's perfectly ok to skateboard in public spaces as long as you don't cause any damage to the surrounding or people. Skateboarding in yards is also ok, if you respect people living there and their property. In these kind of situations, you might need to talk with those people, and if for instance the noise of skateboarding bothers them, then it's often better for you to leave. On the other hand, yards are often environments where you find things you can't find elsewhere, so at least I myself try to make people understand that.* (23-year-old skateboarder, an open-ended answer from the questionnaire data)

This chapter investigated the interpretations, definitions, and implementations of spatial resistance and the compromises of alternative youth sport practitioners in the context of the "fourth space." As the quotation above illustrates, young people performing alternative sports constantly negotiate their right to use public spaces for their sports activities. Thus, the "fresh contact" of young generation with their social environments, as conceptualized by Karl Mannheim (1974/1927), can be seen in the connection between alternative sport practitioners and the environments in which they practice these sports. From children's geography's viewpoint, it is notable that alternative sports in public space are often not recognized as sport by adults. Therefore, young people doing sports in urban space are targeted by paradoxical moral regulations: the imperative of a physically active lifestyle and the prohibition of loitering in public space.

Although adults and older practitioners monopolize public spaces (Sibley 1995; Valentine 1996), young alternative sport practitioners actively aim at taking over

public spaces in subtle ways. Every now and then, they are put back in "their place," and sometimes they succeed in taking over the spaces they desire. They stress negotiation and conciliatory actions, distancing themselves from conflict and explicitly articulated resistance. They are clearly proud of a certain amount of martyrdom in this moderation. For them, public spaces are occupied unremarked, momentarily and collectively. The spatial resistance of alternative sports is largely a silent resistance connected with the hierarchies of youth and adulthood.

Alternative sport practitioners do not recognize the takeover of public spaces as resistance. For them, the unconventional use of public spaces is a necessary part of their sport, and they have to cope with the regulations they must follow in these areas. This necessity drives them to a form of voiceless politics (Kallio and Häkli 2011) in campaigns regarding city space. In their conciliatory speeches, definitions of open contestation are lacking, but their inexorable efforts in taking over common places and platforms for "fresh" purposes can be interpreted as resistance against the conventional meanings of the use of functional space. Thus, they also implicitly challenge the moral discourse of a physically lazy generation by participating in extremely athletic exercise and intensive training.

Conventions, moralistic discourses, hierarchies, and power structures are challenged and redefined (often unconsciously) through space and its use. Hence, the spaces where alternative sports are practiced are counter-spaces, although the practitioners themselves are usually unaware of the contradictory character of their actions (Lefebvre 1991). Norms defining the acceptable use of public space are stretched when alternative sport practitioners are present. Hierarchies of youth and adulthood, different age groups, and different alternative sports are negotiated by being present in, using, and talking about public spaces. In future research, it would be crucial to examine adults' views on and reactions to the different ways of young people's takeover of space as part of their sports hobby. As these reactions are clearly linked to their geographical contexts, discourses of both young people and adults should be studied simultaneously by geographers interested in leisure, play, and sport.

Skateboarders, scooter riders, and inline skaters negotiate their mutual relations in skate parks, streets, and parking places. In these situations, hierarchies of different sports and age groups are clear: the ways in which younger practitioners take over spaces are often very dissimilar in comparison to the ways older practitioners occupy space. Older practitioners negotiate and compromise with other users, while younger ones often do not gain any space with a compromising attitude. They take over spaces for their activities through quantitative superiority, which often displeases older practitioners because they interpret the action as showing the ignorance of shared rules.

The takeover of public spaces is a necessary part of the dynamics of alternative sports while the practitioners reconstruct their relationship to the urban landscape through creating found spaces (Rivlin 2007). Some spaces allow more diverse actions than other spaces do, which is because of the loose or tight character of spaces (Franck and Stevens 2007). On one hand, public space offers possibilities and inspires alternative sport practitioners, but on the other hand, it restricts and sets

limits to the actions performed there. Because alternative sports are performed mainly in urban areas, public space functions as an object of the spatial (re) construction of urban culture.

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Variegated Nature of Play for Auckland Children

15

Banal Landscapes and the Promotion of Well-Being

Robin A. Kearns, Penelope Carroll, Lanuola Asiasiga, and Karen Witten

Contents

Abstract

Children's right to play – as enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) – is important for children's cognitive, social, and physical development and for their everyday well-being.

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Neighborhood affordances – formal and informal – provide more (or less) opportunities for informal active play and social interactions. However, urban intensification of neighborhoods in many Western cities, with the accompanying increase in traffic volumes, is impinging on children's ability to play freely. Active play is a major component of physical activity, which is important in the context of decreasing levels of physical activity and poorer health outcomes. Research shows children are more physically active when engaged in informal play than during formal play activities like sport. Thus children's access to places to play informally is an important public health issue as well as a UN-sanctioned right. This chapter explores the state of play for children, with a focus on the informal play of 253 children aged 9–12 years across nine suburban and inner-city neighborhoods in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. The children's perspectives, presented here within a *third place/space* framework, were elicited using a range of qualitative participatory methods. The chapter concludes that, given the opportunity, the children in this research play anywhere and everywhere – in improvised places as well as in their backyards, school playgrounds, parks, and sports facilities.

1   Introduction

This chapter explores the variegated nature of play for children – what and where they play – and the ways in which banal landscapes can be promoting of children's play and thus their well-being. It begins with a brief overview of some of the extensive literature defining "play," explores changes in conceptions of play over time, and considers why play is important. The role of neighborhoods as more than a mere backdrop to children's lives and a major determinant of formal and informal play opportunities is discussed. Evidence is reviewed revealing a decrease in children's outdoor play. Children are shown to live more sedentary, indoor lives as cities have intensified, parental fears for their children's safety have increased, and plug-in entertainment has lured children indoors.

Drawing on data from a case study example – *Kids in the City*, a project exploring how diverse neighborhood spaces are experienced by children and their parents, the chapter then moves on to explore the state of play from children's perspectives for 9–12-year-olds living in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. Recognizing children's "agency" (their ability to understand and act within and upon their environment) and acknowledging their "voice" (children's own perspectives) have been integral to the *Kids in the City* project investigating the perceptions and play experiences of 253 children living in various Auckland neighborhoods.

How the varied spaces of the city affected the children's play, recreational opportunities, and social interactions was explored using a *third place/space* framework (Carroll et al. 2015), developed from the ideas of Oldenburg (1989) and

Gardner (2011). This framework distinguishes between the more defined and confined physical and social environments of home (including backyards) and school (*first* and *second* places, respectively) and accessible public spaces (*third places*) of the city. *Third places* are divided into *thresholds* (semipublic spaces adjacent to home, such as suburban driveways and inner-city apartment foyers and car parks, indoor and outdoor communal shared spaces), *transitory spaces* (footpaths, alleyways, pavements, streets), and *destinations* (parks, playgrounds, "waste" ground, sports grounds and facilities, shops).

Building on the evidence of diverse play experience in a range of spaces, the chapter argues that, given the opportunity, the children in this research play anywhere and everywhere – not just in their backyards, school playgrounds, and designated public places like playgrounds, parks, and sports facilities. The chapter concludes with a consideration of children's access to public spaces in the city and the importance of *third places* for children's well-being in contemporary cities.

2 Defining Play

Identifying an all-encompassing definition of play is difficult because there are so many beliefs about the nature of play, even among theorists (Fisher et al. 2008). However, as Pellegrini (2009) notes, while theorists write of the difficulty – or impossibility – of defining play, most people have no difficulty recognizing play when they see it happening. There are also different understandings of the nature and value of play. Adults' attitudes vary between ignoring play, seeing it as a waste of time, curbing it as something potentially dangerous, or appropriating play as a tool for learning and socialization (Lester and Russell 2010).

Play is primarily "behavior for its own sake, for the pleasure and joy of being able to do it. . .[and it] offers opportunities to move beyond existing ways of being" . It is about creating a world where, in the moment, children are in control, able to rearrange their worlds to make them "less boring" or "less scary" and to experiment, take risks and experience emotions, "without the consequences they might bring in the real world" (Lester and Russell 2010, p. x).

Free play (as distinct from adult-led or adult-appropriated play) can be defined as play where "the players themselves decide what and how to play and are free to modify the goals and rules as they go along" (Gray 2013, p. 7); it is an activity "freely chosen and directed by the participants and undertaken for its own sake, not consciously pursued to achieve ends that are distinct from the activity itself" (Gray 2011, p. 444). Selecting "when they want to play, and with whom they play," is also a common characteristic of free play (Ceglowski 1977, p. 109). The focus of this chapter is on free or informal play (the terms are used interchangeably) rather than the structured or organized play epitomized by codified games and sports.

Formal play activities such as sports, which have a set structure and rules, and other games which are initiated and/or controlled by adults are increasingly taking over from informal/free play. It has been argued that even contemporary

children's "free play" is not really free, in that "children have less choice in terms of what, where, when and with whom, they want to play" (King and Howard 2010, p. 33).

3   The Importance of Play

There is a shared belief among experts that play is an integral component of learning and child development. It is important for children's present-day well-being and their cognitive, physical, and social development as well as crucial for their later health and well-being as adults (Freeman and Tranter 2011; Hart 2002; Sothern et al. 1999). Free play is a basic evolutionary drive, argues Gray (2013, p. 5), and "the primary means by which children practice and acquire the physical and intellectual skills that are essential for success in the culture in which they are growing." He comments that while lack of play may not kill the physical body, its absence "kills the spirit and stunts mental growth" (Gray 2013, p. 5) as it is through free play that children learn to make friends, overcome fears, solve problems, and take control of their own lives.

Piaget (1965) and many others subsequently have written of how children achieve understanding through play. When they play, they reinvent the world through their own eyes, making it less boring and scary, while at the same time practicing and developing new skills. They create the rules, make decisions, and claim a space among their peers. They own what they have created. Lester and Russell (2010, p. x) offer the ever-popular game of "tiggy" or "chase" as an example of children's free play. In the practice of this form of play, children are physically active and competitive, cherishing above all the thrill of the chase, and keeping the game going by negotiating rules and agreeing to abide by them. The rules provide a framework within which children know "this is play" and the game affords a safe space for experiencing high emotions. According to Piaget, games are legitimate social institutions.

Active play is seen to mirror development, so that, as the child grows and matures, types of play change (Barnett 2013). Play develops coordination skills and strength and helps children cope with challenges, as well as being enjoyable in the present. As Sigel (1987) signals, exploratory adventures offer stimulation as well as advancing healthy development. Children learn about themselves and their world through play (Freeman and Tranter 2011). Curiosity-based play facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and skills and has been linked to later academic success (Fisher et al. 2008).

Parents (and grandparents) generally have a strong belief in the value of play. In an online survey of 7933 parents and 31146 children across 25 countries, 93 % of parents thought play was essential for healthy child development and was important in developing creativity and imagination (Family Kids and Youth 2010). A recent online survey of 406 parents and 152 grandparents on the state of play in New Zealand found 97 % of parents and 98 % of grandparents believed play was "not only important but essential for a child's development," especially their social skills and for the development of children's imagination and creativity (MILO 2011).

Most research about play has canvassed adults on the definition of "play" and whether it is occurring. Arguably, it is important to establish from children themselves what they perceive to be play.

4   Changes in Play Over Time

The propensity to play during childhood, and the value placed upon it, manifests itself most clearly in hunter-gatherer societies. Gray (2011) reports children in such cultures play and explore freely, at all times of the day. In much of the world, however, with the rise of agriculture and subsequently industrialization, children's labor was required for farming and domestic tasks and then in factories. The time available for play diminished. While this is still the case in some countries, by the middle of the twentieth century in much of the Western world, children had been largely freed from long hours of labor. In its place, Gray (2011, p. 5) reports "a heightened sentimentality about childhood" which led to a more benign attitude toward children engaging in free play and the establishment of spaces such as parks to promote it.

Since the mid-twentieth century, however, children's free play has declined, in large part because adults have increasingly exerted control over children's activities. Indeed, children's perspectives are seldom meaningfully considered within city and neighborhood planning (Randolph 2006), rendering children "out of place in urban space." The hegemony of the motor vehicle and increasing intensification of cities have also reduced children's access to outdoor space, thereby limiting where children can "hang out," "just play," "just walk," and socialize with friends.

Dualistic thinking has developed between discourses that emphasize the need for free play in the interests of children's development and well-being on the one hand and the need to guide children toward maturity on the other. According to Lester and Russell (2010, p. 1), "a discourse of 'play and learning' purports to welcome children's freedom to discover and explore through play, but such freedom. . .is strictly monitored and controlled as it is essential that children are discovering the right things." This dichotomous thinking plays out within school as well as home environments. In the context of school, for instance, Beresin (2010, p. 5) has noted that "grown-ups attempt to edit what is played and what is not played."

Technological change has altered the balance between children's indoor and outdoor play and particularly between sedentary and active play. Increased access to, and use of, digital technology is a source of ambivalence for parents, who recognize both its advantages and drawbacks. Many parents admire their children's digital competency and see their computer skills as enhancing their children's future employment prospects. Yet the parents in Witten et al. (2013) study also complained that it was hard to extract children from their "electronic bedrooms" and saw the time spent engaged in virtual entertainment was at the cost of outdoor play. Indeed, parents suggested that their children seemed to have lost the ability to play imaginatively outdoors. Some contrasted their children's experiences to their (largely pre-technology) childhoods when play was necessarily more improvised and occurred in less-structured spaces than the sports field or schoolyard.

Another reflection concerns the increasing focus on children's performance within and beyond the school environment in order to secure future employment prospects. Children are progressively encouraged or required to take adult-directed lessons and engage in organized cultural activities and sports to enhance their future prospects. Childhood appears to be seen by many parents and educators today as "a time for resume building" (Gray 2013, p. 9).

5   Change in Play in New Zealand

In their historical survey, Ergler, Kearns, and Witten (2013) trace changing rhetoric and psychological theories which have altered the character of children's play in New Zealand. Dominant themes of children needing protection and play as a preparation for adulthood have persisted. They argue that concerns about potential moral decline and public health threats led to compulsory schooling and the imposition of supervision and discipline, while moral imperatives for the development of fit bodies and minds resulted in the establishment of playgrounds and sports clubs. Contemporaneously, suburbanization and reliance on private motor vehicles have moved children away from (public) streets and into (private) backyards. Parents' perceived need to protect their children from risk and the acceptance of psychological theories which stressed the importance of structuring play to foster children's development have seen adult-directed and structured extracurricular activities (for those who can afford them) progressively replacing free play as parents strive to ensure children reach their full potential and succeed (Ergler et al. 2013).

Freeman and Higgins (2013, p. 2) note the increasing pressure on children to succeed both academically and otherwise, which leaves some children "with little time for childhood." In their study of 71 9–11-year-old children in the New Zealand city Dunedin, organized education tuition, sport and recreation, music, and community activity classes played a significant role in children's lives. Only 11 of the 71 children had no organized after-school/evening activities, while one child had six.

Formal sport is a major component of children's active recreation and play in New Zealand. The 2011 *Sport New Zealand's Young People's Survey* of 20,000 children highlighted the importance of team sports like soccer, netball, rugby, basketball, field hockey, and volleyball as well as badminton and tennis. A subsample of 8000 Auckland children aged 5–18 years showed that 74 % of boys and 58 % of girls liked playing sport "a lot." In addition, approximately 70 % of boys and 60 % of girls spent more than 3 hours a week on informal sport and recreation activities, including "mucking about with friends," shooting hoops, and games of backyard cricket (Auckland Council 2013).

The *Sport New Zealand's Young People's Survey* highlighted the importance of "informal settings" in young Aucklanders' sporting lives, with sport and recreation in informal settings making up a large percentage of children's overall sporting activity. It noted that rates of participation in almost all sports and related activities

were greatest when children were just "mucking around" with friends and family or on their own. Thus while formal school initiatives, sports clubs and designated sports grounds, and sporting facilities provide important opportunities for children's participation, neighborhood spaces where children can "muck about" with friends are also vital.

6   Role of Neighborhoods in Play

The neighborhood is not just a "backdrop" for children; rather it is a key shaper of the routines of everyday life (Macintyre et al. 1993) including more (or less) opportunities for unsupervised outdoor play and mobility and social interaction. Ideally neighborhoods are the "cornerstone" of city life, providing children with opportunities to play safely and freely (Office of the Children's Commissioner 2010). Yet Gleeson and Sipe (2006) write of an increasing trend toward "toxic cities," which fail to nurture children.

The built form and social dynamics of most neighborhoods frequently restrict play opportunities and curb children's social interactions through, for example, prioritizing traffic over pedestrians. In so doing neighborhoods can negatively influence children's emotional, cognitive, and physical development (McDonell 2007; Spencer and Woolley 2000). Children need safe outdoor spaces where they can be physically active, independently mobile, and socially interactive. This is important for both their present-day well-being and health outcomes in adulthood as physical activity in childhood has lifelong implications for adult health (Sothern et al. 1999), as do independent mobility (Merom et al. 2006; Tudor-Locke et al. 2001) and social interaction. Additionally, being out and about promotes an awareness of the local environment and a sense of belonging (Proshansky and Gottlieb 1989). Woolley and colleagues (1999) argue that children's urban environments become part of their personal and social identity and that place attachment is central to personal identity and well-being. Others argue that the social connections, built when children are out and about walking, playing, and "hanging out," build up social capital (Offer and Schneider 2007; Weller and Bruegel 2007), which is another contributor to place-based well-being (Kearns and Andrews 2010).

Neighborhood affordances for play include child-specific spaces such as parks and playgrounds. But children play everywhere, given the opportunities. Thus the "banal ordinary landscapes" of any cityscape – the *third places* of town squares, pavements, walls, curbs and stairs, driveways, and car parks – can become affordances for children's play. Studies show that informal "play spaces" can be just as attractive to children as designated parks and playgrounds and provide significant opportunities for play and exploration (Walsh 2006). However parental fears for their children's safety have seen many children denied opportunities to play in either child-specific *third place destinations* or other *third places* and increasingly confined to the "semi-fortified space of home" and ferried between organized activities (Kearns and Collins 2006, p. 108).

7   Change in Children's Spaces of Play

Commentators continue to note the "shrinking realm of outdoor play" (Freeman and Tranter 2011; Gleeson and Sipe 2006), and in focus groups parents have talked of how much they played freely in their childhood neighborhoods, how far they roamed, and why they would not afford their own children the same license today (Witten et al. 2013). Surveys in the UK (O'Brien and Smith 2002) and the USA (Clements 2004) have shown fears of molestation by strangers, and the dangers of traffic are the main reasons parents give for restricting their children's play.

In Clements' (2004) investigation of the status of outdoor play through an online survey of 830 US mothers, 85 % agreed children played outside less than they themselves had done: 70 % reported playing outside every day when they were young, while only 30 % said their children currently did. They felt the main reason their children did not play outdoors more was because they preferred to be watching television or playing computer games inside (82 %), while 61 % also cited lack of adult supervision and fear of physical harm coming to their child as reasons for a decrease in their children's outdoor play compared to their own (Clements 2004). An earlier US survey by Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) reported similar results. Children spent 25 % less time playing in 1997 than 1991 – and correspondingly more time shopping with parents and doing homework. There was a further decrease of 7 % in time spent playing from 1997 to 2003 (Hofferth 2009). The authors concluded that children were progressively spending more time on structured, adult-controlled activities and less time on child-controlled play and "passive leisure," including just "hanging out."

In New Zealand, the 2011 Milo "State of Play Report" highlighted the decrease in children's free play. Among its findings were that 46 % of children were not playing every day, that 40 % of children wanted to play outdoors more often, and that there was an overreliance on technology, with "plugged-in playtime" becoming the default play activity (MILO 2011).

There is an inherent paradox at work in the foregoing evidence: while parental fears of "stranger danger" are high, despite media-driven hype, the rate of actual molestation of children by strangers remains low (Finkelhor et al. 2010). Fears of danger from traffic are not unfounded. As traffic volumes have increased, there have been more accidents, and children are disproportionately represented in pedestrian injuries and fatalities (Collins and Kearns 2005). New Zealand, for instance, has a high rate of car ownership, with 620 cars per 1000 people. Of the trip legs recorded in the New Zealand Travel Survey 2010–2013, 79 % were trips made by car (Ministry of Transport 2014). Increased car dependence has seen decreased independent mobility and outdoor play in public places across a number of countries, including New Zealand (Carroll et al. 2015; Tranter and Pawson 2001).

Notwithstanding the decrease in children's free time outside, the emphasis on the outdoors for play persists. In part this is because children are more constrained by adult rules inside, whereas the outdoors allow them a greater freedom, "if not in

territorial range, then at least in the intensity with which they interact with, manipulate and explore the environment" (Chawla 1992, p. 76). Chawla (1992) has noted truisms of child-environment research: school-age children are the most frequent users of "the outdoor landscape"; designated playgrounds are not widely utilized; and close-to-home pavements and backyards are important for children's play (Chawla 1992, p. 78). In summary, children value suburban backyards and close-to-home footpaths/pavements for play in addition to designated playgrounds and parks.

8   The Right to Play

Research on children's use of the outdoor environment reflects both developmental concerns regarding children's cognitive, social, and physical development into healthy adults and, increasingly, a focus on children's rights in the here and now, including the right to play. While children have as much "right" to the public spaces of the city as adults, "...the law tends to facilitate the control of children in urban spaces rather than to allow them to...enjoy its benefits on the same footing as adults" (Simpson 1997, p. 909). Despite children's right to engage in play being enshrined in Article 31 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), children have been increasingly segregated into homes, schools, and playgrounds and excluded from public spaces (Freeman and Tranter 2011; Simpson 1997). This situation denies them the benefits of independent mobility in public places. Children learn through interaction with the wider environment, and being out and about in the city allows them to improvise a social life of their own.

   The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* requires the state to uphold children's rights to protection and play and to have a say on matters which affect them, along with other rights. The "right to protection" appears to have become paramount. Children are positioned at both the state and family level as vulnerable to abuse and in need of protection. This, coupled with a climate of fear fueled by media accounts of abductions and abuse, has led to a risk-averse environment, replete with regulations and rules and restrictions on children's right to play.

9   Case Example: *Kids in the City* Research

The overarching aim of the *Kids in the City* project was to understand how different neighborhood environments are experienced by children and parents. It also sought to provide an evidence base to ensure children's well-being is to the fore in policy and planning decisions in Auckland and elsewhere.

9.1   Auckland Context

Auckland is New Zealand's largest and most diverse city with 1.4 million residents (300,000 of them children) and 188 ethnicities (Auckland Council 2012). The population is expected to reach two million in the next 30 years.

City neighborhoods are undergoing change as intensification to contain urban sprawl leads to more compact neighborhood environments, increases in traffic volumes, and fewer child-friendly open spaces (Kearns and Collins 2006). Intensification is being achieved through a combination of planned and ad hoc greenfield and brownfield property developments, subdivision of some suburban properties, and infill housing in inner-city suburbs. Stand-alone suburban houses with backyards remain the norm for families with children, but this is changing, with increasing numbers of children living in inner-city apartments. Whatever the housing form, private outdoor space that can facilitate children's play is shrinking. This situation is increasing the importance of *third places* (*threshold* and *transitory* as well as *destinations*) for children's play.

10   Research Methods

A mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods was used to investigate children's neighborhood use, experience, and perceptions. Participants were 253 9–12-year-old children from six suburban schools and three inner-city schools. Children wore GPS units and accelerometers and completed trip diaries each day for seven days to record where they went, who with, and by what mode (Oliver et al. 2011). Subsequently, 140 of the children took part in go-along neighborhood walking interviews, talking about where they went, what they did, and what they liked/disliked about their neighborhoods. In situ individual interviews were also conducted with the 40 inner-city children, for the most part in the children's homes. Follow-up school-based mapmaking and discussion groups further explored children's neighborhood experiences. Data collection took place in suburban schools in 2011 and in inner-city schools in 2012. The findings presented below are based on children's trip diaries, interviews and discussion, and mapmaking groups.

11   "Just Walking" and "Just Playing"

All of the suburban children had access to private backyards to play in. Some children living in medium-density developments in the inner city had communal green space around their apartment complex for active play, but children living in high-rise apartments had to make do with apartment foyers, stairwells and corridors, and the public spaces of the city for play. These spaces include child-specific facilities such as playgrounds and parks and other *third places* such as nearby wasteland, streets, and car parks.

School was the most frequent destination for all children during the week; followed by retail outlets/shopping centers and sporting venues. Trips to and from school provided children with most opportunities for traveling independently (usually walking). Across the whole sample, just under half of trips to school were made independently. Trips made by suburban children were twice as likely as those made by inner-city children to be for shopping (excluding food). Conversely, trips made by inner-city children were more than twice as likely as those made by suburban children to be for out-of-school sport and almost twice as likely to be to formal extracurricular educational activities. Conversely, suburban children were more likely to go to their local park than inner-city children (Carroll et al. 2015).

However, the children not only walked to get somewhere; sometimes they "just walked." Horton and colleagues have noted the importance of "just walking" and the way seemingly aimless walking (as opposed to walking to get somewhere) can be "central to the lives, experiences and friendships of most children and young people" (Horton et al. 2014, p. 95). "Just walking" was important for many of the *Kids in the City* participants – as well as a way to get to desired destinations – and while walking to destinations or "just walking," they often played along the way. They walked around parks, around the block, and along city and suburban streets, simply enjoying the peace (or the excitement) of their particular surroundings; they walked (or ran) solely to enjoy the walking or the running. Further, "just walking" provided opportunities to chat and interact with friends and/or interact in a playful way with their physical environment – to avoid cracks in the pavement, jump on walls, and dodge shadows. When one girl was asked where she went to have fun with her friends, she said, "We just walk around."

"Just playing" covered a range of informal physical activities in suburban backyards and *destination*, *transitory*, and *threshold third places* of the city. The children talked of kicking or throwing balls around, "shooting hoops" (basketball), riding bikes and scooters (and doing tricks on them), bouncing on trampolines, climbing trees, playing "tiggy," and hanging out on playground equipment. Sometimes they transformed their environments from the mundane to the magical, playing imaginative games. In interviews and discussion, many children talked of wanting more time to play, both indoors and outdoors. They cited pressures of homework and in some cases the number of formal extracurricular activities they were engaged in as reasons for lack of time to "just play."

12   Enumerating Spaces and Places of Play

12.1 *First Place* of Home

For suburban and inner-city children alike, home, with its related *third space thresholds* (backyards, communal green space, courtyards, driveways, apartment foyers, corridors, recreational facilities, and car parks), was their favorite place to play. The homes and backyards of friends and neighboring children – *fourth places* – were also favored sites for "just playing." In the words of one of our informants:

> I go home after school, get changed and I stay home sometimes. . .or go to my friend's. . .we play wrestling on his trampoline. And we get sticks and we poke them in the ground.

Here we see the choice or requirement to "stay home" – whether one's own or another's place of residence – as yielding rich possibilities of play. In this narrative, the use of a trampoline is subverted away from jumping and used as a platform for "wrestling" – an activity presumably made more challenging with the moving surface.

The speaker quickly moves to comment on the use of sticks, another playful skill-based activity easier to achieve on the home turf than on the hardened surfaces of streets and controlled spaces of schools.

There is opportunism at work in playing with who lives next door or nearby in a suburban setting:

> I have next door neighbours which are kids. . . ..I play with them cause they live right next door to me. Well we play on the trampoline and we play tiggy, and we play hide and seek. Sometimes they come to our house and, because we've both got trampolines.

In this narrative, the speaker attests to the benefits of having kids next door and a sharing of both resources (i.e., trampolines) and company (i.e., each other).

Those spoken to in inner-city locations led more interior lives. More than half of the children said they played inside their individual apartments and apartment complex more than outside. There was a more atomistic experience of play at work, one in which ". . .all the things we need are in here. . .if we want to play something we can just play it."

12.2 *Second Place* of School

School playgrounds were important sites for children's play and social interaction. Some schools are out of bounds to children outside school hours, while others are open for children to play in after school and in the weekends. During school playtimes (and outside school hours where schools were accessible), children made extensive use of school grounds for playing. They talked of hanging out with friends, playing ball games and the ever-popular "tiggy," hopscotch, skipping, climbing trees, and rolling around on the grass. In the words of one child:

> It's good for kids 'cause just around that area you can tumble down the hill, like going in a ball and just rolling and rolling down.

They also played imaginative games. One girl talked of an old tree stump at the back of the school grounds with a hole in the middle. She and her friends collected leaves and dirt and "cooked things up," a fertile (if unconscious) metaphor for both pretending to be in a kitchen and the creative process itself.

Trees in school grounds (as well as in backyards and parks and on street verges) were important also for physically active play. Children talked of climbing trees,

sitting in them (by themselves or with friends), playing imaginary games in their branches, as well as enjoying the vantage point being up high allows. For one informant, "you get to see friends when you're up in the trees."

12.3 Threshold Third Places

Thresholds are liminal spaces, spaces between one place and another. They are spaces usually traveled through or past with little awareness of their detail or potential for activity other than easy movement through and beyond. For the children in this study, apartment complex corridors, lobbies, and stairwells provided places to play. One child reported playing soccer in the hallway, and for another, redundant space was assessed and recycled as a play space:

> Under the stairs there is a big space where sometimes we play with a ball and sometimes with a hula hoop.

The smooth surfaces of driveways and footpaths on the threshold of, and adjacent to, suburban homes were valued for riding bikes and scooters and skateboarding.

Car parks, too, provided opportunity for co-optation and space for a range of physical activities. In the words of one child,

> Oh, um, right next to my house …there's a car park, and my sister goes rollerblading there…[and] she taught me how to rollerblade.

These threshold spaces invariably had a primary and adult-coded purpose. For one girl the parking lot with a high wall ("good for tennis") adjacent to her apartment block was her favorite play space, but could only be used once the workers who parked their cars there on weekdays had gone home. Child play in improvised threshold spaces is invariably a subordinate activity to the primary function of the space in terms of adult routines. Through this necessary adaptation, children learn to be responsive to the temporal rhythms of the city in a manner not unlike the way a beach user must be aware of the tides.

12.4 Transitory Third Spaces

Adults' fears for their children's safety mean that the public space of the street was not generally viewed as a place suitable for their children to be, apart from when in transit between home and school. Even then many *Kids in the City* children were not allowed to walk, scooter, or bike unsupervised to school because of parental fears for their safety. However, for most children, the street was an alluring and interesting space and somewhere to play and to "hang out" with friends. As noted above, walking is not just about getting from A to B; "just walking" is an important activity

in itself that can facilitate play along the way. Spaces experienced "in transit" can be experienced by way of observation rather than engagement. For one participant,

> Me and my friends just walk around staring at people. . .and we talk about people and they don't really know.

Here, being mobile allows a two-stage process: an unobtrusive watching of others and then a playful discussion of those observed with the added pleasure gained from them being unaware of the children's scrutiny. On other occasions, children may choose to "out" themselves and their playfulness to the adult world, risking approbation and sometimes gaining engagement. One participant reported to us:

> Sometimes we stand on the bridge and we like waving to people there and then they wave back to us or beep us.

In this example, to engage directly with adults would violate the deeply ingrained sanction of "don't talk to strangers." But a waving to passing motorists from an overbridge allows an at-a-distance engagement that is subversively playful.

Within such transitory spaces, children played a wide variety of games in the course of walking to school or other destinations. They chased each other, climbed on walls, avoided standing on cracks, and dodged the shadows of passing cars. For them, walking was a variegated practice (Solnit 2001), and, in the terms of de Certeau (1984), they exercised tactics to ensure enjoyment was gained from otherwise routine travel on foot. For instance, two playful tactics are the modulation of pace and the transgression of boundaries, as reflected in the comment:

> We walk around the block. . .and sometimes we have races. . .and we jump fences.

These playful experiences are transitory because not only do they occur in transit between places, but also they are ephemeral – occurring in fleeting combinations of time, place, and participants which generate moments of free and unstructured play that won't necessarily be repeated.

12.5 Destination Third Places

Suburban streets could be destinations in themselves, as well as transitory zones. This is especially the case when traffic is only intermittent. Children talked of seeking out particular streets to ride their bikes and scooters, especially if there are challenges such as hills. Parks are another key destination, providing space for informal games of soccer, rugby, and "tiggy" and for just running around. Room to move around on quiet streets or parks is a central concern for children. One participant spoke of the need for "lots of space and stuff. . . like. . . heaps of trees and dogs . . . and stuff to do," and another remarked "I like that it's very spacious and there's lots of like places to hide in and adventure in and stuff." These

references by children to space are salutary, for free and creative play requires room to move around and for the unanticipated to unfold. Another exclaimed "it's fun and you can run wild on the grass." Again, these are potent words uttered by an expert practitioner of play: "running wild" speaks to the need for free play to have a feral element, a breaking out of the mold of conformity, and rigid expectation.

Some children talked of imaginary games they played in particular designations. In the following exchange a boy talked of a particular playground he liked to go to. When asked what he played there, he simply said, "imagine": "Yeah, I imagine a lot. I like to imagine a lot." When asked what he liked to imagine, he replied:

> Um, it's forest with deadly snakes... camping by my own with guns, and zombies are coming, and with a Hummer tank, yeah. And aliens. . ..

This comment illustrates that outdoor play can involve the imagination triggering activity shaped by the destination. In this case the park is more than a place of play; it re-places the child in a world of his own making.

Playground equipment (swings, roundabouts, and, above all, monkey bars) was utilized extensively by children when they spoke of parks as destinations. One boy reported having "swinging competitions" with his sister, thus illustrating the role of destinations in facilitating a stretching of capacities and a testing of skills. The same boy found the monkey bars opened up a world of possibilities:

> [It's] like you are in a cave or apartment or like that you are imagining that you are a teacher...then I stand up [on top] and watch the sunset sometimes and then just stand there and see my view 'cause I love views.

In this narrative we see a sequence of similes, a transposition of the self into different sites (i.e., cave) or situations (i.e., being a teacher) that enable a mastery of place expressed through being able to "just stand there" taking in the view. For this child, the destination (a playground in a park) facilitated a more personalized destination (climbing to the highpoint and feeling on top of the world).

Parks and playgrounds are often surpassed in intrigue as destinations by less formalized and ad hoc places of play. For the *Kids in the City* study participants, patches of wasteland were appealing, and children particularly liked having plenty of space.

13   Conclusion

One *Kids in the City* child participant said: "heaps of kids play here a lot. . .because there's like a lot of space." Children in twenty-first century Western cities seem caught between the allure of two types of space: the virtual world found through "screen time" and the often improvised and ephemeral outdoor spaces including and beyond home and school. As Rautio (2013) remarks, allowing children to exercise the art of play outside the logics of rules and spatiotemporal structures

seems an urgent need for the twenty-first century. This need aligns with children's right to play, as enshrined in Article 31 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which is under siege from a combination of social and physical factors. As earlier discussed, social factors include: pervasive safety discourses about the need to guarantee children's safety, coupled with societal (and particularly parental) perceptions of neighborhood dangers; parental imperatives that their children be given every chance to succeed in a highly competitive world (with play seen as less important than acquiring specific skills); and the lure of digital devices and the interiorized and virtual play they offer. Physical factors threatening the right to play include: a "child blind" approach to city and neighborhood planning (Randolph 2006) which makes children "out of place in urban space"; the hegemony of the motor vehicle, which compromises children's safe access to *third places* for play; and the increasing intensification of cities which is reducing both the amount of private outdoor space available for play and the number of *third places* where children can "hang out" and socialize with friends, to "just walk" or "just play."

Children's capacity to play freely and fully impacts upon their development in the here and now, as well as on their health and well-being in adulthood. Given that free play is essentially creative and not prescriptive and regulated, there is a need to recognize that play does not always occur where adults expect or insist it takes place (i.e., "playgrounds"). Rather, children's play is, at its best, spontaneous. Play literally and figuratively "takes place" in a variety of spaces – some improvised, others organized. It promotes social interaction, is responsive to the local environment, and promotes exercise – of both the body and of the imagination. Yet city planning seldom takes into account the specific needs of children (Freeman and Tranter 2011; Gleeson and Sipe 2006; Randolph 2006). The tendency of many new higher-density centers to be almost "child blind" is mirrored in Auckland and many other Western cities, where a default planning practice largely confines children's use of public space to child-designated *third place destinations*. It ignores the fact that "banal ordinary landscapes" of a city – and particularly *third place thresholds* and *transitory zones* – are often important sites for children's play.

All too often the built form in neighborhoods restricts rather than encourages children's play, a manifestation of what Gleeson and Sipe (2006) refer to as urban design that is "toxic" to children. Alongside a "child blind" approach to planning, parental perceptions that the world outside of home and school is unsafe also restrict children's outdoor play, with potentially negative impacts on their cognitive, emotional, social, *and* physical development (Spencer and Woolley 2000). A challenge for adults is, however, recognizing that children remain experts at play. As Lester and Russell (2010, x) remark:

> Adults should be aware of the importance of play, and promote and protect the conditions that support it. . .however children's play belongs to children.

Children's propensity to play anywhere – in threshold and transit as well as designation spaces – contests the prevalent adult hegemony of public spaces. The

challenge for adults is to listen and observe and facilitate, but not control, spaces of and for play in the contemporary city. Research that listens to children themselves is an important contribution to this imperative.

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Young Wheelchair Users' Play and Recreation

16

Michelle Pyer

Contents

Abstract

Despite a rapid increase in research into children and young people's lives, the experiences of disabled children – and in particular disabled young people – still remain largely overlooked. This chapter offers some reflections on the leisure experiences of young wheelchair users (13–17 years) in their homes and across a range of public spaces. The data that are presented were collected during a multi-method UK-based project which was designed to capture their use of different spaces away from the school environment. The teenagers and their parents discussed the physical and social barriers inherent in these places which impeded on their access to leisure. Their contributions signal the importance of situating the leisure experiences of young people in the context of families. The complex relationships and negotiations between parents and teenagers in accessing leisure are explored, signaling the ways that they work together, or at times in opposition, to open up or close down leisure opportunities.

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1   Introduction

Despite a rapid increase in research into children and young people's lives, the
experiences of disabled children – and in particular disabled young people – still
remain largely overlooked. This chapter offers an introduction to debates on geogra-
phies of play/recreation and disability, building on existing accounts of the recreational
challenges experienced by disabled adults, and those experienced by nondisabled
young people to introduce the complexities associated with how young wheelchair
users negotiate both public and private recreational spaces. In order to illustrate these
issues, the chapter draws on the findings of a project which focused on the leisure
experiences of young wheelchair users (13–17 years). These experiences were col-
lected during a multi-method UK-based project which was designed to capture their
use of different spaces away from the school environment. In particular, the chapter
will illustrate a range of interplays between the family members – notably parents – of
young wheelchair users which close down or open up leisure opportunities.

The study was designed to gather the views of the young people, and indeed
strategies were developed at the outset to ensure that young people who used a
range of communication approaches could be involved representing their own
views rather than taking part with the use of adult proxies (Pyer and Campbell
2013). As the research progressed, it became clear that the experiences of these
young people were inherently linked to the views, anxieties, and support of their
parents. This chapter draws together some instances which illustrate the myriad of
ways in which these relationships opened up or closed down leisure for the young
people that participated. The chapter will be of interest to geographers with an
interest in the play/recreation of disabled young people, the range of environmental
and social constraints that they encounter, and the strategies that they respond with
to improve their experiences.

2   Context: Young Wheelchair Users and Recreation

Leisure as a concept is hard to define. It varies across disciplines, cultures, and time.
Purrington and Hickerson (2013) draw a distinction between "free" child play and
"restrained" adult leisure (p. 133), arguing that while they both generally occur in
addition to everyday living needs, participating in leisure reflects self-discipline and
the acquisition of cultural norms. It is not within the remit of this chapter to discuss in
detail the meaning of these terms; however, it is important to note at the outset that
the focus of this study were the spaces that young wheelchair users used during their
time outside of school and those that they related to "play" or "leisure" activities.

Thus, the experiences presented in the discussion that follows reflect their own interpretation of play or leisure opportunities. These signal participation in a range of pastimes which incorporate both "free" and "restrained" activities. The term "leisure" is used as an inclusive term to reflect the range of activities that they shared.

Leisure is important. Its value has been agued at a range of scales, from its potential to impact on community inclusion and participation to its ability to enhance feelings of belonging in a range of settings (Welch et al. 2013). Distinctions can be made between the long-term benefits of leisure, which signal its significance for children and young people's future selves, and its worth for their well-being in the present. Often, the former can be aligned to the (professional) developmental perspective of adults, leisure for future good (Pollard and Lee 2003). Thinking about the importance of leisure from this stance signals its significance on growth and development, enabling exploration of the world and skill and identity development (Feinstein et al. 2006; Fjortoft 2004; Hixson 2013). This is especially so during the teenage years. In this sense, leisure is important as a future investment (Purrington and Hickerson 2013).

Research with disabled adults has similarly signaled the benefits of leisure and the opportunities it affords in terms of increased self-esteem, improved confidence and psychological well-being, physical health and fitness, reduced risk of illness, and increased opportunities for social relationships (Aitchison 2003). Research into the leisure experiences of disabled adults signals how particular leisure spaces are often discussed in terms of their usefulness for rehabilitation (Burns et al. 2013), emanating the professional approach discussed above, rather than in relation to current enjoyment or well-being.

With these considerations in mind, it is also important that the intrinsic enjoyment of leisure in the everyday lives of disabled children and young people is not overlooked; indeed it is this element of leisure that has been prioritized by young people when discussing the benefits of leisure opportunities. In this way, leisure can be situated as an end in itself (Harker 2005; Powell and Wellard 2008) with the potential to positively enhance current well-being (Shikako-Thomas et al. 2014; Statham and Chase 2010).

Barriers and restrictions to participation can impact on how young people view, relate to, use, and experience particular spaces, challenging ideologies which promote leisure as associated with free time and free will (Purrington and Hickerson 2013). Some of the barriers experienced by disabled young people in attempting to access leisure opportunities are not dissimilar to those experienced by their nondisabled peers (John and Wheway 2004); however, they may face additional challenges. These become all the more significant when placed in the context of exclusion from fully participatory education or employment, freeing up more of their time (Kelly 2005) and inadvertently promoting exclusion, particularly during holidays and out of school term time (Knight et al. 2009).

A number of issues might impact on the decision making associated with visiting particular leisure spaces outside of the home. In general, choices are often influenced by the social environment that they offer, time and cost implications. Young people also have to negotiate permissions from adults in the context of

increasing social fears for their safety (Giddings and Yarwood 2005). One of the key barriers to leisure participation crosscutting research with young people and disabled adults is the notion of "risk." In the case of young people, adult fears for safety mean that spatial sanctions are imposed at a variety of levels (Jones 2000), impacting on the ways in which they access and make use of public and private spaces. In public spaces, young people often have to renegotiate their place between constraint and choice (O'Brien et al. 2000). Countless accounts exist of the contrasting ways that adults and young people see the world around them, illustrating that there is no "one" leisure experience.

Young people therefore face multifaceted challenges in accessing leisure. The challenges experienced by young disabled people – and in the context of this study young wheelchair users – are further compounded by issues of exclusion associated with the social and physical environment. Certain aspects of places which are taken for granted by nondisabled people might be considered in different ways by the gaze, choices, and actions of a wheelchair user (Imrie 2000; Matthews et al. 2003). Inaccessibility in public environments can close down or limit leisure opportunities for young people where spatial characteristics serve to disable people (Knight et al. 2014; Park et al. 1998). Spatial construction can serve to exclude by keeping disabled people "in their place" while simultaneously highlighting them as "out of place" (Kitchin 1998, p. 345).

The challenges associated with accessing public leisure environments provide a context in many minority world countries in which young people are increasingly spending their spare time at home (Valentine 1999). This is particularly the case for disabled young people who spend more time at home than their nondisabled peers (Beresford and Rhodes 2008). Homes have also been signaled as a site of conflict for young people and their parents (McNamee 1998), where the power held by each individual is constantly renegotiated (Blunt and Dowling 2006). Teenagers often do not have the opportunity to exert power and adapt space in the home to their own needs, particularly in familial areas. Lincoln (2005) illustrates the importance of bedrooms to teenagers, as they are "often the first place in which they are able to exert some control" (p. 400). A growing number of texts have discussed the need for (service supported) adaptations to be made in the homes of disabled young people, focusing largely on their daily needs in relation to washing, sleeping, and eating (Beresford 2003; Heywood 2004). This signals where distinctions are made between provisions aimed toward supporting basic living needs and others which might support the autonomous, spontaneous use of home spaces for leisure activities.

3   Methods: Hearing from Young People (And Their Parents)

The primary participants of the study were wheelchair using young people, aged 13–17 years. This is an age where nondisabled young people are reportedly increasing their autonomy in relation to leisure. The 13–17-year range is also the time when young people potentially have the most multifaceted experiences of space, situated between considering themselves as having outgrown adult-organized activities but

still experiencing the confines of adult regulations (Childress 2004; Valentine and McKendrick 1997). Participants were initially recruited through special schools in the Midlands, East, and Southeast of England. These locations provided opportunities to work with a variety of young people in a range of settings, rural and urban, in the counties. Throughout the chapter, the terms "indoor" and "outdoor" public spaces are used: "indoor" public spaces refers to shopping areas, cinemas, and fast food restaurants, while "outdoor" public spaces refers to streets and roads, parks and playgrounds, and natural environments such as woods or open fields.

The key driver underpinning the methods used during the study was inclusivity. A multi-method approach was selected in order to facilitate the collection of experiences and views from a large number of young people, as well as providing the opportunity to work in-depth with a subsample of them. Often, the only people recruited to participate in research are those who can express themselves verbally (Lloyd et al. 2006), and so for this research, methods were selected on the basis that they enabled the young people to share their experiences in ways which did not rely solely on the written and spoken word. This was particularly necessary because many of them used non-spoken forms of communication (e.g., sign language, communication symbols, or responsive movements). The participants used a range of different wheelchairs, including manual and electric (self- and assistant propelled); many of them used multiple wheelchairs.

The methods employed included structured interviews with 69 young people, a photography exercise with associated interview (13 participants), and participant-led video tours (9 participants). The findings that follow are drawn from discussions arising from each of these methods of data collection. Transcribed data were analyzed thematically (O'Reilly et al. 2013), and a process of ongoing analysis was applied whereby during discussions participants of the second and third stages of the project were asked to reflect on the themes arising from the method that preceded it.

In the research, the position of the researcher as an adult "outsider" meant that steps were taken to avoid influencing the activities that they took part in. It was recognized from the outset that only partial understanding of the lifeworlds of teenage wheelchair users may be gained; although children and adults may use the same spaces, they view them differently because what they expect and what they are expected to do there is likely to differ (Young and Barrett 2001). For this reason, at the planning stage of the study, careful consideration was given to ensuring that the views obtained were those of the young wheelchair users themselves and not those around them (a detailed discussion of the issues considered as part of these strategies has been published elsewhere: Pyer and Campbell 2013).

4 Family Geographies and Leisure: Barrier, Cause, and Response

The research discussed in this chapter was designed to capture the experiences of young wheelchair users in accessing leisure opportunities. A focus on indoor and outdoor public and private spaces away from their schools was loosely defined as

the geographical remit; further to this the discussions completed with the teenagers drew on their own interpretations of the places that were important to them during their leisure time.

While from the outset of the study, priority was given to the views of young people in isolation, as the project progressed, it became increasingly evident that the experiences of the teenagers were intricately associated with the actions, anxieties, and decision making of their parents. These underpinned many parents' willingness (or not) for their child(ren) to spend time independent from them in public places. During the photography exercise, participants were asked to complete a diary which illustrated how (and where) they usually spent their time on a weekday during school term time and at the weekend. Typical examples of these are offered in Figs. 1 and 2, which illustrate the extent to which the teenagers spent leisure time with their parents.

These timetables begin to intimate the close relationships of the teenagers with their parents and the extent to which they spent much of their leisure time together. Discussion of the experiences of the teenagers in isolation would therefore not represent the range of interplays associated with their leisure time. The discussion that follows teases out some key examples that the teenagers – and their parents – discussed with a view to illustrating some of the complex ways that these interactions could open up or close down leisure opportunities for these young people.

5   "Closing Down" Leisure: Environments, Decision Making, and Anxieties

In discussing their leisure experiences, the teenagers cited a range of challenges, or barriers, which acted to close down leisure opportunities for them. These barriers arose from both the built environment and in the form of restrictions introduced by the decision making of those around them. The restrictive nature of their homes was frequently cited in relation to their leisure needs. While the layout of their home space was often considered accessible by service providers (who often implemented adaptations based on the everyday living needs of the young people), the stories recounted by the teenagers intimated that their homes were often not geared toward their leisure wants and needs. Figure 3 gives an example of a diary completed by a 15-year-old male which was typical of the responses received. Some of the teenagers spent relatively short periods of time in their rooms, and in contrast to non-wheelchair-using young people, a number also explained that the use of these spaces for leisure in their spare time was problematic. This is particularly significant given the findings of previous research which asserts that young disabled people often spend more time at home than their nondisabled peers (Beresford and Rhodes 2008).

A large number of the teenagers in the study noted that there were areas of their home that they could not access unaided. Further exploration of this issue showed that, in addition to the structural barriers within their homes, opportunities were also closed down as a result of decision making within the home. Restrictions often
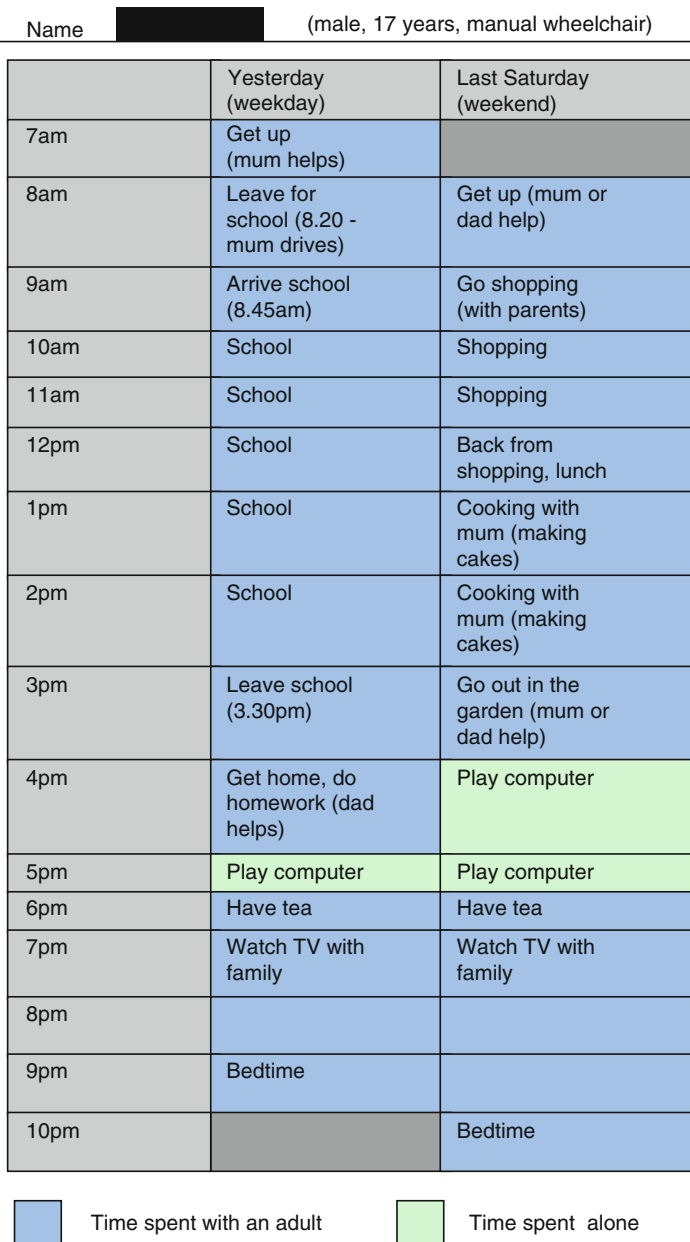
Name ▮▮▮▮▮▮	(male, 17 years, manual wheelchair)	
	Yesterday (weekday)	Last Saturday (weekend)
7am	Get up (mum helps)	
8am	Leave for school (8.20 - mum drives)	Get up (mum or dad help)
9am	Arrive school (8.45am)	Go shopping (with parents)
10am	School	Shopping
11am	School	Shopping
12pm	School	Back from shopping, lunch
1pm	School	Cooking with mum (making cakes)
2pm	School	Cooking with mum (making cakes)
3pm	Leave school (3.30pm)	Go out in the garden (mum or dad help)
4pm	Get home, do homework (dad helps)	Play computer
5pm	Play computer	Play computer
6pm	Have tea	Have tea
7pm	Watch TV with family	Watch TV with family
8pm		
9pm	Bedtime	
10pm		Bedtime

■ Time spent with an adult   ▢ Time spent alone

Fig. 1 Spending time with adults (1)

arose where leisure-related equipment (most notably computing or gaming equipment) was placed in parts of the home which were inaccessible to them. One example of this is shown through Sarah's contribution to the study. Sarah wanted

Name	█████████	(female, 16, multiple wheelchair)	

	Weekday	Weekend
6am	Get up (6.30) (Mum helps)	
7am	7.45am Go to school (bus comes to get me)	
8am	Travelling	
9am	School (arrive 8.45am)	Get up (lie in as it's the weekend! – mum helps)
10am	School	Go to playscheme (one to one helper)
11am	School	Playscheme
12pm	School	Playscheme
1pm	School	Home, lunch
2pm	School	Dad took me to the park
3pm	School ends (3.20pm)	Park
4pm	Youth club (at school)	Play X–box (with dad, mum doesn't like it)
5pm	Youth club	Xbox
6pm	Travel home (school bus)	Dinner
7pm	Dinner	Watch TV
8pm	Watch TV with Dad	Watch TV
9pm	Mum home form work, puts me to bed	Chill out in my room
10pm		Chill out in my room
11pm		Bedtime (mum or dad help)

▨ Time spent with an adult   ▨ Time spent alone

Fig. 2 Spending time with adults (2)

Name	▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮	(male, 15 years, manual wheelchair)
	Yesterday (weekday)	Last Saturday (weekend)
7am	Get up	
8am	Leave for school (8.10 - school bus)	
9am	Arrive school	Get up
10am	School	Play guitar
11am	School	Play guitar
12pm	School	Lunch
1pm	School	Play computer
2pm	School	Play computer
3pm	Leave school (3.20pm)	Play guitar
4pm	Get home, play on computer	Play guitar
5pm	Play on computer	Play guitar
6pm	Play on computer	Have tea
7pm	Have dinner	Watch TV with family
8pm	Listen to music	Watch TV with family/ bath
9pm	Listen to music	Watch TV with family
10pm	Bedtime	Bedtime

🟩 Time spent outside the home   🟨 Time spent in familial areas of home   🟦 Time spent in own bedroom

Fig. 3 Time spent at home

to make use of the Internet to play online games; however, the physical and social restrictions within her home prevented this. She explained that restrictions on school computers placed limitations on access to sites of this kind.

> I can't use [the internet] at school either because all the sites. . .I like going on games sites, where you get to play games for free, but you can't do it on them because of the access and it says 'access denied'. It *sucks*.

Sarah, 15, electric wheelchair

Sarah explained how her younger brothers, who could access this area of the home, were able to use these sites. Previous research has signaled the sibling rivalry resulting from young people's use of media equipment in the home and the contested use of bedroom space where computers or games are located in the bedroom of a particular sibling (McNamee 1999). In Sarah's case, the phone connection which supported Internet use was located in a room which was inaccessible to her, unless supported by another member of the family to access it.

This is one example where decision making within the home environment influenced the impact of building inaccessibility in relation to leisure opportunities. Parental influence was also apparent in other, more subtle, ways around the home in relation to leisure. The contributions of James and his mother illustrate one way in which this was the case. While James was able to spend time playing computer games in his room, his parents instigated rules to limit the types of games that he used and the length of time that he spent playing them. While this is not an unusual behavior for families with teenagers of James' age (15 years old), the ways in which these rules were enforced relate back to the spatial restrictions that his home afforded.

Mother: Because sometimes he can play for quite a while. He doesn't like to use the one hour rule...For some reason [playing the playstation] really triggered aggression with him, and he screamed and screamed all the time as he was playing...and if he loses control and starts banging, his room's up above the dining room and that's our second light fitting there...and we give him a warning. If he bangs all I do is go to the bottom of the stairs and say 'that's one'...

James: Yeah and then there's the electric switch.

Mother: ...that was one of the best things, I could do it from here, yes he's mad but, I'm not getting hit, I'm not getting things thrown at me.

Mother and James, 15 years, manual wheelchair

In this instance, the restrictions stopping James from moving independently around his home were used by his parents to reinforce rules around the use of gaming for leisure.

The interplay between family members also had an impact on the leisure opportunities that were opened up to the young people outside their homes. Concerns of adults – most notably parents – for the young people's safety were a frequently discussed issue in relation to accessing leisure. Examples of this were apparent in the transport use of the young people. Some parents voiced reservations for their child using public transport to access leisure. Their anxieties were often drawn from worries about the inaccessibility of transport services and anticipation that their child would meet barriers in making use of them making them unsafe.

> I'd be worried in case there was a problem getting on the train or something. I wouldn't want him doing that on his own.
>   Mother of 15 year old male, manual wheelchair

> I can't go to the cinema on the bus…mum says I might get stuck somewhere.
>   Female, 15 years, multiple chairs

While the teenage years are usually a time for expanding independence from the family and increase agency (Wray-Lake Crouter and McHale 2010), this was not the case for most of the young people who participated in this study. While young people's wish to develop their autonomy at this age can sometimes be at odds with those of their parents, leading to disagreement and conflict, this was not the case for these families in relation to transport use. The concerns of the parents illustrated above were also mirrored in the contributions of the young people. A number discussed a wish for opportunities to develop their autonomy while at the same time sharing the concerns of their parents for their safety. The use of public transport often signified worry and fear on the part of the teenagers but for reasons which contrast to those detailed in research with non-wheelchair-using young people which intimates that their concerns often arise from social factors, for example, bullying on public transport (Osborne 2005). Examples given by the people participating in this study centered on physical access issues, illustrating that on occasion their fears had been realized.

> Mark does not risk using public transport in case of getting stranded. At certain train stations there is only one lift. If it is not working then it is impossible to get off at certain platforms. When Mark was nine a train ended the journey on a different platform and Mark had to cross the tracks to get back to the ground floor leaving Mark scared for his safety.
>   Researcher diary extract

Where this was the case, the result was often that public transport was closed down to the teenagers, through a combination of their own, and their parents, fears for their safety.

While the feelings of the teenagers reflected those of their parents in the use of public transport, they offered somewhat different accounts when discussing their experiences of trying to access leisure in public places. A range of barriers exist for wheelchair users which impede access to public places. Queues, negative social responses, and physical access issues are all commonly cited issues in previous studies (Knight et al. 2014), and these can contribute to a reluctance from parents to spend time in particular settings. The teenagers in this study signaled the presence of barriers in the built environment including steps into buildings, corridors not wide enough for a wheelchair to pass, and the height of reception desks (see also Bromley et al. 2007; Church and Marsden 2003). The stories that these young people told went further, signaling the social impact of social "othering." While previous research has noted the lack of status afforded young people in public spaces (Giddings and Yarwood 2005), the teenagers recounted how the "gaze" of

others – adults, children, and young people alike – influenced their willingness to access particular places; it was here that socially based fears were most apparent.

> When people look at me, your disability, and then it's 'what's the matter' and 'what's wrong'. . .it's like when we went to town, it's like that 'what's the problem' because they said I'm paralysed on my legs.
>   Greg, 16, electric wheelchair

> I expect it rather than, I expect them to do it and then I'm surprised when they don't, rather than expect them not to do it, if you can see what I mean. It sounds a bit backwards, but it's just how I've got used to it.
>   Lucy, 17, electric wheelchair

The challenges that the young people met in accessing outdoor public places were represented differently. Geographical research with non-wheelchair-using young people has signaled the importance of public outdoor spaces like local streets to young people's enjoyment. They afford opportunities to socialize with peers and to spend time independent of the adults in their lives, developing autonomy (Hopkins 2010; Valentine 2004). The young people participating in this research noted spending very little time in outdoor public spaces; indeed when asked about the time that they spent outdoors, responses often included experiences of time spent in the private gardens of their homes. Barriers inherent in the built environments such as surface type or kerb height (see also Bromley et al. 2007) often played a part in closing down these spaces to them. In addition, barriers of this kind often led to a need for assistance from adults (most often their parents) and limiting autonomous use of these places.

With these issues in mind, the relationships that the young people had with adults also impacted on their use of public outdoor spaces. The concerns of parents for their child's safety illustrated in discussions on indoor public spaces were again evident in considerations of outdoor public spaces. These concerns were also often coupled with concerns for their child's particular (in)competence at negotiating these spaces, leading to mediation of their free time through the introduction of rules.

> Mother: . . .there is nothing in this county that will do that, where you can know that. . .they're there and they're safe. I have to be there every second. . .
>   Mother of 15 year old female, multiple chairs

> Chris: If I go out [with my friends] for a walk after school we always have to have someone with us. . .to make sure we're OK. They make sure we don't go too far. . .
>   15 year old, manual wheelchair

The teenagers would often only be enabled to use particular spaces if the adults with them deemed them safe and their children competent in their use of them. Where this was not the case – which was a common reaction – many spaces open to their able-bodied peers of the same age were closed down to them, often completely. Alex, a 15-year-old, often made comparisons between his spatial

range and that of his brother, citing instances where his brother had opportunities to spend time with friends outdoors; Alex's parents feared for his safety, and therefore, these places were off limits to Alex himself.

Alex: I want to go and play out with my [twin] brother, which I can't do.
Mother: Because there's nowhere safe…he just couldn't go out on his own [to brother] could he? Not to the places that you go to.

Alex, 15, manual wheelchair

Parents' perceptions of risks associated with the outdoors were coupled with concerns that the teenagers were incapable of negotiating challenges – or at the extreme dangers – independently. The concept of risk and its impact on adult rulemaking for children and young people is not new (Pain 2004); indeed Cloke and Jones (2005) note that adults' desires to represent children as innocent have the potential to limit the spaces that they use. Concerns of this kind are usually voiced in relation to the lifeworlds of young children; by the early teenage years, parents often feel that their offspring are developing an awareness of the risks associated with spending time in public places (Gill 2007).

Risk has also been cited as a reason that disabled adults may choose not to spend time in outdoor places, leading to arguments suggesting that risk in itself is used to exclude disabled people (Burns et al. 2013). The young people in this research did not discuss fears for their own safety in outdoor public spaces in the same way as their parents did, illustrating that perhaps they viewed the "risk" associated with outdoor more seriously than those inherent in indoor public spaces. Parents, on the other hand, painted their offspring as innocents and in need of protection in their accounts. They stressed the need for their constant supervision for their own safety and signaled the ways in which risky situations could be avoided. In most cases this restricted the use of outdoor spaces by the teenagers to times when adults were available to accompany them; however, for some young people, this closed down opportunities for spending their leisure time in these spaces completely.

6 "Opening Up" Leisure: Strategies, Aspirations, and Negotiations

The multifaceted negotiations of the teenagers within their family units also reflected the importance of "family" in opening up leisure opportunities. The families responded to the challenges inherent in accessing leisure in a range of different ways. As the needs of the teenagers changed, so too did the strategies that they and their parents employed to overcome barriers to leisure in both private and public spaces.

Some of the restricted elements of the teenagers' homes have already been discussed above, with the impacts of restricted home environments in terms of dependence, reducing confidence, and enhanced levels of stress (Beresford and

Rhodes 2008). A number of the families in this research had developed their own adaptations and strategies in their homes to enhance freedom of movement and access. In this way many of the teenagers had worked with their parents to increase their independent use of the home for leisure.

This is illustrated through Alec's experiences. He explained that his wheelchair would not fit through the doorways of his home or maneuver in the small available space within his living room. To enable independent movement within his home, he and his parents had trialed several different types of chair for his use. Previous chairs had been uncomfortable during his prolonged used of them; however, the addition of a computer chair on wheels had both increased his comfort and his freedom of movement to move around independently. In Alec's case this addition also enabled him to move toward the television independently where he needed to view it from a closer position due to a visual impairment.

Mother: We have that chair that we can move.
Alec: Twenty quid off a car boot.
Mother: And it's good because we can scoot it, and he can scoot it.

Alec (15, manual chair) and his mother

James, another teenager, explained that he and his parents had changed the arrangement of his bedroom furniture to enable him to sit on his bed and play on his Playstation (the use of his wheelchair for long periods was uncomfortable). Following this change, James had attempted to transfer himself from his chair onto his bed, using the table which housed the television and games console to bear his weight. The table had given way and James had fallen to the floor. His mother described her concern at this, alongside a reluctance to restrict James' attempts to move himself into and out of his chair. Instead the family adapted the layout of the room, using a sturdier table that James could use for transfers which had been adapted by his parents to include a raised element, bringing the screen up to his eye level for gaming.

James: You should see my TV upstairs…I've got it one a, like a…
Mother: It was an old coffee table…my husband got this table and chairs and we got them remodelled.
James: Massive thing, massive.
Mother: It's a sturdy table, really sturdy.
James: And we got the TV up a bit.
Mother: …it was a coffee table and we chopped it so, his TV sits on that, even more to bring it up to his eye level.

James (17, manual wheelchair) and his mother

These changes enabled James to be independent in these instances. Alongside this it had the double bearing of reassuring his parents over his safety in transferring

between chair and bed. Rather than relying on the adaptations put into place by service providers which often met only the daily living or care needs of generic wheelchair users (Imrie 2004; Milner and Madigan 2004), these self-developed adaptations opened up leisure while offering these young people ways to exert independence in their homes.

Parents also supported teenagers in accessing different parts of their home by carrying them. Carrying served its purpose in relation to enabling parents to support the daily living needs of their child, but it also helped them to open up the home to enjoyment. Where barriers in the design of homes stopped their child accessing particular places, participants often spoke of the ways that parents would support access by carrying.

> My brother and sister's bedrooms are upstairs. I like going up there to see what they're doing but I can't unless someone carries me.
>   Sophie, 15, multiple chairs

> . . .[At home] most of the time it's just as easy for me to pick him up and go places at the minute.
>   Father of David (17, manual chair)

Parents were therefore essential for many of the teenagers in opening up different areas of their homes. Assistance of this nature was practical, expedient, and in general necessary; it resulted in increased dependence for the teenagers. In addition, the option to be carried markedly decreased with increasing age and size, illustrating the short-term usability of these strategies.

While parents often opened up leisure opportunities for their children by acting as chauffer to places away from the home. The opportunity to be driven to places extended their mobility in this context, but in ways which were still restricted to a willingness or ability of parents to act in this role, and on the presence of a suitable vehicle for them to travel in.

> . . .Because I use my electric chair all the time, I only can use my mum's car when I want to go places because [the electric chair] won't fit any others.
>   Jane, 14, electric wheelchair

> [Mother] didn't use to work then so it would be OK to go [to local club] after school, but now she works on Thursdays and you can't get my wheelchair in Dad's car so I don't go anymore.
>   Vicky, 16, multiple wheelchairs

Positively therefore, the availability of private cars enabled the teenagers to access leisure that would otherwise have been closed down to them had they been solely reliant on public transport. The willingness of parents to drive them these places extended the opportunities that were open to them. While the use of private transport extended their mobility in relation to leisure, they could also serve to restrict opportunities through a dependence on adult chauffeurs (further discussions on this issue are forthcoming elsewhere: see Pyer and Tucker 2014).

The teenagers and their parents shared examples of the range of ways that they, as family units, would seek to open up leisure opportunities away from the home. Opportunities for them to effect change in public places were, perhaps unsurprisingly, noticeably more restricted than in their own personal homes. In the private homes, families were able to make tailored adaptations, and parents could offer personal support in ways which were not possible in public environments. In these places, they applied a range of strategies to open up leisure opportunities. Where parents were concerned for the safety of their child, they would often accompany them on their leisure outing. The teenagers discussed the ways that parents would participate in leisure activities alongside them, for example, by playing sports or visiting the cinema with them. In these ways they facilitated the leisure experiences of the young people through emotional support and participation.

> When Mum takes me to the part we go on the roundabout – my whole [wheel] chair goes on. Dad has to run round [to turn it]. He says I'm a big lump.
>   Ben, 15, multiple wheelchairs

> In this photo we was playing ball in the back garden (see Fig. 4).
>   John, 15, manual wheelchair

Parents also supported the teenagers in more subtle ways when they were in public places. This chapter has already touched on the social barriers inherent in the public spaces that the teenagers frequented. Parents discussed the ways in which they supported the teenagers in responding to instances where members of the public or staff in local businesses were unsupportive of the young peoples' needs. James and his mother offered one example where, when James attempted to buy a new game from a store, a staff member had failed to assist him:

Fig. 4 Parents as participants in leisure

Mum: Actually that was one of the [shops] where…they sort of…like threw his change back to him like that [gestures]…

James: It went all over the floor. It says a hundred percent service – yeah right! Yeah, just threw my money at me…Lost a 20p in the store.

Mum: Yeah, we looked for a while and the lady didn't even seem to acknowledge that we were looking for it. I said well I guess that 20p's gone to the cleaner…that's why I did it…to make her think.

James, 17, manual wheelchair and his mother

While a number of the discussions above intimated that parents' anxieties for their children could impact on their independence in leisure, some parents also spoke of how they were working to develop their autonomy together.

> Mum: …that's something we're still working on, is him being independent…
>   Mother of Chris, 17 year old, manual wheelchair

> Mum:…last year, last August, I said to [father], 'I think the time's come, we'll take her down, try a wheelchair, powerchair, and just see how she gets on. If she's frightened, if it frightens her, we'll know it's…she's not ready'. She was down the shop, got the doors open.
>   Mother of Becca, 15 year old, multiple wheelchairs

Discussions on these issues were always predicated on a basis of concern for the young peoples' safety. The teenagers, for their part, sometimes discussed their attempts to extend their independence, negotiating the extension of their autonomy. Two examples of this are illustrated below. First, Sarah explains that she was actively "working" on her parents to give her permission to spend time away from her home without them. Jessica's example is drawn from a video tour completed with her and her mother. In this instance, Jessica attempted to extend her independence to move to another room within a bowling alley, outwardly attempting to negotiate this with her mother (see Fig. 5).

> Sarah: I'm not allowed to go out on my own…*at the moment* [laughs]…I'm working on them. [At the moment]…it has to be with an adult.
>   Sarah, 15, electric wheelchair

Jessica: Mum! I wanna go…

Mum: There's no rush.

Jessica: I can go on my own.

Mum: You can't go on your own, can you?

Jessica (15, multiple wheelchairs) and her mother

The experiences presented here begin to show the complex relationships through which the families negotiated leisure. They illustrate parents as key actors in

Fig. 5 Negotiating independence

opening up these opportunities. While in the context of familial homes and in the use of transport, parents and young people reported similar viewpoints on the ways that this could be done; their views often differed in relation to accessing public environments. The role of parents often changed between that of facilitator and restrictor to their child's leisure experience. The complexity of these renegotiations often meant that the extent to which they would fulfill a facilitation role changes according to different contexts, events, or anxieties.

7   Conclusion

While young disabled people are spending increasing amounts of time at home in comparison to their nondisabled peers (Beresford and Rhodes 2008), restrictions in their homes have implications for their leisure time. In attempting to access different leisure opportunities, young wheelchair users are "positioned" in two groups which are often considered in need of care and at risk: (i) young and (ii) disabled people. While the physical barriers inherent in different places pose realized challenges to accessing leisure, the social positioning of young wheelchair users further impacts on their treatment in private and public places, restricting or closing down leisure opportunities to them.

This chapter has highlighted the importance of situating the leisure-related experiences of teenage wheelchair users in the context of the family, including

the changing nature of the teenagers' relationships with their parents, who often fulfilled a number of roles to meet the leisure-related needs of the young people.

The decision making of adults in the placement of adaptations for everyday living or the location of gaming or other leisure-related equipment inadvertently increased the challenges associated with undertaking leisure in the home. In addition, the anxieties of parents outside the home environment served to minimize the use of these services or closed them down altogether at age where research has shown that nondisabled young people enjoy increasing mobility (Hopkins 2010).

The importance of the familial context is also important in considering the strategies that were open to the young people, enabling leisure to take place where it might otherwise have been closed down because of physical access issues. While their anxieties and decision making could serve to close down access to leisure, parents were also instrumental in opening up leisure-related opportunities.

A number of recommendations for future research arise from the discussions presented in this chapter. There is a need for studies which focus on the intrinsic enjoyment of "play," "recreation," or "leisure" for a range of groups who have remained marginalized in research. In this way geographers are afforded a unique opportunity to further our understandings of these terms and how they are differentially experienced by people in diverse contexts and places. Further, explorations of this kind will give us opportunities to unpack the complex and often intertwining challenges which compound to limit access to certain places and therefore recreational opportunities. Considerations of the diverse needs of particular marginalized groups, interspersed with spatial, social, and environmental challenges, are key to offering a more rounded understanding of recreational experience.

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Public Open Spaces, Children's Independent Mobility

17

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Abstract

The health benefits of children engaging in at least 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) daily are well documented, including improved musculoskeletal health, cardiovascular risk profiles, and aerobic fitness and better psychological well-being. Many Western countries have indicated a decline in physical activity over recent decades.

Emerging research shows that children who engage in outdoor activities and travel to destinations using active modes (i.e., walking, cycling) accumulate higher levels of physical activity than those that do not. Over recent decades, research interest has focused on children's independent outdoor play and active travel to destinations within their neighborhood, including journeys to and from school without adult accompaniment.

Engaging in independent mobility has two important benefits for children. Firstly, engaging in non-formalized activity practices helps children attain daily physical activity recommendations, which in turn, generates significant health benefits. Secondly, independent mobility has an important role in fostering children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spatial development; this carries into adult life.

A growing body of evidence suggests that the use of public open spaces, including parks and green spaces, is associated with many health and well-being benefits of urban dwellers. Public open spaces are also recognized as important settings to promote physical activity and children's independent mobility, not only because of purpose-built infrastructure (e.g., playgrounds) but also as easily accessible destinations for unstructured activities such as walking, cycling, and informal outdoor play.

This chapter first provides an overview of children's independent mobility and thereafter synthesizes the literature related to public open spaces within the context of children's activity and independent mobility.

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition of Independent Mobility

The term independent mobility was conceptualized by Hillman and colleagues in the early 1990s, as the freedom to move around to destinations outside the home by active travel (e.g., walking and cycling) and engaging in outdoor play without an accompanying adult (Hillman et al. 1990; O'Brien et al. 2000). van Vliet (1983) described these destinations as the "fourth environment," being the setting outside the home, including playgrounds, and child-orientated institutions. Broadly, the investigation of children's independent mobility has fallen into three categories:

studies of parental license for children's independent mobility, accompaniment status, and "true" independent mobility. Parental license is conceptualized as parents allowing children the freedom to do certain activities without the presence of an adult. Hillman et al. (1990) study devised a set of behavioral indicators related to risks to children in the local environment. They examined the licenses and parental proxy reports for what children were allowed to do "on their own" including crossing roads, going to leisure places, coming home from school, and going out after dark and also what forms of transport they were approved to use independently by parents (i.e., walking, cycling, cycling on roads, buses). Hillman refined this to using "six licenses" as the basis for establishing the level of children's independent mobility afforded, as described above. The higher the number of parental licenses a child held, the higher the levels of children's independent mobility. Generally, children's independent mobility increased as children aged.

Accompaniment status has been defined as a child travels, be it with a parent, adult, sibling, peer, or alone, with "true" independent mobility considered as situations where the child travels without any accompaniment (Hillman et al. 1990; O'Brien et al. 2000). Although these definitions exist, Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) suggested a more theoretical perspective is needed to define children's independent mobility. They identified that children navigating environments "on their own" and "alone" described the behavior, but the concept in itself was not defined. Their findings suggested that the concept of children's independent mobility should not be focused solely on the presence or absence of adults but should be broadened to include "invisible actors," such as peers, friends, pets, and animals. In particular, they found Danish suburban children entertained companionship with other children to and from school, and around their neighborhood, while mobility of rural children principally involved the family, pets, and animals. More recently, the use of telecommunication technology such as mobile phones has allowed parents to monitor their independently mobile children and is thus an additional factor to consider when defining children's independent mobility (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009).

The terms "independent" and "mobile" have been interpreted in a variety of ways in health research to describe how these relate in childhood. Mikkelsen and Christensen (2009) argued that "independent" implies freedom of control/not dependent (on people or things). However this definition is unclear if it intends to focus on a power struggle between child and parent, dependence, or physical distance between parent and child at any given time. For example, a child attending an adult-controlled afterschool club, yet engaging in outdoor play with no direct adult supervision during this time, is considered to be independently mobile based on this construct. Pooley et al. (2005a) discussed how the word "mobility" can be characterized into three levels. Level one encompassed practical functions including those undertaken on a temporary basis such as journeys to school, shopping, and visiting friends. Level two included everyday mobility as a social function including interaction – allowing development of social networks, friendships, and local

communities. Level three incorporated mobility as a cultural function to construct personal identity.

It is important to note that children's independent mobility is fundamentally a social construct; therefore its definition will need to reflect on-going societal changes. As shown from this literature, it is evident no precise definition of children's independent mobility exists, leaving it open to interpretations. In the interest of focusing on the diversity of mobility patterns, a combination of "true independent mobility and accompaniment by siblings and peers and active travel behavior" will form the definition of children's independent mobility in this chapter. This chapter uses a blend of these concepts whereby children's independent mobility is defined as whether a child undertakes active travel that is unaccompanied by an adult to school or other destinations during leisure time in the neighborhood environment.

1.2   Trends in Children's Independent Mobility

Globally, children's independent mobility engagement has seen a radical decline over time (Hillman et al. 1990; Shaw et al. 2013). The seminal report by Hillman et al. (1990), "One False Move," investigated children's independent mobility in England and Germany in 1971 and 1990. The survey areas in these two countries were deemed geographically and socially compatible in a number of ways including residential density, range of urban and rural environments, and car ownership. The study was revisited 39 years on in the same areas in the two countries in 2010 (Shaw et al. 2013). As mentioned earlier, Hillman's work was based on six parental licenses which were given to children aged between 7 and 15 years (juniors aged 7–11 years; seniors aged 11–15). In 1971, 86 % of parents of English primary children reported their children were allowed to travel home from school alone; however, this had declined to 35 % by 1990. By 2010, the proportion of children allowed to independently travel home from school had reduced to 25 %. On closer examination by age, this reduction was due to a decrease in parental license given to 7–8-year-olds to travel from home to school alone. In 1971, 80 % of parents allowed children to travel alone to school, but by 1990 this had declined to 19 %. In 2010 the proportion was only 6 %. In the 1971 report, German children reported greater freedom than their English counterparts across all six licenses for independent travel.

O'Brien et al. (2000) replicated Hillman's work in the Childhood, Urban Space and Citizenship project with English primary (10–11 years of age) and secondary (13–14 years of age) school children in the late 1990s. Compared with Hillman's findings in the 1990 report, this study also revealed a decrease in children's independent mobility. There are limitations when interpreting the results of these three studies. The measurement of children's independent mobility was limited to parent report of licenses to travel to school unaccompanied, and mobility to other destinations was not considered. The use of parental license was also a subjective, proxy measure of children's independent mobility and thus was not an assessment of children's actual behaviors.
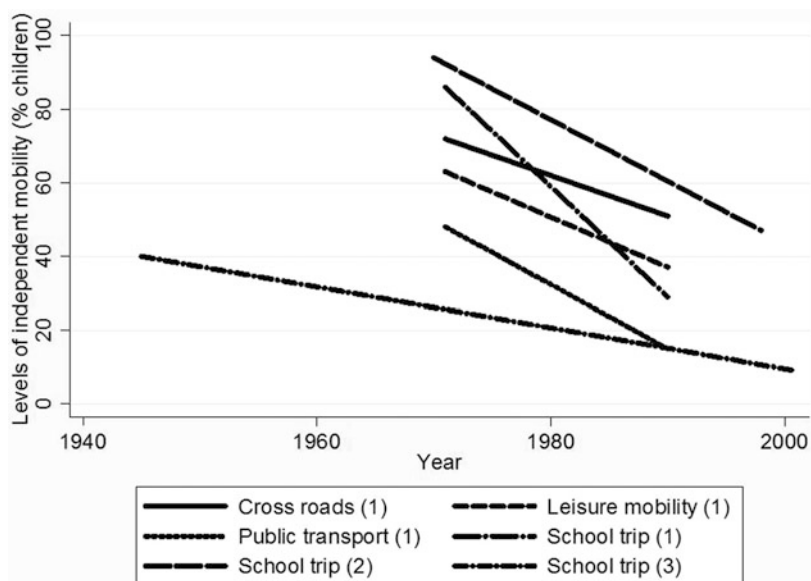
Fig. 1 Prevalence of independent mobility in children (% children over years 1940–2000). Notes: Cross roads = allowed to cross roads on own, leisure mobility = independent mobility during leisure time, public transport = allowed to use public transport on own, school trip = independent mobility to school. (*1*) Hillman 1990); (*2*) O'Brien et al. (2000); (*3*) Pooley (2005b) (Figure reprinted with permission; Badland and Oliver (2012))

Through in-depth oral life-history interviews, Pooley et al. (2005b) compared children's journey to school in urban areas in England since the 1940s. For 10–11-year-olds born in the oldest cohort (1932–1941), 40 % traveled to school alone compared with 9 % in 10–11-year-olds born in the youngest cohort (1990–1991). Figure 1 shows this decline in children's independent mobility over 1940–2000.

Similar independent mobility trends have been reported in other countries, including Denmark, Finland, Norway, and the United Kingdom (Fyhri et al. 2011), Italy, and Australia (Shaw et al. 2013). Interestingly, studies from Finland and other Scandinavian countries have reported children engage in higher levels of children's independent mobility than children from other European countries, albeit overall decline has been observed over time (Kyttä 2004).

Many of the accounts of children's independent mobility and more recently the concept of walkability research have come from study notions of space, and of journeying from place to place across a number of interdisciplinary researchers (e.g., public health, urban planners, environmental psychology, social epidemiologists), looking at distances walked and maps of spatial ranges. However little attention has been drawn to alternative perspectives in particular from the view point of health geographers, for example, practices of walking itself. This could further contribute knowledge on movement activities, different forms of embodiment, their relationship to health, and their places, experiences, agency, and

cultures involved (Christian et al. 2012). As Horton and Evans (2013) suggest, this could be particularly important to know what happens during those distances walked and within those mapped ranges and how such practices matter.

Obesity/fatness is a major concern not only for public health researchers, and globally among policy maker, but across other multidisciplinary researchers. For example, among geographical research there is a shift in obesity policy and understanding obesogenic environments away from an individualistic model of obesity to a more ecological model at population level (Colls and Evans 2014).

1.3 Theoretical Framework

1.3.1 Socio-ecological Model

In determining what influences children's independent mobility, no specific behavioral model has been published that provides a theoretical framework for emerging research in this area (Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009). One of the most common models used in health promotion research to look at health behavior is the socio-ecological model (Stokols 1996). The socio-ecological model developed out of work of a number of prominent researchers (Glanz et al. 2008, pp. 468–469). The core concept of a socio-ecological model is that behavior has multiple levels of influences, including individual, social environment, physical environment, and policy. Original work on the socio-ecological model stems from Bronfenbrenner's work on ecological systems theory in the 1970's, which identifies five environmental systems with which an individual interacts. His work saw the influences on behavior as a series of layers, where each layer had a resulting impact on the next level (Bronfenbrenner 1994). All levels of the socio-ecological model impact on the behavior of the individual (Stokols 1996). As Stokols addresses, the socio-ecological approach integrates person-focused efforts to modify health behaviors with environment-focused interventions. While the components remain the same, the socio-ecological model needs to be tailored to suit particular behaviors and population groups within each level. Figure 2 features the basic socio-ecological model linking the individual with their social, physical, and political environments.

In light of the lack of a theoretical framework for children's independent mobility, Badland and colleagues have recently developed a conceptual multilevel framework to understand the multiple influences on the behavior (Fig. 3; Badland et al. 2016). Figure 3 highlights the relationships within the conceptual framework, for example, children's independent mobility behavior may be influenced by factors associated within the built environment, which in turn are influenced by environmental policies and social norms, and these relationships may be causational or bidirectional.

The focus on children's independent mobility by many social science researchers, over the last three decades, has concentrated mainly within urban neighborhood setting. Drawing conceptual-methodological frameworks from

Fig. 2 Illustration of model made up of the individual, social environment, physical environment, and policy components
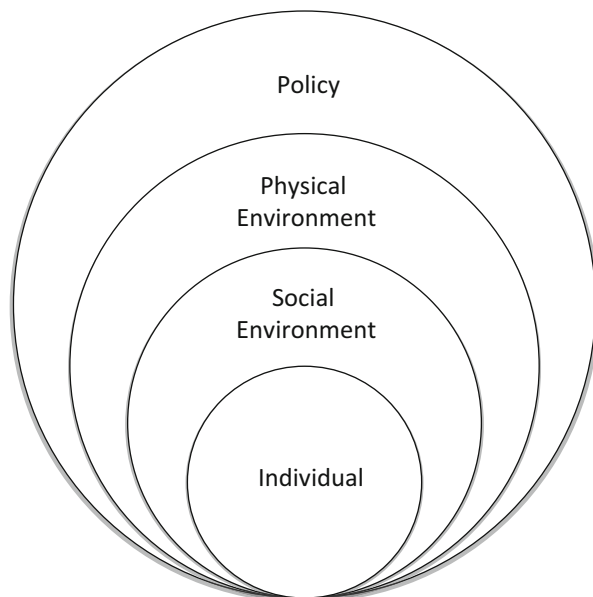
transport geography and environmental psychology has afforded research exploring children and young people's everyday walking in diverse context including walking routines, behavior, and patterns. Together with new terminologies and the development of a number of techniques and technologies, researchers have contributed to understanding children and young people's geographies (Trapp et al. 2012).

1.3.2 Societal Changes

Over the last few decades, a number of societal changes have likely influenced children's independent mobility, including change in family structure, greater use of structured childcare, increasing number of dual income and working households, families living further away from schools and places of employment, and increased and multiple car ownership per household (Fyhri et al. 2011). Also, parental (O'Brien et al. 2000; Prezza et al. 2005) and children's (Hume et al. 2005) perceptions of safety in neighborhood risks, including stranger danger (Rudner 2012), outdoor play (Veitch et al. 2006; Wen et al. 2009), and increased road traffic (Hillman et al. 1990; Zwerts et al. 2010), are contributing factors that have influenced children's independent mobility.

Fyhri et al. (2011) examined datasets from national travel surveys and other types of available data and surveys for active travel and children's independent mobility in the United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. Not all data sources were directly comparable between the countries; however the same patterns were found in all four countries. Data from the United Kingdom sample showed that parental accompaniment for school travel increased among children aged 7–11
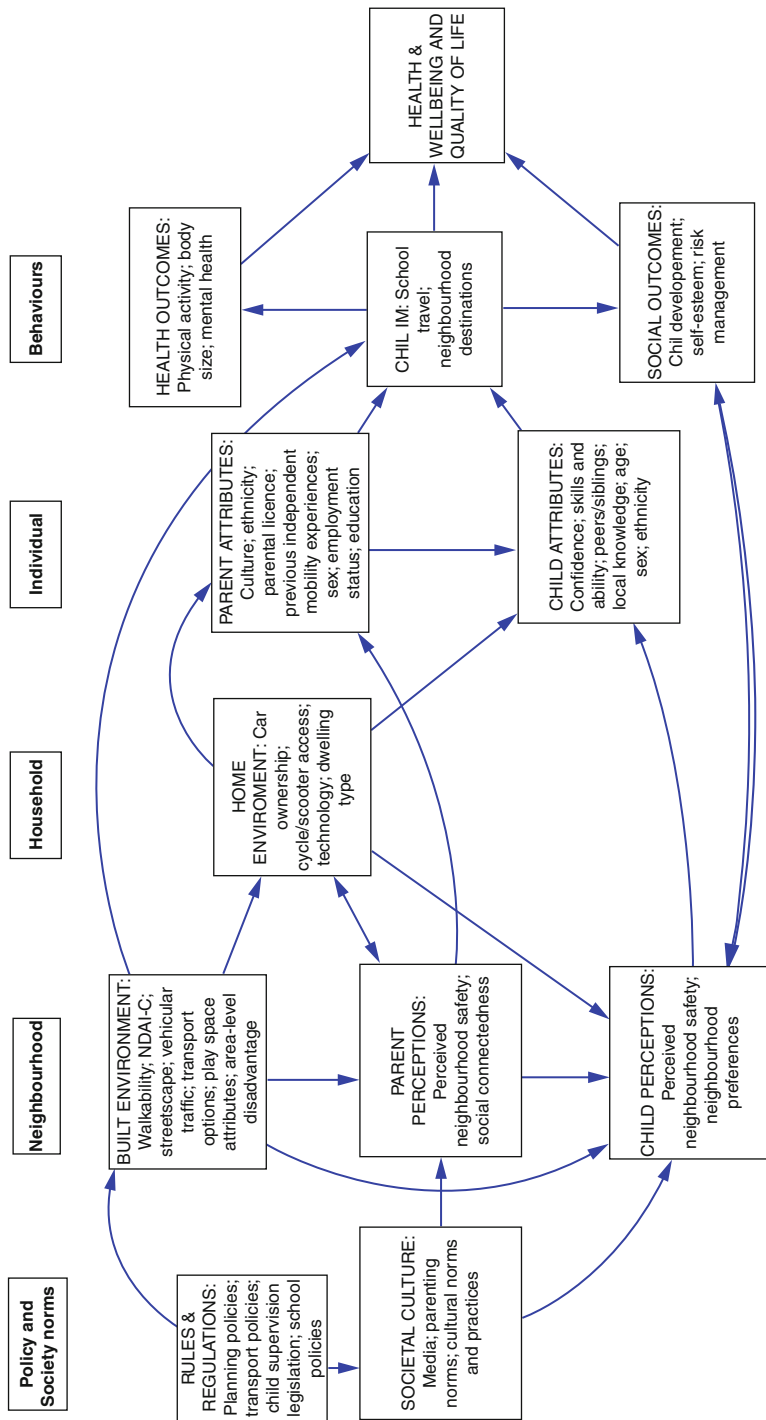
Fig. 3 Conceptual model development for children's independent mobility (Permission to reprint by Badland et al. (2016))

years from 78 % in 2002 to 86 % in 2008 (Department of Transport 2009). In the same age group, traffic danger (58 %), fear of assault/molestation (29 %), convenience (21 %), and distance to school (22 %) were the leading four reasons given by adults for accompanying children to school. In Norway, parents taking the same route to the workplace as their child's route to school was the main reason children were driven to school by car (58 %), followed by concerns of traffic safety (21 %) and the car being the fastest travel mode (18 %). In the Danish and Finnish studies, the main parental concerns for accompanying children to school were road traffic and fear of molestation from adults (Fotel 2007).

1.4   Active Transport

Active transport can contribute to children's independent mobility and encompasses traveling by non-motorized travel modes, such as walking, cycling, scootering, and skateboarding. There is a large body of evidence reporting the significant contribution of active transport to or from school (Cooper et al. 2005; Salmon et al. 2007) and other nonschool travel destinations (Mackett et al. 2005) in overall children's physical activity. Active travel to school has been shown to be an important source of physical activity in young children (Schoeppe et al. 2012). Walking is free and convenient and has been described as a "near-perfect exercise." Cooper et al. (2005) used accelerometry with Danish primary school-aged children to study walking, cycling, and motorized transport to school. The authors found walking to school was associated with higher levels of overall physical activity compared with motorized transport. Cycling was also associated with higher levels of physical activity, but only among boys. Furthermore, a national survey of the US youth has shown a steep decline from 1969 to 2001 (41–13 %) in children's active commuting to school, while motorized transport (by car) to school has increased in this period from 17 to 55 % (McDonald 2008; Shaw et al. 2013). Following on from Hillman's earlier work (Hillman et al. 1990), active transport from home to school among English children decreased between 1971 and 2010 (86–25 %) (Shaw et al. 2013). The decline in active transport has been observed in many countries in Europe and elsewhere (Fyhri et al. 2011). Although the US national survey data are not directly comparable to those presented by Fyhri et al. (2011), it is clear that the overall picture of active travel, particularly walking and cycling, is on the decline, and in contrast transport by vehicular modes has become a predominant form of personal mobility (van der Ploeg et al. 2008).

Apart from a "near-perfect exercise," active transport has been targeted as a way of increasing energy expenditure in children and combating rising levels of obesity in children (Harten and Olds 2004). There are also a number of positive health and social benefits from active transport including mental health, cognitive development self-esteem, improved behavior, and relationship building (Jan 2011). The decline in active transport is particularly well documented in relation to trips to school. The shift in active travel to school may be explained by a number of

reasons, for example, parent's negative perception of the neighborhood, including concerns of stranger danger and traffic safety, the increasing distances to schools, and time pressures (Oliver and Schofield 2010). Though globally on the decline, it should be acknowledged that children's active travel practices vary by country and geographic region.

Distance and trip duration, such as home to school journeys, are the main factors which influence whether one uses active and passive transport modes (Oliver and Schofield 2010). Furthermore, distinct differences can be found for walking and cycling, distance to location being greater for children who walk (Schlossberg et al. 2006), while increased trip duration may affect cycling more than walking (Ewing et al. 2004). Findings from studies in the early 2000s from the United Kingdom and Australia reported that distance to school was the main factor affecting the likelihood that a trip would be active (Black et al. 2001; Harten and Olds 2004). In Harten and Olds' (2004) study on Australian children aged 11–12 years, trip data were collected on two school days and one nonschool day. They reported that children made an average of one active trip per day, with median trip length of 0.63 km and the mean total distance per child per day being 0.61 km. In the Black et al.(2001) study of English children aged 5–10 years, 50 % of the trips to school were by active commute up to a distance of 2.0 km. Urban planning literature suggests that key destinations should be with 400–450 m (approximately 5 min walking) of residential areas and within 800 m of public transportation. In Metcalf et al. (2004) study of 275 younger English children (year one, aged 5 years), the median time taken to walk to school was 6min and the median distance accompanied actively travel distance was 0.7 km.

More recent studies are finding similar results to this early research. A recent review by Wong et al. (2011) identified 17 studies between 1960 and 2010, of which 15 studies reported negative associations between distance to school by either walking or cycling to school or both. No study reported a positive association between distance to school and active transport. McDonald (2007) reported a negative association with active school travel when the trips were short (i.e., less than 1.6 km); no associations were found for trips greater than 1.6 km. A summary from current literature provided conclusive evidence that increasing distance is negatively associated with active school travel (Wong et al. 2011). Promotion of active travel modes such as walking and cycling, with peers or independently in the built environment, has greater prospects if school catchment area is explicitly considered (Black et al. 2001). A handful of studies have measured children's independent mobility in the form of children's (unsupervised) active travel to various destinations (Page et al. 2009; Wen et al. 2009), and one study has looked at unsupervised outdoor play as an indicator of children's independent mobility (Floyd et al. 2011). Schoeppe et al. (2012)recently reviewed the associations between children's independent mobility and active travel. The systematic review reported a vast majority of active travel studies focused on children's transport behavior (active/motorized) to and from school. The review noted that only five studies examined active transport to nonschool locations, suggesting a gap in research that needs to be addressed.

1.5   Associations Between Children's Independent Mobility and Physical Activity

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure. This behavior is not limited to sport and exercise, but it is classified as any activity that raises the heart. Children that engage in active transport behavior are more likely to be physically active overall and have higher levels of energy expenditure. The benefits of different types of physical activity differ across life stages. While morbidity and premature mortality increase into adulthood and older age, exposure to risk through inactivity begins in childhood. Participating in 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily in children has significant health benefits, including improved muscular and bone strength and aerobic fitness and reduced risk of adiposity (Strong et al. 2005). In addition, long-term benefits include reducing risk for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers (Banks et al. 2012) and improved mental health. Time spent outdoors by children is a consistent correlate of physical activity (Wen et al. 2009), and reductions in active travel and in children's independent mobility may be contributors to the decline in physical activity levels (Page et al. 2009).

1.6   Children's Independent Mobility Associations with Health and Social Outcomes

The benefits of children's independent mobility can be seen as twofold. Firstly, being independently mobile allows a child to engage in non-formalized physical activity, which has been shown to be important for children achieving daily physical activity requirements (World Health Organization 2010). Secondly, children's independent mobility has an important role in fostering children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spatial development (Kyttä 2004). Additionally, engaging in children's independent mobility provides opportunities to develop life-long skills including social connectedness, to contribute to community social capital, and to make calculated judgments to safely navigate risky situations, such as crossing busy roads or encountering strangers (Rudner 2012).

1.7   Children's Independent Mobility and the Environment

The design of the neighborhood built environment can have an impact on children's independent mobility. In the review by Davison and Lawson (2006) which focused on the relationship between the built environment and children's physical activity, they reported a positive association with traffic density, speed, and local conditions such as crime rates. Similarly, one Australian study found that perception of unsafe round environments was negatively associated with walking and cycling among 10–12-year-olds (Timperio et al. 2004).

Attributes in the urban built environment may explain some of the changes documented in children's independent mobility behavior. Environmental features that may influence children's independent mobility include distribution, accessibility, aesthetics, and quality of destinations such as public open space, presence of green space/greenery (Giles-Corti et al. 2005a), size of public open spaces such as parks, perceived neighborhood safety (Pooley et al. 2005a; Rudner 2012), and increased motorized traffic (Hillman et al. 1990; Zwerts et al. 2010). More walkable neighborhoods (i.e., those with high street connectivity, residential density, and mixed use) have positive associations with walking activity among adults; however better street connectivity means more exposure to vehicular traffic, which may not be conducive for active travel behavior in children.

Evidence suggests that neighborhoods with parks, play areas, recreational facilities, pedestrian infrastructure, and sporting venues available facilitate higher active travel among children (Pont et al. 2009); these may also be appropriate locations to support children's independent mobility.

1.8   Definition and Importance of Public Open Space

Public space and public open spaces include parks, green spaces, plazas, sidewalks, shopping malls, community centers, and schoolyards. There are a number of subjective definitions of what constitutes a public space or public open space within the built environment literature with overlapping features as described. Furthermore public open spaces can include land space areas for playgrounds and "blue space" areas of water including rivers, canals, lakes, and reservoirs. Crucially, public open spaces are spaces freely accessible to all and may have multiple uses by multiple users, including sport and recreational opportunities. In this chapter, public open spaces have been defined as "parks and green space that can be freely accessed by the public" (Badland et al. 2010).

Public open spaces are recognized as important settings to promote physical activity engagement in the neighborhood built environment (Timperio et al. 2008). This is not only by use of purpose-built infrastructure (e.g., playgrounds) but because they operate as potential destinations to actively travel to and as destinations to travel through. Public open spaces may also confer health and well-being benefits by fostering social connectedness, communication skills, and friendship development (Lachowycz and Jones 2013; Sugiyama et al. 2008). Evidence also suggests that children's body mass index is lower when they have access to more green space (Lachowycz and Jones 2011).

Multidimensional physical characteristics of the neighborhood may contribute to various forms of activity engagement among youth in their immediate environment. The relationship between child and neighborhood environment needs to be further explored to add to the existing body of knowledge of what contributes or hinders children's independent mobility.

1.9   Public Open Space Use by Children

Simply providing green space in a neighborhood is not enough for individuals in the community; attention needs to take place in its design and qualities for it to be beneficial for all groups (Villanueva et al. 2013). Access to good quality green space has positive associations with physical and mental health and well-being (Francis et al. 2012). The use of green space also provides an area for social contact with others, freedom for play, and destinations to walk or cycle and engage in physical activity (Veitch et al. 2008). Access to appropriate facilities for physical activity and active play has been previously identified as a key determinant of activity participation (Sallis et al. 1993), and public open spaces need to be flexible to accommodate a diverse community and populations (Cabe Space 2004). What is not well known is how public open space availability, safety, and accessibility are conducive for children's independent mobility and children's active play. For example, safety features of a public open space have been identified as important contributors to their use. Lighting, dog fouling, graffiti, vandalism, and unmaintained areas all contribute to a perceived lack of safety, which reduces the use of green space in children and adolescents (Cabe Space 2004).

Availability and quality of public open spaces are used widely in health research to determine relationships among the physical environment, physical activity, and health. Availability and access to parks near home are associated with higher levels of physical activity in youth (Cohen et al. 2006). Quality of public green space is an important determinant of health and influences their use for children; key considerations include safety, toilets, drinking water, lighting, and pathways (Sallis et al. 1997; Veitch et al. 2006). Crawford et al.(2008), when looking at features of public open spaces in contrasting socioeconomic neighborhoods, found those in more disadvantaged areas had more amenities (e.g., toilets, drink fountains) and better shading from trees, walking and cycling paths, and lighting than public open spaces in more advantaged areas. Similar results have been reported elsewhere (Giles-Corti et al. 2003).

Park proximity, size, and features have been minimally investigated among children (Kaczynski and Henderson 2007). Giles-Corti et al. (2005a) indicated that among similar-sized parks, those public open spaces rated "higher quality" versus "lower quality" were more likely to attract users to engage in physical activity. Having good access to larger public open spaces was also associated with higher levels of walking in adults. Conversely, Kaczynski et al. (2008) reported size and distance of park were not significant predictors for use among adults, although specific features inside the park (e.g., paved trails) were positively related with use.

Though most public open space studies have focused on physical activity and active play, it is thought that attention needs to be paid to measuring children's independent mobility, an important contributor for daily physical activity. To date very few studies have attempted to relate environmental attributes to children's independent mobility in specific locations.

1.10 How Have Public Open Spaces Been Measured?

A number of direct observational methods have been employed in health research to code attributes of physical activity environments, and a summary of these can be found by Sallis (2009). The chapter discusses observational tools used to measure physical activity behavior in specific settings (e.g., schools, stairways) and auditing of specific environments.

Largely, direct observation audits have been used to audit public open spaces (parks and green space). Audit tool examples include the Bedimo-Rung Assessment Tool, Environmental Assessment of Public Recreation Spaces Tool, Community Park Audit Tool, and Public Open Space Audit Tool (Giles-Corti et al. 2005a). These inventories all vary in length and type of environmental information collected. Other tools collect data objectively on both individual and environmental levels, for example, System of Observing Play and Leisure Activity in Youth and System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities. Details of these tools and resources can be found elsewhere (Active Living Research 2014).

Taylor et al. (2011) measured the quality of public open spaces using a new remote-assessment approach, Google Earth Pro. The study assessed the correlation between remote assessment of quality of public open spaces using Google Earth and direct observation using a shortened version of the Public Open Space Audit Tool. Fifty parks were selected to be assessed by the remote method and scores compared with some parks using Public Open Space Audit Tool. Strengths of the remote method were the speed at which audits could be completed, facilitating a larger number of environmental audits without the need of in-person visits. Limitations of this remote-assessment method were that some items could not be accurately scored due to obstructed view or poor resolution, particularly regarding aesthetic features. Additionally, satellite imagery data may not be current in some areas, as images may be up to 3 years old and thus not accounting for spaces where redevelopment has occurred. Advantages of these direct observation audits are that they are user-friendly tools to measure different environmental characteristics, with no participant bias, and they are easy to conduct. Disadvantages include the cost and need to train auditors, and depending on length of audit, it may be time consuming to collect the data.

1.11 What Is the Relationship with Children's Independent Mobility and Public Open Space

Within the built environment, places where a child engages in physical activity and active play are important to study to establish factors affecting youth physical activity (Ellaway et al. 2007; Giles-Corti et al. 2005b). Play areas are potentially important areas for children's mental, social, and physical health and for social contact with other children (Ellaway et al. 2007). There is limited data on the relationship between children's independent mobility and public open space as the majority of children's independent mobility studies have investigated physical

activity in school locations (including active travel to school), neighborhood streets, and parks (Grow et al. 2008). However, Giles-Corti and King (2009) suggest most individuals obtain physical activity from more than one context, which includes walking and cycling and free play.

Past research in children aged 10–12 years reported that absence of nearby parks and sports venues was related to decrease walking and cycling trips (Timperio et al. 2004). Children spent less time in engaging in sedentary activities (i.e., computer/e-games and watching television) when living near a larger-sized park with a water feature and/or whose parents reported greater satisfaction with park quality (Veitch et al. 2011). Similarly, Grow et al. (2008) showed that regardless of age, living closer to a larger public park and public open spaces increased the likelihood of being active.

It is also possible that sex differences exist for utilizing public open spaces. Some studies have indicated that in youth, boys tend to roam more freely and independently in public open spaces in their neighborhood than girls (Page et al. 2009; Villanueva et al. 2012; Wen et al. 2009). Villanueva et al. (2012) examined how far children traveled from home within the neighborhood; parental perceptions reported in favor of boys being more able to safely negotiate traffic conditions better than girls. Stronger association between access to green space and physical activity has been found for boys (Page et al. 2009; Villanueva et al. 2012). For example, in a cross-sectional study by Page et al. (2009), in the neighborhood, boys aged 10–11 years reported higher children's independent mobility compared to girls.

1.12 What Is the Relationship with Public Open Space and Area-Level Disadvantage

The relationship between individual and environmental characteristics in influencing health and health-related behaviors is well established in literature (Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England 2010). Living in a disadvantaged neighborhood compared to living in a more advantaged neighborhood has been linked to poorer health outcomes in individuals (including children), with higher rates of chronic disease, and associated risk factors such as obesity (Diez-Roux 2001). This has been shown for total and coronary heart disease mortality (Diez-Roux et al. 1997), coronary heart disease prevalence and risk factors (Smith et al. 1998), and depression (Yen and Kaplan 1999). Macintyre (2007) described this as "deprivation amplification." These variations in health are explained as compositional (individual level) and contextual (area level) (Diez-Roux 2001; Macintyre 2007).

Conflicting evidence exists where some populations exposed to more green environments report lower levels of health inequalities (Mitchell and Popham 2008), and several studies in New Zealand have shown that socioeconomically deprived urban communities have better access to parks (Badland et al. 2010; Pearce et al. 2008). Yet other research suggests communities in more disadvantaged

neighborhoods have poorer green space availability than more affluent neighborhoods (Estabrooks et al. 2003). Nevertheless, access, location, and quality are important attributes for determining public open space use within a neighborhood. In contrast, Richardson et al. (2010) suggest the availability of public green space in New Zealand may not be as an important determinant of health as found elsewhere.

The Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England 2009 Marmot Report advocated that there should be green space within 4 min of every family home (2010). Using international data, the report found a significant lack of green spaces and play spaces for children in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Other empirical research suggests that the relationship between area-level disadvantage and public open space access varies nationally.

Studies of the locations of children's outdoor playgrounds have found them more common in and closer to poorer areas in Scotland and the USA (Cradock et al. 2005; Ellaway et al. 2007). However in Australia, Crawford et al. (2008) found no difference in number of playgrounds and recreational facilities between higher and lower disadvantaged neighborhoods, and most of their participants (aged 8–9 years) lived about 300 m to their closest public open space. Veitch et al. (2008) addressed the importance of park proximity to home within Australian neighborhoods. They reported that children living in low socioeconomic outer-urban neighborhoods had to travel a greater distance to access local parks for active free play compared with higher socioeconomic areas. Together, this work highlights the conflicting findings presented thus far.

In addition, researchers have looked at the quality of parks and playgrounds for children's play with regard to their safety and availability by area-level disadvantage (Cradock et al. 2005; Curtice et al. 2005; Ellaway et al. 2007; Ellaway et al. 2001). Ellaway et al. (2001) reported people who lived in poorer areas of Glasgow were more likely to report a lack of safe places for children to play in their neighborhood. Similarly in 2005, a Scotland-wide study found 45 % of people living in deprived areas compared to 4 % of those in affluent areas reported a problem with the availability of safe places for children to play (Curtice et al. 2005). Cradock et al. (2005) found that in Boston, USA, young people from poorer areas lived closer to playground facilities than those in more advantaged areas; however the playground equipment in poorer areas was unsafe and poorly maintained. The quality of public open space for influencing children's use is also important. Badland et al. (2010) analyzed public open spaces in 12 urban neighborhoods in New Zealand and found no difference in quality of public open space by area-level deprivation; however public open space safety score was greater in more disadvantaged areas compared with least disadvantaged areas. However, this study did not look at the association between quality of public open space and individuals' use of public open space.

A 2007 Scottish study investigated the provision of outdoor play areas for children in relation to area disadvantaged per 1000 total population. The results of the study pointed toward more play areas being available in more disadvantaged areas compared with less disadvantaged areas (Ellaway et al. 2007). Similar findings were reported in a Danish study (Karsten 2002); however this study did

not assess the quality and use of the playgrounds. An Australian study revealed a reduction in active travel to school (by foot and cycle) among 9–13-year-olds between 1985 and 2001 in contrasting neighborhoods. In higher socioeconomic areas, this reduction was 50 %, while in lower socioeconomic areas active travel declined by 77 % among children (Salmon et al. 2007).

It is not yet clear whether quality, quantity, or a measure of both is most important for public open space use; several studies have started to investigate these associations with various health outcomes. One Australian study explored the relationship between quality and quantity of public open space attributes and mental health among adults. The authors found that quality of public open space within a neighborhood was more important than quantity (Francis et al. 2012). This warrants further investigation as to the relationship of quality and quantity together with public open space by neighborhood disadvantage among children has not been examined.

2   Conclusion

1. The evidence of the potential health and well-being benefits of public open spaces have increased immensely over the last decade along with the growing research interest in public open space in the urban built environment.
2. Most public open space studies have focused on physical activity and active play; more attention needs to be paid to measuring children's independent mobility, an important contributor of daily physical activity.
3. The evidence base linking public open space attributes with children's independent mobility is limited, for example, mobility in specific locations, and to date very few studies have explored this relationship.
4. Multidimensional physical characteristics of the neighborhood may contribute to various forms of activity engagement among youth in their immediate environment. The relationship between child and neighborhood environment needs further exploration.

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Play and Learning in Benin

18

Emilia Licitra

Contents

Abstract

The current chapter focuses on children's play and toys based upon an ethnographic research in the everyday work and play life of Fulbe (sing. Pullo) pastoralists' children in Northern Benin.

The concept of childhood and children is analyzed from both the point of view of adults and children. It will be seen how adult ideas influence children's perceptions of themselves and of their play activities. In the current research

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Fulbe children articulated both how play fitted into their lives and what these activities meant to them. It follows a description of the principle play activities of Fulbe children, with a focus on sexual differentiation during play, the seasonality of play activities, and the relationship with nature. This research wishes to give useful insights to projects of intercultural education, using play as unifying tool. Moreover, this research intends to contribute to social studies literature on childhood which recognize the importance of children's voices as well as the intergenerational relationship. The chapter ends with the wish of an interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology and geography in children studies.

1   Introduction

People engage with their environment by doing, in a direct connection: through their bodies and senses, humans interact with the sensuous materiality of the world (Howes 2005; Hitchings and Jones 2004; Le Breton 2006; Mason and Davies 2009; Merleau-Ponty 1964). Therefore, learning is a process that involves "the whole organism in its environment" (Ingold 2000, p. 19), and it does not merely consist of the acquisition of information transferred from one generation to the next. As part of everyday life and culture (Torres 2004), learning is not only a subjective experience but is developed and reproduced within "communities of practice" (Pink 2009), embedded in intergenerational social interaction and exchange (Christensen and James 2000; Hsu and Harris 2010; Pink 2009; Heckler 2009).

In this context, play can be considered as one of the most important ways that children learn about and become engaged in the world (Vandermaas-Peeler 2002). Through play, children learn how to use their bodies and to experience their senses (Meire 2007), and especially outdoor play helps develop children's motor skills and coordination (Fjørtoft 2004), and it promotes children's health (Lindstrand 2005). Children's play provides the development of sociality and cooperation skills. Playing often involves the imitation of adults' and older children's lives and activities: this promotes both cognitive and social learning; it helps to develop problem-solving capacities and the social integration in their community (Stone and Lozon 2004; Spittler and Bourdillon 2012).

Play and games are strictly connected to the cultural meanings and categories of the society in which they were created (Callois 2001; Huizinga 1955). Because of this relation with culture, play may serve as a mean to know the other, since we are not simply talking about a toy. In the fact, a toy that is presented in its context allows us to relate about that people's cultural perceptions, their works/activities, the environment where those children live, and their female and male social roles. But this is the first step: it is necessary to go beyond multiculturalism. To know the other who remains far away from us and has nothing to do with us is not enough.

We should benefit by this knowledge and these games to call into question one's cultural categories in order to interact with other people. In this way, play can have a strategic role in the intercultural education. UNESCO (2005) has defined interculturality as "the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect." Interculturality is not a methodology or a kind of pedagogy, rather, it is a way of thinking, it is an approach to diversity, and it allows to acquire a critical mind and a sort of decentralization. Bennett (Bennett and Bennett 2004) talk about "intercultural sensitivity," according to which "my culture is not the only meaning of the world," and she said it is not a natural skill, but it must be developed through education. In order to overcome exoticism and multiculturalism, projects of intercultural education should focus the attention on what unites human beings and not only on differences. In this context, play can be a perfect unifying tool and a bridge between different cultures and a tool to reflect on different social and current topics. Jean-Pierre Rossie (2008) has integrated his researches on North African and Saharan children's play and toy culture in an intercultural and peace education project with preschool group of children in Belgium. He realized that children were stimulated by examples of toys made by Moroccan children to create themselves toys with waste material. He also found the strength of intercultural approach to play to promote a more positive image of Third World children, and that play may be used as a tool for peace education.

The current chapter focuses on children's play and toy culture of Fulbe (sing. Pullo) agropastoralists in Northern Benin. This research wishes to give useful insights to projects of intercultural education, as seen above, using play as unifying tool. Moreover, this research intends to contribute to social studies literature on childhood which recognize the importance of children's voices as well as the intergenerational relationship. Fulbe literature presents few studies on childhood, and there is no research completely focused on children's toys and play. Researches who take into account Fulbe children are mainly centered on infant-feeding and care practices (Johnson 2000; Regis 2003; Riesman 1992). They highlight the great attention and care given to the newborn by their parents and the all Fulbe community, and they point out how children are highly valued in the Fulbe community especially when they are very young (Riesman 1992). Their main limit is the methodological approach too much focused on adult's point of view and on their practices, while children are simply the receivers and not social actors, experts, and agents of their lives (Alderson 2001; Clark and Moss 2008).

In the wake of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations General Assembly 1989) that has produced changing perspective on children's status in society, it has been a paradigm shift also in the social studies on children (James and Prout 1997). Traditionally, when the paradigm of the development psychology was dominant on children studies, childhood and children's have solely been explored through the views and understandings of their adult caretakers: in this context children were considered as empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge (Prout in Christensen and James 2000). Especially after the UNCRC, children began to be seen as subjects and participants rather than

objects and as "beings" and not "becoming" (Clark and Moss 2008), and research "with" children and not just "on" children became common practice: this child-focused perspective sees children as possessing distinctive cognitive and social developmental characteristics. A recent perspective considers children as active participants (coresearchers) because they are members of a community and not as consumers or users of a product.

The social approach to childhood flourished from the 1990s onward in geographies of children, youth, and families (Holloway 2014). Geography of children have recognized the importance of children's voices, giving important contributions about everyday spaces and spatial discourses and the ways in which children negotiate the childhoods constructed in various times and places (Holloway and Valentine 2000). While some social studies, mainly from the anthropology discipline, focused on understanding of children's social world, while neglected the generational differences and the important problem of power relations (Mayall in Christensen and James 2000). Recent studies, especially geographical studies, have overcome the adult/child distinction and see children in their contexts (Christensen and James 2000). Holloway reminds the geographers interested on children to not focus on children's worlds in isolation, rather to see children both as social actors and social category and this to explore their positioning within wider sets of social relations (Holloway 2014).

2   Aims and Contents

The current chapter focuses on children's play and toys based upon an ethnographic research in the everyday work and play life of Fulbe (sing. Pullo) pastoralists' children in Northern Benin (Bierschenk and Le Meur 1997; Bierschenk and Forster 2004). Fieldwork have been conducted in the rural area of Péhunco, in Northwest Benin from June 2012 to August 2013. Fulbe children and adults have been involved in the research process using a multisensory methodology, an approach that emphasizes the *multisensoriality* of experience, of learning, and of knowing processes, both of research participants and the ethnographer (Pink 2009).

The concept of childhood and children will be analyzed from both the point of view of adults and children. In this chapter, there will be described different stages of childhood, learning and development of the child, cultural perceptions on education, and play according to Fulbe adults. Moreover, it will be seen how these ideas influence children's perceptions of themselves and of their play activities (how, when, with whom, and where play activities should be lived). In the current research Fulbe children articulated both how play fitted into their lives and what these activities meant to them. It follows a description of the principle play activities of Fulbe children, with a focus on sexual differentiation during play, the seasonality of play activities, and the relationship with nature. The chapter concludes with some reflections and conclusions on outdoor play, on the role that play culture may have in the intercultural education, and it ends with the wish of an

interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology and geography in children studies.

3 Fulbe Adults' Point of View on Childhood and Play and Childrens' Voices

Fulbe adults interviewed have described children (*sukaabe*, sing. *suka*) as the *awdiiri* of the family: *awdiiri* are the seeds preserved for the following year's sowing, and, thus, children represent the hope for the community. Many people agree with Ibrahim, the chief of Pehunco Gah, who has declared "a wuro (Fulbe village) without children is not anymore a wuro! A child is the future of the family" (Ibrahim, chief of Péhunco Gah village).

Childhood (*sukaku* in Fulfulde) among the Fulbe of Péhunco is considered as dynamic period in which a child changes and develops through different stages. Moreover, Fulbe people recognize also a distinction between children and adolescents (alwasiijo, f. gatool). Adolescent differs from *sukaabe* also because they do not play anymore, rather they participate more often at festivities and dances that occur during the night, and they dress differently, with many more jewelry. The majority of Fulbe adults interviewed (men and women) have pointed out three stages of childhood: *denano*, *borkonu*, and *suka*. Each phase encloses a different way to be a child and a different way of learning, working, and playing. The *denano* phase is described as a period in which babies depend highly on mothers: it is the period of breast feeding. The *borkonu* phase is explained as the time of language apprenticeship and sensorial immersion in physical environment. It is the time of an "immersion in the life" (*duni' aaru*): in this period, children imitate what adults do, their gestures, and their actions, and they often ask questions to their parents. In the *suka* stage, the child is considered a more active agent of his/her life and is smarter and creative; children have more fun but at the same time more responsibilities.

As it has been said, being a child and the way of living childhood and play depend in part on what adults think childhood should be lived. Therefore, adults have different behavior and educational approaches toward their children depending on the phase in which each child is.

In the *denano* phase the adult, in particular the mother, should be always at the child's disposal (in fact *denano* means "to supervise"); she should carefully observe the newborn, who cannot do anything by his own and he is not able to talk and ask, in order to comprehend and satisfy his needs, and it can be observed a great tenderness and physical contact. In this first phase, the newborn is too young to play with the other children of the *wuro*. Thus, in this stage, father and grandparents and especially mothers have the task to let the child play. In fact, as one mother has pointed out, "mothers do not play WITH their newborns but they let the child might play" (Gege, mother from Pehunco Gah).

During *borkonu*, the adult still takes care of his child but in a different way: children turn to parents in cases of necessity and not vice versa. The mother or father – it depends if it is a girl or a boy – starts showing the first simple works, and they ask their children to follow and observe them in their activities. As a mother told me, "this is a way to put my child in the game of my job" (Mata, Pehunco Gah, 11/07/13). In the borkonu phase, the young child starts playing alone or in multiage groups: through games, the child explores with his/her senses and gets to know the environment and the raw materials. In this period, the play activity is not very much structured: in most of the cases, it is made of imitative and repetitive gestures and actions.

Finally, a child can be considered in the *suka* phase when is perfectly able to communicate and in part satisfy his/her needs. This is the stage of work apprenticeship guided by the parents. When a child is defined as *suka*, play is more structured and gendered: most of the games played in this phase imitate and represent creatively the everyday life and works of the female and male relatives.

In general, childhood is defined by the adult participants to this research as a period of lightheartedness, fun, play, and freedom and at the same time of apprenticeship. Children, in fact, are "those who do not know anything" (*sukaabe anna godul*), and thus, since they were born, they have to learn about the world and the life of their community, and they achieve this through play and work (it will be explained afterward). According to Fulbe adults of this survey, children's work is a way to learn their parents' jobs, and it represents a fundamental aid for the domestic economy of the *wuro*, where all members of the community work together, not only for domestic purposes but also in production (Spittler and Bourdillon 2012, p. 6).

These ideas are indirectly transmitted to children, who define childhood as a moment of more freedom and less responsibility comparing to adults' life: "being a child is handsome because we can have fun, play, and we work less than the adults," as affirmed by a boy from Fambereku village. At the same time children recognize the importance of working both to prepare themselves for their future as adult woman or man and to help, in the present, their parents and community. During some chats and in-depth interviews with both boys and girls (around 6–10 years old), children have stressed the importance to start early to work with their mothers, aunts, fathers, uncles, and older siblings for several reasons: first, to learn well ("when you are a child, you can learn how to do things better and more quickly," Adama, girl of Pehunco Gah) and to be ready and capable when they will form a new family; secondly, to meet the expectations of their community and thus to escape the taunts and teasing that would describe them as lazy children, unable to do anything. From the speeches of some of them, it is a clear strong sense of personal pride that they are able to do a particular job: the fact they have acquired manual, cognitive, and social skills makes them proud of themselves and happy to be well regarded by the rest of the community.

> When I started cooking, I was happy! I was glad that everyone assumed that «today Adama has cooked!» I want to learn to cook like the other women. I want to know how to cook (Adama, 12/10/12).

Nevertheless, Fulbe children have affirmed that play is the real "golle" (that in Fulfulde means work) and the main aspect that defines a child and distinguishes him/her from adults.

> We play because we are children. When we grow up, we will not do these games anymore (Moli, girl, about ten/eleven years, Bouerou, 16/07/13).

On the whole, play represents for both Fulbe adults and children the main aspect of the child's identity and an important tool for learning and making one's way into the world. Many adults interviewed (mothers, fathers, and elderly) have affirmed that "seeing a child who doesn't play gives worries," and in these cases they would invite and encourage the girl or boy to play with his/her friends and siblings. If a child, in all the three stages seen above, especially in the *borkonu* e *suka* phases, does not play, he/she is considered ill, physically or mentally.

4   Play and Education

In general, play has an important role and a key part in the ideas and practices of education and transmission of knowledge in the community of the Fulbe of Péhunco.

The Fulfulde word to say education is *enkollital* that literally means "to show" and therefore "to indicate the right direction." Education, the practice of showing by parents or others, has two functions: (1) the transmission of the main values and ethics of Fulbe people ("education is to show a positive idea to someone") and (2) "to show in practice" the activities and jobs of the community and thus to transmit knowledge and techniques regarding cattle's feeding and care to boys and cooking practice, plant knowledge, infant care practices, and home care activities to girls. This second educational purpose (job apprenticeship), that is based on oral instructions and especially on sensorial transmission, starts – has said before – during the *borkonu* phase, but in the majority of cases, it is fully realized in a later stage, during the *suka* phase, and therefore from about the age of 7 years old. Because Fulbe do not count and know the chronological age, the beginning of the "official" apprenticeship does not occur for all children at the same time or at a specific age as it happens in the formal kind of education, as the school one. There are several factors which affect and make more varied and dynamic research context, as, for example, the familiar configuration and the necessity to bring a child sooner or later into the work activities of the village: a girl who already has one or more older sisters will probably start later her apprenticeship because the mother already has a concrete help. Moreover, two of the main factors influencing the age of onset of the apprenticeship are the maturity and development of the individual child and his/her way of behaving toward adults:

therefore, the moral qualities of the child and the type of relationship that is established between him/her and the parent.

The general idea is that learning depends heavily on the children; adults must wait until the child is ready, that is, intelligent, calm, willing to learn, able to listen to, and respectful of older people. In cases where a child has all the features (physical and cognitive) of a child of the *suka* phase but he does not meet the criteria above, it will be the parent of the same sex to encourage and address him/her to the work, at first gently, then with physically powerful manners.

Play, before or simultaneously with this type of "official/guided" education, answers to both of the two educational functions described before. As described by Fulbe mothers and fathers and elderly, play has two principal functions in the life and development of the child. Through play: (a) the child learns to grow up physically, socially, and mentally as a Pullo girl or Pullo boy and (b) the child learns adults' works.

The Fulbe informants recognize that everything has its time and that the age of play is already a good part of apprenticeship in a child's life: "The child learns most of knowledge by himself. What an adult does is just to reinforce the ideas of the child" (Ada Gurà, chief of Maressararou, 28/05/13). Play favors the guided apprenticeship: play is for children "a way to educate themselves by themselves; it is an amusement that imitates an adult's activity, it is a training base for a child" (Ibrahim, chief of Péhunco Gah).

5   Play and Craziness: The Role of the Spirits of the Savannah

> A child who plays is doing his real work. An adult who plays wastes his time (Gobijo, 16/05/13).

Parents do not play with their children, with the exception of the first phase (*denano*) in which is mainly the mother who entertains the newborn with bells and movements on her arms.

Playing with children is not a good thing for a Pullo adult: with the exceptions of the grandparents (considered similar to children), an adult who plays with children is usually mocked and considered crazy and a person who wastes his time instead of working. None of the mothers and fathers interviewed has given importance to the practice of playing together with their own sons and daughters as a way to build and enhance their parent-children relationship.

While in the Western societies, spaces and times of play are more and more "colonized" by the adults, for Fulbe people this is unthinkable. Children's games are described as "najoje," craziness: this is a kind of craziness considered normal, right for the age of childhood but inopportune and negative for adults. This craziness is given by the *ginnaji*, the savannah spirits, who love playing with children. *Ginnaji* are children's friends and are present only in the moment and in places where children play. The *ginnaji* are a sort of guardians of their toys, they protect the toys, and they play with these objects themselves as well. If an adult

destroys one of these objects, he/she will not be able to sleep well because these spirits will be haunting him/her at night. Thus, if a child leaves a toy of his/her on the ground, his/her parents will not take it, nor tread upon it, nor smash it; they cannot even move it but are expected to ask the child for permission.

Earlier it was said that children are defined as "those who do not know anything"; during play, *ginnaji* give to the child a direction; they guide him to the knowledge of the adults' activities. A mother defined the *ginnaji*, with a pastoral image, "duroobe sukaabe": "those who graze the children," who guide, show them a good job, and direct them during the imitation games.

When asked why the *ginnaji* should be interested in protecting children and play with them, the response was unanimous on the part of adults: the spirits love being with children, because – unlike adults – they are discrete and especially they do the same activity, that is, playing. When the child will grow, he will not play anymore, and the spirits will abandon him.

It is difficult to prove whether these spirits really exist, if they really play with the kids or disturb in sleep adults who destroy toys. Children (about 8–12 years old) interviewed say they have never seen these spirits, but they not deny these beliefs; they say that when they leave their toys to get away momentarily, they frighten younger children telling them not to touch anything because otherwise the *ginnaji* might do them harm. Younger children, instead, have always refused to talk about this topic, often their response was "Mi anna," I do not know!

> We (children) just play; we do not know if the ginnaji are with us. We only know that if an adult breaks our games, he will not sleep at night because the ginnaru will tell him: why did you break it? Ginnaji love playing, too (Pettel, eight years old, Famberekou).

The work of the anthropologist is not to prove the real existence of any deity or supernatural presence, but how much and in which way cultural perceptions and religious beliefs affect the daily lives and practices of the people. What is clear is that, thanks to the presence of the spirits who play with children, play acquires even more value in the Fulbe culture and in particular the high respect for toys by the adults. Another practical consequence concerns children play setting: where children play and how children should keep these spaces.

6   Places for Children's Play

The *ginnaji* are inhabitants of the savannah and trees are their houses. Since children play with *ginnaji* – Fulbe adults said – places for children's play are outdoor spaces, often close to the savannah area, and they often keep their toys under or close to a tree. They often play behind the houses, but they never play in front of them in the middle of the *wuro*, rarely indoors (in case of rain). They also play near the waterholes, in the surroundings of the village, or where the trees create shadowy places. These spaces are never too far from the *wuro* but at the "right distance": children have coined a third spatial category that is not present in the

Fig. 1 Girls' toys dropped on the ground behind a house, after playing

speeches of adults and in the literature, that is, *ladde-wuro*, the area of savannah closest to the *wuro*. This is where children play and collect fruits and boys gather plants as food for cows or plant craft to build toys and in general they feel free. Children go in these places in most cases by feet and sometimes with the bike.

> We, children, often come here in ladde (savannah) close to the wuro (camp): we look for the firewood, we gather herbs for the sauce and all sort of fruits. All of us come here to have fun, to take a walk and play. When we are tired of working, we hide and we come here. Mom says: «today I'll grab you and I'll beat you!». So, we run away and we come here, in ladde-wuro. This is a good place because it is not too far from wuro, so if there is any hazard we can run fast and return in a safe place. (Walking with twelve girls from around six to twelve years old, Maressararou, 29/01/13)

Thanks to the presence of *ginnaji*, Fulbe adults save space for the children to play, and, thus, children are allowed to leave toys everywhere. In Fig. 1, there are no children but their traces can be seen in the objects and in their disposition. At a glance, the inattentive observer who knows nothing of their world nor of their game culture would think that Fulbe are untidy or even dirty due to all the rubbish scattered everywhere: pieces of stoppers, tins, broken lids, and so on. Actually, children have been in those places and they have played there!

7   Play and Cultural Heritage: Tawangal Pulaaku

Play is recognized by both Fulbe children and adults as part of the "tawangal pulaaku" that means an element of the cultural heritage of Fulbe community, transmitted from one generation to another, in particular by older siblings to younger, as it arises from the following statements:

> A baby is born and find specific things. A Bariba child does not play with cows; instead, a Pullo child see the cattle with horns in his village and he reproduces them (Gobijo, 16/05/13).

> We saw our older siblings play in this way, and we played with them. Then, they are grown and they left us in the game. Nobody taught us (Dikko, boy around 9 years old, Péhunco Gah).
>
> We have seen our older sisters and we have followed them in the play activity (Moli, 10 years old, Bouerou).

Among these games, there are imitation games and games played during festivities. Regarding these latter, they are not spontaneous games where different roles are taken on; on the contrary children follow a draft shared among all the various villages of Pehunco. It is not just by chance that these games are festivity games played at wedding and name ceremonies or Islamic festivities. In these occasions, Fulbe children dance and sing and they play the mime, tig, and hide-and-seek. These games share common elements to many other plays around the world, but they present local characteristics and elements of the pastoral culture, so that if these games would be exported outside the Fulbe community would need to be explained and contextualized because otherwise they would not be understood and would raise no enthusiasm among the children of "another world."

7.1   The Pretend Games: Boys and Girls Play Differently

From the period of *borkonu*, children's games begin to differentiate by gender: boys' games will be increasingly oriented toward the imitation of the work of their fathers, big brothers, and uncles, therefore pastoral and agricultural works; the girls amuse themselves imitating the work of their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts, thus the cooking works and in general many food-processing activities, cleaning, and laundry. These are "games of imitation" and a form of learning by doing, where creativity and freedom of doing of the child find great space. The adults do not interfere and do not give instructions if they are not requested: they are aware that it is a kind of apprenticeship. Two mothers of the age of 45 years of the village of Bouerou have told me:

> At this age, children classify themselves as male or female spontaneously; playing with the wooden cattle or the dishes, they start to get used to the activities of the fathers and mothers. So, when they will reach the age in which the real apprenticeship starts, they will be already accustomed to these works and it will be easier for them to learn and adapt to the activities of the community.

These are games which can be played anytime, according to the amount of works. The time dedicated to play by girls is more reduced. The differences in time spent on play activities depend also on the age of children: in fact, before the start of the apprenticeship guided by parents, children, both boys and girls, spend most of the day playing or mingle play with work: for example, they accompany the sisters to gather herbs for sauces or help their mother during the preparation of meals bringing some tools for work or small bowls of water

In general, boys and girls play little together: the times in which they play all together are never established and organized before. We are dealing with groups of spontaneous play. It may happen that a group of boys began to play first and then the group of girls or just one/two girls fits into the game through some tricks. For instance, Alu plays at the yam fields farming while girls cook, then he interacts with the girls by offering them the yam he has grown – some sticks – and tells his elder sister to cook *sokora*, a yam-based dish that recalls mashed potatoes ("Do you need a little yam? Then you can make sokora!"). They have played together, keeping their roles and gender differences. These differences can be remarked from 3–4 years of age, not before, since up to that age, boys and girls live in close contact with their mothers and imitate their activities. In this period, it is easy to find young boys and girls (3–4 years old) playing together especially male games, in particular the game with the wooden cows. In most of the cases, the children involved are peer or little brother with his younger or older sisters. If the older brothers see the youngest is playing girls' games, they start to tease them: "In this way, you will become a girl!" A boy said: "It is a great *seemtende* (shame)!"

7.2   Playing at Shepherds: One Example of Boys' Game

> . . . Behind a house I found about twenty-four sticks with horns: these are cows-toys. Adamu tell me that they belong to Sa'idu. They represent his cattle! There is also a calabash, three empty plastic cans and a bottle of coca cola plain of water. A few seconds and Saydu arrives and starts playing. Sa'idu milks the cows with the first bottle of coca cola to which he had previously made a hole in the cap: the bottle is a breast from which (squeezing) the milk comes out. Sa'idu squeezes the water from the bottle into the calabash (birtude, the container of milking), which he keeps between his legs, in a position that can be seen every morning when adults make a real milking. Then he pour the milk from the calabash in the three plastic cans, which represent – Sa'idu tell me – lalodde, that are the calabashes where the milk is poured in order to bring it and keep it in the wuro. Meanwhile, Sa'idu repeats several times the same gestures and so he milks all the other cows. In the meantime, he sings. After milking, Sa'idu brings the cattle to pasture: he places in the first row a bigger stick, that is the bull, and on the trot all the other cows and he wind them on one by one, imitating the bull's bellow and he makes him pawing. At this point, Saydu level out the sand with his feet and hands and he creates a circle, towards which he moves his cattle and he put them inside. . . Now is the time to return into the wuro: Sa'idu turns back his cattle into the wuro (Field notes, Pehunco Gah).

The game described above is called *fijo nahi leɗeji* (*play with wooden cattle*) by the children interviewed and is played by all Fulbe boys in the villages in Péhunco. It is a game that a child can play alone, but most of the time children prefer to play it in group. This game can be played during all the year, because the principal natural materials (forked branches) for the fabrication of the animals and the recycled utensils for the milking, feeding, and treating can be found into the savannah and among the adults' litter in all the seasons. However, it is especially during the dry season (*Cedu*) that boys spend most of their daytime playing at shepherds, because in this season the works of the community are considerably reduced (especially for men) and children have more time to make their wooden cows.

Every child recreates his own cattle using branches purposefully cut down from some particular trees. Children select branches of trees with two or three ends (two to make cows and calves; three for the bulls and for few cows with a hump), which recall the large horns of cattle owned by the fathers, and with knife they remove the external parts of the cortex. They are usually the children of 5–11 years old who build the wooden cattle, while the littlest ones only play with them. In general, each child has his own cattle composed partly of sticks inherited from older siblings, if in good condition, and in part from self-manufactured sticks: most children, including those belonging to other villages, can play with the cattle of the other children, in their presence or not (Fig. 2).

> When you have many cows, you can donate some of them to your younger brother who still is not able to build them. When he grows, he will make them by himself and then in turn he will give some of his cows to his younger brother (Adullahi, around 11 years old, Pehunco Gah).

During this game, boys reenact the activities their fathers, uncles, and elder brothers carry out: the milking, the transhumance of the cows, the watering, the feeding, and the cattle market, and they take care of their animals. They often give names to the various heads of cattle, so they can call their cattle and imitate the special relation between men and animals, typical of the Fulbe culture.

The main tools of this game represent the traditional utensils used by adult men: a tin of tomato that represents the *birtude*; the pumpkin basin where milk is poured during the milking; a calabash broken, that is, *lalodde,* the calabash where milk is

Fig. 2 Sa'idu is playing at milking his wooden cattle

poured after the milking; and a plastic bottle, that is, the *jolloru*, the calabash similar in shape to a flask and used by boys and youth to bring the *boyri* when they go in transhumance. Some children have introduced a new element, belonging to the modern culture: the mobile phone made with clay (*portabu*). During the transhumance, in fact, two children with the two cattle could be split and so with the phone they can keep in touch: "How is the transhumance going? Everything all right? Are you coming back to the wuro?," asked Alu to Saydu during a play session.

In one play occasion, I saw Adullahi (about 11 years old) doing an injection to the cow: he has seen a veterinary or his father treat in his wuro. It is important to note that Adullahi is the oldest in the play group and he performs the delicate and important task of care and not the other younger boys playing with him. The older siblings often dictate the rules, while the youngest ones are usually the assistants. There are also play situations, where children who play are many and they perform different roles. For example, when they imagine to go to the cattle market: in this case, there will be those who will play the heads of the village, those who will go to the market, and those who will be the youth who will go to the pasture. Sometimes, the game also requires the presence of women: the older girls will play the role of wives, and the younger girls will be the children.

These games certainly provide children to become part of their environmental, cultural, and social world. Through this game, more than learning how to "perform" as breeders – thing they can learn in their daily life living with cattle – they learn how to "be" breeders: this is to say that they learn to love this work. That is what the children themselves have affirmed during interviews and informal chats while playing. It has been often asked to them why they played that game, and their answers were "I do it, so I learn to love my cows" or simply "It is tawangal, what I found when I was born." Other interesting children's statements:

> If a child does not play the games that we usually do (play with cows), the others will say that it is not a Pullo child but he is Bariba. This game will help me to have more cows when I will be an adult, and I will love for the cattle. Who does not do this game, then he will do to the real pasture, the cows will not love him. Cows understand and know who does not love them (Dikko, 9/10 years old, Péhunco Gah).
>
> Welli! I like play this game and, also, I prepare myself for the reality. This game helps me to become good at herding cows. A Pullo child who does not play this game, one day even the real cattle will not be interesting for him, and he will desire to do other jobs (Adullahi, 10/11 years old, Péhunco Gah).
>
> If you do this game, one day you will have a lot of cows. (Why?) Our dad played in the same way we do and now he has real cows (Saydu, 8 years old, Bouerou).

Moreover, children acquire manual skills and become self-confident with work tools, beforehand or meanwhile they serve their real apprenticeship with their parents. For example, they preach plants to reproduce little roof of their toy houses; that is a duty usually performed by adults and mainly by the elders. Furthermore, during these games, children examine and face problems and try to find a solution: they discuss issues which reflect real-life situations that adults face every day, but that is something for children to observe, learn, and memorize, such as problems

related to milking, the quantity of milk to be given to the calves, and the quantity to be reserved for the family.

7.3   Girls' Games

Unlike the game of wooden cows that is a typical play activity of Fulbe children, the girls' game named *lalade* is a game played also by girls belonging to many societies in Benin: it is possible, however, to note the differences in some cooking preparations and activities that are typical of the Fulbe, as the preparation of *boyri*, made with sorghum and milk, and cheese (traditional foods of the Fulbe of the Northern Benin) and the sale of milk and cheese.

A girl of about 7 years old, named Aisha from the village of Famberekou, describes this game as follows:

> Most of the time, when we play, we pretend to light the fire and we take the water and the sand and then we cook and we say this is the boyri! We collect food herbs and put them in a basin and we say this is the sauce! There are girls who play with dolls, they carry them on the back and they say that is their baby. We sometimes play in four: two older girls and two younger ones. The youngest are the daughters and the oldest are the mothers who command the youngest: «Gaatol (girl), come here and add the flour, kurbul nyiri!» (it is a particular movement to mix the flower with water)." Usually when we play lalade, each girl has her own daughter. When some ingredient or tool ends, the mother calls her daughter: «Gatool, go to the mill, our corn is over».

Another girl, older than Aisha and belonging to another village, affirms the importance and beauty of playing in group and she adds that the roles represented are not only mother and daughter but also the co-wives or people of other ethnic groups, for example, when girls recreate scenes from the market or festivals like wedding, where Gando women are those who cook. She said:

> Lalade is a game that we do most of the time with the others, with several people. If you do not have friends to play with, playing is not pleasant! Also because in this game you have to talk: if you are just one, how do you talk? We often represent the wedding ceremony: can one person do a wedding? If you are two girls playing, one puts corn grains in a bowl to take it to the mill. Before leaving, she says to the other: while I am at the mill, in the meanwhile, put the pot with water for nyiri and make the sauce! (Moli, 07/19/13).

In general, girls' games and toys are inspired by the intimate sphere of family life and the economic activities of the women of the community. Girls cook together; with sticks they create an "imaginary fire" in which they lay a little plastic lid or container which replaces the pot, serve the food, clean the dish toys or clothes, go to the mill and the market, collect plants, and take care of the babies. In these activities, they learn that to do a certain procedure, they need to do it in a certain way and with a certain tool and they familiarize with cooking tools and their names (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 Allaydo and Bake playing at cooking together: the girl on the left, the "daughter," is adding the flour/sand in the pot, while the other girl, the "mother," mixes it with water

There are differences between the game played by little girls (2–4 years old) and the older ones (5–11 years old): in the first case, the girls, who have just begun to learn the language, play more often alone, and they spend more time playing than the older sisters who have to work and help their mothers. During play, the young girls imitate the gestures of the mother, more than representing and reconstructing the situations of the adults' life. The game of older girls is much more complex: in their games it is easier to see the division of roles (the youngest are always the assistant) and scenes of everyday life; they know well the prices of the ingredients at the market, and they count and solve simple arithmetic functions (Fig. 4).

Each girl has her own kit of cooking utensils: there are pieces of pumpkin, bits of plastic, basins, stoppers that turn out to be pots and pans, bowls, spoons, dishes, and so on and so forth. For example, they make coins out of battery shells to play the market. These objects are an example of dumped materials turned into toys by the girls, in order to play at cooking. They are not often in a good condition: they are objects that were previously used by mothers, and once broken they are used by the girls for their games (Fig. 5).

As well as for boys' wooden cattle, even in the case of girls' toys, the rule of sharing is valid: children play together and use the toys of the others but there are no exchanges of items between girls. When a girl discovers to have more *gineji* (girls' toys) than the other sisters and friends, she is proud of herself. Sometimes, instead of the recycled items, the girls use as cooking tools the objects made by themselves with clay obtained from the termite mound and which probably were the main toys used in the games of the past along with other natural materials.

The "ingredients" that the girls use for cooking are mainly natural materials, as sand, water, sticks, and plants (flowers, leaves, and fruits). In general, the girls use vegetal materials that are not actually used for cooking by the mothers: the only

Fig. 4 Mairò (around 3 years old) is preparing a sort of semolina with sand and a sauce with wild herbs

Fig. 5 Girls' recycled toys

occasions in which they use edible plants is when the plant is wild and it can be found everywhere in large quantities in that season. Girls never use cultivated plants and especially food items purchased at the market: if they would, the girls are reproached and sometimes also beaten by the mother or an adult who is aware of the whim.

While cooking, social roles and dynamics are being built: *lalade* is a spontaneous game, without fixed rules, and thus there is always a child who runs the game

more than others and makes the rules, roles, and content of the game – it is often the oldest or the strongest temperamentally.

Thanks to these play activities, girls do not learn how to cook but to appreciate this work and to get accustomed to the fact that this will be their future. They learn the actions, gestures, and movements of the cooking practice, they get familiar with some raw materials, and they store the cooking sequence. Moreover, they get used to the idea that this will be their job, and they gain confidence in themselves; they can assume the role of a mother and express themselves in leadership roles which in real life is not granted. Let us "listen" to their voices:

> During play, we get used to make the movement of kurbigal (mixing flour and water to make nyiiri), and so when we will repeat it in reality we are faster, we learn rapidly. Then, the game allows us to know what to put in the preparation but not the quantities. To this reason, playing at cooking is not enough to learn how to cook well, you also have to watch and follow as your mother does and practice. In the game we do not eat what we prepare; in the real life, we eat what we cook and all the wuro eat our food and this is a great difference (Adama, Péhunco Gah, 8/07/13).

"In the real life, we eat what we cook and all the wuro eat our food," and therefore the girl who is cooking is subjected to the judgments by the community: she is often encouraged by her mother (who will correct the girl, if she has done some mistakes in the preparation, only in another occasion, usually the next time they will cook together), while she might be teased by her brothers. The game then is often a time of great freedom, where you can make mistakes, change things, and learn without the judgment and orders of the adults.

As mentioned before, the *lalade* game comprehends one of the most common girl's play in the world: playing at taking care of the babies. In the pictures, you can see plastic dolls that mothers buy at the market, but it is a very recent phenomenon. These dolls are modern: in Fulbe culture, human-looking dolls, as we know them, do not exist. Usually, girls use the youngest children as the dolls; otherwise, they use sticks, pumpkins, or other natural materials (see later). The girls often put these dolls behind their back, and thus they learn since very young the practice of bringing babies: since the age of 4–5 years, they have to help their mother to bring back the newborn or the son of an elder sister. Girls usually wash their dolls and pretend to put the pomade and talcum powder (Fig. 6).

They embellish their dolls with small necklaces or dresses made up of plastic threads coming out from unraveled carpets, bought at the market as well. While playing with their dolls, the girls sometimes dress like their mothers, in particular by putting a scarf on their head and a cloth around the body. They sometimes sing a lullaby to their dolls that mothers usually sing to young children when they cry. The words of one of these songs are:

> "Jeda bebbé, jeda! Inna ma yehi luumo!
> Sodanemo bom-bom, nyama fa kaara!
> Jeda bebé, jeda! Inna ma yehi luumo!
> Sodanemo kuli kuli, jakka fa kaara!"

Fig. 6 Aminatu, a girl of around 5 years old, is washing her doll, just like mothers do in real life

("Quiet baby, quiet! Your mother went to the market! She bought some candy, eat them well! Quiet baby, quiet! Your mother went to the market! She bought kuli-kuli – crunchy snacks made with peanuts and chilli – crunch them well!").

7.4   Recycled Toys

Most of the objects used both by boys and girls when they play are adults' litter turned into devices for children creativity: take, for instance, the seamed pumpkin where they pour milk during the milking, or the cans and the plastic bottles used by boys, and all the basins, bowls, and other cooking and cleaning tools used by girls. In one of eight villages where I carried out my research, adults have dug a huge hollow where to throw the rubbish, while in other villages people throw scrap material almost everywhere. Children always go to this hollow and their parents know well that the things they dump will then be salvaged by the kids. It is curious to see groups of children in search of "rubbish" that then becomes a play tool: children, both boys and girls, are a sort of gatherers of broken things, old and useless for adults. They gather together and then they divide between each other all the objects. Children usually wash these objects and they sometimes repair them, and they use as described in the previous pages; other times, they make real toys: they are mainly boys who recycle and assemble, with great imagination and know-how, pieces of plastics and cans to give life to a new toys which are mainly means of transport as a car or a pickup truck, which reflect new changes in African societies due to modernization, industrialization processes, and contacts with western culture.

8 A Game for Each Season

A game for each season is an idea of the children participants to this research. Fulbe children interviewed say that every game is played at different moments and at different places. Each season and natural space provides them with different natural materials to make their toys and invent new games. This idea came out, thanks to the fact that Fulbe children spent most of the time of their life and their play time in outdoor spaces.

As mentioned before, the play places of Fulbe children are mainly open and natural spaces: the principle are *ladde*, the savannah, but also *gesa/deme*, the cultivated area around the *wuro*, the kitchen garden, and the footpaths that link different camps (*gure*) of the same hamlet. Outdoor play allows Fulbe children to be always in close contact with nature, interact with it, and explore and know what it offers and its seasonal changes. The natural elements and natural material from their environment used by Fulbe children for their play and toy making activities can be grouped mainly in three groups: (1) the natural elements (water, wind, and earth), (2) material of mineral origin (sand, clay, termite, stones), and (3) material of vegetal origin (leaves, flowers, fruits, sticks, palm, cob, trees, etc.).

In the next paragraphs, there will be a description of some of the outdoor games and toys made with natural materials, made and played by Fulbe children at the beginning of the rainy season and during the dry cold season.

8.1 Rainy Season, Setto

When the first rains come (during the season called *Setto* in Fulfulde, in the months May-June), nature provides new materials and therefore the possibility for children to play different games from the dry season. During Setto (and especially during *Dungo*, the real rainy season, June-August), children (especially girls) have much less time to play because the activities of the community are numerous.

During Setto, girls play with flowers that represent for them a special type of dolls: girls pretend to comb the flower with the same not yet blossomed flower. For instance, girls use a plant they call "bébé": they sometimes entwine "hair," or twist flowers into a wreath (Figs. 7 and 8).

There is another plant, and its flower is very sticky. Children like the tactile sensation it brings and put their hands on it singing: "Lalodde ebba peppe, birtuɗe ebba peppe" repeating it over and over again – *lalodde* and *birtuɗe* are two pumpkin basins where milk is poured during and after the milking, and they are always kept clean. Given that milk is a precious resource from the alimentary (important source of pleasure) and nutritional point of view as well as socially and symbolically, so, their little song means: "lalodde is so full of milk, birtude is brimful of milk!." They have probably linked that pleasing tactile sensation of the flower to a tune that celebrates what they cherish most.

Fig. 7 Farm wagon towed by two cows made with clay by a boy

Fig. 8 A little girl is dressed as an adult woman and she has in her hands the plant *bébé*

There is a plant that represents a natural rifle: boys and girls take the plant and bang it on the ground and the edge of the flower breaks off, making a loud noise, just like a rifle shot. When they bang it they sing "binnugato-toto-to!," *binnugato* means rifle.

Especially boys spend their time outside the village, exploring the countryside, climbing trees, weaving bracelets (*gaji*) made with spontaneous plants (thin and elastic), and fabricating flutes with canes.

8.2   Dabune, the Dry Season and Sorghum Harvesting

Dabune is the cold dry season (from November to January). It is the time when sorghum and yam are harvested. It is a time of food abundance and variety for people, and it is called *hotti*, return: the cattle with the young men comes back from the short transhumance and return into the wuro where it feeds on spikes of sorghum. Therefore, Dabune is the season of the meeting, in which they most of the weddings are celebrated.

While the cattle feeds on the spikes of sorghum, the boys take advantage of this malleable material to make their toys. Sorghum plant plays a pivotal role in the children's creativity workshop. It is amazing how these children pick spikes and start using every single part of the plant to ply it into many toys. The toys in question are the glasses (*giringite*), the umbrella (*lema*) that opens and closes, the guitar (*gita*), the flute (*furaru*), the horse (*pucciu*), the torch (*tosu*), and the lamp (*peroha*). In the eight villages considered in the research, there were observed only small differences: there are children who add to the glasses of the strips on the lens, there are those who do not make the horse but the bike, but those who can fabric a sort of gun.

This is the case where tradition and modernity meet because these toys are not Fulbe culture-specific objects, but they are gradually becoming part of it. Their making toy process is handed down by elder brothers to younger ones, and this transmission occurs during playing: there are not many verbal instructions, rather observation and reproduction of the observed object (learning by doing) and eventual corrections by the older siblings. These objects are not the issue of every single child's creativity, even though the individual may modify or retouch them: they seldom invent new toys with this material, at least, but only some embellishment as a necklace and rope for the horse (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 Five boys from the village of Famberekou are wearing glasses made with sorghum

These are toys made by boys, while the girls enjoy playing with them but they do not participate in their manufacture. The reason for this difference may lie in the specialization of the work according to gender; the harvest of sorghum is in fact a male work: boys and adult men cut the sorghum stems with a machete, a hard job because of the curved position and under the sun. Through play, boys become familiar with the raw materials and have fun with something that is central in the adults' activities.

These toys are never stored; once children have finished playing they throw them away: the material is not as durable as much as a can or plastics, and then there is also the awareness on the part of children that everything has its time. At the question "what do you think if you could have all the toys and then the raw materials to make them always, throughout the year?," children from the village of Pehunco Gah have initially responded "Welli! We'd be happy, because it would mean that we can always have fresh food, too." But, then, they continued that if they could have all the toys available every time, they would be beaten more often because they would not work. Other children have highlighted the beauty and the most fun to change toys and games; otherwise, they would bore: they are aware that the Dabune season will come back, and it will offer them again these materials.

Dabune is also a very windy season, which often annoys adults, because it causes cold and especially the cracking and splitting of the skin. Children, however, have managed to turn the force of the wind into something creative and fun. Playing with the wind gives Fulbe children two main opportunities for enjoying themselves. The windmill: it is made up of sorghum and dry palm leaves. Children run in the wind and the windmill starts spinning in breeze. The *yufa* game: they take wide pieces of cloth, wrap around their waists, and then grab their edges and run. The cloth swells out because of the wind, just like a sort of kite (Fig. 10).

Another plant used for play during the Dabune season is Néré (Parkia biglobosa) is a tree whose seeds are employed to make an unpleasant smelling mustard, rich in vegetal proteins they use daily in the sauces in all Western Africa. During Dabune

Fig. 10 Girls playing and enjoying *yufa* game

season, Néré trees bear red flowers. Children remove its red petals and play two kinds of games: (1) the spinning top with the outer yellow part and (2) the whole stem of the flower to play in pairs – the two challengers cross the filaments and rub them one against the other. When a filament breaks, the child loses and takes another one to challenge the player one more time. While playing the game, they sing a little song: *tutu banna gari' u banna!,* that has no meaning, except for the word *gari' u* which stands for feminine genitalia. In fact, when children play this game in front of adult people, they only sing *tutu banna*.

9   Reflections on Outdoor Education and Play

Since birth, Fulbe children spend most of their time and life in outdoor spaces. While carried in the back of their mothers, the newborn comes in a more direct way in contact with his/her world (physical and social environment): he/she accompanies the mother wherever she goes; thus, the baby participates to adult life and his senses are continuously stimulated. These children start soon to explore their environment with boldness and autonomy because they already know it. When they start walking, they continue accompanying their mothers, and they interact through their senses with the raw materials, especially those used by their mothers for their work activities (they do not have any mass market toys). This sensorial experience led the child to know better the real world and what it contains; it enables the child to know and manipulate raw materials and to develop his/her creativity. As a result of this, when they are still very young (around 3 years old), Fulbe children show a great manual dexterity and gracefulness when handling knives and also machetes, something unthinkable in our Western societies where the perception of the risk is becoming too excessive. Fulbe children and their parents show us that education must be done through experience and not with an overprotective attitude (Farné and Agostini 2014).

As discussed in the paragraph Play and Education, Fulbe adults encourage the independence of the child. This is not the case of passivity and indifference of adults toward children and their play activities; rather, Fulbe adults are aware that through the manipulation of "dangerous" tools, through touching, smelling, tasting, running, and playing, the child is learning. Parents are very discreet and especially mothers observe their young children and intervene only when it is really necessary, in the case of violent disputes. For children it means to live a real life: they do not live in a vacuum, but they have to do with the real environment, the result is a greater understanding of the dangers, and therefore they are more able to prevent risks. Fulbe children learn very soon to face the difficulties, hardships, and pain.

9.1   What Do Children Learn While Playing Outdoor?

Through the outdoor games, Fulbe children know the changing seasons, the raw materials (also food items), the works related to them, and the places where they

grow. Outdoor play with natural materials allows children to have a positive relationship with the environment, learn about it, interact with it, and enjoy it. According to Valentine, outdoor play "is crucial because it is the primary mechanism through which children become acquainted with their environment" (2004, p. 74). Playing in natural places permits children to know nature, and this often means to respect and love it, to enter into a relationship with it (Lindstrand 2005; Meire 2007), and to recognize the beauty of nature. Moreover, it allows children to discover the rhythms of nature: each material might be found in a different season and every material also refers to occurrences that mark the time of man, especially in agropastoral society such as the Fulbe. Therefore, there is a strong link between the rhythms of nature, the agricultural calendar and festivities.

Children learn not only the rhythms of nature but also acquire a general value and perception of time. In many daily situations and interviews, Fulbe children (and also adults) have declared: "Une fu e wakati muduyu," that means "everything has its own time."

This conception considers time not as our enemy, something to counteract in order to be able to live up to our lives, maximize profits, and achieve our goals and happiness. On the contrary, it is a time that panders to us, which is in a strong harmony with nature and the supernatural. However, people are not passively subjected to the time, but this time is lived and regularized with two very strong instruments such as knowledge and culture. Behind this conception of time, there is a deep knowledge of the features of each season, of the ecological, meteorological, and social events of each time. This kind of knowledge is not transmitted by the adults in a verbal form: each child does, spontaneously and sometimes, guided by his/her parents or group of peers, his/her experience of the seasonality, also thanks to play activities. Fulbe children, educated by the adults in this direction, hardly prefer a season to another in an absolute way: of course there are personal perceptions and preferences, but in general there is a global vision according to which each season is linked to all the others and, again, every world (vegetal, animal, and human) is interconnected.

There is a strong desire to change from the point of view of children: they reject the possibility to have every food, every toy and game, and every type of job always, in every season. This is not just because it sounds to them unreal. At the contrary, there are several occasions in which they can have more things in the same time: these are especially moments of transition from one season to another in which the tiredness prevails on the accumulation and are strongly the happiness of gathering and the pleasure of tasting a new fruit, the joy of creating new toys and having new stimulus for new games, and the joy to learn something new.

There are many other benefits of outdoor play, such as the movement, a fundamental need for children, and many occasions to eat fresh and seasonal fruits, but the most important advantage that recurs in all children interviews is about the freedom in play activities: children want to feel free to play, without the presence of the adults, to build their toys by themselves; they do not want to depend on

purchased toys; that is a form of dependency on adults; sometimes they wish to have more free time to play.

I spoke to a group of Fulbe boys and girls aged from about 4 to 11 about Italian children's play and of the fact that they seldom manage to build up their own toys; conversely, they would rather have them from their parents, who go and buy toys for them as gifts. It started a dialogue and reflections on these differences. Thus, Fulbe children stressed the sense of freedom that must be there in playing, and they suggested five tips to play well. The following five points can be considered a manifesto for children's rights:

1. "When the father buys toys and he brings them at home, you should observe carefully and understand how the toy is made, in order to make it by yourself. You should try several times until you succeed. That day you will say to your father that you do not need anymore his toys."
2. "To make your toys, use simple materials as aluminum and the wrapper of batteries to make the wheels of your car."
3. "It is better for children to play without adults to better learn. Adults have to work. If adults are there during play and the child makes mistakes, the adult will correct the child and will do it at the place of the child: this is the end for the child! When another time the child wants to do that toy, he will not be able do it. Instead, if he does by himself, step by step, he will comprehend: he will make mistakes and he will start from the point he had left the last time he played, and at the end he will remember and know well how to make that toy."
4. "If the adult is there, he will show his way to play and so children cannot play as they want. **The way of playing of children is the only way to be free: you can do what you want during playing.** Moreover, the way of playing of adults may be too difficult for you."
5. "Everything has its own time! There is a game for each season: the savannah offers different game tools in different times of the year, and there are also times to play a lot and times to help your family."

10   Conclusion

The current research has shown that play in Fulbe culture is seen as the main aspect of the child's identity, a tool for learning and making one's way into the world, a means through which children explore and get to know nature and raw materials, a way to enhance ties and create differences, and the object as well as the tool for transmitting the cultural heritage. Through play, children learn to love their work, get accustomed to that job, acquire manual skills, and become self-confident with work tools.

Fulbe adults do not consider themselves as appropriate play partners for their children, and thus they are not involved in playing, except with very young children (denano phase). Adults pointed out the importance to play with the peer group in order to socialize and learn to interact with the others. The main play partners of Fulbe children are in fact the peers, older brothers and sisters, and the spirits of the

savannah. The children interviewed stressed the importance of free play without the presence of adults: in this way, children learn to socialize, social strategies, how to approach others, how to ask, and how to integrate into the group; they also know the material and learn to build toys and solve problems with technology at their disposal.

Most of the games played by children, especially the pretend games, are not just imitative of adult's life. These games are part of an individual experience of the physical world: a personal way to interact with the environment and with its sources and objects and a way to learn and to "develop skills" through touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight (Ingold 2000). According to Ingold, the education of attention includes a process of copying that is "a matter of following what other people do" (Ingold 2000). What is copied are not other persons but their actions. The process of copying is imitative and improvisatory – novices discover knowledge/their environment from themselves.

Fulbe idea of education stresses the importance of the independence of the child: to the child is given the possibility to learn by himself, to learn by doing, to make mistakes, and to learn from himself, while the adults rarely give instructions or transmit verbally knowledge and practices. Therefore, there is a kind of individualism, which is completely different from the form of individualism of the Western societies: each individual makes full use of his sensorial abilities. If on the one side the individuality is solicited, on the other side the sensorial apprenticeship is oriented toward the learning of the same actions, movements, and gestures. The main purpose of the apprenticeship is to learn to work in the same way the mother, father, aunt and uncle, grandparents, and mother-in-law do.

The study and the analysis of the play activities, games, and toys of Fulbe children has given the possibility to explore their everyday lives and their world and some aspects of their society and culture. Moreover, researching play activities and toys can stimulate the development of a child perspective (Rossie 2008). As seen in the introduction, the recent paradigm in social studies (that has invested also the geography discipline) has stressed the idea that children as social actors have a part to play in their own representation. In this research, giving importance to Fulbe children's voices has given the possibility to know what children think a child has to be, the meanings they give to their play activities, and what is really important for them. It has been useful also taken into consideration Fulbe adult's perspectives on childhood and education because children's daily lives are structured by adult views of how those lives should be lived.

In the introduction, it has been said that play and games can be an interesting tool for intercultural education. Fulbe play activities and games were presented in their context, and this allowed to deal with a local idea of childhood and local perceptions of play (as a form of craziness) and to reflect on different conception of education and learning, the relationship with nature. Talking about the play activities of the others to our children and our society can be a useful tool to demolish stereotypes, and it might be also a way to deal with environmental topics and education. Fulbe children's games depend upon the rhythms of nature, and this needs to be emphasized to our children, who are often compelled to play indoors,

alone, rather than outdoors. It is a question of allowing children to get in touch with nature in order to know and respect it, to love it and – being there – to feel a sense of enjoyment, because the environment turns out to be a place where to play or where to find materials to create one's own toys.

Therefore, this chapter wants to be as a little occasion and "space" to see the world and some human and social topics from different perspectives, in order to develop our "intercultural sensitivity," and thus to interact with the "others" with the aim to put into questions our categories, to dialogue with other visions of the world, and to enrich the own cultural background. There are no more the "others" of distant and wild regions which do not have any relations with our communities, but the others must be seen in a globalized world, where all societies are interconnected and the Global North is linked to the destiny of the Global South: we are citizens of the same world (Kaivola and Melén-Paaso 2007). In this sense, geography can contribute better than other social sciences to an intercultural dialogue. In fact, the geography discipline provides a global perspective and recognizes the interdependence of different physical and social settings (Katz 2004).

According to this, I believe that it is a need of interdisciplinary approach, a collaboration between anthropologists, often criticized for local studies, and the lack of a global perspective, and geographers, who at the contrary, deal with universal topics, but with a ethnocentric look as Rigg (2007) pointed out. Rigg states that often geographical theoretical approaches and frameworks have their roots on the North and are used to explain the South. Both Holloway (2014) and Rigg (2007) pointed out the gap in geography literature of studies in the Global South, perceived as a "mere adjunct, a small and rather dry annex, to the West." Rigg (2007) criticizes most geographical studies on the South focused on development and poverty. In his book, *Everyday Geography*, he stressed the importance of examining people's everyday lives and livelihoods in their own terms: this can be useful also to present a more positive vision of the Third World. The interest of geographers to children perspective which is to hear children's voices goes in this direction: observing and analyzing aspects of the everyday lives of people; the human agency in a particular environmental world, as, for example, children play activities, can be a starting point. After knowing them, try to find the interconnections and interdependence between other regions of the world. Rigg (2007) wrote:

> ordinary people in the Global South are like everyone else extra-ordinary and to appreciate this requires that become more than objects to be developed.

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Popular Culture, Identity "Play," and Mobilities: Young People and Celebrity

19

Kim Allen and Heather Mendick

Contents

Abstract

This chapter engages social research to explore how celebrity functions within young people's lives. Countering public debates which position celebrity simplistically as pushing young people predictably along "good" or "bad" pathways, the chapter offers a conceptualization of celebrity as a resource within young people's "identity play" through which they make sense of different kinds of mobility. It begins with an overview of the key debates around "media effects,"

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before discussing a more recent body of literature on young people's engagement with popular culture and celebrity. Extending this work, the chapter draws on examples from a recent research study on celebrity culture and young people in England to identify the ways in which celebrity is used by young people as they make sense of different kinds of mobilities and transitions, both imagined and "real": age and maturity, gender and sexuality, and social status.

1   Introduction

Celebrity occupies a paradoxical position within UK media and policy discussions about young people. It figures *both* as a tool to raise young people's attainment and aspirations *and* as an influence that distorts these. *On the one hand*, celebrities are viewed as "good role models" and used to promote educational initiatives. For example, in 2009, the government appointed UK *Apprentice* star Alan Sugar as "Enterprise Tsar" and used his celebrity status to endorse vocational qualifications and training (Adams 2009; DCSF 2009). Similarly, in the aftermath of Team Great Britain's success in the 2012 Olympic Games, celebrity female athletes, such as cyclist Victoria Pendleton and boxer Nicola Adams, were hailed as "inspiring the next generation," providing girls with "strong" role models (Elgot 2012). *On the other hand*, there is a long-standing policy agenda to tackle the "damaging" effects of the commercial world on children and young people (DCSF/DCMS 2009; DfE 2011). Politicians and media commentators repeatedly assert that young people value fame in itself, over achievement based on hard work and skill. Notably, in the aftermath of the 2011 English riots, Conservative politician Iain Duncan Smith said: "X Factor culture fuelled the UK riots . . . Kids are meant to believe that their stepping stone to massive money is The X Factor. Luck is great, but most of life is hard work."

Both of these approaches see celebrities as a way to *direct* young people – either encouraging them to follow "good" educational or career pathways or pushing them toward "bad" ones that restrict their horizons. They share three assumptions. First is that a simple cause-and-effect model can explain celebrity influence on young people. This has been called the hypodermic syringe model of media influence because it suggests that audiences passively accept media messages, as if they were injected directly into their veins. Second is that children and young people are "vulnerable-minded protoviolent masses" (Walkerdine 2001, p. 18), more susceptible to media influence than adults and so in need of specific protections. Third is that celebrities can be unproblematically classified into "good" and "bad" role models – or what Kim Allen and Heather Mendick (2013) have called "proper" and "improper" celebrities.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how social research has challenged these assumptions and developed a more nuanced framework for understanding how celebrity functions in children and young people's lives. Instead of something that directs people relentlessly and predictably along what are produced as "good" or "bad" pathways, the chapter draws on research evidence to argue that celebrity enables people to "play" with different identities, to move and transition in their imagination and (potentially) beyond. A detailed discussion of the literature is followed by examples from a recently completed research study which suggests that celebrity offers a way for young people to negotiate three types of "mobility": age and maturity, gender and sexuality, and social status.

2   Understanding the Role of Popular Culture in Young People's Lives

This section draws on scholarship across education, critical psychology, cultural and media studies, and sociology to show that celebrity acts as a resource through which young people construct their identities. In other words, celebrity provides a collection of meanings that everyone – children, young people, *and* adults – uses in making sense of themselves and their place in the world. In this way, celebrity *both* opens up *and* sets limits on what it is possible for us to be and to become. However, celebrity is just one resource among many (such as family, schooling, policy, the labor market, and location), and social research has also called attention to how social class, gender, sexuality, disability, race and ethnicity, and age shape how young people see themselves, their place in the world, and the futures available to them.

2.1   Conceptualizing "Media Effects"

The hypodermic syringe, or transmission, model of media influence offers a useful starting point because of its simplicity and its popularity outside academia. The main evidence cited for it is a series of 1960s experiments carried out by Albert Bandura (Osgerby 2004). He found that children shown films in which violence is rewarded subsequently act more aggressively toward a doll than those shown films in which violence is punished. This idea, that the media injects or transmits messages directly into the audience's meaning-making system, has been taken up widely, with regular moral panics about media depictions of violence. In a well-known example, when two ten-year-old boys killed two-year-old James Bulger in 1993, the judge linked their act to their viewing of violent films. Some UK tabloid newspapers claimed the killing was inspired by the film *Child's Play 3* and campaigned for increased regulation of "video nasties." In the USA, the Columbine school shootings provoked similar reactions with Marilyn Manson's music becoming a target. In both cases, it emerged that the killers had not seen the offending media (Osgerby 2004).

One response to the transmission model of media effects has been to deny that media have any effects at all. This approach moves away from ideas of harm and cultural determinism, foregrounding the *agency* of the audience: their power to make meanings and gain pleasures from popular culture. Those adopting this approach are unlikely even to use the word "audience" preferring to talk about "media users," in order to stress their *active* rather than *passive* media engagement. However, this approach also has problems. Many have pointed out that, in its eagerness to counter media effects research, it ignores how popular culture, in all its forms, shapes who we are. For example, Rosalind Gill and Ngaire Donaghue (2013) criticize the idea that female consumers have the power to make their own meanings from the sexualized imagery that saturates contemporary media. They argue that emphasizing agency and pleasure downplays influence and oppression and ignores the inequalities in which these texts and their readers are located.

Stuart Hall (1973, p. 5) offers a nuanced framework for understanding the power and function of popular culture in his classic working paper *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*:

> Though we know the television programme is not a behavioural input, like a tap on the knee-cap, it seems to have been almost impossible for researchers to conceptualize the communicative process without lapsing back into one of other variant of low-flying behaviourism. We know, as Gerbner has remarked, that representations of violence on the TV screen "are not violence but messages about violence": but we have continued to research the question of violence as if we were unable to comprehend the epistemological distinction.

So, according to Hall, what we receive from the media is not violence, sex, or easy fame but *messages* about these things. The insertion of the word "messages" disrupts the possibility of making direct links between media representations and people's behaviors. It also insists that we look *both* at what these messages are, including the power relations in which they are embedded, *and* at what people do with them or the meanings they make. Hall's work highlights how popular culture is a site of a continuous struggle over meaning, providing valuable tools to those concerned with the relationship between media texts and those who consume them.

Within this, there has been a foregrounding of the cultural and symbolic, to counter the idea that it is primarily the material that shapes our lives. As Paul Willis (1990) argues "the application of human capacities to and through, on and with symbolic resources and raw materials (collections of signs and symbols – for instance, the language as we inherit it as well as texts, songs, films, images and artefacts of all kinds) to produce meanings . . . is broader than, logically prior to and a condition of material production, but its 'necessariness' has been forgotten" (p. 10). Willis, like Hall and others in this tradition, is interested in looking at what resources, or capitals, this cultural economy offers and to whom.

2.2   Studying Popular Culture, Youth, and Identity

Building on the debates above, there has been a range empirical work exploring how popular culture operates in children and young people's lives and how they actually *use and are used by* popular cultural texts (Boden 2006; Buckingham and Bragg 2004; Marsh et al. 2005; Nayak and Kehily 2008). This has shown how, as well as engaging with mainstream culture, children and young people have distinct relationships with popular culture associated with their youth, and offering a way for them to assert their difference from their parents and other adults.

Studies of girls' and boys' engagement with music, television, computer games, and magazines demonstrate that popular culture regulates gender identities. For example, magazines, films, and music contain within them certain meanings about gender, what some call gender "scripts." That is, they do not simply represent but give meaning to gender (as well as to class, ethnicity, nationhood, and so on), providing "commonsense" ideas about what it means to be a "normal" man or woman and boy or girl and what is valued by society. However, this work also considers how "objects, signs, media images and music may be appropriated, adapted and subverted within the texture of [young people's] everyday lives" (Kehily and Nayak 2008, p. 326; see also Duits 2010; Lumby 2007; Willett 2006). For example, recent work by Sue Jackson et al. (2013) examines how middle-class "tween" girls (aged 11–13) engage with the ideals of femininity within sexualized "postfeminist" popular culture. This is oriented around "sexual empowerment" and includes Playboy bunny-emblazoned T-shirts and Miley Cyrus and Rihanna's "porno-chic" music videos. They demonstrate that girls are not passively influenced by tween culture but often resist and reject the pressure to dress in "sexy" clothes, criticizing the marketing strategies aimed at them. However, when the girls in their study spoke of themselves as "critical consumers," they did so by distancing themselves from "other" girls who they saw as "too influenced" by popular culture and who dressed "too sexily" or "too slutty." This distancing reproduces an opposition between "good girls" and "bad girls" which regulates women's sexualities. Their work shows how consumers tend to locate media influence in "other" people who they see as more vulnerable than themselves. Men will often position women as more vulnerable; middle-class people will do this to working-class people, adults to children, and children to younger children.

Popular culture provides a site for fantasy through which we can, partially and temporarily, escape the constraints in our own life imposed on us by societal norms and structures of inequality (such as class, gender, or race and ethnicity). Encountering different worlds through the media opens up horizons of freedom and "becoming." For example, in her research Valerie Walkerdine (2013, p. 762) describes how Nicky, a working-class young woman from the North of England, imagined the possibility of attending university through her engagement with an American television show. Popular culture offers working-class young people like Nicky "virtual territories" through which they can imagine themselves in places

such as higher education and professional careers – places that are not normally possible for "people like them." It can create and support desires for "mobility." It can also enable survival in difficult circumstances. For example, Louise Archer et al. (2010) found the young working-class London youth in their research took on what they called "Nike" identities, gaining value through their adoption of particular style and clothing, in a context where their localities, their schools, and their selves were devalued.

The rest of the chapter focuses specifically on the place of celebrity within practices of identity play.

3   Focusing on Celebrity and Distinction

Research in "celebrity studies" has generally focused on the messages that celebrity contains, rather than what people do with these (Turner 2010). However, recent research within education and sociology has begun extending work on youth and popular culture to look specifically at celebrity (Allen 2011; Allen and Mendick 2013; Cann 2014; Read 2011). This work sees celebrity as made up of discourses – historically and culturally specific collections of meanings that make some ways of thinking possible and others impossible (Foucault 1972). Discourses can be used to position ourselves and to judge others and their hopes and dreams. Thus, celebrity is a field in which social distinctions are made and relations, behaviors, and people are given or denied value (Tyler and Bennett 2010). Young people's talk about celebrity (both about individual celebrities and wider celebrity culture) is a way of doing identity, through which they and others are positioned; this is neither arbitrary nor entirely volitional. Rather, it is negotiated "within a matrix of social and historical forces enshrined in the ideological arenas of . . . family, schooling, media, work and so forth" (Nayak and Kehily 2008, p. 5).

Allen and Mendick (2012) have examined how celebrity is implicated in the construction of young people's identities within neoliberalism, as they align themselves with socially valued aspirations. They show how young people draw on, and are captured by, the meanings circulating within celebrity about "hard work," self-responsibility, and opportunity. For example, participants in their studies identified themselves as "hard working" subjects by aligning themselves with "proper" celebrities who they viewed as skilled and dedicated. Conversely, most distanced themselves from "improper" celebrities, usually female and working class, who were seen as "famous for nothing" and undeserving of their status. Allen and Mendick show that these judgments reproduce gender and class inequities that shape young people's identities and possible futures. Yet they also illuminate how some young people find alternative ways to engage with the dominant messages within celebrity:

> Some young people challenged the idea that being a Reality TV star or a WAG [a footballer's Wife/Girlfriend] is a value-less position that requires no work, and some female university students challenged the idea that attractive women celebrities must lack intellect. These alternative and contested readings hold the possibility of relating to celebrity discourses in other ways. (Allen and Mendick, 2012, pp. 90–91)

So far, this chapter has set out the field of research that engages with the role of popular culture in (young) people's lives. We have seen that celebrity is an interesting, important but under-explored part of young people's "identity play." Understanding celebrity as providing cultural resources that young people "can, at different moments, "talk with" and "think with"" (Kehily and Nayak 2008, p. 330), the rest of this chapter considers how young people draw on celebrity as they negotiate, navigate, and make sense of three different kinds of mobilities and transitions around age and maturity, gender and sexuality, and social status.

To do this, the chapter uses data from a recently completed study of "the role of celebrity in young people's classed and gendered aspirations" or CelebYouth for short (http://celebyouth.org). This study was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and carried out between 2012 and 2014 by Kim Allen, Heather Mendick, Laura Harvey, and Aisha Ahmad at Brunel and Manchester Metropolitan Universities. It involved group interviews with 148 young people aged between 14 and 17 at six schools across England, two each in London, Manchester, and the rural South West. The schools were selected to ensure that participants were mixed in relation to social class, ethnicity, and gender. In each school, there were four group interviews, two with Year 10 students (aged 14–15) and two with Year 12 students (aged 16–17), exploring their views on and engagements with celebrity. These were followed up by in-depth individual interviews with 51 participants, examining their educational and personal histories, aspirations, and imagined futures (for further details on the research design, see http://celebyouth.org/mythbusting/research/). The data uses pseudonyms selected by the participants.

4 Temporal Mobilities: Navigating and Making Sense of Age and Maturity Through Celebrity

In wider society, the dominant view of age is chronological, a simple measurement of one's time on earth that is associated with a biological and psychological process of growth. However, social researchers have widely critiqued this idea of age as "natural" and "developmental." They have pointed to the social regulation of age via schooling, legislation, and widespread expectations about what is normal and appropriate at different ages. Representative of this approach, Erica Burman (2008, p. 95) makes a case for the "textualization of childhood," and Nancy Lesko (2001) does the same for adolescence. They both show that dominant ideas of childhood and adolescence normalize some children and young people and construct those who do not fit as different and "Other," whether they be the starving African children who feature so often in charity advertising or the closer-to-home teenage mothers who "grow up too fast." Using this approach, it is meaningless to attempt to understand what childhood or adolescence is, really and authentically, for it can only be read through discourses. Thus, age is produced through the stories we tell about it and the meanings we make of and from it. This section focuses on how celebrity offers young people a way to tell stories about age. In the CelebYouth

data, growing up happens through young people's celebrity talk, as they negotiate their transitions from childhood, through adolescence, to adulthood.

Distinctions between old and young pervade the data, with participants constructing themselves as in-between, simultaneously *both* part of a young generation *and* as more mature than children and tweens. In a rural school, there was a rich discussion contrasting "our generation" with "the older generation," including this extract:

Joe: The older generation has mucked it up for our generation.
Joseph: Because they think they know best, they think that we are too young and too
   unpredictable. But in reality they're losing their grip. They're starting to like lose
   what they are good at, because they're not young any more, like us. . . . So like
   some older generations do step aside for the youngers, and . . . they're open to
   what the younger people say, and that kind of stuff. But others are just so tight
   up, and wound up in their own ways. (South West, 16–17)

Although, Joseph admits to diversity within the "older generations," there is a clear generational difference within his talk and a demand that the failed older generation "step aside for the youngers." Celebrity taste is a way in which this difference between young and old is constructed. For example, in the extract below, Paris' admiration for British hip-hop group NDubz offers a way to establish this difference *and* to position herself as young:

Paris: NDubz is well good. I like them because they've come from like nothing and
   they've all done bad things in their life, but they've overcome them now . . .
   Older people don't like them because of the reputation they have and stuff. But
   . . . I think they're good. (South West, 16–17)

Similar positioning happens through talk about "older" celebrities. For example, Take That, a boy band who had their heyday in the 1990s, was dismissed as "so old" (London, 14–15), and a young woman, explaining why she no longer fancies Hollywood actor Orlando Bloom, said, "I don't know whether it's the stress but he looks really old now" (South West, 14–15). Alongside this distancing from older celebrities, there was a sense of closeness and intimacy evident in the participants' talk about those young celebrities with whom they had grown up. As Jake said of actress Emma Watson, "I've watched her in *Harry Potter* my whole life" (Manchester, 16–17).

Youth operates socially as a space of transition between childhood and adulthood, between dependence and independence, play and work, immaturity and maturity, childish irresponsibility and adult responsibility, and vulnerability and strength (Osgerby 2004; Willis 1990). So participants also constructed themselves as *older* than other people by talking about those who were more dependent, playful, immature, childish, irresponsible, and vulnerable than themselves. Thus, they showed concern to protect children and to critique contemporary taste as "going to

be like totally irrelevant within like 15, 20 years" (London, 16–17). Both these elements were apparent in their discussion of younger people's vulnerability to contemporary celebrities, following the tendency, identified earlier, to locate media influence away from themselves. Although they discussed both "good" and "bad" influences, the most energetic talk focused on the bad. As Dumbledore complained, "I know full well that there's people who are 11 or 12 or 10, or 9, or 8, cos they've all said to me stuff like this, they would be quite happy to go off and marry a footballer, because that way they're rich and trampy" (South West, 16–17). While this may be derided by Dumbledore, it is presented by him as normal for those who are younger. In one group interview, Alison remembers "age 13, the Jonas Brothers' Inception, that like took over my life. I would just sit there for hours on a computer just looking at pictures of them . . . and now I'm like 'I hate them so much'" (London, 16–17). Alison produces herself as mature by locating her obsession with these Disney popstars in the past. Rick underlines the message that you are required to grow out of such things by concluding with a warning that: "Some people don't grow out of it." In another group, Nishaan speaks about his current age as being one of work, positioning celebrity as for younger people who can still afford time to play: "this stage of time, . . . you're mostly like focusing on all your work you've got . . . You don't really care what a celebrity does" (Manchester, 14–15).

As in the previous examples, most of the references to those younger people who are influenced by celebrities were implicitly or explicitly to girls drawing on the idea of female vulnerability (Projansky 2014). Indeed, in only *one* case were boys identified as being specifically prone to celebrity influence, being lured by the promises of extreme and easy wealth attached to becoming a footballer. That gender and age are embedded in this relationship to celebrity is made explicit in the term "fangirl" which has emerged within cultural parlance over the past decade. Defined by the Urban Dictionary as "a rabid breed of human female who is obsessed [sic] with either a fictional character or an actor" (http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=fangirl), this term was used often by young people:

Interviewer: Is there a male equivalent for fangirling?
Dumbledore: Men don't tend to do it. [laughter]
Julia: No.
Jinny: It's like or Justin Bieber, One Direction, 12-year-old-girl fans. . . .
Dumbledore: You know Justin Bieber, a photograph of him having a joint [appeared] something like that and then, because his fan base is made out of like 13-year-old girls, they're all going "aaargh!" (South West, 16–17)

This extract illustrates the association of Canadian popstar Justin Bieber and British boy band One Direction with this childish, girlish fandom. "Little girls" recur through the talk about Justin Bieber and One Direction, for example:

Strawberry: What about what he [Bieber] did at his concert recently? . . . He turned up two hours late. . . . Half of them had gone home. [laughter]

George: Yeah, they're little five-year-olds. Five-year-olds.

Strawberry: Poor little children. And they went home because otherwise. . .

Pringles: Why are five-year-olds going to a concert?

George: They should be, they should be playing with Barbie dolls, or something.

Pringles: Exactly. . . .

Strawberry: Like the whole people who like Justin Bieber are quite a lot younger than us. . . . The ones who are proper hardcore are like ten.

Taylor: But if Justin Bieber was like to tweet about, "oh I really like eating." I don't know, for example, "I like drinking strawberry milkshake," everyone would like, you'd see like the. . .

Strawberry: [in high-pitched voice] "I love strawberry milkshake too." [laughs] (London, 16–17)

This relationship to gender and age persists even in the few instances where contrary evidence is offered:

Paris: A lot of boys, boys don't like One Direction.

Kikas: I know someone who does.

Britney: To be fair, my brother does like One Direction, and he's like twenty-four. . . .

Joseph: Not a lot of girls like One Direction either though. Most of the people that I talk to they don't like it.

Tom: It's more young fans.

Britney: Yeah, it is, isn't it?

Joseph: Yeah. Like Years 7 s to 9 s, and 10s [ages 11–14]. (South West, 16–17)

Running through this talk, we can see young people's concern to distance from Bieber and One Direction, as this offers a way for them to act their age by conforming to age-appropriate tastes. In such celebrity talk, we can see growing up, moving from youth to maturity, happening through social practices rather than as natural development. Throughout these examples, taste is linked not just to age but to gender, as femininity is associated with bad taste. However, as the next section shows, celebrity provided both a space for reproducing gender norms and disrupting them.

5   Queer Mobilities: Making Sense of Gender and Sexuality Through Celebrity

Gender, like age, is often viewed as natural. In the 1970s, feminist thinkers disrupted this by distinguishing between biological sex and social gender (Rubin 1975). More recently, Judith Butler has shown that these concepts are interwoven. Riki Wilchins (2004, p. 51) explains:

> In Judith Butler's terms, Sex is to Nature (raw) as Gender is to Culture (cooked). The naturalness of sex grounds and legitimizes the cultural practice of gender. But what if this narrative is inverted? Maybe the formula is reversed. Gender is not what culture creates out of my body's sex; rather, sex is what culture makes when it genders my body ... Sex, the bodily feature mostly completely in-the-raw, turns out to be thoroughly cooked.

Butler 1990/1999 speaks about sex/gender as performances that operate in relation to compulsory heterosexuality, or heteronormativity, which presumes that opposites attract. This interweaving, rather than distinction, of sex/gender explains why those "born" male predominantly do (or perform) masculinity and those "born" female do femininity. It has drawn researchers' attention to people and behaviors that do not fit this pattern. Jack Halberstam (1998) explored female masculinities, from tomboys to butches, and Heather Mendick (2006) applied this to women who chose stereotypically masculine pursuits such as mathematics. Becky Francis' (2012, p. 3) exploration of gender "heteroglossias" highlights how "individual productions of gender are shot through with contradiction, and incorporate both aspects of performance generally understood as 'masculine' and 'feminine.'"

The CelebYouth dataset shows participants reproducing dominant gender patterns, notably, by naming same-gender celebrities as those they liked and would befriend and opposite-gender celebrities as those they fancied. Discussing celebrities in these ways offers ways to perform gender. For example, young women in the study were often excluded from group talk about footballers so that this could become a space for young men to do masculinity. These gendered and heteronormative divisions were taken for granted, and only when researchers drew attention to them were they explained:

Interviewer: Why do you think that it is that you haven't mentioned many women?
Male: Because we're guys.
Male: I suppose we can relate to blokes more than. Not, I didn't mean that in a bad way, I know that sounded. [laughter]
Male: What about Nicki Minaj?
Male: She was in the bad pile. . . .
Interviewer: Are there any female celebrities that you like?
Male: Emma Watson. [laughter]
Interviewer: Right yes, the ones that you fancy.
Male: That Fox woman. . . .
Male: You like her so much that you don't even know her name. [laughter] (South West, 16–17)

The young men make it clear that gender matching – "blokes" befriending "blokes" – is a requirement for relating positively with a celebrity. However, this was not the case when it came to negatively judging celebrities, as their classification of black female musician Nicki Minaj shows in the extract above. Liking female celebrities is conflated with fancying them and a site of humor. Typically,

the male participants have very little to say about the women they fancy, with one not even remembering Megan Fox's first name. In contrast, female participants usually provided reasons for being attracted to a celebrity beyond just their appearance. Orlando (Manchester, 14–15) said of actor Nicholas Hoult "he's quite diverse. Like he played from an early age . . . a geeky little boy and just played it really well, and then went on to play . . . a manipulative perfect kind of boy who's really popular and how, and I just think he's really gorgeous as well." It appears more difficult for young women to express sexual desire, and so Orlando legitimates this by her interest in Hoult's career and admiration for his talent. Thus, it is not just through *which* celebrities young people identify as romantically or sexually desirable but also in *how* young people talk about them that they do gender.

However, there were exceptions to these patterns, instances in which young people expressed opposite-gender identification and same-gender desire. These exceptions were often accompanied by complex negotiations, suggesting that such nonnormative identifications were difficult to accomplish without being penalized by peers. For example, a 14–15-year-old young woman in the South West when asked which celebrity she would like to be inquired if she could "change them into girls so I don't have to turn into a boy?. . . Because I don't really want to be a boy." Only when the interviewer agreed and asked "who do you want a girl version of?" did she admit, "I want to be [diver] Tom Daley." Transgressive discussions of the "sexiest" celebrities provoked similar negotiations and disclaimers, as we see in this talk from Mike, a young woman who chose a male pseudonym:

Mike: Is it okay to say [you fancy] a female [celebrity] even though you're straight? [athlete] Jessica Ennis.
Teresa: Oh my god.
Mike: I must look like such a lesbian. [laughter]
Teresa: Are you sure you want to tell them why Mike? [Mike laughs loudly] Are you gonna say?
Mike: She has a really nice bum.
Teresa: Yeah, okay then. [Laughter] She made me look at this and I was just like. . .
Mike: You made me look at [singer] Limahl's nipples. [laughter] (South West, 14–15)

In this discussion, Mike is aware she is transgressing the norms of opposite-sex attraction and that this carries the risk of being seen by others as "a lesbian." Yet, through humor, teasing and displaying their intimate friendship to others in the group Mike and her friend Teresa temporarily play with what it means to be both female and heterosexual. Other ways that female participants could speak about attractive women while avoiding appearing gay included attributing these positions to others ("I think that I heard like a lot of people say Megan Fox is like um the hot, like the sexiest girl in the world, I don't know why") and speaking about them in terms of prettiness or niceness rather than sexiness.

Male participants very rarely named men as "sexy." However, the rest of this section focuses on one example where this did happen, taken from the only all-male group in the study. In this group, the interviewer had written the names of participants' most liked and hated celebrities on strips of paper. One participant, Will Smith, had introduced a number of male "sex symbols" including One Direction and Hollywood actors Will Smith and Zac Efron. The interviewer then observed him taking one of the strips of paper and writing on it:

Interviewer: You're writing something.
Will: I was just [pause] doodling. [laughter]
Interviewer: [looking at the strip of paper] Oh, you just put like a little love heart on One Direction.
Will: Yes.
Interviewer: So what is this thing about One Direction?
Will: Nothing. . . . I don't know. I've just been forced to.
Interviewer: So how do you get forced to like something?
Will: Go out with women, I guess. [laughter] . . .
James: Like Will Smith. I'm sure he rocks.
Interviewer: You think Will Smith is sound. Right?
James: He's probably a decent guy, right.
Will: He's sexy. I mean
Interviewer: Is he? So you like Zac Efron and One Direction. Yeah. [laughter]
Harry: Is there something you want to tell us? [laughter]
Will: From a guy's point of view, I think Will Smith is just. . . .
Harry: Why are you choosing all the guys? [laughter]
Will: Well, it would be weird if you wanted to be a woman wouldn't it?
Lewis: No we're talking about who's sexy now.
Will: Yeah I know but. (South West, 16–17)

That Will selected Will Smith as his pseudonym suggests a complicated relationship between desire and identification. In this extract, as in those above, we see frequent laughter. This humor opens up a space for Will to express desire toward male celebrities, including by drawing of a love heart next to the name One Direction (Fig. 1) and writing the word "hot" and a representation of a "six-pack" alongside Will Smith (Fig. 2). The laughter shows the group's pleasure in Will's breaking of rules around gender and sexuality; it also calls attention to these rules by signaling that they have been broken.

On describing Will Smith as "sexy," Harry asks Will, "is there something you want to tell us?" Harry does not use homophobic language to denounce Will: he (like the other five participants) neither calls him offensive names nor reacts to him violently. Indeed, Harry and Will were sharing a chair (subtly). Through this discussion, Harry did not get up and move (although he did at one point jokingly exclaim to Will "get your hand off me"). The shifts in lesbian and gay visibility over the last few decades are evident. However, there is discomfort in Will's
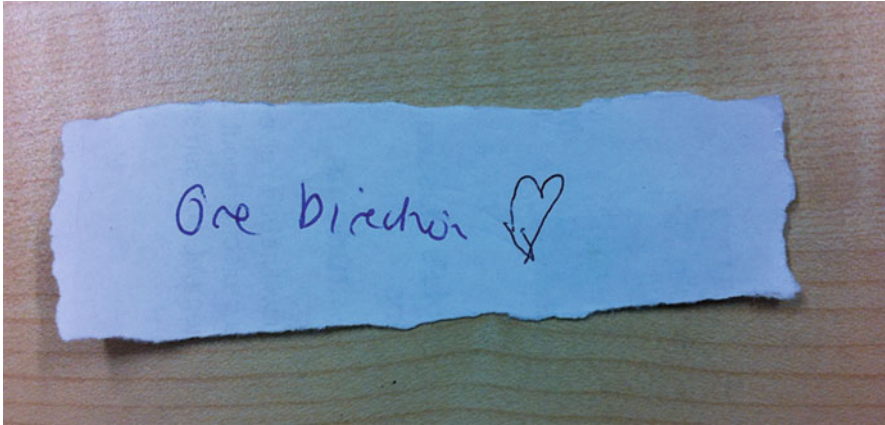
Fig. 1 Will's love heart drawing and "One Direction"
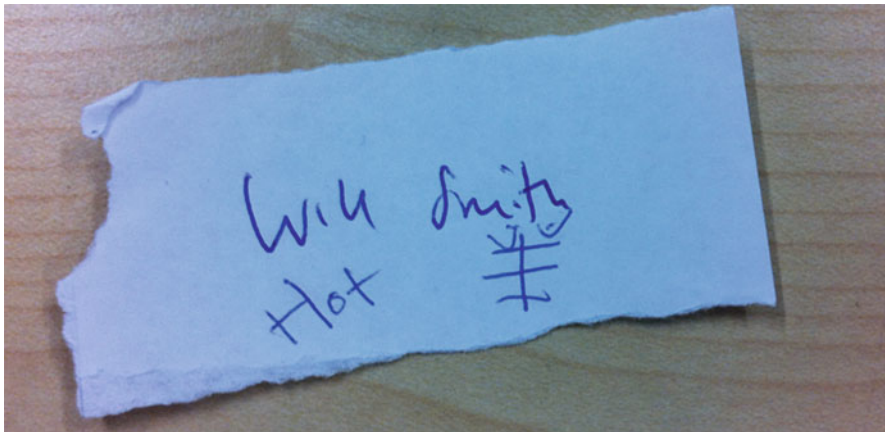
Fig. 2 Will's six-pack drawing and "Will Smith"

ambiguity. His expression of (potential) same-gender desire is quickly diffused in two ways. First, Will distances this from femininity, saying, "it would be weird if you wanted to be a woman wouldn't it"? Second, he associates it with heterosexual masculinity, claiming he has been "forced to like" these celebrities by "go[ing] out with women." He elaborated this later in the interview when he again explains why he likes those cultural texts and celebrities deemed "feminine" describing them as "the perfect way to pick up women" and saying he wants One Direction's job for "the money, the girls." Yet, even in these ambiguities, we can see Will like the other participants above playing with the gender scripts in celebrity, testing their limits and their possibilities.

6   Social Mobility: Imagining a Future Self Through Celebrity

"Social mobility" – crudely defined as the movement of people between social strata – is a long-standing preoccupation within policy. The aspiration to climb the social ladder – especially through education and work – is common narrative arc within cultural texts, from films like *Educating Rita* and *The Pursuit of Happyness*, to the contestants' "back stories" on reality television shows like *The X Factor*. Enabling social mobility has been a key feature within government pledges to create a fairer society. In America this is embodied in the "American Dream," while in the UK, successive governments have promised to enable people to transcend their background and achieve a "better" life. In 2012, UK Prime Minister David Cameron (2012) emphasized his commitment to building a socially mobile Britain, "an aspiration nation" in which people could "ris[e] from the bottom to the top." As discussed in the opening of this chapter, celebrity is implicated in these debates, often blamed for stunting young people's aspirations and potential social mobility.

A body of social research has engaged with the issue of social mobility in various ways, including how it is measured and defined (see Friedman 2013 for an overview), as well as how it is lived by individuals, including the painful or ambivalent experiences that accompany class movement or aspirations for this (Allen 2013). This section of the chapter is specifically concerned with examining how celebrity comes to features in young people's sense-making practices in relation to mobility in social status. While earlier sections drew on group interviews, this section uses data from individual interviews with young people in the CelebYouth study.

Celebrity plays a role in young people's imaginings of the future and desires for social mobility in a number of ways. First, infused as it is with notions and images of glamour, wealth and status, desires for social mobility can be manifest in young engagement with celebrity. While young people's interest in fame is often derided by politicians as evidence of a lack of aspiration, the CelebYouth study suggests that desires for celebrity are much more complex. While only a few of the participants in the study actually spoke explicitly of wanting to be famous, when desires for fame were mentioned this was often as a by-product of a career in the arts or sports. For example, Tim Jimmy, a white working-class young man, was passionate about football, playing for a local team. Tim discussed his plans to pursue sports coaching or become a Physical Education teacher. However, he explained that his "dream job" would be to become a professional footballer, where a degree of fame was inevitable:

Tim Jimmy: If I got the chance to be a professional footballer I'd take it, coz like I know that it'll be a good job. And I know that like people like look up to me, and want to be like me. . . . I'd like people having respect for me. . . [to] be a role model – so, when you go out you're sensible, you don't get drunk all the time. And [you should] donate money [to charity], you don't just like sit there and do nothing. (London, 14–15)

Joanna, a British African working-class participant, wanted to become an actor and was planning to apply to a local performing arts school. Like Tim Jimmy, achieving success within this sector was associated with fame.

Joanna: What I want right now, in my life, is just to get good grades. ... What I want is to get somewhere in life, cos if you have parents from like a different like sort of background from me ... they want me to be someone that they couldn't be, and I'm trying to do that for them. ... I want to be a successful actor. For me it wasn't all really about wanting to be famous ... I just really enjoyed it, and then my sister pointed it out to me, and said, "You know you could actually do what you're doing really well, and be noticed for it." (London, 14–15)

Tim Jimmy and Joanna's accounts show that when fame features in young people's aspirations, this is not desired simply in and of itself, but because of what it represented: a "better" life, praise and respect, economic security, and exceeding the social status of their parents. Because of its visible nature, fame operates as a powerful symbol of success, representing the chance to gain recognition, especially for those who have been marginalized in traditional forms of education such as working-class youth (Allen 2013; Walkerdine 1997). As such, young people's investments in fame must be understood in relation to classed and gendered desires for recognition.

Another way in which celebrity is implicated within young people's imagined future and possible "mobility" is by transmitting new forms of cultural knowledge. Specifically, the CelebYouth study shows how celebrity and popular culture more generally was a source of knowledge about possible career pathways, including those not previously thought of or considered possible by participants. In the following examples, we see how ideas about mobility in terms of social status are not just about social class but intersect with gender, ethnicity, religion, and culture.

Mariam, a working-class, Black African and Muslim participant, had been inspired to pursue a career in fashion promotion by the television series *The Hills* – a reality television show set in Los Angeles about young women working as interns for fashion magazine *Teen Vogue*:

Mariam: On MTV I used to watch The Hills and I really loved their job, working for a fashion magazine ... I used to watch it every day [and think] "I wish I could do that." It always stayed in my mind. (Manchester, 16–17)

After watching the show, Mariam started researching careers in fashion journalism and promotion, exploring local college courses she could take to achieve this career. Similarly, Sabeen, a working-class, British Asian participant, discussed how she had been inspired to pursue a career in law after watching the TV show *Judge Judy*:

Sabeen: I'd like to be a lawyer.
Interviewer: And what is it about becoming a lawyer, do you think?

Sabeen: Er, just listening to people, helping people out. You're making sure they're happy . . . through law, through bringing them justice.

Interviewer: So you think you can feel good and happy by making. . .

Sabeen: Yeah, to know that I've actually brought some justice and truth.

Interviewer: And is there, do you have an early memory about when you first decided that that's what you wanted to do, or became interested in it?

Sabeen: Yeah [laughs] it was in Year 6, in primary school, and I saw Judge Judy [on the television] and she's just going on and on. [laughs] And I was like, I want to be that. I want to be a part of, in the courts, defending people and having arguments [laughs], which you get paid for. I was like "how am I going to do that? I want to do that."

Interviewer: So what was it you liked when you saw her on TV?

Sabeen: Just the control that she had over them. And she's straight to the point, no messing, and she got it done, she got the job over and done with. Which is quite good. (Manchester, 14–15)

Sabeen's connection with celebrity Judge Judith Sheindlin as a strong career woman appeared to relate to her capacity to imagine a different future in other ways. For example, Sabeen also discussed her determination to resist wider family expectations and Islamic traditions for young Muslim women to marry early. Drawing on her own mother's narrative, Sabeen insisted on the importance of career and financial autonomy:

Sabeen: I'm not one for getting married. I hate the whole marriage thing . . . if I get married that'll hold me back, I can't achieve my goals, I can't do anything. . . I'll end up having a lot of pressure from my family. So, to start a family but I've told my mum definitely I'm not going to get married. . . . I'm putting my career before anything else. I prefer to do that. . . . If I had a husband I would never depend on them financially. . . [because] my mum, she's a single mother, she's been very independent and she's passed that on. (Manchester, 14–15)

Despite significant changes in the social and economic landscape, social class continues to intersect with ethnicity and gender to shape what futures in education and employment are available to young people. As Muslim, working-class women from minority ethnic backgrounds, popular culture opened up for Mariam and Sabeen a space to think outside of the constraints placed on them by society because of their class, gender, and ethnicity. Like the young women in Louise Archer's study of Muslim teenagers (2002), their education and career choices were sites of active negotiation and contestation. Celebrity operates as a resource in these young women's practices of resisting the meanings and expectations placed on them, allowing them to think of themselves and their futures "otherwise."

Fantasy operates as a space for stories of transformation (Walkerdine 1997), and celebrity can open up opportunities for young people to imagine themselves differently, beyond the boundaries of "the real," "the now," and "the expected."

Rather than write these off these imaginings as mere escapism or delusion, it is imperative to take seriously the place of celebrity in young people's sense-making practices about their future and who they can become. As we see with Mariam and Sabeen, even though actually moving toward these possibilities will be far from straightforward, these imaginings *do* something, opening up potential futures and prompting these young women to take action toward realizing these.

7   Conclusion

This chapter has engaged with evidence from social research to explore how celebrity – and popular culture more broadly – functions within young people's lives. It began with an overview of the different ways in which academics have conceptualized how media and popular culture affect us. This discussion introduced key debates and thinkers within the field and suggested that understanding the role of popular culture in our lives demands a more nuanced framework than that offered by either the hypodermic syringe model of media or one that posits an agentic media user who is entirely free to construct meaning from the texts they consume.

The chapter then outlined a more recent body of literature on young people's engagement with popular culture in general and specifically that on youth and celebrity in order to offer a conceptualization of celebrity as a resource within young people's "identity play." Further elaborating on this framework, the chapter then drew on examples a recent research study (CelebYouth) to explore how celebrity is used by young people as they negotiate different kinds of "mobilities." These were age and maturity, gender and sexuality, and social status.

The examples in this chapter demonstrate how popular culture can provide a key space for young people to "play" with identities and make sense of different kinds of mobilities and transitions, both imagined and "real." However, the term "play" is used not to suggest that who we are or who we can become is subject to voluntary practices and free choice. As we can see from these examples, there are limits on what kinds of identities we can take up. In the CelebYouth data, we saw young people play with ideas of gender and sexuality temporarily, testing out the possibilities of doing masculinity or femininity differently, but that there were limits placed on how young people could enact such transgressions. The examples also demonstrate how young people's engagement with celebrity culture is shaped by powerful ideas about what tastes and forms of consumption are "age appropriate," with many participants distancing themselves from younger "vulnerable" and "irresponsible" consumers of celebrity in order to produce themselves as "mature." We also saw how constructions of maturity were bound up with gender, with young girls in particular being positioned as immature and as having "bad taste."

Likewise, while the examples suggest that celebrity culture can generate aspirations among young people and stimulate ways of thinking about themselves beyond the expected, it is known that young people's opportunities in education and work continue to be characterized by inequalities of social class, gender, and ethnicity. So, while watching *Judge Judy* allowed a young working-class Asian woman like

Sabeen to imagine herself in a professional career, evidence shows that top professions such as law continue to be dominated by white, privately educated middle-class men. For example, while 88 % of young people in Britain attend comprehensive schools and only seven percent attend independent school, 71 % of Britain's senior judges attended independent school, and only four percent attended comprehensive school (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission 2014, p. 71). These inequalities continue to have salience in shaping young people's capacity to realize their aspirations and imagined "mobilities" in social status. However, by thinking about celebrity as a resource within young people's practices of "identity play," this chapter encourages students and researchers to think about how young people use cultural texts in making sense of who they are and their place in the world.

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Geographies of Trolls, Grief Tourists, and Playing with Digital Transgression

<div style="text-align:right">**20**</div>

Nic Crowe and Mike Watts

Contents

Abstract

The digital geographies of young people, have become increasingly important to our understanding of how modern youth navigate adolescence. In this chapter, we consider the online presence of young people. The piece pursues two lines of analysis: the first of these moves from behaviors that are deemed socially acceptable, through the "marginal" and "questionable" into the undesirable, from misbehavior to the plainly unacceptable. A second parallel line traces activities that young people first see as of interest and curiosity, then as a movement from "play" into mischief, from nonconformity and irreverence to transgression and rebellion, and from there to bullying and maltreatment. We argue that through such behaviours, young people create for themselves geographies through which adult norms are norms and values are rejected and new forms of expression of order are established.

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1   Introduction

A study of the "geographies" of particular social groups has tended to focus on their
place-based activities. Where young people are of interest, this might involve an
emphasis on connections to a local neighborhood, and not uncommonly, young people
define their sense of identity and belonging in terms of such a locality or community.
They assess their "life meanings" as being associated with a particular zone and the
social and cultural relationships played out within it. This chapter departs the physical
for the virtual. As an initial argumentative stance, there is a need to shake off
distinctions between those two "arenas of action": for most of Prensky's (2001) digital
natives, divisions between what might be real, virtual, or otherwise are, at best,
generally unacknowledged, arbitrary, and irrelevant. Digital spaces share many of
the characteristics of material spaces having ". . . geography, physics, a nature and a
rule of human law" (Benedikt 1991, p. 123). To all intents and purposes, the virtual *is*
real. This might leave the sense of "digital geography" as problematic; there are no
recognizable neighborhoods, no localities, no zones, no single space, and no conse-
quential tethering of identity to place. Needless to say there are, of course, online
equivalents and the discussion to follow examines the extent to which social arenas are
populated, how social norms are established, and, more importantly, how there can be
unwanted incursions, "trespass," into these online spaces.

  The essential direction of the following review and analysis pursues two lines;
the first of these moves from behaviors that are deemed socially acceptable, through
the "marginal" and "questionable" into the undesirable, from misbehavior to the
plainly unacceptable. A second parallel line traces activities that young people first
see as of interest and curiosity, then as a movement from "play" into mischief, from
nonconformity and irreverence to transgression and rebellion, and from there to
bullying and maltreatment. In tracing these lines, use is made of a range of
philosophical perspectives, not least from Bakhtin, de Certeau, and Foucault.

2   "Sight-Seeing" Tragedy: Kayleigh and Sherana

One of the most iconic images of the 2011 "riot" disturbances in London was the
television coverage of the one-hundred-year-old Reeves Building ablaze in West
Croydon, part of London's expanding suburbs. The next day, as the Reeves brothers
picked over the charred remains of a furniture business that had been in their family for
five generations, crowds began to gather to view the spectacle. While some stood in
shocked disbelief at the loss of a familiar and much-loved local landmark, others
gleefully pointed and posed for pictures. Fifteen-year-old Kayleigh and Sherana are

typical of this second group; they had made the 20-mile trip from Sevenoaks to "See what all the fuss is about on last night's TV and to get some pictures of me in all this so that I can put them up on my Facebook." They jostled with others for the best photo-shot, waved at a group of teenage boys gathering at the other end of the police barriers and bemoaning the arrival of maintenance trucks as "getting in our way," and retired to the burger van parked opportunistically at the side of the road for a spot of lunch, reporting it all as "a good morning out, much better than going down the town!"

There are several points to be made here. First, it is a fundamental assertion in this chapter that media (TV) and online facilities (such as *Facebook,* forums, and news-group postings) represent a fusion of both virtual and material experience. Users commonly acknowledge both as carrying equal validity and are equally real, whether talking about the latest music discovered on *Reddit*, using phones to update status on *Snapchat*, or arranging the exact spot to meet that evening. Young people experience place and space in ways different to nondigital adults; to many, these online spaces are exactly where they do connect, congregate, interweave, and socialize with friends: their knowledge lies in their connections (Siemens 2004). Second, the spectacle, the scene, and the display are a legitimate source of interest, curiosity, and wonder. The fact that the spectacle may entail suffering to others somewhere in the near or distant past can add to rather than detract from the impact, and historically, this has long been the case. Again, as the popularity of *Youtube* attests, this is as true online as it is off. Third, online sites allow young people to construct and rehearse a range of identities (Dowdall 2009). Within this, identity is not taken as unitary but is both multiple and situated (Wetherell 1998; Mishler 1999). Indeed Mishler has argued that identity is better understood as a matrix of sub-identities including those corresponding to relationships and centered on "inter individual variability, discontinuities and turning points, . . .[a] multiplicity of self definitions" (1999, p. 154). Donath's (1999) paper outlines the ambiguity of identity in disembodied virtual communities:

> In the physical world there is an inherent unity to the self, for the body provides a compelling and convenient definition of identity. The norm is: one body, one identity . . . The virtual world is different. (p. 19)

Mead's (1934) theory in turn rests on the premise that the becoming of a person is an ongoing process. It is never fixed but always in relation to others. It is through social experience and activity that people learn to assume the roles of others and behave accordingly. The construction of identity is never complete (Hall 1996) but is "constantly in the process of change and transformation" (p. 17). To this extent, the online Kayleigh and Sherana will be "versions" of Kayleigh and Sherana eating their Croydon burgers, versions where similarities may or may not "touch." When exploring issues such as these, a complex social world is entered, a subculture that brings together many of the problems and possibilities, and sometimes more, of the relationships operating in the non-virtual world. Understanding these innovations requires examining users' online behaviors, specifically the types of textual (e.g., forum "chats") and nonverbal (in this case, photographic) actions.

Fourth, these issues raise problems for the very nature of data. While it is possible to "evidence" Kayleigh and Sherana's actions and behaviors in the real world through photographs, observational field notes, and perhaps interview recordings, it is less certain what constitutes data in online spaces. A range of data like this, gathered from within the cyber world through "internet ethnography" (Jones 2002; Hine 2000), will be used to illustrate and exemplify points being made. This extensive social space is a highly rewarding and data-rich environment though, as discussed in the following sections, ethnographic practices in this "online geography of young people" raise numerous practical, philosophical, and ethical challenges (Sade-Beck 2004).

3   Grief Tourism: The Spectacle

Grief tourism is already well established as a material world activity and is emerging in virtual space as an important aspect of "digital sight-seeing." While the reasons underpinning young people's desires to seek out such sites are not always clear, it is interesting to explore what motivates their subsequent "grief touristic" activities.

The phrase "dark tourism" was coined by Lennon and Foley (2000) to describe a relatively new kind of sight-seeing: reflecting and feeding on representations of despair, disaster, and death. Dark tourism – the tourism of sites of calamity or tragedy – has been in evidence for centuries (Lennon 2005; Seaton 1996; Sharpley and Sundaram 2005; Stone 2006). Today, dark tourism has become a global phenomenon and has aroused considerable academic interest (Cochrane 2002; Lennon and Foley 2000; Stone 2006; Stone and Sharpley 2008). Some have attempted to define or label it as "black-spot tourism" (Rojek 1993), "thanatourism" (Dann 1994; Seaton 1996), "morbid tourism" (Blom 2000), and "atrocity tourism" (Ashworth 2002). Some have created a typology comprising battlefield, cemetery, disaster, ghost, holocaust, prison, suicide, and doomsday tourism, which involve visits to places which are under threat (Trotta 2006).

Such activity is usually seen to be culturally informed: people see "Schindler's List" and then visit Auschwitz; they watch the news and then add "Ground Zero" to their New York itinerary. While to many, they may appear "morally depraved" and "morbid," grief tourists are simultaneously socially anxious, the sites they visit prompting, for example, "How could this have happened?" questions. Seaton (1999) argues that grief tourism derives from a "thanatoptic tradition" (the contemplation of death) that dates back to the Middle Ages. He proposes that thanatourism is the "travel dimension of thanatopsis" defined as "travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death" (Seaton 1996, p. 240). Others attribute diverse motives to such tourists, for instance, curiosity, remembrance and commemorative purposes, empathy with the victims, search of novelty and

authenticity, overcoming childlike fears, celebration of crime or deviance (bloodlust), or risk-taking (dicing with death) (Ashworth 2002; Causevic and Lynch 2007; Dann 1998 as cited in Stone 2006; Seaton 1999; Shackley 2001; Slade 2003; Stone and Sharpley 2008).

With the increase and development of mass communications, people are able to research and discover moments of tragedy and disaster very easily. Furthermore, death always features as the predominant portion of the daily news. With the free flow of information, whether desired or not, coupled with an innate fascination for the morose, one is enticed to discover and visit sites of death and disaster. But is it for commemorative reasons or feelings of morbid curiosity? One of the more interesting aspects of social networking has been the ways some members have used the sites to establish memorials to friends and loved ones who have recently died. Arguably there is nothing unusual about this. It is perhaps fitting that friends can post digital messages of condolence and support in much the same way as one might sign a book of remembrance at a funeral or cremation. But often, participants in digital memorials extend far beyond the more usual "friends and family" that can be seen in material proceedings. There are numerous users who seem actively to seek out memorial pages and postings. Recently, a colleague reported that on a page dedicated to her recently deceased brother, she had come across the following posts:

> I didn't know you in real life but I feel a connection with you on here – I will think of you.

> I never knew you but I will miss you.

In total she counted a further 56 similar postings. Clearly, these users had no connection with either the colleague or her brother; it seems that they had used the interconnectivity of the social network to source the memorial page and then write on his "wall." This is not an isolated incident. When Travis McFee was killed on Christmas Eve of 2010 in a car crash, his *Facebook* memorial page attracted over 700 people – far more than could possibly have known him in real life. Similarly, following his suicide, *Facebook* memorials for 15-year-old Tom Mullaney included tributes from other members who had no prior contact with him.

Digital social networks encourage – even require – that identity and community be played out in very public ways (Crowe 2012). As one 16-year-old "grief tourist" Emily explained:

> Nearly everyone on Facebook scans other people's pages, it just happens that we cruise the sad things, searching for memorial sites and similar stuff. Sometimes it is just curiosity, learning more about people's lives. If you can share in things that are good, then why not share their hard times or when things get bad? Other times it is trying to be in something bigger – after a murder or something - like you are part of it. Its exciting!

Emily's assertions are familiar: sites of calamity offer glimpses of the unknown, a tantalizing "exotic" that cannot be experienced in the day to day. Book identifies how online spaces might act as "tourist spots," by allowing participants to escape

from their everyday lives (2003). The relative attractiveness of virtual tourism lies in the location's ability to resonate with the digital "vacationer." As Emily's friend, Michael, acknowledges:

> We are no different from people who go around old churches looking at graveyards when they are on holiday.

4   A Frontier Township

Virtual space is often characterized as a lawless "frontier township" of contemporary experience (Watts and Crowe 2014), where young people can break with norms and violate cultural rules and values (Crowe 2011; Crowe and Watts 2014). In the early nineties, radical journalist Bea Campbell sought to explain a range of transgressive pastimes within equally "lawless" contemporary settings. Campbell's (1993) account, *Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places*, identified where deviant antisocial activities were portrayed as an alternative realm of achievement for (often) young men and (sometimes) young women who had at that time been denied the conventional routes to economic success. She made the contentious explanation that lawlessness is an expression of masculinity, while acknowledging that the:

> fusion of social and anti-social is not the collapse of the former without residue into the latter. It is the contradictory nature of such actions that need to be explored rather than dismissing them as forms of one-dimensional violence or a simplistic 'lawless masculinity.' (Campbell 1993, p. 202)

More recently, Freestone and Mitchell (2004, p. 126) have claimed that the internet is the "new environment for unethical behavior," actually enabling and making "user-friendly" means of online misbehaviors that range from digital piracy, fraud, stalking, identity theft, body image, and cyberbullying to organized criminal activity. This is unsurprising given that, in the UK alone, there are currently over 42 million users of *Facebook*, of whom some 37 % are between the ages of 13 and 24 (www.fanalyzer.co.uk/demographics.html). To date, the majority of research on online misuse and nonconformity has focused on the extent of specific behaviors; Freestone and Mitchell, for example, discuss the prevalence of five broadly deviant activities: (i) the illegal, (ii) the questionable, (iii) hacking, (iv) internet (mis)-trading, and (v) downloading activities. Bea Campbell's original work, however, is a reminder that, in socially complex situations, transgression, aggression, and "victimhood" are multifaceted and that contemporary digital transgressions (perhaps all antisocial transgression) cannot easily be conceived as a simple typology. The broad interest in this present chapter lies in deviant and transgressive behaviors, in virtual spaces. There are numerous examples where the Internet fosters nonconformity, adolescent rebellion, and activities that have

been labeled the "dark side" of Internet use (Crowe and Watts 2012). While young "digital natives" are instinctive and avid consumers of the Net, they are also constructors and reshapers of its online content. They create and exploit digital spaces for social interaction, identity expression, media production, and consumption – and do so with a proliferation of voices, cultural forms, and styles. While much of this is innocuous, broadly courteous, and dignified, there exist the negative, risky, or inappropriate uses of the Internet such as "Internet addiction," gaming addiction, exposure to sexually explicit material, online victimization, harassment, cyberbullying, sexual solicitation, and so on.

Geographical debates around the Internet use have often drawn upon the institutional geographies literature of, for example, Foucault (1977a, 1980a). However, the discussion here does not trade on the "institutions" of the Internet but, quite specifically, on the "spaces" between them. This direction draws on the work of Michel de Certeau (1984, p. 17) who, using a metaphor of the city, argues that its inhabitants are shown to create their own spaces within and between those places designed and built by the city's planners and architects: "the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into space by walkers" (p. 18). De Certeau understands lived practice as a "redeployment" of received texts, where everyday practitioners artfully move across notional limits to create new spaces. Viewing innovation from above – from the authoritative point of educators, administrators, technologists, experts, and authors – affords a mapping of what de Certeau (1984) refers to as "the clear text of the planned and readable city" (p. 93) and "the discourses that ideologise the city" (p. 95). However, this "top-down" authoritarian view obscures the proliferation of everyday operations found on the ground. Viewed at this lower level, however, from between the pillars of society, ordinary people are not shown as passively receiving authoritative "texts," the fixed and delivered buildings in the city, but as recombining and constructing these primary texts to produce their own secondary "texts," their own singular "concretions." De Certeau's ordinary subjects are not simply molded by the regulations and symbolic structures of science or social life but take hold of these preexisting systems, follow their laws while simultaneously negotiating and bending them to their own purposes. In this discussion, the focus is on the use and users of the Internet "street-culture. . . the ways in which users – commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules – operate" (p. xi) and to demonstrate that users practice a far more active and subversive art than most realize.

One of the central aspects of Bakhtin's (1981) philosophy of language is heteroglossia. This is a field in which contesting forces in discourse (centripetal vs. centrifugal forces) interact and clash. The centripetal force (also called an "authoritative discourse") contains an authoritative voice that usually requires people to obey, or at least attend to, for example, social protocols, church dogma, school rules, Standard English, and so on. Centrifugal forces, on the other hand, contain voices that attempt to question, challenge, or rebel against the authoritative voice. These two forces are not only in flux but are also at odds with each other. What can be said about centrifugal non-authoritative forces is that they can be used as tools for dialogues that challenge the authoritative voice. In our discussions,

then, the centripetal forces are those that command respect, social nicety, civility, care, consideration, graciousness, and benevolence. The centrifugal forces are voices of disdain, rebellion, resistance, rejection, valorizing the vulgar, obscene, and the grotesque. The extent to which these can be seen as "tools for dialogue" is much the point of this discussion.

There are three key issues to be taken from Bakhtin's analysis. The first is Bakhtin's notion that "language is inherently dialogic" (Greenleaf and Katz 2004, p. 173). In contrast to dialogic language is monologic language, which is purposely produced by people who do not want to open up dialogues to discuss or challenge their perspectives. For instance, a monologic parent gives no opportunities for his/her adolescent children to have real dialogues at home. She/he typically dominates the domestic discourse by lecturing without interacting. In spite of this being a dominating monologic discourse, it is, of course, susceptible to other people's doubts, questions, challenge, and utter disagreement. Outside of the home, these same young people may dialogically cherish, ignore, or mock the parent's teaching within themselves (i.e., intrapersonal dialogues) or, more likely, with their friends (i.e., interpersonal dialogues). This relates to the second issue. Appreciating Bakhtin's heteroglossia allows an awareness of being double-minded or having both "centripetal and centrifugal" voices at the same time. This awareness forces a myriad of open-ended questions to be addressed, such as how to reconcile both being orthodox and enjoying unorthodoxy simultaneously. Pennycook (2007, p. 131) describes this as the "...pleasure of doing things differently, such as thinking... that which has not been thought, and...[exploring] boundaries of thought."

The third issue is that both sets of forces are necessary. The boundary between the two, between acceptable and non-acceptable behavior, is defined by acts of transgression. As Marcel Détienne claims, "to discover the complete horizon of a society's symbolic values, it is also necessary to map out its transgressions, its deviants" (1997, pp. 19–20). Transgression and civility are, by default, codependent: the contours as each is defined in relation to the other. To breach the limits of the acceptable is to simultaneously define them, and as those limits expand to encompass that which once contravened them, so the limits of transgression are then temporarily affirmed. As Jenks (2003, p. 7) defines it, transgressive behavior:

> ...does not deny limits or boundaries, rather it exceeds them and thus completes them. Every rule, limit, boundary or edge carries with it its own fracture, penetration or impulse to disobey. The transgression is a component of the rule.

To contextualize these three issues in the discussion here is, first, to point to the competing forces surrounding the Internet. Foucault argues that 'there are no relations of power without resistances (1980, p. 142). Some of the complex processes of constructing identity and particularly of "dis-identification" (Rose 1996) can be understood as resistance. Rose considers it unsurprising that "human beings often find themselves resisting the forms of personhood that they are enjoined to adopt" (p. 319). His argument, drawing on Foucauldian analysis,

stems from the view that human beings are not "unified subjects of some coherent regime of domination that produces persons in the form that it dreams," but that they "live their lives in a constant movement across different practices that address them in different ways" (p. 319). As such, individuals live in contentious and conflicted states. This chimes with Raby's (2005) notion of resistance, which can be justified as rebellion or deviance on the part of those being judged and is an expression of human agency: a struggle between individual personal agency and dominant power relations. It need not, however, be a negative force. Izberk-Bilgin (2010) conceptualizes resistance as "a personally enriching and liberating lived experience" (in Fry 2012, p. 359).

5 Trolling

Trolling is the darker subsidiary to the online memorial activities described above. The memorials for McFee and Mullaney were both hit by a form of posting that deliberately ridiculed the deceased. Sometimes called "trolling" (although this is more usually a term for any form of derogatory remark or comment), this form of "cyber attack" is becoming increasingly popular on social network memorials. Often very creative, the troll post will deliberately target a key aspect of the memorial, usually the cause of death. So, for example, in Tom Mullaney's case, an image of the boy had been carefully doctored to include a noose around his neck and the caption "Hang on in there, Tom!" The practice came to prominence following the railway death of schoolgirl Natasha MacBryde, 15. A link appeared on her memorial wall to a cleverly constructed YouTube animation called "Tasha the Tank Engine," which featured a steam train with the dead girl's face.

Much of the rationale for these actions was that the perpetrators were engaged in mischievous play: were "just larking," it was "a bit of fun," it was a prank. It is not the case that they displayed particularly antisocial lack of feelings, but engaged in deliberate acts to cause discomfiture, embarrassment, or annoyance to others. It was a playful inclination to behave in this way, to tease, or to disturb; it was in their terms wayward but not malicious behavior. Kirman and Linehan (2009, p. 1) point out that mischief does not need a higher goal:

> there is intrinsic fun in flaunting conventions with small acts of anti-social behaviour and "getting away with it". When transgressions are discovered, provided the actions didn't cause any genuine harm, the consequences typically are trivial. The naughty person is accused of being childish or immature - a small price to pay for the joy of breaking the rules.

They go on to note that mischief and naughtiness are not restricted to our everyday "real world" lives. In the same way, there are social rules and norms for behavior in virtual communities; for example, within online games, there also exist opportunities to break those rules. They refer to this phenomenon as "playful misconduct" (Kirman et al. 2009a). The key term in Kirman and Linehan's quote above, of course, is "genuine harm."

Which leads to perhaps the most extreme example of digital dark tourism and subsequent trolling is the case of 15-year-old Amanda Todd. Prior to her suicide in 2012, the Canadian teenager had posted a 7-min video on *YouTube* in which she used flash cards to tell of her experience of being blackmailed, bullied, and physically assaulted. Following news of her suicide, her memorial page had received one million "likes" from other *Facebook* users, and by mid-2014, the *Youtube* video had received over 17 million "hits." Amid the outpouring of sympathy and support for the teenager were a plethora of troll posts accusing her of being a "camwhore" and "an attention-craving slut." As the trolling gained momentum, a series of "rival" *Facebook* pages begin to emerge. "I Hate Amanda Todd," for example, reveled in the murkier details of the case, specifically a previous suicide attempt by drinking bleach that Todd had alluded to in her video. The page encouraged its users to "get creative" and soon was awash with "photoshopped" images of Todd, holding bleach bottles, an advert for the product supported by the tagline "life stained with sorrow? Then bleach it away – and it tastes great to" and an infamous image of a teenage boy drinking Clorox accompanied by the text "LOL! Am I Amanda Todd yet?"

6   Conclusion: trolling as Transgression

It might perhaps be easy to dismiss these latter posts as little more than bad taste humor, and it is not surprising that well-established material practices manifest themselves within digital arenas in this way. There is after all a long literary tradition of using humor as a means of exploring trauma, suffering, and death (Dundes and Hauschild 1983). Although the surrealist Andre Breton originally identified the term 'dark humor in the mid-1930s, the literary form can be traced back to the seventeenth century writings of Jonathon Swift. The genre might also include among others Edgar Allen Poe, Lewis Carroll, and the cautionary tales of Heinrich Hoffman and Hilaire Belloc, who relate how naughty children meet amusing, but grisly ends. More recently though dark humor has been used to spotlight disagreements with authority in forms that circumvent traditional ways of dealing with issues. As Kirman and Linehan (2009) point out, the phenomenon is visible at all levels of society, from challenging government policies (e.g., the reaction of Twitter users to a terrorism charge (Chambers 2010)) to internal corporate disputes over working practices (Ackroyd and Thomspon 1999).

At the more innocent end of the spectrum, young people use dark humor to make light of serious and often taboo subject matters, and some adult humorists use it as a tool for exploring vulgar issues and, in doing so, provoke discomfort and serious thought as well as amusement in their audience. Sometimes termed "gallows humor," it can be comedy used to mock the victim, whose suffering is often trivialized. It submerges into unpleasant endeavors and emerges with a funny story, line, or image found humorous to the other young people. At the other end, it is humor that is graphic in nature, morbid, cruel, and offensive yet, to some, is still found funny. As expected, there are numerous examples of this throughout social

media, for example, *Why the Long Facebook* is a production that touches on topics ranging from bullying, sexism, reality TV, the pursuit of the American Dream, and how these issues are all discussed, not face to face, but on *Facebook*.

In his brief essay "Humour," Freud suggests that humor offered a way to overcome pain and humiliation by asserting one's superiority to the situation. Dark humor is not resigned he claims, but rebellious. This is evident in the way that some of the "trolls" in the Todd case subsequently explained their actions. Many argued that the images they had posted were meant to be humorous comments on what they saw as the overused practice of creating online memorial pages. These were not personal attacks on Todd they argued, but social commentary on a girl who had chosen to play out her descent into tragedy online:

> I thought the posts were funny, but yeah some noobs might find them a bit raw (laughs). What pisses me off is the hypocrisy. She moans about being tricked into being nude online and then distributes the vids through Blog TV. They are all calling her an Angel and a Role Model and shit like that. I don't think she is that and I think I have a right to post a different view. I could have called her a "slut" and a "whore" like some of those other trolls, but I wanted to do something different – play for the lulz you know. So I cut and pasted "will show my tits for bleach" onto one of the flash cards of her vid. I think what I did was more powerful than just swearing at her. Plenty of members told me how cool it looked and I got more "likes" for this than anything else. Clorax Max (via "I hate Amanda Todd")

> Swearing and calling her a slut does nothing, you just get griefed for flaming. If you want to make people notice you have to do something like make them laugh, even if it some people find it a bit sick. Its for their own good, you cant go around acting like Todd did online and then be called an angel, that's just not how the game is played. She was just depressing – no fun you know. Sonya2457

Sonya2457's analogy with a game is interesting. Indeed the "game" of trolling is a complex interplay of positions. Notice here how both her and Clorax Max distance themselves from other trolls. Their actions (in their eyes) served a higher purpose – distinct and separate from the "flamers" who merely posted abuse – and this is achieved, at least in part, through the humor that they attempt to deploy (Clorax Max's reference to "the lulz"). As Corax Max hints, it is not just a means for getting their view across but rather a mechanism for gaining notoriety. Trolling for kudos in this way often relies on transgressive humor to create impact and build reputation (Bishop 2012) and forms part of the "rules" of online play; indeed, Todd is singled out for abuse in part because she didn't follow these rules. Rather than a humorous observation of her experiences, her video and posts were merely "depressing."

7   Internet Mischief as Play

The argument from Sonya2457 that these posts were playful acts – as opposed to simple abuse – is compelling not least because play is often something that we associate with children rather than young adults. Theorists have struggled unsuccessfully for years to reach consensus on a definition of adult play. Regardless of all

of the differences between adults and children, Kerr and Apter (1991) point out that adult play is a suitable and respectable way to describe intense and meaningful adult and adolescent activities. Being "playful" is a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and conative components, which together constitute a continuum, between "high levels of playfulness" to low. In their study, Glynn and Webster's (1992, p. 97) separated adult play behaviors (both "positive" and "negative") into five groups: *(i) spontaneous* (impulsive, adventurous, free-spirited); *(ii) expressive* (bouncy, animated, excitable); *(iii) fun* (bright, exciting, playful); *(iv) creative* (active, imaginative, creative), and *(v) silly* (childlike, whimsical, frivolous, unpredictable). The general sense here is that play need not be seen as some deviant and undesirable distraction from "real" work, but an inevitable and often creative response to tasks at hand.

Else (2009) maintains that the process of play is that which children and young adults do in order to find out about themselves and the world around them. It has, he says, many qualities, not least that it can be very immersive, is personally directed, and is an act of free choice – it ceases to be play if one is required or ordered to do it. The impulse to play comes from within, and there must be some return, pleasure, and essential satisfaction derived from it. This approach informs not just this study but also "play-ways" of learning through problem-solving (Watts 1991) and play as a feature in informal learning (Kanhadilok and Watts 2011). Else uses a range of 16 types of play, initially established by Hughes (2006), among which are exploratory play (manipulating behaviors and the environment in some way), imaginative play (where the conventional rules which govern the physical and social world no longer fully apply), and deep play (where a person engages in risky or threatening experiences such as, in the physical world, leaping off a high swing, skateboarding at speed on a narrow parapet, playing "knock-and-run" on a neighbor's door).

Sociodramatic play is a form of role-play through which people explore their emotional world, enact emotional control, rehearse rituals and ceremonies, develop social competencies, test out possible consequences, and play out social scenarios. Hughes describes this as "An important safety-valve in highly charged social situations" (2006, p. 59), such as those involved in fraught relationships, difficult home circumstances, social bullying, or simply "falling out." The suggestion here is that playing with roles, actions, behaviors, identities, and relationships enables young (and not so young) people to have a direct impact on the world around them. It can, says Else, involve exaggerated social behavior, challenges to accepted social norms, and "toying" with the social rules that commonly govern certain situations. The argument is that, when young children play "families," "we are orphans," "doctors and nurses," they are reaching for some level of emotional understanding and "rehearsing risk," allowing them some appreciation of issues within their own lives.

While it is possible to see positive elements in processes of sociodramatic play, instances of deep play move to the extreme, what Hughes recognized as the "darker side" of play (2006, p. 57). This kind of play can involve impulsive unorthodoxy, "breaking loose," being countercultural, acts of subversion, being antisocial, and

crossing the boundaries. In an adult world, these encompass "dares," potentially life-threatening extreme sports, teasing someone who becomes the "butt" of humor, and where the purpose of the play turns to risk-taking, excitement or thrill-seeking, mischief, being malicious, and malevolent. Perhaps the answer lies in a redefinition of the term "mischief." Bell (1992, 1997) notes that rituals bind lives together in meaning and action, including ceremonies surrounding death. When rituals are practiced, a sense of empowerment is felt in the ability to negotiate various shifts in ceremony. Bell also describes tendencies toward ritual "mastery," where people begin to dictate appropriate forms for observance and claim expertise over what appears to be authentic (or inauthentic) ceremonial acts. Boundaries are constructed for what is appropriate or inappropriate practice and these often begin (tacitly if not explicitly) to draw a line between what – or who – "fits." Sutton Smith (1997) notes that play, particularly mischievous play, signals a creative testing of boundaries during which young people explore their strengths and expose "adult" expectations and control. When they "playfully" interrupt expected patterns of behavior, they often test the boundaries of established ritual expectations, a "quirkiness" that challenges a sense of dignity and piety.

It is less easy to understand the reactions to Todd without invoking Hughes' sense of deep, or dark, play. Self-confessed troll "Cenobite-Angel" (creatively named after the Clive Barker's fictional characters who found pleasure in pain) is keen to distance his activities from those of more conventional grief tourists:

> I would describe myself as a 'Troll-Tourist'. Grief Tourists are soft-arses who seek out people that they didn't even know and then claim some connection to them. They are even worse than the ****ers who put up the RIP sites in the first place. Remembrance should be a private thing. We are not disrespecting the dead but we are making a fun point about the practice.

His views echo similar explanations from "troll tourists" in the McFee case, who claimed that the posts were designed to teach "kids today how to deal with all these things on social networking sites." While "Cenobite-Angel" acknowledges that such activities might cause offense:

> in any war there will be causalities, this is for the greater good of the web.

Troll tourism has become an increasingly popular activity. Cenobite-Angel reports that although the postings are usually quickly removed by network administrators:

> the trick is to get it all up and recorded before anyone notices – a bit like the old graffiti artists.

Indeed the "I hate Amanda Todd" page played a game of virtual cat and mouse with *Facebook* administrators as it was taken down and subsequently reposted under

a series of differing guises. The page authors argue that they had a "right to hate. . .our page redresses a balance in which those unhappy with the sentimentalist view {of Todd} have somewhere to express their feelings and anger for what's going on."

Like other forms of digital subcultures, troll tourism has its own language, numerous arenas where the best "trolls" can be displayed and discussed and, most importantly, a hierarchy: the most creative postings gain kudos and their creators achieve status (in the Todd case, users were encouraged to "rate" the most "creative" postings). In many ways it would be easy to adopt the position of the popular press and dismiss these activities as the most sickening form of cyberbullying. This may indeed be true, and while society is largely unconvinced by troll tourist arguments that such activities are "for the greater good of the web," putting morals and ethics aside for a minute, there is an important point about digital space being made here. Ironically trolling has now become a dark tourist location in its own right. Emily and Michael – while keen to assert that play has no part in trolling activities – actively seek out and record the postings before they are removed. Michael proudly displays his album of "troll posts" commenting occasionally how "brilliantly creative" this one is or how that is "a little raw, it well over-steps the mark."

8 Trolling as Transgression

Digital spaces offer avenues to represent transgressive ideas and identities. Transgression refers to a crossing over, the exceeding of bounds or limits, and the infringement or violation of a law or convention. Marcel Détienne claims that acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors are defined by acts of transgression, "to discover the complete horizon of a society's symbolic values, it is also necessary to map out its transgressions, its deviants" (1997, pp. 19–20). Transgression and compliance are, by default, codependent: the contours of each are defined in relation to the other. Bataille's ideas on transgression and the sacred are similar and derive largely from the anthropology of religion. The word "sacred" derives from the Latin *sacer*, meaning to set apart. The sacred is separated from the profane by a taboo or limit. For Bataille, it is through acts of transgression that one experiences the sacred. The profane world is the world of the taboo, while the subject of a taboo that which the taboo prohibits is sacred. Yet, transgression does not deny or destroy the taboo; it exceeds the taboo but also completes it. In a post-enlightenment age, transgression and the limit have replaced the older dichotomy of the sacred and the profane. Transgression is important in rediscovering the sacred, as Foucault declares in his "Preface to Transgression":

> In that zone which our culture affords for our gestures and speech, transgression prescribes not only the sole manner of discovering the sacred in its unmediated substance, but also a way of recomposing its empty form, its absence.

However, these activities need not necessarily be seen as simple mischief, "cemetery vandalism," malice, *schadenfreude*, or a sickening form of cyberbullying. From the perspective developed here, there is need to study these forms of action and resistance together with the ways in which they interact, conflict, and become interwoven with more destructive forms of criminality. The growing exclusion of large numbers of young people from both education and the world of work, from citizenship and from effective political participation, provides the necessary foundations for emergence of a digital "carnivalesque" as an expression of agency and as a form of symbolic resistance. As Katz (2001) argues, the geographies of young people – the places that they occupy and use – should always be seen as potential sites of active resistance, in this case against adult notions of propriety. The trolls and tourists detailed in this chapter steer toward Bettelheim's (1976) reminder that the human spirit requires dark narratives through which to discover and make sense of humanity. Like fairy tales, digital space offers young people hints at an "adult" view of the world (Morie and Pearce 2008). As Bakhtin acknowledges, ordered societies require legitimate spaces of transgression as a means of demarking order from disorder. Troll tourism offer young users ideal arenas in which these adult norms and values are rejected and new forms of expression of order are established.

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Part II

Geographies of Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing

Children and Medicines

21

Kate Hampshire

Contents

Abstract

The message "*Keep out of the reach of children*" appears on medicine packaging in the UK and many other countries, reflecting an assumption that children are vulnerable and in need of adult protection, while medicines are powerful, dangerous substances that should be controlled by experts. However, a growing literature challenges these assumptions, highlighting young people's active roles in acquiring and consuming medicines. Even very young children may significantly influence their parents' medication practices by drawing attention to, feigning, or concealing symptoms, while independent medicine use may begin earlier than many parents realize. The upshot is a paradoxical situation in which children and adolescents often end up taking considerable responsibility for their own medication, but their social and economic positions, along with regulation designed to "protect" them, may limit their ability to do this safely and effectively. Where access to high-quality, formal-sector services is limited and regulation of pharmaceutical markets is weak, young people may resort

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disproportionately to the informal/unlicensed sector and self-medication, with serious risks to both individual and public health. Engaging with children and adolescents as *therapeutic citizens* (Nguyen (Antiretroviral globalism, biopolitics, and therapeutic citizenship. In Ong, A., & Collier, S. J. (Eds.), *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems* (pp. 124–144). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 2004), with legitimate rights and responsibilities commensurate with their cognitive abilities and social situations, is an important step toward facilitating safe and effective health-seeking practices.

1   Introduction: Out of the Reach of Children?

The words "*Keep all medicines out of the reach of children*" that appear on the packaging of all pharmaceutical drugs sold in the UK (NHS n.d.), the USA (USFDA n.d.), and many other countries appear at first sight to convey a straight-forward and sensible message. However, look a little deeper and those words reveal certain assumptions about the nature of childhood, and of medicinal substances and practices, that are deeply rooted in particular Western philosophical traditions. Two suppositions prevail: that children are vulnerable and need adult protection and that medicines are powerful, dangerous substances that should be controlled by experts (Geissler et al. 2001, p. 363). This view dominates the literature on child health, which focuses almost exclusively on the practices of adult caretakers (parents/guardians, health professionals, teachers, etc.), rather than those of children themselves. However, recent scholarship in the social sciences has called into question both of those assumptions, which are fraught with ambiguity and contradiction. The aim of this chapter is to begin to unpack some of that complexity, challenging taken-for-granted generational categories and questioning the role of children's agency in managing their bodies and healthcare.

2   Questioning Childhood and Medicines

First, who exactly are the "children" from whom medicines should be kept "out of reach"? The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to all those under 18 years of age, the age of legal majority in most countries (OHCHR 1989). The World Health Organization distinguishes between *childhood* (0–9 years) and *adolescence* (10–19 years), which is regarded as a "distinct life phase," marked by an

"evolving capacity" to think about health and make decisions (WHO 2014, p. 6). In practice, the process of growing up is far more fluid, complex, and contingent. While children's social/cognitive abilities and other competencies undoubtedly develop as they grow older, they do so in nonlinear ways, and socially prescribed roles and responsibilities do not always map neatly onto fixed age categories (see Ansell 2005; Dehne and Reider 2001; Fatusi and Hundin 2010).

It is also increasingly clear that the idea of childhood as a period of innocence and freedom from the responsibilities and burdens of the adult world is not universal and does not correspond to the experiences of many young people around the world. In their seminal book, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, James and Prout (1990) argued that this version of childhood is a very particular one, rooted in European social and economic history (Ariès 1962). The "new sociology of childhood" (James and Prout Ibid) heralded something of a revolution – among social scientists at least – challenging the idea that children are simply passive recipients of adult care. Instead, children are recognized as social actors in their own right and strategizing agents who reflect on and construct their social worlds (James 2007), worlds that extend to health-seeking and medicine use (e.g., Prout and Chistensen 1996).

Medicines have also come under the recent scrutiny of social scientists. Biomedically, the concept of a medicine is relatively straightforward, defined as "a drug used to treat an individual with an illness or injury" (Marcovitch 2009, *Blacks Medical Dictionary (42nd Edition)*) or "any substance or substances used in treating disease or illness" (*American Heritage Medical Dictionary*). However, medicines do much more than act biochemically on human physiology, and their power extends beyond the individual body. The act of giving, receiving, or ingesting a medicine can profoundly shape, and even transform, social relations. Whyte and colleagues (2003) path-breaking volume, *The Social Lives of Medicines*, has been enormously influential in this field, demonstrating through careful ethnographic study the social "work" that medicines do and the roles they perform. For example, when a mother administers cough mixture to her sick baby, she is not only trying to alleviate the cough symptoms; she is enacting and performing – for herself and other observers – an act of care that confirms her status as a "good mother." Similarly, the act of prescription within a doctor-patient encounter, the sharing of precious prescription medicine with a family member, and the sacrifices made in order to afford expensive medication for a sick relative are all charged with social and symbolic meaning that extend far beyond the expected biochemical action of the medicine on the individual body (e.g., Van der Geest and Whyte 1989; Nichter and Vuckovic 1994). Medicines also mediate powerful economic relationships, particularly over recent decades as "pharmaceutical giants" have become increasingly important geopolitical actors (Greene 2011).

Medicines are indeed powerful substances; they are also potentially very dangerous ones. Taken in the wrong dose or inappropriate combinations, medicines can be highly toxic to individuals. At a public health level, "misuse" of antimicrobial drugs (antibiotics, antimalarials, antivirals) is the key driver of accelerated drug resistance, one of the greatest global health threats today (Aminov 2010;

Laxminarayan et al. 2013). In response to these risks, many governments have sought to restrict public access to certain drugs. In the UK, for example, a distinction is made between "prescription-only medicines" (POM), which include most antibiotics, high-strength painkillers, and psychoactive medication; "pharmacy" (P) medicines, which do not require a prescription but must be dispensed under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist; and drugs on the general sales list (GSL), which are considered generally safe if used "correctly" (e.g., small packs of painkillers, anti-allergy tablets, laxatives, etc.) and can be purchased over the counter from a variety of retail outlets including supermarkets and petrol stations (MHRA n.d.). Other countries make similar distinctions between pharmaceutical drugs that may be purchased over the counter (OTC) and those that require authorization from a qualified physician or pharmacist. There are no legal age restrictions on the purchase of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs in the UK or the USA, but most retail outlets limit sales to over-16s, the age at which a patient is presumed in the UK to have the capacity for medical consent (General Medical Council (UK), nd).

It has been argued, however, that the construction of medicine as a domain of expert knowledge, with strict separation between healer and patient, is not universal but rather a function of the particular way that biomedicine developed in industrializing Europe (Foucault 1989; Geissler et al. 2001). While other healing systems may also have "expert" healers, who (like biomedical doctors) undergo lengthy training and initiation rites, the expert/lay distinction may not always be quite so clear-cut. In Western Kenya, for example, Prince and colleagues (2001, p. 218) observed that "[k]nowledge about herbal and pharmaceutical medicines for everyday illnesses is common property, accessible to all through observation, experimentation and learning from others. It is not a secret or expert domain." Prince et al. (Ibid) have also observed a less rigid distinction in Kenya between "inexpert" children, who need protection from dangerous medicines, and "responsible" adults who do the protecting; children, like adults, learn about medicines over time through observing and being involved in illness and its treatment from an early age (see also Hampshire et al. 2011, for similar observations in Ghana).

To summarize, the apparently simple message "*Keep all medicines out of the reach of children*" belies a mass of complexity and ambiguity that throws into question some basic assumptions about the nature of childhood and intergenerational relations, as well as some of the premises of (bio)medical convention and practice. Whatever the official advice and legislation may be, it is very clear that children and adolescents all over the world *are* using medicines, often without the knowledge or consent of adult "caregivers." This chapter reviews some of the key literature on children's and adolescents' acquisition and use of medicines globally and suggests some areas for further research and action. It covers both "legal" and "illegal" practices, as well as those that might be called "extralegal," in contexts where drug control is ineffective or nonexistent. However, the increasingly globalized and virtual nature of emerging therapeutic arenas – for example, the rise of online pharmacies that can circumvent national legislation – promises (or threatens) to render these boundaries increasingly obscure and permeable.

3   Children's Medicine Use in Europe and North America

A growing literature challenges the dominant assumptions in Europe and North America that children are vulnerable (in general and to illness in particular) and the passive recipients of adult care. From a young age, children begin to learn and form opinions about medicines. Based on a systematic review of research in 17 countries, Hämeen-Anttila and Bush (2008) reported that children aged 5–14 years recognized qualities of medicines such as color, form, taste, appearance, and therapeutic purpose and had opinions on the efficacy of different medicines, based on their appearance, cost, and source. In another review, De Maria et al. (2011) confirmed that children from 6 years old form opinions about medicines, while Whatley and colleagues' (2012) study of English primary school pupils identified a steady increase in children's ability to identify common medicines and indications between 4 and 11 years. Young people acquire their knowledge about medicines from a variety of sources, including their parents and other family members, friends, teachers, doctors, pharmacists, and from television, the Internet, and other media sources (Hämeen-Anttila and Bush 2008; Ellul et al. 2008). Personal experience or "trial and error" also plays an important role: based on a study in Dresden, Germany, Stoelben et al. (2000) found that adolescents tended to gain knowledge about medicines *through their consumption*, rather than in advance.

From an early age, children also begin to practice sets of unwritten rules that constitute the cultural performance of sickness and healing (Bourdieu 1977; Prout and Christensen 1996). Even very young children may significantly influence their parents' medication strategies and practices by drawing attention to or concealing symptoms. Anecdotally, the author has often heard UK parents complain that the attractive taste of "Calpol" (paracetamol syrup) has induced their young children to feign pain symptoms, while exaggerating symptoms to avoid going to school is also widely reported. Conversely, young children may actively *resist* adults' interventions, for example, by refusing to swallow a medicine.

Fully independent medicine use begins earlier than many parents realize. In a US-based study, 36 % of 5-to-12-year-olds reported having taken medicine independently, and 25 % reported having purchased medicine independently, a finding confirmed by visiting relevant outlets (Bush et al. 1985). High rates of independent medicine use in early adolescence have been reported by several researchers in Europe and North America. For example, in a study of UK school pupils aged 11–15 years, Dengler and Roberts (1996) found that 67 % of their respondents ($N = 8,500$) had taken pharmaceutical drugs in the preceding week – a figure considerably higher than that reported by their parents. Holstein et al. (2008) reported similarly high rates of independent medication for headache among children aged 13–15 years in Denmark, while 90 % of 14–16-year-olds questioned in a Maltese study reported taking medicine in the preceding month; of these, a quarter had done so without adult guidance (Ellul et al. 2008). In a recent US study based in New Hampshire, 57 % of eighth graders (13–14-year-olds) reported taking OTC medication in the preceding month; of these, almost two-fifths had done so without consulting a "responsible adult" (Abel et al. 2012); broadly comparable

findings have been reported by Sloand and Vessey (2001), also in the USA, and by Chambers et al. (1997) in Canada.

The medicines acquired and used by children and adolescents in Europe and North America cover a range of over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs, as well as non-pharmaceutical substances. Overall, OTC painkillers (non-opioid analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs) appear to be the most commonly acquired and independently used medicines, along with antispasmodic drugs for stomach cramps and cough/cold medicines (see review by Hämeen-Anttila and Bush 2008; also single-country studies in Poland (Pisarska and Ostazewski 2011), Germany (Du et al. 2012), Norway (Skarstein et al. 2014), Denmark (Holstein et al. 2008), and the USA (Wilson et al. 2010; Fouladbaksh et al. 2012)). Dietary supplements, herbal remedies, homeopathic preparations, and other "complementary and alternative" medicines (CAMs) are also widely used, especially for dealing with psychosocial conditions such as stress, fatigue, sleep problems, anxiety, and other mood concerns (Pisarska and Ostazewski 2011; Du and Knopf 2009; Grm et al. 2012; Mattila et al. 2010; Jacquier et al. 1998; Piccini et al. 2011). Significant researcher attention has focused on adolescents' self-medication with prescription drugs, which have been found to circulate among groups of school friends in the USA (Daniel et al. 2003; Boyd et al. 2006a, b, 2007; Goldsworthy and Mayhorn 2009; Mc Cabe et al. 2012, 2013, 2014) and in Canada (Currie and Wild 2012).

Young people obtain medicines from a wide range of sources, of which home medicine cabinets are among the most important. Based on their 17-country review, Hämeen-Anttila and Bush (2008, p. 102) concluded that "most commonly, medicines are not locked up. School-aged children in all countries (..) knew where medicines are kept at home and have physical access to them." In several studies, children have reported using a variety of home-stored medicines without parental knowledge or consent, from OTC painkillers (Holstein et al. 2008; Bozoni et al. 2006) to prescription-only drugs such as antibiotics (Ellul et al. 2008) and opioids (McCabe et al. 2012, 2013). Children also acquire medicines from each other. In a study of US residential summer camps, 8 % of younger campers (aged 8–12 years) and 28 % of older ones (13–16 years) reported sharing medicines with other children (Rudolf et al. 1993). Similarly, in Canada, Chambers et al. (1997) reported that 29–48 % of 12-to-15-year-olds in their study had apparently "shared" or "borrowed" medicines from their friends, while friends were also identified as an important source of medicines in Holstein et al.'s (2008) Danish study. The sharing of prescription drugs has attracted particular attention. Based on a nationally representative US sample, 20 % of girls and 13 % of boys aged 9–18 years reported having borrowed or shared prescription medicines, often on multiple occasions (Daniel et al. 2003), with even higher rates reported in subsequent US-based studies (Goldsworthy and Mayhorn 2009; Boyd et al. 2007).

To summarize, children and adolescents in Europe and North America are learning about and using medicines independently from an early age, often earlier than their parents realize. Independent medicine use generally increases with age (Daniel et al. 2003; Meier et al. 2012) although even very young children may exert a considerable degree of agency in medication processes. In general, girls appear to

use medicines more than boys overall and to be more independent in their medicine use (Fouladbakhsh 2012; Gobina et al. 2011; Piccini et al. 2011; Ellul et al. 2008; Westerlund et al. 2008; Dyb et al. 2006; Boyd et al. 2006a; Young et al. 2012). Girls and boys have also been reported to use different *kinds* of medicines and for different purposes. For example, in Currie and Wild's (2012) study of prescription drug use in Canada, girls were more likely than boys to report using pain relievers, sedatives, or tranquilizers, while boys reported greater use of stimulants. The role of other factors has been less well explored but, interestingly, Du and Knopf (2009) report that, in Germany, children's self-medication is positively correlated with high socioeconomic status.

4   Children's Medicine Use in the Global South

In contrast with the large and growing literature reviewed above, far less research has been conducted on children's medicine use in the "Global South." While the Global North/South distinction is problematic and not clear-cut, there are some broad differences that may have significant impacts on children's medicine use. First, in many low- and middle-income countries, where states lack of capacity (and/or willingness) to provide effective comprehensive healthcare for their populations, the "informal sector" becomes far more important for many people. Second, where the trade in medicines is limited and weakly enforced, it can be very easy to acquire controlled drugs (including antibiotics, strong painkillers, and pyscho-active medicines) over the counter. In Kenya, for example, Geissler et al. (2000, p. 1772) reported that, despite legislation, "local shops deal in all sorts of pharmaceuticals including those that ought to be sold only at pharmacies"; the same is true of many other countries in Africa (author's observations). There is thus the potential, at least, for much more independent medicine use – and with a wider range of substances – than is the case in Europe or North America. However, whether and how that potential translates into practice is a largely unexplored area, with just a handful of studies, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and Brazil.

The anthropological work of Geissler, Prince, and colleagues in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda has been perhaps the most comprehensive and detailed research in this field. Children living in these areas had relatively easy access to a wide range of both pharmaceutical and herbal medicines sold in local shops. Most medicines were cheap "even in relation to the scarce economic resources of children" (Geissler et al. 2000, p. 1774) and were sold to customers, irrespective of age, often a tablet at a time, while children also generally had access to medicines stored at home. However, although children's access to *medicines* was relatively straightforward, access to professional *advice* was not. A combination of high costs and social hierarchies inhibited children from communicating directly with health professionals; they were thus much more likely to buy medicines from a nonspecialist shop or acquire them from some other informal outlet than from a licensed source.

Geissler and colleagues (2000, 2001; Prince et al. 2001) found that Luo children (aged 11–17) years in Western Kenya reported regular illnesses, most of them minor and left untreated. In those cases (42 %) where treatment was sought, one-third of children self-medicated with no adult intervention or advice, using both local herbal medicines and pharmaceuticals, including antimalarials, antibiotics, painkillers, and antipyretics, stocked in most small shops. Most Luo children were able to name an impressive number of herbal preparations and "hospital" (pharmaceutical) medicines, with children learning about medicines as part of everyday life: "through observation of illness and its treatment among family members, neighbours and friends, and through being ill and treated themselves" (Prince et al. 2001, p. 225; see also Geissler et al. 2002). However, while children's knowledge of local herbal preparations was often quite comprehensive, their knowledge of pharmaceuticals was more limited: few knew the correct dosages, even for commonly used medicines, and many were unable to distinguish between antipyretics and antimalarials and would use both to treat a headache. Likewise, in Eastern Uganda, Geissler et al. (2001) found that young people (aged 10–18 years) used a wide range of medicines to treat themselves and younger siblings but had only limited knowledge of dosages and indications, leading to inappropriate drugs being taken and unsuitable drug combinations, while it was rare for any child to complete a full course of medication. In both countries, children's *use* of pharmaceutical medicines often exceeded the accuracy of their *knowledge*.

More recently, Hampshire and colleagues' (2011) work in Ghana suggests a broadly similar pattern of children and adolescents (aged 8–18 years) actively (and often independently) acquiring and consuming pharmaceutical and herbal medicines. For "minor" illnesses (e.g., body pains, mild fever, or stomach upset), young people were often expected to take significant responsibility for their own treatment. Children as young as 10 years old frequently visited local drugs stores alone, sometimes sent by their parents to buy specific medicines, but many went on their own initiative and used their own money to buy medicines for themselves, younger siblings, and sometimes friends. Even younger children also sometimes acquired medicines independently, often from home medicine "cabinets" or from neighbors or friends (the youngest example encountered was a 5-year-old girl who had gone to a neighbor's house to "borrow" some paracetamol because she had developed a headache while her mother was away at the market).

A handful of studies in Brazil have also revealed high levels of self-medication among children and adolescents. In an urban area of southern Brazil, De Moraes et al. (2011) reported that 56 % of the high school students (aged 14–18 years) they surveyed had taken medication in the preceding 15 days, of whom just over half had self-medicated, while Silva et al. (2011), working in city of Fortaleza, found that of those high school students who had taken medicines (mostly painkillers) in the preceding 60 days (72 % of all students), a fifth had self-medicated independently. As is the case elsewhere, many Brazilian adolescents acquire medicines at home. Opaleye et al. (2013) found that 4 % of adolescents in a nationally representative sample had used nonprescription sedatives acquired at home, and the widespread availability of medicines in homes was underlined by a household survey of

families with children (Tourinho et al. 2008): an average of 5.1 drugs (mostly pharmaceuticals) per household were found, stored in bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms, within easy reach of young children.

5 Discussion

It is abundantly clear that, despite the idealized separation between children and medicines deeply embedded in Western philosophical traditions and enshrined in professional guidelines and legal frameworks, young people engage actively in seeking, acquiring, and consuming medicines. A growing body of evidence suggests that children's medicine use is far more widespread and pervasive than adults have often realized. The upshot is a paradoxical situation in which children and adolescents often end up taking considerable responsibility for acquiring and consuming medicines, but their economically and socially marginalized positions, in combination with regulation meant to *protect* them, may limit their ability to do this safely and effectively. While many of the barriers that children face in their quest for effective healthcare are of course shared by adults, assumptions about children's abilities, combined with limited economic resources and restricted possibilities for travel, can severely constrain treatment-seeking options, especially in resource-poor settings (Geissler et al. 2000, 2001; Van der Geest and Geissler 2003). Where access to high-quality, formal-sector services is limited and regulation of pharmaceutical markets is weak, it is hardly surprising that young people resort disproportionately to riskier healthcare options, relying on the informal/unlicensed sector and self-medication. Ironically, it is often high-quality health services that are "*out of the reach of children*," not the medicines themselves.

This situation is problematic for (at least) two reasons. First, as discussed above, the potential risks to individual and public health of using pharmaceutical drugs "incorrectly" are severe. Daniel and colleagues (2003) have noted that individual risks of inappropriate medication may be multiplied for adolescent girls with unplanned or undiagnosed pregnancy. The rise of counterfeit and substandard drugs across world, and particularly in lower-income countries and informal retail outlets, adds another set of serious risks (Caudron et al. 2008). Moreover, because they tend to have more limited resources at their disposal, children may be particularly likely not to complete a full course of medication, a key driver of antimicrobial resistance (Aminov 2010; Laxminarayan et al. 2013).

Second, by denying (or refusing to engage with) children's agency as medicine users, a major opportunity is being missed. Although young people may face risks in their quest for effective therapy, certain factors might work to their advantage. Children may be able to learn new things more quickly and easily than adults and be more flexible and willing to adopt new practices. In relation to their work in Kenya, Geissler et al. (2000, p. 1782) noted that "children are active and knowledgeable, curious learners and agents of health. They show a high degree of [. . .] ability to move between and act within different discourses, related to different "traditions of knowledge" and they transcend "tradition," creating new discourses and

contributing to change." Moreover, across Africa and much of the Global South, rates of schooling and literacy have improved very markedly over the past two decades (United Nations 2015). This gives many children another advantage over many adults: they can read. Unlike their parents, the new generation of children across even the lowest-income countries is growing up functionally literate. They can read the labels and instruction leaflets that accompany medicines, and they can read health information in clinics, schools, newspapers, and a variety of other sources.

This opens up the potential for children not only to become more effective and safer medicine users in their own right but to take a more proactive role in improving the health of their families and communities (Geissler et al. 2001; Christensen 2004). This potential has already been demonstrated in several school-based programs that have encouraged children to take health messages (mainly around health promotion and disease prevention) to the wider community and have led to measurable improvements in health-related behaviors at both individual and community levels (e.g., Ayi et al. 2010; Onyango-Ouma et al. 2005).

6   Moving Forward: Engaging Children and Young People as Therapeutic Citizens

In order for this potential to be realized, it is important for adults (parents, healthcare professionals, and policy-makers) to recognize and take seriously with children's health-seeking agency and engage with them as therapeutic citizens. The concept of *therapeutic citizenship* was formulated by Nguyen (2004, 2010), in the context of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in West Africa, to refer both to a political claim to treatment and a personal engagement involving self-transformation (see also Biehl's (2004) related concept of biomedical citizenship). The situation described in this chapter is clearly very different to the one portrayed by Nguyen, whereby groups clearly bound by a common predicament (living with HIV) and set of interests (getting effective treatment) led to a process of collective conscientization and political engagement. However, the concept might still be a useful one, even for a globally dispersed and disparate population of young people who may have little else in common but who, through their acquisition and use of medicines, are laying claim to a form of therapeutic citizenship.

By denying children's agency in this regard, adults risk, albeit unintentionally, perpetuating a situation in which the dangers are heightened because there is no framework within which to *imagine* how that agency may be deployed safely. Engaging with children and adolescents as therapeutic citizens, with legitimate rights and responsibilities commensurate with their cognitive abilities and social situations, offers the possibility not only to imagine but to act in partnership with young people to facilitate safer and more effective health-seeking practices.

What might this mean in practice? First, it should entail addressing a gap between knowledge and practice that arises in part, ironically, from a desire to protect children. Although young people clearly learn about medicines from an early age, Hämeen-Anttila and Bush (2008, p. 104) conclude that "children's

knowledge of medicines seems to be poor especially *in view of their levels of autonomy*" [emphasis added]. Geissler et al. (2001, p. 364) have pointed to the dangers inherent in a situation whereby "[d]ue to the ideology of childhood and medical expertise, knowledge about the proper use of medicines is withheld from children while access to medicines, including potent hospital medicines, is easy. Where the barrier between children and medicines is broken down in practice, the (..) ideology, meant to protect children from harm, endangers their health." Children's ability to acquire appropriate and accurate knowledge about medicines may be seriously compromised because of a tendency among health professionals to communicate relevant information to parents rather than directly to children (De Maria et al. 2011; Hämeen-Anttila et al. 2006). Prout and Christensen (1996, p. 33) have argued that children are "doubly constrained" in this respect: "first in relation to social structures of professional knowledge, control and power, and second in their relationships with adults."

Use of medicines rarely features on school health education curricula, in either the Global North or South (Hämeen-Anttila and Bush 2008; Geissler et al. 2001), leaving children to acquire information about medicines piecemeal, from a range of non-expert (and sometimes biased) sources. This observation has led several commentators to call for age-appropriate education on use of medicines to be part of standard health education curricula. Hämeen-Anttila and Bush (2008) argue that this needs to start *before* young people become independent medicine users. Given that, according to US national survey data, a significant proportion of adolescents begin "misusing" prescription opioids from age 12 to 14 years, Meier et al. (2012) argue that it is too late to leave appropriate educational initiatives to the last year of high school; likewise, Morales-Suarez-Varela and colleagues (2009, p. 656) have called (in Spain) for early education on responsible medicine use to become a public health priority.

Similar arguments have been made in sub-Saharan Africa. Geissler et al. (2001) have called for the urgent need to extend school-based health education beyond the usual (often bland) health promotion messages, to cover safe and appropriate use of medicines. Crucially, they insist that school-based health education should "take school children's knowledge and use of (..) medicines as its starting point and adjust its teaching to the medical reality the children live in" (Ibid, p. 367). This should include detailed and accurate information on indications and risks of commonly used and available medicines, tailored carefully to the local context. In a similar vein, the need for school-based health education that starts from, and engages constructively with, children's medical realities has been emphasized by Hampshire et al. (2011).

Educational initiatives alone are of course not sufficient, since many children and adolescents worldwide face significant structural barriers to safe and effective healthcare. Most obviously, there is a need to invest in health services that are responsive to young people's needs. In a landmark document published in 2002, the WHO set out an agenda for establishing "adolescent-friendly health services" (AFHS), based on five key principles: accessibility, acceptability, equitability, appropriateness, and effectiveness (WHO 2002, 2012, 2014). However, despite the development of national standards and other policy tools (Chandra-Mouli et al. 2010;

WHO 2012, 2014), implementation has tended to be patchy and inadequately evaluated (Patton et al. 2012), and more than 10 years later, there is still a large gap between health service provision and adolescents' needs, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Mburu et al. 2013; Chandra-Mouli et al. 2013b).

A key element of effective youth-friendly health services is improved communication. Investing in training and supporting staff to improve intergenerational communication skills and develop more empathetic approaches in working with young people is an important step. Appropriate youth-focused training should also be extended to informal healthcare providers. In the African context, Van der Geest (1999) has proposed that local shopkeepers, often the first port of call for children and adolescents, should receive appropriate training on medicine dosages, indication, and contraindications. As with school health education, such training programs are potentially controversial, since many shopkeepers sell drugs illegally; the challenge of balancing legality with making existing practices safely needs careful consideration (Van der Geest and Geissler 2003).

Building youth-friendly healthcare must also go hand in hand with an intersectoral approach that engages with the wider social, economic, and political context within which children and adolescents seek, acquire, and consume medicines. This includes, for example, addressing some of the *underlying reasons* that children self-medicate, particularly those associated with stress, depression, and other psychosocial disorders, as well as working to regulate medical advertisements, particularly those targeting children and adolescents.

Crucially, young people's active participation must underpin all of these initiatives. Building genuine partnerships that involve young people working alongside adult policy-makers and practitioners to effect positive change is at the heart of the concept of therapeutic citizenship in this context: see Viner et al. (2012) and Chandra-Mouli et al. (2013a), who have called recently for greater participation of young people in health systems policy-making. Involving families, schools, and wider communities is also essential. While young people exercise considerable agency in their medicine use, their quest for healthcare often involves others (family members, friends, work colleagues, etc.). Enabling young people to acquire the necessary skills and experience to seek effective healthcare *in partnership with parents, health professionals, and other caregivers* has been highlighted by the WHO (2002) as an important strategy for enhancing adolescent health and well-being, both immediate and longer term, but there is still a long way to go before this becomes a reality.

7 Conclusion: Emerging Virtual Therapeutic Arenas and Future Research Directions

The world is changing fast. New, complex therapeutic landscapes are emerging that are eclectic, globalized, and increasing virtually (Hampshire et al. 2011), as borders become increasingly permeable to the flow of medicines and associated information facilitated by new media and communications technologies. It will be important,

over coming years, to track these changes carefully and seek to understand what they might mean for children and adolescents using medicines.

One important area is medicine advertising and other forms of commercial promotion. In Ghana, for example, Hampshire et al. (2011) noted the huge increase in advertising of medicines and other therapeutic products on commercial radio stations over the last decade, following liberalization of broadcast media, with the boundaries between advertising and other programming also becoming increasingly blurred as healers pay for regular slots on phone-in shows and others (Hampshire and Owusu 2013). Children and young people absorbed and appeared to be heavily influenced by these advertisements and promotional health shows, often using scarce resources to purchase expensive branded drugs that were not necessarily indicated (see also Hampshire et al. 2015). Similarly, Silva et al. (2011) reported that many Brazilian adolescents in their study "had been influenced by the media in the purchase of medicine." Research on the effects of advertising on young people in the West is limited and remains inconclusive, but Almarsdóttir and Zimmer (1998, p. 227) suggest that it might induce "irrational beliefs" without increasing factual knowledge or understanding. Given the explosion of advertising and new media forms that make it easier to bypass national guidelines/restrictions, this is an important research area that needs urgent attention.

The role of social media could also be extremely influential, but again, researchers have been relatively slow to explore the implications for young people's medicine use. In one recent US study based on analysis of young people's "tweets" over the course of a year, Hanson and colleagues (2013) found strong correlations between drugs mentioned by an "index user" and those in his/her network and between the amount of interaction about prescription drugs and levels of apparent drug abuse. The authors conclude that "Twitters who discuss prescription drug abuse online are surrounded by others who also discuss it, potentially reinforcing a negative behaviour and social norm" (Ibid, p. 256). In a similar vein, Mackey et al. (2013, p. 3) have recently argued that "unregulated [social media] technologies may pose a potential risk for enabling youth NUPM [non-medical use of prescription medication] behaviour." There is clearly a need to extend beyond the small handful of US-based studies focused on prescription drug abuse and research carefully the ways that social media may play into many different forms of medicine use across different global and local contexts.

The rise of Internet pharmacies is potentially a game changer, enabling access to medication that can circumvent national drug controls and overturning and subverting the conventional flows of medicines from Global North to South (e.g., Brijnath 2012). As yet, little is known about how young people across the world are engaging with this relatively new means to acquire medicines, but an experimental study conducted by Ivanitskaya et al. (2010) among university undergraduates in the USA found that a high proportion were susceptible to the cheap drug prices offered by unregulated sites/providers without adequate appreciation of the risks. Research in this area is urgently needed, particularly given the rapid spread of 3G/4G across the world, which enables young people even in resource-poor settings to connect to the internet.

Recent years have seen growing calls for children and adolescents to be actively involved in the research process, not simply as subjects but as co-researchers whose input extends goes throughout the course of a project, from identifying questions and study design to carrying out empirical work, analysis, stakeholder dissemination, and engagement with ensuing policy initiatives and policy-makers (see James 2007; Porter et al. 2012, 2010; Hampshire et al. 2012). This is particularly important when researching an area like the one outlined here, where the technologies and the practices around them are changing so quickly, with young people themselves at the forefront of these changes. More fundamentally, such engagement with young people is crucial to ensure that any such research and action is firmly grounded in their experiences and realities and reflects their claim to meaningful therapeutic citizenship.

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Geography of Adolescent Anaphylaxis

22

Michael Gallagher, Allison Worth, Sarah Cunningham-Burley,
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Contents

Abstract

This chapter examines how anaphylaxis shapes the geographies of adolescence. Anaphylaxis is a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction, commonly triggered by food. Research suggests that adolescents who experience anaphylaxis are at higher risk of death than other age groups. The chapter reviews previous studies and presents qualitative data about how being at risk of anaphylaxis affects teenagers' bodies, their experiences of everyday spaces, and their patterns of travel. This analysis contributes to work on children's geographies of food and of risk.

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Anaphylaxis emerges as a spatially disruptive force, confounding conventional expectations about bodies, spaces, risk, and safety. The chapter explores how anaphylaxis and food intersect to produce spatialized risks, experienced most acutely by those with severe allergies and their close family and friends but also with wider societal effects. Within this context, anaphylaxis management can be understood as a form of biopower which shifts responsibility away from food producers and onto consumers. Where this is effective, it results in an intensification of self-surveillance and self-regulation. However, this relation to self can also allow for a loosening of power, creating opportunities for adolescents to adapt, rework, or resist different aspects of "good" allergy management, fashioning their own ways of living with risk and uncertainty.

1 Introduction

This chapter examines how anaphylaxis, a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction, shapes the geographies of adolescence. It reviews previous research on this topic and presents qualitative data on how being at risk of anaphylaxis affects teenagers' bodies, their experiences of everyday spaces, of food, and of travel. The chapter makes four arguments: that anaphylaxis is a spatially disruptive force; that the risks associated with anaphylaxis are counterintuitive, strange, even weird, and hence disrupt conventional understandings of risk; that these risks not only affect those with allergies but have wider repercussions, ultimately feeding into large-scale social anxieties about food; and that the management of anaphylaxis can be understood as a form of biopower in which individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health.

While anaphylaxis does not kill large numbers of people, the way in which it kills is particularly shocking, with seemingly innocuous triggers such as nuts, milk, or eggs leading to rapid fatality. Those deemed to be at risk of experiencing this reaction thus face a peculiar set of dangers that are difficult and sometimes impossible to assess and avoid. This strange landscape of risk creates complications for processes that are part of "normal" adolescent development in Western nations, such as learning to judge danger and becoming independent from one's parents (Akeson et al. 2007; Fenton et al. 2013; Worth et al. 2013).

The chapter contributes to a growing body of social science scholarship that attends to the heterogeneity of childhood, mapping the kaleidoscopic differences within the category of "child." In particular, the work presented here makes connections with recent interests in children's geographies of food and of risk. Anaphylaxis, while clearly a health issue, is commonly triggered by food allergies, so for most young people at risk of anaphylaxis there are implications for eating. Punch et al. (2010) argue that food plays an important part in the construction of

socioeconomic differences, gender identities, family and home life, peer group dynamics, morality, and the exercise of power and resistance. What this chapter adds to that mix is consideration of how food is involved in producing risk. Anaphylaxis and food intersect to produce a highly variegated, unstable set of risks. Spaces and foods that are mostly "safe" occasionally turn out to be deadly, disrupting conventional geographies of safety and danger.

While the most immediate implications of these strange risks are felt by those with severe allergies, their close family and friends, there are also wider effects rippling outwards, affecting restaurateurs, food retailers and manufacturers, regulatory systems such as environmental health and food standards, institutions such as schools and early years settings, and ultimately a wider public increasingly familiar with "may contain" labels, EpiPens, and dramatic stories about anaphylactic emergencies. Thus anaphylaxis exerts its influence not only on the rare occasions when it takes place but also – more pervasively – in everyday spaces where there is a risk that it *might* happen, particularly spaces where food is consumed. Anaphylaxis is a kind of spectral presence, the possibility of death hovering in the background. It shapes behavior in ways that may seem minor if considered in isolation, but which, taken together, constitute a significant disruption of everyday life (MacKenzie et al. 2010).

The management of anaphylaxis can be understood as part of a wider preoccupation in modern societies with risk (Beck 1992; Giddens 1999) and the control of risk. Clinical practice is based on encouraging patients to self-manage their allergies, a form of biopower that attempts to persuade individuals to take responsibility for making the "right" choices, such as carrying adrenaline autoinjectors, avoiding "risky" foods, and not eating products with "may contain" labels. These regimes resemble healthy eating discourses insofar as they tacitly shift responsibility away from food producers and onto consumers (Gibson and Dempsey 2015; Pike 2008). Such processes are instances of what Foucault termed governmentality, in which states regulate populations not by coercion but by encouraging people to regulate themselves. The result is an intensification of the relation of self to self, forming self-managing allergic subjects. At the same time, this relation to self can allow for a loosening of power, creating opportunities for adolescents to selectively adapt, rework, or resist different aspects of "good" allergy management, fashioning their own ways of living with risk and uncertainty.

The chapter begins with an overview of anaphylaxis. Previous research on the geography of allergies is then reviewed, from large-scale epidemiological studies to in-depth qualitative approaches, linking to literature on children's geographies of food and risk. In the second half of the chapter, findings from a single study are presented to add further detail about the geography of anaphylaxis. After a brief account of the methods used, the chapter explores how anaphylaxis disrupts: (i) adolescent bodies; (ii) the spaces of teenagers' everyday lives; and (iii) adolescents' travel, particularly to international destinations. The chapter ends by looking across these themes to reflect on how adolescents live with anaphylaxis as an ever-present risk.

Two further general points will help to contextualize the chapter. First, a note on terminology. While anaphylaxis is a reaction rather than a disease, those who have

experienced it sometimes refer to themselves as "having" anaphylaxis, indicating that they have been diagnosed as having a severe allergy that can cause anaphylactic reactions. Anaphylaxis can occur in anyone, but those who have already experienced an anaphylactic reaction are generally considered to be at higher risk of having further reactions. To reflect this situation, this chapter uses the phrase "at risk of anaphylaxis" to frame anaphylaxis as a particular kind of event that associates itself with individual human bodies but is not intrinsic to them. This form of words also recognizes how anaphylaxis functions in the historical and social context of the "risk society," in which events previously understood as hazards beyond human control have been reframed as calculable, controllable risks (Beck 1992). In this context, prior experience of anaphylaxis is deemed to place a body "at risk," shaping expectations for the future of that body, and prompting a whole range of anticipatory actions designed to avoid recurrence.

Second, though the primary research reported in the chapter aimed to examine the adolescent experience of anaphylaxis, many participants spoke about childhood experiences of allergy. For some, particularly those toward the lower end of the age range, their last or only anaphylactic reaction had been in childhood. The memories of these events influenced their lives as adolescents, sometimes strongly. This chapter is therefore an examination of the geography of anaphylaxis across childhood, the family, and youth, albeit with a bias toward the latter.

2   What Is Anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. It occurs when the immune system reacts to a benign substance as though it were harmful. The focus of this chapter is anaphylaxis in young humans but it has also been observed in other mammals such as cats, dogs, and mice. In anaphylaxis, the immune system response causes a narrowing of the airways causing breathing difficulties and/or cardiovascular impairment, which may manifest as loss of consciousness. These symptoms are often accompanied by swelling, rash and itching, nausea and vomiting. Occasionally, the breathing and circulatory impairments are so severe that anaphylaxis is fatal.

Food, drugs, and stinging insects are the most common triggers, with food being the most common cause of anaphylaxis among adolescents (Alves and Sheikh 2001; Lyons and Forde 2004). Food allergens include peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, fish, milk, and sesame. Anaphylaxis may also be caused by animals and exercise and in some cases no trigger can be identified. People who have experienced anaphylaxis often suffer from other allergic conditions such as asthma, eczema, and allergic rhinitis (hay fever), which are thought to share the same underlying mechanism. Estimates of the prevalence of food allergy vary, but a recent systematic review found that, in Europe, at least one in 20 children is believed by parents to have had a food allergy in their lifetime (Nwaru et al. 2014b).

Anaphylaxis is relatively rare but its incidence appears to be increasing, at least in Europe (Allen and Koplin 2012; Nwaru et al. 2014a; Sheikh et al. 2008). The rate of fatalities from anaphylaxis is difficult to ascertain as reactions are not always diagnosed, and therefore tend to be underreported. One study suggested that, in the UK and Ireland, from 1990 to 2000, there were eight deaths due to anaphylaxis, slightly less than one per year (Macdougall et al. 2002). However, Pumphrey (2004) suggests higher rate of 214 fatalities in the UK due to anaphylaxis between 1992 and 2001, or around 24 deaths per year.

Attempts to develop potential disease-modifying treatments and possible cures for venom- and food-triggered anaphylaxis have had some notable recent success (Anagnostou et al. 2014; Dhami et al. 2014; Du Toit et al. 2015; Muraro et al. 2014) but such treatments are still experimental. At present, for most of those affected, management involves avoidance of exposure to allergy triggers and carrying adrenaline autoinjectors, which are the recommended emergency treatment for anaphylaxis. These devices enable injection with a measured dose of adrenaline, either by the person suffering the reaction or by someone else. They are often referred to as EpiPens, the name of the most common brand. In most cases, if used correctly, the adrenaline dose will reduce the effects of anaphylaxis until professional medical help is available. However, these devices are often not used when needed, with multiple barriers to proper use (Gallagher et al. 2011). There are also cases where two doses are required, and cases where fatalities have occurred despite autoinjector use.

Research indicates that anaphylaxis is a particular problem in adolescents, with higher rates of fatality for that age group than the population as a whole (Bock et al. 2007; Lockey 2012; Pumphrey and Gowland 2007; Sampson et al. 2006). Teenage deaths from anaphylaxis tend to be perceived as tragic and avoidable accidents. Clinicians often explain them by invoking stereotypes of adolescents as risk-taking or reckless. In-depth qualitative research on this issue, however, reveals a more complex situation, which this chapter will describe in detail. The chapter argues that anaphylactic episodes among young people result not primarily from recklessness but rather from the capacity of severe allergies to disrupt conventional expectations about bodies, spaces, and foods (Gallagher et al. 2012). Anaphylaxis is an unpredictable, rare event in which an elemental chaos momentarily breaks through the usual order of everyday life. Thriving bodies are suddenly made vulnerable; safe spaces become life-threatening; and nutritious foods turn toxic.

Anaphylaxis also disrupts the processes through which adolescents are learning to live more independently of parents or guardians. In the cultural context of Western nations such as the UK, adolescence is an important period of transition to greater independence – not for all young people, but for many. Learning how to judge and mitigate everyday risks is part of this transition and often that learning involves making mistakes along the way. Anaphylaxis, however, creates additional risks that are difficult if not impossible to assess and whose consequences can be fatal (Gowland 2002). Trial and error becomes a dangerous business.

3 The Geography of Anaphylaxis

There are different ways in which the geography of anaphylaxis can be understood. On a global scale, studies have identified uneven patterns of distribution of allergies. Anecdotally, it is often suggested that atopic conditions are more prevalent in so-called developed countries than in the "developing" world. Large international studies indicate that the situation is more complex, however. A global study of atopic eczema symptoms reported that:

> Interesting patterns emerge, such as a band of low disease prevalence running from China through central Asia to Eastern Europe and a marked range of prevalence differences within Europe, with low values throughout the former socialist Eastern Europe. Very high values were observed in developed countries, such as Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Data from African cities, such as Ibadan and Addis Ababa, suggest that atopic eczema is a major problem there as well, whereas data from Latin America and the Asia Pacific yield intermediate values for symptoms of atopic eczema prevalence (Williams et al. 1999, p. 133)

Global patterns of asthma have some similarities but also significant differences. Africa and Scandinavia, for example, both have high eczema prevalences but not high asthma prevalences (Beasley 1998). Why such variations are apparent remains a matter for speculation. Possible explanations include genetic factors, exposure to allergens, diet, environmental and climatic variables, socioeconomic factors, and medical factors such as levels of immunization and access to healthcare.

The global geographical distribution of anaphylaxis is more uncertain, as its rarity and difficulty of diagnosis make it challenging to investigate on a large scale. A study of England showed that living in the south of the country, in rural areas, and in affluent areas all appear to be associated with increased risk of anaphylaxis (Sheikh and Alves 2001). Other studies have suggested that vitamin D deficiency, linked to low exposure to sunlight, might explain variations in anaphylaxis across latitude (Hoyos-Bachiloglu et al. 2014; Mullins et al. 2009).

Another aspect of the geography of anaphylaxis is the role of globalized and industrialized food production in giving rise to reactions through cross-contamination. Tracing food commodity chains can be revealing. To take one example:

> In December 2010/January 2011, at least 6 peanut-allergic individuals experienced significant allergic reactions after eating a variety of seafood products in geographically-distinct areas in Australia. The products all contained a crumb coating, supplied by a company in Beijing, China, which in turn contained soy flour supplied by a third party company. It is believed that the supply chain for the soy flour involved a number of companies, one of which had changed its production line resulting in contamination from peanut flour.(Allen et al. 2014, pp. 1–2)

Another instance was the "nuts for spices" episode in early 2015. Tests carried out by the UK's Food Standards Agency indicated the contamination of spice products with nuts somewhere in the commodity chain, resulting in food products

being recalled across the UK and Europe (Bawden 2015). Such episodes illustrate how food-induced anaphylaxis is related to globalization. It is a health problem that is exacerbated by socioeconomic systems involving industrially processed foods, complex supply chains, and the international circulation of ingredients.

There are also smaller scale, everyday geographies of anaphylaxis. Of particular note are recent studies by Fenton et al. (2013) and Stjerna (2015) showing how the spatialities of safety and danger are different for children with severe allergies, producing distinctive emotional geographies. Both studies found that homes were experienced as spaces of safety, whereas schools and public places were seen as more risky, resulting in feelings of fear, uncertainty, a sense of constant threat, and experiences of exclusion. For example, Fenton et al. (2013) found that school cafeterias, relatively safe spaces for most children, were experienced by allergic children as anxiety-provoking. As a coping strategy, some had managed to find pockets of "safe" space at school, such as a music room where no food was allowed. Anxiety thus becomes spatialized in particular ways. The resulting landscape of risk, for children with these allergies, is significantly different to that of their nonallergic peers. The emotional disruptiveness of these risks is underlined by quantitative research showing significant negative impacts of allergy on anxiety and quality of life (e.g., Cummings et al. 2010a, b; Sicherer et al. 2001), including a study indicating that peanut allergy is more detrimental to quality of life than type 1 diabetes (Avery et al. 2003).

The spatialization of risk in relation to allergy becomes particularly problematic in adolescence. Studies of other chronic conditions have identified the teenage years as a time of conflict between the demands of health regimes and the desire to live a "normal" life (e.g., Balfe and Jackson 2007). For adolescents in so-called developed nations, a "normal" life includes activities such as socializing, traveling, living away from home, and experimenting with new situations and activities. These lifestyles sit uneasily with clinical recommendations for anaphylaxis self-management, which are based on risk-averse behaviors that are inevitably restrictive. The unpredictable geography of severe allergies, liable to flare up anywhere, at any time, means that clinicians, allergy experts, charities, and anxious parents attempt to counteract this chaotic force by advocating strict regimes: perpetual vigilance, diligent checking of food labels and ingredients, and spatial restrictions on everything from school trips to curry houses, in an effort to "control the uncontrollable" (Stjerna 2015, p. 289). Adolescents are urged to carry autoinjectors at all times and are labeled "noncompliant" by clinicians if they do not conform. Unlike some risk averse behaviors, these measures cannot easily be dismissed as an overreaction given the very real possibility of fatality. Teenagers themselves, meanwhile, vary in the extent to which they adopt, adapt, resist, or evade these forms of self-subjection. Their perceptions of risk and ways of coping are also varied, often differing from the views of parents and professionals, and also differing between individuals (Christensen and Mikkelsen 2008; Gallagher et al. 2011, 2012; Monks et al. 2010). Many find allergy management strategies restrictive and troublesome (Marklund et al. 2007). Management, from the adolescent point of view, tends to be less about compliance and more about finding a workable balance between taking allergies seriously while not allowing them to dominate their lives (Gallagher et al. 2012; MacKenzie et al. 2010).

These observations about the geography of anaphylaxis contribute to recent work on children's geographies of food. It has been recognized that food is an integral part of children's lives, involved in producing the family and domestic spaces; in performing social class, ethnic, and gender identities; in reproducing moral discourses surrounding health; in fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and care; in exercising power over children and in children's expressions of agency (Punch et al. 2010). Food allergies draw attention to another dimension of food: its role in the construction of risk.

Food and risk have been discussed in relation to children's practices of healthy eating (Backett-Milburn et al. 2010; Gibson and Dempsey 2015), through which "unhealthy" foods are constructed as risky. Research has also noted the effects on social relations of the health and safety regulations that govern institutional food spaces, such as kitchens in residential care (Dorrer et al. 2010; Punch and McIntosh 2013). Anaphylaxis, however, generates arguably more complicated, more unsettling risks arising unexpectedly in bodies that previously appeared "healthy," in spaces that might otherwise seem "safe," triggered by foods that may not be nutritionally "risky" in any obvious way. Protein sources such as milk, eggs, nuts, fish, often promoted as a source of growth, reveal a darker side: the capacity to make a body erupt, starving it of breath, ultimately to death. Fenton et al. (2013, p. 287) describe how children with allergies encounter "invisible risk materials," such as rumors or scents that hint at the presence of allergy triggers. In some cases, these risk materials are not only invisible but unknowable. As is explored in more detail below, adolescents in the study reported on in this chapter spoke of reactions from an incoherently disparate set of triggers: apple pie in a restaurant, the vapor of homemade lentil soup, canapes at a wedding, a supermarket ready meal curry, a free sample of chocolate in a shop, a chicken tikka baguette, moisturizing lotion. In some cases no trigger could be found.

Such risks have no obvious underlying logic. They are not easy to predict, identify, or avoid, and they have a strange spatiality that does not follow ordinary geographies of safety and danger or fit in with conventional moral geographies of "good" and "bad" foods (Curtis et al. 2010). In anaphylaxis, risk thus becomes doubly other, and hence intensified. Kelley et al. (1997) question the distinction made between "normal" risks to children, such as accidents and mistakes and "exceptional risks" such as physical or sexual abuse. Anaphylaxis thoroughly scrambles such distinctions, turning normal situations into exceptional ones. Thus while food can help to create trust (Kohli et al. 2010), anaphylaxis shows that food can also undermine trust, especially where foodstuffs are industrially produced, laced with traces of anonymous, complex, unknown global networks. As discussed below, adolescents frequently relate stories of severe reactions taking place after carefully checking the ingredients of food, and being informed that the allergen in question is not present, making it difficult to trust food providers. The risks of anaphylaxis also extend to other ordinarily benign encounters that do not involve food: bee stings, touching animal fur, and doing physical exercise. These unsettling, disruptive qualities of anaphylaxis are explored in more detail in subsequent sections of the chapter.

There are also wider implications. The geography of anaphylaxis is not restricted to particular anaphylactic episodes, or to people considered at risk of anaphylaxis, their families, friends, and health professionals. The reaction itself is rare, but the uncertainties it creates are more pervasive, contributing to what has been termed social anxiety (Jackson and Everts 2010; Jackson et al. 2013): a state of fearful anticipation which, while rooted in the felt experiences of individual subjects, circulates more widely through social institutions and cultural practices, including those surrounding food. In the case of anaphylaxis, these institutions and practices include media reportage of anaphylactic emergencies, charities such as Allergy UK and the Anaphylaxis Campaign, anaphylaxis management policies in schools and other institutions, and "may contain" trace labeling of foods, all of which work to produce a generalized state of alert.

Unpacking this last example in more detail, the risk of litigation following anaphylaxis has resulted in the widespread use of trace labeling, informing consumers that products "may contain" allergenic substances not listed in their ingredients. These labels engender particular anxieties in those at risk of anaphylaxis and their carers, who often find them confusing and difficult to interpret (Joshi et al. 2002; Sakellariou et al. 2010). Allergic individuals often perceive "may contain" labels as a strategic, cynical move by corporations to merely "cover their backs" in defense against litigation (Barnett et al. 2011; Monks et al. 2010). Again, trust is undermined. But the ubiquity of these labels also creates a more generalized sense of uncertainty about the contents of food among nonallergic consumers, who are now routinely made aware that their food may be contaminated by other foodstuffs. Trace labeling thus feeds into wider societal concerns about the contents of food under conditions of globalized, industrialized consumer capitalism. These collective anxieties, simmering in the background, are most noticeable in occasional high profile episodes, such as the controversy in the late 1980s over bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in beef, and the furor in 2013 in the UK and Europe when products advertised as beef were found to contain horsemeat.

To add further detail to this account of the geography of adolescent anaphylaxis, the following sections of the chapter draw on primary data from an in-depth qualitative study. The methods used are briefly outlined, followed by three empirical sections detailing how anaphylaxis disrupts adolescent bodies, spaces, and travel.

4   Methods

Semistructured in-depth interviews were used to examine the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of 26 adolescents living in Scotland and deemed to be at risk of anaphylaxis, indicated by: (i) anaphylaxis in the 5 years prior to recruitment or (ii) an earlier reaction and/or testing indicating high risk. Those who had previously experienced only mild reactions or reactions in early childhood were not included. Participants were purposively recruited through school nurses, specialist clinicians and primary care, the website of the Anaphylaxis Campaign (the main UK patient support organization, www.anaphylaxis.org.uk), and a press release. Participants of both genders

and from all ages within the teenage years were sought. Participants' parents were also invited to be interviewed, resulting in 17 interviews with mothers, five interviews with mothers and fathers both present, and one interview with a father.

Interviews were approximately 1 hour long, using topic guides informed by the literature, discussions with health professionals, and findings from a previous study (Akeson et al. 2007). Interviews were digitally audio-recorded, with permission, and later transcribed. Informed consent was obtained verbally and in writing, using an information sheet to structure discussion about the project. Interviews continued until data saturation was indicated by no significant new information being gathered. Focus groups were then held at which preliminary findings from the interviews were presented for further discussion: two groups with young people who had been interviewed, two groups with their parents, and half-day group discussion with 20 professionals working in anaphylaxis management across the UK. Again these were recorded and transcribed. Analysis was by thematic coding of transcripts using NVivo software. The coding framework was informed by the research aims and literature, and by the content of the data, based on detailed reading of transcripts by the research team. All participants have been pseudonymised.

5   Disrupting Bodies

Both adolescents and their parents spoke about the bodily effects of anaphylactic reactions, reporting the defining features of difficulty breathing and unconsciousness, and other typical symptoms such as vomiting, swelling of the mouth and eyes, and rashes on various parts of the skin. Clinical definitions of anaphylaxis list these symptoms in a rather dry, abstract way, but some adolescents – though not all – described anaphylaxis as a viscerally embodied, emotional experience:

> I sat doon and I couldnae move, like my arms felt so heavy and my legs felt so heavy and I just felt as though I was like having to lift up a weight or something. And then like my mooth a' went dry and swollen and my throat swelled up and then you start tae, like your eyes start tae go and so ye dae get scared like. (Claire, age 16)

> Although I was only six I'll still remember that day till the day I die because it was just horrific. I can just remember sitting in the back of the car not being able to breathe and being itchy all over, it's not a nice thing to go through when you're that young. (Steven, age 19)

Several participants gave animated accounts of dramatic bodily transformations that they had found unexpected, rapid, and alarming:

> I felt ma throat going. . .inside ma ears, the ear canal gets dead, dead itchy. . .I was scarlet, I swear, I could not believe it. . .and ma eyes were pink and all watery. (Catriona, age 19)

> A' of a sudden my lips started going a' like weird and tingly and that. And then I just turned roon and ma eyes were oot like that. . .and then my lips started to go a' blue and purple and like my veins started coming oot and that. . .This was like in a matter o' like two minutes or something. (Fiona, age 17)

These quotes convey a sense of the alarming emotional and physiological disruptions of anaphylaxis. The body becomes other, deteriorating from full health to a state of serious illness in the space of minutes.

Adolescence is already a time of bodily change and heightened awareness about body image, shape, and size, concerns that were explicitly articulated by some female interviewees. Anaphylaxis further intensifies this sense of bodily change. Some accounts of teenage anaphylaxis resonate with wider discourses of adolescence as bodily metamorphosis, evident in fictional superhero stories such as *Spiderman*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,* and the films *Teen Wolf* and *Jennifer's Body*. Positioned between the assumption of childhood innocence and the supposed fixity of the adult, the teenager is often figured as a site of disruption, an unstable body through which chaotic, supernatural, repressed, or forbidden forces erupt within a more ordered social fabric that struggles to contain them. These notions of teenage mutation form a potent combination with the horror-film-like qualities of anaphylaxis. The immune system, ordinarily a technology of protection, turns against what should be harmless environmental proteins, resulting in dramatic bodily changes that can be deadly. The body becomes its own enemy.

Not all interviewees expressed their reactions in these embodied, emotional terms. Some, particularly males, referred to allergies more as a nuisance or inconvenience. However, for those who spoke of anaphylaxis as a physically, affectively intense experience, the consequences appeared to be far reaching, shaping their attitudes toward everyday spaces and situations. It is to these spaces that this chapter now turns.

6   Disrupting Spaces

One of the most difficult aspects of anaphylaxis is its capacity to disrupt the safety of everyday spaces, particularly where food is consumed. Food is central to many forms of social interaction, and spaces of food consumption are used by adolescents for celebrations, rituals, and "hanging out" in leisure time. Adolescents use such spaces to experiment with and develop social relations, including friendships and sexual relationships. But eating spaces are particularly problematic for those at risk of food-triggered anaphylaxis (Bailey et al. 2011). Such spaces typically include eateries – fast food outlets, school canteens, cafes, restaurants, pubs, and wedding venues. Other food sources such as takeaway outlets, food stalls, and domestic spaces also present risks. For example, one young person reported a reaction after eating a free sample of chocolate in a shop, while another had a near-fatal reaction from a cookie bought at a ceilidh (a Scottish folk dance).

For most people, most of the time, eating spaces are relatively safe. In the UK, for example, eateries are subject to strict hygiene regulations enforced by environmental health officers. However, this system of regulatory power is ill-equipped to deal with food cross-contamination and has repeatedly proved incapable of controlling the minute quantities of allergen required to trigger anaphylaxis in the most sensitive individuals. Normal hygiene practices may be insufficient to prevent

cross-contamination: for example, peanut protein can be transferred by hands and via hard surfaces and is resistant to ordinary methods of cleaning (Brough et al. 2013).

The possibilities for allergen cross-contamination in eating and food preparation spaces are therefore manifold, disrupting allergic young people's sense of safety in these spaces. A number of young people reported instances where they had asked about allergens and been reassured that none were present – presumably in good faith – only to experience anaphylaxis after eating the food in question (see also Gowland 2002). Thus eating spaces were often locations in which trust was undermined:

> I always say to them, 'look I've got a really severe peanut allergy' and they bring out like the ingredients list and I check that there's no nuts and everything, and I speak to the chef and stuff. And I did all that …And I was having my dessert, it was like an apple pie, and like I had this kind of weird feeling in my throat [describes anaphylactic reaction]…So now I just don't trust people, like I just don't trust restaurants any more…there was nothing else I could have done (Sophie, age 19)

Asian eateries were reported as being particularly problematic. Many Asian foods contain allergens such as nuts, sesame, lentils, and fish, including in concealed forms such as ground nuts in korma or satay, ground lentils in pappadums, or fish sauce in Thai dishes. There are also language barriers in enquiring about ingredients, translating their names, and communicating the severity of anaphylaxis. The resulting risks are particularly salient because Asian food has become an important part of the social life of many UK teenagers:

> My friends, we're just getting into the stage where you go out for a curry kind of thing and this is the problem, because obviously curries are a no go for me. So I miss out on that and that's quite inconvenient, and they go to Chineses and stuff like this so you have to stay well away from those kind of places. (Phillip, age 16)

> I've been into the Indians and I've said has this got nuts, peanuts in it and they'll say no, but they make it with ground nut oil and they don't say that…so I had quite a bad one [anaphylactic reaction] because of that. (James, age 17)
>   curries are the ones that are going to have a huge amount of allergen in if it's contaminated…almond paste in the korma having about 40 % peanut in it, that's going to be a big allergic dose that will quite possibly kill someone even if they have adrenaline. So I wouldn't want to see someone holding their EpiPen and eating their curry in that circumstance. (Allergy specialist, focus group)

The perspective of this specialist contrasts sharply with that of a small number of adolescents, who had decided to accept the risks associated with eating Asian food as part of their social life. They took the view that the risk was manageable and expressed faith – probably misplaced – in adrenaline autoinjectors as a form of protection:

> She does have curries and she'll have her EpiPen and her antihistamines with her, because she eats korma…she's prepared to take the minimal risk of having a curry because she

thinks she's got everything in her bag and it's fine and it's safe, well that's OK by her. (Mother of Catriona, age 19)

I went to an Indian restaurant. . .and everyone's meal was coming with sprinkled nuts on. . .When the waiter came, I said is this definitely the one without nuts in it because I'm allergic and he was like, "yeah, yeah, it's fine". . .I was a bit apprehensive but I wasn't going to sort of not have anything, you know, I went out for a meal. And I had the EpiPen on me at the time as well, so whenever I have that on me I feel secure to have anything I want, I can eat anything with the EpiPen. (Donald, age 19)

These examples highlight the discrepancies between the allergy management norms of clinicians, based on specialized scientific knowledge, and the allergy management practices of adolescents, which are based more on previous experiences and the desire to live a "normal" life.

For these young people, as for the teenagers with diabetes studied by Balfe and Jackson (2007), "[r]isk is spatialised." Coping strategies are therefore also geographical, involving avoiding spaces perceived as risky or taking special precautions to render them safer, such as carrying emergency medication. As noted earlier, it has been suggested that allergic children experience schools and public spaces as dangerous, compared to the safety of the home (Fenton et al. 2013; Stjerna 2015). This differentiation between public danger and private safety is a recurring theme in research on children's geographies of risk (e.g., Harden 2000). Such views are in line with quantitative research showing that the majority of food-induced anaphylactic reactions and anaphylaxis fatalities occur outside the home (Bock et al. 2007; Pumphrey 2004; Pumphrey and Gowland 2007). However, the construction of the home as a safe haven sits uneasily with several reports from adolescents in our study of reactions in domestic spaces. In some cases, these reactions were caused by foods that parents or other trusted adults had provided, which again disrupted expectations of safety and risk:

Callum (13):I think there was something in the roll, because I'd just came back from nursery and my mum made me a roll and then it must have had like nuts in it like.
   Mother: We thought it maybe had cross contamination, it had been beside something, because usually the rolls are fine.

I came home from work, my mum was making like a big pot o lentil soup in the kitchen and I just sat, and I was sitting talking to her aboot my day and things like that and I was like, 'Mum', I said, 'I need to go in the room my throat's quite tingly'. . .And in the space o ten minutes ma body from head to toe was scarlet and my eyes were pink, my lips swelled up and my throat was near enough closed, I could barely breathe. (Catriona, age 19)

This second quote typifies the strange landscape of risk produced by anaphylaxis. The interviewee said that her mother had made lentil soup countless times previously without any adverse effects but on this occasion inhaling the vapor was enough to induce a near-fatal reaction. In such situations, anaphylaxis confounds expectations about spaces. It flies in the face of prior experiences, disrupting conventional codings of spaces, their meanings, and associations.

It should be noted that some participants related anaphylactic episodes that were the result of mistakes, which could have been avoided by checking or greater caution. Yet many interviewees described reactions which, far from being due to stereotypical teenage recklessness, were rather the result of the sheer unpredictability of the risks and which would have been practically impossible to avoid. Despite the emphasis of many clinicians on avoidance as the key to food allergy management, even the most diligent checking of ingredients sometimes failed to identify allergens. Anaphylaxis is thus a peculiar risk, highly unpredictable and resistant to knowledge.

7   Disrupting Travel

Another aspect of the geography of anaphylaxis is its effects on patterns of travel, particularly flights and overseas trips. In an age of budget airlines, cheap oil, and constant mobility, international travel has become one way in which many adolescents in "developed" countries learn to become autonomous. Yet participants reported difficulties managing allergies in foreign countries where there were language barriers and cultural differences:

> In Paris we were eating out and we kind of talked to the waiter and he didn't really understand any of it. Luckily we got a translation card which had like it all in French so we gave him that and carried on. We realised it just, I don't know, it just didn't feel like he knew much about it at all to be honest. (Chris, age 16)

> In Spain, I just was really keen that she had a hot meal and we found a restaurant where someone spoke good English, explained really, really carefully…they brought a piece of nice fish that had been fried in olive oil and she assured us the fish were fried in olive oil and nothing else in the oil. And when the chips came she started eating them, there was a peanut sitting right in the middle of the chips…we were both really depressed by that. (Mother of Susan, age 15)

Flights were also seen as risky due to the possibility of nuts being served on board as a snack, the potential for allergens to be recirculated in the enclosed atmosphere of the cabin, the difficulty of bringing adrenaline autoinjectors through airport security, and the lack of access to medical help during the journey (Comstock et al. 2008; Shehata and Sheikh 2007). Some interviewees reported that airlines seemed increasingly aware of allergies, not serving nuts on board or removing them from a flight if given advance notice. Others recounted less positive experiences:

> They served nuts on the flight and we'd said, you know, Helen [daughter] was allergic to nuts and we had presumed they didn't serve nuts…when she was airborne she got extremely asthmatic because of the airborne allergies. (Mother of Helen, age 15)

The slippage here between two different meanings of airborne is revealing. The threat is both from being in the air and from the air itself.

Responses to these risks varied. Some had decided to avoid any foreign travel without their parents. At the other end of the spectrum, a few young people, particularly those with foreign language skills, said that they had no problems with traveling independently. Most young people and parents reported making some overseas trips, but many spoke of being restricted in where they felt able to go. There was a tendency to favor English-speaking countries and European destinations as a way of reducing risks. For example, two interviewees attended the same school, through which they had the opportunity to go on an organized exchange trip to South Africa. Both spoke about this, and both had decided that it was too risky:

> I'm not going on that this year because I'm really worried. . .I mean God knows where the nearest hospital is, do they know what anaphylaxis is, if you know what I mean, so I think that would be suicidal going out there. So yeah it does cripple me like that. (Phillip, age 16)

> I've said to her look, you know, your school is the kind of school that, they would go to a lot of lengths to make it happen that you would go to Africa and she said, "Actually I've thought about it", she said. . ."I don't really want to be in a situation where I'm worried everyday about what I eat and have to take all my own food", she said, "It's just not worth it, I'm not going to go", she said. So I mean she's making decisions and limiting her own life. (Mother of Susan, age 15)

For those who had decided to travel abroad, there was also a perception that eateries would be particularly unsafe. Again, this resulted in self-imposed spatial restrictions in a bid to manage the risks involved:

> I just stick to British bars and ma breakfasts and ma pizza and chips but always British. So I cannae explore the cuisine, I always have to go like, to like the crap places, like where everyone's Scottish and fat (laughter), ken. . .Rangers bars. . .I cannae go anywhere that's Spanish or, like because everything is going to made wi' it [peanuts] because it's foreign and they're no gonnae listen. (Fiona, age 17)

> I went to Bulgaria recently and I had problems there. . .we found a restaurant that was owned by, I think it was an American franchise so most of the people there were speaking pretty good English and they said, 'no there's no nuts in our food', so I just went there every day. . .I just stuck to pizza and spaghetti (laughs). (Steven, age 19)

Despite these risks, challenges, and restrictions, there was a sense from many interviewees – both parents and young people – that traveling without parents was beneficial as a way of helping adolescents become more independent. Most parents expressed anxieties, but said that despite these worries it was important for their children to develop spatial freedom: "they've got to live their life, they've got to live with it." (Mother of Sophie, age 19) School trips and scout camps were

mentioned as affording valuable opportunities for travel with a "safety net" of supervision. Young people and their parents attempted to mitigate risks by choosing relatively "safe" locations, speaking with trip leaders beforehand, obtaining translation cards and other preparations. These methods of risk management mean that international travel is possible, but is more complicated for adolescents at risk of anaphylaxis than for their peers, and the range of possible destinations and experiences is more limited.

8   Discussion: Living with Risk

The previous sections have mapped out some of the ways in which anaphylaxis disrupts the geography of adolescence. Looking across these findings, it is clear that the influence of anaphylaxis goes far beyond the rare moments when reactions take place. Everyday spaces are experienced as *potentially* threatening. One can never be sure where or when a reaction will strike. Adolescents at risk of anaphylaxis are learning to be independent in a world that harbors the possibility of death in unlikely spaces, a specter hovering in the background that is remarkably resistant to knowledge.

In theory then, the severely allergic adolescent must learn to live as though deadly allergy triggers are present everywhere, even if they are in fact present only in some situations. In this respect, anaphylaxis is reminiscent of Foucaultian panopticism insofar as it exerts a powerful influence by generating a state of constant uncertainty (Foucault 1977):

> I need to kind o live my life on the risk that something is going to happen or something might never happen. So it's basically like living a risk kind o' thing. (Claire, age 16)

> It's so dangerous, honestly it's really, really, it's like mine territory, you just need to watch what you're doing kind of thing, you always need to be worried something's going to happen. (Catriona, age 19)

One of the most important features of panoptic power is the tendency to inculcate self-surveillance in subjects. Adolescents spoke about taking up, as forms self-management, the regimes of allergen avoidance, ingredient checking, and autoinjector carriage advocated by clinicians, allergy charities, and parents. Such activities align with wider currents of neoliberal biopower, in which individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves rather than agitating for changes in larger social structures, such as food regulation and manufacturing processes. At the same time, most adolescents adapted allergy management regimes to fit with their everyday lives, balancing the challenges of severe allergy with the desire to lead a "normal" life. These adaptations included making choices about where to eat, what to eat, and which countries to travel to. Some adolescents were

more "compliant" while others deviated considerably from what health professionals would regard as "good" self-management.

9   Conclusion

This chapter has examined how anaphylaxis shapes the geographies of adolescence by disrupting teenage bodies, everyday eating spaces, and patterns of international travel. The resulting discussions have contributed to recent research in children's geographies of food and of risk in several ways.

First, the chapter has provided one example of how food is involved in the production and management of risk, in relation to young people, in a "developed" country, under conditions of globalized industrial food production. In the case of anaphylaxis, these risks are profoundly unstable and unpredictable. Anaphylaxis is a chaotic force that disrupts the modernist fantasy of regulated, orderly space. This disruption is felt by bodies in the event of a reaction but also in a more pervasive sense of being "at risk" that affects young people's experiences of eating, travel, and becoming independent from parents. Other notable empirical findings include the capacity of food to destroy trust as well as to create it, and the mismatch between the perceived safety of home and the near-fatal reactions that occasionally take place there. The chapter has also argued that the effects of anaphylaxis ripple outwards into wider social anxieties, through media reportage of anaphylactic fatalities, trace labeling, institutional management policies, and so on. Seemingly innocuous foods and spaces are increasingly placed under suspicion of allergen contamination, fuelling a generalized uncertainty that links up with other anxieties about food safety.

The chapter has suggested that anaphylaxis self-management is part of a broader preoccupation in modern societies with controlling risk. It can thus be understood as a form of biopower through which individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health. These regimes, like discourses of healthy eating, implicitly shift responsibility away from food producers and onto consumers, intensifying self-surveillance and the self-regulation of everyday life. However, in some cases this intensification of the relation of self to self also introduced space for a degree of autonomy. Few interviewees were as strictly observant as allergy specialists might have liked but likewise few showed signs of outright recklessness in relation to their allergies. Despite the potential dangers involved, the majority had selectively adopted some aspects of recommended allergy management while adapting or resisting other aspects, fashioning their own ways of living with risk and uncertainty.

These findings suggest that clinicians and parents ought to support allergic adolescents to make informed choices about how to manage risks, rather than to dictate adherence to unrealistically restrictive regimes. Another way to support adolescents would be through campaigns, perhaps involving legal action, to push responsibility back onto private and public sector organizations, demanding foods,

eating spaces, and travel spaces in which cross-contamination is more carefully controlled.

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Young People's Drinking Geographies

23

Samantha Wilkinson

Contents

Abstract

Studies undertaken by scholars in a range of disciplines in, and beyond, geography have provided important insights into geographical issues pertaining to young people's alcohol consumption practices, for instance, elucidating experiences in a range of drinking microgeographies, such as bars, pubs, and clubs, along with differences between drinking in public and private realms and between urban and rural areas. This chapter aims to synthesize existing literature, from a range of international contexts, which brings to the fore the diverse microgeographies within which young people consume alcohol while also giving an indication of how young people manage their well-being in such spaces. Two key analytical points can be distilled from the body of work presented in this chapter. First, scholars have been somewhat fixated with preformed drinking spaces, such as bars, pubs, and clubs – typically in city centers. Second, studies exploring the ways in which spaces and places are

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fundamental constituents of experiences of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness are largely theoretical. To expand, drinkscapes have typically been conceived as passive backdrops to young people's drinking practices; and, more than this, spaces have predominantly been rendered fixed, bounded, terrains. These omissions are significant because health promotion and education discourses seeking to address problematic dimensions of young people's alcohol consumption practices are limited by their incapacity to acknowledge and address the spaces in which drinking occurs. Consequently, this chapter goes beyond bars, pubs, and clubs to consider spaces young people create themselves as drinkscapes, including: squares, streets, parks, waterscapes, and homes. Further, this chapter signposts theoretical apparatus which may assist future researchers in elucidating the agentic and fluid capacities of young people's drinking geographies, namely, the more-than-representational conceptual tools of actor-network theory and (im)mobilities.

1   Introduction

By elucidating the *lived experiences* of young people's alcohol consumption practices in a range of spaces, this chapter responds to Evans' (2008, p. 1675) call for a more "youthful" geography, that is, one that engages with "young people's experiences around issues of 'fun', exuberance, and the excitement of new opportunities and possibilities." This chapter also seeks to highlight how young people conserve their well-being while consuming alcohol, and it is argued from the outset that they do so by exercising what Brain (2000, p. 9) terms "calculated…hedonism." That is, they generally consume alcohol in a planned, carefully controlled manner, drinking with specific people, at certain times, and "mark out pleasure spaces in which they can plan to 'let loose.'" Young people then, practice a "controlled loss of control" (Measham 2004, p. 338), by choosing with whom, when, and – of particular importance to this chapter – *where* they drink. It is, therefore, reassuring that studies undertaken by scholars in a range of disciplines in, and beyond, geography, including medical and health studies, psychology, sociology, and politics, have provided rich, detailed research considering geographical issues pertaining to young people's alcohol consumption experiences. Themes include: exploring a range of drinking microgeographies, such as bars, pubs, and clubs, and differences between drinking in public and private realms along with urban and rural areas. However, as Holloway et al. (2009) assert, the alcohol study literature has privileged preformed drinking spaces, such as bars, pubs, and clubs – typically in city centers – at the expense of spaces young people carve out for themselves as drinkscapes.

Further, Jayne et al. (2008) review the extant literature and come to the conclusion that the ways in which spaces and places are fundamental constituents of experiences of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness have largely operated in a theoretical vacuum. To be more specific, the authors contend that there is a distinct lack of appreciation of the agentic capacities of spaces to shape drinking experiences (Jayne et al. 2008). More than this though, Jayne et al. (2012), drawing on empirical research undertaken in Australia, articulate that drinking spaces have been treated as static, fixed, bounded terrains, thereby failing to engage with young people's movements in, and through, drinkscapes. These are important neglects because, as Harrison et al. (2011) rightly argue, based in an Australian context, yet the point has great credence for contexts elsewhere: health promotion and education discourses seeking to address problematic dimensions of young people's alcohol consumption practices are limited by their incapacity to acknowledge and address the settings in which drinking occurs. This chapter is therefore timely in its dual aims of: synthesizing literature which elucidates the diverse microgeographies within which young people consume alcohol and signposting means in which the agentic and fluid capacities of drinking spaces can be brought to the fore.

This chapter is structured as follows: first, a cursory glance at the alcohol study literature, written by both non-geographers and geographers, highlights the importance of spaces for young people's drinking experiences. Second, this chapter explores research on the preformed drinking spaces of bars, pubs, and clubs, drawing on literature surrounding the nighttime economy. Third, this chapter moves beyond the current academic preoccupation with preformed drinking spaces to consider young people's creation of their own public drinking spaces, in squares, streets, parks, and waterscapes, respectively. Fourth, the importance of the home as a drinking space is explored from three predominant angles: the home as a pre-drinking arena for young people, the home as a space of partying for young people, and the home as a space in which young people experience hangovers. Fifth, this chapter proposes ways in which current research on the microgeographies of young people's drinking can be advanced. In doing so, the potential of actor-network theory as a means of accounting for the agentic forces of spaces – this is to mean the capacities of spaces to transform the relational, affective, and embodied experiences of young people's alcohol consumption practices (Duff 2012) – is explored. It is also articulated that an additional means of making strides toward understanding young people's drinking geographies is to address Jayne et al.'s (2012) plea for research which appreciates that drinking spaces are not static or bounded. It is thus argued, heeding Jayne et al. (2012), that future research should pay attention to young people's alcohol-related (im)mobilities in, and through, a variety of drinkscapes.

2   Alcohol Studies, Geography, and Young People

A significant body of alcohol research, beyond the geographical canon, has discussed the ways in which issues pertaining to young people's alcohol consumption practices play out in different spaces and places. An indicative list includes, but

is by no means limited to: motives surrounding pre-drinking at home before a night out (Ostergaard and Andrade 2014); alcohol, excitement, and violence for outer-suburban young adults in the inner city at night (MacLean and Moore 2014); the production of drinking spaces in, and outside, nightlife areas (Demant and Landolt 2014); and maintaining "youth" identity within the British nighttime leisure economy (Smith 2013). Moreover, research has focused on: students' hazardous drinking behaviors across campus housing at women's liberal art college (Zamboanga et al. 2009), the home as a space in which young people in Norway recover from hangovers (Fjaer 2012), how guides at an international nightlife resort help young tourists lower their inhibitions and reach states of collective effervescence through alcohol (Tutenges 2011), and a comparison of the meaning and function of young people's alcohol use during the "rite of passage" to adulthood in Italy and Norway (Beccaria and Sande 2003). An implicit supposition in much of this growing corpus of research by non-geographers addressing young people's experiences of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness is that the spaces and places in which young people drink are of importance.

In a similar vein, geographers of children and young people have enhanced understandings of the spatialities of young people's alcohol consumption practices and experiences. Examples of pertinent literature include: young people's alcohol consumption experiences in relation to nightlife in British cities (Hadfield 2007), segmented consumption spaces in the British nighttime economy (Hollands 2002), and young men "hanging around" pubs waiting for people to buy them alcohol from off-licenses in New South Wales, Australia (Kraack and Kenway 2002). Additionally, research conducted in the UK has resulted in literature on: young people and cultures of alcohol consumption in rural environments (Valentine et al. 2008), young women's emotional and embodied experiences of drinking in the countryside (Leyshon 2008), masculinities and femininities in public and private drinkscapes (Holloway et al. 2009), and the role of the affective space of family life in molding preteen's knowledge about alcohol's social and health implications (Valentine et al. 2014). Such geographical attention illustrates that, over a fairly short time period, there has been a flourishing interest in alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness among geographers of children and young people. Undoubtedly, such research has provided key insights into the ways in which spaces and places are significant to young people's drinking experiences. However, much more needs to be done because, as earlier articulated, health promotion and education discourses seeking to address problematic dimensions of young people's drinking are limited by their failure to fully appreciate the spaces in which drinking occurs (Harrison et al. 2011). The predominant aim of the main body of this chapter is, therefore, to synthesize pertinent alcohol study literature, in order to give an indication of the diversity of spaces in which young people consume alcohol. To begin, young people's drinking experiences in preformed drinking spaces of the nighttime economy, including bars, pubs, and clubs, are explored.

3   Diversity of Young People's Drinking Spaces

3.1   Preformed Drinking Spaces

The contemporary geographical imaginary of drinking is predominantly one of the city center issues (Holloway et al. 2008), typified by a large body of work on the nighttime economy. This work has been useful in addressing important issues relating to young people's experiences of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness. For instance, based on research conducted in the UK, Hollands (2002) explores how mainstream forms of youth identity and consumption overshadow minority elements of neo-tribal and hybrid forms of youth identity, thereby segregating young people into particular spaces and places in cities. Additionally, Boyd (2010), using the example of artist-identified indie kids' relationship to Vancouver's entertainment district – the "mainstream" club district of the Granville strip – contends that social nightlife practices shape a particular subcultural group's relationship with city spaces. Moreover, the author asserts that this is a bidirectional process. Boyd (2010) posits that Vancouver's entertainment district is an actively produced, normalizing space which produces, maintains, and reiterates the moral contour of heterosexuality within the city. Boyd (2010) argues that those who articulated negative experiences of mainstream clubs lining Granville Strip found more positive experiences of sexuality and gender at indie clubs. That is, the participants felt indie events were more open to various sexualities in a manner discouraged in the dance clubs on the strip (Boyd 2010). Both Hollands (2002) and Boyd (2010) then can be seen to conceptualize the city as a segregated drinking space.

Further to this, Ayres and Treadwell (2012) have argued that the UK nighttime economy is a space where young people from different subcultures *converge* in the pursuit of leisure and pleasure. Moreover, Smith (2013) has posited that, in the absence of traditional forms of community and social order, the British leisure nighttime economy functions as the field upon which many young people seek to develop a sense of *communitas* and belonging. Smith (2013) has argued that the pubs and bars of the high streets are spaces in which relations and friendships are sought, developed, and maintained. However, the author is at pains to point out that such friendships and community ties forged in the nighttime economy can be experienced as weak (Smith 2013). Despite articulating that the nighttime economy shows some signs of convergence in young people's pursuit of consumption spaces, Ayres and Treadwell (2012) – based on research into alcohol, cocaine, and violence in the nighttime economy among football fans – remark that young men in their study, unlike other nighttime economy regulars, spend match days in the nighttime economy's pubs and clubs. Interestingly then, the traditional demarcation between day and night leisure does not apply for this subculture (Ayres and Treadwell 2012). It is, therefore, of significant importance to appreciate that different groups of young people may use the same spaces at different times and in different ways.

Moving away from a sole focus on the inner city, MacLean and Moore (2014), drawing on research conducted in Melbourne, explore the experiences of outer-suburban young people in the inner city at night. The authors assert that young people are drawn to the city center nighttime economy. According to MacLean and Moore (2014), more so for outer-suburban young people than those living in closer proximity to the city, going out in the city is an event distinguished from the everyday. While such participants articulated being "hyped up" in the inner city, they also spoke about discomfort, danger, and fear. Interestingly, MacLean and Moore (2014) posit that violence is most likely to occur at points where the young people felt a dissonance between this heightened affective state and the spaces they found themselves in. To draw on one of MacLean and Moore's (2014) examples, young people may feel suddenly out of place in the nighttime economy when denied entry to a club, due to some perceived unsuitability. To draw on a second of MacLean and Moore's (2014) examples, having left a club, young people may feel emotionally drained while waiting for a taxi. In both instances, this disconnection between young people's embodied drunkenness and the spaces they find themselves in has the potential to lead to violence.

There has, undoubtedly, been an empirical preoccupation in the alcohol studies literature with preformed drinking spaces (Holloway et al. 2009). However, work on such spaces is certainly important and needed. A case in point is Brooks' (2011) research into young Scottish women's adoption of safety advice when socializing in bars, pubs, and clubs. Brooks (2011) illustrates that women deploy strategies, such as covering the tops of bottles, taking drinks to the toilet, pretending to be married, and staying with friends at all times, in an attempt to stay safe. Along similar lines, Scottish students in Bancroft's (2012) study who went out in pairs would arrange a designated meeting spot in the event of being separated. Echoing Bancroft (2012) then, the nature of clubs as drinking spaces means that informal management of the drinking experience is often left to friends.

Although the majority of the studies relayed in this section have utilized the term "nighttime economy," it is noteworthy that Shaw (2014) recently rejected this term as a synonym for "urban night." The reasons for this are twofold. First, by adopting a nighttime economy perspective, the city at night is reduced to the bars and clubs making up city centers. Second, the nighttime city is reduced to the economic means of relating between these. Instead, Shaw (2014) seeks to describe the nighttime city center as an affective atmosphere, emerging from the arranging of practices, bodies, and materials. While not having an explicit focus on young people, Shaw's (2014) work offers promise for future alcohol study research to move beyond the current empirical preoccupation with bars, pubs, and clubs. Additionally, Shaw (2014) urges researchers to move beyond the city center, to study suburbs, towns, and homes. With Shaw's (2014) request in mind, this chapter now seeks to bring together existing literature in which authors have considered ways in which young people create their own drinkscapes in a diverse range of public spaces.

4   Creating Public Drinking Spaces

According to Townshend and Roberts (2013), the success of government measures prohibiting under 18s entering pubs, bars, and clubs means that, while underage drinking in licensed premises is not so much of a prevalent issue, unsupervised alcohol consumption by young people is now more concealed, occurring either in parks or private homes. This coincides somewhat with Trell et al's. (2013) assertion that the illegal status of alcohol for those under 18 years old, in most parts of the world, means that when those under the legal drinking age consume alcohol, they are likely to do so in spaces and places which are secluded and out of sight of any forms of external control, including adults and the police. Rurality, according Trell et al. (2013), affords young people isolated spaces in which they can create informal drinking opportunities. This coincides with Leyshon's (2008) contention that rural young people attempt to carve out spaces to drink, such as in parks, which are beyond the adultist gaze.

The ways in which young women in the rural South West of England produce, negotiate, and experience identity through an exploration of their embodied alcohol consumption practices were sought by Leyshon (2008). The author asserts that, in rural areas, pubs, clubs, bedrooms, and parks are all arenas in which identities are performed; rural young women move between such spaces to experiment with alcohol and alternative femininities and "do" gender (Leyshon 2008). Also with a rural focus, yet based in Estonia, Kobin (2012) notes that young people exercise stronger self-governance over their drinking, as the countryside offers less anonymity than urban areas, and thus drunken rowdiness is more likely to be witnessed by friends, family, and future employers. However, Kobin (2012) concurrently proposes that some young people feel "freer" drinking in the countryside, more able to "fall down" or "fumble around" in spaces where nobody knows them. Young people in Kobin's (2012, p. 28) study contend that, in the city, people's drinking is considered more proper, whereas consuming alcohol in rural areas is often seen as "vulgar, degraded and unrefined – drinking like an 'animal.'" As Trell et al. (2013) assert, there are positive effects of young people having their own spaces to socialize in and perform their identities. However, echoing Trell et al. (2013) once more, one must not downplay the fact that, when combined with alcohol, and the absence of forms of external control, there can be negative implications for the well-being of young people, including conflict situations and fights.

While social control mechanisms are more readily present for those drinking in the city, for many young people drinking in rural areas, a lack of surveillance and external control is a key feature. Trell et al. (2013) provide the example of "bush parties" in remote outdoor locations of Estonia, contending that these are accessible to all, yet out of the adultist gaze, and thereby provide a particularly high risk to the well-being of young people. Moreover, in Kobin's (2012) study, the author highlights that young people perceive the risks of drink driving to be different depending on space. To explain, the city is perceived to encompass more dangers,

or possibilities of having an accident and getting caught, whereas rural areas are perceived as much safer. It is tempting in this light to state, following Kobin (2012): drinking spaces and places carry particular behavioral norms that impact on the drinking practices of young people and the limits of acceptable or unacceptable drunkenness. This was a point likewise advanced by Fabrizio et al. (2013). The authors assert that drinking spaces have their own rules, perhaps only implicit or informal, which may encourage or restrict alcohol consumption.

Consuming alcohol in "marginal" public spaces should not solely be envisaged as a rural phenomenon. Valentine et al. (2010), based on research conducted in an urban area in the Midlands (Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire), in the UK, point out that young people in urban areas also consume alcohol in arenas in which adult rules can be transgressed with greater ease. Such spaces include: church yards, bus shelters, outside youth clubs, parks, and streets. Additionally, Cullen (2011) undertook research in a town on the edge of a large city in England and argued that age restrictions on entry into licensed establishments mean that teenage girls' drinking stories were based on adventures in outdoor, hidden locations such as parks, graveyards, and the riverbank, where sexual adventure and hiding from the police were fundamental elements in such stories. The author contends that such "wild spaces" become an older playground for teenagers to play.

Further, with a focus in Zurich, Switzerland, Demant and Landolt (2014) consider young people's alcohol consumption in Katzenplatz – a square located in Zurich. The authors argue that this space is not a preformed drinking space. Rather, Demant and Landolt (2014) posit that Katzenplatz *became* a "comfortable youth drinking space" due to the "thrown-togetherness" of disparate factors, including: the square's location, alcohol availability, and the privacy and intimacy afforded by the place. However, as the authors are keen to point out, "comfortable youth drinking space" is not the only possible event of this place. To explain, when the police interrupt young people's alcohol consumption practices, the space is transformed. Further, Demant and Landolt (2014) explore alcohol consumption on the street within the vicinity of nightclubs. The authors recognize that during a night out, young people frequently exit and (re)enter clubs to drink the less expensive alcohol they have hidden outside on the streets. Thus, while the street is not initially young people's chosen location, it is a space which is frequently visited by young people. As Demant and Landolt (2014) deduce, the streets are considered to be more than "going outside to grab a drink" – they are also considered to be a party zone. To sum then, paraphrasing Demant and Landolt (2014), drinking can be said to be shaped by the specific space of inner-city drinking zones.

The importance of streets as drinking spaces for young people who may not be permitted to consume alcohol in their home (or others' homes) and are legally forbidden to consume alcohol in licensed premises was the focus of Pennay and Room's (2012) work. More than this though, based on research conducted in the UK, New Zealand, and Australia, the authors highlight that young people may prefer drinking in spaces other than licensed premises because these venues are restricting in multiple ways, including: size, smell, noise, permissible behavior, and type of entertainment provided. It is important to highlight that there may be other

reasons young people avoid certain spaces to drink in. This is certainly the case for some participants in Madriaga's (2010) study. The author highlights that some students with Asperger syndrome find obstacles locating themselves in spaces where students tend to congregate, such as student unions and pubs, due to their hypersensitivities to sounds, sights, and crowds. From this, it can be argued that those with Asperger syndrome may prefer spaces to drink which are devoid of auditory and visual overstimulation. Pennay and Room (2012) advance additional reasons young people may prefer to drink in open public spaces, such as streets. To provide an example, as licensed premises are open to the public, young people cannot be selective about who they are drinking with and may find it difficult to remain together as a group with their chosen companions. However, Penny and Room (2012) point out that there have been attempts to prohibit public drinking in certain urban public spaces, via the implementation of street drinking bans. Echoing Pennay and Room (2012), it must be recognized that the enforcement of street drinking bans can lead to displacement occurring, often resulting in drinkers moving to more covert, less safe, spaces to drink in. One such space is the park, as will now be explored.

In line with Townshend (2013), it is worth noting that, while engagement with open green space is often deemed positive for young people's health and well-being, drinking outdoors and unsupervised in parks are often considered to be a risky behavior indulged in by teenagers. Based on empirical research conducted in England, Townshend (2013) argues that while drinking in parks (streets, the beach, and a disused quarry) is a widespread practice among young people, many young people disapprove of this behavior, labeling it "trampy" or "chavvy." Elsewhere, Townshend and Roberts (2013) remark that many young people deem drinking in parks to be pointless or a sign of having low esteem and are thus "trying to be hard" in an attempt to camouflage this. Some participants in Townshend and Roberts' (2013) study comment on the perceived dangers of consuming alcohol in parks, asserting that it may lead to being attacked, injured, or taken advantage of sexually; there were particular concerns about being unable to summon help. Consequently, Townshend and Roberts (2013) contend that there is an unwillingness of some young people, particularly girls, to go to parks where street drinkers can dominate or intimidate. More generally though, those who admitted drinking in the park claimed it was a relatively harmless activity and felt they were often harshly judged.

In the context of rural Estonia, Trell et al. (2013) argue that, while the home is considered to be a safe, relatively private, space to experiment with alcohol and test one's limits, the home does not afford many opportunities for young people to expand their social space by meeting new people. Trell et al. (2013) contend that spaces, such as the hamburger kiosk, provide greater possibilities for such encounters. For rural Estonian young people, the hamburger kiosk – a combination of fast food café and a grocery store – is a meeting place in which alcohol is accessible and only occasionally subject to police presence. Interestingly, and consistent with the findings in Townshend and Roberts' (2013) previously mentioned study on parks, Trell et al. (2013) articulate that, while both males and females frequent the hamburger kiosk, young women express discomfort with meeting at this space in

the evening, due to its reputation as a drinking space, often associated with trouble. It is noteworthy that there is a seasonal aspect to where young people choose to consume alcohol; Trell et al. (2013) emphasize that, while in the winter months the popularity of the hamburger kiosk is pronounced, in summer, young people prefer meeting outdoors, particularly to drink by the old railway dam and the lake.

Going into more depth on the theme of waterscapes as important sites for young people to consume alcohol, Sinkinson (2014) focuses on alcohol consumption in, on, and around water in New Zealand. For the young people in Sinkinson's (2014) study, trips to the beach, and barbeques by the pool, are typical events involving the consumption of alcohol. Other activities involve jumping into water from decks, walls, or cliffs. Young people recognize that consuming alcohol during activities in, and around, water may add to potential risks of injury or death. Some participants in Sinkinson's (2014) study distinguish that the type of activity may have a lower or higher degree or risk. For some, activities involving alcohol in closed water environments, such as private pool parties, constitute a lower degree of risk than activities taking place in open water. Additionally, being *around* water is considered to constitute a lesser degree of risk than being *in* water (Sinkinson 2014). The young people in Sinkinson's (2014) study deploy strategies to keep themselves safe against the potential risks associated with combining aquatics and alcohol. These can be individual rules, such as limiting the amount of alcohol they consume or not drinking when participating in water activities, not swimming, or exercising more caution. Additionally, Sinkinson (2014) discusses "sober minders" as techniques young people deploy in order to increase safety. "Sober minders" are the presence of a person or people, who adopt the role of minders, along with having sober people outnumber intoxicated people. To sum, despite drinking in high-risk spaces, young people in Sinkinson's (2014) study articulate strategies they utilize in order to maintain their own, and others' well-being. This coincides with Brain's (2000, p. 8) notion of "bounded hedonistic consumption," whereby young people allow themselves the pleasures of consuming alcohol, yet carefully plan which spaces they deem safe to do so in. However, it is the contention here that it is perhaps more aptly termed "(un)bounded hedonistic consumption," recognizing that young people's drinking microgeographies are mobile, fluid, and continually in flux – a point which will be expanded on later in this chapter. First though, having discussed how young people transform a variety of public spaces into drinkscapes, this chapter turns to explore young people's creative transformation of the home into *their* drinking space.

5   Creating Private Drinking Spaces

The importance of the home as an arena for drinking has been explored by Holloway et al. (2008), in their study of alcohol consumption in two English cities. As the authors rightly contend, studies considering drinking at home typically focus on the problems associated with drinking, for instance, domestic violence. Consequently, Holloway et al. (2008) go on to argue that research is needed into the more

"everyday" home drinking practices of a broader diversity of social groups, who would not necessarily consider themselves as having an alcohol problem. That said, there are some noteworthy studies seeking to highlight the ways in which the home is used by young people in relation to alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness. Drawing on such literature, three main themes are discussed in this section: the home as a pre-drinking space, the home as a space for alcohol-related partying, and the home as a space in which to recover from hangovers, respectively.

As Barton and Husk (2014) contend, in the UK, the traditional pub-club model of drinking by young people has begun to be transcended by a home-pub-club model of drinking. Put another way, the pub or bar has ceased to become the locus of early evening drinking, with early evening drinking in the domestic sphere becoming the norm (Barton and Husk 2014). The reasons for pre-drinking (also termed preloading, pre-gaming, front-loading, or prinks) in the home environment typically center around the "it's cheap" approach (Ostergaard and Andrade 2014). However, Barton and Husk (2014) seek to move toward an understanding of pre-drinking beyond cost as the single explanatory factor. In Barton and Husk's (2014) study, the pre-drinkers interviewed report the "home" part of drinking as the best part of the evening. To explain, the home offers a safe, secure, environment to relax in, prior to entering the somewhat "chaotic" environments of bars, pubs, and clubs. Moreover, the home provides a space for young people to cement and enhance social bonds, to gain confidence, along with an arena in which to meet likeminded people. Further, participants in Barton and Husk's (2014) study favor the ability to tailor the drinking environment to their tastes, for instance, through the music they play and the volume of this music. To summarize, during pre-drinking, the atmosphere and physical layout of the home can be manipulated to suit the desires of the drinkers. It is thus unsurprising that the home is not only popular among young people for pre-drinking but also for alcohol-associated partying, as is now explored.

The popularity of the home for alcohol-associated partying is recognized by Trell et al. (2013). The authors contend that, for rural young Estonians, partying at home may be both safer and more comfortable than partying in a pub or a park, for example, as it avoids young people traveling on relatively dangerous countryside roads. Moreover, in their study of Danish teenagers' partying, Demant and Ostergaard (2007) argue that consuming alcohol during house parties is one way in which the parents' dining room is creatively transformed into a space for teenage partying. Often the size of the house is a factor defining the size of the party, which can vary from a few close friends, to very large parties, where young people jointly invite all their friends (Demant and Ostergaard 2007). As Demant and Ostergaard (2007) importantly highlight, at larger house parties, young people feel greater pressure to consume more units of alcohol and likewise if they are partying with older young people. Prior to house parties, young people may gather together in smaller groups, or "warm up" parties, where they listen to music, consume alcohol, and discuss the night ahead (Demant and Ostergaard 2007). When young people arrive at the party, several hours may go by before the party reaches its peak, when everyone is drunk and dancing; before this, young people may just sit and talk while

consuming alcohol. Consistent with Trell et al's. (2013) findings in an Estonian context, Demant and Ostergaard (2007) remark that parents are often not home during such house parties. To expand, echoing Demant and Ostergaard (2007), the house party is a space where young people are in control, and parents usually have limited access. Only in this way is the place transformed into a space which allows for alternative rules of interaction. From this, it can be deduced that the presence of parents can hinder young people's creative transformation of space into drinking space.

   While often overlooked in the literature, it is important to recognize that the home is not only significant for the drinking situation but also for the day following drinking. Taking this omission as a point of departure, Fjaer (2012) explores the social context of the home as a site in which young people in Norway experience, and deal with, hangovers. Fjaer (2012) notes that, after a night out or house party, young people often sleep over at a friend's house or have friends stay over at their home. The author contends that this is largely for practical reasons, for instance, it is safer to walk through the city in a group or one could stay out later if one could sleep over at a house closer to the party. According to Fjaer (2012), there are both positive and negative aspects of waking up on a couch away from home. Positively, if one feels physically ill, friends can help obtain remedies, such as water and painkillers. Negatively, however, it may be an uncomfortable place to sleep; one may not have a fresh set of clothes for that day; or one may be expected to assist in tidying up after the party. While the night of the party is typically oriented around drinks, Fjaer (2012) notes that the day after the party typically centers around food and stories of the night before – the latter of which has the (un)intended effect of relieving or preventing binge angst. Having brought together a variety of literature appreciating the diversity of young people's drinking geographies – ranging from an exploration of preformed drinking spaces, to a consideration of spaces young people carve out for themselves to consume alcohol in – this chapter goes on to indicate potential avenues for future research.

6   Toward Theoretically Informed Young People's Drinking Geographies

Lack of theory is something Horton and Kraftl (2005) lamented about the children's geography literature. This criticism is mirrored in the alcohol studies literature, with Jayne et al. (2008) contending that the spaces of drinking have largely been treated in an atheoretical manner. Having synthesized literature appreciating the spatialities of young people's alcohol consumption practices, it can be argued that there are two specific theoretical hiatus. First, drinking spaces have largely been rendered passive backdrops, rather than active agents with the capacity to shape drinking experiences (Jayne et al. 2008). Second, drinking spaces have predominantly been treated as static, bounded terrains, with a lack of appreciation of how young people move in, and through, a range of spaces while consuming alcohol (Jayne et al. 2012). Before embarking on elucidating how certain theories may elucidate

the *lived experiences* of young people's drinking geographies, there needs to be a brief word on terminology. The term "space," as Horton and Kraftl (2005) contend, implies static, fixity, and closure. Spaces, however, as Horton and Kraftl (2006, p. 88) remark elsewhere, "are never finished, never containers waiting to be filled, never discrete blocks, segments or 'fields.'" It is for this reason that the authors deploy the term "spacings," perceiving that this term goes further in recognizing action, doing, ongoingness, and movement (Horton and Kraftl 2005). Following on from this, the term "spacings" is mobilized from this point forth. With the aforementioned omissions in mind, this section goes on to suggest that theoretical work elucidating the ways in which young people's drinking spacings are both agentic and fluid may be "useful" for "children's geographies" (Horton and Krafl 2005).

One means in which drinking spacings can be appreciated for their agentic capacities is by adopting what Thrift (2008) terms "non-representational theory" or what Lorimer (2005) prefers to call "more-than-representational" theory. Two predominant characteristics of more-than-representational geographies are movement and mutability (Thrift 2008). This theory is interested in detailed studies of the specificities of the present moment, that is, "practices," in what "bodies and things" do, as opposed to representations (Thrift 2008, p. 6). As Lorimer (2005, p. 83) writes, it is a term usefully deployed by those researching "more-than-human, more-than-textual, multi sensual worlds." Philo and Smith (2013) have urged that more-than-representational theory is particularly relevant for the study of children and young people because these humans inhabit the world in a much more immediate, unmediated, noncognitive, non-reasoned fashion, in comparison to adults. It is the contention here that two more-than-representational conceptual apparatus, those of actor-network theory and (im)mobilities, can assist in elucidating the agentic and fluid dimensions of young people's drinking spaces, as will now be detailed, respectively.

According to Duff (2012), actor-network theory provides a means of accounting for the agentic forces of spaces in transforming the relational, affective, and embodied experiences of alcohol consumption. Actor-network theory is an approach prescribing agency, intentionality, and subjectivity to nonhumans – attributes commonly reserved for humans (Latour 2005). In Duff's (2012) study, settings such as dance floors, parks, and street corners are considered to be active agents making a difference in the social, affective, and physiological experience of alcohol consumption. Further, adopting an actor-network theory stance, Demant (2009) analyzes a girl's development from being a nondrinker at the age of 14 to a heavy drinker at the age of 16. Demant (2009) treats the village in which the girl, Maria, lives as an active agent shaping her alcohol consumption experiences. Living in a small village outside the town where she goes to school, where only six people from her class live, makes it unlikely that there will be a party in Maria's immediate vicinity. Demant (2009) articulates that the cost of a bus ticket, parental restrictions, and a 5 km spatial separation were central actants preventing Maria from going to the town where her classmates reside, hence restricting her from being in proximity to groups that party with alcohol. When 15 years old, however,

despite still living in the same village, Maria discusses feeling a real part of the town where she attends school. This imaginative transformation in proximity to her friends has altered Maria's network and is central in creating her interest in partying and drinking (Demant 2009). From this, it is evident that actor-network theory calls attention to the specific local character of individual spacings and the agentic capacity of objects working in these spacings (Duff 2012). Utilizing the more-than-representational analytical foci of actor-network theory then is a means in which the spacings of drinking can be appreciated as having an active role to play in shaping drinking experiences. Put simply, from this perspective, drinking spacings are far more than inert backdrops.

The contention now made is that young people's drinking spacings should not be seen as static or bounded, as is typically the case in the alcohol study literature (Jayne et al. 2012). Rather, to echo Jayne et al. (2012), drinkscapes should be conceptualized as fluid, and young people's alcohol-related (im)mobilities in, and through, spacings must receive much more academic attention than has hitherto been the case. This is important because, as Skelton (2013) proclaims, how and where young people can/cannot move, with speed or slowly, with freedom or constraint, are important to consider in order to enhance understandings of the complex relationality of (im)mobility and its connection with identity formation. Recognizing that there is never any absolute immobility – bodies are always moving in some sense – the term "(im)mobilities" is used in this chapter (Adey 2006). There are a few notable instances where authors have explored the notion of young people's alcohol-related (im)mobilities, yet authors typically have not done so in any sustained manner.

For instance, Hackley et al. (2013) adopt a Bakhtian analysis, proclaiming that young people do not solely drink in spacings; they also drink while traversing spacings. As Hackley et al. (2013, p. 945) argue, the creation of highly concentrated urban drinking areas has turned many UK city centers, by night, into theaters of the carnivalesque, and, as such, movement through urban spacings can be "transformed by alcohol into a surreal theatre of spectacle." Additionally, Fabrizio et al. (2013) flirt with the notion of (im)mobilities, pointing out that drinking and using cannabis are generally perceived as legitimate activities undertaken within leisure spacings that are becoming increasingly "recreational," nocturnal, and mobile. Consuming alcohol, echoing Fabrizio et al. (2013), is not only an occasion to experience new places but to move from one place to another, meeting and talking to old and new friends. The experience of drinking then, to paraphrase Fabrizio et al. (2013), is a search for social relations, excitement, and spacings where young people can be sociable.

Perhaps the most in-depth consideration of alcohol-related (im)mobilities is Jayne et al.'s (2012) research into the experiences of young people backpacking in Australia, relating to alcohol consumption, drinking practices, and performativities of drunkenness. The authors argue that alcohol can help to soften a variety of (un)comfortable embodied and emotional materialities linked with budget travel, act as an aid to "passing the time" and "being able to do nothing," and heighten senses of belonging with other travelers and the "locals." For instance, some

participants in Jayne et al.'s (2012) study describe alcohol as allowing them to generate memorable moments of backpacking travel through behaving badly with the locals, while others discuss alcohol as a means of wiping away tensions with fellow travelers. Following Jayne et al.'s (2012) lead, much more needs to be done in order to appreciate young people's alcohol-associated movements in, and through, a variety of spacings. To sum, future research engaging with young people's drinking geographies should productively engage with more-than-representational work, particularly actor-network theory, and the (im)mobilities literature, in order to gain greater insight into the agentic and fluid capacities of drinking spacings.

7   Conclusions

This chapter sought to respond to Evans' (2008, p. 1675) plea for a more "youthful" geography, by exploring young people's experiences of drinking in a range of spacings. From the offset, it was argued that the extant literature has been preoccupied with preformed drinking spacings, such as bars, pubs, and clubs – typically in city centers (Holloway et al. 2009). The dearth of research looking beyond this narrowly specified range of (predominantly urban) public drinkscapes was deemed to be problematic because, as this chapter went on to illustrate, young people consume alcohol in a diverse range of spacings, for example, squares, streets, parks, waterscapes, and homes. This chapter emphasized that young people tend to practice "calculated. . .hedonism" (Brain 2000, p. 9), by consuming alcohol in a planned, carefully controlled manner. For instance, it was argued that young people avoid certain spacings when drinking alcohol, in order to conserve their well-being. To recapitulate, young women may avoid going to parks where street drinkers have a high presence (Townshend and Roberts 2013); and young people may choose to drink *around* water, rather than *in* water (Sinkinson 2014). Alternatively, young people may still drink in spacings they perceive as risky, yet adopt strategies in these spacings in an attempt to retain their well-being. Thus, drawing on Brooks' (2011) study, it was illustrated that young women cover the tops of bottles, take drinks to the toilet, pretend to be married, and stay with friends when socializing in busy bars, pubs, and clubs.

The extant literature then can be praised for providing useful insights into how young people manage their well-being in drinkscapes. However, it was then argued that the alcohol studies literature has largely discussed the spacings of young people's drinking in the absence of theory. Consequently, scholars have generally rendered drinking spacing passive backdrops to young people's drinking practices, rather than active constituents with the ability to shape alcohol consumption experiences (Jayne et al. 2008). More than this, it was noted that much of the alcohol studies literature portrays drinking spacings as fixed, bounded terrains (Jayne et al. 2012). This fails to appreciate that young people do not just drink *in* spacings; they also drink while *traversing* spacings. These omissions are problematic because, as articulated at the offset of this chapter, health promotion and

education discourses seeking to address problematic dimensions of young people's alcohol consumption practices are limited by their incapacity to acknowledge and address the settings in which drinking occurs (Harrison et al. 2011). Consequently, echoing Harrison et al. (2011), it was realized that much more must be done to ensure the role spacings play in the ways young people imagine their use and consumption of alcohol is foregrounded.

With this in mind, it was proposed that actor-network theory is one means of accounting for the agentic forces of spacings in transforming the relational, affective, and embodied experiences of alcohol consumption (Duff 2012). Further, following Jayne et al.'s (2012) lead, it was contended that future research should engage with the (im)mobility literature, in order to gain insight into how and where young people can/cannot move, with speed or slowly, with freedom or constraint (Skelton 2013), when bound up with consuming alcohol. These more-than-representational analytical tools were argued to be of utility to children and young people's geographers because they recognize that such humans inhabit the world in a much more immediate, unmediated, noncognitive, non-reasoned fashion, in comparison to adults (Philo and Smith 2013). On a final note, while the extant literature has gone some way toward addressing a range of spacings in which young people consume alcohol, there are numerous spacings which remain unexplored. Future research then should fruitfully engage with a host of spacings within and through which young people consume alcohol which have not garnered sufficient academic attention. These include: casinos, cinemas, restaurants, woods, fields, bus stops, buses, taxis, public toilets, and cemeteries. This is important because, to date, the *lived experiences* of young people's drinking have not been fully represented in the world of children and young people's geographies.

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Moral Geographies of Young People and Food: Beyond Jamie's School Dinners

24

Jo Pike and Peter Kelly

Contents

Abstract

Over the last decade, school food has emerged as one of the number of ways in which concerns over children and young people's health might be addressed. In 2005 Jamie Oliver, TV chef, emerged as a significant voice, championing the capacity of school food to avert a range of potentially detrimental health conditions. This chapter attempts to identify and analyze the ways in which the complex and ambiguous figure of Jamie Oliver has and continues to claim some authority – in a variety of TV shows and social/moral enterprises such as Working in Jamie's Kitchen and Jamie's School Dinners – to intervene into what might be termed "the moral geographies of young people and food." This chapter is concerned with those programs and interventions that aim to educate and encourage people (families, parents, young people, school teachers, dinner ladies) to make "better" food choices in what has been called the battleground of school dining rooms. The intervention of social/moral entrepreneurs into these

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issues/spaces raises troubling questions not only about knowledge, expertise, and authority in relation to young people, food, and health but perhaps more significantly on who is/can/should be an actor in programs that overwhelmingly target the children of disadvantaged/poor families. Drawing on the work of Foucault and the late Stuart Hall, the chapter explores how the figure of the moral entrepreneur might compel us to imagine the State as only one of a possible range of actors in the moral geographies of young people and food.

1   Introduction

This chapter draws upon a corpus of work that identifies and analyzes how the complex and ambiguous figure of Jamie Oliver has come to claim a particular authority to intervene in what might be termed the moral geographies of young people and food (Kelly and Harrison 2009; Pike and Kelly 2014). Taking programs such as Jamie's Kitchen and Jamie's School Dinners as a starting point along with the concomitant and ubiquitous proliferation of press coverage which accompanies Oliver's endeavors, the chapter initially attempts to illustrate both the governmental nature of programs and interventions that entice young people and their families to make "better" food choices and the moral judgments that are attached to them. In doing so the chapter augments existing scholarship in children's health geographies, particularly that which adopts a more critical approach to childhood obesity (Evans 2006) and children's food choices (Rawlins 2009). As many in the field have suggested, attempts to address the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity by shaping children's food choices form part of a biopolitical strategy that mobilizes "underlying moral assumptions that fat people are irresponsible and reveal multiple responses to obesity which place blame on fat individuals in a plethora of ways" (Evans and Colls 2009, p. 1011, see also Gard and Wright 2005). With the explicit rationale of addressing the prevalence of childhood obesity and ameliorating health conditions associated with it, the UK school food revolution championed by Oliver was a pivotal element in this biopolitical strategy. Effectively, it fundamentally reshaped the moral geographies of young people's health.

This chapter attempts to map these moral geographies in order to trace some of the lines of forces that traverse the school dining room to influence what and how young people eat. Essentially, it suggests that the nature of Oliver's foray into school meal territory altered the landscape of children and young people's health, by bringing into play a number of different actors/"actants" (Latour 2007) that claimed some authority, right, or interest in what young people eat and are fed in schools. These lines of force forge new connections that reshape the relationship between children, young people, and the State by enabling a variety of social/moral entrepreneurs to emerge as significant actants in the field of children's health and

well-being. As such they call into question the existing position of the State as the most significant or, in some cases, the only agency that could or should intervene in the school food "problem." However, the intervention of social/moral entrepreneurs into these spaces also raises troubling questions not only about knowledge, expertise, and authority in relation to young people, food, and health but perhaps more significantly on who is/can be/should be an actor in programs that overwhelmingly target the children of disadvantaged/poor families.

Throughout the chapter the work of Foucault and the late Stuart Hall provides a theoretical basis for this analysis. This chapter argues that like most of us, Jamie Oliver is a fundamentally *ambiguous figure*. Those two words – *ambiguous* and *figure* – have a particular meaning and lineage that resonate with the deployment of the term in this chapter as a means to think and write about Oliver. Donna Haraway (2008, p. 4) argues that we are all, along with many other material and symbolic entities, indeed figures, *material-semiotic nodes, or knots*:

> Figures are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another. For me, figures have always been where the biological and literary or artistic come together with all of the force of the lived reality. My body itself is just such a figure, literally.

In conducting this analysis, it is suggested that much of the response to Jamie Oliver can be understood as "judgment." This kind of judgment not only assumes a particular authority in claiming to know the truth about Oliver, but it also conceals and silences other possible interpretations. This is analysis is of interest for those working in children's health geographies since it has implications for the ways that we conduct geographic enquiry.

2   The Ambiguous Figure of Jamie Oliver

Save with Jamie is Jamie Oliver's most recent campaign (2013–2014), consisting of a new cooking show, a new cookbook of the same name, and a dedicated website on which he offers advice and recipes related to the three themes of the campaign: *Cooking Clever*, *Shopping Smart*, and *Wasting Less*. During October 2013 promotions for this campaign created controversy for the ways in which Oliver commented on the choices poor people in the UK make about consumption – food and otherwise:

As Jason Deans (2013, see also Lewis 2013) noted in *The Guardian*:

> Oliver expressed bewilderment that poorer Britons would choose cheap fast food while spending their money elsewhere.
> "I'm not judgmental, but I've spent a lot of time in poor communities, and I find it quite hard to talk about modern-day poverty. You might remember that scene in [a previous series] Ministry of Food, with the mum and the kid eating chips and cheese out of Styrofoam containers, and behind them is a massive fucking TV. It just didn't weigh up."

> "The fascinating thing for me is that seven times out of 10, the poorest families in this country choose the most expensive way to hydrate and feed their families. The ready meals, the convenience foods."

At the time, Jack Monroe (2013) claimed that Jamie Oliver was a "poverty tourist turned self-appointed tour guide" whose comments "are not only out of touch but support dangerous and damaging myths that 'poor people are only poor because they spend their money on the wrong things.'" Monroe through her blog *A Girl Called Jack* rose to some prominence in the UK during 2013 as a so-called austerity blogger who posted recipes for cheap, simple, healthy meals (how to feed a family on £10 a week) while simultaneously arguing against the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat coalition government's austerity program that targeted the "benefits culture" in the UK. As a single mother, Monroe spoke from her experiences as a recipient of a number of government benefits, but also as someone who resented the sorts of judgments many people, politicians, and commentators made in relation to "people like her." Political, media, and community debates, during 2011, 2012, and 2013, tended to divide the UK's population into the all too convenient categories of *strivers* and *skivers*. According to Monroe (2013) Oliver has little understanding of what it's like to be poor in this context:

> Popping into a struggling family's home to shoot a television programme does not qualify you to talk about how people should spend their money, especially when you have a £150 m fortune to go home to (made, ironically, off the back of promoting the supermarkets and ready meals that he is now turning his back on).

Monroe's argument is indeed persuasive. However, the notion of Jamie Oliver as the self-proclaimed culinary educator of the undeserving poor is merely one way to understand someone who can be regarded as a figure of some complexity and ambivalence. Zygmunt Bauman (1989, 1990, 1991) has noted the concept of ambivalence and its centrality to the human, the hurts, pain, pleasures, and joys that variously characterize the ambivalence that shapes our being in the world. Further he notes the challenges that recognition of and engagement with ambivalence pose for social scientists who have, throughout enlightenment modernity, tended to try to *legislate* away or rather to eradicate that ambivalence. In this sense, while Oliver may well be understood, in more recent contexts at least, as a poverty tourist we must be mindful of eradicating some of the complexities which manifest themselves in the figure of Jamie Oliver. In 2005 his reality TV show *Jamie's School Dinners* attracted some of the highest viewing figures for Channel 4 with an estimated 5.3 million UK viewers tuning in to watch his crusade to improve school meals in the London Borough of Greenwich, UK. CBS's *60 Minutes* program in the USA "swooned" over Oliver's social entrepreneurship in relation to his campaign:

> Oliver has practically become a national hero in Britain for exposing the unhealthy diet of junk food that is served in schools at lunchtime. To prove that good food can be produced as cheaply, he took over the school catering in one London borough and cooked a range of fresh and healthy dishes. Oliver is proposing to carry out the same experiment in American

schools but he says that we shouldn't expect an overnight transformation. Cooking good food is one thing — getting the kids to eat it is quite another. (CBS America, *60 Minutes*, April 2006)

Jamie's School Dinners documented his controversial and sometimes unsuccessful attempts to change both the eating habits of school children in schools in the UK and the food that was served to young people in school dining rooms. Oliver himself summed up his intentions in his school dinner campaign:

My manifesto by Jamie Oliver

For the past couple of years I've been campaigning to ban the junk in schools and get kids eating fresh, tasty, nutritious food instead. Without your support for the Feed Me Better campaign we wouldn't have got the commitment from Tony Blair for new school meal standards and £280 million to start sorting out the problem.

In my new programme, we show that parents are key and without cooking skills, kitchen facilities and political support on the ground it's going to be very hard to make lasting improvements.

During the course of filming I spoke to the Prime Minister and he committed more longer term funding for school food. I don't want to sound ungrateful, but the amounts are tiny when you divide it up between all the schools in the country – Nora only gets £2,000. Local and national government need to come up with a ten-year strategy and some real money to re-educate people about proper eating habits.

Big love, Jamie O, Xxx (Channel 4 2006, *Jamie's School Dinners: The Campaign*)

The drama and controversy of the series was largely based in the actions of some parents who resisted being told what to feed their children, the ways in which many school dinner ladies rebelled against the extra work involved in preparing meals rather than opening packets of pre-prepared and processed food, and the ways in which many of young people themselves were resistant to attempt to get them to eat more healthily (Kelly and Harrison 2009; Pike and Kelly 2014). Further television series followed with the UK-based *Jamie's Return to School Dinners* in 2006, *Jamie's Ministry of Food* in 2008, and *Jamie's American Food Revolution* in 2010 which aired in the USA and Australia as *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution*. The response from the public, media commentators, nutritionists, and school food professionals was mixed, and Oliver's campaigns and interventions were both applauded and criticized. While some commended his efforts to bring school food to the fore of the political agenda, other reactions ranged from the outspokenly critical to the savagely judgmental. Why is it that this young, successful, multimillionaire chef continues to provoke such wildly opposing and often vitriolic reactions? In short, what is the problem with Jamie Oliver? As Sarah Rainey (2012) writes in *The Telegraph*, his professional role cannot easily be categorized, and this leads some to question the motivations behind his campaigns:

The problem critics have with Oliver is that he's notoriously difficult to define. Chef? Politician? Entrepreneur? Philanthropist? And many are scornful of his repeated rants against Gove: what right, they ask, does a celebrity chef have to be indignant about the Government's school meals policy? (Michael Gove, at the time, UK Secretary of State for Education)

For others, particularly in the USA, the targets of his campaigns are misguided. For commentators such as Bettina Seigel (2011), he simply fails to grasp the bigger picture in the US school meal system:

> I recently met (via email) Justin Gagnon, CEO of Choicelunch, a California school food catering company mentioned on TLT last week. Somehow he and I got to chatting about flavored milk, and Justin summed up beautifully my overall feeling about Jamie Oliver's crusade:
>
>   I've walked the floor of the CSNA [California School Nutrition Association] and SNA [School Nutrition Association] national show multiple times, and I'm frankly a little bummed that the best Jamie came away with was chocolate milk. What about "Uncrustables"? Or "pancake and sausage sandwiches"? Or "commodity processors"? I get that chocolate milk is an easy target…But on the macro level, instead of addressing what I feel are much larger issues, we're bringing the fight to something kids love, and quite frankly, parents are split in terms of their position (even those who are adequately armed with all of the facts).

Some felt he was leaping on a bandwagon that they had been traveling on for some time. As Debra Eschmeyer (2010) suggested, Oliver simply fails to acknowledge the efforts of others to improve school meal services:

> In the end, I think we all want his show to be effective: meaning Jamie's School Food Charter becomes a reality instead of a reality show. If folks get angry, great. But generate that anger into a phone call to Congress during the Child Nutrition Reauthorization, which is happening NOW, where we need our elected officials to reauthorize the bill at least at the amount the Obama Administration requested or divert that anger into energy to work with a local nonprofit to make change in the school system.

Some of these responses to Oliver reveal a diverse set of understandings that coexist and that might suggest that the figure of Jamie Oliver is not reducible to a set of judgments about what we imagine his motivations might be. In suggesting that Oliver is a fundamentally ambiguous figure, this chapter makes no claims to reveal the truth about Oliver. Nor does it develop what Judith Butler (2002) might conceive of as a judgmental critique of Jamie Oliver. Rather, it intends to follow Butler's suggestion that Foucault's provocations open up a space in which it is possible to think of critique as being less about judgment, and more about a process of de-subjugation in which those of us that engage in practices of critique, refuse, by degree, to be governed in particular ways, in relation to particular ends. In this sense Butler suggests that critique is suggestive of something more akin to virtue insofar as critique is a practice that should also problematize the practices, knowledges, vocabularies, and positions that make critique possible (see also Kelly 2013). Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter, it is suggested that if Jamie Oliver is imagined as an ambiguous figure, it is possible to gesture toward a variety of social, cultural, economic, political, and personal/individual issues that are of interest to scholars of children's health geographies. This should not be assumed to imply that Oliver stands in for, or is a caricature of these issues. Rather it is to say that by tracing back from or through Jamie Oliver, his career, his identities, and his enterprises, it is possible to imagine the ways in which *diverse bodies and meanings co-shape one another* (Haraway 2008).

3   School Dining Rooms and the Moral Geographies of Young People and Food

In their Introduction to *Geographies and Moralities: International Perspectives on Development, Justice, and Peace*, Roger Lee and David Smith (2011, p. 2) suggest that far from being universal and unchanging, ethics and morals "are, in short, social constructs." In making such claims they are following a long history where others have argued similar things (e.g.,, Nietzsche's (2003) *The Genealogy of Morals*; Weber's (2002) *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism*, Foucault's (1986) *The Care of the Self*). This perspective and approach is important insofar as it enables us to recognize and work with the idea that ambiguity, complexity, argument, debate, polemic, judgment, critique, and commentary are inevitable, always-already, constitutive characteristics of the moral geographies of young people and food. In the ways that the concept of moral geographies is deployed here, the use of the term "moral" suggests the fundamental element of choice that relates to what it is that we *should* feed ourselves, our families, and our children. These questions of choice and what we should imagine as food extend also to the various, often complex and ambiguous, processes and practices of food production, processing, transportation, and preparation, as well as to the array of personal and cultural practices that structure often idealized, always morally inflected, ideas about children, parenting, and food (Pike and Leahy 2012); the family meal (Rawlins 2009); the issues of young people's nutrition, health, and well-being; public health "crises" such as obesity; and the array of possible responses and interventions in relation to these crises. This chapter concerns itself primarily with the cultural, economic, social, political, and spatial dimensions of these choices, the things that contribute to the shaping and the making of these choices, the normative and nonnormative forces, and positions that contribute to the naming and framing of what it is that we should choose to do; how we should choose to prepare, present, and consume our food; where and when these practices and processes should occur; who should be present; and what relations of authority are implicated in the choosing and the doing.

What the *Jamie's School Dinners* series made clear, along with other elements of Oliver's ongoing campaigns and the interests and efforts of other campaigners, is that school dining rooms are spaces that bear a noisy witness to historical and contemporary legacies of changing, often competing concerns about parenting, childhood, education, welfare, nutrition, and well-being. In this sense, it is possible to imagine the school dining room as a *battleground* in which a constellation of governmental ambitions are played out; in which individual actors play particular roles in supporting, resisting, and transforming these agendas; and in which particular types of knowledges and understandings of food, health, childhood, and youth become accepted and function as *truths*.

This examination of the ways in which such knowledges are produced and reproduced by young people and other actors in school dining rooms traverses a broad theoretical and conceptual terrain drawing on a range of different disciplinary areas to understand the school dining room as a specific site with quite particular

conventions and cultures. Roger Lee and David Smith (2011, p. 2) make a case for recognizing that "there are 'moralities of geography' as well as 'geographies of morality,'" a recognition that not only points to some of the spatial dimensions of our concern with moral judgments and justifications in relation to the complex array of issues related to young people and food but also to the "normativity of the practice of geography, and of geographers." Lee and Smith (2011, p. 1) indicate that in these moments of recognition, when "we raise issues of spatial inequality and its social, economic, and political consequences," then the normative dimensions of spatial relations, and geography's concerns with these, become apparent. What also becomes apparent in these moments, and movements, is the "more critical issue of normative ethics: to what extent are uneven development and social inequality just?" (Lee and Smith 2011, p. 1). As they indicate, the "resolution of such questions are both reflected in, and constitutive of, the moral values of particular people in particular places." In addition, these "particularities both reflect local circumstances and practices and condition the ways in which they are formed and transformed over time by the mutually interactive relations between 'local' and 'non-local' influences and norms" (Lee and Smith 2011, pp. 1–2).

Making sense of the school dining room in terms of moral geographies requires reference to notions of spatiality to acknowledge the ways in which space is both constituted by, and constitutive of particular forms of action. Thus the organization of the school dining room, the layout, and aesthetics of the space generate and foreclose particular ways of being for actors within it. The dining room space then is not conceived of as a passive space, a backdrop for the action, or battles which occur within. Rather, it influences, shapes, and molds the ways in which children and young people are able to act, and further, the way children and young people act impacts upon the ways that this space might be understood. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the school dining room is a more or less porous space through which particular knowledges about food, mealtimes, and young people flow are produced, appropriated, and, often, contested. In this sense insights afforded by sociological and anthropological understandings of family mealtimes, changing ways of eating, and the function of meals in social relationships in thinking about the connections between family relationships and school meals are particularly illuminating (Pike 2010; Pike and Leahy 2012; see also Marshall 2005; Lalonde 1992; Charles and Kerr 1988; Mitchell 1999; Murcott 1982; Burgoyne and Clarke 1983).

4   Government as a Moral Project

The work and legacy of Michel Foucault generates a fruitful understanding of how the practices of school dining rooms enable and/or constrain certain kinds of action to encourage young people to work upon themselves as healthy subjects. Foucault's (1978, 1985, 1986, 1991) work on governmentality, and the care and practices of the self, provides a number of conceptual tools to examine the ways in which young people are cajoled, directed, encouraged, and rewarded to behave in ways that are

considered healthy and civilized in school dining spaces and in other spaces – for example, around the family dinner table – that are associated with school dining rooms through specific ideas of health and civility. Of particular relevance to this chapter are the kinds of "technologies" that are used and the strategies employed in order to achieve these ends. In this sense government is always a moral project that is articulated in substantial, national policy pronouncements about young people, health and well-being, and public health crises and in what might appear to be the more mundane, everyday project of feeding, say, 400 young people a nutritious, filling, and appetizing meal in a comprehensive school in South Yorkshire.

Arts and practices of government are invested in, and with, an array of purposes and outcomes that the subjects of government should be concerned with and should be concerned with in quite particular ways. Foucault's work and the ways in which it has been taken up in governmentality studies over the last 20 to 30 years point to a sense that neoliberal governmentalities invest in subjects who are imagined as being ethical beings, persons who have developed the capacity to make choices and recognize their responsibilities about such things as the nutrition and health and well-being of themselves and their children.

The moral dimensions of neoliberal governmentalities are well illustrated in the Third Way political project that emerged during the Clinton presidency in the USA (1992–2000), during Tony Blair's prime ministership in the UK (1997–2007), and in various other manifestations in the neoliberal democracies over the last three decades:

> Today I want to set out our purpose and our programme to do more in a second term – how, on strong foundations, we can build a strong society... A society where work pays and idleness does not... A society with rules, and without prejudice. A society where we bind generations and communities not split them asunder. A society where parents take responsibility for their children, and where families are supported. A society where everyone has a chance to share in prosperity and gives back in return. (Blair 2001)

Drawing on Foucault's legacy and his own substantial contribution to this legacy, Nikolas Rose (1999), in an expansive, often acerbic, review article, identifies and critiques the political, economic, and ethical terrain marked out by the Third Way. For Rose (1999, p. 468), political inventiveness is suggestive of the "kinds of *problems* that trouble political thought" and the sorts of solutions that emerge on the horizons of our thoughts. In this sense, Rose (1999, p. 468) argues that while the Third Way project is in many respects hardly "novel" and, indeed, is lacking in *inventiveness*, it is "distinctive in the sense that it is grounded in explicitly defined values." For example, Rose (1999, p. 470) cites Tony Blair's articulation of New Labour's mission in the UK, a mission that, at the time, outlined a project that sought to "promote and reconcile four values which are essential to a just society which maximizes the freedom and potential of all our people – equal worth, opportunity for all, responsibility and community." The first two of these values were, for Rose, familiar elements in a "left of center" political project. The final two were "distinctive" but hardly original political ideals. In contemporary

communitarian discourses, these values are suggestive of new forms of "responsibilization" (Burchell 1996) between, as Rose (1999, p. 471) suggests, "those who have the power to exercise power and those who have an obligation to be its subjects. While the former must provide the conditions for the good life, the latter must deserve to inhabit it by building strong communities and exercising active responsible citizenship."

Rose (1999, p. 475) argued that the "etho-politics" of communitarian discourse is productive of new ways of "acting upon the ethical formation and the ethical self management of individuals so as to promote their engagement in their collective destiny in the interests of economic advancement, civic stability, even justice and happiness." He argued that this etho-politics can be identified via the "moral vocabulary" of communitarianism and its invocation of ideals of "partnerships, civil society, community, civility, responsibility, mutuality, obligations, voluntary endeavor, autonomy, initiative" (Rose 1999, p. 474). An "etho-politics" attempts to "act upon conduct by acting upon the forces thought to shape the values, beliefs, moralities that themselves are thought to determine the everyday mundane choices that human beings make as to how they lead their lives" (Rose 1999, pp. 477–478). For Rose (1999, p. 478), the etho-politics of community "puts new questions into play about the kinds of people we are, the kinds of problems we face, the kinds of relations of truth and power through which we are governed and through which we should govern ourselves" (see also Kelly 2004).

These ideas are central to the identification and analysis of the moral geographies of young people and food. Here, the focus on these moral geographies is useful for a number of reasons: it moves much of the discussion about parenting, young people, health and well-being, and diet away from often universal, technical discussions of *5 A Day*, or *Food Pyramids*, or other dietary advice, it enables us to focus on the questions of inequalities and power relations that inhere in governmental projects aimed at influencing what young people eat, it foregrounds the particular spatial and moral dimensions of food practices and relations, it allows us to explore the ways in which food practices and relations generate an array of different outcomes and consequences for different populations of young people and their families, and it encourages us to consider the moral processes of responsibilization at work in various governmental programs aimed at improving the health and well-being of young people and the ways in which these processes appear to point the finger at some organizations, communities, groups, and individuals, at the same time as letting others *off the hook* (Fine 1994).

5   Beyond the State: Multiple Actants, Multiple Lines of Force

In their critique of the TV series *Jamie's Ministry of Food*, Joanne Hollows and Steve Jones (2010, p. 309) describe and discuss what they call the "topographical and generic shift" from the trendy middle-class laddishness of Jamie Oliver's earliest manifestations, through his working with marginalized, unemployed

young people in the *chic* spaces of Fifteen, to his emergence in *Jamie's School Dinners* as a social explorer "bringing to the public's attention the culinary abuses to which children are subjected in the de-lifestyled kitchens, classrooms and working-class homes of outer London sprawl."

Hollows and Jones provide a valuable discussion of many aspects of the Jamie Oliver phenomenon. They identify and explore his social entrepreneurship and his celebrity-based intervention in a variety of public *crises* – for example, young people's marginalization, unemployment, child and youth health and well-being, and obesity – that appear to be beyond capacities of the State to deal with, to manage, to regulate (Garland 1996; Rose and Miller 1992). However, while acknowledging the strengths of this analysis, concerns may be raised with the form that this critique takes and the ways in which language and practices of critique manage, in part, to strip the figure of Oliver and these issues, of ambiguity and ambivalence. An ambiguity and ambivalence which they acknowledge is critical to the issues, but which they appear not to allow to the figure of Oliver, the celebrity, the moral entrepreneur, the health campaigner, etc.

For example, they suggest there "is a *slippage* between a campaign teaching people to eat more healthily and one teaching them culinary skills." Moreover, the "*central conceit* of the show is another attempt to roll out a programme of change called 'Pass it on'" (Hollows and Jones 2010, p. 310, our emphasis). This analysis appears to engage in a process of judgment of Oliver and the practices that shape and emerge from the genre he is working in – which may justifiably be the object of critique – but here is couched in a vocabulary that positions those doing the critique, passing the judgment, outside of or above this ambivalence and complexity. *Slippages* and *conceits*, in this critique, are self-evident, even a little *knowing*: "The concept of 'passing it on' ostensibly rests on displacing the authority of the expert: as culinary skills are democratized, anyone can become a teacher within their community" (Hollows and Jones 2010, p. 311). Except, of course, in the language used here, Hollows and Jones appear to be a little cynical about whether anyone can or wants to, indeed, become a teacher within their community. Hollows and Jones (2010, p. 316) summarize their concerns with the "problem-solving narrative" of *Jamie's Ministry of Food*:

> The series repeatedly indicates the lack of community networks open-to working class people through which to 'Pass it on'. It presents Rotherham as a marginal place rather than one at the centre of a 'food revolution'; it undercuts the health and obesity issues that are its purported motivation; it ignores working-class people's traditional food culture, while overstating the proportion of people who cannot cook; it has almost nothing to say about domestic economy; and it belittles the mediated expert knowledge which could form part of a solution to the crisis it assumes.

While there may be much to agree with here, much to discuss further, the tone of their critique also rests on a view of the State as *good* and the Private as *bad*. In this view the State and its diverse agencies are the appropriate agents and technologies of change, particularly in terms of the sorts of problems – marginalization, unemployment, child and youth health, well-being, and obesity – that Oliver takes on:

> However, whereas the original Ministry of Food was a state initiative, Jamie's ministry is a private enterprise initiated and partly funded by Jamie, which he hopes Rotherham will pass on to other councils. While past British governments are represented. . .[by various textual devices in the TV series and in the cookbooks that accompany the show]. . .as providing solutions to crises, the need for Jamie's intervention suggests that the government is no longer able to initiate successful change. (Hollows and Jones 2010, p. 311)

In this way, in ways that Hollows and Jones (2010, p. 311) consider problematic, *Jamie's Ministry of Food* "privileges the role of social enterprise within the non-profit sector." Indeed, a major part of the work that they do seeks to locate *Jamie's Ministry of Food* in the moral, social, economic, and political discursive spaces of *Broken Britain* that they identify as emerging in the three years leading up to the UK general election in 2010 (which resulted in a Conservative Party/Liberal Democrat coalition government). In these discursive spaces, *Broken Britain* is made *real* through concerns with crises in education, in crime, in "health, 'binge drinking,' teenage pregnancy, 'fecklessness,' the 'culture of disrespect' and, crucially, state bureaucracy" (Hollows and Jones 2010, p. 317). As they argue:

> Not only does *JMoF* delineate a crisis in British culture corresponding closely to the discourse of broken Britain, but the solution to the crisis is also consonant with the anti-statism that is central, if not limited to, contemporary Conservatism. While, as we noted earlier, the management of social needs in the UK continues to be provided by a mixture of public bodies and private enterprises, social enterprise and the social entrepreneur have emerged as flag bearers of the neoliberal economy. (Hollows and Jones 2010, p. 319)

Again, much of this analysis is productive of our understanding of the ambiguous and complex figure of Oliver, the social and moral entrepreneur. At the same time much of their critique rests on a limited, statist view of agency which many on the Left have critiqued in the context of how the Left should respond to the challenges of what was first called in the 1980s Reaganism and Thatcherism, but which is now more widely named as neoliberalism.

In early 2014 the influential UK-based, Caribbean-born, cultural, and social theorist Stuart Hall died. Along with many others, this chapter has been mightily influenced by his ideas, his approach to intellectual work, what might be objects of that work, and the cultural, social, economic, and political spaces that shape this work, its emergence, and conduct. His death followed less than a year after the death of Margaret Thatcher, a provocateur for much of Stuart Hall's thinking and actions from the late 1970s. This symbiotic relationship was remarked on by David Morley and Bill Schwarz (2014) in their obituary for Hall in *The Guardian* of Monday 10 February 2014:

> In The Politics of Thatcherism (1983), he insisted that the left's traditional statism was in part responsible for creating the conditions that had allowed the Thatcherites to win ascendancy, pointing to the degree to which Thatcherism had rooted itself in authentically popular sentiment – something he believed the left had failed to do. This generated fierce controversy among those who might otherwise have been among his political allies. His

conviction that Thatcherism would define the politically possible, long after Thatcher herself had departed, proved enormously prescient, providing a key to understanding the politics not only of New Labour, but also of the subsequent coalition.

So, in picking up the previous discussion on the emergence of an array of actants/figures, including Jamie Oliver, who seek to appropriate diverse responsibilities, to claim some authority – moral or otherwise – and to intervene into and change the ways in which young people, parents, individuals, groups, organizations, and communities think about food and the range of responsibilities and obligations that diverse actors should have when they make choices about the food that they buy, provide, and serve to young people; here, it is pertinent to revisit Hall's engagement with the challenges of Thatcherism. The explicit intention of doing so is to examine the complexities and ambiguities that should rightly be addressed in thinking about both the material and discursive realities of Reaganism, Thatcherism, and neoliberalism and the ways in which it is possible to think about these governmentalities (Foucault 1991). In what follows, the intention is to indicate the limitations of thinking about the State within these constructions, limitations which become most evident in the ways in which the relations between the State and its Others (the self, civil society, the economy) are formulated. Foremost within this project is a view that these constructions, grounded as they are in various idealized notions of the State, the self, civil society, and the economy, represent "actually existing" (Hall 1988a) examples of the State (and its Others) as "failed realizations" of "deeper" or "higher" principles (Hunter 1994).

It is instructive, given the continuing and contemporary character of these debates in the wake of the austerity programs implemented in many EU and OECD economies as a consequence of the 2008–2009 Global Financial Crisis which are reimagined as being principally about sovereign debt levels (Kelly 2012), to think about how the Left (broadly defined) could respond to Thatcherism's challenging and remaking the Liberal welfare state during the 1980s. In a number of spaces, including more recently under the banner of the *Kilburn Manifesto* (Hall et al. 2013), Stuart Hall (1988a, b, c, d) collaborated in ongoing discussions and critiques of neoliberal reimaginings of the State and its Others and how these reimaginings might be engaged. Writing before the collapse of Eastern European Communist States, Hall (1988a, p. 221) argued that the experience of "actually existing socialism" suggested that far from "withering away," the State had emerged as a "gigantic, swollen, bureaucratic and directive force, swallowing up almost the whole of civil society, and imposing itself (sometimes with tanks), in the name of the people, on the backs of the people." Set against this experience of the State under the conditions of "actually existing socialism," Hall (1988a, p. 221) examined the development of the State in western Liberal democracies, a development marked, particularly in the postwar period, by a "gigantic expansion of the state complex within modern capitalism": an expansion which saw the State playing an "increasingly interventionist or regulative role in more and more areas of social life."

As Hall (1988a, p. 221) pointed out, the regulatory or interventionist practices of the Liberal state were most evident in the practices of the welfare state, practices which were often "experienced by masses of ordinary people in the very moment that they are benefiting from it, as an intrusive, managerial and bureaucratic force in their lives." These practices include the more obvious *welfare* provision of income support for the aged, the sick, the unemployed, and supporting parents. However, these interventionist and regulatory practices are also mobilized and experienced in the provision of services related to the health and well-being of young people, including free school meals in the UK and the surveillance and monitoring of young people's food choices.

The tremendous postwar growth of the "paternalistic" welfare state (Thatcherism's Nanny State) was identified by neoliberal economists/philosophers Milton and Rose Friedman – in *Free to Choose* – as the main threat to individual freedom, autonomy, and prosperity in the Liberal democracies. The "public waste" of large State bureaucracies is, for the Friedmans (1980, p. 127), "distressing" enough. However, the "major evil" of paternalistic welfare programs is their impact on the very "fabric of our society." Such programs "weaken the family; reduce the incentive to work, save and innovate; reduce the accumulation of capital; and limit our freedom." Such arguments are familiar in relation to school food policy since, from the inception of the school meal service in the UK in 1906, the intrusion of the State into private matters of family mealtimes constituted a "weakening of the spring of responsibility" for parents (Welshman 1997, p. 7).

This *free market* critique of the State, and its rights, roles, and responsibilities in relation to civil society and the economy, has echoes in Hall's (1988a, pp. 221–222) problematizing of the welfare state from a Left perspective. This scenario, of some sort of convergence in certain Left and Right critiques of the welfare state, creates a number of significant dilemmas for the Left. In one sense, argued Hall, those who critique the welfare state from the Left were seen to be keeping company with the "Thatcherites, the new right, the free market gospellers, who *seem* (whisper it not too loud) to be saying rather similar things about the state." In another sense, certain "Statist" sections of the Left, as traditional champions and defenders of the welfare state as an alternative center of power to the market, as an alternative to the logic of the market, were, and continue to be, positioned morally, politically, and intellectually as responsible (culpable) for the growth of big government, so that the Right was able to, more or less successfully, articulate "widespread popular dissatisfactions" with welfare State regulatory practices to an "anti-Left, 'roll back the state' crusade." In this political and theoretical context, in which the State and its Others are conceived of as *doubles* and the ideal relationship between these principled constructs is a cause for debate, Hall (1988a, p. 222, original emphasis) posed a number of questions that remain important for the Left: "Where, to be honest, do *we* stand on this issue? Are we for 'rolling back the State' – including the Welfare state? Are we for or against the management of the whole of society by the state?"

However, Hall's, largely rhetorical, questions are not necessarily the most appropriate questions to ask in order to understand contemporary problematics of government in relation to children and young people's health and well-being or

marginalization. Posing such questions, and responding to them in either/or ways, results in thinking the State within the limits imposed by thinking in terms of oppositions such as: the State/civil society, oppression/emancipation, public/private, coercion/choice, waste/efficiency, power/agency, and regulation/freedom. As Rose and Miller (1992, p. 174) argue, a "political vocabulary" structured by such oppositions fails to "adequately characterize the diverse ways in which rule is exercised" in contemporary Liberal democracies. Following Rose and Miller (1992, p. 174), it is more productive to argue that in the Liberal democracies, power is exercised through a profusion of shifting alliances between diverse authorities in a variety of projects which seek to govern various "facets of economic activity, social life and individual conduct."

However, the either/or thinking which structures much of the theoretical terrain about the State, on the Left and Right, fails to grasp this *reality* or its consequences for thinking about the State. Further, this either/or conceptualization positions Left intellectual and political practice (as dialectical critique) in a negative or positive relation to one or other of the elements in the binary. A defense or negation of one of the poles is often a principled process, underpinned by an ideal or higher conception of the recuperated pole in the opposition. Further, mounting a (dialectical) critique of these oppositions, of, for instance, the relations between private/social enterprise and State enterprise, serves to trap this intellectual practice in the "orbit of the binary concepts that it seeks to problematize" (Hunter 1993, p. 125).

In Hall's (1988a, pp. 4–5) mind, there was little doubt that at one level Thatcherism profited the "industrial and business classes of society," the new prophets of an "enterprise culture" who (re)emerge as the "keepers of the moral conscience and guardians, inter alia, of our education system." However, Hall also acknowledged that thinking of the *interest*s which are served by these transformations became problematic when attention was focused on Thatcherism's successful articulation of "different social and economic interests within its political project." In this situation, it became difficult in any "precise" way to argue "which class interests are represented by Thatcherism," since, for Hall, it was "precisely class interests which in the process of their "re-presentation" are being politically and ideologically redefined."

Faced with such difficulties, it becomes increasingly problematic to think *of* the State, conceived as an assemblage of apparatuses for/of public administration, as cohering around a common interest or purpose or as possessing a "sovereign will" or a "unifying moral or intellectual rationale" (Hunter 1993, p. 131). What becomes apparent, as Hunter (1993, p. 131) suggests, is that the "instruments of government," that is, the "systems of management" of police, the military, state schooling, public housing, etc., all had "diverse" origins and have developed their own "forms of expertise and ethical imperatives."

It is in this sort of theoretical and political context that Foucault's genealogies of government and the self emerge as potentially useful aspects of a problematizing intellectual practice. Mitchell Dean (1994, p. 177) argues that these genealogies "effect a displacement" within "conventional forms of ethical and political analysis." Foucault, argues Dean, "juxtaposes an analysis of the practices of government

to the theory of the state." Colin Gordon (1991, p. 4) points out that Foucault, in response to (Left) criticisms that his genealogies lacked a theory of the State or a theory of the relations between society and the State, acknowledged such criticisms by remarking that he "refrained from a theory of the state, 'in the sense that one abstains from an indigestible meal.'" So that in Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality rather than a theory of the State, it is possible to determine an analysis of the "operation of governmental power, the techniques and practices by which it works and the rationalities and strategies invested in it" (Dean 1994, p. 179).

So, when considering what might be called the superheated lines of force that traverse and remake the moral geographies of young people and food; when identifying, situating, and attempting to make sense of the diverse, and significant, array of figures that populate this terrain (Jamie Oliver, Tony Blair, etc.); and when endeavoring to make apparent the moral dimensions of the myriad strategies, projects, and interventions that aim to equip parents and young people to make better choices about food, then governmentality studies provide an array of tools that make these things thinkable and doable. It is possible, then, to imagine that school meal policies are never just about feeding large numbers of children and young people a nutritious meal in an economic manner. Indeed, the history of school meal policy in the UK is one in which a nutritious meal is a practice, a set of processes, and a matter of money that is often overburdened by demands, intents, promises, and possibilities that it will do so much more than meet at least some of the daily nutrition needs of young people around the globe. These practices, the subjects who make them real and the subjects who emerge as a consequence of these practices of the self, are invested with a range of possibilities and obligations and are burdened with a range of competing concerns in relation to such things as the health of the nation; ideals about parenting and the family; positions about the role of the State in our lives; a sense of what the competitive logics of markets can deliver; the roles that schools can play in responding to a troubling array of health concerns; and what can be done to "civilize" young people, to develop in them the attributes, the capacities, and the dispositions that will equip them to make good healthy choices about food and their own health and well-being.

In this context it is instructive to imagine the ways in which celebrity lifestyle experts, including the ambiguous figure of Jamie Oliver, celebrity chef and moral entrepreneur, have emerged as significant actants in diverse spaces and programs in which the moral failings and bad food choices of young people, parents, and families from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds are highlighted, scrutinized, and judged and that the figure of the celebrity lifestyle expert has been implicated in processes which have reframed what we think we know about these issues and who it is that we think has responsibility for the regulation and management of children's health and nutrition. These changes raise a number of questions for how we *do* critique in these spaces. This chapter makes a case for forms of critique that can explore the ways in which many of these diverse but complexly related practices – food practices, parenting practices, school-based nutrition practices, food industry practices, and state policy practices – have an array of different outcomes and

consequences for different populations of young people and their families. Put simply, everyone has choices to make about the food that they buy and feed to their families, but the spaces, relations, and circumstances that shape these choices, in which these choices are made, are not the same for everyone nor are the consequences of these choices, intended or otherwise. In this sense it might be argued that reducing the complexities and ambiguities and ironies (delicious and/or cruel) of human being in the world to the making of good or bad choices does material and symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1984) to the rational and irrational, the cognitive and emotional, the embodied and visceral pasts, and presents and possible futures of communities, of families, of individuals (young and old). But that is what much of the community, media, and political/policy commentary and debate do in the all too hasty rush to judgment that characterizes much of the topography of these moral geographies of young people and food.

6   Conclusions

> The fact that food is so saturated with class connotations – with, as Alex Andreou pointed out, a politics of "aspiration" – is telling. It is one of the ways in which the discussion of class has become refracted through the prism of consumption rather than production. Instead of being interested in one's means of securing a livelihood, we are supposed to be more interested now in some nebulous "lifestyle" indicators – whether it's cider and fags, or lentils and Kettle chips; the iPad, or the "massive fucking TV". These cultural markers of class offer moral-aesthetic judgments on the consumers; they cleave the deserving from the undeserving poor. (Seymour 2013)

The approach taken in this chapter encourages us to consider the moral processes of responsibilization at work in various governmental programs and the ways in which these processes appear to point the finger at some organizations, communities, groups, and individuals, at the same time as letting others *off the hook*. It has attempted to suggest that government is an inherently moral project. That is, the subjects of government ought/should/must make the right choices, live in the right way, eat the right food in the right way, etc. Further, it has attempted to draw attention to the diverse and shifting alliances of various actants that are involved with and implicated in or claim some authority to seek to manage the conduct of parents, of families, and of children and young people and, with reference to the work of Stuart Hall, to show how if we are to understand the governmental work that these shifting alliances engage in, we must think beyond the traditional binaries of the State and its Others. The chapter suggests that this governmental work attempts to develop in young people and families a capacity for making better, even good, choices about the food that they might grow or buy and on how that food might be prepared and presented and consumed: at home and in other spaces, such as the high street, the shopping mall, and the school dining room. And in these other spaces, governmental programs also seek to develop various behaviors and dispositions in the teachers and the dinner ladies who are charged with the responsibility of feeding children nutritious meals in an efficient, effective, economic manner.

From this perspective the government of problems, such as children's health, is always a failing project. Neoliberal governmentalities invest in subjects who are imagined as being capable of making the right choices or who are targeted as being in need of education, encouragement, incitement, direction, and even sanction, so that they will develop those capacities that will enable them to make good choices. The geographies which shape young people's choices, and in which choices are made, are also fundamentally shaped by privilege and disadvantage, by wealth and poverty, by inclusion and marginalization, by justice and injustice, in all their complex and ambiguous permutations and combinations. And, as indicated throughout this chapter, as Jamie Oliver has suggested, as *A Girl Called Jack* has argued, these moral geographies and these questions of choice, of food, and of "massive TVs" have taken on a particular character in a post-GFC environment of sovereign debt crises and state austerity programs. In these spaces families and individuals, even whole communities, can too readily be characterized by politicians, commentators, and self-appointed moral guardians ("poverty tourists"?) as strivers or as skivers, as deserving or as undeserving, as responsible or as irresponsible, as moral or as lacking (something, somehow, somewhat). The analysis undertaken here seeks to make apparent the moral dimensions and judgments that attach so readily, and strongly, to the choices that are imagined as being open to us (all) as we feed ourselves, our families, and our young people.

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Mediating Young People's Knowledge: Framing School-Based Sexuality Education in New Zealand and Canada

25

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Abstract

The news media play a critical role in shaping the places, social ideologies, and practices that constitute everyday life. This influence encompasses understandings of spaces such as the school, elements of curricula (including sexuality education), and the construction of what it means to be a young person. This chapter takes a framing approach to examine the ways in which recent news media stories in New Zealand and Canada represent and position the school as a place for educating young people about sexuality, thereby constructing this population, their sexuality and sexual health in specific ways. A range of framings related to school as a place for sexuality education within six examples of media episodes are discussed, and the claims-makers appearing in each episode are identified. The discussion highlights the ways in which the rights of young people, their voices, and the realities of their everyday lives are rendered invisible in debates about school-based sexuality education.

Keywords

Young people • Sexuality education • School • Media geographies

1 Introduction

This chapter explores the question of *how school-based sexuality education is represented in the print media* with a focus on New Zealand and Canada. The chapter begins with a review of key academic debates pertaining to the news media, young people, risk, space, place, and sexual health. This chapter highlights the role of the news media in promoting particular ideas and attitudes that affect the lives and health outcomes of social groups, including young people. Evidence is reviewed showing a focus on risk and adult power within public health approaches to young people and sexual health that (re)positions sexuality as the preserve of adults and school spaces as most appropriately controlled by adults. Research demonstrating the school as an important setting that informs the (re)production of particular identities, subjectivities, and sexualities is explored. Debates concerning school-based sexuality education are explained as place-based conflicts dominated by adult's views and a relative absence of young people's voices. Following this review, the chapter's focus on New Zealand and Canada, as well as its methodological approach, is explained. An analysis of six examples of media episodes related to school as a place for sexuality education is then conducted. The chapter argues that recent news media stories assert the status quo – that sexuality is

inherently problematic for young people and is ideally the preserve of adults. Through this assertion, the news media promotes particular visions of sexuality education and particular knowledges as appropriate for young people to have access to (or not) in relation to sexual health. In this way the news media profoundly impacts the lives of young people, the spaces that they inhabit, including the school, and their health outcomes.

2   News Media Reports: Shaping Places, Ideologies, and Practices

News media reports commonly involve selecting and highlighting issues, making moral judgments, defining problems, and suggesting remedies (Entman 1993). As such, the news media is involved in agenda setting: it signals what issues should be thought about, and how they should be understood (Cohen 1963). Kosicki (1993) suggests that media reports tell people what is important and valued in the world around them, as well as how to regard events and people inhabiting that world. As such, the news media hold significant cultural power – it communicates particular sets of ideas and expectations to diverse viewers/readers and, in so doing, tends to reproduce rather than challenge myths, ideologies, and relationships that define and legitimize the dominant social order (Brown 2002; Gupta and Sinha 2010).

The news media occupies a particularly potent place in promoting or contesting ideas and expectations concerning children and young people. In constructing visions of social reality, the news media affect the lives of social groups – such as young people – by not only promoting particular ideas and attitudes (Clark et al. 2008) but also by constructing moral panics about their status and behavior (Cohen 1972). It can also play a role in advocating policy responses that will reassert adult control over young people (Kearns and Collins 2003). The majority of media stories relating to young people are negative, emphasizing issues of gangs, crime, social exclusion, and poor educational performance. Further, many young people are aware that they are represented in sensational and stereotyped ways, e.g., as dangerous, irresponsible, antisocial, and immature (Clark et al. 2008; Madge 2006). Such representations reflect a more general interest in/demand for negative stories (Goddard 2005). In the context of the 24 h news cycle, Hallsworth and Young (2005) argue that the public want sensational stories which are repeatedly mentioned, thereby increasing their impact.

The news media is also a significant but problematic source of health-related information – not only for the general public but also for health promoters, educators, and policymakers (Gupta and Sinha 2010; Bryant and Thompson 2002; Freimuth et al. 1984). Its coverage tends to promulgate a strongly medicalized view of health, emphasizing the importance of medical intervention, while disregarding or downplaying social determinants (Hayes et al. 2007). Both individual compliance with "expert" advice about health risk and access to high-technology medical procedures receive considerable attention (Gupta and Sinha 2010; Brown and Walsh-Childers 1994). This coverage may shape how health

issues are experienced, understood, and approached (Bryant and Thompson 2002). With respect to sexuality education and young peoples' sexual health – the focus of this chapter – the news media may be an important, accessible source of information for young people. However, its reports rarely reflect current policy priorities and the public health emphasis on increasing young people's access to information. In addition, it almost never depicts young people's sexual development in a positive light.

3 Placing Young People, Sexuality, Sexual Health, and the School

3.1 Young People

Public health policy is increasingly focused on the identification, management, and treatment of *risk*, rather than on symptoms of disease (Brown and Duncan 2002; Evans 2010). Young people are prominent within the gaze of this "New Public Health" and its proliferating narratives of risk and uncertainty (Sharland 2006). This prominence reflects contradictory visions of young people as sources of both hope and danger (Sharland 2006). Evans (2010) suggests that the origins of this contradiction lie in the notion that children and young people are the embodiment of the future. It follows that their health-related behaviors and knowledges are central to establishing the future security of society. Scott et al. (1998) claim that linking youth and risk inseparably creates a paradoxical situation in which children and young people's autonomy is emphasized alongside aspirations to protect them. On the one hand, they are active, knowing individuals potentially responsible for making decisions about exposure to risk; on the other, they are passive, innocent dependents in need of adult control and protection.

The emphasis on managing young people's exposure to risk so as to secure a collective future can act powerfully to limit lives and experiences. Implications may range from decreased opportunities to travel independently to restricted access to sexuality education in schools. However, it cannot be assumed that young people are always willing to be understood as dependent upon adults: they may challenge the notion of an adult-child boundary and the strategies that adults employ to constrain them and maintain their safety (Scott et al. 1998). Mathews et al. (2000) argue that young people are increasingly becoming more adult-like as the gap between generations is closed. Yet, for many adults, being young constitutes a transitional phase of little or no social status until adulthood. In this view, young people are adults-in-waiting, and they and their concerns are considered less legitimate than those of adults (Mathews et al. 2000). This situation has prompted Wyness (2000, p. 24) to comment that young people are "not part of the social world that counts." Rather, they await adulthood and social integration and, until that time, may cause adult anxiety since they are perceived to be less than ready or mature enough to behave responsibly (Mathews et al. 2000; Wyness 2000).

With regard to sexuality and sexual health, risks are represented as considerably greater for young people than for adults, and it is almost uncritically accepted that

adults should "protect" young people from these risks. The judgment that young people are particularly at risk in relation to sexuality is made on their behalf from an adult perspective (Scott et al. 1998). This understanding positions sexuality as the preserve of adults and engenders a preoccupation with preventative measures, such as sexuality education (Green 1998). Viewed in this light, sexuality education can be understood as an attempt to contain young people's sexuality and exposure to risks.

Sexuality has long been deemed the preserve of adults, and the spaces in which young people are legitimately able to access sexuality education, such as the school, have invariably been controlled by adults (Cook 2012). It therefore seems likely that young people's sexuality and experiences of school-based sexuality education may cause adult anxiety or even horror (Jackson 1982). Within sexuality education classes at school, young people are no longer as securely under the surveillance of their parents, and this may heighten parental discomfort.

3.2   Young People's Sexuality and Sexual Health

Young people's sexuality and sexual health is commonly addressed by media through a focus on the high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies that young people experience. This amounts to an outcome and risk-based assessment of young people's sexuality. In the context of current policy initiatives that draw on the language of the new public health, there is persistent emphasis on risk and the negative outcomes associated with young people's sexuality. This focus within media reporting constructs young people's sexuality as out of place – a problem for society and even as a threat to the moral order.

Frequently, media reports suggest that the "problem" of young people's sexuality and sexual health must be approached by ensuring that school-based sexuality education is controlled and limited to a focus on "the basics" of biological knowledge that may allow young people to regulate their bodies and sexual feelings (Berne and Huberman 1999). The power of this message is evident within current school-based sexual health education in New Zealand which adopts these emphases with a putative goal of improving student's health outcomes and securing their future prospects (Coleman et al. 2010). In this sense, young people are called upon to become rational selves able to make decisions that ensure self-improvement and social success (Lupton 1995). Consequently, society at large, and schools in particular, are involved in both moralizing and medicalizing young people's sexuality and sexual health. Thus, both society and the school are cast as spaces in which young people must become able to manage their "problematic" sexuality through both being governable and governing their own bodies in rational, risk-averse ways.

3.3   The School

The spaces of the school and the reach of its governance have been subject to a modest but growing body of geographic inquiry (e.g., Collins and Coleman 2008;

Holloway et al. 2010; Kraftl 2013). This research has demonstrated that the school is an important setting in the lives of young people and is influential in the production of identities, subjectivities, and sexualities (Allen 2013). Within schools, young people undergo a socialization that tends to allow freedom and choice only within strict bounds and in ways that typically legitimates the status quo. In other words, schools are involved in the (re)production of social norms and are a space through which young people are both controlled and disciplined by adults (Fielding 2000). Further, the school space is influential beyond its borders since schooling continues to shape identities and the prospects of individuals, their families, regions, and nations throughout the life course (Collins and Coleman 2008; Allen 2013).

As a key institution of socialization that provides structures and systems to support the reproduction of social orders, the school is implicated in meaning-making and the (re)production of identities and sexualities (Allen 2013). Schools are also inextricably bound to meanings of place through their unique place-based histories and characteristics. Consequently, the identities that schools possess and reproduce are distinct. Lynagh et al. (1997) assert that schools mediate a local community's identity via meanings of place by bringing together educational strategies, parents, caregivers, and local residents. Messages relating to being young and sexually mature within the school environment mediate and reflect the identities, ideologies, and practices that win out in the interplay between school and community spaces.

Schools must confront expectations that they will address health and social problems that stretch across a wide range of public health concerns (e.g., obesity, water safety, tobacco control, pedestrian skills, sun protection) (Collins and Coleman 2008). Moreover, debates about curricula (i.e., what a young person will learn and how) are almost exclusively conducted by adults and in adult terms. Indeed, parents' emotions are central in critiques of curricula and debates regarding state schooling (Kraftl 2013). Typically, these debates reflect prevailing adult anxieties about young people and their moral status and health-related behaviors. Unsurprisingly, such anxieties are particularly evident in debates concerning young people and access to school-based sexuality education. Indeed, the school is a space in which progressive arguments that assert the acceptance of diversity conflict with conservative arguments founded on a mixture of moral panics and dissonance between schools and conservative homes (Collins 2006). Sexuality education remains one of the most controversial elements of the school curriculum (Cook 2012; Hampshire 2005) resulting in underlying tension between classroom spaces and the broader adult world.

3.4   Sexuality Education at School: Place-Based Conflicts

The debate regarding the appropriate place of sexuality education is characterized by the dominance of "adult" views and the relative absence of young peoples' voices regarding the appropriate boundaries between public and private life and

disputes concerning the relationship between education and family life (Cook 2012; Thomson 1997). Hampshire (2005) concludes that tensions relating to sexuality education in schools are highly divisive. Parents frequently exert their power to contest the curriculum and/or to remove children from sexuality education classes, which demonstrates that even when sexuality education is placed within the domain of the school, it remains an issue that is powerfully linked to discourses of parental control over young people. Indeed, even when schools possess considerable autonomy, they must face the possibility of public criticism over their teaching of sexual health topics (Darroch et al. 2000).

Reiss (1995) finds that although parents, students, teachers, health professionals, and politicians all agree that sexuality education is a crucial issue, there is widespread disagreement over how it should be taught in school environments. Deciding which messages to give young people and where to impart them has long been the cause of discord and polarization in many communities (Blinn-Pike et al. 2000). Conflicts and debates surrounding school-based sexuality education are important since they represent differences in politico-moral values and illuminate a range of dynamics at work within school spaces and the wider community (Hottois and Milner 1975).

The sexual politics surrounding schools and sexuality education may be reduced to the ongoing disputes between conservative (sometimes referred to as "restrictive") and progressive (sometimes referred to as "permissive") movements (Hoggart 2006). As Rose (2005) explains, religious right political groups have fought to oppose the teaching of sexuality education at school since the 1960s. Conservative organizations, for example, the Christian Crusade, have actively opposed any discussion of sexuality within the school and asserted that the home is the only appropriate site at which to impart sexual health information. During the 1980s, the "family values" movement fueled the conservative campaign to confine discussions pertaining to sexuality within the home where abstinence could be promoted, information could be censored, and young people could be taught the moral absolutes of "right" and "wrong" (Lindley et al. 1998). Another moral absolute promoted by these interests is the idea that sexual relations should not occur outside of heterosexual marriage (Reiss 1995).

By attempting to confine discussions relating to sexuality within the home, conservatives have been understood to be concerned with maintaining a form of social control in line with their political directives, including the maintenance of a traditional/patriarchal social order in which bodies (particularly female ones) and desire must be carefully controlled (Rose 2005). In this way, conservative discourses have supported traditional/patriarchal conceptions of "real boys" as sexual beings who cannot control their desires beyond a certain point and "good girls" as those who control their desires (practice abstinence). These understandings maintain a strict adult/child binary and privilege parents and home spaces over young people and school spaces (Rose 2005). They also contribute to a broader dynamic around school-based sexuality education, in which the rights of young people and the realities of their lives are rendered invisible (Thomson 1997).

4   Research Approach

The purpose of this study was to examine *how school-based sexuality education is represented in the print media in New Zealand and Alberta*, *Canada*. A secondary aim was to consider *what knowledges of sexuality are (re)produced as legitimate for young people to access within school boundaries*, *and how this distinction is shaped by the wider community*. These goals were addressed through a framing analysis of print media articles, a methodological approach that highlights the power dynamics in how issues are portrayed and by whom (Liu and Blomley 2013).

Framing analysis recognizes that in the context of a media-saturated world, "stories" constitute a symbolic realm that informs subjective reality construction (Surette 1994). Framing refers to "the process of selecting and highlighting some aspects of perceived reality, and enhancing the salience of an interpretation and evaluation of that reality" (Entman 2004: 22). Examining the use of frames by different media actors allows "their involvement in the social construction of meaning, their role in performing the world, and their material consequences" (Liu and Blomley 2013, p. 120) to be explored. In the present context, media framings may contribute to shaping meanings of young people and their sexuality, to reproducing some knowledges as more important or legitimate than others, and to defining the content and boundaries of sexuality education curricula.

Media stories related to school-based sexuality education were collected over the period April 2010 to July 2014 from New Zealand (NZ) and Alberta, Canada. The decision to focus the investigation on these jurisdictions was in part opportunistic, given that the first and third authors reside in NZ, and the second lives in Alberta. However, the two contexts share important similarities. Both have a single, central school curriculum (formulated at the national level in NZ and the provincial level in Alberta) that includes a component on sexuality and sexual health. In both contexts, issues of how to address risks such as teen pregnancy, STIs, and sex assault through the curriculum are topics of public debate. In addition, Alberta and New Zealand are similar in terms of population size (in 2013, 4.0 million and 4.4 million, respectively).

A set of search terms was developed to identify relevant print media reports in both contexts: "sexual education," "sexual health education in schools," "sexuality education and public schools," "teaching sexuality education," "sexuality education in classrooms," and "sexuality curriculum." These terms were used in searches of the Canadian Newsstand database (with further filters restricting results to English language articles that mentioned Alberta) and the New Zealand Index and Newztext Plus databases. After eliminating duplicates, a data set of 28 articles was established (see Table 1).

The framing analysis conducted asked the following four questions of the data: (1) What is the problem being presented? (2) What is understood as the cause of the problem(s)? (3) What is understood as the appropriate solution to the problem(s)? (4) Who are the claims-makers involved? These four questions are used to structure the results and discussion section that follows. To begin analysis, the authors read the sampled reports in their entirety to gain a preliminary understanding for how

Table 1 Selected media reports

Canadian print and online newspapers included in research sample (17 total)	New Zealand print and online newspapers included in research sample (11 total)
The Weekly Anchor (1)	*New Zealand Herald* (7)
The Globe and Mail (1)	The *Greymouth Star* (1)
The *Bassano Times* (1)	*The Dominion Post* (1)
Northern Journal (1)	Lifesitenews.com (1)
Edmonton Journal (6)	3 News online (1)
The *Calgary Herald* (4)	
The National Post (3)	

issues were framed. Next, guided by the above questions, a coding system was developed and the first and second authors coded the data independently, then compared, checked, and recoded the data together.

Claims-makers were defined as those identified within media stories as knowledgeable and holding a relevant opinion and whose voices were deemed worthy of inclusion (through either direct quotation or indirect reference). The data set includes overtly opinion-based pieces (e.g., op-ed articles), and when the voices/ opinions of journalists were clear, they were acknowledged as claims-makers. Nongovernmental groups (NGOs) were also cited widely in the reports and classified into two types: those who advocated comprehensive sexuality education in schools that includes open discussion of a wide range of issues and sexualities (labeled "progressive") and those who favored a narrow curriculum, for reasons related to religious belief, parental rights, and/or protection of children from exposure to inappropriate sexual knowledge (labeled "conservative").

5   Results and Discussion

The research strategy made it possible to identify a range of framings related to school as a place for sexuality education within six distinct media episodes. Three of these episodes took place in each of NZ and Alberta. As further described below, some episodes of media attention in relation to school-based sexuality education appeared over a short period of time, while others continued over an extended period. Distinct framings and specific claims-makers appear in each episode.

6   New Zealand

6.1   Episode One: Sexuality Education in Schools Is "Too Explicit"

A relatively long-running media episode occurred in NZ over September 2011–February 2014 that presented school-based sexuality education as overly explicit and therefore both unacceptable to parents and a potential danger to

young people. The main claims-makers within these six media stories were parents (appearing seven times) who described themselves as "worried" and "disgusted" by information being given in schools to young people about sexuality. Other dominant claims-makers included school principals (appearing three times) who tended to respond to these complaints by emphasizing a need for greater parental awareness of, and involvement in, sexuality education. Progressive NGOs (appearing three times) called for "comprehensive" sexuality education, which included the full range of information to keep young people safe and encourage them to make "good" decisions – a focus that links young people and their sexuality to risk and responsibility. Despite the topic being about young people, their sexuality, and sexual health, only one high-school student was visible in this episode (see below).

This framing of school-based sexuality education as too explicit clearly indicated that the underlying problem was the inclusion of information in relation to oral and anal sex, contraceptive techniques, alternative sexualities, and pleasure. Such knowledges were represented as particularly out of place for young people and in school spaces. Further, including these topics for discussion in school was suggested as encouraging young people to become promiscuous and sexually active. Parents described school-based sexuality education as "graphic," "grubby," "delivered with no delicacy," and even a "form of abuse." Thus, adult anxieties were foregrounded in this episode, consistent with previous studies (Thomson 1997; Jackson 1982; Coleman et al. 2010). In addition, sexuality education in schools was presented as a matter of (adult) opinion and without reference to research on the outcomes of different approaches.

In one media story, a high-school student who had recently become pregnant blamed the sexuality education she had experienced at school for normalizing and encouraging her sexual behavior, even while she admitted she became pregnant after becoming heavily intoxicated at a party where an older male "took advantage" of her. Despite this admission, her story was presented as an argument for school-based sexuality education to be constrained to biological information about reproduction and human anatomy. As mentioned, media reporting has a tendency to discuss sexuality education as responsible for instigating sexual behavior and emphasizing the so-called "risky" and negative outcomes of young people's sexuality (Jordan et al. 2000). The solution to this "problem" is frequently presented in the media as an approach that focuses on biology and "the basics" – a focus in which young people acquire a particular (narrow) set of knowledge and skills in order to manage their "problematic" sexuality (Coleman et al. 2010).

Commonly, parental voices in these six media reports claimed that information regarding alternative sexualities, pleasure, and sex acts (e.g., explanations of condom use and oral sex) was "well above the students' level of maturity." Thus, cultural constructions of young people as incomplete, irrational, and potentially irresponsible continue to shape the discussion around how young people and their sexuality should be approached (Renold 2005). Moreover, the articles proposed a reassertion of parental control to resolve the "problem" of "immature" students being exposed to explicit (i.e., comprehensive) sexuality education. Specifically, this required greater respect for the rights of parents to be informed about the

content of sexuality education classes and to remove their children if they deemed it necessary. Both of these rights are enshrined in legislation in NZ.

Parents were also quoted as suggesting that teachers should refrain from answering any explicit questions asked by students and to refer them home for parents to answer. Schools themselves were urged in these stories to consult their communities on the design of sexuality education programs – a requirement of the NZ Ministry of Education. Implicit in this direction to schools was an implication that their lessons on sexuality may be inconsistent with the conservative values prevailing in homes (see Collins 2006). Indeed, all six media stories in this episode suggested that the proper place for sexuality education to be conducted was at home and within the family, in order to ensure that young people are given "appropriate information" at the "right time" (as defined by parents). This media episode therefore reiterates the common claim made by critics of sexuality education – that access to information about sexuality (other than that grounded in abstinence) undermines the autonomy of the family and has the potential to encourage young people to engage in sexual activity (Hampshire 2005; Jordan et al. 2000). That schools are not only complicit in the emergence of this threat, but active in disseminating the knowledge that underpins it, is contrary to their traditional role in reinforcing social order.

6.2   Episode Two: Young People and High Risk of Sex Assault

In November 2013, a short media episode – involving two stories in total – centered on young peoples' risk of sex assault. The dominant claims-makers to appear within these media stories were journalists (appearing twice) and progressive NGOs (also appearing twice). One other claims-maker – the NZ Ministry of Education – appeared in one of the articles. The voices of young people themselves were not included in any of the stories in this episode, illustrating earlier claims by Scott et al. (1998) that judgments regarding where and when young people are at risk are almost always made by adults and can powerfully limit young people's own participation.

The problem articulated by these stories was sex assault among young people in the context of "rape culture" and constructions of masculinity as sexually aggressive. The cause of this problem was represented as a *lack* of comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Specifically, such education was necessary to challenge cultural norms and improve young people's knowledge and skills with regard to sexual violence prevention. Government intervention to ensure mandatory comprehensive sexuality education in schools was suggested within these reports as the solution to the problem. This "solution" was strongly advocated by progressive NGOs, which articulated a need to make learning about sexual violence mandatory within schools for all students. They contended that a school's responsibility does not "end at the gate" but extends to preventing potential harm in a range of everyday environments (e.g., the community, the home) and to promoting students' health and well-being broadly. However, there was very limited recognition in the articles

that such an approach would be contrary to current legislation (outlined in the previous section) that prioritizes parental rights and requires individual school boards to decide on the design of school-based sexuality education programs in consultation with their local communities.

Both media stories were a direct response to the "Roast Busters" scandal – revealed in the New Zealand news media in November 2013 involving a group of young Auckland-based men alleged to have purposefully intoxicated underage girls in order to gang rape them. Both journalists writing in response to the Roast Busters case suggested that comprehensive sexuality education in schools would promote open discussions with young people about sexual ethics, violence, consent, and responsibility, as well as challenging cultural norms and issues of power that make the abuse of girls and women more likely. Alongside the voices of these journalists, progressive NGOs and the Ministry of Education argued that comprehensive sexuality education would benefit young men and women by opening up conversations regarding gendered meanings and behaviors. Specifically, it would create space for young people to think through the consequences of sexual encounters and to develop strategies to prevent harm and stand up to abuse. Such claims were diametrically opposed to those made in the first episode (above) with regard to the value and importance of comprehensive sexuality education. Yet in both episodes, assessments of what types of sexuality education are appropriate in schools flow from adult assessments of what young people "need" to know in order to avoid risk. Young people's voices are largely absent from this underlying discourse, and their rights to knowledge go entirely acknowledged.

6.3 Episode Three: A Select Committee Inquiry into School-Based Sexuality Education

During March 2014, a short media episode consisting of three articles centered on an inquiry by a Select Committee of the New Zealand Parliament into sexuality education. These stories responded to recommendations by the Select Committee to "revamp how (sexuality education) is taught in our classrooms and broaden the subject beyond a narrow focus on the mechanics of sex and reproduction." Political figures, including the Prime Minister, were the dominant claims-makers within these media stories (appearing eight times). Progressive NGOs (appearing three times) were the next most visible claims-makers, while only one parental voice was present in this episode. Once again no young people's voices were included.

Within the three media reports, the problem was positioned as NZ's currently high rates of teenage pregnancy. Significantly, this problem was not described as *unwanted* pregnancy but rather simply as *teenage* pregnancy – an emphasis that casts all pregnancy among young people in a negative light. The cause of this problem was asserted to be a "fragmented and uneven" landscape of sexuality education across New Zealand schools, which leads to students receiving highly variable levels of access to sexuality information. The media reports noted that some NZ schools focus on "physical aspects of sex" and "reproduction" without considering issues such as

consent, while others avoided the topic almost entirely, leading to "sometimes nonexistent" sexuality education. Additional inconsistency arising from the ability of parents to withdraw their children from classes on sexuality and sexual health was also discussed. Further, there was a lack of external oversight of how schools delivered the sexuality component of the national health curriculum. As a consequence of these "huge gaps." high-school students were said to be ignorant about sexuality in general, and sexual violence in particular, and therefore at risk of harm. The Accident Compensation Corporation, which receives claims from victims of sexual violence in New Zealand, urged schools to teach young people to say "no" to sexual activity in order to keep themselves safe and avoid insurance costs.

The solution to the problem expressed in these stories by politicians, school principals, and progressive NGOs was the provision of a comprehensive sexuality education program that would go beyond the denial of sexual behaviors. This would involve monitoring schools to ensure that sexuality education programs meet Ministry of Health standards and the needs of "students of all cultures, ethnicities, and sexual orientations." These claims-makers asserted that providing comprehensive sexuality education at school would protect young people by teaching them about issues of consent, safety, and condom use, as well as delaying first intercourse and reducing the number of partners and frequency of intercourse among young people. However, in one of the media stories, Prime Minister John Key asserted a need to tread carefully and protect parental rights and responsibilities when expanding the sexuality education curriculum. The Prime Minister's caution once again illustrates the highly controversial nature of this issue (Somers and Surmann 2005; Jackson 1982) and the limited (or nonexistent) claims of young people themselves to sexuality education (Thomson 1997; Coleman et al. 2010).

7   Alberta, Canada

7.1   Episode Four: Parent and Human Rights Debates

One media episode in Alberta occurred over an extended period – August 2010 to November 2012 – and involved debate over parental versus human rights within school spaces in relation to young people's access to sexuality education. Six media stories appeared on this topic and were dominated by the voices of politicians (appearing nine times). Other claims-makers included teachers (five), school board (three), parents (three), university academics (two), conservative NGOs (two), and journalists (two). Again, young people themselves were conspicuously absent from this media episode.

In these media reports, the problem at issue was conflicting views on legislation that allows parents to withdraw their children from school if sexuality, sexual orientation, or religion are on the classroom agenda. Specifically, amendments to the *Alberta Human Rights Act* in 2009 established that school boards in the Province, as in New Zealand, must provide parents written notice when topics such as sexual orientation are scheduled to be taught at school. Teachers who did

not provide such notice could be subject to legal action from the Human Rights Tribunal. This legislation also enabled parents to withdraw their children from sexuality education at their discretion. In 2012, Alberta's new Premier, Alison Redford, suggested she would support amending the Act to remove these provisions, which prompted further debate over their appropriateness.

The case in favor of mandatory notification and parents' right to withdraw children from class was outlined at length in an opinion piece by a conservative journalist. He contended that the legislation ensured that the values of "education bureaucrats and ideologues" did not displace parents as the primary educators of children and recognized that schools were merely "complements to the home." This journalist further suggested that any change to its provisions would "upend parental rights" and thereby "undermine many family beliefs." Conservative NGOs made similar claims, arguing that public schools are "beholden to parents, not the other way around." Conservative claims-makers saw the solution to the problem as ensuring that adult rights are protected. Parents should be notified about sexuality education programs and able to remove their children in order to protect family values. This framing echoes assertions in the literature that sexuality education has long been positioned as a family concern (Hampshire 2005) and cannot be readily separated from adult anxieties and agendas (Measor 2000). As earlier illustrated, conservative claims-makers have a long history of seeking to confine discussions about sexuality within the home in order to maintain the traditional social order and the adult/child binary (Rose 2005).

An alternative framing within these media stories was suggested by several politicians and progressive NGOs. They contended that the decision to privilege parental rights in legislation was a homophobic reaction to the inclusion of diverse sexual orientations and practices within school spaces. These claims-makers asserted that failing to challenge parental and adult rights would continue to limit young people's access to information needed for them to "live healthy lives" by creating uneven access to school-based sexuality education and (potentially) encouraging teachers to avoid "controversial" topics. Teachers in this episode cautioned that current legislation meant they were likely to become hesitant and uncomfortable about the sexuality education curriculum, which would in turn disadvantage students. One journalist suggested that current legislation forces teachers to spend more time reviewing material and sending home notifications than delivering the curriculum and is potentially divisive since it places parents and teachers on opposing sides. Teachers' associations asserted that for teachers to do their jobs well, they must be able to provide access to information and allow students to explore and debate ideas. Further, a cooperative relationship with parents constructed around positive communication was needed. Thus, for these claims-makers, the solution to debate over the proper limits of parents' rights was to ensure that teachers are able to teach students without conversation being stifled while maintaining open communication with parents and communities. However, it was unclear how fundamentally inconsistent adult views over both the content of, and responsibility for, sexuality education – which has been highlighted in this episode – could be managed and negotiated within "open communication."

7.2   Episode Five: Innovations in Sexuality Education Curriculum

A long-running episode relating to innovations within the Alberta sexuality education curriculum occurred between October 2010 and February 2014. These media stories describe a problem of "raunch culture" – in which young men view online pornography and are encouraged by associated cultural norms to disrespect women. This media episode is the only one within the data set in which young people (specifically high-school students) were the dominant claims-makers (appearing six times). University academics are also prominent (appearing four times), as were progressive NGOs advocating comprehensive sexuality education (appearing three times).

Within this media episode, the availability of Internet porn, as well as advertising, film, and television, was identified as responsible for (re)producing negative perceptions of women, sex, and male power that undermine young peoples' relationships, safety, and sexual health. Comprehensive sexuality education in schools – in which no topics were deemed off-limits – was suggested within these reports as the best solution to the problem. Student voices within this media episode emphasized that innovations that support peer-delivered sexuality education would help to ameliorate the situation. According to the students, this is because peer-driven sexuality education affords young people the opportunity to share information without adults being present and makes space for young people to talk about sex in a safe, relaxed, and comfortable environment.

Progressive NGOs in these media stories asserted that initiatives that intervene in male youth culture by involving open conversations where everything can be discussed – including reproductive anatomy, STIs, birth control, relationships, values, and the media – help to combat domestic violence and poor sexual health outcomes, as well as fostering healthy relations and nondestructive masculinity. Progressive NGOs and academics asserted that open conversations about sexuality in the classroom bring young men and women together, thereby building understanding, confidence, and respect. They also argued that being able to have open conversations means it is possible to discuss sexuality without vilifying men and allow young people to understand and contest dominant cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity. While it is positive that young people's own perspectives were included in this episode, the emphasis remains on students undertaking responsibility for their own risk management, without meaningfully challenging current legislation or the structures of the school which are almost solely adult-determined (Collins and Coleman 2008).

7.3   Episode Six: Edmonton Family Complains About Christian Abstinence Education

Another media episode in Alberta unfolded between October 2013 and July 2014 and centered on complaints from an Edmonton teenager, Emily Dawson, and her mother, Kathy Dawson, about the delivery of Christian abstinence-based sexuality

education in the public school system. Six media stories reported on these complaints, and the dominant claims-makers within these stories – in addition to the teenager and her mother – were those of school boards (five), parents (three), conservative NGOs (three), progressive NGOs (two), and journalists (two).

The problem articulated within these media stories by dominant claims-makers was stated as Christian-based counseling and messages of abstinence being delivered within public school spaces. Specifically, Emily Dawson described experiencing abstinence messages at school that were delivered by the Pregnancy Care Center – a conservative NGO with origins in US Evangelical Protestantism. She claimed that the Pregnancy Care Center ridiculed single-parent families and same-sex relationships during sexuality education classes and engaged in "slut-shaming." Her mother, Kathy Dawson, also attended a class and reported messages relating to abstinence, divorce, and abortion that were "deeply rooted in Christian doctrine," as well as wildly inaccurate information about the transmission of STIs. The Dawson family filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission to object to this instruction, alleging that they had suffered discrimination as a single-parent and agnostic family.

Two journalists reporting on this episode suggested that abstinence-based Christian sexuality education is problematic and harmful since it promulgates "misinformation and fear" and promotes an agenda that is unbalanced and judgmental. Hence, while for Emily and Kathy Dawson the problem was framed as infringement on their human rights, for these journalists it concerned access to full and accurate information. The solution suggested by these claims-makers was to provide "scientific, unbiased" comprehensive sexuality education programs in schools. By extension, a second solution was to protect the rights of parents to be informed in writing when the topics of sexual orientation or religion are scheduled to take place in the classroom so that they have the opportunity to exclude their children. Thus, once again, it is possible to observe parental rights being elevated without meaningful attention being given to the rights of young people themselves.

In response to the Dawsons' allegations, the Pregnancy Care Center argued that while the organization does teach abstinence, it does so without reference to religious belief. Moreover, it emphasized that it is up to schools to decide how to present *other* aspects of the sexuality education curriculum. In addition, the Center's involvement was approved by the Edmonton School Board, which noted that it was required by Alberta's Ministry of Education to 'include discussion of abstinence as an option.' The Board's own policy went further than this in prioritizing abstinence, by requiring that sexuality education "promote . . . the view that abstinence from sexual relationships is the most effective method of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies." Neither the Dawson family nor the journalists argued that abstinence was inappropriate in the curriculum but objected to the way it was delivered by "missionaries" in a way that promoted "evangelical values."

Related to these concerns was an objection by journalists and progressive NGOs to the delivery of the sexuality education curriculum being "outsourced" to external providers with an "antichoice, anti-queer agenda." Their proposed solution was to

amend policy to ensure that schools were required to provide "medically accurate" information on sexuality and sexual health that was free of agendas, comprehensive in character, and inclusive of diverse sexualities. Additionally, they asserted that the information focused on teaching students about sexual consent, rather than abstinence, in order to combat sexual assault and abuse. Although the episode originated with the complaints of an articulate teenager (backed by her mother), her account became less prominent as the debate proceeded, and no other young person was asked for their views in any of the six stories.

8   Key Findings

Media stories reveal an ongoing maintenance of the adult-child boundary and the construction of being young as a "risk" that produces anxiety in adults (Scott et al. 1998). The activity of this reporting can be understood as agenda setting with stories selectively highlighting issues, making moral judgments, defining problems, and suggesting solutions (Entman 1993). This process signals what issues are important and how they should be approached within particular settings. The media episodes described here illustrate cultural power that helps to define the parameters of sexuality education in schools within the New Zealand and Alberta contexts, as well as what it means to be a young person and which knowledges are deemed appropriate for school spaces.

In the first instance, this power is clearly formulated by adults; five of the six episodes were dominated by adult voices (with three not including young people's perspectives in any form). This privileging of adult claims-makers speaks to the role of the media in reproducing dominant ideologies and relationships (Brown 2002; Gupta and Sinha 2010). It also resonates with observations that while adults disagree (often vehemently) over the content and location of sexuality education, they at least implicitly agree that it should be debated *in the adult realm* (Reiss 1995).

It does not follow, however, that media accounts of this issue are necessarily hostile to young people receiving comprehensive knowledge about sexuality and sexual health: indeed, advocacy for comprehensive education was clearly apparent in all but episode one. Comprehensive education was represented as something of a "cure all" for diverse problems – including sexual assault, teenage pregnancy, "raunch culture," and special interest capture of the curriculum. At one level, support for such education in the media stands in stark contrast to traditional media preoccupations with the "permissiveness" of sexuality education, which has been represented as undercutting parental authority and encouraging sexual behavior among young people (Berne and Huberman 1999). At another level, it resonates with – and perpetuates – a larger narrative, one in which the purpose of school-based sexuality education is to avert risk, which ultimately requires young people to control their bodies and desires. It is, in this sense, entirely consistent with the broader remit of new public health, within which the current and future health status of young people is a particular preoccupation (Sharland 2006).

The news media profoundly effects the lives of young people and the spaces that they inhabit, including the school, by promoting particular visions of sexuality education and legitimating particular knowledges as appropriate for young people to have access to (or not) in relation to sexual health. The episodes reviewed here suggest that the news media continues to approach young people and their sexuality and sexual health from a position of need, rather than on the basis of right. In part, this reflects a legislative context (common to both NZ and Alberta) in which parental rights are prioritized. Consequently, young peoples' access to information relating to sexuality is restricted to that which adults define as appropriate, with rare exceptions such as the peer-led initiatives discussed in episode five.

More generally, it has been argued that the news media is a problematic source of health-related information as it tends to emphasize a medicalized approach to health while downplaying social determinants (Gupta and Sinha 2010; Hayes et al. 2007). This research has illustrated a range of claims-makers beyond the medical professional involved in articulating risk and "expert" advice in order to manage young people and their sexuality. Indeed, in only one instance was medical knowledge – portrayed as "accurate" and "unbiased," in contradistinction to abstinence-based classes offered by evangelical volunteers – explicitly privileged. Arguments explicitly grounded in religious belief, so important in the US context (Rose 2005), were also largely absent from the episodes.

Despite some claims-makers asserting that young people must have access to open conversations regarding sex to improve their sexual health outcomes and prevent sexual violence, young people's sexuality was invariably presented in a negative light within the media episodes identified. Frequently, they presented young people as less-than-legitimate sexual beings whose bodies and feelings were potentially dangerous (to themselves, others, and society). That young people can assign other meanings to sexuality and sexual behavior and value its emotional aspects (e.g., desire and love) – and may benefit from establishing a legitimate space, at school or elsewhere, in which to discuss it – was largely excluded from the agenda. Even rare examples of young people being empowered to discuss sexual matters on their own terms (see "Episode Five") were justified in terms of addressing the *problems* associated with their sexuality (e.g., gender-based violence, poor sexual health outcomes, and unhealthy relationships).

9   Conclusion

Academic inquiry related to the news media, young people, risk, space, place, and sexual health has provided a range of key insights. It is clear that the news media profoundly impacts young people (and other social groups) by promoting particular ideas, attitudes, and even moral panics related to their behavior within the spaces and places of everyday life. Further, research to date has established that news media reports rarely take a positive stance in relation to young people's sexuality and sexual health. Similarly, rather than conceptualizing young people's sexuality and sexual health in positive terms, public health approaches undertaken

within settings such as the school are increasingly focused on the management and treatment of risk. Hence, young people's sexuality is positioned as "out of place" – a problem for society and something that must be controlled by adults within everyday spaces. Debates regarding young people, sexuality, and sexual health are typically characterized by the dominance of "adult" views and the relative absence of young peoples' voices. Consequently, even when placed within the domain of the school, sexuality education remains linked to discourses of parental/adult control over young people.

The power of the media to influence young people increases as they enter their teenage years (Madge 2006). Within media stories, narratives of risk and uncertainty associated with young people and their sexuality continue to suggest that we must protect, rather than empower, young people to improve their health outcomes (see Sharland 2006). As this chapter has illustrated, young people continue to be positioned within everyday life as a risk to themselves, others, and the community. In turn, the school continues to be positioned as responsible for the management of young people and their sexuality – to protect young people from themselves and to avoid costs to society (e.g., those associated with teenage pregnancy, STIs, and sexual assault). There is a strong sense in which all of the diverse "approaches" to sexuality education – e.g., abstinence-based, the "basics" of biology and the mechanics of sex, and comprehensive – are framed as serving this overarching goal. Adults can disagree over the suitability of particular approaches (as reported in episodes one and six), but the goal itself remains unchallenged.

In this respect, the media accounts of the conflicts and debates surrounding school-based sexuality education that this chapter has reported on assert the status quo – that sexuality is inherently problematic for young people and is ideally the preserve of adults, while sexuality education is best approached as a preventative measure. In terms of further investigation, research with young people themselves is needed to establish how they experience media reporting related to sexuality education in schools. Future research could also usefully consider how the same media stories are read differently by subgroups of young people (e.g., defined by age, ethnicity, location of upbringing). Such work is essential if understandings of school-based sexuality education are to extend beyond adult perspectives, in which the focus on risk (underpinned by new public health and conceptualizations of young people as future rather than current citizens) renders somewhat invisible the rights of young people, their voices, and the realities of their lives.

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Governing Futures and Saving Young Lives: Willful Smoking Temporalities and Subjectivities

Qian Hui Tan

Contents

Abstract

Set within the context of a neoliberal regime, the deployment of an anticipatory logic is a distinctive feature of contemporary tobacco-control campaigns. As governments are obligated to secure the best possible futures for their citizens and economies, these campaigns serve to prepare countries for a potential loss of productivity engendered by (prognostications of) a dwindling workforce undermined by smoking-related deaths and diseases. In tandem with human geography's engagements with a preemptive politics, this chapter examines the state's construction of youth smoking as an affront to hegemonic public health discourses vis-à-vis Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of willfulness. Through a discourse analysis of various texts, I argue that the state plays a crucial role in fashioning, inciting, and perpetuating popular perceptions of the young Singaporean smoker as a willful subject. In so doing, I hope to contribute to emerging debates on geographies of the future by foregrounding smoking as a willful temporal practice among young people.

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1   Smoking Among Young People: A Means of Killing Time and Killing Lives

Lately, human geographers have explored how imaginations of futurity are not temporally bounded but are instead enmeshed in present spatialities (Anderson 2010; Brown 2011; McCormack 2012; Baldwin 2012). They have evinced that an anticipatory regime - a set of disciplinary prescriptions that stretches out into space, time and in phenomenological terms is useful for "manag[ing] [our] ontologically insecure futures" (Evans 2010, p. 21; Adams et al. 2009, p. 251; Cooper 2006; Diprose 2008; Amin 2013). Such disciplinary actions manifest themselves in "stop smoking" campaigns, actions that are fixated with attempts to "secure the best possible futures" (Adam et al. 2009, p. 246). Cultural theorists have argued that the rescripting of a future "indeterminate potentiality" as something present is a response to states of uncertainty (Massumi 2007, p. 13; Kinsley 2010). Alongside this, critical sociologists have explicated on the social construction of smokers as squanderers of time, manifested in taglines such as "life is short, why make it shorter?" In this regard, smoking not only takes up time but also causes one to die before one's time (Keane 2002, 2006).

> About 7 Singaporeans die prematurely from smoking-related diseases each day. social cost of smoking in Singapore includes the direct costs (payments for hospitalisation and health care due to smoking), morbidity costs (lost production due to smoking related illnesses) and mortality costs (lost production from people who died early due to smoking). (Health Promotion Board Singapore 2012)

As the quote above suggests, this apprehension that surrounds the mortal loss of lives and (economically) productive time is symptomatic of a neoliberal condition (see Ayo 2012; Jha et al. 2014; Holdsworth and Robinson 2013). Especially when time is a valuable commodity, techniques of "saving" and "spending" time become inflected through a moral lens. In this regard, smokers are dubbed as undesirable neoliberal citizens of the future whose temporal practices culminate in a "waste of time" (McGuire 2013). Since young people are thought to possess a whole life ahead of them, this notion of "waste" is particularly salient for young people who have come to embody "the telos of the social order" (Edelman 2004, p. 11; Uprichard 2008; Gough et al. 2013). Thus, it is unsurprising that the state demonstrates a vested interest in adopting an anticipatory orientation toward the future. The aim is to eliminate any bad accidents that can potentially sabotage the smooth running of its neoliberal economy. Correspondingly, this vested interest is manifested in preemptive action that has been urgently taken in order to curb such flagrant waste of young lives and futures.

The literature on youth smoking has dealt with the spatial management of this phenomenon via smoking bans in public places and even within private spheres (Tymko and Collins 2014; Haines-Saah et al. 2013; Rooke et al. 2013). Geographers have also expounded on how young people negotiate these smoking and nonsmoking spaces as well as how smoking is fundamental to the construction of one's personhood (Denscombe 2001; Thompson et al. 2007; Scheffels 2009; Rooke et al. 2013; Procter-Scherdtel and Collins 2013; Tan 2013, forthcoming). Meanwhile, a lot has been written about the role that health education plays in smoking cessation. Within the ambit of human geography, attempts have been made to demonstrate how young people make sense of health campaigns vis-à-vis their lived everyday realities. In particular, Holdsworth and Robinson (2013) explore how children reconcile no-smoking messages taught in school with an awareness that their parents and relatives may be "doing the wrong thing" or "setting a bad example" by smoking. Despite the existence of this established body of work, the temporal modalities of smoking – specifically, public perceptions of children who have adopted or who will in the future adopt unhealthy lifestyles – have yet to be fully investigated. By the term "temporal dimension," I am also alluding to the engineering of a palpable anticipatory reality in relation to a young smoker's "risk-laden" future.

Consonant with human geography's burgeoning interest in a preemptive politics, this chapter argues that the state constructs smoking among young people as a willful infringement of an imperative of health. I understand willfulness as a propensity to assert "one's own will against persuasion", as being "determined to take one's own way" without regard to reason, thus rendering one "obstinately self-willed" (Ahmed 2011, p. 240). Following Sara Ahmed (2014), to be willful is to disrupt the flow of things and to hijack the future, thus jeopardizing the possibility of happiness. In this regard, willful people tend to embrace (non)normative smoking futures. They are unwilling to conform to social norms and, above all, unwilling to preserve mainstream ideas of what it means to be healthy and happy (see Tan forthcoming).

Concomitantly, this notion of willfulness relates to the existing scholarship in children's geographies that espouse young people as political agents and intentional beings capable of resisting "adultism and authoritarian brutality" (Aitken and Plows 2010, p. 328; Skelton 2013; Holloway 2014; Evans 2008; Jones, 2009; Ansell 2004; Aitken 2001; Fenwick and Hayward, 2000). In the last decade or so, geographers have taken great pains to document the opinions of young people (see Tymko and Collins 2014), although some have acknowledged that the expression of one's view may not do very much to disrupt the asymmetrical power relations between adult and child (Percy-Smith 2010). There is growing evidence that this move to take the voices of young people seriously is instructive, even if their views run countercurrent to normative understandings of childhood and morality (Holloway 2014; Bordonaro and Payne 2012). After all, children possess "a unique body of knowledge about their lives needs and concerns [. . .] which derive from their direct experience[s]" (Lansdown 2011, p. 5).

Accordingly, I conducted textual analyses of print and online materials that are largely situated within Singapore's cultural context. I did this by running a search on the database *LexisNexis* with keywords such as "smoking ban" and "young smokers." Besides attending to local newspapers such as *The Straits Times,* which is Singapore's widely read English-language newspaper, I also looked at posters, billboards, personal blogs, Facebook [social networking site], online forums, and no-smoking signs. This online research has been updated in mid-2013. The next section zooms in on significant moments in Singapore's tobacco-control efforts. I outline some strategies that have been undertaken to police smoking practices and explore how these strategies may have been productive of certain youthful smoking subjectivities. In sum, I argue that the state plays a key role in inciting and perpetuating popular perceptions of the young smoker as a willful temporal subject. Finally, I conclude by returning to the figure of the willful smoking subject, one who prompts us to reconsider the feasibility of top-down adultist efforts with purportedly 'the best interests of the child' at heart.

2   The Discursive Production of Temporal Anxieties and Willful Smoking Subjectivities

Many places, particularly those in the global north, have aspired towards being a smoke-free city. Taking heed from tobacco-control practices in these places, Singapore's National Smoking Control Campaign (NSCC) started projects are not exceptional in aiming specifically at young people below the age of 35 since the early 1990s. In the following paragraphs, I show how state-driven tobacco-control efforts have grown more streamlined over the years, to take into account progressively younger children "at risk" of challenging the moral imperative of health (see Bergman & Scott, 2001; Bradley & Wildman, 2002; Katainen, 2006; Hunt et al. 2007; Gough et al. 2009; Hunt et al. 2010). In so doing, I illustrate how the overall stance toward young people who smoke has always been paternalistic, that is, it adopts a "the government knows best because it can foresee the future" approach. Together with the "creeping criminalization" (Hayward 2002) of youthful activities, laws have been passed to prohibit smoking in an array of spaces that young people are likely to occupy. As I will go on to show later, these spaces are for example, military camps where training (National Service) is being conducted and educational institutions where learning takes place.

Overall, Rising tides of panic have been gaining traction in two main ways. First, concerns over diagnoses of perilous futures are evident in arguments such as "the longer one smokes, the more addicted to nicotine one becomes." It is as though the "problem" with young people who smoke is only inevitably exacerbated with time and that young people are willfully "mortgaging" their futures in "pitiful" exchange for the fleeting pleasures of the present. Since the early 1990s, the Singapore Cancer Society has begun to urge young Singaporeans to pledge their allegiance toward a "Singapore of nonsmokers," a goal that should be realized preferably in the not too distant future (The Straits Times 1992a, b).

About two decades later, these temporal anxieties are still evident in what has been dubbed the "Tobacco-Free Singapore" movement. This movement is spearheaded by a team of Singaporean oncologists who strongly advocate for a ban of the sale of cigarettes to those born after the year 2000 – an arbitrarily determined temporal marker (Chew and Lee 2012). The logic behind it is that: "3 kids in every primary 6 class today *will* eventually be killed by tobacco unless we take action *now* to *protect* them" (Tobacco Free Singapore 2011, http://www.tobaccofreesingapore.info/, accessed 27 November, 2012, note the use of the term "will" which denotes absolute certainty). It critiques policies that are only directed at the sale of tobacco by contending that such policies discourage cigarette consumption but not smoking initiation among young people – they circumvent these restrictions by sharing cigarette packs. Additionally, this movement also contests the notion that smoking is acceptable at any age. Taking inspiration from cities in the United States such as New York and New Jersey, Santa Community Health, a voluntary nonprofit organization in Singapore, has made a proposal to raise the legal smoking age up from 18 to 21 (The Straits Times 2013). However, proponents of "Tobacco-Free Singapore" are primarily against the idea that smoking is acceptable at any age, which would otherwise lend itself to Big Tobacco's retort that its products are legal. For "Tobacco-Free Singapore," its key objective is to typecast smoking as "passe" and, in so doing, free future generations from the bondage of tobacco by consigning it to its "rightful place in the grimy ashtray of history" (Berrick 2013, p. i25).

Second, young smokers are often (mis)judged as polluting presences in a supposedly clean and green Singapore. The fact that smoke and smell resist containment in space implies that young people are a source of "toxic fumes," and are possibly indifferent to the respiratory irritation that they may be imposing on nonsmokers, particularly babies and other young children (Tan, 2012). In this respect, a moral panic has coalesced around imageries of "the anarchy and uncontrollability of unfettered youth" as smoking has been framed as a lack of will power or self-control (Pilkington 1994, p. 18 in Valentine 1996, p. 206). Additionally, scores of epidemiological studies have demonstrated that tobacco-related death and disease are not the sole province of smokers, who may at least experience the pleasures of consuming tobacco. Instead, constant exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, especially in private spaces outside the jurisdiction of public smoking bans may allegedly contribute to the development of lung cancer in nonsmokers (see, e.g., Mu et al. 2013). In this case, the olfactory tangibility of smoking bodies impinges upon the happiness of nonsmoking bodies and spaces (Tan 2012; Ahmed 2007, 2009). Accordingly, smoking is construed as a hedonistic, self-indulgent practice reflective of one's moral laxities, especially by agencies such as Singapore's Health Promotion Board (The Straits Times 1992e, 1998b). What has not been picked up by the media, however, is the coercive nature of these public health discourses that have cleverly "concealed by the very language of reciprocity" (Ahmed 2010b, p. 91). In fact, the happiness of the whole nation is made conditional upon not just the (future) healthfulness of those who smoke but also rides on their "willingness to be made happy by the same things (in this case, that of living a smoke-free life)" (Ahmed 2010a; b p. 91).

2.1   Pastoring/Protecting Lives, Disciplining Futures: (But) Willful Resistance

By ascribing willfulness as a key attribute of young smokers, these individuals are subsequently brought under the auspices of paternalistic state institutions that wield "pastoral power" over them; a form of power that proceeds from promising one's salvation should subjects do as they are told (Foucault 1982). Young people are frequently construed as being in need of "protection" or "pastoral assistance" because they are future political participants in the making with an "incompletely fashioned will" (Ahmed 2011, p. 238) rather than as people capable of "recogniz [ing] or exerciz[ing] their rights on their own behalf" (Johnson 2008, p. 115; Evans 2010). In highlighting the "protective" tendencies of pastoral power, my intention is not to discount how public smoking bans can have a powerful protective effect for all nonsmokers and may also reduce tobacco consumption among smokers. Their population-wide biomedical health benefits are well documented, including the redemption of time through the reduction of mortality rates (Stallings-Smith et al. 2013). Rather, my contention is that pastoral power operates by offering subscribers "protection" or deliverance from a deleterious "would be" event, which is a mode of governing the future. This is achieved via a two-pronged approach, usually in the form of legal protection and pastoral care involving education.

First, young people are "protected by nonsmoking" legislations. Since the early 1990s, the law stipulates that it is illegal for young people below the age of 18 to be caught possessing either lit or unlit cigarettes in public spaces (The Straits Times 1993d). Currently, they may be fined up to $300 but it has been reported that most are let off with a "composition fine of $30 and two mandatory counseling sessions" (The Straits Times 2009). Concomitantly, laws that govern the sale of tobacco to underage smokers have become more stringent. Since 2010, the spotlight has become focused on retailers, who would be slapped with a fine of $500 should they sell cigarettes to minors (young people below the age of 18 for the first time, and up to $10,000 for subsequent convictions). They would also have their licenses to sell tobacco suspended for 6 months, whereas those who sell cigarettes to children under 12 years old or minors in school uniform would have their licenses revoked.

Second, young people are "protected by" the dissemination and acquisition of health-related knowledge in educational and military spaces. The state's premise is that public schools, madrasahs (religious schools), and tertiary institutions are places of positive socialization likely to make students "willing to will the right thing (that is not to smoke), so that that the willing right becomes habitual" (Ahmed 2011, p. 236). Beginning in the 1990s, preemptive health education was targeted at nurturing "willing compliance" (Ahmed 2011, p. 236) by discouraging smoking initiation in students as young as 6 years old. It was necessary to get students started on health education early since reports from the Ministry of Health from 1995 to 2006 have consistently shown that children as young as 12 years old were experimenting with cigarettes (Phey and Teo 2012). Moreover, it has been reiterated that 82.3 % of these smokers aged 18–69 first experimented with cigarettes

between the ages of 12 and 20. Therefore, health education has been tasked with directing the will of young people "in the right way so that it does right of its own accord (that of abstaining from smoking) without much exertion or effort" (Ahmed 2011, p. 236). In this way, the authorities would not have to deal with smoking cessation later in the future (The Straits Times 1993c, 1994, 1998a). According to a spokesperson from Health Promotion Board, students are never too young to learn that smoking is a deplorable habit that would increase their probability of contracting smoking-related diseases sooner in life (The Straits Times 1995a, b, 2012). Relatedly, school students were closely monitored to ensure that they were not smoking out of boredom, and teachers were disallowed from smoking in the presence of their students for fear that they would no longer be credible role models. In sum, essentialist representations of young people as weak-*willed* continue to prevail in educational spaces.

Despite the pervasiveness of anti-smoking messages, members of the public continue to chance upon several instances of young people smoking unabashedly in their school uniform, while bragging about their ability to evade being discovered or apprehended. Images of these students who smoke in school toilets, at secluded stair wells, void decks of public housing flats and even right in front of "no-smoking" signs all attest to their "willful" behavior. These images were then posted on Singapore's citizen journalism website called STOMP (2013) (see http://singaporeseen.stomp.com.sg/stomp/sgseen/caught_in_the_act/1611534/smoking_in_school_uniform_smoking.html; http://singaporeseen.stomp.com.sg/stomp/sgseen/what_bugs_me/1766236/smoking_in_unform.html; http://singaporeseen.stomp.com.sg/stomp/sgseen/this_urban_jungle/1088596/secondary_school_students_blatantly_smoke_openly_in_uniform.html; http://singaporeseen.stomp.com.sg/stomp/sgseen/this_urban_jungle/1781232/youth_openly_defies_no_smoking_law.html). Smoking regulation was also tightened to prohibit tertiary students on public campuses like the National University of Singapore and National Technological University from lighting up within 30 meters of any structure (The Straits Times 1996a, b, c, 1997). Nonetheless, this regulation was being flouted most of the time as students searched out discreet nooks and crannies where they could light up without being conspicuous.

Likewise, military spaces have been key sites for remedying such "epidemics of the will" (see Sedgwick 1993). In 1993, the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) responded to public opinion that National Service (NS) acted as a festering ground for smokers by arguing that four out of ten teenagers were already smoking long before they donned their military garb (The Straits Times 1993a). Nevertheless, SAF began a "war on smoking" by setting up smoking cessation clinics and mandatory smoking awareness programs (The Straits Times 1993b). Hence, NS men in their army fatigues have been discouraged from smoking openly in public places as an impression management strategy (The Straits Times 1994b). However, no stringent measures have been put in place to stop them from smoking behind closed doors (such as in toilets). In fact, smoking is still permitted in military camps, albeit within "yellow boxes." With the advent of more extensive smoking bans, young smokers now have their access to public places partially curtailed as

they can only smoke in designated areas. These areas are, for example, smoking tables at outdoor eateries, among others, which are usually clearly demarcated by bright yellow paint on the ground.

2.2　"Living It Up While Lighting It Up"

Paradoxically, hyperbolic dramatizations of willful smokers across media platforms have gone hand in hand with an "alarming" increase in smoking prevalence despite more aggressive efforts at tobacco control (Tannenbaum 1938; Morrow and Barraclough 2003a, b; Chew and Lee 2012). On top of channelling such efforts towards educational and military spaces, the state-run Health Promotion Board (HBP) also organizes activities around the theme "living it up without lighting up." In an attempt to broaden its spatial reach, it has launched a youth wing called the Youth Advolution [a combination of "advocation" and "revolution"] for Health (YAH). YAH seeks to galvanize a nonsmoking lifestyle by enlisting young people who are nonsmokers (this includes ex-smokers) as health ambassadors. Nevertheless, the rise in the number of underaged young people caught smoking from 6607 in 2009 to 6947 in 2010 has led some members of the public to feel that conventional tobacco-control efforts have reached a dead end (The Straits Times 2011b; National Health Survey 2010). Evidently, Singapore's two-pronged approach at smoking cessation (as previously mentioned) has not been effective in reducing the number of young smokers. Rather, some journalists have been shrewd enough to point out that "the surest way to drive [teenagers] to do something is to tell them no," as this would aggravate an impetus to beat the smoking regulations, if not now, then in a future space and time when they "grow older and are beyond the law" (The Straits Times 1992c, d). Nonetheless, requests from the general public to implement more ingenious means of tobacco control rest uncomfortably on a flawed assumption that an increase in the number of transgressive practices must and can only be eliminated by more punitive measures.

3　Concluding Thoughts: Unraveling the Willful Smoker

In explicating how young smokers are the targets of state interventions to manage expectant futures, I have argued that figure of the willful young smoker is crystallized through his/her embeddedness in a web of discourses. Additionally, I have illustrated that despite more comprehensive smoking legislations over time, coupled with a relentless onslaught of "quit smoking" messages, young people continue to light up in places that they are not supposed to, presumably as a willful act of defiance against the authorities. The prevalence of youth smoking therefore perpetuates public perceptions of young smokers as irresponsible and willful subjects who would "assert[s] one's will against persuasion, instruction or command" (Ahmed 2014, p. 13). Apparently, this allows the state to justify its forceful attempts at reorienting them from their misguided "errors of the will" brought

about a "misdirected happiness" that they may have placed in cigarettes (Ahmed 2007, p. 11).

But how could smokers be so willful in the face of unequivocal evidence that smoking is detrimental to one's health? Perhaps it is because young people are lacking in will power? Ahmed (2014, p. 63) suggests that "the doctrine of will has been invented essentially for the purpose of punishment, that is, of finding guilty". This is congruent with broader neoliberalist discourses on self-responsibility, in which the will is translated into "willpower," a capability that a moral subject must augment. Moreover, public health organisations assume that "sensible" and "logical" young people would be responsible enough to choose the "right path," the path that adults and adultist institutions would want them to follow and that implies being smoke-free. Crucially, what counts as the "right path" has implications for the social stratification of young people, as it is a means of "ordering human experience, a way of distributing moral worth" (Ahmed 2014, p. 11). The willful young smoker is unwilling to preserve his or her future health, and this is almost akin to "a passive willing of death" (Ahmed 2014, p. 10). Since the smoking problem is now perceived as "problems of the will," which is indicative of a failure a failure of the self, the rhetoric of "will" and "responsibility" becomes a technology of governance.

However, even as young people will themselves to neutralize "future's excess" through religious commitments to a plethora of self-management techniques – quit smoking being one of them – "the future surprises, otherwise it is not the future" (Anderson and Adey 2012, p. 1529). In other words, "happiness becomes not what might happen but what will happen if you live your life in the right way [i.e. living smoke-free]" (Ahmed 2009, p. 2). Taking Ahmed's work as a point of departure, what if we reclaim vilified archetypes of the young smoker and ruminate on willfulness as a style of politics? What if we avoid labeling those who refuse to go along with the general will as a problem and condemning those who are deemed as either having not enough will (succumbing to temptation) or having too much will (such that health agencies would want to "rework their autonomy and agency into something less problematic and more socially acceptable")? What might come out of these "willful creation of meaning(s)" in embracing willfulness as an expression of agency and even audacity (Ahmed 2011, p. 250)? As such, I suggest that future research on youthful smoking subjectivities through the lenses of a queer temporality may present us with more refreshing insights into alternative time spaces that deviate from conventional social scripts (Halberstam 2005).

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Children's Corporeal Agency and Use of Space in Situations of Domestic Violence

27

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Contents

Abstract

This chapter draws on empirical and theoretical literature from a diverse range of disciplines and perspectives, illustrated with examples from the authors' research with child survivors of domestic abuse, to explore children's corporeal agency and use of space in situations of violence. There is a noticeable paucity of literature that explores how children cope, or their capacity for resilience and resistance, in situations of domestic violence. Furthermore, while violence and abuse are perpetrated and experienced in ways that are embodied and spatial, research seldom explores how children and young people experience and

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manage living in violent situations in corporeal and spatial ways. This chapter highlights the need for future research to consider children's capacity for agency and resilience, taking into account spatial and corporeal contexts and experiences of violence in order to balance *problem-focused* debates around children's experiences of domestic abuse with a more *resilience-focused* lens. Findings illustrate children as capable and active agents, resourceful and inventive in their capacity to use, produce and construct physical, embodied, and relational spaces for security, comfort and healing during and after living within violent and volatile contexts.

1   Introduction

Within a large body of domestic violence literature, there is a noticeable lack of empirical and theoretical work which engages with the embodied and spatial experience of violence. This includes a lack of attention to the ways in which children use physical space to produce resistant embodied agency (Callaghan et al. 2016a). Work undertaken within the field of children's geographies continues to provide insight into children's interactions with and within their environments, and to the way space and place are meaningful in children's lives. There has been some interesting work undertaken by children's geographers exploring how children use outside spaces in contexts of conflict and war. However, the use of *home space* in contexts of *domestic violence* has largely been neglected in children's geography and in the social sciences more generally, with a few notable exceptions (Øverlien 2011, 2012; Wilson et al. 2012). Researchers in the field of children's geography provide valuable insight into the complexities, obstacles, and ethical issues of conducting research with children (see Skelton 2008; Darbyshire, MacDougall, and Schiller 2005) and are increasingly placing importance on the investigation of embodied, corporeal, and lived experience of bodies in context (Hörschelmann and Colls 2010; Horton and Kraftl 2006). There is a need for this work to be extended though, to include critical analysis of the body within situations of violence and the interconnections between embodied and spatial experiences, particularly as the perpetration and experience of violence operate on spatial and corporeal levels.

This chapter draws on empirical and theoretical literature from a diverse range of disciplines and perspectives, illustrated with examples from the authors' research with child survivors of domestic abuse, to explore the experiences of children who have lived in situations of domestic violence and abuse. An investigation of these experiences challenges the dominant representation of children who experience domestic violence as passive victims, damaged by their experiences. The aim of this chapter is to challenge discourses of damage, through an exploration of children's corporeal agency and use of space in violent contexts.

This chapter is composed of three key sections; the first presents a review of domestic violence literature, the second discusses the ethical and practical issues of involving child survivors of domestic abuse in the research process. The third section considers the survivor's body in the context of violence and illustrates children's capacity for agency using data from the authors' project "Understanding Agency and Resistance Strategies: Children in Situations of Domestic Violence and Abuse" (UNARS).

Throughout the chapter, the terms "children" and "young people" are used interchangeably to refer to persons aged up to and including 18 years. "Domestic abuse" and "domestic violence" are also used interchangeably. As of March 2013, the UK Home Office defines domestic violence as:

> *Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional [. . .].*
> (see Home Office 2013, p. 2)

This is the working definition which framed the UNARS project. In addition, authors considered children's experiences of domestic violence as a violation of one's own personal space, both in the sense of their body and their familial and intimate environment.

2   Constructing Children as "Victims": Domestic Violence Literature

In this section, psychological and social research on children affected by domestic violence and abuse is reviewed to explore how "the child" is constructed within this literature.

Overwhelmingly, domestic abuse discourses have centered on trauma, harm, and detrimental implications to mental health and wellbeing and to social, emotional, and behavioral development (Anda et al. 2006; Ehrensaft et al. 2003; Meltzer et al. 2009; Repetti et al. 2002). Wolfe et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis into the effects of children's exposure to domestic abuse; findings suggest that research has consistently reported negative effects on emotional and behavioral functioning and social competence. Neurophysiological research tends to emphasize abnormal development of neurophysiological and intrapsychic processes as a consequence of experiencing domestic violence (e.g., Vythilingam et al. 2002; Shonkoff and Garner 2012; Gerhardt 2004). Permanent negative impacts on neurophysiological development are considered to be a result of extreme stress induced by childhood trauma (Osofsky 1995; Shonkoff and Garner 2012). Brain structures thought to be responsible for memory storage and retrieval, and mood and anxiety regulation are reportedly smaller in adults who suffered childhood trauma (Gerhardt 2004; Frodl et al. 2010; Vythilingam et al. 2002). Physical health and

development are also considered to be negatively affected by the stress response which suppresses the immune system, digestion and growth, thereby impacting upon general health and wellbeing in the long-term (Anda et al. 2006; Rothschild 2000; Sapolsky 2000, 2004). Hester et al. (2007, pp. 64, 84) suggest that child survivors can experience depression, introversion, aggression, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) such as detachment, impaired memory, hypervigilance, and flashbacks.

Intergenerational transmission is a highly influential and pervasive concept in the literature but is rarely critically examined. Literature tends to focus on the impact of transmission and the contributing factors, rather than exploring the complexities around the lived experience of being in families affected by violence in multiple generations, or the ways that spatial and embodied relationality might play a role in transmission. Often belying research and practice is the assumption that experience of domestic abuse in childhood creates irrecoverably damaged adults; and the detrimental effects of one generation are transmitted to subsequent generations, affecting childhood, adulthood, partner choice and offspring, children's children, and so on (Repetti et al. 2002). Social Learning, from parent to child, is widely attributed as the process by which intergenerational transmission occurs. Counterintuitively though, research in the field of domestic abuse is more heavily focused on the negative influences "nonviolent" mothers have on their children than that of violent fathers (Bancroft and Silverman 2002). There is also an inherent gender bias apparent in the literature that tends to presume that children who have directly and/or indirectly experienced domestic violence will become future female victims or future male perpetrators (Ehrensaft et al. 2003; Pears and Capaldi 2001).

Findings are often reported without any hint of hope for remediation, further implying that damage is long-lasting if not permanent, becoming an inherent part of the self. But where amelioration and reparation is of concern within research and intervention, it is typically aimed at restoring "victims" to a former state of being, prior to experiences of domestic abuse (Evans and Lindsay 2008). The underlying assumption being that there *was* a former self, independent from the relational context, and that this former self is a favorable state to revert to. An area which escapes the lens of research, however, (possibly because it could be misinterpreted for promoting violence) is children's learning and development that might arise as a result of their difficult and challenging experiences.

Only within the last decade or so, amidst sustained and convincing discourses of deficit and harm, have there been enquiries into children's resilience, agency and capacity to cope with, and manage their experiences of violence (as exemplified by Katz 2015; Buchanan et al. 2014; Buckley et al. 2006; Collis 2013; Anderson and Danis 2006; Hester et al. 2007). These authors call for a reframing of the ways that "victims" of domestic violence are perceived and studied. Such enquiries provide hope that a sense of balance and openness may be brought to the debate around domestic abuse and that those who experience violence may be studied and considered through a *resilience-focused* rather than a *problem-focused* lens.

Masten (2011, p. 494) defines resilience as, "*The capacity of a dynamic system to withstand or recover from significant challenges that threaten its stability*, *viability*, *or development*." A research focus which does not deviate from resilience to acknowledge potential risks and vulnerabilities is equally as problematic as one entirely focused on harm (Masten 2011). A balanced presentation of resilience and risk/vulnerability is particularly important since the historical use of the term "resilience," to describe an intrinsic personality trait, has left a legacy which has potential repercussions for current research (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000) and policy. An overreliance on findings from resilience research could portray survivors as strong enough to withstand the adversity of domestic abuse. This could unintentionally give credence to a shift in social policy and commissioning practices towards the reduction or withdrawal of already limited fiscal allocation to domestic abuse, the protection of victims from violence, and the punitive measures and reformation of perpetrators.

"Problem-focused" explorations can provide knowledge of the potential short-, mid-, and long-term implications of violence. However, by adopting a resilience- or strengths-based approach to research and intervention, an improved understanding can be developed into how children and young people might be enabled to enhance positive aspects of themselves and their lives (Zimmerman 2013) and how they might be most safely supported to be resilient and appropriately resistant under circumstances of domestic violence (Anderson 2010). Although Masten (2011) suggests that the introduction of resiliency theory to research and practice in clinical psychology and psychiatry has been transformative, there are still adverse contexts where resiliency theory is rarely applied, such as domestic violence.

Although an analytic model was not directly applied, the philosophy underpinning the UNARS action research project echoes the strengths-based approach and key associated principles to family support as described by Powell et al. (1997, p. 1): "a philosophy based on family strength; a partnership approach to service provision; a family-centered, family-driven agenda; and an individualized response to family [and individual members'] needs and capacities. . .".

The positioning of those who experience domestic violence in childhood as irrecoverably traumatized is disconcerting not least because it reinforces and (re) produces representations of damage and powerlessness. The damage implied obscures the capacity of professionals, service providers, and researchers from seeing and building on children's agency and resilience. This is especially problematic when taken together with the (often hidden) implication that remediation is neither within the individual's nor the family's power. There is a need to explore and interrogate the reified concept of intergenerational transmission, particularly as it enables and ratifies stigmatization and oppression, and permits social, statutory, and professional quiescence. Finally, the singular notion of damage influences research such that data collection and analysis can be compromised by researchers inadvertently neglecting to fully consider holistic and contextualized understandings of the impacts of domestic violence, and in doing so obscure other possible insights. This is compounded by complexities around defining and measuring

domestic violence (Hogan and O'Reilly 2007; Gelles 1980), neurophysiological processes, development, and brain structures (Anda et al. 2006).

Prevailing theories medicalize and pathologize those who have directly and indirectly experienced domestic violence. While acknowledging the negative impacts of domestic violence, it is important that the stigma and labeling which result from one-sided accounts of "harm" and "damage" are also recognized. What is ignored in the literature is an engagement with the embodied and spatial experience of violence, including a consideration of how children use physical space to produce resistant embodied agency. In order to move away from pathologizing accounts, it is important that lived experiences of coping are explored and that researchers, professionals and academics, take embodiment, space, and relationality more seriously when considering how and why people manage in situations of violence.

These theoretical points are illustrated in the rest of the chapter through examples from the authors' "Understanding Agency and Resistance Strategies: Children in Situations of Domestic Abuse" (UNARS) (Callaghan and Alexander 2015). This 2-year European action research project explored children's capacity for agency and resilience during and after living in situations of domestic violence. Interviews with 107 children were conducted in the UK ($n = 21$), Italy ($n = 43$), Spain ($n = 24$), and Greece ($n = 19$). Together with empirical and theoretical literature, this chapter draws on the UK interviews conducted with children aged 8–18 years. Within the UK, 15 children were interviewed once and 6 were interviewed twice. The second interview centered on the children showing and reflecting on photographs they had taken as part of the photo elicitation element of the UNARS project.

3   Children, Domestic Violence, and the Limits of "Voice"

The voices of child survivors of domestic abuse still remain relatively unheard in research literature with a few exceptions (See for example, McGee 2005; Swanston et al. 2014). Typically, where children are of concern, they are studied by proxy, framed as an extension to adults, and are subject to parental or professional appraisals of their experiences, behavior, and wellbeing postviolence. McGee (2005, p. 13) suggests that in trying to gather data and make inferences about the impact of domestic violence on children, researchers frequently rely on adults' perceptions of children through the use of questionnaires and rating scales which limit expression and articulation of the lived experience and the complexities and ambivalence around violent and conflictual familial relationships. This positioning of children in the research process as nonagentic and as the focus of an objectified gaze sits uneasily in an environment and at a time where there are calls for the rights of the child to be acknowledged, and where agendas promote the enablement of children's opinions to be voiced and heard in policy and legislative frameworks (Hogan and O'Reilly 2007; Darbyshire et al. 2005).

This paradox has not been lost on some researchers, who have also noted institutionally imposed obstructions and barriers impinging qualitative research with children which effectively results in their silencing (Skelton 2008; Darbyshire et al. 2005; Morrow 2001) or tokenistic participation (Dexter et al. 2012). Darbyshire, MacDougall, and Schiller (2005, p. 419) note the complexities and obstacles to involving children as participants in research: "*Researchers undertaking qualitative research with children immediately confront cultural, social, psychological and political perspectives that militate against taking children seriously. For example, children are seen as 'part of' a larger unit, subsumed under families, schools and households.*" In a similar vein, Skelton (2008) notes the obstacles in existence at an institutional level which may obscure children's voices in research. She reflects on the challenges experienced in obtaining ethical approval for research with children and implies that ethical infrastructure may inadvertently block children's voices by rejecting apparently ethically sound research.

Institutional and organizational barriers may be even harder to overcome when researching children who are deemed to be "vulnerable." For example, during the recruitment phase for the UNARS project, it was evident that adults' anxieties and protection around children's emotional and psychological capacity to articulate their experiences of violence often resulted in them declining interview on behalf of children or overruling children's decision to participate. This was experienced to some degree within all European partnerships involved in the project. Researchers frequently found that the opportunity to participate in the project was not filtered down by adults to children or young people. Rather than considering survivors to be capable agents, some parents and organizations held representations that the children were either not aware of the violence or that talking about their experiences might elicit secondary traumatization. Researchers anticipated that dominant representations of fragility and damage would emerge, and they were sensitive to the potential for re-traumatization and emotional upset as a consequence of participation in interview and took steps to minimize this possibility and to address representations in project design. For example, participants were fully informed about the nature of the research and of their involvement in the interview process, they were free to omit questions or stop the interview at any point, and following interview, where necessary, researchers referred or provided contact details of support agencies. UNARS interviews were designed to enable discussions around coping rather than the violence itself, and furthermore, only children who had left situations of domestic violence and were considered safe by those working with them were interviewed. Whilst there was an expectation that adults would show caution about the involvement of children in the research, the level of gatekeeping experienced by European researchers was not anticipated. Denying children an opportunity to reflect on and voice their experiences of coping is especially problematic, because it reinforces the stigma of children of domestic violence as passive, damaged, and lacking emotional competence (Callaghan and Alexander 2015; Callaghan et al. 2016b). McGee (2005, p. 99) reflects on her research with survivor children:

> "Not knowing whether to talk to the children about the domestic violence was, as we have seen, also linked to the hope that children were either unaware of or unaffected by the violence. However, most children were very aware of the violence and it does not follow that they should not be allowed to talk about it. Domestic violence had been their actual experience: talking about it did not create trauma, experiencing their father's violence did that. Talking about their experiences, or at least knowing that they could talk about them, was very important for children. [….] It is important that any discussions of the violence are led by the child's pace and needs, and that children feel that they can broach the subject when it is the right time for them.".

There is a need to conduct research *with* children rather than *on* or *about* children especially since adults' knowledge of children's lives is inevitably incomplete and sometimes inaccurate (Jaffe et al. 1990). In Punch's (2000) ethnographic work, parental perceptions of children's use of space contrasted with the way children themselves reflected on their actual use of space. Parents were sometimes not aware of where children were or of their preferred play areas (pp. 54–56). This further illustrates the need for children to be consulted in research, directly enabling their reflections, as opposed to an indirect consultation via adults.

When involving child survivors of domestic abuse in research, there are many complex ethical issues that need to be sensitively and carefully addressed in project design and worked through as they arise throughout the duration of the research. The ethical dilemmas encountered during the course of UNARS will be discussed in depth in a following paper, but we address the most salient issues here. Firstly, it was of paramount importance to ensure that the risk of violence and reprisals (relating to participation) to participants, their families, and researchers was minimized. To mitigate this risk, researchers only interviewed children and young people (aged 8–18) no longer residing in contexts of violence. At the point of interview, all UK participants were either living in refuge or resettlement accommodation. The majority of the UK interviews took place across two domestic abuse centers, with a small number in schools, refuges, and a resettlement home. Secondly, researchers collaborated with professionals who worked with survivors to identify potential participants who considered themselves to have previously experienced domestic violence. Researchers made initial contact with carers by telephone and, where appropriate, organized an initial meeting with them and their children to further inform them about the nature of the research and involvement in interview. The research team were acutely aware of the need to protect participants' anonymity. All identifying information such as names, places, and specific events and incidents have been disguised or omitted from dissemination activities.

As part of UNARS, multiple visual methods were used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews. Researchers wanted to avoid being overprescriptive and sought to provide children freedom to choose the mediums by which they communicated in the interview space. This approach is theoretically underpinned by such works as Darbyshire et al. (2005) and Prosser and Loxley (2008). The former suggest that complementary methods might help to engage children and provide a source of fun and interest, as well as enabling access to and expression of different aspects of their experiences and histories (p. 430). Prosser and Loxley (2008, p. 4)

propose that "*visual methods can [. . .] slow down observation and encourage deeper and more effective reflection on all things visual and visualisable; and with it enhance our understanding of sensory embodiment and communication, and hence reflect more fully the diversity of human experiences.*" Visual methods were also introduced in interviews to counter some of the limitations associated with relying on "voice" in isolation. In her work with girls from four African countries, Unterhalter (2012) considers what is "speakable" in a particular culture as a limit to what can be achieved through research focused on "voice" alone: "[. . .] *contrary to the over-emphasised stress on voice in relation to children's rights research, I want to signal that context is as important* [. . .]". (p. 321). Looking "beyond voice" to facilitate an articulation of children's stories of domestic abuse may enable richer, more detailed accounts of their lived experiences within relational and spatial contexts of violence.

Mitchell et al. (2011) maintain that using drawing as a visual methodology facilitates the rich exploration of participants' perceptions, reflections, and views on a lived experience. They propose that drawing enables exploration of conscious or nonconscious issues and experiences, and in doing so, it can uncover parts that are not verbally expressed or expressible. Moreover, where semi-structured interviews bring forward the researcher's questions, interests, and agendas, visual methods give complete freedom of choice and expression to children and young people. In interview, UNARS participants were invited to depict their families and map their homes and gardens. Following interview, participants were given the opportunity to take part in a photographic exercise and subsequent interview.

Mapping and photography are particularly pertinent to this chapter because they enabled visual and verbal expressions of spatial, emotional, and embodied experience. Children were invited to draw a map of the home and garden in which they had experienced domestic violence. Their maps generally took the form of floor plans within which they included furnishings, objects, and possessions as they wished. Where children had experienced domestic abuse within more than one residential context, they were given the option of drawing the most memorable location, which typically was the last residence in which they had experienced domestic abuse.

Research tends to define the meaning of home in positive ways, alluding to a place of security, warmth, and comfort (Meth 2003). Researchers were mindful that where there had been complex and difficult relationships, home might be perceived with a sense of ambivalence or conceptualized as a negative environment (Bowlby et al. 1997; Meth 2003). Sixsmith (1986) and Sixsmith and Sixsmith (1991) first explored the meaning of home in the mid-1980s and progressed from more positive and place-based meanings of home to more negative and expanded meanings. In their article, Sixsmith and Sixsmith (1991) consider the meaning of home as a transaction between the physical space and the individual. In this respect, the meaning of home is transitional and shifting, influenced by individuals' life transitions, lived experience and interactions with and within the physical place. Facilitating an articulation of the transitional nature of "home" is also particularly important when considering issues affecting those who experience domestic abuse

– issues, such as volatile and rapidly changing home spaces, and insecure and migratory housing processes.

A number of researchers have applied mapping in their research design to explore children's use of space (Morrow 2001; Darbyshire et al. 2005). However, these tend to be in the field of children's geographies and often involve exploration of spaces outside of the home such as neighborhoods and community spaces rather than the inside home space. Exceptions to this include the work of Bridger (2013) and Gabb and Singh (2015) who utilized graphic elicitation of home spaces to support interviews. Gabb and Singh (2015) explored relationality and emotions of the home space using floor plans and emoticon stickers to elicit participants' verbal and nonverbal reflections. They maintain that graphic elicitation in the form of emotion maps can be a useful clinical tool, encouraging clients' personal reflections and enhancing clinical assessment and therapeutic practice. Bridger (2013) explored young adults' experiences of shared households and involved a number of visual methods in conjunction with interviews including "household" maps and photo elicitation. Bridger (2013) suggests that photo and graphic elicitation can not only help to elicit rich data in interview, prompting in-depth and nuanced discussion, but images themselves can provide a source of rich data.

Photo elicitation in the UNARS project subscribed to traditional methods as discussed by Bridger (2013). After an initial interview, children and young people were invited to take part in a photographic exercise. Willing participants were instructed on the use of the photographic equipment and were given a brief to take photographs of material, personal, or relational things that had helped them cope during and after living in circumstances of domestic abuse. Researchers explained to children the importance of respecting their own and other people's privacy and dignity, and informed them that if they wanted to take photos of other people they must first gain written consent and ideally take obscured photographs which symbolized but did not reveal the identity of the person. A second interview was then arranged in which participants discussed their photographs with the researcher. The photo elicitation approach implemented in UNARS differed from that associated with "Photovoice," as participants' reflections relied on the spoken rather than the written word as is common with Photovoice. However, the fundamental principles of Photovoice were evident: engaging young people in participatory methods and empowering participants to critically reflect, capture, and voice the issues that affect them, and their environments, in order to stimulate social action and change (Wilson et al. 2007). As an action research project, data generated from interviews, played a substantial role in informing the manualized UNARS training program for professionals and the therapeutic intervention program which aimed to build child survivors' capacity for resilience and coping (Fellin et al. 2015).

Visual methods generated rich data and enabled children's critical reflections and articulations of how they (agentically) used spaces and places within and outside the violent home environment. Maps focused on private home and garden space, whilst photography enabled exploration of both private and public spaces. Findings support Bridger's (2013, p. 106) work and suggest that photo and graphic elicitation enables discussion of spatiality, relationality, and temporality.

Potentially the act of reflecting on contexts of violence specifically in relation to coping might help children to re-envision and re-author their histories more positively, enabling them to acknowledge their capacity for resilience.

Understanding the ways in which children use space and place is important to understanding their worlds (Holloway and Valentine 2000). Photo and graphic methods could prove useful research tools, helping to elicit discussions directly relating not only to spatiality but also to corporeality. In the following section, the authors explore violence and embodiment from a theoretical perspective before moving on to discuss findings from the UNARS project.

4   Violence, Corporality, and Embodied Agency

Studies of children and childhood often progress in sociological and psychological perspectives which pay little attention to the role of places in children's lives, to their meaning structures, or to their relational or material environments. The exception to this is the work undertaken in the field of children's geographies which directly explores children's interactions and perceptions of their environments. Where space and place are considered in any discipline though, discussions around embodiment, corporeality, and bodies (especially of children's bodies) within spaces appear to be less well developed. Addressing this paucity, Hörschelmann and Colls (2010) draw on their work in children's geographies and develop the area of embodiment by bringing together a collection of works which focus specifically on addressing the overwhelmingly negative portrayal and construction of children's bodies. Despite the work being undertaken within children's geographies and the broader social sciences, there still remains a surprising dearth of research which addresses or even acknowledges the body within contexts of violence despite the corporeal and spatial nature of domestic abuse. The exception to this is research from a clinical perspective which considers the abused body primarily in relation to deficits and developmental abnormalities that possess and inscribe it (ibid). There is a need for research and practice to go further in considering and exploring bodily experience, corporeal agency and the physical actions, acts and responses that adults and children experience and engage in. This is not to suggest there is a clear path to understanding these factors, not only are they nebulous and ephemeral, but they are not always accessible, knowable, or sayable (Horton and Kraftl 2006). Possible reasons for the lack of research exploring the body *as* space and the body *in* space might be due to the complexities and ambiguities surrounding corporeality and bodily experiences. Conscious and unconscious processes and responses to domestic abuse, the knowable and unknowable, the articulable and inarticulable, and all of the accompanying complexities and messiness are important for researchers to acknowledge, particularly due to the implications for social policy and practice (Hogan and O'Reilly 2007). With a body of research to draw on which predominantly has a clinical focus, in practice, domestic abuse support systems often adopt clinically focused theories which further reinforces the notion of victims as inevitably damaged. Understandably

(but not unproblematically), the concept of intergenerational transmission of psychological and physiological damage underpin many domestic abuse programs. Not only can oppression and trauma themselves impact upon corporeal identity (Harbin 2012) but messages of harm and damage voiced in "reparative" programs potentially (re)produce and reinforce the stigma of domestic violence and have implications for the corporeal identity and agency of survivors. In this respect, the habitus of organized domestic abuse recovery, including social practices, expectations, and representations of victims, become the clients' embodied practices.

Threat, coercion, control, and violence in the forms of psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse (Home Office 2013) are all inherently physical and spatial by nature and occur within embodied and relational spaces (Callaghan and Clark 2007). Domestic abuse always involves spatial and corporeal regulation of one form or another, constraints on space, body, movement, resources, and physical and verbal expression. In terms of direct physical impact to the body, individuals living within violent contexts might experience purposeful physical injury to the body and injury sustained in the cross fire of violence. Imposed restrictions on the body in relation to behavior, speech, movement and appearance, combined with the trauma of living with volatile people in unpredictable spaces can elicit withdrawal and inhibition (Devereaux 2008), hypervigilance and dissociation. Dissociation is typically considered to be an unconscious defense mechanism that triggers in response to actual or potential threat to the self. Dissociative symptoms can include a disconnection from pain or emotions, a feeling of disembodiment, traumatic visual, auditory or somatic flashbacks, and an altered sense of time (Rothschild 2000, pp. 13, 65). It is pertinent to note here that for the purposes of safety, rescue actions from domestic violence (e.g., refuge, police, and social care interventions) also pose restrictions to use of space and personal freedom.

"Walking on eggshells" and "being tied in knots" are just two metaphorical phrases associated with domestic abuse which directly relate to somatic experience. Both phrases conjure images of constraint and repression. Both assume an external actor involved in the imposition of the oppression, a power imbalance, with the external actor setting rules and restrictions and creating an environment in which fear exists. Both assume that the person walking on the metaphorical egg shells and being bound in knots must exert control and restraint over their body in order to abide by the rules. Within situations of domestic violence, whilst the implicit and explicit "rules" may be imposed externally initially, in order to avoid or reduce threat, survivors themselves internalize and impose self-control, self-censorship, and restraint on their bodies (Devereaux 2008). Drawing on Foucault's analysis of Bentham's Panopticon, domestic abuse survivors in effect engage in self-surveillance under a controlling and dominating gaze, "*An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising surveillance over and against himself*" (Foucault 1977, p. 155).

If freedom of expression is inhibited, so too is the way the body is used, how it moves and how it negotiates space. In order to manage emotions and increase

chances of physical and psychological survival, those who experience domestic abuse learn to suppress and contain emotions that could betray the body, lead to a physical response, and elicit further harm from the perpetrator. Survivors may inhibit speech (Anderson 2010) and constrain the body, movement (Devereaux 2008; Chang and Leventhal 1995), and use of space in order to reduce triggers for the perpetrator's abuse. In spite of this, involuntary physical responses to anxiety and distress may occur. McGee (2005, pp. 71, 100) notes that nail biting, bedwetting, nervous twitching, sleepwalking, and stuttering were evident for some children whilst living in situations of domestic violence, desisting when away from perpetrators.

With the exertion of control and dominance, the kinespheric spaces or "physical horizons" (Rydstrøm 2003) of individuals who experience domestic violence are violated and boundaries blurred (Rothschild 2000). Rydstrøm (2003) implies that such acts which disregard the boundaries of a human body and mind not only implicate identity but also redefine the ways in which the abused person perceives, relates to, and experiences their own body. Similarly, Rothschild (2000, p. 146) suggests that because trauma is often the result of events which are physically invasive, in working therapeutically with survivors of trauma, (re)establishing a sense of corporeal integrity and bodily boundaries is important. In order to help trauma survivors (re)connect with and become accustomed with their own physical boundaries, Rothschild (2000, p. 146) suggests to her clients that they physically feel their own skin. Wesley et al. (2000) also recommend activities to reconnect mind and body as part of the healing process for domestic abuse survivors. They explore how women survivors reflect on their corporeal identity and consider that identification with the body may be compromised. They promote participation in recreational activities and particularly physical activities to counter corporeal impacts of violence and reduce dissociative effects (Wesley et al. 2000). Similarly, Devereaux (2008) suggests that the body is heavily implicated in domestic violence, with survivors exhibiting patterns of physical and emotional immobilization. In working therapeutically in a series of dance/movement therapy sessions with a mother and her two daughters postabuse, Devereaux (2008) noted dissociative responses, verbal and nonverbal constipation or "immobilization," and emotional and verbal withdrawal. Devereaux (2008) promotes the use of dance/movement therapy with this client group, suggesting that it (re)connects mind and body, (re) establishes healthy familial attachments and boundaries, and enables individuals to develop healthy regulatory processes.

For survivors of domestic violence, their coping processes and expressions of survival are frequently framed as binary opposites of resilience or dysfunction. The two cannot be disentangled; the complexities of coping and resilience, deficit, and harm should be thought of as being interlinked (Anderson and Bang 2012; Thompson and Calkins 1996). Resilience and dysfunction are the result of adaptation to living in violent and hostile environments, as Anderson and Bang (2012, p. 56) suggest: "*In trauma recovery, resilience and impairment are not necessarily opposites, but are instead different aspects of the overall experience of coping and adjustment.*"

In focusing on the clinical presentation of symptoms, survivors of domestic abuse are framed as docile and passive, and the active ways they resist and manage violence can be overlooked. Despite restrictions over space and movement, there are many resourceful and inventive ways that children construct and negotiate their spaces and embodied experience in violent contexts.

With careful consideration and mitigation of the risks involved in interviewing children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, this population should more readily be engaged in research as participants and enabled to voice their experiences directly (Mullender et al. 2003). Supporting direct consultation, Krause (2011, p. 307) makes an interesting point, implying that corporeal agency should be determined via the agent and not simply through interpretations *of* the agent: "*The meaningfulness of action makes the difference between instances of human agency and merely random occurrences or non-agentic bodily functions. This meaning is partly determined by social interpretations [. . .] but it also issues from or affirms the subjective existence of the agent herself. We can distinguish corporeal agency from other kinds of bodily movement by looking for concrete manifestations of the agent's subjectivity in the deed*". Here Krause's (2011) statement aligns with the theories of Merleau-Ponty (1968) and Young (2005), proposing that our individual and subjective interior and exterior lives, our perceptions of our material and relational worlds in space, place, time, and history, and our physical and emotional experiences of these worlds are interconnected and interwoven. That said, as our experiences, are subjective and individual, it is all the more necessary to consult directly *with* subjects rather than *on* or *for* subjects.

Trawick (2007) enabled the voice of a 14-year-old boy living in war-torn Sri Lanka to be heard. Her touching reflection gives insight into Menan's world as he negotiates and manages the restrictions and challenges of his ever-changing and perilous environment. Not only is Menan consulted about his experiences but he guides the "consultation," he is the expert, and the ethnographer, Trawick (2007), respects him as such. Trawick (2007) explored the lives of children living in Sri Lanka during 1997–1998, overshadowed by armed conflict and extreme violence. Counterintuitively, she notes that it was not witnessing or directly experiencing violence that was one of the biggest hardships for the children, but the loss of freedom and personal autonomy over space and movement (2007, pp. 21–22). A parallel may be drawn here with the loss of personal autonomy over space and movement experienced by children and young people who live with and who flee domestic abuse. Not only do children experience a lack of freedom and control within the home space, but in fleeing violence, they often have to contend with being uprooted to unfamiliar geographical areas and the confines and restrictions of shared refuge space. Measures are often put into place in shelters to mitigate potential harm or kidnap that might ensue as a result of being found by perpetrators, such as ensuring that children are accompanied to and from school and are not left unattended outside of refuge and resettlement accommodation. Often within refuge space, children are expected to be monitored by their mothers at all times (Support Worker – "*in your own home you'd be free to leave your children wherever you wanted while you got on with something for ten minutes*, *but they [mothers] can't do that [in refuge], they're*

expected to supervise their children at all times"). Whilst families experience the safety and protection that refuge affords, in fleeing to shelter, they are still subject to monitoring and rules – essentially exchanging one set of rules for another within the "home" environment. The upheaval of relocating, moving away from family and friends and periods of transition between shelter and resettlement accommodation, can also be sources of great anxiety and uncertainty for parents and children.

Punch's (2000) work highlights the resourceful ways that children negotiate restrictions imposed by adults on their time and space. Her research shows children as active agents, creating time and space around daily chores to play, socialize and interact with nature. Similarly, patterns apparent within the UNARS data set suggest that children living in situations of domestic abuse are by no means passive, they might *learn* to *behave* and *appear* as such in specific situations, for instance when under threat or when they are unsure if they can trust someone. Rather, in spite of and due to the limitations and restrictions of their relational spaces, they are resilient and active agents, engaging with (inter)personal and material resources in order to manage their circumstances. During and after violence, children demonstrate a capacity for corporeal agency, and construct space (in time and vicinity) for security, comfort, escapism and healing. In constructing these spaces, they become intrinsic in their own coping processes.

5   Illustrations: Exploring Space and Embodiment in Children's Narratives of Domestic Violence and Abuse

Children interviewed as part of the UNARS project managed spatiality in a variety of ways to enhance their feelings of safety and security. Children monitored familial interactions from a distance, found vantage points and listening posts, and during conflict positioned themselves in order to action speedy escape or access help where necessary (See also Callaghan et al. 2016a). Some children also constructed hiding places and built barricades to resist violence and increase security. (All names given to the children in this section are pseudonyms and not their actual names.) Below, Emma (aged 16) manipulates her relational space and shifts the balance of power to a less threatening and more neutral position in order to improve her actual and felt sense of safety and comfort:

> *Int*: . . .*When there were bad times at home, what was it like for you?*
> *Emma*: *It was lonely but I always used to, 'cause I had a phone at 10, so like, I always used to try and get my friend round and sleep over, so then when I had friends round, nothing would happen, he wouldn't dare try anything, so I used, I used, then when I did realise that I used to get friends round all the time ((laughs)) [. . .]*
> *Int*: *And how did you feel, when they were there, what was that like?*
> *Emma*: *Safe, I could just go wherever I wanted, I'd go downstairs, sit in the living room, be a bit of a daredevil, in my head ((laughs)).*

In learning that she could temporarily free herself from oppressive control, reclaim spaces within her home, and transgress her step-father's boundaries,

Emma engages in a purposeful act which temporarily makes her feel safe and comfortable, and enables her free movement of the space. Understood in the context of her whole story, inviting friends over is not just about social interaction or even social support. It is an embodied act of resistance that enables her to claim space for herself within the violent home.

In addition to this use of space as a form of active but subterranean resistance, participants talked about their use of material resources and objects to soothe and promote an embodied sense of comfort and calm:

> *Int*: *So when there was lots of arguing going on, you know, was there anything that you did that helped you?*
>   *Lizzy*: *I told you about my comfort blanket, didn't I?* ((smiles)) [...] *I used to rub it together and like put it over my face, and it used to like, calm me down and make me feel safe. I don't know why, but it just did.*
>   *[...]*
>   *I still have it. It's silk, and I love silk, and my nan gave it to me, and it's just got loads of like, flowers, different patterned flowers and colours, and it's just all silk, and you just rub it together and it's just, a lovely feel* ((mimes rubbing the blanket on her face)) ((laughs)).

Lizzy's blanket has an association with her grandmother who was available for Lizzy (aged 14) and her mother during times of crisis. The sensorial experience of the touch and look of the blanket is a stimulus which induces positive somatic experiences and feelings of safety and comfort. The tactile object triggers a psychological and emotional space between Lizzy and the conflict occurring in nearby rooms, and Lizzy resourcefully and purposefully relies on it to aid self-soothing. Lizzy's quote highlights the importance of material and spatial elements of relationships. Relationships are lived and experienced not only intrapsychically but also in shared spaces and places, and through embodied interactions often mediated by physical objects.

Nancy (aged 9) (below) also uses and manipulates material objects to promote healing. Post domestic violence, but still living with the fall-out amidst familial division and sibling conflict, Nancy transforms her room into a sanctuary in which she builds her self-esteem through positive affirmation:

> *Int*: *Is there anyone else you can talk to about the things that have happened?*
>   *Nancy*:[...] *I talk to this doll, she's called Nancy as well! And she feels like a real person [...] In a way, she speaks stuff. She's like a brave doll. She's like* ((puts on a macho voice, American accent)) *"You can do it man!"*
>   *Int*: *Does she really speak?*
>   *Nancy*: *In a way yeah. She has a voice recording thing. Every time I go up to her and say something, it replies with what I've recorded*
>   *Int*: *And what have you recorded?*
>   *Nancy*: *I've recorded stuff about being brave, able, able to survive, stuff like that*
>   *Int*: *And how does that help you?*
>   *Nancy*: *It helps me feel like I can make it, I'll be okay*
>   *Int*: *What d'you mean "make it"?*
>   *Nancy*: *Like, get to the end of the road*
>   *Int*: *What's the end of the road?*
>   *Nancy*: ((errm)) *Like, happiness*

Nancy uses her motion-sensor activated doll to trigger messages of strength and support, and in manipulating space and engaging in this spatial practice, Nancy constructs a space for healing and positive affirmation. She is resourceful in taking control of her space and at her will she can adjust her spatial proximity to her doll and activate the voice recording. She purposefully programs her doll to act as a motivational force, encouraging and spurring her on through relational difficulties. Amidst familial conflict, her doll allays her fears, fears of not being able to cope in her challenging environment. Her quote contains a spatial metaphor for hope of future happiness. Nancy's act is a purposeful and powerful attempt at making her bedroom a space which directly contrasts with the difficulties and intrinsically undermining nature of her relational and home spaces.

6   Conclusions

Within a few words, Emma, Lizzy, and Nancy provide insight into the creative ways they have found to cope with domestic violence. They inform us how they protect and heal themselves, and how they have resisted violence in their own ways, without aggression or conflict but through the use of their relational and material environments. Much research into domestic abuse portrays children as passive bystanders, damaged by their experiences and as nonagentic extensions of their parents. If we, as professionals and academics, neglect to acknowledge the many varied and resourceful ways in which children are coping, we risk obscuring their voices and reproducing the stigmatizing representations and stereotypical images of damage and deficit that are prevalent. So prevalent in fact, that they accompany survivors en route to recovery and beyond. A more balanced discussion of resilience and vulnerabilities will facilitate consideration of how children might be empowered and enabled to build their capacity for resilience and coping. Research and practice need to shift focus from studying and considering survivors through a *problem-focused* to a *resilience-focused* lens. Child survivors should be included more readily in social action research and given the opportunity to articulate their experiences. Spaces and places of violence are highly relevant to the field of Children's Geographies, particularly because domestic violence is inherently located within and between physical, embodied and relational spaces. Although children are coping within their immediate contexts of violence – their private home spaces – they also actively and purposefully utilize and seek enjoyment from public outdoor spaces and the natural world to mitigate and help cope with the occurrences of the indoor home space. Since they have slightly different connotations, future research might consider two key issues for child survivors of domestic violence: the use of space and the use of objects to mediate experience of space. Authors have drawn upon their research with child survivors of domestic abuse and have pulled together empirical and theoretical literature from a diverse range of disciplines and perspectives to explore children's corporeal agency and use of space in

situations of violence. Findings illustrate children as capable and active agents, resourceful and inventive in their capacity to use, produce and construct physical, embodied and relational spaces for security, comfort and healing during and after living within violent and volatile contexts.

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Alcohol Consumption and Geographies of Childhood and Family Life

28

Mark Jayne and Gill Valentine

Contents

Abstract

This chapter considers the transmission of drinking cultures within families. In particular we highlight the differential and discursive construction of the home as a space where parents/carers are happy to introduce children to alcohol in a "safe" environment in opposition to public spaces which they consider to be

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locations where alcohol consumption is associated with violence and disorder. Presenting empirical research undertaken in the UK, we argue that parents/ carers miss the opportunity to teach children about the range of drinking practices and spaces they may experience throughout their lives and fail to engage with their children about wider social responsibilities as potential drinkers in the future.

Keywords
Alcohol consumption • Childhood and family life

1   Introduction

In this chapter we focus on the place of alcohol consumption in geographies of childhood and family life and highlight the home as a space where parents/carers are happy to introduce children to the pleasures and dangers of alcohol in a "safe" environment in opposition to public spaces where they associate alcohol consumption with violence and disorder (Valentine et al. 2010a). We argue that this parental emphasis oversimplifies health- and well-being-associated public and domestic drinking cultures and misses the opportunity to teach children about the range of other drinking practices and spaces that they may encounter throughout their lives. Moreover, a stress on individual choice ensures that children are generally not being educated about the impact that drinking and drunken behavior may have on others and consequently parents fail to engage with their children about wider social responsibilities as potential drinkers of the future.

In contemporary societies in the global north there is growing concern about health and well-being associated with levels of alcohol consumption, among children and young people, even in countries such as France and Italy, which have previously been assumed to have "sensible" drinking cultures (Järvinen and Room 2007; Vellerman 2009). Alcohol research has generated a voluminous amount of writing focused on young people in terms of a diverse range of issues with a nonexhaustive list of studies including everyday drinking practices in households and the role of family and peer influence (Komro et al. 2007; Lowe et al. 1993; Yu 2003; Conway et al. 2002; Shucksmith et al. 1997; Marquis 2004; Bogenschneider 1998; Plant and Miller 2007); teenage "risky" behavior (Newburn and Shinner 2001); gendered geographies of young people's drinking (Forsyth and Bernard 2000; Hubbard 2005; Leyshon 2005, 2008a); and the misuse of alcohol by both young people and parents (Leib et al. 2002; McKeganey et al. 2002; Ward and Snow 2010; Templeton et al. 2011).

Despite this progress it is noticeable that there has been a relative lack of research that examines the transmission of drinking cultures within families across a broad diversity of social groups, including those who do "not necessarily consider themselves as having an alcohol problem, or to be suffering the consequences of other people's problematic drinking" (Holloway et al. 2008, p. 534). Moreover, research

has also failed to consider in a sustained manner children who are younger than teenagers, or indeed to address in a convincing way how space and place are key constituents in parental and children's/young peoples' knowledge and experiences of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness. To this end, here we be begin to unpack the complex ways in which geographical imaginations of childhood contribute to the transmission of drinking cultures within families (Jayne et al. 2008; Valentine et al. 2010b).

We respond to challenges outlined by children's geographers regarding the need to take seriously cross-generational approaches by exploring preteen children's understandings of alcohol as well as that of parents (Evans 2008). This is important because adults and children may experience familial socialization practices around alcohol differently. Too often adults' views about what is in the best interests of children are read through the lens of age-appropriate behaviors which are predicated on deterministic theories of child development in which preteens are presumed to be too immature to express opinions, rather than on children's own experiences of their lifeworlds. Drawing on theoretical understandings from social studies of childhood, and more specifically children's geographies, we recognize that children are agents in their own worlds and active choice-makers in terms of spatialities of consumption and lifestyle/health behaviors (e.g., Alderson 1993). Indeed, it is through the negotiation of shared practices that individual identities (of parents and children) and family relations are forged (Morgan 1996). Consequently, to understand the place of alcohol in children's lives we need to pay attention to how families are lived between people, and to daily events and inconsistencies of family behavior (Valentine et al. 2012). As such, this chapter focuses on young children's own knowledge about alcohol, and its role within the context of the health and well-being of family lives. It addresses the question: what do preteen children know about alcohol and its associated potential harms? Our argument focuses on the significance of the geographies of everyday family life: understanding the child in context (Valentine and Hughes 2012). In doing so, the chapter contributes toward addressing Daly's (2003) concerns that what it means to live in families remains an elusive challenge for social scientists. In particular, we seek to advance understanding of the differential and discursive construction of "public" and "private" drinking cultures (Jayne et al. 2006; Holloway et al. 2009) in order to contribute to broader interdisciplinary debates on alcohol consumption and health and well-being.

2   What Do Children Know About Alcohol Consumption?

This chapter draws on research undertaken in the UK which includes a national survey of 2089 families with at least 1 child aged 5–12, and in-depth multistage qualitative research with 10 case study families which included interviews with parent(s)/carer(s) (both alone and together) in order to collect data about attitudes/ practices toward parenting. These interviews were also augmented with participant observation undertaken at a celebration and an "ordinary" family meal (see Valentine

2010 for more details). The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and along with the participant observation material were analyzed using conventional qualitative techniques. The quotes have been anonymyzed and are verbatim; editing is highlighted.

Our study shows that most of the children have a good general understanding of what a drunken person looks like and how they behave, from popular culture ("look tired," "eyes half closed," "smell of drink," "walk strangely," "zigzag about"). Although their observations tended to focus on the short-term behavioral or social effects of alcohol, they also repeat public education messages about drink-driving which they had learned from television campaigns, with several children nuancing these warnings with specific limits on consumption (it's permissible to have one alcoholic drink and drive) that they had picked up from their parents. Albeit, some of the younger children were less clear about whether the restriction on drinking and driving applied only to alcohol or also to other "adult" drinks like coffee. In this sense, the children had largely understood distancing messages about their separation from this adult world through the negative emotional contexts in which alcohol was presented (e.g., accidents).

Approximately one in five (20.6 %) of the parents who responded to the survey said their child had ever expressed a concern about somebody's drinking: their own, their spouse/partner's, ex-spouse/ex-partner's, sibling's, or a friend/relative's. Approximately 17.8 % of the respondents said their child had mentioned one individual, while 2.8 % said their child had concerns about two or more people. Children from five of the case study families described having seen a parent or sibling drunk with occasions which they described were commonly related to parties or holidays, reflecting the fact that parents are often unaware of the significance of such intimate familial moments when they model patterns of consumption:

> My Dad once drunk alcohol but then he had to go to bed [edit] *Interviewer*: Do you think that you will have drinks when you grow up? No . . . when I grow up, I think my Dad might drink some alcohol and then he might fall asleep, so that's why I won't drink it. (Boy, aged 9, Family D)
>
> *Girl*: When we went to Greece my sister, she had one or two cocktails and when we went back to our . . . apartment . . . she just laid down on the bed laughing . . .
>
> *Interviewer*: So what does alcohol do to you when you drink it? . . . *Boy*: It makes them a bit less controlled of theirself . . . *Girl*: Well they sing stupid songs . . . my Mum and my friend's Mum got drunk . . .
>
> They was a bit drunk and they started singing a song about what you do when you need the toilet when you're working in the garden. (Girl and boy, aged 10, Family C)

Children did not appear to feel threatened or upset by adults' drunkenness. Rather, they commonly represented their parents' behavior in a rather bemused way, although one child recognized that there are degrees of drunkenness and that if someone is "a bit drunk" you can have fun with them but if they are "very drunk" you should stay away. While the parents were concerned that their children might be judgmental about their drunkenness, their offspring did not associate alcohol with

moral failings, reflecting the extent to which domestic drinking has become normalized in UK culture.

However, when children talked about being drunk in abstract terms rather than in relation to family members, they represented it in negative imagery, drawing a striking association between alcohol and aggression. Here, the negative portrayals of alcohol and violence on television were key reference points for the children's observations, as well as some recollections of seeing drunken strangers behaving in threatening ways in the street. Although television appears to provide an important source of risk information for children about the potential social harms of excess alcohol consumption in public, the spatiality of their moral distinction between drunkenness at home and in public space suggests a problematic disassociation between children's understandings of the negative effects of drinking to excess and everyday family practices.

> Because alcohol has this sort of thing in that can make like kids do things that they're not supposed to do . . . like fight people and kill people . . . and kids aren't supposed to do things like that. And the other reason is it can damage them.
> *Interviewer*: How can it damage them, do you know? Because if you drink some, it can damage them because they might not be able to be like a proper person anymore [edit later] because if they have alcohol, it can make you really like naughty . . . They might punch people, sometimes say things that they don't mean, like 'I hate you' . . . if they have a lot they do nasty things but if they don't have that much, they're nice. (Girl, aged 10, Family A)
> *Interviewer*: . . . Have you ever seen anyone you know drunk? No . . . I've only seen one or two [drunk strangers] and it's been after a football match. But one man, I was walking home from school and my Mum actually called the Police on him [edit] *Interviewer*: So do you think getting drunk is something that lots of people do or just a fewpeople? Teenagers do it quite a lot . . . And they usually talk about murdering and things.
> *Interviewer*: Murdering? Yeah, other people and on the news and things they're just talking about teenagers, blah-blah- blah . . . they just do bad things? (Boy, aged 9, Family E)

While children demonstrated generally competent understanding of some of the potential social harms associated with excess alcohol consumption in public space, they had a limited understanding of the long-term health risks associated with drinking above recommended limits. These are defined by the UK Department of Health as cancer of the mouth and throat, sexual and mental health problems, liver cirrhosis and heart disease for adults, as well as affecting brain development and the risk of accidents, injury, and alcohol poisoning for children. Although previous research (e.g., Kurtz 1999) has suggested that health is not an issue of significant concern to children, perhaps because these risks are commonly framed in the future (e.g., Valentine et al. 2010a), nonetheless those who took part in our study had a reasonable knowledge of the health harms associated with other social practices like smoking rather than drinking. Indeed, in some cases the children muddled the health warnings associated with smoking, drugs, and alcohol. John (aged 9), for example, suggested that drinking might damage your lungs; Aileen (aged 8) thought that Michael Jackson had died from alcohol rather than drug consumption; while Lucy (aged 7) made a loose association that alcohol is more of a threat to children's health than adults' and can result in a heart attack. Where children were aware of the

concept of addiction they associated it with warnings about playing computer games – the framework within which many parents introduced them to this concept – rather than with alcohol:

> Getting addicted, like you've tried it and then you want to do it again and again and again . . .You can get addicted to a game, like Club Penguin . . .*Interviewer*: Do you know of any famous people who drink a lot of alcohol or celebrities? I know someone who did but he died.
>   *Interviewer*: Who's that? Michael Jackson. *Interviewer*: Michael Jackson; he was addicted to alcohol was he? He died from it. (Boy, aged 8, Family G)

The case study parents were commonly ambivalent about talking to preteen children about alcohol, arguing that they lack sufficient understanding to receive such complex health information. Yet, our research found that most of the parents surveyed had a poor understanding of the potential long-term health harms associated with alcohol themselves, as well as a lack of awareness of how much they actually consumed. Of the fathers who responded to our survey nearly three-quarters (73.5 %) had drunk above or well above recommended limits on their heaviest drinking day in the past week, although only 16.5 % of these respondents recognized that they had exceeded sensible drinking guidelines. Likewise, two-thirds (66 %) of the mothers who responded to our survey had drunk above or well above recommended limits on their heaviest drinking day in the past week, with only 6.9 % acknowledging their excess consumption.

Case study parents described using soft drinks to model the way that they regard alcohol: as "naughty but nice." In most of the families, sugary drinks were considered bad for children's health and liable to cause hyperactive behavior. This representation has parallels with the way that alcohol is perceived by adults as a potential health harm and cause of antisocial behavior. Most of the parents interviewed are aware of the risks of drinking above recommended limits, even if they do not recognize when they do so, and consider alcohol as a treat. In the same way, they warn their children about the potential health risks of particular soft drinks and do not permit them to drink these products regularly – except as treats (e.g., holidays, parties) or when they are being rewarded for good behavior. In this way, a reverse morality of drinking is constructed within families (cf. James's 1990 study of confectionery) where "good" behavior by a parent or child is rewarded with a drink that could be potentially "bad" if health advice is disregarded by the consumer:

> It smells like lemonade . . . We're only allowed fizzy drinks in the holidays because sometimes they have sugar in and it kind of makes you a bit hyper . . . we're allowed it at parties as well. (Girl, aged 8, Family G)
>   *Interviewer*: . . . if you could have a choice, what would you ask for? Lemonade . . . I'm not always allowed it. *Interviewer*: Why not? Because Mum says it's really bad for my teeth . . . because it's sugary. *Interviewer*: . . . What sort of occasions might you have them'? If I be good. (Girl, aged 7, Family I)

The confused information children receive at home from their parents about the potential health risks associated with drinking is compounded by the fact that most of those interviewed said that they had not received education about alcohol at school.

This despite the fact that the UK Department for Education states that children aged 7–11 will learn about the health and social risks associated with alcohol and basic skills for making good choices about their health and recognizing risky situations at school. From teenage years onward children should be taught about units, how to handle peer pressure, and tips for staying safe if they consume alcohol.

Previous research has indicated that the place where children are most likely to obtain and consume alcohol is at home or their friends' homes, supplied by parents (e.g., Hibell et al. 2009; Valentine et al. 2007b), and that the inappropriate supply of alcohol to minors by parents is commonly cited as a cause of teenagers' hazardous drinking (e.g., Kypri et al. 2007). Yet, despite the fact that all the children (aged 5–12) in the case study families were exposed to alcohol consumption at home, the majority had little interest in experimenting with it. Some had tried it but most either actively disliked the taste or preferred soft drinks. This was further borne out by the evidence of participant observation at family events. Here, children showed little interest in alcohol despite the fact that adults were drinking. Rather, the children commonly carved out their own "private" space where they could play together independently from the adults' activities and were happy to enjoy their own "treats" such as fizzy drinks without showing interest in what adults were consuming. Parents' observations suggest that girls show more general interest in the adult world than boys, picking up on issues being discussed and asking questions in relation to their surroundings; however, this rarely translates into an active interest in drinking:

> *Boy: Interviewer* [to girl]: *Girl*:
> [Identifying a picture] WKD . . . So is it something that you've drunk ever? . . .
> I haven't. I have had a bit. . . .You've had a bit, so you've had a taste of this? Yeah. And do you like it? It's alright. I prefer cola [edit] . . . Have you ever asked [to try it]? No, I don't want to. (Boy and Girl, aged 10, Family C)

When asked about their probable attitudes toward alcohol when they are adults, the children interviewed anticipated a future of moderation (i.e., drinking but not getting drunk). In particular, their imagined futures hinted at a recognition that drinking alcohol is a pleasurable social activity, while also showing awareness of some of the social risks associated with excess consumption, despite their generally limited or confused understanding of the possibilities of alcohol-related harms to physical health:

> *Interviewer: Do* you think you'll drink when you get older?Yeah . . . maybe beer or something . . . I don't think I'd ever get drunk. *Interviewer*: Right, so you think getting drunk is bad? Yeah . . . Because it makes you go a bit crazy in the head. *Interviewer*: Does it have any other effects on your health? . . . I think it like damages your lungs . . . (Boy, aged 9, Family E)

3 Who Is Most at Risk and Where?

Leyshon (2008b) highlights that discourses around children/young people are none-theless imagined, defined, and created around certain place myths and practices. However, Leyshon also considers the social and material relations predicated on how

young people actively produce understanding, belonging, and not-belonging and the sometimes contradictory feelings of inclusion and exclusion in ways that can be very different from adults. Leyshon (2005, 2008a) thus describes the performing of moral geographies and imagined deviance relating to young people and drinking in public space in terms of a process of problematization and reconstruction. Thus, while most of the parents interviewed did not feel their children aged 5–12 faced any current alcohol-related harms, many of them expressed concerned attitudes about the potential risks their children may face as teenagers as they become more "independent" and are exposed to and experience alcohol consumption beyond the home. These risks of future dangers were perceived to be highly gendered: with girls described as being vulnerable to sexual violence when drinking in public space and boys as vulnerable to getting involved in fights or other kinds of social disorder in the nighttime economy (see Holloway et al. 2010).

These views mirror wider social attitudes about gender and alcohol consumption. However, while there has been a significant increase in drinking by women with the gender gap between men's and women's drinking behaviors narrowing in the last 30 years (Smith and Foxcroft 2009), moral attitudes toward women's drinking in public space have not kept pace with this social change. Women drinkers still face more opprobrium than their male counterparts, reflecting the persistence of traditional gendered (and classed) expectations of "respectability" and historical sexual discourses about women in public space as "loose," and as inviting male violence (Plant 1997, Day et al. 2004, Ettore 1997):

> Father: I think they're natural worries that everyone has. But I think with the girls, I know it sounds sexist but I always feel like girls need more protection. I think as teenagers, they are almost more vulnerable...
>
> Mother: I think ... well I'm speaking from personal experience where sort of you think you are indestructible and it'll never happen to me, and I look back now at things that I did and think I don't want my children to do that. I don't want them going out wearing high heels and short skirt and then walk home on their own, thinking 'Oh nothing will happen to me', when clearly it could.
>
> Interviewer: So the risks are slightly different?
>
> Father: The risks are different ... I just think there is a responsibility that both boys and girls need to understand, it's okay to go out and get drunk but don't go out and get so drunk that you end up doing silly things or getting yourself into trouble...And I think that applies to both ...
>
> Mother: And do it in a safe environment, if possible, which would be at a house party
> (Parents, Family F)
>
> No, I mean obviously I don't want them to be raving drunks or whatever and I suppose I'd be more concerned about my daughter getting drunk at parties and getting into trouble...Then the other side is lads going out and getting drunk in town centres are at risk as well, so.
> (Father, Family D)

Bound up in these interview quotes is an implicit attitude that some spaces are "safer" than others (see Holloway et al. 2008). Here, young people's drinking is considered more risky outside the home because the extrafamilial norms associated with young people drinking in public space are predicated on representations of

"bingeing" and "antisocial" or irresponsible behavior. In this context, most of the parents perceived that it would be safer for their children to drink alcohol at home (and one family in the space of their local neighborhood pub), where they would be under the surveillance of family, friends, or neighbors which would moderate their consumption and associated behaviors, than for them to drink "in public" unsupervised on the streets or in city center venues (Forsyth and Barnard 2000). In these terms, parents/carers generally expressed a notion of their own childhoods as being "safer" and their own behavior as more "sensible" and in doing so clearly "bought into" popular and policy discourses relating to "moral panics" of young people being drunk, violent, and disorderly with little attempt to entertain a more balanced understanding of the pleasures and dangers of alcohol consumption for contemporary children/young people.

Indeed, some of the interviewees placed responsibility for young people's problem drinking in public space on what they perceived as poor parenting by "others" – which they were quick to stress was about particular families' practices and "bad" choices rather than a class issue:

> It's better than on street corners. Yeah, I said 'I'd rather you [to her older daughter] were sat in [name of local pub removed] with a group of friends responsibly'. And I did point out to her that she could go in [name of pub] and drink soft drinks at 16 and it's a social thing for her every week now [edit] . . . And I think well it's up the road, we know where she is and you see so many kids on street corners with bottles of Vodka and cans of cider
> (Parents, Family C)
> I'd rather do it that way [allowing his son and friends to drink in his home], then I know what he's doing and then hope that by doing that, it will open a link of trust between us both. . . once they're out of that front door, you're not going to know until you get the knock on the door from the Police or whatever, saying 'He's been found drunk'. You know, I'd be quite happy to supervise him . . .
> (Father, Family B)
> Mother: But I don't think binge drinking in itself is the problem, I think it's the type of people who do the binge drink [edit] . . . It may be I think you know, how they were brought up. I just think however drunk you are, your basic morals will still be there. So yes, I might get really drunk and steal a traffic cone, which is you know, when you're at university quite funny, but I can't imagine . . . that I would ever get really drunk and smash a bottle in someone's face. You just know . . . however drunk you are, you have your limit of what's acceptable and what really isn't, what's unacceptable social behaviour
> (Parents, Family F)

However, contrary to a common perception that "other" people's parenting is at the root of young people's alcohol-related antisocial behavior most of the interviewees argued that home was the main site where children should learn about alcohol rather than school. While some interviewees noted the potential role of education in reinforcing messages about responsible drinking and meeting the needs of those who do not get support at home, most parents felt that their children needed tailored advice and guidance which they were best placed to offer because of their intimate knowledge of their children, their friends, and the spaces that they inhabited and consequently the people and situations they were likely to encounter:

Father: Definitely from the parents. I think that should be the first introduction. I don't think schools should really . . .

Mother: It's not appropriate really in schools.

Father: No, schools are to educate you, not to learn about drinking.

Mother: Yeah, it's not something . . . I think introduction definitely within the home life.

Father: Not to set up a whole lesson in school in the curriculum on drinking or whatever. I mean there's talk about changing school curriculums to include all these sort of life skills, but I mean that's almost taking over what parents should be doing. . .

Mother: You're right but a lot of parents don't and I think that's why they're looking to introduce it or do more in school because a lot of kids don't have as much guidance as you or I might be able to give them. . .

Father: It's a vicious circle because the parents don't put enough effort in because they know the school's going to do it.

(Parents, Family D)

Such evidence highlights how "problematic," "sensible," "safe," and "unsafe" drinking practices and the spaces and places where alcohol consumption takes place are differentially and discursively constructed in relation to each other. The work of Evans (2008, 2010) is particularly important for understanding the preemptive logic and politics of restrictions put on young people's use of public space. Evans (2008, p. 1662) considers the spatialities and boundaries between children/young people and adults as being far from fixed and for the need to consider the "changing social constructions of childhood and adolescence and the processes that structure young people's lives across a range of spatial scales." Moreover, advancing debate about relationality and intergenerationality Evans (2008, p. 1669) shows how recent work on movement to "independence" has focused on "developing a more nuanced understanding of the negotiation and ongoing *inter*dependence with significant (extra)familial others during key 'transition events' [and that] . . . 'dependency' and 'interdependency' having moral implications for both young people and parents." Such insights are important in understanding the complex adults'/young people's/children's relationships bound up with geographies of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness.

The ideological dimensions that constitute notions of, for example, the home and associated geographies of alcohol consumption were thus shown to relate to visions of urban drinking practices and experiences relating to violence and disorder and the role and influence of other adults/children/young people. Moreover, the findings show how links between home and public spaces relate not only to alcohol consumption per se but are reflective of concerns regarding the "wider world," which as parents in the study highlight are not necessarily informed through personal experiences, or indeed the reality for the vast majority of adults and children/young people who drink alcohol in public spaces but via geographical imaginations bound up with wider extrafamilial political and popular debates and representations of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness.

In our study then, parents perceive that there has been a significant shift in public drinking cultures and the nature of young people's drinking since their own childhoods. While the findings from the quantitative element of this research suggest the dominant parental attitude (i.e., their perception of what ought to be the extrafamilial

social norm) is that children in general should *not* be introduced to alcohol at home until their mid teens and ought *not* to be allowed to drink in public space until they reach adulthood, the qualitative element of the research suggests that parents are actually introducing their own children to alcohol at home at an earlier age than this. In doing so parents/carers draw on experiences from their own childhoods (either repeating what they perceive as positive parenting strategies or intentionally parenting in a completely different way from how they were brought up) to inform their specific intrafamilial parenting practices. In other words, there is a discrepancy between how respondents perceive parents ought to behave and what they are actually doing themselves in practice. In particular, parents want their children to appreciate the pleasures and benefits of alcohol as well as the risks of excess consumption (particularly in the context of public space) so that in future they will drink in moderation. This attitude toward alcohol is perceived to be best learnt at home – as part of "growing up" – rather than at school or other spaces. In this sense, attitudes about intrafamilial parenting in relation to alcohol do not appear to have changed as much as parents' perceptions of extrafamilial public drinking cultures.

Indeed, the dominant attitude of parents surveyed and interviewed for this research project was that children should be introduced to alcohol by families at home. However, most of the parents/carers who participated in the case study element of the research did not have specific rules related to alcohol for children aged 5–12 as they did not consider them to be interested in drinking at this age. At the same time, the case study parents modeled a positive attitude toward alcohol – emphasizing pleasure and sociality (notably a reverse morality that good behavior can be rewarded by a "naughty but nice" drink) – through their domestic drinking (and shopping) practices, including encouraging children to try alcohol and to participate in drinking rituals albeit often by mimicking these practices and moralities with soft drinks. Parents were nonetheless more reluctant to expose children to drinking (unless it was with a meal) in public space, thus implicitly constructing an understanding of home as a safe space to drink in contrast to the risks associated with alcohol in public space.

In these terms, those who took part in the qualitative element of the research had an individualized approach to parenting around alcohol (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

Parents/carers were thus reluctant to reprimand other people's children for inappropriate drinking or for other adults to discipline their own children; resistant to the suggestion that alcohol education should be provided at school; and considered that general advice in relation to alcohol would be ineffective believing that each child had an individual personality and needed to be parented in specific ways. In emphasizing children's expressivity, rather than parental discipline, the interviewees presented families as resources out of which individual children construct themselves, defining the role of parents as to equip children with the right personal qualities and skills to ensure that they make sensible choices in relation to alcohol. This "neoliberal" model of parenting assumes that a child is able to distinguish between what might be the right action for himself/herself in a particular time and place (Holloway et al. 2010). However, such an approach fails to account for the

ways that individual's drinking can impact on many other lives beyond his/her own and consequently parents/cares are failing to acknowledge, and educate their children about the wider shared social responsibilities of drinkers.

Yet, the evidence in our study is that while parents are ambivalent about talking to preteen children about drinking, regarding them as too young for such discussions, the children themselves have developed a competent understanding of alcohol and the broad circumstances under which children and adults may drink. They also have thoughtful reflections about consumption practices of family members and their own likely future behavior. Specifically, the children recognized that alcohol is an adult product, have an awareness of the social harms of excess consumption in public space, and imagine that as adults of the future they will drink in moderation.

Much of this knowledge about alcohol has been gleaned by children through proximal processes, namely, their daily interactions with parents/older siblings in the context of everyday family life and from the media, rather than through health campaigns targeted at them or interventions at school. Although parents generally consider preteen children to be too young to receive education about alcohol the banal omnipresence of alcohol in the everyday affective spaces of familial life such as at home, in the supermarket, and on holiday means that they are unintentionally modeling drinking to children. Children's identification and affective ties with their parents intensify their learning about alcohol such that their knowledge about different products, where alcohol can be purchased, why people drink, and the social rituals associated with drinking are largely confined to familial consumption practices. In other words, the proximity effect of shared family life produces a particular type of knowledge about alcohol, with the majority of the children in this study describing positive associations with familial drinking (e.g., sociality, shopping, fun), although this is not to suggest that this necessarily means they want to experiment with alcohol in the present or will drink to excess as adults of the future: indeed the common intention is to drink in moderation. It does, however, contrast with studies from the 1980s (e.g., Casswell et al. 1988), which have suggested that between the ages of 6–10 children have a negative attitude toward alcohol. In doing so, this article highlights the significance of experiential learning, notably the way that families are created and lived together, in shaping children's development of knowledge about alcohol.

Given parental concerns that preteen children are too young to be formally taught about alcohol, children's knowledge of the harms associated with drinking is primarily gleaned from television and observation of drunken strangers in public space. The spatiality of children's moral distinction between the meaning of drunkenness at home (silly, makes you sleep), compared with public space (frightening, violent), suggests that there is a potentially problematic disassociation between children's understandings of the negative effects of drinking to excess and everyday family practices. Only one child cast an experience of parental drunkenness in a negative light, stating that he did not want to drink because his father had got drunk and gone to bed.

However, children had a weaker understanding of social problems associated with alcohol and had not assimilated health information about drinking compared to

their knowledge of other recreational habits, such as smoking. While the social risks associated with alcohol readily arise in households because of intrafamilial practices (e.g., drunkenness at parties, hangovers), as well as the visibility of popular/political debates about alcohol in the media, the public health risks do not resonate with parents' own experiences of alcohol and are less easily raised in the context of everyday family life. More problematically, many of the case study parents were implicitly normalizing excess consumption, which has potential health risks because they were regularly drinking above recommended limits without they, or their children, being aware that they were doing so, and were encouraging their children to taste alcohol despite medical guidance about the need to raise the age of the first drink. As a consequence, the familial pattern of "moderation" that many children intend to replicate in adulthood is, in medical terms, a pattern of excess with long-term health risks. Moreover, not all young people have positive familial environments given wider socioeconomic, educational, and health inequalities. Some children may be overexposed to "problem" familial drinking, others "protected" from knowledge about alcohol for cultural or religious reasons despite evidence of the absent presence of alcohol even in communities that abstain (Valentine et al. 2010a).

As such, alcohol policy must give more guidance to parents not in terms of establishing fixed normative ideals but rather to improve their awareness of the long-term health risks of "everyday" patterns of consumption: specifically, to cause parents to reflect on their own habits and domestic practices; to raise their awareness of the experiential nature of children's learning about alcohol through the proximity effect; and to improve their communication skills about how to talk to preteen children about alcohol. Yet, the third National Alcohol Strategy of England and Wales, published in March 2012, has actually shifted the emphasis away from the previous government's focus on consumers (e.g., individuals, families, communities) and policing, and toward the industry, retailers, and health professionals through its concentration on the minimal pricing of alcohol; encouraging the greater use of interventions by health professionals; and a new public health responsibility deal to improve choice of lower-strength products (Department of Health and Home Office 2012).

Yet, as some parents observed when complaining about other parents allowing their children to "binge drinking" in public space – without appreciating the significance of their comments – not all children have positive family support and as a consequence some children are much less well equipped to make "sensible choices" than others. As such, in addition to government campaigns targeted at parents, alcohol education in schools is one way to address the gaps in what children are learning about alcohol and the differential levels of education and support children receive at home. This implies that it would be beneficial to review the way alcohol education is currently delivered as part of the National Curriculum within primary schools, in order to improve its efficacy. As part of this, alcohol education in schools should involve parents and/or should run in parallel with campaigns targeted at parents to maximize impact. As noted elsewhere, however (see Jayne et al. 2010; Waitt et al. 2011), it is important that such educational activities do not stigmatize alcohol consumption but rather offer more salient measures which relate to the way

to, for example, encourage the young to conceive of their "big night out" in terms of an "ethics" of personal and group safety, and that educational campaigns target, for example, the perpetrators of violence, rather than "criminalizing" generalized groups of drinkers (e.g., young people/women). At present, however, it is clear that governmental policy and charity guidance is overly simplistic and is thus failing to engage with and thus challenge notions and practices bound up with alcohol and family life.

4   Conclusion

In this chapter we have contributed to research agendas focused on geographies of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness by unpacking the "problematic," "sensible," "safe," and "unsafe" drinking practices bound up with specific spaces and places, differentially and discursively constructed in relation to each other. However, we have also highlighted that there is still much theoretical and empirical work to be done to draw out the connections and mobilities that constitute geographies of alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness in terms of, for example, alcohol education and the diverse range of spaces where children encounter alcohol in everyday family settings. Sustained engagement with such relationalities and the complex intergenerational conflicts, tensions, and dialogues that are bound up with adult/young people/children's geographies can thus be seen to offer much to advancing understanding of the transmission of drinking cultures within families in a way that also highlights the false dualisms and misconceptions associated with health and well-being and "public" and "private" drinking cultures.

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Mental Health of Looked-After Children: Embodiment and Use of Space

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Contents

Abstract

Much psychological language uses metaphors of space and place to conceptualize human experience. In everyday conversation, people talk about needing "space to think" or "putting some distance" between our self and someone we find difficult. In psychotherapy, much emphasis is placed on the psychic geography of the "therapeutic space," for instance, talk about maintaining boundaries, providing containment. Psychologists and psychotherapists use topographical models to envision psychological processes – like "levels of consciousness" (the conscious and the unconscious) – and use the language of movement and distance to make sense of our relationalities. And yet, psychologists and other mental health professionals have been surprisingly resistant to theorizing the importance of space and place in children's daily lives and its

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implications for their mental health and well-being. This is particularly notable in research focused on children who are looked after away from home, where work on mental health has focused very strongly on the impact of being looked after on inner experiences of mental health and well-being, individualizing and pathologizing young people's lives, but neglecting the importance of the impact of the many experiences of physical and material displacement that young people in care have. This chapter explores how the mental health of looked-after children is conceptualized and the implications of considering the importance of space and embodiment in looked-after children's mental health and well-being. The importance of notions of "home" and "belonging" for young people in care is considered, and the implications of these for an understanding of their well-being, as well as their experiences of distress, are explored.

1   Introduction: Constructing the Looked-After Child- Pathology, Stigma, and Risk

When exploring the mental health of young people in care, academic descriptions tend to be highly psychiatrized. Looked-after children (children who are in the care of the state or looked after away from home) are represented in both popular and academic contexts as "vulnerable" (e.g., Akister et al. 2010; Goddard 2000), "damaged" (e.g., Gaskell 2010; Kovandžić et al. 2011), or having extensive mental health needs (Blower et al. 2004; Golding 2010; Ford et al. 2007). Being "in care" is often itself described as potentially damaging (Thoburn et al. 2012), with contemporary child protection practices prioritizing maintaining birth families or returning children to birth families where at all possible, in order to protect young people from the negative impact of being "looked after" (Lutman and Farmer 2012).

In the UK, the Department for Education (2014) data on children and young people reflects the well-established pattern that young people are typically taken into care as a result of abuse and neglect, severe family dysfunction, and severe family stress. Given these kinds of personal histories, it is perhaps unsurprising then that these young people experience a greater rate of mental health need than the general population (McCann et al. 1996; Blower et al. 2004; Ford et al. 2007). Much of the psychological research on looked-after children has focused on the prevalence of psychological difficulty among this group. For example, in one of the first prevalence studies exploring mental health need among looked-after children in the UK, McCann et al. (1996) found that 67 % of a sample of 13–17-year-old young people in care evidenced significant mental health needs, compared to 15 % in a general population sample. Over the last 20 years, similar findings have been reported in community, residential, and clinical samples (Payne 2000; Minnis and Priore 2001; Richardson and Lelliott 2003; Blower et al. 2004; Ford et al. 2007). In

addition to these explicitly psychiatrized representations of young people in care, there is a substantial literature that documents the poor outcomes of looked-after children – in terms of their educational attainment, vulnerability to long-term unemployment, domestic violence and other forms of violence, early pregnancy, other indices of social exclusion, socioeconomic problems, and long-term mental health difficulty (Garrett 2002; Stein 2006; Dixon 2008). The implications of these studies are clear: being "in care" renders young people vulnerable to a range of mental health difficulties, and the extent of mental health need among the looked-after population is significant (Callaghan et al. 2004b).

The factors that are associated with more positive outcomes for looked-after children are also fairly well established – placement stability, educational involvement (Social Exclusion Unit 2003), gaining employment (Martin and Jackson 2002; Harker 2012), having positive relationships and good communication skills (Dixon 2008; Stein and Dumaret 2011; Stein 2006), and other indices of social inclusion (Stein and Dumaret 2011). These factors that are seen as protective for young people are also understood to be compromised by the move into care, as young people lose access to these familiar and often supportive contexts at a time when such support is critical to healthy mental development and ability to cope with difficult situations. This, according to the literature, places young people at further risk of the development of mental health distress (Power et al. 1995; Ryan and Chambers 2008; Coyle and Pinkerton 2012).

The dominant representations of young people who are looked after outside the parental home are, therefore, typically heavily influenced by notions of damage and pathology. These are largely framed in terms of internal, psychological challenge. In the UK context, the vast majority of psychological research has explored the extent and nature of psychopathology, suggesting that young people in care have significant unmet mental health needs. This work has been important, in terms of drawing attention to a vulnerable population in need of intervention. However, at the same time, it embeds in discourses of health and social care a representation of young people as inevitably and indelibly damaged by the factors that resulted in their move into care and by their experiences of being in care themselves. Through individualizing our understanding of the impact and experience of care, this kind of literature also predicts strategies of intervention that target individual distress and behavior. However, care and, indeed, the circumstances that lead to a young person moving into care are not conditions that occur purely in our "inner" world. Care, being cared for, and being removed into care all occur in material and social spatial arrangements. This is indicated in the language used to describe care arrangements – being "moved into care," being "placed," placement breakdown. The psychic geography of care is constituted within and is interpenetrated by spatial relations. The particular use of language here is also significant in the way it positions young people as passive – they are "placed," "moved." They are not framed as agents moving through the landscape of care; rather, they are objects *being moved*.

Mason and Davies (2009) suggested that "too often social science research and knowledge is oddly abstracted from the sensory, embodied and lived conditions of

existence that it seeks to explain" (p.600). In the case of young people in care, our preoccupation in mental health research with understanding how they are psychically damaged by care, and by the circumstances that led them to care, means that the complex relational spaces in which they live their lives in the everyday are often neglected. Instead, this chapter explores how a psychosocial account of the everyday, as it is lived in the physical and relational spaces of care, has implications for the psychosocial aspects of young peoples' lives. We argue that this can lead us to a less pathologizing, more appropriate narrative of young people's lives in care. This narrative recognizes that growing up in care can be complex and challenging, but offers less individualizing alternatives for understanding how young people make sense of their lives and for intervening into their lives and relationships to support them moving forward.

Being "looked after away from home" is a necessarily ambivalent positioning, particularly for young people in foster care, housed in "family-like" homes. Being cared for in the community blurs the boundaries of familial and formal care, breaking down our usual understandings of the meaning of home. Mallett (2004) argues that "home" has a particular place in the "Anglo-European imaginary" (p.77), with "home" framed as an intimate, private space, associated with comfort and belonging. The "proper" domain for raising children tends to be seen as "home" (Dorrer et al. 2010), (i.e., a familial home) with the area beyond the home being constructed as "risky" (Harden 2000). However, being "in foster care" or living in a residential setting challenges the usual public-private divide in our conceptualization of home spaces. Academics have long troubled this apparent divide between "public" and "private," suggesting that the notion of home as "haven in a heartless world" covers over the complex meanings of home for many, for whom the associations of warmth and love are not as clear. Homes can be dangerous, risky, and unsettling spaces (Lasch 1995). While the conflation of "home" and "safety" may be taken for granted in some kinds of families, in families that do not conform to our ideas of "normal," the idea of house as home is more problematic (Bowlby et al. 1997; Graesch 2004) – for example, Harden (2000) and Wilson et al. (2012) suggest that home is not necessarily a "safe" place for children affected by domestic violence and abuse. Similarly, home is not necessarily a place of "belonging" for all children. As Mallett (2004) suggests, home is for many a more ambiguous space and "can constitute belonging and/or create a sense of marginalisation and estrangement" (2004, p. 84). Some young people have multiple homes, or the space they regard as "home" may not correspond to observing adults notion of what home "should" be. The implications of this, psychosocially, must necessarily be significant for children and young people who are looked after, but its implications for mental health and intervention are generally not sufficiently engaged in psychological, psychiatric, and other mental health literature. This chapter draws together literature from children's geographies and psychological and other mental health research, to highlight the importance of taking into account the spatialities of looked-after children's lives, in understanding their experiences and in intervening appropriately to better support them. We use children's geography resources that explore the use of home spaces by looked-after young people and their implications

for young people's sense of self and sense of relationship (Harden 2000; Leverett and Rixon 2011), young people's sensory construction of family relationships in domestic spaces (Wilson et al. 2012), and the way that embodied practices (like eating, access to resources within the home, self-care) intersect with use of space to produce the domestic space as either house or home (Callaghan et al. 2016; Dorrer et al. 2010; Harden 2000). This transdisciplinary perspective is further explored through a consideration of systemic family interventions with looked-after children that specifically draw on geographical constructs, like spatial mapping, to understand the importance of space and spatial relationships in the lives of young people who are dislocated, relocated, and rehomed.

2 The Rehabilitative Spaces of Care: Foster Care as Home/Not Home

Symbolically, the home is a space of shared memories, and shared family histories, within which people construct a sense of self (Auge 1995). Being fostered, being placed in a foster "home," is in some senses to be set adrift from his shared personal history, to be away from the familiar spaces in which they feel they "belong." Some young people may not remember "home" at all, and their personal narrative might be one of foster homes and of movement. The work of the foster child is to remake a sense of home for themselves and to find comfort and belonging in a world of strangers. The work of the foster carer is to provide a home within which the young person feels safe and secure and in which they feel they belong. However, in young people in care, the lack of a shared past and memories is to some degree "built into" the home space into which they must transition, and this lack of common roots can contribute to a sense of a more uncertain future together that must be acknowledged and worked through in relational and physical spaces in order to ensure and preserve the bond the foster carer and the young person must co-construct. As looked-after children approach adolescence, the situation gets sometimes more complicated as they manage the identity challenges so often associated with this part of growing up. As young people negotiate a more personally defined sense of identity, they begin to achieve a balance between independence and belonging.

This may trigger difficult and complex patterns of relating in newly formed and often temporary families. Experiences like tantrums, absconding, self-harming, and antisocial behaviors – which are often seen in psychological literature as an expression of individual difficulty – need to be understood contextually, as at least partly related to experiences of dislocation and a lack of a sense of belonging and/or an attempt to test the safety of the new attachments in new home spaces. As young people navigate the sense of multiple families (foster families, biological families, their own extended networks, and informal family-like relationships), they must negotiate sometimes quite dramatic emotional dilemmas – "conflicts of split loyalties" (Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner 1986), between multiple belongings and families. These conflicts are often embodied in physical interactions with carers, objects, and relational spaces that constitute and represent these bonds.

The following vignettes are drawn from the second author's clinical practice as a family therapist in Italy. All families provided written consent for their data to be used for research and publication purposes. To preserve anonymity, names, locations, and identifying features disclosed in the interview and in the visual task have been omitted and replaced with pseudonyms. Participant's family maps have been electronically recreated and all names, locations, and identifying features replaced with pseudonyms.

Case Study *Mark's foster parents cannot understand what happened. Since his arrival 5 years before, they did their best to make him feel welcome and to offer him the things he didn't get in his early childhood, including a nice bedroom all for himself. Initially everything seemed going smoothly and he seemed very grateful to them. Their only concern was that he was eating a lot and eating very quickly. Soon he began to hoard food under his bed or in his wardrobe. His foster parents found this upsetting and forbade him from bringing food into his room. Mark then began to be very untidy and messy, and his foster parents suggested his room "looked like a dump." He also kept losing his belongings and gifts received by his new family and friends.*

Six months ago, Mark (now 14) started stealing various objects from their house and smashed up some furniture in his room. More recently, he started hanging out with bad company. Their concerns were further raised when he was found sleeping at the local train station by the police, looking unkempt, "like a homeless person."

Mark's foster parents kept trying their best, and their reactions were kind and patient, but things continued to deteriorate. They were at the verge of a placement breakdown, feeling helpless and frustrated when they sought family therapy: "He doesn't care about, he doesn't love us… he has no respect whatsoever for our belongings."

By linking these puzzling behaviors with other difficult and painful belongings, so far left unspoken in their family conversations, we were able to connect his current conduct to his past life and home. That is how we learned that Mark felt ambivalent about the privilege of being welcomed into a wealthy, nice home, where he could have a room on his own. It made him feel very guilty about his older biological brother left behind, with whom he had almost no contact at all since his move into care.

The case study highlights some of the complexities that moving into a "new home" might produce. While having a space of his own may seem an uncomplicated positive feature of his foster placement, for Mark, the experience of a house with a room of his own and a kitchen full of food is a necessarily ambivalent one. On the one hand, it is a space he can retreat to. On the other hand, it makes him feel that he has betrayed his roots and his earlier relationships with those in his family of origin.

Some young people in care experience something akin to "survivor guilt" – a sense of discomfort about young people "left behind" in difficult situations, institutions, or temporary placements. Just as their concept of home might exceed the

one that their carers, social workers, etc. assume, so too their concept of family might extend beyond the socially dominant concept and may be wider, more flexible and fluid, and more encompassing, including previous professionals and young people who met in other settings. While their social workers and other professionals might rightly feel that the priority is finding a "good family" for them, for such young people, this may seem to discount the meaning and relational consequences of other placements and homes they have known. Being "placed" successfully might counterintuitively also mean a loss of other loved ones and changes of school, community, and environment. Professionals can underestimate individual transitions or experiences in and out families and other important contexts and particularly might overlook the embodied and spatial elements of those transitions. As Rustin (2006) suggest:

> It can be a feeling of guilty betrayal of the early relationship but also a fear of the loss of the sense of self – the idea of belonging somewhere is an ordinary and fundamental building-block of a sense of personal identity. The somewhere that we belong starts off as our family of origin in which we are accorded a place defined by relationships. Around this will be concentric circles in which we belong in some fashion to wider social groups: extended family, school, local community, city, region, country. Children who cannot be brought up in their families of origin suffer a basic disruption in this sense of membership, of knowing where they belong.

Some of this is relatively easily accommodated through bringing the familiar to the unfamiliar environment. Milligan (2003, pp.461) suggests that "the presence of private possessions within the home further acts to reinforce the sense of self, safety and social status, endowing the home environment with personal meaning." Of course, this is not always achievable, as young people being removed from their home of origin may not have many possessions, or bringing belongings with them may not be an option. Further, material objects brought from outside the home can be unsettling and can have painful connections for young people and foster carers. For instance, a soft toy brought from their biological family home may seem an object of comfort, but one that is marked with cigarette burns can draw in uncomfortable associations of histories of abuse and neglect (Reavey 2010). Further, familiar objects may also invoke memories of a shared and lost history and compound the pain of separation. But generally, and where possible, having a sense of own space and own belongings gives those cared for a sense of an anchor around which a sense of self-in-care can be constituted and which facilitates a sense of narrative continuity for young people – that their life in foster care is a continuation of the life they had before.

The more significant work of feeling "at home" for foster families is at the interface of the relational and material – the familial use of space within the home and the way that the looked-after child is incorporated into this social space. In their study of everyday life in foster care, Hedin et al. (2011) explored the daily routines, actions, and events, the daily flow of interaction, and use of space in families incorporating foster children. They noted that accommodating a foster child effectively required that "routines, rituals and actions are negotiated and renegotiated among the members of the family" (p. 2283). Settling these everyday interactions

involves getting to know the rhythms and flows of the everyday, the form and shape of the house, and the way people live in it together.

"Doing family" is not an easy task for newly formed families. Looked-after children do not share the host family's semantic repertoire of common memories, patterns, routines, and reciprocal expectations – what Byng-Hall (1995) defines as a "family script." Rather, the new family member's script can be quite different from the one of others and may even conflict with them. This can cause further frustration and issues between parents and children, as parents normally expect children to fit in with their "house rules and roles," therefore losing their previous scripts, which are embedded in and attached to previous families, previous bonds, lived in previous home spaces.

Feeling "at home" and "not at home" emerged as an important construct for many of the young people they interviewed. For example, one young person said:

> I still don't feel at home (. . .) I don't, because it like takes such a long time and then, like, it's a huge change and everything, and then you kind of close yourself off in a corner, and then you like haven't been able to open up to the others. (Hedin et al. 2011, p.2285)

The central importance of material space and a sense of ownership of that material space, and entitlement to its use, as part of belonging and feeling "at home," are clearly signaled in this quote. The young person does not "feel at home" and consequently "closes himself/herself off in a corner." While young people may quickly build up an understanding of the physical space of a home, securing a sense of it as a place, imbued with meaning and history for them, takes longer and is built up through the everyday experience of being there (Jack 2008).

In contrast, young people described how shared activities in shared spaces contribute to a sense of feeling at home. Shared practices and rules around eating and other elements of personal care emerged as important in helping young people feel "at home" in foster care. For example, having to ask for a drink was experienced as negative, symbolizing a lack of power and belonging in the family (Luke and Coyne 2008), while other young people described the importance of having access to the family fridge (Hedin et al. 2011). A sense of normality in family life is achieved through taken for granted embodied practices, within the material spaces of "home." One of the foster carers in the Hedin et al. study suggested: "Like if you were to just. . . sit down at the dinner table and eat dinner every day together, it starts to build just a kind of sense of like a routine and a normalness in their life" (p114).

Having access to the everyday comforts of home creates a sense of belonging, while regulating such access inscribes in the material spaces of the house a sense that this is *not* their family home – that they do not fit in. Other elements of personal care, like bathing, washing, hair brushing, and having "nice," clean clothes – the routines of self-care – also emerged as important in young people's sense of belonging (Rees and Pithouse 2008). These embodied practices are elements of the living, everyday aspects of caring and being cared for that facilitate for young people a sense of belonging, of fitting in, of being "part of the family." Our sense of

home is constituted in the everyday gestures and routines that are taken for granted in many settled homes, but that need to be lived and learned by young people in care contexts. These are not always readily or easily accepted, and some of the taken for grantedness of them within families may require both explication and negotiation. As one social worker indicates in the study by Storer et al. (2014):

> One of the things I hear the most is... the home we put them in has a set of standards that are normal for their family . . .. Then we put these kids in here and they don't really fit, the puzzle piece is different. (Storer et al. 2014, p.113) (113)

Understanding these sometimes invisible "rules" of family life is important for giving young people a sense of mastery over their environment.

This work of building a sense of a shared home is done against the backdrop of concerns about the "riskiness" of the looked-after child, representations of psychological instability and mental health difficulty, behavioral complexity, criminal potential, and often a sense of sexualization that is rooted in abuse histories. Many young people in care do have experiences of sexual abuse, and this history makes them wary of the risk that adults and other children pose to them, and given dominant discourses around "damaged sexuality" and "violated innocence" (Reavey and Warner 2006), young people are themselves often regarded as "risky" by their carers. This sense of the "riskiness" of the looked-after child is encapsulated in quotes from foster carers from these studies of space and relationships in care:

> You have to almost lock everything up in your house, because if they can find a pill they will take it you know or hair dyes or whatever you know without asking, there's just no boundaries. (Storer et al. 2014, p.113)
>   You can't afford to take your eyes off him. (Rees and Pithouse 2008, p.345)

Through the regulation of space, and of objects in material space, the foster carer produces the looked-after child as "risky body," to be managed through observation and through controlled access to material spaces and objects. Baudrillard (1998) argues that the body is not just biology, but is socioculturally constituted, meaningful, and symbolic and mediates subjectivity through lived experience. The looked-after child's construction as a risky subject through pathologizing discourses of mental health, sexualization, and criminality is managed in foster care contexts through the regulation of the body and of use of space. Rees and Pithouse (2008) found that foster carers had detailed and explicit rules for young people about how they used the space of the home – rooms they were allowed in, where they were permitted to be unclothed, and how they made use of the private spaces of the home, like bathrooms and bedrooms. They note that in discussions with foster carers "notions of boundary and risk frequently arose in the context of inappropriate behaviour from male foster children" (p.343). In this context, rules are understood as maintaining boundaries and keeping children safe, they are disciplinary spaces within which the bodies of the looked-after child become monitored and regulated – young people learn to present themselves appropriately through the appropriate

management of their bodies. At the same time, the heightened regulation of young people's bodies within the home space reinscribes a sense of their *difference*, or their alien position, of their inherent riskiness, unsettling the sense of home as quickly as it is produced.

The daily rituals and the rules of family life are sometimes explicit and sometimes implied. Having to "read" the rules of family life, if they are not explicit, can be challenging for young people, who are unfamiliar with the material spaces and arrangements of the home. Several studies suggest that more explicit rules about the shared spaces of family life contributed to a better sense of "settling" for looked-after children (Rees and Pithouse 2008; Hedin et al. 2011; Luke and Coyne 2008). However, as Rees and Pithouse (2008, p.343) note, "the fostered child has to learn the new family's expectations about domesticity and intimacy. While these are likely to have evolved over time, they need to be understood quite swiftly and complied with, if the placement is to succeed." Built into these assumptions, there is also a sense of regulative pressure for young people that has its roots in the individualization of placement "success" or "breakdown" to the action of the young person themselves. Either they conform to the rules of the household or they "fail" in having a successful placement.

Added to this complex work of communicating the rules of shared spaces, and constituting a mutual sense of home, is the role of the state in regulating foster care. While foster carers are responsible for providing proxy homes for young people in care, and for the rehabilitative action of these homes, children and young people "in care" are in fact always still in "the care" of the state. Being "looked after" is by nature defined as a temporary state – even if being "in care" is a long-term circumstance, it lacks the symbolic permanence that is attached to adoption arrangements. Consequently, building a home both for foster carers and for young people in care is necessarily unstable, uncertain, and tenuous, with the stability foster families might wish to introduce always being dependent on the will of the state. Care in general is a peculiar form of human labor, seated too at the intersection of "the professional" and "the relational." The emotional labor of foster care, in particular, spans the domestic and the public sphere – being a foster carer is both a job and a relationship. The work of foster care is subject to high levels of public scrutiny, and the provision of formal care in the community and family context produces a particular intrusion of the service world into home and of home into service provision (Twigg 2000). The subjectivity of the looked-after child in foster care, and their relationship with their foster family, is constituted at this interface of the public-private boundary and shaped by the constant reminder of its transience.

The professionalization of care and the observational and regulative role of the state produce an anxious set of social arrangements in care that renders "feelings" as an inappropriate resource for staff and foster carers to draw on in their interactions with young people. As Emond et al. (2013, p.3) suggest, "relationships and the pain and risk that they necessarily evoke are arguably something that the formal social work system seeks to minimise." But providing the material, bricks, and mortar space of a residential context or house is not the same thing as providing a

"home." Foster children need a relational space, a home that is lived in, stable, and shared, in which their relationships and relational stories are constituted, not a physical space that is "homelike." Concerns about "risk" and "protection" have to a large degree overwhelmed the notion of care itself – of emotional connection – being at the heart of what is good for children. The regulation of caring relationships through professionalization and surveillance have produced a notion that good care involves care where "food is prepared in advance, the laundry is up to date, and the house is clean and tidy, rather than based on the tangible sense that recovery and relationship building have taken place" (Emond et al. 2013, p.4). This is evidenced too in the anxious management of physical contact, the everyday "cuddles" of home in foster care. Foster carers "manage" their expressions of affection with the children they look after and are careful and selective about who they touch, with cuddling becoming a "conscious and individualised event" (Rees and Pithouse 2008, p.345). The notion that home (specifically a family-like home), especially a temporary one, is "best" for children in care needs to be understood in fuller and more complex ways.

It is important to consider the "spaces" of care for looked-after children, as these are the locations within which a sense of self is built for young people. Our sense of place identity is built up over time, strengthened by living in a space, building social networks, filling spaces with personal meanings and associations (Jack 2010). Identity is constituted within these meaningful places, spaces to which our self-stories are connected. If our sense of who we are is built up in narratives, in the stories we tell about ourselves (Shotter 1993; Shotter and Gergen 1989; Taylor 1989), the coherence of these stories relies on their emplacement. It is our argument that failing to take into account the complexity of space and place for young people in care risks reducing their challenges to individual pathology, without sufficiently understanding or working with their histories in space, time, and relationships. It is important to recognize the intersection of place, identity, and well-being (Green and White 2007) if we are to intervene effectively and appropriately in young people's lives.

2.1   Transitions, Breakdown, and Relationship

While the provision of a stable "homelike" environment is an important feature of social care policy for looked-after children, it is important to remember that home can be an unstable and complex space for young people in care. Talking about children who live with parents with addictions, Wilson et al. (2012) suggest that "The short lived and unpredictable nature of many respondents' living arrangements was further highlighted where each interview with the same respondent over the course of less than 2 years revealed different living circumstance. The equation of domestic space with the secure and stable place of respite, suggested in some of the urban sociology literature, was not easy therefore for many respondents" (p.98). This is clearly the case, also, for many looked-after children and young people, where placement instability is such a common feature of their day to day lives. In a

previous study that tracked young people in care over a mere 6-month period (Callaghan et al. 2003, 2004), a remarkable feature of the experience of this research was how frequent placement moves were, even in such a short period of time. Storer et al. (2014) noted that this became a particularly significant issue between the age of 14 and 18, when most foster youth will have experienced an average of three placements. This results in multiple transitions in the lives of looked-after children – moving in and out of care, moving between placements, as well as leaving care and the transition to independent adult life.

The primary focus of social work and mental health intervention in the lives of looked-after children has tended to be on social relationships. However, the emotional language of transitions is couched in spatial terms, and these relationships do not occur in a vacuum but "rather in specific places capable of leaving an indelible mark on a person's identity" (Jack 2008, p.756). Young people's transitions into, and out of, care are often understood as practical, or perhaps interpersonal, problems to be solved, with "service provision" or "advocacy" being offered as potential solutions to the problem of navigating changes in their lives. Again, these processes of transition are riven through with a geographic, spatial, and embodied language – of "pathway planning," "relational mapping," "contact," and "social networks." Nonetheless, transitions out of care, particularly as young people transition to adulthood, are complexified by a sense of rootlessness, a lack of a sense of "home" as a secure base from which they can explore their world. Wade (2008) suggests that restructuring of welfare has resulted in an extended period of economic dependency, with most young people needing to rely on the resources of their family well into young adult life. However, as he notes, "the parental home is not a resource for all" (p. 41). This lack of a "base" produces a clear differentiation between those who have benefitted from "ordinary" family life and those who have not, extending the construction of a sense of difference and disadvantage still further into adult life for looked-after children. While a small number of young people are able to maintain a sense of "home" through their foster homes, most find this more challenging.

For young people who cannot easily be accommodated within the practices and spaces of what is regarded as "ordinary society," there are two possible options – criminalize them or pathologize them. Rees and Pithouse (2008, p.345) suggest that "Foster children are often at the margins of society and are at the margins of families are to some degree excluded from the mainstream." As has already been shown, looked-after children are represented in most outcome-based accounts as at risk of both offending and mental health difficulty. "Home" is typically understood as the main site in which risky looked-after children – the damaged looked-after child of psychological discourses – can be "rehomed" and "rehabilitated." The "home" is represented as a solution to the unruly subjectivity of the young person in care. Young people in care are positioned as "other" through a range of social practices, inscribed in and reproduced in space and spatial relationships. Space functions here as part of the ordering system that regulates "normal" and "different" lives (Foucault 1977). The sense of their difference, of their "nonbelonging," is further underscored by the public nature of placement breakdown, which disrupts

and inverts the taken for granted privacy of the home, as the child's fragile connections to one home and community are severed and they are required to build anew. The kind of shaming experience of their visible shifting from place to place was recounted in stories of foster carers and social workers who work with looked-after children, who reported that, often, young people's first inkling that a placement move was imminent was coming home to find all their belongings in a black bin bag (Callaghan et al. 2003).

Nonetheless, the riskiness of the looked-after child is generally described in individualizing terms, and this is particularly marked in talk about placement breakdown. This is often framed symbolically as produced in the personhood of the child themselves – they are "too damaged" (genetically or traumatically), their attachments are "too disordered," their difficulties are "too complex" for the placement, they have "made allegations," and they are "difficult to place." Their "failure" to manage home is further symbolized in a potential shift to residential care. As Emond et al. (2013, p.2) note "the ideological primacy of 'the family' as the site for children's growth has meant that residential care caters primarily for those children for whom family options have 'failed'." These framings do not take into account the complexity of "home" for such young people – or that "homing" them is challenging. At the same time, there is an urgent imperative in social care policy for keeping such young people "at home" and for creating "homelike" spaces for them. Foster care is framed here as a rehabilitative and regulative space, in which children and young people can be "rehomed," constructed as appropriate subjects of culture, through the mystical healing properties of the home space. The looked-after child is an embodied subject, whose sense of body, boundaries, and intimacies must be cared for and managed in foster homes. The child is understood socially to be "unfinished," still growing, still developing (Prout 2000), and in need of molding, guidance, and discipline. Incorporating "risky" looked-after children into our orderly world is achieved, at least partly through the "homing" of the child in foster placements. For the young person who cannot be accommodated in "foster homes" and who is placed in residential care, there are particularly high levels of surveillance, as regulation and orderliness are deployed to discipline the unruly subjectivities of the looked-after child. This surveillance is particularly enacted through routines around embodiment – eating, sleeping, and use of leisure (Dorrer et al. 2010; Emond et al. 2013).

Residential locations for young people in care can function as "unhomely" spaces (Bhabha 1994) – residential locations that are not "homes" function to further exclude those who are not part of "normal" family life. For Bhabha the experience of "unhomeliness" (distinct from homelessness) positions subjects "outside" the master culture that can function to "limit the spaces of being" for looked-after young people (Cary 2003, p.587). He argues that "the unhomely moment relates to the traumatic ambivalence of a personal psychic history to the wider disjunction of political existence" (Bhabha 1994, p.p.11), describing a process whereby those who are not "homed" in the traditional sense are constructed as other within settled and hegemonic culture. In this way, home becomes an

impossible space for young people in care, because of the intertwining of dominant practices and social arrangements.

3 Beyond Talking Therapies: Using Material and Embodied Strategies to Intervene with Looked-After Children

This chapter has explored the importance of understanding foster homes and residential care contexts as relational spaces within which young people constitute a sense of self. This final section briefly explores how some therapeutic tools used in work with young people might support a shift from a focus on the intrapsychic worlds of young people in care (with the attendant production of a discourse of damage for looked-after children) to an approach that is more able to take into account the intersections of space, relationship and movement, in the production of looked-after children's narratives of self, and particularly self-in-relationship.

A fundamental challenge faced by both researchers and professionals is theorizing children's lives in a way that privileges their experience, rather than adult accounts of those experiences. Here particularly, it is argued that the privileging of verbal ways of knowing presents specific challenges and hindrances in enabling truly participatory practices. In recent years, researchers, professionals, and health services have placed an emphasis on the involvement of young people and families in service development and in participatory research designs (e.g., Leverett and Rixon 2011; Celinska et al. 2015). Researchers and therapists are encouraged not just to hear the "voice of the child," but to actively involve the child in decisions made about their own lives (Alderson and Morrow 2004; Dumont 2008; Gammer 2008; Moore and Seu 2011). Graphic and drawing tasks are examples of such tools. "The Double Moon" task, introduced by Ondina Greco (1999, 2006), is an adaptation of the Family Life Space (Mostwin 1980) and is a graphic-symbolic instrument allowing both qualitative and quantitative analysis of family relations, as well as the facilitation of therapeutic conversation around issues that are often silenced or avoided. It is, therefore, particularly useful in exploring the experience of relational spaces and movements for looked-after and adopted young people. This task involves the participant drawing a map that represents themselves and the people they care about. These may include family members and/or loved ones from their present or past living environment. Young people use symbols, placed inside or outside a rectangle shape on a sheet of paper that represents their psychological and emotional world. In this way, their own "psychic geography" is symbolized in the material space of the drawing. As the young person places their family members in the drawing, their relationships are mapped out, making visible the sense of closeness and distance that characterizes their sense of relationship. In the second part of the Double Moon task, participants draw circles around the members who they see as belonging to the same family/families, adding a further dimension to the representation of the participant's construction of family relations. They can draw more than one circle, as needed to express their sense of the

Fig. 1 An example of a "Double Moon" drawing, illustrating Claire's complex relational alliances between birth mother, siblings, and current foster family
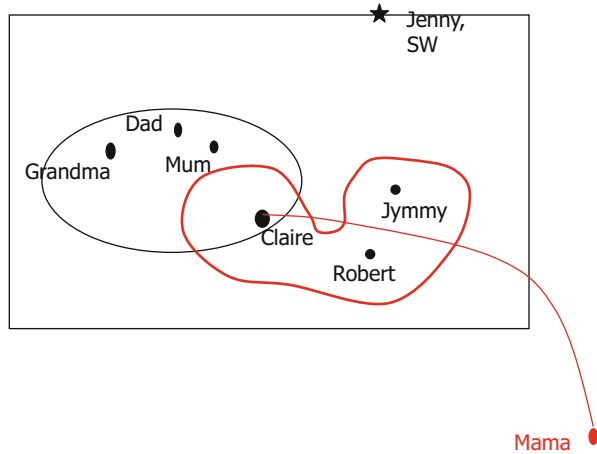
configuration of the people in their lives. This enables a (nonverbal) expression of their family relationships, facilitating the young person's depiction of movement, of shifting alliances, and of complex emotional histories. The depiction enables a symbolic expression of the inner geographies of children's relational lives, enabling them to articulate networks of closeness and distance in graphic form. This task can be administered individually or with carers and was designed especially to make it possible for the individual to express the possible conflicts of boundaries, divided loyalties, and feelings of belonging within and between two or more "families" that are common for young people in care and to make present symbolically lost and missing family members and inarticulable allegiances. These issues are illustrated in a second case study – "Claire" (Fig. 1).

Case Study 2: Living Under a Double Moon *Claire is a 10-year-old looked-after girl who has been living with her foster parents for almost 2 years. She was asked to draw herself and the people that she cared about. When asked to draw a line (one or more circles, as it suits her better) around everybody who is family to her, she first hesitated, looked at her mother, and then drew a circle around herself and her foster family members (foster mother, foster father, and foster grandmother). Her biological siblings (Jimmy and Rober) and Jenny, her favorite social worker (not the current one), were depicted at the border of her rectangle. Of her favorite social worker, she says "not because I don't love her, but because I don't get to see her anymore"). These individuals were not included in the shape she drew to indicate who was "family" to her. She was asked "Is there anyone else you don't get to see and you miss? Anything or anyone you remember, who you heard about or who you have imagined from your past, and who you may want to add to this drawing?" Claire sent anxious glances to her new foster parents as if she felt compelled to silence her attachment to her mother and her younger siblings (whom she mentioned in her individual interview). The therapist asked: "Where do you think Mum could be placed?"*

Having been invited to draw her mother into picture, Claire was then able to place her biological mother Mum in the map, but still located her far away and outside the rectangle. The therapist invited her to "use a magic wand" to change anything she wanted in the drawing. Again, Claire needed much reassurance from both carers before drawing tiny red arrowed line that brought mum closer. It was only then that she was able to define another family, which included her biological mother and siblings, the lost family of her origins.

This example illustrates one of a number of embodied and spatial interventions that can be used by therapists working with looked-after children that might help to disrupt the dominance of verbal and behavioral therapies in this kind of work. For example, family sculpting is an expressive nonverbal technique (a form of silent role-play) developed by Virginia Satir that can be adapted to enable the young person to express the dynamics within foster families, biological families, and the interface of both. In this technique a family member is asked to physically place other family members in positions in relation to one another – a three-dimensional, in vivo arrangement of actual people. This powerful tool can enable young people to feel and see their situations rather than just talk about them. The aim is to explore and increase awareness of the extent to which behaviors and emotions are connected to the ones of their family members in a circular way, but also to explore alternative patterns of behaviors and positioning to introduce change in the family interactions. It also enables the material sculpting and embodied expression of power dynamics and of patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the family that offer insight into the embodied, lived experiences of young people in care as they navigate the complexities of new familial relationships, as well as felt connections to earlier relationships and networks. Spatial maps can be used as a way of helping young people to visualize the spaces of the home, and their use of those spaces, facilitating an expression of the often tacit regulative use of personal space, as well as spaces where they feel comfort and ease, and the emotionality of material spaces (see Alexander et al. 2016, this volume; Gabb and Singh 2015; Bridger 2013). Such interventions can be used to help young people, foster carers, and others involved a way to explore some of the implicit and explicit rules of the home and of self-care and care of others within the home. It enables a consideration of how material practices within and beyond the home function to include and exclude, where the young person feels they "fit" and where that sense of fit might be poor. It enables an expression and consideration perhaps of the uneven application of rules and norms within the home, making explicit some of the taken for granted assumptions of how family norms are produced, applied, and policed within the home. This can enable a consideration of the degree to which children are expected to "fit in" with family norms as they adapt to being "looked after" and opens up the possibility for greater coproduction of family practices, to enable collective contributions to the production of home space. In this way, all members would experience a transitional period of learning and adaptation to the new spatial practices and "rules" which might assist in the development of an empathic understanding of the experience of "newness" for the looked-after child.

4   Conclusions

In working with looked-after children, mental health research and practice has generally focused on quite individualized accounts of young people's lives, with an emphasis on individual psychological problems and verbal and behavioral strategies of intervention. This chapter has reviewed the more limited literature that explores looked-after children's sense of embodiment, and use of space, considering its implications for young people's mental health, experiences of (family) life and of distress. Possible alternatives to a verbal approach to therapeutic interaction with looked-after children have been considered, to explore models of therapeutic work with children that acknowledge the complexity and materiality of relationship building for young people in care. The chapter has drawn together examples of research from children's geographies and sociology to illustrate the importance of considering space and place in the lives of looked-after children. This is a clear area for future interdisciplinary collaboration in research and practice, to enable a better articulation of the way that looked-after children's emotional lives and well-being are constituted within and expressed in material spaces and shaped by movement and physical shifts over space and time.

It is important, in doing this, to recognize that spaces of care are not unquestionably positive phenomena for young people and that the "homing" of looked-after children often (indeed, typically) has regulative and normative implications for them. Looking after children is not simply about care, and care in turn is not only about warmth and kindness. Rather, the experience of care – both for carers and for the cared for – is often about fitting in, about absorbing new norms, and about acquiring ways of being that enable them to get on in the new homes to which they must adapt. Much of this regulative work of care is done through the sometimes explicit but more often implicit rules of households, typically inscribed in the use and regulation of physical space. Care work is also a typically embodied work. In other words, "caring" involves not just looking after children's inner worlds, emotional life, and relationships; care work is performed in looking after bodily selves, located within the spaces of the home and beyond. Further, for the young person, being "in care" often involves navigating multiple locations and multiple relationships, a complex network of belonging and not belonging that is lived in material, relational, and embodied spaces. Acknowledging the locatedness and material aspects of "being in care" begins to open up spaces for an understanding of the operation of power and regulation in family life and enables a resocialization of our understanding of being looked after and our interventions with young people in care.

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Children's Spaces of Mental Health: The Built Environment as Places of Meaning

30

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Abstract

This chapter will look at the role of the built environment and space in children and young people's mental health settings. In particular, the chapter will focus on the internal and external space of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) outpatients' setting. Since work on the built environment and space in children's mental health settings is so sparse, the chapter draws on commentaries from psychological and sociological studies on children's space and place, adult mental health settings, and research examining the internal and external spaces of children's hospitals. As well as providing some context-setting for why the child and adolescent mental health services offer an informative site for studying spaces of mental health, this chapter attempts to theorize how different meanings around "childhood" and the "child" are enacted through the built environment. In essence, there will be an examination of what meanings are developed through children and young people's interactions with CAMHS. Notably, how specific features of the built environment, symbolic associations with other types of buildings and past memories, serve as the frame of reference for understanding the role of place. Discussions about the construction of the "normal" childhood will show how features of the built environment in children's mental health settings position the child as "dangerous." As an example, the building façade of children's mental health settings is so discreet that they perpetuate the stigma associated with children's mental health. CAMHS therefore becomes a "hidden" service, rather than a service developed *for* children, *by* children. The chapter will conclude by using some empirical data from a study of the CAMHS built environment, collated with parents and children and young people, to act as exemplars for the phenomena discussed.

Keywords

Adult asylum • Child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) • Green space • Healthcare policy • Internal building • Mental health • National service framework for children and young people • Urban environments

1   Introduction

Colin Ward's (1988) seminal book on children in the country has been credited with bringing to the fore the experiences of "other" groups of young people (Philo 1992). In some instances, Ward (1988) details the lives of previously "invisible" groups of children or, at least, those who have had the least attention in the academic literature and wider public consciousness (Valetine et al. 1998). The focus of attention in this chapter, namely children and young people with mental health difficulties, certainly fits into this "invisible" group. This chapter aims to address a particular mental health space used by some children and young people; namely, the built environment. When children and young people have emotional or mental health difficulties in England, they may get referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Service (CAMHS). Some of the children will be outpatients-visiting a clinic for appointments only, whilst more serious cases may warrant an inpatient stay in a more formal hospital facility. This chapter will focus on the issues associated with the built environment of the former and aims to examine what impact the built environment might have on a child or young person coming for outpatient treatment for mental health difficulties.

While there have been notable examples detailing the role of the built environment and space in adult mental health settings, such as asylums (e.g., Philo and Pickstone 2009; Parr 2008), community mental health spaces (Parr 2000; Smith 2012), and home spaces of mental health service users (Tucker and Smith 2014), children's mental health services as a context for examining "space" and "place" have been sparse. Halpern (1995) suggests that "the built environment includes, but is not limited to physical form of specific dwellings. . ." (p. 1). By space we refer to the types of settings for interaction, and place refers to the specific meanings associated with those spaces (Philo 2000).

The research on the built environment, space, and place relating to children has looked at hospital settings (Birch et al. 2007), schools (Gislason 2010; Kraftl 2006), nurseries (Clarke 2010), or the outdoors, such as neighborhood spaces (Valentine 2004). There is a significant need to explore in more depth mental health spaces for children and young people more generally. This also applies specifically to the built environment. The lack of empirical evidence regarding children's mental health spaces and the built environment is akin to the shortcomings that were evident in research on children's hospitals. When Birch et al. (2007) embarked on their children's hospital study "Space to Care," they remarked that relatively little was known about children's perspectives on internal spaces. The same is true of children's mental health space, though it is both the internal and external built environment that is discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, throughout the chapter the authors will argue that aspects of the built environment for mental health are inextricably linked with, and contradict, constructions of the "normal" childhood.

2   Some Background to the Provision Child and Adolescent Mental Health

There is now clear evidence that the mental health needs of children and adolescents are at a substantial level, although the figures only reflect those who go through the treatment system. A survey of the mental health of children and young people in Britain (Green et al. 2005) suggested that 10 % of 5–15-year-olds have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, and of those, a possible 45,000 have a severe mental health issue. One in ten children under the age of 16 has been clinically diagnosed with a mental health disorder (Board of Science 2006).

Support for children and young people with mental health and emotional problems can come from a variety of sources. In 1995, the review *Together We Stand* (HAS 1995) laid the basis for what is now a four-tier model for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Cottrell and Kraam 2005). Tier 1 staff tend

to be those from whom families seek help first, such as teachers or social workers. If additional help is needed, these staff can refer families to Tier 2 professionals, who have specialist training but are usually based within the community. Tier 3 staff comprise specialist teams who deliver complex packages or interventions of care help. Tier 4 provides very specialist services to a small number, usually in inpatient and residential settings. It is clear that spaces of mental health cover a broad and complex range of contexts. However, this chapter will focus on the Tier 3 context, of which the specialist CAMHS outpatient clinics can be counted. This space of mental health is interesting because the built environments of CAMHS outpatient clinics vary considerably and therefore act as an interesting focus to look at the social relations and meanings identified with these different places. Later on in the chapter, there will be examples of how the built environment is embedded with meaning for those attending a CAMHS outpatient clinic.

3   Linking the Built Environment with the Psychology of Mental Health

The body of work that explores the links between the physical form of the built environment and the impact on psychological aspects of our well-being has grown considerably. Material elements, such as light, noise, and décor, connect with our emotional experiences or "place feelings" (Hart 1979). Much of the work in this area has focused on either hospital settings or, to a lesser extent, adult mental health. Earlier work, with a more sociological focus, looked at the impact of particular neighborhoods on mental health and well-being. One well-known study by Faris and Dunham (1939), for example, found a higher number of admission rates to psychiatric hospitals from those living in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Chicago (see Silver et al. 2002). There has since been a rise in the number of studies looking at the relationship between the built environment and mental health (see Evans 2003). For example, studies looking at the direct effects of the physical environment on mental health have addressed things like housing quality (e.g., Evans et al. 2003), the neighborhood (e.g., Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000), privacy (Hutton 2002), population density (Baum and Paulus 1987), and noise and light (e.g., Lawson and Phiri 2003; Ulrich et al. 2004). Evidence has shown that bright light, whether artificial or natural, can improve health outcomes such as depression (Ulrich et al. 2004).

There are other aspects of the built environment and its physical form that have a bearing on issues linked to mental health that might apply to any form of patient care. Lawson and Phiri's (2003) work in adult wards in hospitals found that regardless of whether accommodation was old or new, patients were sensitive to their environment. A particular dislike was the lack of control for noise, temperature, and light levels. These issues also apply to the internal spaces in children's hospitals (Birch et al. 2007). The lack of control over the spatial environment in health settings was raised in another study in children's hospitals. In interviews with children, James and Curtis (2012) found that bedtime and lights out were a cause for

complaint. Whether the health setting is an inpatient or outpatient facility, or whether it is related to mental health or physical health, children have very little control over what the built environment looks like.

Color also represents an interesting point of contention for mental health spaces. Children's spaces are usually represented by bright colors, and it seems that this is something desirable from the children's perspective. In a children's hospital study, Lambert et al. (2013) asked children to draw their ideal hospital room. Interestingly, the children chose colorful but gender-neutral colors, alongside artwork. This finding is echoed by another study of children's hospitals where they reported a general desire for spaces to be colorful and bright (Birch et al. 2007). However, children's mental health spaces differ significantly from children's hospitals on the subject of color because some therapeutic approaches prefer neutral colors to allow the room to act as a blank canvas for the mind. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service clinics are deliberately decorated in very neutral colors and tend to have very little by way of pictures on the walls. While this may be good for therapeutic purposes, the built environment does not signify that this is a children's service *for* children.

4   Location and the Imagined Benefits of Nature as a Therapeutic Landscape

There has been growing evidence within the last decade that local area, or community factors, can have an impact on mental health (O'Campo et al. 2009). In many instances, studies in these areas have focused on the links between physical disorder (such as run-down neighborhoods) and distress, which then negatively impact on mental health (Ross et al. 2000). In the O'Campo et al. (2009) study, green areas and natural environments were highly related to good mental well-being by adult participants. Noise and bad smells were moderately related to poor mental well-being. Equally, gardens and nature have become increasingly associated with physical and emotional well-being (Wake 2007). While noises from cars, sirens, and loud voices are intuitively associated with stress and negative emotions, green spaces become associated with peace and calm (Marcus and Sachs 2013). In fact, Chawla et al. (2014) report that studies with young people about the impact of green spaces on their psychological well-being mirror those from adults, namely, that they improve attention and improve coping with stress.

There is evidence in the literature that supports the assumption that green spaces play a restorative role, either by improving attention or by reducing stress (see Hartig 2007; Ulrich 1991). This idea has been applied to the context of children's hospitals where some have created garden spaces, believing they have restorative powers. However, it was often the parents of sick children who used the garden to relieve stress and worry, rather than the children themselves (Marcus and Sachs 2013). It is worth examining, therefore, what any particular green space might be used for in a children's mental health context. Parr (2008) took a more critical look at the restorative ideal of green spaces while tracing the history of nature therapy in

adult mental asylum contexts. Both historically and now, such "nature work" has been in the form of labor, often resulting in the commercializing of produce. Another assumption has been that nature allows the patient to "master their madness" or become more "rational" outside.

Whether or not one takes seriously the role of green spaces, there is no evidence to suggest that CAMHS clinics offer anything similar to children's hospital gardens, despite being a service geared toward improving mental health for children. In fact the National Service Framework for Children and Young People highlighted in a report on mental health and psychological well-being that CAMHS community services (such as outpatient care) were often "poorly housed with insufficient space" (Department for Education and Skills 2004, p. 38). The report found that some services had very poor access, particularly for families who needed to use public transport. In addition, some CAMHS were located near adult services (e.g., drug and alcohol services), thereby putting the children at risk of harm. In the years since this report, little seems to have been done to tackle the built environment of community services like CAMHS.

5   Mental Health Spaces as Places of Meaning

Even when looking solely at the material features of the built environment, it is impossible to ignore how particular meanings are developed through the spatial structures that shape the children's experiences of it (Curtis 2007; Johnston et al. 2000). Many have argued that space plays an active role in the construction of social identities. That is, the way we see ourselves is shaped both by the people around us and by the spaces we occupy (Valentine 2001). Different spaces hold particular meanings for us, so that school is a space designed for learning, but entering a school building can evoke visceral physiological and emotional feelings for us that may be linked to past experience or personal or collective memories (Taylor 2010; Radley 1997). In turn, the school building becomes symbolic of our feelings about being in that space. Once again, the literature on mental health spaces as places of meaning has largely focused on adults, but this work can provide insights that can be taken forward to children's settings. In her seminal book about mental health and social space, Hester Parr (2008) writes a personal story about the uncertainty she felt in attending counseling in an adolescent psychology department located in a hospital asylum. In particular, she writes about the stigma and anxiety attached to simply walking into the building. In some respects, the built environment informs what we do in those buildings and the practices we undertake. In turn, these practices or activities shape our identities and our sense-making (Wenger 1998).

While it is worth bearing in mind that adult asylums are very different mental spaces than CAMHS outpatients, they do provide a powerful indication of the highly symbolic and emotional meanings invested in such buildings (Parr et al. 2003). These kinds of studies also give some insight to the role of internal spaces of mental health, particularly in the way that corridors, doors, and locks add

to the "impersonalness" of institutions (Parr et al. 2003). In terms of children's spaces, there has been less work looking at their perspectives of internal built environments. One notable exception to this was a study by Birch et al. (2007), mentioned above, who looked at children and young people's views about internal hospital spaces. These authors describe a push within healthcare policy to make hospitals more "child-centered" and friendly, including mental health environments (NHS, 2003). However, the degree to which this has extended to children and young people's mental health has been arguably more limited. At the time of writing this chapter, it is satisfying that a CAMHS unit in Prestwich was recently nominated for Design Project of the Year (see http://www.buildingbetterhealthcare. co.uk). Nevertheless, where there is a push to improve built environment and space in children's mental health services, the focus is generally, and perhaps understandably, on inpatient settings.

6   Children's Mental Health Spaces as "Dangerous"

A number of commentators have discussed the often complex and contradictory ways that children are positioned in relation to how we construct childhoods (Burman 2008) and what this means for children's use of public spaces (Valentine 2004). Valentine argues that on the one hand, we seek to protect children from the dangers of outdoor life, but on the other hand, children are viewed as being contributors to the outdoor dangers. What ensues are "moral panics" that partly revolve around places (Aitkin 2001, p. 25). Such debates about how childhood is constructed through place have centered on outdoor spaces such as local neighborhoods. This is exemplified by the work of Lucas (1998) who discussed the moral panic around youth gangs in Santa Cruz, California.

However, children's mental health settings and the children who use those services are positioned in even further contradictory ways. Children and young people attend mental health services because they are vulnerable and in need of care, but on arrival in the building, the environment in a number of CAMHS signifies that they are potentially dangerous. The receptionist usually sits behind a glass window, each corridor has door locks that are controlled by the adults in the building, cameras are in place in the corridors (and sometimes the therapy rooms (in the project discussed later in this chapter, the cameras in therapy rooms had been disconnected, though the camera remained in the corner near the ceiling)), and some therapy rooms have one-way mirrors built into them.

Children's mental health spaces can therefore be considered what Jones (2000) calls "othereable spaces," where the connotations and constructions of those spaces are defiled. Perhaps this goes in some way to explain why there has been a surge of work looking at everyday spaces like home, school, and the urban environment (see James et al. 1998). However, spaces of mental health have had less attention in the academic literature.

Commentaries about risk are also interesting in the wider context of the study of childhood and have some pertinence here. On the one hand, children are seen

as being in need of protection from dangers in the external world, particularly with respect to the risks posed by strangers and traffic in wider neighborhoods (Knight 2013; O'Brien et al. 2000). In studies looking at risk in the neighborhood, for example, while traveling to school, other young "dangerous" people also present a risk (Knight 2013). In the child mental health setting, the built environment sets the child up as "the risk" by virtue of having a mental health difficulty.

7   Children's Mental Health Spaces Are "Hidden" Spaces

The "othereableness" of the external space for outpatient child mental health settings is an interesting site for discussion. Unlike children's hospitals, outpatient mental health services like CAMHS do not always visibly display themselves as a children's service. In many instances, the signage on the outside of the building is very small and looks similar to any other adult health hospital facility. Research in urban environments has shown how children appropriate spaces for themselves, often naming favorite spaces (Hart 1979), but most "official" spaces, and this particularly applies to CAMHS outpatients, are designed by adults so this is not possible. Children have little power to affect the built environment and space they inhabit.

There are very legitimate reasons for making the signage for CAMHS small and discreet. Such an approach seeks to protect children from the stigma attached to entering a building geared toward mental health issues. However, in many ways this could also serve to perpetuate the negativity associated with mental health. Returning to the arguments put forward by scholars such as Valentine (2004) and Burman (2008) about constructing the "normal" childhood, mental health difficulties position children as "different" or "damaged." O'Dell (2008) makes a similar point about children who have been abused, in that they "stand as iconic referents to how child is, should be and has been destroyed" (p. 383). In the paper she discusses how the portrayal of abused children in advertisements, such as those displayed by charity advertising campaigns, reinforce the idea that childhood should be a time of innocence. Children with mental health difficulties present a similar challenge to the "ideal" childhood experience. The "hidden" quality of CAMHS perpetuates this invisibility and thus reinforces the stigma associated with children's mental health.

8   The Context of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

To supplement these discussions, this chapter will now present some examples from an empirical study undertaken in 2008/2009, which aimed to explore how staff, parents, and children and young people felt about their CAMHS built environment (see Crafter et al. 2010). The study took place in two outpatient clinics in different towns within the same NHS primary care trust. Clinic A had been

occupied by CAMHS for a number of years and was placed in a building with other health services (doctors and dentists). It was fairly small in size, and this was particularly the case for the waiting room, which at most could sit five people. The CAMHS team occupied the second floor where, as well as the waiting room, there was a reception (with office staff), eight therapy rooms, and a small kitchen. The clinic was located in the center of town near the central pedestrian area with shops at the front and parkland at the back (since this study, Clinic A has moved to a different location).

Clinic B occupied its own building which was fairly old but which had been specially redesigned and decorated for its purpose. It was located a little out of the center of the town; approximately a 15 minute walk from key transport links. There was a busy duel carriageway on one side and a housing area on the other. There was little in the way of parking facilities available nearby. Clinic B was quite a bit larger than Clinic A with a comfortably large waiting room, reception for office staff, and three floors. The first two floors had 12 therapy rooms and the top floor was used as office space for the clinical staff.

It is worth noting that CAMHS buildings vary considerably across the country. There is a sense of uniformity to the treatment rooms but not the style or type of building they occupy. These two clinics are a good example of how different the built style can be. Below are pictures of the outside of the two clinics in question (Fig. 1).

The staff ($N = 27$), parents ($N = 30$), and children and young people ($N = 13$, between 11 and 18 years old) were interviewed, and additionally, some of the young people created drawings of their "ideal" CAMHS clinic. They were asked to draw and comment on the surrounding location of the clinic, the building façade, and the internal space. The interview questions focused on how respondents felt about the internal and external built environment and how it made them feel, what they liked most/least, what their ideal CAMHS building would look like, and how they thought the built environment affected their treatment.

The authors have taken extracts from the interviews with parents and children that stand as exemplars of the kinds of issues raised in this chapter. A more systematic analysis of the data can be found in Crafter et al. (2010).

Fig. 1 The outside of the two clinics – Clinic A on the *left* and Clinic B on the *right*

9   The External Built Environment, Outside Location, and the Perception of the Value of Green Space

You will recall Hester Parr's description of her own anxieties and concerns the first time she entered an adult asylum when she was a teenager. Some of the children spoke of similar feelings when they first attended the outpatient CAMHS clinic. They reported feeling scared, and the built environment was a contributor to some of those feelings, particularly when visiting CAMHS for the first time. These quotes are indicative examples of some of the comments:

I: *what do you like least about the building*?
C: *It's scary* (*laughs*)
I: *It's scary huh*? *It looks scary…*
C: *Yeah it looks like a church and I don't like churches* (*Child, Clinic B*)

> *It's like* [*the building*] *um, a bit like um, it reminds me a bit like a hospital um, I don't know, when you're sitting there and I'm a bit nervous sometimes* (*Child, Clinic B*)

One parent, when asked how they would feel if they were a parent or child coming to Clinic B for the first time, said:

> *Oh well it's not much of a view. You've got a brick wall there, and with the barbed wire there, I'd feel a bit scared really, there's nothing nice you know. It looks almost like you're in a prison* (*laughs*) *you know, with the brick wall, barbed wire, you know, and somebody who may be, you know, who could be claustrophobic, that could be quite scary couldn't it, you know* (*Parent, Clinic B*)

As well as associations between churches, hospitals, and prisons, a number of people mentioned feeling like that they were going to the dentist. If fact, Clinic B had, at one point, been the local school dentist, and the negative memory of visits to the building persisted for one parent:

I: *What did you think when your first came into this place*?
P: (*laughs*) *well my memories of when I was a child, cause' this used to be a school and it also, it was the um, the dentist was here, the school dentist. And um, I remember having a bad experience here as a child actually and I had to have a tooth extracted and I had to have gas and they put the mask over your face so um, I thought 'oh no' so um well um, I don't like this place cause' it's not a nice, not a nice…but it's, it's quite old really and it's a bit run down, shabby you know, it's very, it's not, it's not very welcoming really* (*Parent, Clinic B*)

This quote speaks to the power the built environment and place have for evoking and remembering the past. Like the children in the "Space to Care" study of children's hospitals (Curtis 2007), in this study the children were asked to imagine an "ideal"

space. Most of the children, rather than creating discrete or "hidden" spaces, wanted the building to be more obvious as a place where children can go to get help. The majority of the children created an "ideal" building façade that was bright, colorful, and designed to make the building "cheerier." As one child put it (Fig. 2):

> I've done like um, um pictures on the windows and to show that it's like a child's place and cause' here's no indication outside that um children come here and um I've put like a phone number on the front (Child, Clinic A)

This is not to say that the children were not concerned about the stigma of attending a CAMHS clinic. Rather, they wanted to recast the building as a service attended *by* children *for* children. Such a building would signal that this was a place where one went to get help.

When asked for their views on what the outside location of an ideal CAMHS clinic might look like, it is not surprising many of the young people in both clinics imagined somewhere greener and quieter:

> I'd just like a tree or a plant to show um that; I think that it's too busy here, there's too much traffic and I think it should be somewhere where there's a lot more green. There is the park just across the road but I think the area itself is just really busy (Child from Clinic A)

Fig. 2 Two of the children's drawings depicting an "ideal" building façade

I think it should be, I think it's good but I think it should be in a bit of a quieter estate because if the windows are open there's always sirens or cars or people shouting (Child from Clinic B)

The notion of green space as a therapeutic healing landscape appeared to be quite powerful in the minds of parents and children in this study. However, it is worth noting that the children and parents also valued the convenience of having clinics close to town centers:

The landscape could be nice, more welcoming, more peaceful, because I think this type of environment is nerve-racking and I think that, that the element of green and colours and they could make a big difference in the way you feel (Parent from Clinic A)

I think for people with mental health problems it's just anything that looks beautiful, calm, friendly and welcoming it's good for mental health problems (Parent from Clinic B)

For both of these parents, there was an assumption that green spaces offer some psychological comfort that would be particularly beneficial to people with mental health problems. Moreover, the power of nature and greenery to make one feel happier was strongly represented in the CAMHS build and space study by both parents and the children and young people. As noted above, the research evidence for these assumptions is more mixed.

10 Internal Build Environment Spaces: Tensions Between the Desire for "Homeliness" and the Therapeutic "Blank Canvas"

Issues like those discussed earlier in the chapter, such as light, noise, and color, were all raised as concerns for respondents in this study. For example, parts of the building, particularly in Clinic B, were described as being dark. As one parent from Clinic B said "I think it's quite dark, the waiting area's very confined . . . its very claustrophobic." Another parent described how more light in the clinic would be "less depressing."

However, it was the role of color and the general décor that was discussed by parents and children to the largest extent. For some therapeutic approaches, the room itself acts as a blank canvas, so the focus of the therapy is entirely on the child. However, for the children and parents visiting the clinics, this gave the impression of a service that was not "child-centered" or "friendly." In the clinic of the children's (and parents) imagination, the ideal décor would be bright, colorful, and linked to positive emotions. The only exception to this was a boy in his mid-teens who stated he preferred neutral colors. The following quote exemplifies the role that color might make to an indoor mental health spaces:

> *Cause' like a bright colour could also help how you're feeling so if you're like talking about something that's like, bad and hard; if you just look at the bright colours, it can sort of like help you to calm and settle down a bit easier* (Child from Clinic A)

Curiously, even the waiting rooms tended to be very neutral, and even if they contained posters on the wall, they were a token effort at "child-friendliness". When the children and young people were asked to imagine an ideal clinic setting, they attempted, both through their interviews and their drawings, to reconstruct new meanings by describing spaces with a sense of "homeliness." CAMHS, as an outpatient clinic, offers very little possibilities by way of establishing some kind of personalized or private space, which might facilitate an identification with the place. Even the kinds of boundary crossings and transgressions described by Parr (2000) in her study of a adult mental health "drop-in" are minimalized, and the young people have little, if no control, of the built environment. Visits are tightly timed and not long in duration; a temporary fleeting in-an-out of the environment.

When the children described or drew their "ideal" clinic, they tended to create symbolic features of "homeliness" such as rugs, sofas, curtains, and pictures. The actual therapy rooms contained both practical materials, such as a table and chairs, a familiar feature of the therapeutic room, with spatial features that were very much like a bedroom. Here are two indicative examples:

> *It would be, it would be nice to have the walls just painted; thinking it could be like one colour or two; the two colours like split in half and a border around it. But pictures, you get some people come to clinic, like most, some of the young kids draw pictures to put on the walls. Or like me, and use stencils so you can draw them straight onto the walls* (Child, Clinic B)
>
> *I would like it* [the therapy room] *to have more of a homely feel and some couches* (Child, Clinic B)

The drawings below provide two indicative examples of the kinds of therapy rooms drawn by the children. While the rooms reflect the functionality required for a therapeutic setting, extra "homely" features such as pictures, a sofa, and flowers are included. To provide a comparison, there are photographs of the therapy rooms from Clinic A and Clinic B (Fig. 3).

The emphasis for the children may be quite at odds with the requirements of different therapeutic styles or needs. A psychoanalyst may prefer plain walls with no pictures, so that the room is almost like a blank canvas. Art therapists often prefer color and pictures, and family therapists need rooms large enough to comfortably fit the whole family. CAMHS is an excellent example of the tensions exemplified in mental health spaces that may not be so apparent in schools or children's hospital research. There is also another "double bind" because in a context where children are treated for difficulties following child sexual abuse, it is easy to question whether a therapy room that is like a "bedroom" is appropriate. However, this chapter, and the data it draws on, is about representational spaces, so more critical thinking is needed about how to create a space that symbolizes "homeliness" without crossing inappropriate boundaries of home and institution.
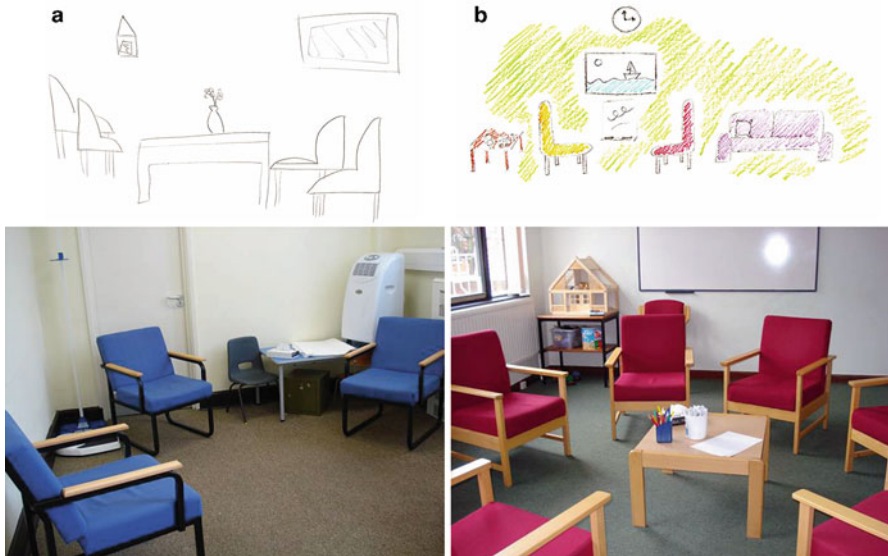
Fig. 3 Examples of "ideal" therapy rooms drawn by the children and pictures of the real therapy rooms

11   Children as Dangerous: Symbolic Meanings Associated with the Built Environment

In both the CAMHS clinics discussed in this chapter, when children and young people and their parents arrived to the clinic, they would check-in for their appointment, much as one does in a doctor's surgery. In both CAMHS clinics, there was a glass "hatch" with sliding glass doors (see Fig. 4), rather than an open registration desk which is more common in children's hospital wards. The glass "hatch" was mentioned by some of the staff and quite a number of the parents in the study sample. The pictures below show what the hatch in both clinics looked like:

This quote illuminates how a feature of the built environment can mediate negative symbolic associations:

> *You wonder what it's gonna be like because I mean, what's it's name, "mental health" so you don't know quite what to expect and it's a bit like, behind glass doors you know. It reminds me of a benefit office or somewhere where they expect you to be violent people so, I don't know, maybe they are (laughs)…yeah um, it's a Government run State thingy that you're…um yeah it implies you're, it's almost, it's got that atmosphere of um, you're coming for a service that we need to protect ourselves from you (laughs) yeah? (Parent, Clinic B)*

None of the secretarial or therapy staff mentioned feeling under threat from any child, adolescent, or parent. As another member of staff put it, "it's not patient friendly." This raises questions about the need for the hatch and the sliding glass

Fig. 4 The "hatch" in the waiting area – Clinic A on the *left* and Clinic B on the *right*

and the symbolic representations it creates. The views of the parent quoted above were shared by other parents, although his views were the strongest. For them, these features do not send a positive, client-friendly message to the patients, but rather they create a symbolic association with fairly simplistic understandings of young mental health patients as dangerous. The glass was not able to act as a barrier to confidential conversations or phone calls made by reception staff, so this questions the practice need for a glass window. The parent quoted above also mentioned that his child liked to check himself in to the clinic, but the hatch was so high it made it difficult for him to perform this small act of agency within the setting.

The children and young people had different concerns that tapped into similar symbolic associations with the built environment and the "dangerous" child. In both clinics, access to the therapy rooms was only available to either clinic staff or reception staff through a coded lock. In this next quote, one of the children from Clinic A describes how the lack of access was his least favorite feature of the internal building:

I: *what you like least about the building*?
C: *The door leading to the stairs, I always walk into it*
I: *Which door*?
C: *The one downstairs. It has to be unlocked by reception*
I: *What would you like instead of that, how you would imagine. . .*
C: *Just something so you can get up the stairs easier, so I don't have to walk into the door, or*
I: *I see, easier access*
C: *Yeah and go to reception to get it unlocked*

In some ways this child's reasons for wanting easier access to the therapy rooms seem quite benign; they just want it to be easier. However, it can also be argued that, like the hatch, the locked door is there to put in place boundaries that are both physical and symbolic. Issues of surveillance, particularly concerning

the use of one-way mirrors and cameras, also led to feelings of uncertainty for some of the children:

C: *Um well that mirror always makes it feel a little uncomfortable. It seems that there's somebody moving behind it*
I: *A mirror you said, OK*
C: *A one-way mirror*
I: *Mmm, mmm, so you would like that not to be*
C: *A bit more discreet* (Child, Clinic A)

> *I was in a bit of a mood when I first came but it didn't really make me happy when I came in here, and the doors were opened and the mirror up, and I could see people behind the mirror and the camera was on and they were watching us and I didn't, I was worried about that, and it made me angry…so it made me think that the clinic; it isn't all as they say it is, because of the danger* (Child, Clinic A)

From an adult perspective, the mirror is used for therapeutic and training purposes. However, it made these two children uncomfortable in ways that might not be foreseen by adults. In the first quote, the child perceives there is danger behind the mirror because they sense people moving about. In the second quote, the one-way mirror and the camera in the therapy room angered him during his first visit. He felt deceived by the clinic, not because people were watching him but because the safety he felt on entering the clinic seemed false.

12   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed a largely untapped area of research, namely, the built environment and place meanings of children's and young people's mental health. In particular, it has focused on the internal space of two CAMHS outpatient clinics. The discussions in this chapter have resonance with research in adult mental health spaces, both with respect to asylum and drop-in centers. For example, the material or physical features link powerfully to users' emotions. Light, noise, décor, the locked door, and corridors were all mentioned. The children's mutual feelings of uncertainty in attending clinics for the first time and how the building façade could feature as part of the insecurity (e.g., in looking like a church) were evident. There are clear limitations to the data presented in this chapter because it involved the comparison of only two clinics. CAMHS outpatients occupy a wide range of settings across the UK, and there is more work to do in looking at how these associations play out across contexts.

More than this, elements of the place were tied up with constructions of the "normal" childhood and the "dangerous" child in ways that echo commentaries from children in the neighborhood research. "The hatch" was used as an indicative example of how parents took aspects of the built environment as a symbolic

representation of the dangerous child. The hatch suggests that it is the staff inside the building who are in need of protection from the children and young people. There was no evidence in these two particular CAMHS clinics that this was necessary. Similarly, locked doors and one-way mirrors led to feelings of discomfort in the children. The children seemed to struggle to articulate the nature of the discomfort, but it bears some resemblance to the parents' concerns about the "hatch." The concerns and uncertainties about locks and camera surveillance echo Parr's findings from adult mental health spaces.

Gathering children and young people's representations of an "ideal" or "imagined" CAMHS space has raised some questions about the visibility of CAMHS as a children's service. The young participants were conscious of the stigma attached to mental health but seemingly far less concerned than the adults around them. Should an "imagined" service that is publicly colorful and openly geared toward helping children be taken seriously? Or have the children only articulated this ideal space because the research methodology, by asking for something "ideal," allowed them to remove themselves from the reality of stigma? Moreover, in making the service "hidden," is this perpetuating the stigma associated with children and young people's mental health? More research is needed in a range of children's mental health spaces like CAMHS to wrestle with the tensions about visibility and stigma.

Parr (2008) writes about reimaging adult mental health by creating different narratives that represent the complexity of the experience. In doing so, representations become sites of active resistance with active agents. It is even harder to do this in a childhood mental health setting because there has been relatively little work from a built environment and space perspective, and "empowering" children and young people offers an additional challenge within formal institutions. Children and young people attending CAMHS could be said to have multiple barriers to "individual and collective resistances to psychiatric power and control" (Parr 2008, p. 23 quoting Crossley 2006).

The focus on the children's "ideal" CAMHS space served a very useful purpose for the original aims of the study, which was to gain an understanding of the users' experiences and an understanding of the CAMHS of their imagination (through children's drawings and interviews). What the majority of children sought were feelings of tranquility through the use of green spaces, warm colors, and less institutional-looking furniture. Overall, what they conveyed was a sense of "homeliness," often with features of a bedroom space. However, these findings raise critical questions about the boundary crossing between formal (institution) and informal (home) settings that require further explanation. How can CAMHS be a service that *looks* like it is designed *for* children *by* children, whilst managing the complex needs of the people who use it?

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Locking Up Children and Young People: Secure Care in Scotland

31

Anna Katharina Schliehe

Contents

Abstract

Navigating between the poles of security and care, secure care units often symbolize the "last resort" for children and young people deemed to pose an increased risk to themselves and/or to others. As institutions, secure care units extend common understandings of care, cutting across the issues of offending, security, and safety.

In order to explain these conceptualizations, young people's experiences will be presented which focus on their emotional and embodied perceptions of this most secure form of care. These will include reflections on periods of respite, crisis, and negotiations with carers and fellow detainees. The divergent poles of "locking up and away" difficult and unmanageable children and young people, while at the same time maintaining levels of care and possibilities of rehabilitation, are considered in connection with the young people's experiences of material spaces and institutional practices.

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In this sense, the chapter aims to cut across children's geographies and carceral geographies and in so doing untangles some of the complicated issues that arise when children and young people are locked up in order to ensure their well-being. The respective research forms part of an ongoing doctoral research project that looks at girls and young women who are detained in different types of closed institutions. For this paper the interviews that have been conducted in a Scottish secure care institution will provide the main source of empirical material.

1 Introduction

Secure care units in Scotland provide secure accommodation for children and young people with emotional and behavioral problems who are deemed to pose a risk to themselves or to others. These have to fulfill the ambiguous task of providing care while at the same time attempting to control and change behavior presenting pro-social role modeling. These closed secure care spaces are therefore highly complex, exhibiting intricate power relations, control, and surveillance. Not only characterized by control but also as environments of care, secure care units also raise issues that are intrinsically linked with geographies of health and well-being more broadly. The secure environment functions as a space created to establish young people's primary needs regarding physical and mental health and more complex indicators for well-being like building relationships and increasing hope and self-worth.

This chapter is intended as an introduction to debates on environments of detention and young people, and it is informed by two literatures, the first concerning geographies of children and youth and the second looking at carceral geographies and detention. Looking more closely at the specific spaces and practices of secure care helps to specify wider questions on the need and nature of control regarding young people. While there are many excellent papers on both the care and control of children in institutions, these particularly controlled environments have not featured much in carceral or children's geographies. This qualitative and ethnographic account aims to reveal some of the complex nuances of locked environments built explicitly for children and young people. The relationship between security and care and how they are exercised and balanced out inside a closed institution is the main focus of this chapter. This is partly done by concentrating on the young detainees' own accounts of how secure care is experienced.

For researchers interested in geographies of children and young people, carceral geography can offer insights into measures and practices of control that form part of the most secure form of care. Diverse aspects of detention and what this means to the individual also link in with wider debates on children and young people in the community. Measures of control typically used in closed environments are not

limited to these spaces, or this detained group, but form part of the apparatus of control on young people more generally. As an environment that organizes all spheres of life under one roof, secure care provides many possibilities for geographical inquiry, and this chapter will focus on how much control intersects with the primary aim of care and well-being.

The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows: after an overview of children's geographies in closed environments, secure care is closely examined with a particular focus on the dilemmas and ambiguities of providing care and exercising strict control. Following this, the research methodology is outlined and some of the key features of doing research in a closed environment are presented. Empirical examples of everyday life in a secure unit in Scotland are introduced, with an emphasis on the institutional workings of the unit as well as environmental and social measures of control and care. Section 6 considers some of the experiences and perceptions of being locked up from a young person's point of view. Section 7 briefly reviews the main arguments and contends with how secure care is seen as a "last resort" regarding available measures to control society's most vulnerable and "out-of-control" young people while at the same time purporting to offer "intensive" social care and behavioral adaptation.

2   Children's Geographies in Closed Environments

Until the 1990s children and young people were rarely the focus for academic geographers. Since then a large variety of contributions has been published, and many are relevant when considering locked environments for young people. Valentine (1996, 596) offers a comprehensive overview of the different accounts of childhood and youth that have been reproduced and constructed over the last three centuries – drawing on the portrayal of children as either "angels" (innocent) or "devils" (dangerous and out of control). The disruption of the moral order and panic about "dangerous children" calling for greater spatial control is summarized as a process of marginalization (Valentine 1996, 597) that has taken specific shape in secure care. Her questioning of the status of children as "human becomings" rather than equal agents is taken up by Philo, who argues that "the otherness of children and their geographies, the impossibility and inappropriateness of subsuming them within studies of the adult worlds, is itself made a justification for opening of a new field of geographical inquiry" (Philo 1997, 2, also 1992). Children's geography (as opposed to geography of children) very much focuses on children's experiences and perceptions as well as their agency. As Sibley pointed out in 1991, other areas of research have established practice regarding children and young people that need to be taken into account, while stating at the same time that children's experiences of place and space will always remain elusive. Children's geography has since developed and branched out. The "coming of age" of the journal *Children's Geographies* raises issues around the "crisis of representation" and contends that a partial understanding is better than not attempting to understand (Matthews 2003, 5).

Many previous debates continue, such as the balance between risk avoidance and young people's full social development. In an attempt to situate young teenagers in geographies of children and youth, Weller (2006, 98) argues that adolescents remain "the neglected 'other' of children's geographies." Slipping between terms such as child, teenager, and adolescent is criticized for its "fuzziness." Instead, Weller calls for teenagers' geographies to play an important role in examining the "betweenness" that transverses childhood and adulthood (2006, 101). The labels of being "at risk," "in trouble," or "in need" that are so readily applied to teenagers (Weller 2006, 104) show how this group of young adults, and young people in closed institutions in particular, are often constructed through negative imagery and demonization. The development of conceptually informed "critical youthful geographies" has focused on issues such as restrictions on children's spatial freedom and moral panics surrounding teenagers. Such themes are highly relevant when assessing closed environments set up for children and young adults (Collins and Kearns 2001).

Discussing geographies of children and young people's bodies, Colls and Hörschelmann (2009, 1)) emphasize the importance of small, sometimes banal matters and the position of the child's body as "unruly, in need of control and/or intervention." Horton and Kraftl similarly stress the importance of little things and in which way they matter:

> [A]ll sorts of things-in-the-world and geographies which are habitually underestimated...- the entire realm of small, banal, low-key, daft, happenstance things, moments, events, practices, experiences, emotions, complexities, quirks, details and who-knows-what-else? in and of everyday lives, for instance – ought to be taken far more seriously. (Horton and Kraftl 2005, 133)

Looking at the transition from childhood to adulthood, Valentine (2003) refers to the "liminal period of youth" as a time of complex and fluid transitions. The reflexivity of this period can be seen in the different lifestyles, subcultures, and identities that young people can adopt, but Valentine (2003, 40) recognizes a simultaneous increase of risk "in the form of guilt or blame if they end up on the margins of society as a result of their own choices." This recognition must particularly be applicable to children and young people who are detained in secure accommodation for they are placed out of the eye of the public in order to attempt "normalization." In referring to experiences of "home," Valentine (2003, 44) draws connections between unstable, fragmented, and turbulent "care careers" and subsequent homeless and prison populations. Closed institutions for young people should be seen in the same category, although they still provide a sense of care as well as keeping the public "safe." Dependency can also "diminish individual's sense of identity and reproduce relationships of inequality between these young people and adults they encounter in other aspects of life" (Valentine 2003, 44). Although referring to parents and their children, this claim could be transferred to institutions and their detained young population. The "hidden" war between adults and children over the designation and utilization of "social spaces" (Philo 1997, 11) that is taking place outside in the "streets" also

takes place inside closed institutions. Resistance and agency are recognizable and constantly on show (e.g., young people "kicking off") – but often being designated a backseat when confronted with the increased control mechanisms of the closed institution.

In the secure care estate, almost all decisions exclude young people, with the institutions, as well as the social justice and social work systems, run by adults. Kendrick et al. argue that in this system, young people have been "silenced" because of their lack of status and power and their isolation and because "adults have not listened" (Kendrick et al. 2008b, 80). In order to be able to debate "out-of-control" young people, the particular and very diverse experiences of different subgroups have to be recognized. By putting marginalized groups and in particular detained populations at the center of the debate, their existence "out of the public eye" but still on the boundaries between public (observed) and private (home life) becomes undeniable. Most of the spaces in which they spend time are shared with others or are under constant observation, so there is little or no opportunity of retreating into more private corners (see Pain and Francis 2004). A blurry boundary between offending (being a risk) and victimization (being at risk) connects many individual experiences and life courses (Pain and Francis 2004, 102). Curti and Moreno (2010) point out how the ways in which young people negotiate their lives are fundamentally informed by their socio-geographic location. Transferred to young people "growing up" in secure environments, the impact of closed spaces on self-produced identity and biography must be significant. A good example of the combination between the focus on the "everyday" in children's geographies and ambivalence in "institutional" homes lies in a study of food practices in residential care in Scotland (Dorrer et al. 2010). Dorrer et al. (2010, 248) argue that a "reflection on food practices can provide a critical insight into the complexity of the residential home, as well as the use of food as a medium of care." They find that there is a "fine line between the staff's regulation of access to food and spaces being perceived as helpful and caring and it being perceived as constraining" (Dorrer et al. 2010, 253). Examples of children's resistance to institutional (and adult) control of the use of food are transferrable to other areas of institutional living. The space as simultaneously "workplace" and "home" highlights the ambiguity surrounding institutions in general and children's institutions in particular. A similar argument is offered by Disney (2013) who bridges children's geographies and carceral geographies with his work on orphanages. His paper analyses the heterogeneity and complexity of these spaces while stressing that institutional spaces of childhood such as schools have been in the focus of children's geographers for a while (Disney 2013, 5; also Gallagher 2010).

While accounts of children's geographies mainly focus on children and young people, their status, bodies, experiences, and development, carceral geography can offer a nuanced and in-depth analysis of the closed environment as this affects detainees and staff. In this sense combining theories of children's geographies and carceral geographies should be considered in order to understand the complex issues surrounding young people who are detained in closed environments. Carceral geography considers the "spaces set aside for 'securing' – detaining, locking

up/away – problematic populations of one kind or another" (Philo 2012, 4). It spans and synthesizes three main areas of research: (1) the nature and experience of carceral spaces, (2) spatial and distributional characteristics of carceral systems, and (3) the relationship between the carceral system and an increasingly punitive state (Moran and Keinänen 2012). These areas within carceral geography overlap with other geographies of security (see Philo 2012, 4), and additionally one area of extension is the incorporation of "other" carceral institutions under the umbrella of carceral geography, such as secure care units for young people. Young people and their "challenging" and "offending" behavior have long been in the focus of criminal justice and youth studies alike. The study of increasing securitization of childhoods and the criminalization of young people through curfews and control of antisocial behavior provide common ground for carceral and children's geographies' analyses alike. Both areas of human geography have routinely employed Foucault (Driver 1990; Ploszajska 1994; Philo 2011, 2012; Moran and Keinänen 2012) and his discussion of Mettray (reformatory for boys) for conceptual arguments on containment, separation, and discipline (Foucault 1991). In the analysis of closed institutions, Goffman (1991 [1961], 1990 [1963]) also offers important conceptual frameworks in his work on *Asylums* and *Stigma* (Schliehe 2014). A lot is known historically, as well as contemporarily, about the effects of securitization of youth and childhood. However, less is known of the institutional geographies of everyday life inside a locked facility for children and young people. Critical geographers have continuing contributions to make to understanding young people's experiences in closed environments and how they impact on wider debates about youth and young people's geographies.

3 Secure Care: Keeping Young People Safe

Young people who are sent to secure care units in Scotland are deemed to pose a danger either to the public or to themselves. They are termed the most vulnerable, at risk, and risky young people with complex disadvantages like a history of changing care patterns alongside very difficult family circumstances and social relationships (Bullock et al. 1998). Their (intergenerational) family background is often characterized by breakdown, substance misuse, domestic violence, and severe experiences of loss and separation through incarceration or death. Most of the young people in secure care have gone through multiple placements often connected to chronic unemployment, homelessness, and severe financial difficulties among the family and for the young people themselves (Mitchell et al. 2012, 19).

There have been extensive debates about the primary purpose of secure care and the associated paradox of "care versus control" or "welfare versus punishment" (Goldson 2002, 119; Bullock et al. 1998; Harris and Timms 1993). While some studies see secure care primarily as negative and punitive (Littlewood 1987; Goldson 2002 (England); The Howard League for Penal Reform 2006 (England)), others see a more mixed picture. Rose (2002), from a practitioners' perspective, emphasizes the positive, e.g., therapeutic possibilities (in England).

Earlier research on secure care units in Scotland includes residential schools (Mitchell et al. 2012, 20), while more recent studies have other foci: longitudinal evaluation (Walker et al. 2006), outcomes for sexually exploited young people (Creegan et al. 2005), and the young people's views on their stay in secure care (Foreman 2004; Foreman and McAllister 2006; Barry and Moodie 2008). Considerably more analysis has been done on the situation in England and Wales, which has a significantly different legislative context.

Most of the young people's families have had involvement with social work services, and "the year prior to secure admission has also been found to be marked by upheaval, stress, and change for the young person and their family" (Mitchell et al. 2012, 20f.). Trauma, neglect, and experiences of abuse are other factors commonly experienced by these young people. One study reports that one in three girls reported an experience of sexual abuse, compared to 1 in 20 boys (YJB 2008 In: Mitchell et al. 2012, 20). Young people in secure care and particularly young women show high rates of self-harm and a range of different mental health difficulties including suicide and attempted suicide. Khan (2010) reports that interrelated risk factors, such as substance misuse, poor sexual and mental health, and exposure to violence and sexual violence, all exacerbate the state of their health overall. These experiences are often coupled with problems at school due to a lack of appropriate school placements, experiences of exclusion, and frequent moves, with a "significant number of these young people also show[ing] evidence of learning disabilities and/or emotional, social and behavioral difficulties" (Mitchell et al. 2012, 21). Although there are few analyses on gender and gendered factors in decision-making on placements to secure care, many authors highlight that ideas about vulnerability and gender play a significant role for young women admitted for being at risk "sexually" (here via a welfare rather than criminal route) (e.g., Walker et al. 2006). Boys, however, seem to show similarly high rates of mental health, social, and educational needs (Barclay and Hunter 2008). After being admitted to secure care with high levels of supervision, a great reduction in need has been noticed alongside improvements in aggressive behavior, substance dependency, social relationships, self-care, and educational achievements, although rates of depression and anxiety seemingly remain high (Barclay and Hunter 2008, 167) (Table 1).

Young people under the age of 16 are typically placed in secure care through the Children's Hearing System (CHS) under the legislative terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Often these young people are already known to the CHS under a "supervision requirement" (Section 70 of the Act) which can include legal justifications such as "protecting, guiding, treating or controlling the child in question" (Mitchell et al. 2012, 8). The recent Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 means that there is now a new single, national Children's Panel for Scotland which sets the criteria for using secure accommodation (Section 83(6), 87 (4), 88 (3)).

Referrals via the CHS are usually made with reference to welfare rather than justice. In severe cases referrals can also be made by the courts. Before being placed in secure care, other forms of residence like foster care, open residential units, or

Table 1 Young people's main behaviors associated with detention in secure care (Roesch-Marsh 2014, 207)

Absconding
Misusing drugs and alcohol
Spending time with unsuitable people (usually defined as those who would exploit or corrupt the young person in some way)
Getting into trouble with peers (with trouble most often related to offending, disruptive behavior in the residential unit and absconding)
Having unsafe sex or putting themselves at risk of sexual exploitation (a risk almost exclusively identified with females)
Self-harming (including cutting and a range of other self-injurious behaviors)
Offending

residential schools may be tried. This combination of young people incarcerated in secure care for welfare (risk to themselves) and criminal justice (risk to others) reasons makes it difficult to describe accurately the detained population. Often they are referred to as "offenders" even though this may not be technically true, creating a problematic stigma that is attached to different places of confinement as well as to the self-perception of the young people. For Gelsthorpe and Sharpe (2006, 57), it seems that all "children in trouble" placed in secure care are being criminalized rather than treated as children in need of care.

In the last decade, the number of available placements in Scottish secure units has changed. In 2003 a decision was made to increase the number of available places and to develop specialist services in order to reduce the number of under-18s (particularly young women) in prison (SIRCC 2009, 12). Compared to today, in 2009 the numbers were considerably higher, with seven secure care units and a total of 124 beds available (Scottish Government 2009). This strategy did not produce the expected results, however, as the supply of secure care places outstripped demand, with the result that secure care providers (four out of six private) were struggling to remain financially viable (SIRCC 2009). During this period one private unit closed while others downsized. Today there are 90 secure beds in six units (Sans 2015; Celcis 2013).

Existing data sources in Scotland provide some figures on the use of secure care units. Between 2010 and 2011, 146 children received secure authorizations as part of a warrant and 117 as a condition of the supervision requirements. In the same period there were 273 admissions and 259 discharges from secure care (Mitchell et al. 2012, 14). Many young people, who have been through the care system, end up in the criminal justice system and often subsequently in prison. Those between 16 and 18 are at a higher risk of falling between the gaps of local services as the transition from child to adult services is not always coherent or consistently applied (Scottish Government 2011, 5).

The secure unit used for most of the research on which this chapter is based presents itself as a "positive opportunity" that helps the young people to "recognize and reach" their full potential. The staff use a range of approaches to work with

young people which are drawn from a comprehensive needs assessment completed on admission. Their well-being is assessed on a weekly basis. Approaches adopted to respond to unmanageable behavior and mental health difficulties include cognitive behavioral therapy with models such as behavior modification, social skills training, problem solving, anger management, and moral reasoning. The unit is purpose built and has a high security standard, including several security measures at the entrance, locked doors throughout, and camera surveillance. It is a constant effort for staff to balance security and care (e.g., keeping the environment ligature free but not sterile).

Before looking into the "spaces" of secure units in more detail, research methods and particular ethical considerations connected to working in closed environments are introduced.

4   Researching Secure Environments

This chapter is based on fieldwork carried out in Scotland in two phases from May 2012 to September 2012 (Schliehe 2012) and October 2013 to September 2014, together with an analysis of media reports, policy documents, press releases, and academic commentaries concerning different types of secure accommodation for young people in Scotland. Combining primary and secondary sources of data helped to establish an overview of both the institutional landscape and young people's perceptions. The empirical work included qualitative semi-structured interviews to explore the social and spatial situation of this marginalized group of young people while at the same time recognizing that the study could only provide a snapshot of existing experiences (Schliehe 2014). While all interviews with young people feature young women, participant observation, "spending time," and "taking part in activities" were done irrespective of the gender of the young people involved. The interview material refers to 11 young women in secure care and 12 young women talking about secure care while being interviewed "on the outside." Furthermore, 24 interviews were conducted with secure care staff on site. Semi-structured qualitative interviews allowed the meanings and experiences of young people to be foregrounded and represented. The flexibility in the applied data collection strategy allowed it to adapt the methods to fit individual participants' needs and to provide opportunities for young people to steer the conversation if they wanted. Responding to all kinds of emotional reactions required active listening to the young people's voices and opinions (Gaskell 2008). All results in this chapter are presented in a descriptive and summarizing manner (for more information on methods, refer to Schliehe 2012, 2014).

In reviewing other research accounts, there is helpful advice and methodological detail available on interviewing marginalized and "difficult" children as well as young people across a range of settings (Curtis et al. 2003). "Spending time with young people prior to the interview" or "joining their activities" is recommended, alongside different styles of questioning and communication (Curtis et al. 2003, 168). The fieldwork in Scotland was based primarily in one secure care unit but also

considered ethnographic data from other secure units and testimonies by people who had been detained in secure units in the past. The questions asked ranged from biographic details to the issues that led to detention in secure care. Respondents' perception of and experiences within the unit, and specifically what the spaces "inside" look and feel like, formed the main part of the interview (see Schliehe 2014). At the time of the interview, all young women were aged between 14 and 21 years and had spent varying length(s) of time in secure care, often having experienced different secure units or returning to the same one several times.

Overall, researching closed institutions like secure care units is challenging on many different levels ranging from ethical to practical issues. Methodologies need to be chosen with the young people and environmental restrictions in mind and have to be reassessed on a continual basis.

5   Everyday Life in the Unit

This most secure form of care in Scotland is embedded in a strict architectural environment, meticulous routines, and extensive staff training. In order to care for, control, and change young people who are perceived to be beyond the control of their parent(s) or carer(s), secure environments follow particular regimes. In the following, several particularities that form part of the everyday life in secure care will be examined more closely using secondary readings, interview material, and observational data.

In the interviews, the secure care complex was described as a high-security building where all doors are locked and people cannot simply walk from one room to the next (Schliehe 2012, 47). Each young person has a room with a single bed, a sideboard, and an en suite bathroom. There is no privacy in the room, however, as there is no door to the bathroom and shower curtains are not allowed for everyone because of the opportunities afforded to people who self-harm (Sophia – young person 2012, 6). Every room has a window, but none of the windows in the unit actually open; there are no handles, and the door to the bedrooms can only be opened from the outside (Schliehe 2012, 47). A panel on the wall next to the bedroom door can only be unlocked by staff in order to check the room and the young people (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 15). Underneath the panel, staff can access control switches for blinds, lights, and power sockets. The young people are risk assessed in order to allow them to keep things in their room and personalize it. If they are at very high risk or when they come in initially, they are not allowed anything that could lead to self-harm or suicide attempts. Slowly, things like extra clothes, posters, TV, CDs, and toiletries can be introduced, but generally most clothes and other personal things are kept in lockers in the hallway (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 16). The rooms are checked by staff at least twice daily (doing "safe care") to ensure that they are safe and no harmful or forbidden items are kept there (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 15). Other measures are built into the environment to prevent harm like locked cupboards in the kitchen, locked TV (behind a

cabinet), CCTV cameras, and locked doors to the staff office, the corridors, and the kitchen. Social routines are used by staff to make the environment safer, such as only one young person being allowed in the hallway at any time (accompanied by staff), no hot drinks, everyone having to wait in the dining room until cutlery check is completed, and so on (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 17, 35, 38). Feelings about these security measures vary. Sophia (young person 2012, 5) put it like this: There shouldn't be as many locked doors, but if you think about the number of people who kick off, then the place would have just got flung up in the air, and everything would have been smashed and stuff. So they just lock up for our safety and their own safety, the staff. Not only staff but also young people thought a lot about the environment that they occupied and remarked on different things like cameras and surveillance, locked doors, and furnishings including carpets: "The carpets were pretty rough, so people would always get carpet burns [when restrained]. I think they need some decent carpets. If they're going to restrain people, you should get some soft carpets instead of some really rough ones" (Joanne – young person 2012, 7).

According to Kendrick et al. (2008a, 5), most young people in secure care indicated how distressing and upsetting it had been for them to find themselves in secure accommodation. This was confirmed by Mona:

> It was quite traumatizing. It is a new place, I am not used to the rules and new people, and I just thought 'Oh my god' and people shouting and screaming and that. And all it takes is a matter of seconds, like one minute everybody sits having a laugh and the next someone's getting restrained and you get dragged into a room – it is quite scary. (Mona – young person 2014, 3)

Some described being anxious and terrified on arrival and it took them a while to settle down (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 43). On arrival all young people are provided with information about the unit, and they are given time with their appointed key worker (Kendrick et al. 2008a). There is a set plan of how young people are introduced to living in secure care with many checks, information, and introduction to key people (nurse, unit manager, key worker, etc.), self-assessment, and appointments scheduled to happen in the first 72 h (Schliehe 2014, 1).

Effective means of controlling young people's behavior are seen as crucial by staff in order to make the unit a safe space for all residents (Kendrick et al. 2008a). This control is generally achieved by using a reward-consequence-based system. Consequences can be dining room bans (having to eat on your own in your room), courtyard ban (not being allowed time outside with the others), early bed time, or early power cut in your room (Linda – unit staff 2014, 6). On the other hand, young people could gain additional privileges like extended mobility (having time outside the unit with staff accompaniment).

Staff have the complex task to enhance well-being, to manage "risk" (Roesch-Marsh 2014, 198), and to respond to crises. The process of defining and identifying risk and "risky behavior" is difficult in an environment that demands reactive

decision-making on the spot. This includes management within the unit, such as the use of "safeholds," restraining, or constant observation. Attacks on staff, violence toward other young people, or self-harm has to be managed and can prove demanding (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 31, 43). Staff also have to think beyond the unit, managing a young person's "mobility" and potential risks outwith the unit (upon release or when on mobility).

Assessments of a young person's behavior, mood, and overall well-being are carried out on a daily and weekly basis in order to provide appropriate care plans for their placement, working through a system of formal reviews and individual discussion with young people, key worker, and social worker present (Kendrick et al. 2008a, 5). Weekly assessments of well-being indicators include a description of how the young person is progressing in respect of certain indicators and how the staff-young people relationships are developing (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 9–10).

Key workers in particular, but all workers in general, had "building relationships" with young people as an explicit goal. This was achieved through key time (time spent with the two key workers at least once a week) and through general everyday encounters in the unit and in education. For many staff and young people, "the main emphasis of the plan was to help develop relationships with their family, or to support the move from secure accommodation to their subsequent placement" (Kendrick et al. 2008a, 5). In team meetings, staff mentioned that it can prove difficult to help young people to change when they come in with very high levels of hopelessness (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 50). As a member of staff, you have to manage a wide array of responses to you: "You get kicked, punched, spat on and the verbal abuse but also the hugs, cuddles, all the high fives and kind gestures" (Kenny, staff member 2014, 9).

Every young person receives an education and other structured programs while being in secure care. Classes are kept small and there are individual assessments for all young people, which often help them to reengage with their education (Kendrick 2008a, 6). A range of programs is delivered by a team focused on well-being and mental health, addressing offending, personal issues like sexual behavior or personal health. Other programs were working to take young people outside the unit and provide some scout-like outdoor experiences (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 4).

There are certain particularities to secure care that are embedded in the everyday institutional experience, like its particular language (Snow 2006). Certain words have a specific institutional meaning, like "mobility," which means that young people get increasing supervised trips to the outside to go for a walk in the grounds or to a shop. Other phrases are created like "getting a niner," meaning getting an instruction to go to bed early, or "having a pit pulled," meaning having the alarm raised because of a young person's behavior or conduct (Schliehe SC field diary 2014, 49).

According to Roesch-Marsh (2014, 210), research with young people suggests that there is an acute awareness of the stigma attached to secure care units and other locked settings. This was particularly described by young people interviewed after their time in secure care:

> When I say to someone that I've been in a psychiatric hospital, then they think I am a bit loopy. But they're nicer to me than if I say I was in a secure unit. One's for people who are unwell and one's for people who are bad and criminals. [Even though] you see people coming into the secure unit who have not done anything, and they've just been self-harming, and there's just been nowhere else [for them] to go. (Joanne – young person 2012, 11)

In order to understand the "here and now" of secure care, many different aspects have to be learned about the built environment, staff practices, routines, school, and other programs, as well as about young people's perception of situations and spaces and institutional lingo.

6 "Nothing Will Happen to You While You're in Here": Vignettes of Security and Care

The young people that were interviewed and the general conversation that went on in secure care made clear how everybody's embodied experience and emotional response to this most secure form of care were different. Many young people felt ambiguous about their time "inside" telling stories about both positive and negative experiences. In this section some vignettes and aspects of what secure care can feel like will be explored, ranging from severe anxiety about being locked up to feeling safe for the first time in a long time. One young person said that she feels safe in secure because "nothing will happen to you while you're in here" (Schliehe, SC field diary 2014, 50). The very primary needs of "feeling safe," of food, and of shelter are being met but accompanied by a complex apparatus of control.

Some young people commented that they had not experienced any difficulties in the secure unit, but others indicated that it was hard not being able to see friends and family, being watched on a continual basis, not being able to go outside, and experiencing boredom. The hardest thing for most young people was the simple reality of being locked up. Secure care means a severe loss of control and liberty. Every young person has to adjust to an unfamiliar community and strict rules. There are no responsibilities for any "normal" everyday duties, and there is a high dependency on staff to allow for the most basic requirements like food, fresh air, or moving about (Schliehe 2012, 51). There was a lot of ambiguity when it came to explaining why they were there. A lot of the interviewees saw secure care as a kind of punishment and at the same time benefitting their safety: "I don't think I deserved it, but I think it benefitted me for my safety, but I don't think I deserved that much punishment, because it was more punishment than safety. [–] I think secure [care] is like jail" (Carrie – young person 2012, 4).

A whole set of emotions are tied to secure care. Sometimes young people go in with preconceptions picked up from friends, and the arrival is heightened with intense stress and high levels of anxiety. Others were more bothered by the distance between the secure unit and the places and people they knew (Nora, young person 2014, 3; Maggie, young person 2014, 3).

The relationships with the other young people in the unit were never straight-forward and there were severe trust issues. Every interviewee was quite clear that real friendships could not be established in secure care. Mona talked about how she saw the other young people: "Yeah, we've all got like really severe problems compared to some. Some just have problems and some of us are just here, but all of us have problems that we need to be in secure, so it is not good, you don't know these people's tempers and that" (Mona – young person 2014, 3). Trying to get on with people who you do not know and building relationships is an inevitable but difficult social task. It involves displaying a "façade" and feelings of ambiguity were described frequently as: "You never know who you're living with either" (Cece – young person 2014, 5).

Feelings about negotiating living space with other young people and staff sometimes changed over time, as Mona described (young person 2014, 3): "It was quite nice at first I guess, they were quite nice but as time's gone on you're closed in like you can't get away from people, so friction builds up. You get to a point where you're just 'aaahhh' that you kill each other. But it's like you can't open the window and you can't go look out the window to distract yourself, so it's like (. . .)."

Often the first time and the last couple of weeks were experienced as unsettling, whereas in between moods stabilized and they adapted to the environment: "It used to bother me [being locked up] but now I am used to it. [–] [In the beginning] like you can't have any privacies, you have to ask to go to the toilet so you're basically having no privacies. So if you want to have a shower you have to ask to have a shower" (Nora – young person 2014, 5). Often "being locked up" is most of all associated with the bedroom that many interviewees described in great detail evoking sounds, smells, and the general "feel" of the room with all its locked features and different aspects of control. This control is tightly interwoven with maintaining young people's health and basic levels of well-being – sometimes as basic as just keeping them alive.

Negotiating relationships with staff was seen as a particular struggle, which was exacerbated by the living environment and the extremely high dependency on staff. The strictness of routines and rules was often seen as negative, but at the same time provided some security and predictability. Karen (young person 2014, 5) said: "It is strict in unit 1, it like, oh, you would get into trouble for everything [. . .] just stupid stuff [. . .] you get in trouble for laughing and that [. . .] you're not allowed to put your feet up on the seats or anything, you're not allowed to drink hot drinks [. . .] fuck that. You get an early bed time, early power."

The feeling of isolation and hopelessness can arise through many different factors like geographical distance, no close relations to other young people or staff, and the physical barriers to the outside world (Phoebe – young person 2014, 3–4). One important point is the restriction of communication to people outside. To be able to have phone contact, they need to be on a list (usually family only) that is approved by social work and the secure unit staff. So normally it is not possible to stay in contact with friends while in secure. There is no contact to the Internet (apart from school research), and only approved people can come and visit.

The secure environment restrains and detains young people but at the same time offers them a high level of personal security – from themselves and from others. There were many interview comments confirming a deeply ambiguous feeling toward being locked up: benefitting personal safety but interfering with their most personal needs. For all interviewees, their time in secure care was emotional on many different levels – many describing similar thoughts of being held in a closed space but without a common feeling of togetherness – everyone by themselves.

7   Conclusion

As the discussion above shows, conducting research in closed environments with children and young adults involves many different layers of complexity. Thinking reflexively about the research process and reassessing it throughout the project is crucial in understanding the dilemmas and challenges, as well as the losses and gains that result from decisions made. Explicating the term social control and describing a controlled environment are both notoriously difficult to do. In this chapter the attempt was made to get closer to what it is like to experience being locked up by hearing young people's accounts. The multiple layers of regulation, surveillance, normalization, and coercion that are exercised in secure environments meet practices of intensive social care such as looking after physical and mental health, providing food and warmth, offering education, and, most of all, just "being there" for the young people. The young people's descriptions of the "strangeness of the building," with its many rules and routines, showed how the environment is governed. The space being simultaneously "workplace" and "home" made it neither public nor private, which had a profound effect on the small and banal as well as on more complex experiences and emotions.

In relation to closed environments, geographical engagement in the area of children's geographies (Kendrick et al. 2008a; Dorrer et al. 2010; Disney 2013) and carceral geography (Philo 2012; Moran and Keinänen 2012; Schliehe 2014) both provide valuable tools and cover important aspects for the analysis of secure care units. Ranging between the poles of care and control, all spheres of life are organized under one roof in order to achieve the primary goal to keep both young people and the public safe while enhancing the young people's well-being to achieve better outcomes when they are returned to the community. In this sense the employed measures of control form part of a broader apparatus of societal control on young people more generally.

Geographical engagement in the area of children's geographies has emphasized how young people and their uses of space have resulted in a series of moral panics, "representing them as violent, undisciplined and disrespectful- threats to the (adult) moral order of the street and indeed to the very fabric of society" (Collins and Kearns 2001, 401). In this picture, the young people in secure care units can be considered the most "undisciplined and unmanageable" who require intensive intervention locked away for their own and others' safety. While there is evidence to suggest that this stigma is a lived reality, the situation disclosed within secure

care suggests that the task of "simply" keeping children and young people alive proves highly complex. When children are locked up in order to ensure their well-being, many dilemmas, ambiguities, and inconsistencies arise navigating between the poles of security and care. As institutions, secure units go beyond common understandings of care in their everyday practices as well as their purpose-built secure environments. The analysis of security and care in the context of closed institutions for children and young people bridges children's geographies and carceral geography. Both conceptual areas of human-geographical enquiry have important aspects to add to a qualitative and ethnographic study that focuses on the experiences of children and young people regarding their containment and separation from society. Their embodied and emotional experiences of being locked up combine aspects of intensive care and extreme control that develop this extreme manifestation in a unique way.

There are many different aspects that future geographic research in this area could focus on: from more traditional topics of children's geography like the societal pressures on and control of children and young people or better responses to "risky and at-risk" youth to carceral geography and the analysis of the nature of control and confinement on young people and the fundamental question of how much control is needed to keep young people "safe" in secure units and in the community. There are many challenges for future research ranging from ethical and access considerations to making research relevant to policy and practice or giving young people a voice. Considering secure units specifically, more could be learned about young people's agency and resistance, the long-term benefits or drawbacks of secure care, and their long-term role in solving "problems" originating in the community.

When it comes to analyzing outcomes, evidence about the effectiveness of secure accommodation in changing behavior or suggesting that secure care works better than community alternatives is limited (Roesch-Marsh 2014, 201). The most clearly established benefit of secure care is that it can keep young people physically safe in the short term (Roesch-Marsh 2014, 201; Mitchell et al. 2012). The effective control of young people's behavior is seen as crucial by staff and in some ways also by young people in order to keep the unit a safe space for everyone. The sense gained from most young people in the interviews is that it is hard at first, but that they become used to being locked up and used to the routines and behavior control. Spending time in the common room areas shows, however, that they nonetheless constantly work on small forms of resistance and voice their discontent loudly about control of their language and their behavior. While wanting to keep a low profile, this was not always achievable because standing your ground toward the other young people and staff provokes conflicting emotions and responses. A constant and difficult negotiation of the living space with other young people and staff becomes necessary, and feelings quickly run high in a confined communal space. "Being locked up" is seen as both respite and punishment which confirms the ambiguities connected to the concept of safe care.

Most of the daily life in secure care is revolving around ordinary things like being provided with meals, going to school, and spending recreational time, but

there are distinct differences to how this would ordinarily happen "outside": no cutlery count, no "pits" pulled, and no "niner" without "power." By seeking to understand young people's experiences of secure care units between the poles of "security" and "care," a few bricks have been moved to allow a glimpse into the institutional everyday here.

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Geographies of Maternal Obesity, Eugenics, and the Clinical Space

32

Deborah McPhail and Anthony Huynh

Contents

Abstract

In this chapter, the authors draw on the results of qualitative research conducted with 24 women at two sites in Canada to explore the effects of maternal obesity discourse on women considered "overweight" and "obese." In particular, the authors concentrate, here, on the affective and spatial effects of maternal obesity discourse by analyzing the ways in which it is mobilized in and through the bodies of fat women in the clinical space. Through an analysis of semi-structured interviews, the authors show how health practitioners, mainly physicians and nurses, deployed affects of risk that defined, contained, and restrained their patients' bodies, the result of which was at the extreme to prevent fat women from conceiving children. As such, we add to critical literature on maternal

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obesity by demonstrating how affects produced and circulated in the clinical space actively materialize bodies or, conversely, foreclose that materialization. We end by arguing that further research and writing is necessary to explore fat women's experiences of reproductive care, in particular to establish whether or not the kind of practices performed in the clinical spaces outlined here can be considered eugenic.

1   Introduction

At a September 2011 meeting of fertility specialists in Canada, doctors debated whether to deny services to women classified as obese (Abraham 2011b). Some specialists argued for an across-the-board denial of care based on the premise that the use of infertility interventions within the obese population is both unsuccessful and risky, while others argued that limiting care in this manner would be discriminatory (ibid.). Debates about obese women's reproduction – or "maternal obesity" – take place outside doctors' offices as well, frequently appearing in medical and popular texts (Blackwell 2012; Farquhar and Gillett 2006; Krakowiak et al. 2012; Moran et al. 2011; Pasquali et al. 2007; Wang and Zhan 2010). Often, the medical and popular media express concern for the safety of fetuses when obese women are pregnant, stating that risks for the offspring include miscarriage, stillbirth, prematurity, diabetes, spina bifida, autism, and eventual cardiovascular disease (Abraham 2011b; Blackwell 2012; McNaughton 2010; Reynolds et al. 2013; Warin et al. 2012). Even when obese women give birth to healthy babies, doubts continue about their suitability as mothers, with various sources expressing concern that fat women will raise fat children (Abraham 2011a; Barton 2009; Zivkovic et al. 2010). Amidst escalating worries over the health of obese women and their (potential) babies, few have stopped to ask how concerns are manifested by health practitioners in everyday clinical practice or how narratives of obesity and reproduction impact obese women. Fewer still have paused to examine the social effects of determining some women to be "unfit" for reproduction.

In this chapter, the authors draw on the results of qualitative research conducted with 24 women at two sites in Canada to explore the effects of maternal obesity discourse on women considered "overweight" and "obese." In particular, the authors concentrate, here, on the affective and spatial effects of maternal obesity discourse by analyzing the ways in which it is mobilized in and through the bodies of fat women in the clinical space. Through an analysis of semi-structured interviews, the authors show how health practitioners, mainly physicians and nurses, deployed affects of risk that defined, contained, and restrained their patients' bodies. Previous scholars have critiqued the emphasis on risk in medical and popular discussions of maternal obesity, arguing that the obese pregnant body is represented as always already at risk and, perhaps even more so, as risky for the (potential) child (Jette 2006, 2009; Lupton 2013; McNaughton 2010; Nash 2012; Warin et al. 2007, 2012). Some scholars have posited that medical practices encouraging the refusal to facilitate obese women's desires to become pregnant through, for example, providing fertility care can be considered as a form of eugenics (Jette and Rail 2013).

Relatively unasked and unanswered by critical obesity and fat studies scholars, however, are questions regarding the effects/affects of maternal obesity risk discourses for those at whom they are targeted and how these discourses circulate spatially. How exactly are "obese" women's bodies produced as "risky" (potential) mothers – what are the mechanisms through which this risk circulates, not only at the more macro level of medical journals and the popular press but also at the more micro level of the psyches of individual subjects? Further, what are the spatial dynamics of this psychic production of embodied risk? Such questions are of course too large to answer definitively with a sample size of 24. The authors do show, however, that women labeled "obese" by healthcare practitioners not only experienced discrimination in the clinical space but that this discrimination, expressed through an intense metrics of surveillance and containment, was supported by an affective economy of risk that invited participants to feel disgusting, unworthy, and as failures as women and as mothers. More broadly, the chapter adds an important discussion of affect to geographies of health and illness, helping to push discussions beyond naming discourses of risk and exploring how they are *experienced* to thinking about how these discourses are *materialized* (or not) through affective relations that are legitimized and made possible through and in the spaces of healthcare delivery.

Before beginning, the authors wish to clarify our use of the word "obesity." Critical obesity and fat studies scholars generally question and critique the word obesity, arguing that the word itself pathologizes, medicalizes, and stigmatizes fatness. Often, scholars therefore choose to put scare quotes around the word, to indicate its political and contested nature. While the authors completely agree with critical scholars on this point of language, for legibility's sake the authors do not use scare quotes around obesity throughout the chapter.

2   Questioning Maternal Obesity: A Review of the Literature

Over the last two decades, obesity has become a topic of significant concern for national and international public health agencies, health researchers, and the popular press, who have sounded alarm bells about a global obesity epidemic with disastrous health effects, chief among them rising rates of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, mental illness, and some cancers (WHO 2013). In Canada, for example, obesity is considered a serious public health problem both because one in four Canadian adults is said to be obese according to height/weight or body mass index (BMI) data (PHAC 2011) and because obesity and its associated comorbidities are positioned as drains to the coffers of Canada's public healthcare system (Beausoleil and Ward 2010). Indeed, Canada's national public health body, the Public Health Agency of Canada, has calculated that obesity costs Canada 4.6 billion dollars in 2008, an estimate they describe as "conservative" (2011, 2).

Within this flurry of intense concern about increasing obesity and its health effects, as well as its potential to bankrupt entire healthcare systems, a critical scholarship of obesity has evolved that focuses on both adult and childhood obesity (see Evans 2010; Ward 2016). This "critical obesity scholarship" is rooted in a number of disciplines and scholarly perspectives, including geography (cf. Guthman 2011; Longhurst 2009; Lloyd 2014), and boasts scholars from public health and other health disciplines such as kinesiology and dietetics (Campos 2004; Gard and Wright 2005; Gingras 2006; McPhail 2009, 2013; Ward 2016). These scholars make three important arguments. First, many – though not all (see Warin 2014) – argue that the health effects of "excess" fat have been overstated and exaggerated, a claim that is increasingly supported by medical and population health research. For example, work from the Centers for Disease Control shows morbidity and mortality rates for overweight and obese people are better (overweight) and very similar (obese) than those in the so-called "normal" weight category and that the only solidly defininte relationship between weight and ill health can be frond in the most underweight and overweight populations, which in fact represent small proportions of the population (Flegal et al. 2007, 2013; see also Orpana et al. 2010). Links between ill health and obesity are particularly troubled by critical scholars of childhood obesity, who argue that no real link between childhood fatness and future adult illness has been established (see McPhail et al. 2011). Moreover, how, they ask, can we make *any* meaning of childhood obesity rates when children are continuously growing and thus their BMIs are constantly in flux (Ward 2016)?

Second, scholars argue that obesity is not (just) a biological type of embodiment, but a discursive one that has been produced spatially and over time through regimes of power and discipline. Work in this area often concentrates on Foucaultian concepts of biopower and governmentality and argues that current edicts concerning body size are an inflection of neoliberal techniques of power whereby citizens are encouraged to govern themselves and take responsibility for their own bodies and health, lessening the necessity for government spending and

involvement in healthcare (Bell et al. 2011; Lupton 2013; McPhail 2013; Rail and Lafrance 2009; Rich 2010, 2011).

Third, and related, within discourses of obesity, certain "risk populations" are targeted more than others for blame and intervention. Not surprisingly to observers of public health and health promotional campaigns throughout history (see Lupton 1995; Bell et al. 2011), these "risk populations" are groups that are already socially marginalized – indigenous and racialized populations (Fee 2006; Poudrier 2007), working class people and people of lower socioeconomic status (Ernsberger 2009; McPhail et al. 2011), rural people (McPhail et al. 2013), lesbians (McPhail and Bombak forthcoming 2014), women (Saguy 2011), and children (Evans 2010). These groups are most often labeled as "obesity risk groups" with higher rates of obesity and greater risk of its comorbidities. Given that obesity is positioned within neoliberal rationalities as a health "problem" that could be fixed by individuals (by taking up specific diet and exercise regimes), people in most obesity risk groups, already marginalized, are further marginalized by health moralism and obesity blame, as they are imagined as lazy, non-educated, and out-of-control consumers of junk food who cannot understand nor implement "good" health behaviors such as eating from the four food groups.

Children are positioned differently within this discourse of self-responsibilization. While they are regarded as an obesity risk group, it is generally not children who are held responsible for their obesity (Evans et al. 2011), but often their "obesogenic environments" (see Ward, 2016) in schools and at home that are positioned as at fault. In particular, those who are charged with the task of feeding children – namely, mothers – are generally blamed for their children's obesity. As April Herndon (2010) argues, obesity discourse of this nature thus reproduces the much-rehearsed sexism of "mother blame," whereby individual mothers are blamed for a number of social ills (Blum 2007; Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998; Salmon 2011; Singh 2004). Further demonstrating the uniqueness of childhood obesity discourse, even in a climate of intense neoliberalism, childhood obesity and women's supposed incapacities to feed children healthfully elicit action on the part of the (former) welfare state, which includes anti-obesity diet and exercise programming in schools (Colls and Evans 2009), as well as direct state intervention as in cases where fat children in the USA, UK, and Canada have been apprehended from their families based on the grounds that childhood obesity is a type of physical abuse (Boero 2009; Friedman 2012). These cases are particularly troubling in that they tend to involve racialized children and their families and/or families of lower and working classes (ibid.), demonstrating how "the obesity epidemic" has become a technology through and by which marginalized bodies can not only be re-stigmatized but also further regulated and constrained by the state (Herndon 2005; Lupton 2013).

Such conversations about obesity spill into discussions about obese women's reproduction, which has emerged as a topic of increasing concern for both critical and noncritical obesity scholars. On the one hand, as noted above, medical/health researchers and the popular press communicate the dangers of obesity in pregnancy (Abraham 2011b; Blackwell 2012; Pasquali et al. 2007). As a result of these

concerns, health providers in Canada and internationally are encouraged by their professional associations to counsel obese women about the health risks of obesity in pregnancy (cf. ACOG 2013; College of Midwives of Manitoba 2011; CFAS 2012; IOM and NRC 2009; RANZCOG 2013). On the other hand, some scholars consider this concern with obesity to be discriminatory and stigmatizing (Boero 2009; Herndon 2010; McNaughton 2010; Warin et al. 2012). Much like critical obesity scholars generally, writers in this area point to the fallibility and polarity of the science and argue that sexism, not definitive health risk, underpins concern regarding obese women as potential mothers (Harper and Rail 2011, 2012; Jette and Rail 2013). These scholars suggest that worries about obesity in pregnancy are rooted in problematic understandings of obesity as an individual problem, the fault of women who are then characterized not only as "bad" people but, in this case, as "bad mothers." Maternal obesity discourse is thus caught up in the general hyper-surveillance of pregnant women (Longhurst 2001, 2007), rooted in large part in the rhetoric of risk that surrounds the pregnant woman and her ability to successfully give birth to a healthy baby (Longhurst 2007; Ruhl 1999; Salmon 2011; Weir 2006). In maternal obesity concerns, then, two risky embodiments come together: the pregnant woman and the obese woman. Through such a marriage of concerns, the obesity of the (potential) mother is automatically transferred to the fetus, which is itself considered "at risk" for all sorts of ailments, from diabetes to death, for which the pregnant woman is then held responsible (Jette 2006, 2009; Lupton 2013; McNaughton 2010; Nash 2012; Warin et al. 2007, 2012). In addition, and critically, a great deal of concern is also directed at the fetus in that it is imagined as a future adult with the potential to become a "good" or "bad," "healthy" or "unhealthy," thin or fat citizen. Because the fetus of a fat mother is said to be "at risk" for childhood obesity (Abraham 2011b; Blackwell 2012; McNaughton 2010; Warin et al. 2012), it is thus caught up in more generalized affects attached to childhood obesity, whereby, as Bethan Evans (2011) maintains, the potential for "good, healthy" citizenship that a child typically represents is dashed by the specter of fatness. Certainly not our great hope for a healthier future, a fat child instead elicits panic about a dystopian possibility in which obesity has crushed healthcare systems and bankrupted governments. Anti-childhood obesity policy, Evans argues, authored to assuage such fear, elicits a hope that "good science" and health policy will restore the nation's (supposedly lost) virility and vitality.

3 Affects of Fatness: Theoretical Background

While scholars are beginning to trace the discourses of risk that produce the "obese pregnant body," then, less is known about how women labeled obese internalize these discourses, both in terms of how they interpret and put into practice risk discourse in their reproductive lives and how this internalization is materialized in their reproductive embodiments. In order to explore these gaps, the authors employ affect theory to analyze interview data.

Affect theory has become one of the preeminent theories used in recent socio-cultural geography (Davidson and Milligan 2004; Evans 2010; Kwan 2007; Morrison et al. 2013; Thein 2005; Thrift 2004, 2008; also see Pile 2010). While affect, as a substance or embodied material, has not been defined or definitively identified (see Anderson 2010; Pile 2010), scholars are in general agreement that affect relates in some way to emotion. Thus, affect theorists trace the ways that emotions such as happiness, fear, and hope are socially organized through power (Ahmed 2004, 2010a; Evans 2010; Thrift 2008), animating what Ahmed calls an "affective politics" (Ahmed 2004, p. 64). At the same time, affect lies beyond the iterative; it cannot be captured in language (Clough 2010; Crang and Tolia-Kelly 2010; Lorimer 2008; Massumi 2010; McCormack 2003; Thein 2005; Thrift 2008; Tolia-Kelly and Crang 2010; also see Pile 2010). As such, affect should not be *equated* with emotion.

Important to our analysis, "affective politics" is inherently embodied for (at least) three reasons. First, affect is experienced through the body; when we are sad, for example, we experience the physicality of crying. Second, while scholars have not agreed on what affect *is* in the body, some argue that affects are produced through the body's encounter with the material world (Seigworth and Gregg 2010, 2; see also Clough 2010; Ahmed 2004). As Gregg and Seigworth note: "affect is integral to a body's perpetual *becoming* (always becoming otherwise, however subtly, than what it already is), pulled beyond its seeming surface-boundedness by way of its relation to, indeed its composition through, the forces of encounter" (2010, 3). Third, as Ahmed makes clear in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, various affects can serve as a mode of containment for Other/Othered bodies and can thus be adeptly described as "affective *bio*politics" (cf. Ahmed 2010b; Clough 2010). In thinking through how affective biopolitics contain some bodies in space while allowing others to expand, Ahmed's work links to affective geography. As geographers have adeptly demonstrated, affects are spatialized (Davidson and Milligan 2004; Evans 2010; Kwan 2007; Morrison et al. 2013; Pile 2010; Thein 2005; Thrift 2004, 2008), inasmuch as affects are attached to spaces, regulating, containing, and producing embodied subjects in those spaces (Crang and Tolia-Kelly 2010).

Geographer Robyn Longhurst (2010) has argued that affects attached to obesity, such as fear and disgust, help to produce spatialized bodies and bodies as spatialized. She argues that "body size is as much about how we *feel* as it is about the materiality of the physical body" and "may depend on an array of factors such as clothing feelings of well-being, the activity being undertaken, and interactions with people" (p. 200). Importantly, then, the feelings that we have about fatness, produced in relation to the outside world, both people and things, shape embodiments and produce experiences of "being fat." Further, Longhurst argues that embodiments, formed through affects which are, in turn, shaped relationally, are inherently created and recreated through space. The fat body's inability to literally fit into certain spaces – airline seats, change rooms, and theater chairs – helps determine the feelings a fat person might have about her body and, hence, helps to materialize her body, itself.

What follows is a description and analysis of the research McPhail and colleagues carried out with women labeled obese who were attempting to conceive a child or who had given birth as filtered through affect theory. The authors argue that affects such as fear and disgust were not only leveled at participants' bodies but also helped to produce them as risky, in need of management and containment, as unfit vessels for (potential) fetuses, and as "bad mothers." Like Longhurst, the authors show how these affects were formed in relation to the space in which they emerged – the clinical space – thus showing how discourses of maternal obesity are inherently spatialized. The authors end with a discussion that considers whether or not the medical practices concerning maternal obesity described in this chapter can be considered a type of eugenics, in that even as these medical practices *produced* certain types of affective embodiments, they also actively *foreclosed* and *disallowed* another type of body, a fat maternal body, and at times the offspring of that body, to materialize.

4   Reproducing Stigma? Research Methodology

This chapter is based on research conducted by McPhail (with colleagues Pamela Ward and Jill Allison) from 2012 to 2013 in two midsized cities in Canada, East River on the East Coast of the country and Centreville in the central region of the country. These are pseudonyms; for confidentiality purposes the authors cannot provide the real names of or too much detail about the research sites. Called *Reproducing Stigma*? *Obesity and Women's Experiences in Reproductive Healthcare*, the study was intended as a pilot for a larger study that is beginning at this writing. As such, the recruitment targets were small, and in the end the researchers recruited a total of 24 participants. Initially, the researchers hoped to recruit equal numbers of participants in each site, but the bulk of participants (18) were from Centreville. While the researchers can only speculate as to why numbers were so small in East River, the researchers think that this may be the result in large part of resistance encountered while recruiting there. Our requests to advertise in medical spaces were routinely refused by practitioners. Given this resistance on the part of medical practitioners, it may be that their patients did not participate because they feared potential repercussions from their healthcare provider.

Participants were recruited through postering in key venues (such as medical clinics, women's hospitals, and community centers), notices on listservs, and snowball sampling. In this pilot study the researchers wanted to know *whether* women experienced fat phobia in reproductive care. The researchers were therefore careful to recruit for women who felt that their "excess" weight had affected their relationships with care providers – whether these effects were negative or positive was left up to the potential participants to declare. Criterion for participation was that women had attempted to conceive a child or had given birth some time in their lives and that they were considered overweight or obesity by healthcare practitioners, friends and family, and/or themselves. Overweight and obesity was

discerned at each site by the participants, themselves. This is a common technique in critical, qualitative studies of fatness and obesity, where BMI or other measurements of participants are rarely taken. Rather, recognizing the fluidity of bodies and the fact that weight can change over a person's life span, researchers generally allow participants to self-define as having had the experiences of or having been regarded as an obese person (Hopkins 2012; Rice 2007).

McPhail, Ward, and Allison conducted semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 1 h each, during which the researchers asked questions regarding participants' histories in reproductive care, their experiences with reproductive healthcare workers with regard to participants' weight, and whether and how these experiences influenced participants' relationships with and feelings about their bodies. Participants received a $30.00 grocery store gift certificate in recognition of their time. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. Both authors of this chapter read the transcripts for emerging themes and then simultaneously coded according to these themes. Coded transcripts were compared and then reread, out of which emerged the themes for this chapter.

5 Findings

5.1 Fat Phobia in the Clinical Space

For the most part, participants reported fat phobia in their interactions with a variety of healthcare practitioners: general practitioners or family doctors, obstetricians/gynecologists, nurses, and fertility care specialists. A small number of participants, however, reported very good relationships with health providers, though researchers observed in their field notes that these participants were often on the smaller end of the "excess" weight spectrum. At times, participants could clearly identify that they had experienced some kind of discrimination or bias that was due to a practitioner's attitude about and sometimes outright disgust for fat people. Most times, however, fat phobia was more subtle as it was couched in highly legitimate and widely accepted biomedical interpretations of the impact of "excess" fat on a pregnancy or potential pregnancy. This more subtle fat phobia took the form of *medical practice* and included the intense surveillance of participants' weights and, less often, the suspension of or refusal to care for a participant until she lost weight so that a procedure would be more "safe" or "successful." Subtle or not, fat phobia leveled at participants was generally based on patriarchal notions of "good" and "bad" mothering and concomitant concerns regarding the risk that women are imagined to pose to their fetus.

One participant from the Centreville site, Dorothy, provides an example of outright fat phobia that she experienced at the hands of a number of medical practitioners in the birthing room. Dorothy was very clear that she had experienced discrimination based on her weight while explaining to the interviewer her experience of a C-section:

[I remember] all the snide remarks about the fact that I was bigger: "it's hard when you're bigger because there's more flesh to go through" . . .I just thought it was mean, really mean. . . . And [then] the nurse said to me "Well, you're going hold up your belly, so we can tape it." And I went "Sorry?" And she goes, "well, because you have a belly, none of us want to hurt our backs." So, they have you like hold up, right, and then they start taping you, so that, like, your flesh is out of the way. So like, now, I am exhausted; I am hurting; I am scared. They're not letting my husband in. And now it just feels like they're making another attack on my size. And then it came time to move me off of the operating thing, to, like the gurney to go to recovery. And, I heard one of them say, (laugh) "You know, we should have some kind of special machine to move the fat people." That was who almost got punched. . . .[Y]ou're totally frozen. . .so you really can't. . .slide yourself over to another bed. And so they bring in extra people. And. . . they make sure that you know that. Like "Oh, we had to call in some extra people, from somewhere else, to lift you onto the thing." So that same nurse was assigned as my recovery nurse. And she continued through my recovery, [sitting at the side of the bed] pointing out that I should lose weight, and that it's so unfair to the healthcare system to have to be working with people who are overweight, because of the amount of work that they have to do and it's not good for their backs. . .And she sat there, the whole time, talking about, you know, how difficult it was for *her*.

Thus, Dorothy was rightfully angry about her experience at the hospital – "that was the one who almost got punched." Eventually, Dorothy wrote the hospital a letter expressing her dissatisfaction with the nurse who sat by her bed admonishing her weight and, in essence, her failure to uphold the responsibilities good citizenry. The hospital did not respond to her letter by the time of the interview. Dorothy was clear that her experiences relating to her size were unwarranted and inappropriate; she uses words such as "mean" and "attack."

Also in Centreville, Annette noted an instance in which a doctor "grabbed [her] lower stomach" while giving her an internal exam following the birth of her child, stating "that's not the direction we'd like you to be going at this point." Annette clearly identified her experience as one of fat phobia when arguing: "I really feel that that's not really a health thing, in that case."

In East River, Kerry described her experiences with various specialists, including gynecologists and fertility doctors. Stating that she "dreaded" every single appointment with her doctors, Kerry, whose family doctor was suspicious that her failure to conceive was due to PCOS, or polycystic ovarian syndrome, told the story of a first consultation with her gynecologist for her fertility issues:

the specialist basically told me that he didn't think that it was PCOS, that my problem was that I was fat. And that's exactly what the wording [was]. And my husband and I [were shocked] to the point where we're just sitting there. And it was upsetting. . . .I went back to my [regular] doctor the next day. And I was really upset. And she was really upset, too. She told me she was going to write a letter, I don't know if she ever did.

Kerry's story demonstrates the power of language in women's experiences of fat phobia. In Kerry's instance, the word "fat" was extremely "upsetting" to Kerry, her husband, and her regular family doctor – so much so that this family doctor decided to "write a letter," presumably to the provincial regulatory body for physicians,

about the gynecologist's behavior. Kerry's story also illustrates how health practitioners could, but very rarely did, act as an ally to fat women who experienced discrimination. This type of alliance was also evident in the care that Kerry received from a nurse at the fertility clinic to which she was eventually referred:

> Before I even saw the doctor, I got weighed and my height and everything done from the nurse. . . . I'm four foot ten. And she wrote my height as five feet tall. And I said "I'm only four ten." And she said, "no, let's leave it at five. It'll help you."

Kerry went on to explain that recording a greater height allowed the doctor to perceive Kerry's BMI as lower than it actually was. The nurse was therefore hoping to lessen some anticipated discrimination that she believed Kerry would receive from the doctor.

While the instances of fat phobia described thus far were easily identifiable for participants – they were, in Annette's words, "not a health thing" but an instance of a healthcare provider's disgust for fatness – other moments of fat phobia were more subtle in the sense that they were presented to participants as clear-cut medical truisms about the relationship between fat and risk. In these instances, not only was the patient at risk but so, too, was the potential fetus. The fact that an obese pregnancy was "risky" led to its containment and control in the form of the intense surveillance of participants' bodies. This is not a surprise. As Jette and Rail (2013) have shown, weight is closely monitored in *all* pregnant women, a result of the fact that, as Longhurst (2007) and Bordo (1993) have also argued, pregnant women are regarded mainly as "vessels" for fetuses – and rarely trusted vessels, at that (see also Weir 2006). At the same time, critical obesity scholars have shown how the weight and BMI of the nonpregnant obese body are also highly monitored in the clinical space, acting as the primary indicator for a patient's health despite, in many cases, the existence of good health markers such as "normal" blood pressure or blood glucose levels (Murray 2008; Wann 2009). In the case of study participants, many of whom fell under the category of "obese (potentially) pregnant woman," these two hyper-monitored bodies, the pregnant body and the obese body, came together, and the weight management of participants' bodies was incredibly intense.

Many participants described how their weight was framed in terms of restriction or the need to restrict food intake. Cheryl, from Centreville, was encouraged by her obstetrician to *lose* weight while pregnant:

> the first thing [the doctor] said to me was, "You know, you need to lose weight." That was the first thing she said to me. And I was like "Okay. You know, don't you generally end up gaining weight when you're pregnant? I don't know that I can [lose], but I'll try." [laugh]. . . I actually did end up losing about thirty pounds while I was pregnant, because I was throwing up all the time. Cause I couldn't keep anything down.

Cheryl continued that the doctor's advice to lose weight was framed in terms of risk, though Cheryl was not at all clear on what those risks were:

> She did say that the heavier I am the highest risk my pregnancy was. …There was no discussion as to what the risks were, what could happen. It was just "you're high risk. You'll be in a high risk ward to deliver. We need to get your weight down." That's it. Period. The doctor always commented on my weight: "Still not low enough. You gotta keep getting lower."

The experience of being labeled a "high-risk" pregnancy, yet not really knowing why or what the specific risks were because they were not explained by healthcare practitioners, was common among participants. As Lynn from Centreville related:

Lynn: [The obstetrician] did caution not to gain too much weight, and ways that I could gain weight. Like, "Don't drink milk. Don't drink juice." And so every time he had a few more cautions like that. …

I: Did he explain why he didn't want you to gain weight in terms of risks?

L: He's like "Everyone needs to watch that they don't gain weight. But you're fat already." Like, he usually referred to me as that [fat].

I: But he didn't talk about, "the evidence shows this or that…"

P: No, no, he didn't.

It is important to note that Mary, also from Centreville, did not feel that she was surveilled in the same way that other participants described. She communicated that weight was taken up only casually in her appointments: "I'm kind of not bringing [my weight] up to [my doctor], unless she brings it up to me now. Whereas in the first few appointments, I would always bring it up to her." In the main, however, the management of participants' bodies through weight surveillance was extreme, as participants would be weighed at every single appointment and then admonished if they were not falling within established parameters. Many participants described the resultant anxiety and dread that would arise as each appointment approached, particularly in the instance that this type surveillance would lead to a complete denial of care as it did for participants attempting to access specialty care at fertility clinics.

Fertility clinics in both Centreville and East River exercised BMI cutoffs, meaning that patients over a certain BMI coming in for the first time were denied care and told to return in 3 months after having lost a certain amount of weight as determined by the fertility doctor. In Centreville, participants related that doctors would treat them, often begrudgingly, upon returning in 3 months regardless of whether they had not lost the "correct" amount of weight, though pressures to lose weight continued. In East River, however, doctors routinely refused care until a participant had lost a substantial amount of weight.

The reasoning for the deferral and/or refusal of care at fertility clinics was, again, explained to participants in terms of risk. For example, Gerry from Centreville related her story of visiting a fertility clinic for the first time. She saw both an experienced doctor and a resident, both of whom were in the room during the intake appointment:

> [The resident] did my PAP, great. So, that was all fine. . . .So he [the experienced doctor] comes in. He's in a black suit, black tie, white shirt. And I'm still, obviously, no pants on. It's important to the power differential here. He takes on look at me, and starts in on "Okay, we're going to talk about a few things." . . .He's like "well let's get down to the reality here, okay? Gals your size, okay, mortality rates are higher. Baby's mortality rates are higher. Okay? We're talking about more complications. We got high risks of –" blah, blah, blah. And he's like, this and that, and he's tossing it around. And I'm just staring right at him, like, "Wow, this is phenomenal." And then he says "So I go ahead and intervene, help you get pregnant here. Okay? Then you go down to [a major hospital]. You see. . .another doctor – they're not very happy with me. Okay? When they see you, because you've got all these higher risk factors. And then, boom, pulmonary embolism, I've gone and started off a series of events that I now can't retract." And I'm like "Pulmonary embolism, eh?" . . .And then, he's like "Okay? Okay. Gotta mum in shape, right? Gotta get mum in shape. I mean, especially if you're going to be a single mom."

Gerry was then told to return in 3 months 30 lb lighter. In Gerry's story, a number of discourses surrounding fatness and motherhood intersected to create a very pointed experience of fat phobia in the clinical space. Not only was she denied care because she was too fat, but she was told that her weight was particularly problematic given that she was not in a relationship at the time and planning on becoming a "single mom." All the while, Gerry felt vulnerable due to the fact that she was not entirely clothed throughout her appointment, causing Gerry to feel the "power dynamic" between herself and the medical professionals even more intensely.

The outright refusal of care in fertility clinics based on risk was frustrating to many participants, particularly because doctors did not seem to assess any other health factors or possible reasons for fertility issues. Participants walked in and, before any testing was even considered, were told they were too fat and needed to work on their weight prior to any treatment. This was thrown into stark relief by Marjorie, an East River participant, who had survived cervical cancer some years prior to her first visit to the fertility clinic. As a result of the surgeries related to her cancer, Marjorie had severe scarring, called vaginal stenosis, that caused irregular periods. Despite her diagnosis of vaginal stenosis, her fertility doctor immediately assumed that Marjorie's fertility issues were a result of "excess" weight:

> The first, first thing was weight. And there was no conversation of vaginal stenosis, which was a big issue for me to get pregnant. I brought it up and it was like, just shut down, it was the weight. And I had said "But I had gotten pregnant twice." And it was back to the weight. . . . So they had said "We can't do anything for you until you lose thirty pounds. You've got till September."

Marjorie's fertility doctor also explained her need to lose weight in terms of risk, including an increased chance of miscarriage, gestational diabetes, and high blood pressure, despite the fact that Marjorie consistently experienced low blood pressure and good blood sugar levels in all medical checkups.

Thus, many participants experienced fat phobia in the clinical space that was either obvious and bluntly discriminatory or more subtly couched in the language of

medical truth and health risk. The question for the authors is how these instances of fat phobia, and in particular those communicated through the discourse of risk, were felt and embodied by participants. We thus now turn to exploring the affects of discrimination in the relationship between patient and health practitioner, looking in particular at the ways in which space helped produce the affects we describe.

5.2   Affective "Hauntings"

As Samantha Murray eloquently discusses in the *Fat Female Body* (2008), the fat woman's body in the clinical space is particularly vulnerable. Murray argues that this vulnerability is made possible through Cartesian dualism, in which the fat woman is rendered an object for the rational medical mind to decipher, poke, prod, contain, and define. This Cartesian clinical relationship is based on a symbolic economy in which the woman and the fat body are both positioned as Cartesian body, the fat woman, then, rendered as *hyper* body (Braziel 2001; Lupton 2013). This Cartesian-based vulnerability described by Murray was clearly felt by participants; recall how Gerry felt the power dynamic with doctors was made even more stark by the fact that she had "no pants on" during her appointment. The clinical space thus provides an important context for the affects communicated by healthcare practitioners, as these affects must be negotiated within a profound, power-infused relationship between an all-knowing practitioner, who is often the gatekeeper to a particular health outcome such as a "good" birth experience or successfully conceiving a child and a "diseased" patient.

In general, healthcare practitioners communicated a number of affects to participants, and participants could feel that their practitioners thought of their bodies as disgusting, as is evident in Annette's story, above, where her doctor grabbed her stomach flesh, telling her how "this" was something "we didn't want." Similar sentiments were expressed by Cheryl, another Centreville participant. When the interviewer asked about how she felt she was treated by her obstetrician in relation to her weight, Cheryl answered: "[S]he wouldn't look me in the eye, the entire time I went to her. She wouldn't. She talked down to me. She was just, I found her very degrading." Cheryl then communicated her health practitioners' disgust for her body:

> I had my IUD in for six years. It's supposed to be in for five years max. I had it in for six years, because I couldn't find someone willing to do a PAP smear on me. [My gynaecologist and family doctor] didn't want to do a PAP smear on me because I'm overweight. They don't like, they don't want to, I guess, they don't want to see that. (laugh)

Gerry's family doctor also refused to provide Pap's or breast exams, which she believed was due to his contempt for her body.

More specifically, participants also experienced the affects of risk including an overwhelming judgment from healthcare practitioners and a sense that participants

were "bad" candidates for motherhood and should not be reproducing. These affects were communicated most obviously in the fertility clinic, where participants were turned away until they lost weight, thus effectively proving their worth as mothers. As Gerry told the interviewer: "The resident says to me, 'So now if you can prove to us that you can lose thirty pounds in the next 3 months, then we can proceed with other treatment.' She used the word prove."

Affectively, as a result of this judgment, participants felt that they were worthless and not "good enough" to have children, and, at times, they felt like failures. In Cheryl's words: "I felt worthless because [the obstetrician] treated me like I was worthless." Pat, an East River participant, poignantly described how she felt after her interactions with a fertility specialist:

> I would leave there feeling like I've somehow failed at something, like as if something is not good enough. And you already feel that way to the nth degree because as a woman, the one thing you should be able to do is have children.

Thus, Pat's feelings of failure were tied up in gendered dictates about the "natural role" of women as mothers.

Another East River participant, Shelley, also described the affective consequences of healthcare practitioners' judgment of their bodies:

> I had had an IUD placed. And I wanted to have it out, and she refused. She said that at my weight, it would be a disaster if I got pregnant. . . . so it was probably a year of me going and saying "I really want to take this out." And, her just saying "Absolutely not." I have a really assertive friend and she said "You know what? I don't understand. Your health is good. She shouldn't be able to say no." . . . So I called Planned Parenthood one day. I went there, to get it out. And I was crying. I went into that appointment thinking and I was going to have another doctor tell me that I shouldn't do it and I must be crazy. . . . And she realized I was crying and she said "You know, are you okay?" And I said "Well, you know, I'm just, I want to have a baby." And I was lying down, and I figured "Maybe she can't tell that I'm four hundred pounds." And she came up by me, and she said "Of course you want to have a baby. What's wrong?" And I said "Well, my doctor wouldn't take this out." She said "Okay. What am I missing?" I said "What do you mean?" She said "Well, what's your health, like, high blood pressure?" I said "No." "How's your blood sugar?" I said "Pristine." . . . And she said "Do you smoke?" I said "No." And she was like, "Of course, you've got every right in the world to want this." And she was rubbing my arm and that made me cry harder. And you know, we bonded and you know, she took it out.

Thus, Shelley felt profound sadness and trauma at being told she could not become a mother and then extreme relief at encountering a doctor who would "allow" her to have children by removing her birth control device.

The affects that circulated within the clinical space did not stay there. Bodies were defined and redefined in the clinical space through affects of disgust often leveled at fat bodies (Lupton 2013) and also specifically through the affects of risk associated with maternal obesity. These bodies then reemerged from the clinical space as something else – something diseased, something abject, something Other, something that could definitively *not* be a good mother.

Centreville participant Samantha, for instance, related her birth story, in which the use of the word "obese" on the part of one of the doctors completely colored an already traumatic experience:

> I could even hear, on the foetal monitor, that things didn't sound the same as they did before. And all of a sudden, people started rushing around me. . . So they were wheeling me off to high risk. And then I heard them say "We're cutting her open right away. We're cutting her open right away. There's no heartbeat." And I saw my husband's face just go grey. And I was like "What? Is something going on? What?". . . And they didn't even acknowledge my existence. [And I went in for an emergency C-section] . . .I'll never forget that surgeon's name. . .I was so upset [be]cause it had been like a whole day of really emotional stuff. And she's standing there, with her residents, and just keeps referring to me as "the obese patient". . .I've never been called obese before. . .And whether I think it in my own head, I mean, that's one thing. But to be referred to in just this cold, sterile, clinical environment, as an "it" . . . just served as a real kind of confirmation and smack in the face. . . [A]nd to have my new born hear them referring to me that way too, was like, I could have died. I just wanted to die. . . .Tears were just streaming. Here I am, the most vulnerable I could ever be in my life: half, three quarters frozen, completely exposed [trails off]. . . .

Samantha, like other participants, described the potent vulnerability of the clinical space, in which her body is "exposed" and laid bare, both physically and emotionally, and described as an "it," as something subhuman and abject. Samantha continued her story, explaining how the words "the obese patient" continued to shape her birth experience immediately after the C-section and beyond:

> I became really angry in the recovery room actually, because she [the surgeon] was sitting right next to me then, writing up her notes. And I was going to say something, but you know, this is the time when I want to bond with him. We're trying to get him to breastfeed and all I can think about: "You're the obese patient. You're the obese patient. You're the obese patient." That's all I heard. . . . It's just haunted me, ever since. And maybe it's just me and I just can't let go of it. But. . .the care that I'd had to that point was really good and respectful. And all it took was that one moment, to have that sort of all just collapse.

Samantha was thus clearly haunted by her birthing experience, through which her body was redefined and newly minted as "obese," a highly medicalized term that communicates disease, abject difference, and Otherness. Samantha's story also illustrates a further point, that the affective relationship between health practitioner and patient could give rise to other, unexpected affects of resistance in participants. In Samantha's case, she felt intense anger at her surgeon, which she could not express because of the affective economy of the recovery room and the new maternal "bond" Samantha was attempting to forge with her baby.

Similar anger was felt by other participants. This anger was borne from the affective dissonance much like that described by Ahmed (2013) between what feelings are promised and what feelings are in fact experienced. In the participants' case, dissonance existed between what was supposed to happen affectively according to dominant patriarchal discourses of motherhood and what, because of their "abnormal" bodies, actually happened. For example, Lorraine from Centreville had been attempting to conceive a child with the help of a fertility

specialist for over a year. She felt like a "burden" to her doctor, who refused to give her certain tests to explore fertility issues other than her weight, despite the fact that Lorraine had survived thyroid cancer years previously. Lorraine expressed her frustration at her experiences in terms of affective dissonance:

> I've been helping raise children since I was eight years old. Like, this is my dream. This is absolutely my dream. My stress relief is calling a friend and saying "Do you want me to take your kid for a little bit?" This is, if I wasn't doing my job and I could earn a sustainable wage as an early childhood educator, that's probably what I'd be doing. It's just very difficult to battle really hard for this when it should come so easy.

Lorraine's statement that motherhood "should come so easy" is in part a reproduction of gendered discourses about the "nature" of women's bodies and the idea that women are "made" to bear children, but it can also be read as a type of resistance to these discourses – Lorraine is beginning to realize that such "ease" is socially mediated and is not as accessible to women who are Othered.

Similar affective dissonance was echoed by Dorothy, who related her experience of recovering from a C-section:

> [The recovery nurse said]: "You know, you gotta take care of this [C-section] wound. And you know, when you're overweight, you're going to get an infection almost a hundred percent of the time. . . . and that's because you need to lift up your belly. And you need to clean underneath". . . and blah, blah, blah. And it's like, this is supposed to be the happiest time in my life. . .and you are ruining it for me.

This statement, that birth and pregnancy was supposed to be "the happiest time" in a woman's life and was then "ruined" by healthcare providers was made, quite bitterly, by a few participants. While this statement is obviously steeped, again, in gendered ideals of motherhood, it is also an example of what Gregg and Seigworth (2010) call the "blooming" of unexpected affects in which we might find possibility for new ways of thinking about and resisting the gendered collapse of women with their reproductive bodies. For if the "promise of happiness," to use Ahmed's words (2010), that motherhood is to provide cannot be experienced by all women, might it be that this "promise" is based on something that was never there to begin with?

6 Discussion and Conclusion

Evident within participants' stories of fat phobia in the clinical space is an affective spatial economy through which participants were invited to not only feel unhealthy and disgusting because of their "excess" fat but also to feel as if they were unworthy, unfit (potential) mothers. This affective geography grounded medical practices such as the hyper-monitoring of weight and the suspension or refusal of care. Importantly, these affects were produced through the power-infused relationship between doctor and patient largely made possible through the spatial context of the clinic – a space in which, as Murray (2008) describes, the fat body is splayed out

for the practitioner to see, hanging over the examination table, vulnerable and at the mercy of the medical gaze that considers it diseased. These practices and spatial relations produced certain types of embodiments and feelings that "haunted" participants outside the clinical space, as well.

While the affective geographies the authors described, here, produced and reproduced particular embodiments for women – such as "the obese patient" – they also foreclosed others. Almost every single participant related that they left the clinic negotiating with the feeling, communicated by healthcare practitioners, that one could not be both a "good mother" and a "fat woman." The embodied subjectivity of "good fat mother" is an impossibility in the clinical space. This impossibility was taken to the extreme in some cases to the degree that the embodiment of *mother*, never mind *good mother*, was foreclosed. Kerry, for example, decided to cease trying to have children because of how she was treated by fertility doctors. Cheryl was initially offered an abortion by her healthcare provider, an offer which, Cheryl believed, was at least in part because of her size. In addition, recall that both Cheryl's and Pat's healthcare practitioners refused to remove birth control devices, in Pat's case explicitly due to the fact that her doctor did not want her to reproduce "at her size."

The question for the authors, then, is whether these foreclosures are a type of eugenics. "Eugenics" includes a wide variety of discourses and techniques, though Rose (2007) argues that eugenics can be broadly described as the containment, regulation, and prevention of the reproduction of traits and populations imagined as "inferior, defective, or diseased" (54). The potential obesity of the child, and thus reproduction of that characteristic, was not necessarily named by practitioners referred to in our study, though, as noted previously, childhood obesity is named in the literature as one of the potential risks of maternal obesity (Abraham 2011a; Barton 2009; Zivkovic et al. 2010). However, within this study of women of a certain typology or characteristic regarded as "inferior, defective, and diseased" (overweight and obesity) were certainly and systematically denied types of care that would lead to conception. Other women who did conceive children were made to feel unworthy and "bad" for having done so. Additionally, medical practices surrounding maternal obesity that the authors have described, here, do seem to fit the definitions of so-called "hard" and "soft" eugenics. Though a crude and arguably false distinction, "hard" practices of eugenics refer to such things as forced sterilization and forced birth control, such as the refusal to remove IUDs in the experiences of two participants in this study. "Soft" practices, meanwhile, refer to discourses and practices that shape women's reproductive "choices," such as ideologies of "good" and "bad" mothering (Paul and Moore 2010), much like the affects of risk into which almost all participants in this study were interpolated.

Rose (2007) cautions against theorists labeling contemporary biopolitics of reproduction as eugenics, given that eugenics historically took place with a specific nationalist project of racial improvement in mind. Health practitioners discussed by participants were never cited as wanting to "improve" the "stock" of the nation. Medical practices relating to maternal obesity were carried out in the name of the "health" of the woman or the fetus. On the other hand, fighting obesity is in fact

contextualized within the neoliberal agenda of creating "good citizens" who take responsibility for their own health which is, in turn, a racialized project of defining who does and does not belong in the nation. April Herndon (2005), for instance, has shown how obesity discourse has become a way of redefining America as a white space, and since Western obesity is attached to bodies of color and indigenous people who are positioned as "risk populations" within obesity discourse, then discourses about "getting rid" of obesity are also and more symbolically about expelling the racialized Other from the white nation state (see also McPhail 2009, for a similar argument in the Canadian context).

Given that the results discussed in this chapter are gleaned from a pilot study with a relatively small sample size, the authors cannot definitively answer questions about whether the types of practices described by the participants are systematically occurring in all medical spaces across Canada. This study does, however, help to elucidate the affective assemblages that materialize some types of bodies while foreclosing others within the clinical space. While the authors perhaps cannot state with certainty that the current medical approach to all fat women attempting to conceive or birth children is eugenic, the authors can say that the medical practices described by participants were at the very least hurtful and insensitive, haunting their existence within and relationship to their fat embodiments.

This chapter thus represents a beginning or an opening up of what the authors hope will become a fruitful line of inquiry that is not only theoretically intriguing but also politically essential. For if in fact current approaches in healthcare to maternal obesity can be characterized as eugenics, then the questions the authors begin to explore here are not only of interest to critical obesity scholars but also to scholars of childhood and childhood geography, as these questions get to the heart, to draw on Judith Butler (1993), of how spatialized affects about the maternal body actively produce what bodies – what *children* – "come to matter."

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Alternative Childhood Obesity Treatment in Age of Obesity Panic

33

Pamela Ward

Contents

Abstract

Concerns related to childhood obesity have increased dramatically in recent years with calls for immediate action through prevention and treatment efforts. While the rates of childhood obesity have increased globally, critical obesity scholars have raised concerns over the manner in which the notion of obesity has been constructed, suggesting that weight alone is a poor predictor of health and the conflation of weight and health may be resulting in growing panic over body size. Furthermore, the work of critical geographers has illustrated how the concept of "obesogenic" environments may also be implicated in reinforcing the weight-focused paradigm and in stigmatizing those who present in nonnormative bodies. This chapter presents an overview of a feminist poststructural study conducted within a childhood obesity treatment program that challenged dominant notions of obesity and emphasized acceptance of natural body sizes. The chapter begins with a discussion of literature that implicates obesity panic in the growing rates of fat stigma and questions the

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notion of obesogenic environment as a solution to the obesity "problem." It also provides examples of narratives elicited from program coordinators and child participants that explicate how the program was designed, how the children reacted to the alternative approach, and how the program space became a safe haven where the children could define themselves as "healthy" subjects.

1   Introduction

The so-called war on obesity is still raging in Canada and other countries around the world. This "battle" is being waged on the heels of research studies and government reports that emphasize the growing rates of obesity, constructing obesity as a modern-day crisis. In these reports, obesity has been linked to numerous health concerns including hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and even cancer (Park et al. 2012; Reilly and Kelly 2010). The research, while replete with discussions about how obesity is threatening the health of nations, also focuses on the economic burden obese people place on overwhelmed health-care systems (Grieve et al. 2013). More recently, geographers have begun to examine the relationship between health, body size, and the so-called "obesogenic" environment (Evans et al. 2012). While this approach attempts to shift the focus of blame from the individual to broader environmental factors, many critical geographers contend that it continues to situate obesity as a key threat to the health of the population. This approach constructs obesity in a mechanistic way as a matter of altered energy balance suggesting that weight in excess of the "ideal" results from poor lifestyle habits that are framed by people's surroundings (Colls and Evans 2013; Guthman 2012). This focus on (re)shaping the environment to promote healthy lifestyles, it is argued, may in fact be detrimental and may result in further stigmatization of fat (Evans and Colls 2009).

As a consequence of the escalating concerns related to childhood obesity in particular, this framework has resulted in efforts to not only reduce the weights of those who have fallen "victim" to a fat-producing "obesogenic" environment but to work preemptively to reduce the weights of children who are the future adults (Evans 2010). Such an approach therefore supports prevention and treatment programs with a focus on developing environments that promote behavioral or lifestyle change. Interestingly, while there is little evidence to support the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs, even within an environmental approach, the focus on weight loss as a solution to the obesity "problem" remains the dominant framework (Brownell 2010). While the built environment is critiqued for setting up the factors that contribute to weight gain, the onus remains on individuals who interact with these environments in "responsible" or "irresponsible" ways (Guthman and DuPuis 2006). Given that excess weight is most often associated

with lack of personal fortitude in neoliberal societies that emphasize individual responsibility (Gard and Wright 2005; Jutel 2009), those who do not fit the "healthy" body type continue to be viewed as lazy and in need of treatment (Evans 2009). Critical obesity scholars contend that this approach to obesity fails to consider the lived experiences of people who do not fit the normative body type (Beausoleil 2009; Dworkin and Wachs 2009). This is of particular concern for larger children, as thin ideal messages have infiltrated not only the school system but also the broader spaces children occupy. Given that negative perceptions of fat are also pervasive in the health-care setting (Puhl and Heuer 2009), it is vital that researchers explore how individuals who are referred for treatment negotiate these spaces and how health professionals construct and utilize particular discourses of health in their program development and implementation. While there is a growing body of literature that explores children's constructions of health, much of this literature is situated within the school environment (Burrows 2010). Moreover, research in the health-care setting tends to focus on issues of weight bias (Brownell 2010) without critically examining medical constructions of health and the body. Literature that considers children's and health professionals' embodied experiences within the obesity treatment space is extremely limited.

This chapter provides an examination of an alternative childhood obesity treatment program in a children's hospital in eastern Canada. The program, unlike traditional weight loss programs, focused on the promotion of positive self-esteem and not weight loss while maintaining that health can be experienced in different sized bodies. The chapter explores the coordinators' beliefs about obesity, their rationale for the program they developed, and their perceptions of how the children's constructions of health intersected with alternative messages that were inconsistent with dominant messages. The children's voices are also presented through narratives that illustrate how they negotiated the program space and how they took up alternative discourses in their struggles toward achieving positive subjectivities. The narratives reveal how they initially envisioned the program and how it became a safe space that allowed them to explore new constructions of health. While the critical geography literature has been pivotal in opening up discussions related to relationships between obesity and peoples' environments, this chapter broadens this discussion to consider the impact of treatment spaces on those defined as obese, as well as the manner in which these spaces are constructed by health professionals who have the power to influence how obesity is conceptualized and addressed in the health-care setting.

2   Obesity as a Contemporary Construct

As previously noted, obesity has been constructed as a modern-day scourge, an epidemic that threatens not only our present populations but also future generations (Evans 2010). Weight over the "ideal" had been consistently linked with disease (Park et al. 2012; Reilly and Kelly 2010), while the potential for shortened life spans is regularly presented in the literature (Saguy and Ameling 2008). Given that

children are viewed to be adults of the future, particular emphasis has been placed on the increased rates of childhood obesity with dire warnings about the future health of these adults to be (Evans 2010). Interestingly, while there has been little significant change in the rates of obesity in many regions (Rokholm et al. 2010), researchers continue to discuss the "growing" obesity rates in an alarmist fashion, calling for immediate action (Boero 2012). Such calls for action have led to the development of policies and programs designed to prevent and treat childhood obesity.

As previously noted, there has been growing attention within the field of geography and beyond to the role of built environment in the production and growth of obesity. Obesity, it is argued, is the product of a fat-producing or "obesogenic" environment that promotes sedentary lifestyles and poor dietary habits resulting in a generalized disruption in energy balance (Swinburn et al. 1999). Research that uses this approach has been critiqued however for its continued reliance on the thesis of energy balance that is grounded in individual behavior. As stated by Guthman (2012),

> With their emphasis on environmental features that mediate eating and exercise activities, these explorations fundamentally rest on behavioral models of obesogenesis. As such, they tend to black-box the biological body as the site where excess calories are putatively metabolized into fat and made unhealthy. (p. 951)

Hence, the solutions to obesity, it is argued, lie in developing environments that promote movement and active living while supporting diets that are less energy dense (Majnik et al. 2014). While this approach to the so-called obesity epidemic is considered by many as key to improving the health of the population, critical geographers have raised concerns, suggesting that the concept of "obesogenic" environment is short sighted and has potential for harm (Evans et al. 2012). Given that weight alone is not predictive of disease and mortality, and that one can be obese and experience a normal metabolism (Bacon 2010; Evans and Colls 2009; Gard and Wright 2005; Padwal et al. 2011), the notion of "obesogenic" is problematic in that it continues to conflate weight with health. It also neglects contributing factors that do not fit the energy balance theory and fails to consider how people interact with their environments in complex ways (Guthman 2012). Even Egger and Dixon (2009), who were forerunners in the discussions of the "obesogenic" environment, have begun to question their own previously held assumptions. They now contend that it may not be obesity (per se) that increases one's health risks but rather an environment that promotes inflammatory processes. They state, "not all fatness indicates disease risk and not all leanness indicates lack of risk" (p. 239). Given that obesity in healthist neoliberal societies is consistently tied to a lack of personal responsibility and fat people are often characterized as lazy and unattractive (Rich and Evans 2005; Shea and Beausoleil 2012), the "obesogenic" model continues to promote fat panic and reinforce the thin ideal. In this context people remain preoccupied with the body and fearful of fat (Dworkin and Wachs 2009. Those who are considered outside of the ideal weight continue to

be held responsible for the health failings of nations and considered unworthy citizens who are symbols of society's moral decline (Gard and Wright 2005; Hopkins 2012; Jutel 2009). Some authors have argued that the conceptualization of obesity as a threat to the population has provided governments with the power to govern bodies. Evans and Colls (2009), for example, contend that the body mass index (BMI), a measure based on a person's weight and height, is a biopolitical tool that functions to simultaneously monitor the population and individuals, defining what constitutes normal. Hence, BMI is utilized as a springboard from which the state can provide instruction on how to achieve "normal" or "ideal" body weight.

The continued construction of obesity as a killer, as evidenced by the American Medical Association's (2013) decision to define obesity as "disease," results in ongoing calls for treatment of those with the so-called condition. Yet, while the literature is replete with examples of research on obesity treatment, there has been very limited evidence to suggest it is effective (Sung-Chan et al. 2013). Despite the lack of evidence, practitioners in the midst of a moral panic over obesity continue to utilize a weight loss approach. As stated by ten Have et al. (2010),

> The view that "we have to do something now. Doing nothing is not an option" may blind us to the fact that doing something where we have very little evidence that it works is, apart from in a political sense, unlikely to be much better than doing nothing. And we also have to remember that doing something without sufficient evidence may later be proved to be a bad idea. (p. 32)

It has also been suggested that the rush to "do something," without specific attention to the complex nature of obesity and the lived experiences of those considered obese, may enhance the potential for harm (Graham and Edwards 2013; O'Dea 2005; Rich and Evans 2005). While preoccupation with weight that is evident in school and social environments exerts an obvious impact on children's view of fat (Larkin and Rice 2005), a number of authors have noted that obese children may be even more susceptible than children of so-called normal weight. For example, studies have found that obese children are more likely to suffer from lower quality of life as well as low self-esteem, low self-confidence, loneliness, and higher risk for body dissatisfaction, disordered eating, eating disorders, and suicide (Franklin et al. 2006; Lin et al. 2013). A number of studies have also found that obese children are regularly faced with discrimination and peer victimization (Larkin and Rice 2005; Puhl and King 2013). Obesity stigma has also been noted as a concern in the health fields where health professionals often display negative attitudes toward obese people viewing them as lazy and noncompliant (Puhl and Heuer 2009).

Along with research related to obesity stigma, there is a growing body of critical obesity research that challenges the so-called truths about obesity. Drawing on poststructural theory, these researchers view truth not as something to be revealed but rather something that is produced through language or "discourse" (Rail 2009; Wright 2009). In keeping with the work of philosopher Michel Foucault, discourse is seen to represent not only the language that people use but also the broader text

and symbols that shape the way people make meaning of the world. Foucault (1972) defines discourse as "the practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). It is premised on the notion that some discourses are more powerful than others. More powerful (hegemonic) discourses are influential because people are exposed to them, schooled, and trained in them. Hence, they become the framework from which daily experiences or lived "truths" are identified. Poststructural research examines how such discursive truths are formed and reproduced and how people take up and resist certain discourses in their daily lives. Discourses are considered to be fluid and can be resisted and shifted depending upon the power relations at play at a given time (Harper and Rail 2011).

3   A Feminist Poststructural Design

Following a feminist poststructural design, the researcher was interested in how the program coordinators employed resistive health messages in the program and how they talked about obesity. Given the power of dominant discourse, it was also important to consider how the children "took up" dominant discourses of health and the body and how they utilized the program space to adopt alternative health perspectives that challenge existing conceptualizations. Also of interest were the dynamics that arise out of this particular social space given the children were enrolled out of concern for their weight. The study was conducted within an 11-week obesity treatment program that had adopted an alternative approach. Ethical approval was granted from the local university and hospital-based ethics committees. Upon orientation, the coordinators (a physician and child psychologist) informed the children that weight loss was not a goal of the program. Through the program activities, they critiqued dominant beliefs about weight and health while promoting an acceptance of natural sizes. The children were involved in self-esteem building activities as well as enjoyable physical activities in a nonjudgmental environment. They were also encouraged to challenge dominant beliefs through media literacy, art, and ongoing open discussions. Eleven children were enrolled in the program at the time of the study. All consented to participate in the research. The following children (who chose their own pseudonyms) are highlighted within this chapter: Jenny (11-year-old girl), Billy (13-year-old boy), Pete (11-year-old boy), Jordan (12-year-old girl), Nicholas (11-year-old boy), Joel (16-year-old boy), and Adam (11-year-old boy).

In keeping with a feminist approach to research, multiple methods were utilized in the data collection process. Both the children and coordinators were interviewed. As well, two focus groups were held with the children. There was ongoing observation and participation on the part of the researcher who took detailed field notes. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Data was analyzed using poststructural discourse analysis (Rail 2009; Weedon 1997) to explicate how the concept of obesity was constructed, perpetuated, and challenged by those involved. This analysis was conducted on two levels. First, each transcript was read and reread for similar text fragments. General themes related to constructions of health, the body,

and perceptions of the program were then generated. The second level of analysis involved comparing the previously generated themes with dominant discourses of health and the body. The researcher was interested not only in how the discourse utilized was consistent with dominant discourses but also resistive moments in which such discourses were challenged and alternative discourses adopted.

4   Situating the Program: Shifting Focus

As previously noted, the treatment program, while functioning within the dominant health paradigm that produces obesity as a major threat to health, adopted an alternative perspective that questions the effectiveness of weight loss as the solution to the obesity epidemic. In keeping with a growing body of research, the coordinators suggested that the moral undertones inherent in obesity discourse may have a dire impact on the children's growing sense of self (Rail 2009; Wright 2009). While this study was conducted from a perspective that is critical of dominant health messages that endorse a larger governmental framework, the intention was not to critique the program itself but to provide an examination of how the messaging was designed, delivered, and negotiated. The following excerpts explicate how the coordinators conceptualize the program:

Coordinator #1 [psychologist] I think primarily though, the history of the program, and it really is, was born as an obesity program – so the issue is weight. That's not the take we take on it, that's not the way we look at it, but that is the identifying issue. The message should not be different for people who have the weight on than it is for people who struggle with an eating disorder, because otherwise, I think you will actually produce eating disorders, or vice versa. So we had to have the same message, that was the vitality message, it still is – we haven't changed the message, it's the foundation of the philosophy of the program...The third pillar is to feel good about yourself and there was very few, if any, programs that actually included that within this field. . . and if you're measuring weight loss as a measure of success of a program then they're all failing.. . .I think [the physician] is probably one of the biggest proponents of that – she's very clear that that's not the goal, and she's very committed to educating people about that and to make sure that there's not prejudice – that we're not increasing prejudice, and that we're not increasing body image issues, or damaging kids in any way.

The points raised by coordinator #1 were reiterated by coordinator #2:

Coordinator #2 [physician] The kids always come first, so our number one priority is that helping them to become as healthy as they can and feel good about themselves. And if, at the end, they are feeling better, they're happier – for lack of a better word. . .regardless of whether they've lost weight, most of the time they eat fairly well, and if they are doing activities and enjoy it, then I think we've done a good job.

The coordinators emphasize that while weight is the reason for referral, once the children become participants in the program, the focus shifts from weight to health. Coordinator #1 highlights the Vitality message. This message was introduced by Health Canada in 1990 with a shift in emphasis from weight loss to healthy living. "Rather than focusing on weight loss, VITALITY aims to enhance Canadians' physical, psychological, and social well-being by encouraging them to enjoy eating well, being active and feeling good themselves" (Health Canada 2000, p. 7). While this message has been criticized for being complicit in endorsing self-surveillance and individual responsibility (Beausoleil 2009), the coordinators note that they place much emphasis on the third pillar, the promotion of feeling good about oneself, as coordinator #2 states "so our number one priority is that: *helping them to become as healthy as they can and feel good about themselves*." The focus, they suggest, acknowledges the complexity of health. As coordinator #2 states:

> So there are certain things that I think are good for people to know. So one is... about the complexity of body sizes, and it's not about willpower and things like that...there's a lot more technology now, for example, or maybe we're moving less as a population...and look at the strong influence genetics has on it and all those sort of things. It's not all about individual control.

The view of the coordinators is consistent with the work of Neumark-Sztainer et al. (2007) who suggest that promoting health rather than weight loss may enhance the health of youth today. Like Neumark-Sztainer et al., the coordinators support the contention that eating disorders, disordered eating, and obesity exist within the same realm and hence can be addressed in a unified approach. As coordinator #1 states: "The message should not be different for people who have the weight on than it is for people who struggle with an eating disorder." The panic around obesity, it is argued, produces a disordered eating mentality that glorifies thinness and promotes the use of unhealthy diets (Campos et al. 2006; Rich and Evans 2005). Hence, if the focus shifts from the need for a thin body to health in many sizes, improvements may be seen in the rates of body dissatisfaction, unhealthy dieting, obesity, and eating disorders (Bacon 2010; Gaesser 2002).

5 The Children's Expectations

The coordinators state that the children are often surprised when informed that the focus of the program is not weight loss. The expectation is that they will be measured, weighed, and placed on restrictive diets. This is illustrated in the following exchange when asked about the children's first reaction to the program.

Coordinator #2
I think they're very surprised, actually... They're expecting to come and be weighed every week and be given a specific diet to follow, or ... this is your exercise regime, or something like that. And I think too, that they're expecting

...to be in an atmosphere more of blame type of thing, where that it's all about them 'you're not doing this, you're not doing this sort of thing . . .

Researcher

Where do you think that comes from?

Coordinator #2

I think it comes from society... when people talk about health, and especially body size . . . you know almost everything you read is all individually based. It's rare to talk about how society has changed things. It's all about this person's not eating well, and how can they do that?

The coordinator illustrates how obesity discourse engenders the healthiest views when she states, "you know almost everything you read is all individually based." Such an approach "promotes an individualistic conception of health, a view that health can be sustained and illness prevented through sheer effort of will and determination of individuals" (Kirk and Colquhoun 1989, p. 419). The children, she suggests, expect the program to promote the messages that weight is indicative of health and is the sole responsibility of the individual. It is intriguing that she also suggests that the children expect to be introduced to an environment of blame and ridicule. This is consistent with critical obesity literature that states obese people are regularly ridiculed for being lazy, self- indulgent, and self-destructive in conducting lifestyles that are not conducive to health (Hopkins 2012; Tischner and Malson 2011).

The children's description of their expectations mirrored the words of coordinator #2. Drawing on obesity discourse, they assumed the program would focus on weight loss. They also voiced the expectation that they offer themselves up to specific forms of monitoring. For example, Nicholas, Adam, and Jordan had the following responses when asked about their expectations of the program:

Adam: going into the program...I thought it would be Weight Watchers or something like that; you had to weigh every day or something. I thought it was going to be like a diet plan too.

Nicholas: I thought it was going to be like one of those programs- like, oh look at you!...you're fat! Let's weigh you now on a scale...I thought they were inspecting our bodies over like...a 12 month period... an it's like you have to go on diets and crap like that.

Jordan: I expected it to be more- okay so what's your waist size today? How much do you weigh today?

This notion of inspection reflects the dominant paradigm. Media and health promotion strategies consistently emphasize the importance of monitoring weight and BMI in an effort to remain within the recommended standards (Evans and Colls 2009; Gard and Wright 2005; Gerbensky-Kerber 2011). This is in keeping with Foucault's (1988) notion of "technologies of the self," which suggests that people draw upon dominant discourses to monitor and control their behaviors in defining themselves as subjects. People utilize available discourses to willingly adopt

practices to achieve the thin ideal. This also intersects with Foucault's "technologies of regulation and surveillance" in which there exists a subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) imperative that people offer their bodies up for expert surveillance. It therefore becomes normal to expect to be monitored to promote the health of a nation. Given that within the context of the current obesity panic, obesity has been constructed as disease, and those who present as obese fall under medical authority, and hence measurement of the so-called condition is an expectation (Jutel 2009).

The children in this study were aware of the expectation that larger people submit themselves to medical monitoring. The clinical gaze is a powerful force in a health-driven society. As noted by Foucault (1973), the clinical gaze encompasses the power ascribed to the physician who was seen to learn the "truth" about the patient through the process of gazing upon the visible (Murray 2009). The power of the clinical gaze was reflected in the children's talk. For example, Jordan demonstrates her knowledge of the clinical gaze as a phenomenon that entails inquisition in an authoritative manner when she states, "I expected it to be more- okay so what's your waist size today? How much do you weigh today?" She and the other children were aware that clinicians are the "experts" who, because of their position in "knowing the body," have the power and the right to inspect and monitor them. This is reiterated in Nicholas's statement, "I thought it was going to be like one of those programs . . . like, oh look at you, you're fat. Let's weigh you now on a scale." This is supported by Rail et al. (2010) who state "obesity scientists and clinicians are presumed to know the "truth" of obesity and to have the moral and intellectual authority to label it a disease and to prescribe treatment" (p. 261). In keeping with this, the children also expected to be placed upon diets as highlighted by Adam and Nicholas, respectively: "I thought it was going to be like a diet plan too" and "and it's like, you have to go on diets and crap like that." These notions are consistent with obesity discourse that suggests obese people are unable or unwilling to follow a balanced diet and therefore need prescriptive programs to ensure they lose weight (Jutel 2009). It is intriguing that Adam uses the term "diet plan." In fact, the children were well versed in the terminology that is reflected in what Kater et al. (2002) refer to as the "diet mentality." These included ways to lose weight such as restricting carbohydrates or increasing water intake and an articulated knowledge of various diet programs.

6   Challenging Dominant Discourse: Starting with Children's Constructions of Health

As noted by Burrows et al. (2002), "analyses of health promotion discourses and practices in contemporary western society point to the power of certain constructions of health over others" (p. 41). While the program in this study provides room for children to explore messages that challenge traditional corporeal views of health, dominant discourses are difficult to challenge as they are deeply imbedded in practices of everyday life. The coordinators discussed the challenges of addressing weight and health issues with the children. Consistent with critical

obesity literature, they suggested you must begin with insight into the children's conceptualizations of health (Rail 2009; Rich and Evans 2005). As can be explicated from the following excerpt, the coordinators demonstrated an appreciation for the ways in which the children constructed health.

Coordinator #1

The boys are telling us that in order to be healthy, you have to have a six pack, and the girls are telling us that it's better to be anorexic than overweight, in order to be healthy. I like that they tell us, it means they're being honest, and what I do with that as a psychologist can help them explore that. We need somebody with expertise that can debunk some of that, which [coordinator #2] is lovely at doing that.

Here, the coordinator speaks to the gendered nature of dominant health discourses. She recognizes from regular interactions with the children that boys often desire to be lean and muscular while girls strive toward thinness. This is consistent with the children's narratives where gendered notions of the healthy body prevailed. Initially, the boys in this study consistently spoke of muscularity in reference to health using terms such as "ripped" and "cheese grater abs," while the girls spoke regularly of thinness as the definition of healthy and noted the cheerleader as symbolizing the desired body form. This changed over the course of the study.

The coordinators also demonstrated that, given the medicalization of obesity, health professionals could use the authority afforded them to challenge dominant messages. By utilizing this authority, it is hoped that they can provide opportunities for children to draw upon alternative discourses that allow them to identify as "healthy" people (Rich and Evans 2005). The coordinators noted that the task of promoting alternative views of health is challenging because health professionals and society in general often reinforce obesity discourses. As coordinator #1 illustrates in the following excerpt, it may be naïve to assume they can completely change the ways children conceptualize health. Hence, the goal becomes the introduction of critical perspectives with permission to challenge dominant views.

Coordinator #1

They hear that [fat is bad] message everywhere. All we can do is help them to question it. So we have a session on body image and the focus of that session is to get them thinking and questioning.

The coordinator acknowledges the pervasiveness of dominant messages and the difficulty inherent in challenging powerful discourses. This assertion is supported by Wright (2009) who states:

> the discourses of the obesity epidemic are enacted on the bodies of children and young people in schools, in patient consultations in doctors' surgeries and by individuals on themselves via the mechanisms for self-monitoring offered on the web, in popular magazines and similar popular media sites. (p. 11)

The coordinator qualifies that statement by suggesting, "All we can do is help them to question it." This emphasizes the power of a critical approach to knowledge formation. By offering children alternatives, recognizing them as social agents, and providing them with resources, professionals may support them in challenging discourses that limit opportunities for healthy subjectivities (Rail et al. 2010). As suggested by Beausoleil (2009), young people's lack of power in relation to dominant messages "and their lack of power in general, may ironically position them particularly well for critical thinking about concrete obstacles to health" (p. 104).

The children began to draw upon alternative discourses throughout the program. Within one group session, for example, they raised the issue of mannequins. The following exchange illustrates their ongoing vexation with the thin ideal and how, when given permission, they were eager to vocalize their frustrations:

Pete: Like those mannequins in the store, they don't look like real people. I'd like to steal them and burn them all. I think they should have mannequins that look like real people in the windows.
Researcher: Do you mean that mannequins should look like people with different looks?
Pete: Yeah, I think they should be different sizes and different looks... they should be like real people... real people... healthy people don't come in mannequin sizes. They should stand them there so they look real, then the person who goes in to try on the clothes will know what the clothes look like on real people not those stupid skinny mannequins.
Jenny: Maybe you could just not shop at those stores...may be that would change it.

Pete notes, "healthy people don't come in mannequin sizes." This illustrates some change in Pete's conceptualization of health as he stated in the first session that healthy people are "skinny people who are all toned and ripped." He voices his frustration with the "skinny' ideal stating "not those stupid skinny mannequins." Jenny presents an option that would allow them to exercise some power over the storeowners. By choosing not to shop at these stores, she may exert resistance by removing herself from the influence of the thin ideal or by choosing not to spend her money in an establishment that supports harmful body ideals. Adam provides another example of the positive impact of alternative messaging in the final focus group when he stated, "you shouldn't worry about your weight, it's not about how heavy you are." This is in contrast to Adam's discussion of weight in the initial focus group when he stated he was not healthy because of the weight around his belly (as he drew a wide ring around his abdomen with his hands to emphasize his girth). Again, while these moments of resistance were interspersed with moments where the children utilized the dominant discourse, their agency should not be underestimated. The fact that people utilize dominant discourses does not mean that they do not take opportunities to resist in different ways (Rawlins 2008). This depends largely on whether they recognize the power they possess and whether they have access to resources to facilitate this critical perspective.

7 The Program as a Safe Social Space

While the children were eager to draw upon alternative discourses, they acknowledged their sense of being different often referring to themselves as "offbeats" who do not fit the "popular" category. Interestingly, while the children spoke of their marginal social positioning within the school and social setting, they appeared quite comfortable within the social space of the program. Even early in the study, it was evident that the program provided a safe haven for the children. They spoke openly about their concerns regarding weight, the program, and the impact of their position as "fat" children. They took on challenges and participated in activities that they stated they would usually avoid such as rock climbing and hiking. As one child stated "I can be myself here." The following excerpt illustrates this sense of social safety:

Researcher: How do you feel when you are here in the program?
Nicholas: Relaxed
Adam: Yes
Billy: Yeah
Joel: Incredibly so
Researcher: Yeah? And why do you say incredibly so?
Joel: Well, I'm pretty much opening up to everyone here like it's absolutely nothing. . .
Adam: And it's extremely private
Billy: And you barely know us
Joel: Exactly! You guys are practically strangers and. . .
Researcher: Why do you think that is? Why don't you do that elsewhere? What is it about this place that does that?
Jordan: We're all here for the same reason.
Adam: Pretty much
Researcher: So you feel that you guys have the same sort of experiences?
Jordan: To some degree
Adam: Yeah
Researcher: And do you think it is safe to talk here?
Jenny: Yes
Nicholas: Yes
Jenny: I feel safe here because I feel I can talk about what I want to talk about. . . Sometimes you can't talk to your friends at school because they don't know what it's like . . .they don't understand. . .they haven't had the same experiences and they don't understand.
Joel: Where we're in a similar situation, people who haven't been in a similar situation won't sympathize the same way because they don't know what it's like. . . but people here have been in similar situations, and they can sympathize and see where you're coming from, they listen to you. They've probably been in the same situation.

The children emphasized that they feel comfortable within the confines of the program group. They stated they did not often feel this comfort in other social

settings and that others do not understand where they are coming from. This is reflected in Jenny's statement "they don't know what it's like …they don't understand…they haven't had the same experiences." The stigmatization that often is inflicted upon those with nonnormative bodies is also reflected in the literature (Puhl and Heuer 2009; Rice 2007; Sykes and McPhail 2008). Thus, the children's embodied experiences impacted how they relate to others and the terms upon which they feel free to be themselves.

Also, as can be explicated from the previous excerpt, the children articulated how shared experiences and commonalities permitted a sense of safety. As Jenny suggested, she felt she could talk more openly because the people within the group would understand. Joel emphasizes this point when he states "but people here have been in similar situations, and they can sympathize and see where you're coming from, they listen to you." Such shared experiences may, as noted by Puhl and Brownell (2003), provide a mechanism for coping for people experiencing stigmatization. The authors state that health-care providers may "help their stigmatized clients participate in positive interactions with other members of the stigmatized group who can affirm their identity" (p. 59). Also, consideration of the larger child's point of view as well as attention to individual difference can positively impact on the child's path toward achieving a positive sense of self (Bromfield 2009). The social safety produced in the program provided an outlet in which the children could discuss shared experiences and share resistive messages. As noted by Coordinator #1,

> I think that what the kids get here, that they don't get other places, is they actually experience not being judged. And for many of them that's a unique and first time experience. And even having that feeling can help create that in other settings, and that is the hope…So it's a psychological safe space.

As noted by the coordinator, the freedom from judgment is key to enhancing children's comfort levels and allowing them to explore being active. The coordinator asserts that this should be achievable beyond the space of the program. A shift from weight to wellness they contend would hopefully enhance the social safety for all people and redefine the "normal" body.

8   Conclusion

The study outlined in this chapter provides a unique exploration into the experiences of both health professionals and children involved in an alternative approach to obesity treatment. Through an examination of the literature and first-person narratives, this chapter highlights the damaging effects of obesity discourse while also illustrating how children negotiate a treatment space that is, in many ways, contradictory to the spaces they experience outside of the treatment program. The sense of social safety experienced by children within this study illustrates the powerful capacity of alternative discourses of health and the body and highlights

the potential of expanding upon this framework, moving beyond the conflation of weight and health, to create environments where people of all sizes have opportunities to define themselves as healthy.

This work fills an identified gap in the literature and builds on critical geography works from researchers such as Bethan Evans, Rachel Colls, and Julie Guthman that seek to explore how individuals relate to their environments in dynamic and complex ways. It also demonstrates the converging goals of critical geographers and other critical obesity researchers who strive to consider the embodied experiences of people in relation to health and the body and social, cultural, and physical environments. By opening up channels of communication, recognizing that health knowledge is contestable, and by problematizing our current assumptions between health, the body, and the environment, it is possible to begin to change the present weight obsessed milieu to which these children and the population at large are exposed. It also demonstrates that health professionals are in a powerful position to influence change. By using the authority afforded them by their positions in the health system and acknowledging children's agency, they can provide children defined as obese with the permission to question and challenge dominant ways of thinking about health that limit opportunities for healthy identities. Health professionals can function as change agents in altering a clinical environment that, to date, has not demonstrated success in its approach to obesity.

While this study was conducted within one treatment program, it provides impetus for further research in relation to patients and treatment spaces. Given that few obesity treatment programs have adopted an approach that shifts from weight to wellness, this research has the capacity to inform current and future practice. While there is a growing body of research that examines weight bias within the health-care system, this research provides a call to geography and critical obesity researchers to conduct more research that explores people's experiences in the treatment space whether they are hospital or community based. It also highlights the need for research into the preemptive approaches to the obesity "issue" in terms of the various prevention strategies. Finally, this research provides hope that shifting obesity discourse and moving from a weight to wellness approach may produce socially safe spaces where people of all weights can experience their bodies in healthy ways.

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