

Geographies of Children and Young People 7

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Politics, Citizenship and Rights

 SpringerReference

Geographies of Children and Young People

Volume 7

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Geographies of Children and Young People is a Major Reference Work comprising twelve 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 landscape; 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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Politics, Citizenship and Rights

With 15 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 subdiscipline; 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 subdiscipline. 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: nationhood, landscape, and belonging; children, nature, and environmental education; urbanity, rurality, and childhood; home/less 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, *Geographies of 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 Volume 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*, 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 Volume 9, *Play, Recreation, Health and Wellbeing*, important, well-established, but often contentious foci of children's and 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, *Learning and Laboring*, 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* (Volume 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
May 20, 2015

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Editor-in-Chief

Editorial: Geographies of Children and Young People's Politics, Citizenship, and Rights

Kirsi Pauliina Kallio and Sarah Mills

Introduction

In 2014, 25 % of the global population were aged 0–14, and combined with those up to 29 years, young people comprised half of the world's people (US Census Bureau 2014). These individuals form a unique global population. As *human beings*, they are equal with other people – children's humanity is seldom questioned. In terms of *human rights*, they are separated from older generations as their needs and capabilities are seen to differ partially from those of adults. As *citizens*, children are minors who acquire diverse positions in different political systems. In this regard, young people's engagement in political communities varies notably as a range of interpretations of youthful citizenship exist in different geographic contexts.

Research on children and young people's geographies therefore does not concern minor groups or issues but quite the opposite. The *policies* that specifically target young people or have great influence on them, and the *politics* in the everyday lives of children and youth in all scalar dimensions, are major issues that ought to draw broad interest among geographers and other researchers. This book is dedicated to bringing visibility to this research area and aims to cement the political geographies of children and young people within human geography and beyond. There have been several important calls in relation to this research agenda over the last decade or so, advocating closer conversations between political geographers and those who research the geographies of children, youth, and families (Philo and Smith 2003; Vanderbeck 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2010; Skelton 2010, 2013). While these much-needed requests have championed the need for geographic research that recognizes children and young people's presence in politics, our hope with this volume is to demonstrate the rich scholarship that has established alongside newer areas of enquiry that are emerging as part of these debates. On the one hand, the collection seeks to portray the specificity of the roles and positions available to children and young people in their societies, to explicate why their political geographies earn special attention; on the other hand, it paves a way to understanding the broad geographic variety of youthful politics, citizenship,

and rights, proposing that the geographies of children and young people are always contextual (for similar attempts, see Hopkins and Alexander 2010; Kallio and Häkli 2013, 2015; Benwell and Hopkins 2016; Häkli and Kallio 2015).

The international dimension to this volume of the Major Reference Work in Geographies of Children and Young People (hereafter MRW) is noteworthy, not least for its geographic breadth represented in the contributions (on Africa, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe, South America, North America, Australasia, and Asia) and by authors who are based in 14 different countries. In addition to this international scope, the collection illustrates a wider argument about the importance of recognizing different socio-spatial contexts and geographic arenas in and through which young people are and become “political.” Therefore, this specific research agenda ought to connect with broader discussions in contemporary human geography and its neighboring fields and not just with those that focus on childhood and youth. The whole MRW shares these endeavors – to bring together a variety of perspectives and scholars working on political geographies of children and young people. This volume specifically explicates how issues of *youthful citizenship* and *children's rights* cross disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical boundaries and can thus be used to explore wide-ranging processes of social, economic, and political change that reach beyond “children's worlds,” which are often misleadingly imagined as separate from the worlds of adults (cf. Vanderbeck 2008; Mitchell et al. 2004). Particular attention falls on *children and young people's active roles* in different kinds of political situations, environments, processes, and practices. The discussion also emphasizes that there is scope for future research, not least because of the shifting (geo)political landscapes that can be currently witnessed all around the globe (Benwell and Hopkins 2016; see also Vol. 11 of the MRW).

This volume of the MRW on *Politics, Citizenship, and Rights* is structured in four sections. As editors, we wish to stress that this division is not intended to be fixed in relation to categories; indeed, major themes of the book overlap and cut across these sections. Cross-references are provided by the authors to connect the chapters that have clear linkages, which inevitably reveal only partially the interesting connections between individual contributions and thematic ensembles. The index at the end of the book is another source that can be utilized to identify further specific themes and approaches. The remainder of this introduction seeks to outline the major ideas of individual chapters and their geographic foci, which we hope offers a useful starting point for entering and exploring Vol. 7 and the multiplicity of children and young people's political worlds.

Spatialities of the Rights of the Child

Children's human rights are globally acknowledged as a specific concern. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989, hereafter UNCRC) is the most broadly accepted human rights treaty ratified by nearly all

countries in the world, with Somalia as the latest member state (exceptions include the newly established state of South Sudan that is currently preparing the process and the USA, which has signed the treaty). The international rights it proposes are based on the premise that all activities involving and influencing children should take “the best interests of the child” as a starting point. To define what this means more specifically, the UNCRC identifies three types of rights for children, which should be appreciated both publicly and privately, in institutional settings as well as in children’s everyday lived environments: (1) rights to protection and prevention from harm, (2) rights to adequate provision, and (3) rights to be heard and participate in matters concerning oneself. For the approaches of this volume, the third principle is perhaps the most pertinent one, resting upon the UNCRC §12:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

To emphasize the importance of these principles, the Committee on the Rights of the Child gave a General Comment in 2009 that heightens §12 as “one of the fundamental values of the Convention [that] establishes not only a right in itself, but should also be considered in the interpretation and implementation of all other rights,” paralleling it with “the right to non-discrimination, the right to life and development, and the primary consideration of the child’s best interests” (UN 2009, p. 3). Active youthful agency is hence markedly recognized in child’s rights discourses and policies (for an extensive overview, see Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010).

Even if the ratification of the UNCRC requires that the treaty is followed in all national legislation and policymaking and that state institutions and other actors who work with children and young people realize its principles in their activities, children’s rights are appreciated very differently in different parts of the world. Indeed, they are inherently geographic. The first section of this volume explores the *spatialities* of the rights of the child. Overall, it demonstrates that geography matters in how children’s rights are protected, enacted, restrained, and denied. Focusing on specific cases, the authors portray how, in practice, these rights are shaped by social difference. They are thus unequally fulfilled, lived, and experienced within the politicized realities where children and young people lead their lives. As Holloway and Valentine argued in their seminal text *Children’s Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning*, “Children’s identities are classed, racialised, gendered and so on, just as gender, class and racialised identities are cross-cut by adult-child relations” (2000, p. 5).

Noticing these and other political aspects, the first six chapters of this volume explicitly tackle the spatialities of the rights of the child. Ruth Evans and Morten Skovdal discuss the tensions surrounding different perspectives and definitions of child labor, domestic work, and caregiving as part of wider debates on the rights discourse in Sub-Saharan Africa. They suggest how these various frameworks can influence the lived experiences of young people and their access to resources. Nisha Thapliyal takes educational rights as her focus, providing a critical analysis of neoliberal education policy in India. Her chapter outlines the limitations of rights-based policies of education and how inequalities are linked to a wider reproduction of fragmented neoliberal subjectivities. Ian McIntosh, Samantha Punch, and Ruth Emond consider children's rights in relation to food, specifically via a case study of food practices in residential care in Scotland. Their chapter highlights how the children's rights agenda has shaped the experiences of looked-after children and examines how rights are "done" in care spaces through management practices. Aisling Parkes' chapter outlines the legal framework for how children's "voice" is conceptualized and understood in the context of the UNCRC. To exemplify this, she draws on the example of schools in Ireland and the possibilities of restorative justice for involving young people in decision-making processes. This theme of educational rights continues with I-Fang Lee's chapter on the school as one site (as well as the home and community more broadly) where young people are "assembled." She takes as her focus the cultural politics of "Hong Kong childhood" and how the rights-based struggles around education and immigration shape the lifeworlds of children and young people living in Hong Kong, and to some extent throughout Asia. The final chapter in Section I focuses on youthful political presence. Here, Kirsi Pauliina Kallio portrays the multifaceted complexity of children's rights – how they are set, interpreted, performed, negotiated, practiced, realized, and actualized differently in distinct situations, contexts, and locations. For Kallio, the inherently paradoxical nature of the UNCRC and the rights alone provides an unstable basis for understanding the politics of children and young people's activities and agencies.

Children and Young People's Agency in Politics

Childhood and youth have traditionally been considered as stages in the lifecourse that are "outside" of politics. This positioning is based on the idea that politics is something children and young people ought to be protected from, deriving from rather narrow readings of politics as related to geopolitical power relations, matters of the state, and public administration. However, a broader understanding of politics and its everyday articulations and influences is an integral part of the life of any society, covering social, cultural, economic, as well as administrative arenas. In this context, children *cannot* be "saved" from politics as their lives are embedded in political worlds (Hörschelmann 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2010; Elwood and Mitchell 2012). Furthermore, they can shape those worlds as social actors on

their own right, along with older generations (Skelton 2010; Mills 2011; Bartos 2012; Smith 2013).

The concept of agency is a key tenant of children's geographies and has been employed by researchers to analyze and understand the everyday practices of children and young people (for wider discussions on theoretical approaches to researching the geographies of children and young people, see Vol. 1 of this MRW). In this volume, 15 chapters in total focus on children and young people's agency in politics, excluding approaches directly linked with citizenship. The first seven of these, forming Section II, provide distinct perspectives to this theme, whereas the latter eight, placed in Section III, share a focus on resistance. Some of the contributions in Section II focus on the *possibilities* of agency, making visible the conditions under which children can develop as political subjects. Other chapters are more attuned to agencies as they unfold in the present, through youthful *active participation* in politics broadly defined. Yet as these aspects of agency – often referred to as “being” and “becoming” – are inseparable in everyday life, all of the following chapters discuss both elements with varying emphasis in their respective contributions.

Section II begins with Ann E. Bartos' extensive review and critical analysis of children and young people's participation, considering the normative assumptions around agency and discourses of participation, as well as the implications of these ideas for research with children and young people. In their coauthored chapter, Jessica Pykett and Thomas Disney explore some of the political tensions around agency and governance through their analysis of the biopolitical child. Framing the discussion on neuroscience and neuroeducation in predominantly Western contexts, this chapter reviews the potential limits of agency (see also Kraftl 2013) and emerging political questions on children's capacity in light of new forms of biopolitical knowledge and intervention. Suncana Laketa focuses on geopolitical contestations around youth identity and the related questions of agency. With an empirical focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina, she draws on feminist geopolitics to explore the site of the school as part of a wider discussion on the boundaries between “public” and “private” in the context of young people's lives as active political agents. This theme of children and young people's active engagement in shaping their own lifeworlds and the wider relationship between politics and place is pervasive in Section II. Katharyne Mitchell and Sarah Elwood's chapter on “counter-mapping” for social justice outlines their participatory action research project in Seattle, USA, where children discovered historical sites of in/exclusion and engaged with issues of social justice. The authors outline how this project created possibilities for political agency, emphasizing the role of place in children's political formation. Zsuzsa Millei and Robert Imre's contribution examines the preschool as a political space, making visible the power relations involved in a building project and how these connect to broader debates surrounding authority, political agendas, and cultures of democracy. Finally, in their chapter on embodied politics of exclusion and belonging in public space, Sofia Cele and Danielle van der Burgt examine children and young people's role as active participants in politics, highlighting the importance of the body to understandings of injustice in their everyday lives.

Youthful Practice as Political Resistance

When children and young people are acknowledged as active members of their communities and, following the UNCRC spirit, heard in matters concerning their own lives and provided opportunities to participate, they are typically invited to take part in communicative processes within existing communities, for example, via youth councils and other representative bodies (Matthews and Limb 1998; Cele and van der Burgt 2015). This engagement with democratic processes and politics does, however, tend to assume that their experiences, thoughts, and activities should align with existing structures and can be folded together and merged with adult perspectives. When children or young people voice concerns that differ from this schema, they are often positioned as problematic, which raises the question about whether the democratic mechanisms are meaningful or merely tokenistic. This is especially the case when the “child’s voice” is set against adult perspectives, be it in a mundane situation, an institutional setting, or via forms of social protest (Wyness et al. 2004; Kallio 2012; Taft and Gordon 2013). Their practices of *resistance* can often be framed as out of place and “wrong,” creating a wider moral landscape of appropriate, and by extension inappropriate, political conduct.

In this volume, eight chapters discuss youthful practice as political resistance. Authors of Section III traverse the dynamic boundaries between different forms of political action across diverse international settings. David Marshall examines the embodied resistant practices of Palestinian refugee children, as part of his argument on play as a form of political resistance. In his wider discussion of the sites and scales of these activities, Marshall highlights how social exclusion, surrounding gender for instance, can be reproduced through performances of resistance. In her contribution to examining possibilities and practices of political resistance, Janette Habashi also draws upon a case study of Palestinian childhoods, to exemplify wider debates in children’s political geography. Specifically, she unpacks the concept of “political morality” and its gendered dimensions within an essay on the intersections of power, community, and decision-making. In their coauthored chapter, Harriot Beazley and Mandie Miller take the lives of street children as their focal point in demonstrating how political resistance can be understood as seeking to counter negative identities attributed to certain youths. Specifically, they examine how street children in Cambodia contest their marginalization and employ a “repertoire of strategies” to survive and create alternative communities. Discussing the resistant practices of young adults, Shanene Ditton provides a critical reflection on “cultures of resistance” that are produced by them, often in response to related “moral panics.” She draws upon the example of youth on Australia’s Gold Coast, to argue that young people imaginatively shape place as part of their engagement with cultural politics. The ways in which children and young people actively resist and challenge stereotypes, evidenced in both Beazley and Miller’s discussion and Ditton’s chapter, is approached more forcefully in relation to *protest* as resistance by Cristina Arancibia, Stephen Sadlier, and Lesmer Montecino. Their coauthored chapter takes up the recent Chilean student movement as a lens through which to explore how digital social media can be a “catalyst” for young people’s expressions

of political resistance. For Fazeeha Azmi, Cathrine Brun, and Ragnhild Lund, the notion of resistance is intimately tied to the wider emotional geographies of “becoming” political. They illustrate this through an example of young people in Sri Lanka, whose political action and opportunities for political engagement have been shaped by the specificities of nation-building and state in/exclusion. The final contribution to this section on youthful practice as political resistance is from Kathrin Hörschelmann, who provides a conceptual overview of the notion of “dissent.” She reviews key debates on the challenges that young people are seen to pose to the state, as well as critically analyzing ideas of conflict, protest, and power in relation to young people’s politics.

Youth Citizenship: Practice, Performance and Experience

Citizenship is widely understood as the relationship between an individual and a polity (see Yarwood 2013 for an excellent overview). It has been conceptualized as a status (Marshall 1950), a series of acts (Isin and Nielsen 2008), as multilayered (Yuval-Davis 1999), and is closely connected to concepts of belonging, identity, community, participation, and democracy. Children and young people are specific kinds of citizens due to the diverse age-based interpretations of rights and responsibilities outlined earlier in this introduction. The process of young people “learning” to be citizens can be shaped by unique institutional geographies (Mills 2013), and contemporary youth citizenship has been theorized as both relational and transnational (Hörschelmann and El Refaie 2014; Kallio et al. 2015).

In the last Section of this volume, eight chapters focus specifically on youth citizenship. Whereas some concentrate on the formal status and practices, others stress the more mundane forms of citizenship and the acts that children and young people perform in their everyday lives. Yet as these aspects of citizenship – often referred to as “P”olitical and “p”olitical – are intertwined, the following chapters also speak to this wider debate on the political geographies of childhood and youth.

Bronwyn Wood begins Section IV with a fascinating genealogy of the “everyday” within work on youth citizenship. Here, she reviews how the “everyday” has been theorized and utilized within geography and a range of other work on young people’s citizenship. As part of this research field, another growing area of study has concentrated on the relationship between (active) citizenship and participation. Barry Percy-Smith provides a critical discussion of this relationship in his chapter, outlining how participation has been framed and politicized in the context of children and young people. Empirical examples from an action research study in Scotland illuminate this in practice. The performance of everyday citizenship and diverse opportunities for young people to participate are then exemplified in a number of chapters in Section IV. Elen-Maarja Trell and Bettina van Hoven explore the various sites of citizenship from their research in rural Estonia. They examine how home, school, and leisure places provide varied possibilities for young people’s participation through a discussion of citizenship as “practice.” Claudia Wong’s chapter discusses how theatre can be conceived of as a participatory

space using the case study of young people's "performances" (literally) in theatre productions in Singapore. These alternative sites of citizenship expression are used by Wong to advocate for methodological creativity that draws on theatre techniques. The contribution from Catherine Cottrell Studemeyer provides a useful review of work on multicultural citizenship, before discussing how young people negotiate aspects of belonging within culturally diverse societies. Drawing on her research in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, she examines the ambiguity of multicultural citizenship and its influence on young people's everyday lives. In their coauthored chapter, Alex Jeffrey and Lynn Staeheli focus on how young people in postconflict societies learn new forms of citizenship, with a particular emphasis on civil society. With an empirical focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, and South Africa, the authors examine how relationships are reworked in these settings to make space for learning to be citizens. Caroline Nagel and Lynn Staeheli's chapter on youth citizenship in Lebanon provides an account of how nonstate actors – specifically NGOs – can shape the discourses of youth citizenship in powerful ways. Here, the aims of citizenship pedagogy are explored before an examination of how young people can negotiate and undermine the "norms" of these types of citizenship productions. In the final chapter of this volume, Sarah Mills and Jonathan Duckett review the "place" of the nation in research on youth citizenship and the political geographies of young people more broadly. They outline how devolution in the UK is currently reconfiguring ideas of the nation-state and shaping youthful politics.

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Part I

Spatialities of the Rights of the Child

Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice

Ruth Evans and Morten Skovdal

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Abstract

This chapter explores the spatialities of children’s rights through a focus on how children’s paid and unpaid work in sub-Saharan Africa intersects with wider debates about child labor, child domestic work, and young caregiving. Several tensions surround the universalist and individualistic nature of the rights discourse in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, and policymakers, practitioners, children, and community members have emphasized children’s responsibilities to their families and communities, as well as their rights. The limitations of ILO definitions of child labor and child domestic work and UNCRC concerns about “hazardous” and “harmful” work are highlighted through examining the situation of children providing unpaid domestic and care support to family members in the private space of their own or a relative’s home. Differing perspectives toward young caregiving have been adopted to date by policymakers and practitioners in East Africa, ranging from a child labor/child protection/abolitionist approach to a “young

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carer"/child-centered rights perspective. These differing perspectives influence the level and nature of support and resources that children involved in care work may be able to access. A contextual, multi-sectorial approach to young caregiving is needed that seeks to understand children's, family members', and community members' perceptions of what constitutes inappropriate caring responsibilities within particular cultural contexts and how these should best be alleviated.

Keywords

Care work and caregiving • Young carers • Children's rights • Child labor • Child domestic labor • Policy and practice • Sub-Saharan Africa

1 Introduction

Children occupy a prominent position in human rights and development discourses, and antipoverty targets are often measured explicitly in indicators of child mortality, health, and education by the UN, the World Bank, and other development agencies. The UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC), introduced in 1989 and rapidly ratified by all countries except the USA and Somalia, provides a framework of universally applicable standards for safeguarding children's rights, while many of the Millennium Development Goal targets refer to children's health, education, and welfare. However, concerns about child labor and "young carers" call into question the universality of global constructions of childhood and youth.

This chapter explores how the paid and unpaid care work that young people undertake in their everyday lives in many African societies intersects with wider debates about children's rights, child labor, and child domestic work. Firstly, we give a brief overview of tensions in conceptualizing children's rights in the African context and highlight key debates about child labor, child domestic work, and children's familial responsibilities. We then examine the nature of children's care work and consider how to define young caregiving and why this may be beneficial. We then explore the policy and practice implications of adopting differing perspectives on young caregiving, from a child protection/child labor abolitionist perspective to a "young carer"/child-centered rights perspective, drawing on empirical research with young people, families, and NGO and governmental stakeholders in East Africa. Through the lens of children's rights, this chapter focuses on care, a theme that is also discussed in other contributions to the first section of this volume, as well as childhoods and youth in the global South, which are explored throughout the volume.

2 Defining Children's Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa

The UN Convention provides a universal framework of rights to the provision, protection, and participation in the "best interests of the child." While the global focus on children's rights and, in particular, recognition of children's rights to express their views in all matters affecting them (Article 12) have been welcomed,

researchers have revealed how the Convention conflicts with sociocultural understandings of childhood and the lived realities of children and youth in the global South. The rights discourse promotes a universal model of childhood, based on Western ideals, that has become globalized through international development and human rights discourses and national policies (Boyden 1997). Western ideals of childhood are often based on notions of children's innocence, vulnerability, and needs for education and socialization in preparation for their future adult lives. From this perspective, children need to be "protected" from "adult" responsibilities, exploitation, and harm; they should be cared for predominantly by parents within the family home and spend most of their time in full-time education, recreation, and play.

Such ideals of childhood bear little resemblance to the lives of children and youth in the global South, where many children are expected to contribute to the household economy from an early age, where the living arrangements of children are characterized by a diversity of household forms and where there is limited public social protection to prevent child poverty. Children who do not conform to these understandings of childhood are constructed as "other" and are perceived as the focus for rescue, rehabilitation, and intervention (Wells 2009). The UN has identified categories of children deemed to be particularly vulnerable, including "street and working children," "children affected by armed conflict," "trafficked children," "disabled children," and "orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS." While recognition of the needs of children is important in enabling them to access support, researchers have also revealed the dangers in constructing particular groups of children and youth as "different" and "at risk" when measured against a single, universal model of childhood (Glauser 1997; Meintjes and Giese 2006). Researchers call for greater recognition of the plurality and diversity of global childhoods that are historically and geographically contingent.

Furthermore, the UNCRC is based on an individualized notion of the child, rather than recognizing the communal value systems of many societies in the global South and the ways that children's lives are embedded in relationships with their families and communities. Boyden (1997) argues that the influence of Western discourses of psychology, social work, and law on global and national social policy has resulted in an emphasis on individual remedial solutions and less attention being paid to the social structural inequalities that disadvantage people. In addition, the Convention is based on Western notions of the nuclear family that emphasize biological parents' primary responsibility to meet the child's needs, constructing nonnuclear families as deviant, despite the fact that these often constitute the majority of family forms in the global South (Stephens 1995). Similarly, while the Convention addresses child military service, which mostly affects boys, it fails to mention child marriage, which mostly affects girls.

Disenfranchisement with the universalist and individualistic nature of the UN rights discourse led to the establishment of African regional charters on human rights, such as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). Alongside identifying individual rights, these regional charters emphasize the sociocultural

responsibilities of individuals to their families, communities, ethnic group, nation, and region. Many nongovernmental organizations working on children's rights in East Africa also recognize children's contributions to their families and communities, through their focus on children's rights *and responsibilities*. Article 31, "The Responsibility of the Child," of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) states that, among other duties, "the child, subject to his (sic) age and ability, shall have the duty to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need" and "to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society." The African Charter also explicitly recognizes gender-specific concerns in the African context, such as girls' right to education.

The UNCRC age-based definition of the "child" as any person below 18 years of age is also problematic and overlaps with the commonly accepted UN definition of "youth" as young people aged 15–24 (United Nations 2007). The concept "youth" is often associated with Western understandings of an in-between phase between childhood and adulthood that is marked by young people's socially expected transitions to becoming an "independent," "responsible," and "productive" adult, such as the completion of education, entry into the labor market, moving out of the parental home, marriage, and establishing their own families. In many societies in the global South, young people's transitions to adulthood may be viewed as a series of gradual stages marked by life course events, such as initiation rites, marriage, or childbirth, rather than being defined according to age or entry into the labor market. The UNCRC definition of the "child" may also conflict with national laws and policies that allow young people to engage in consensual sexual relations, marry, or work, for example, at age 15 or 16. Furthermore, age is often used as the criterion for particular categories of children to receive assistance and support as specified by international donors, development agencies, and immigration policies, which often results in gaps in service provision and protection for youth aged 18 or over.

Strict age-based definitions of children and youth may be especially problematic for orphaned young people who reach the threshold age of 18 years, but still have significant caring responsibilities and may be just as vulnerable as younger children. Indeed, research from both the UK (Becker and Becker 2008) and Eastern and Southern Africa (Evans 2012; Evans and Becker 2009) has shown that young adult carers (aged 18–25) are often involved in more hours of care work per week than child carers. Furthermore, their care work often has detrimental impacts on their education and employment prospects and may delay or restrict socially expected transitions to adulthood, such as migration, marriage, and establishing their own households. Indeed, the global discourse of orphanhood, guided by age-based definitions of childhood, constructs orphaned children as passive, dependent children who are in need of support until they reach the age of 18 (Meintjes and Giese 2006) and has little to say about young people's support needs in the "liminal period" of youth (Evans 2011).

3 Children's Work or Child Labor?

The involvement of children and youth in work represents a key feature of many childhoods in the global South that conflicts with universal ideals of childhood and children's rights discourse. In many societies in sub-Saharan Africa, sociocultural norms and levels of poverty mean that most children are expected to engage in paid and unpaid work from an early age as part of the household economy. Such responsibilities are usually valued as part of children's informal education and socialization in the family and community. Children often engage in both productive and social reproductive activities according to a gendered division of labor and age hierarchies. Although gender relations vary in different contexts, girls in many patriarchal cultures are expected to undertake domestic chores located in and around the home, such as fetching water and fuel, washing clothes, cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger siblings, sick, or elderly relatives, while boys have greater responsibilities for activities conducted outside the home, such as running errands, herding livestock, and working in the informal sector (Nieuwenhuys 2005). Older siblings often have greater responsibilities than younger siblings, and the extent and range of tasks that children are involved in usually increases with age, linked to perceptions of young people's physical strength and competencies to perform particular tasks (Evans 2010).

A growing body of research has documented the regular, substantial, predominantly unpaid caregiving activities young people engage in to meet the needs of their families in Eastern and Southern Africa, the regions most affected by the HIV epidemic over the last three decades (Evans and Becker 2009; Evans and Thomas 2009; Robson et al. 2006; Skovdal 2010; Skovdal et al. 2009). The available research evidence from sub-Saharan Africa suggests that there are nine main categories of caring activities that young people undertake: household chores, healthcare, personal care, child care, emotional support, self-care, income earning, household management, and community engagement (Evans 2010). Although income earning is not usually categorized as a form of care work in time-use studies (since it involves payment for work) (Budlender 2010), it forms a crucial element of young people's care work in families affected by HIV, since young people need to replace the loss of a parent's/adult relative's income resulting from illness or death (Evans 2012; Evans and Becker 2009; Skovdal et al. 2009).

Most dimensions of children's everyday care work (seven of the nine categories) are focused predominantly in and around the social space of the household, with the exception of income generation and community engagement activities that are usually reliant on young people's interactions and mobility beyond the immediate household. However, several aspects of children's household chores and healthcare support for their relative may involve social reproductive work and mobility outside the household which may provide opportunities to socialize with their peers and siblings, such as fetching water, collecting wood, subsistence agriculture, going to the market, or collecting medicine and/or providing food/care within a hospital/clinic setting, in addition to young people's income generation and community engagement activities (Skovdal and Ogutu 2012).

Researchers to date have conceptualized these caring activities undertaken by children predominantly as familial responsibilities rather than as “child labor,” which has been the focus of considerable global concern since the 1990s. Children’s premature engagement with so-called “adult” responsibilities at the expense of their health, development, and education led to concerted international efforts to eliminate child labor, led by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO (2014) (Convention 138) defines child labor as employment or work, “which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons.” While the Convention states that the minimum age for admission to any such type of work should be no less than 18 years, it recognizes the sovereignty of nation states and allows signatories of the Convention to “authorize employment or work as from the age of 16 years on condition that the health, safety and morals of the young persons concerned are fully protected and that the young persons have received adequate specific instruction or vocational training in the relevant branch of activity” (ILO 2014). The ILO also distinguishes between “children in employment,” whose work is not necessarily considered harmful, and a subset of “children in child labor,” whose work is problematic (see Box 1).

Box 1: ILO Definitions of “Children in Employment,” “Children in Child Labor,” “Child Domestic Work,” “Child Labor in Domestic Work,” and “Hazardous Work” (ILO 2010, p. 6, 2014)

“Children in employment” are defined as children aged under 18 engaged in any productive activities for at least 1 h on any day during a 7-day reference period, including in the informal or formal sector, inside and outside family settings, work for pay or profit (in cash, in kind, full time, or part time), or for domestic work outside the child’s own household for an employer (with or without pay).

“Children in child labor” are a narrower subset of “children in employment” and include children aged under 18 involved in the worst forms of child labor and those in employment below the minimum age.

“Child domestic work” is defined as children’s work in the domestic work sector in the home of a third party or employer. Children who work outside their own household may be paid, unpaid, or paid in kind.

“Child labor in domestic work” refers to situations where domestic work is performed by children below the relevant minimum age (for light work and full-time nonhazardous work), in hazardous conditions or in a slavery-like situation.

ILO response to the question: Do household chores performed by children in their own homes constitute child domestic work?

Household chores undertaken by children in their own homes, in reasonable conditions, and under the supervision of those close to them are an integral part of family

(continued)

life and of growing up, therefore something positive. However, in some cases, there might be concerns over certain situations where these workloads might interfere with the children's education or be excessive, in which case they might be tantamount to child labour. Children doing household chores in their own home, and children in domestic work (in a third party household) might perform similar tasks. However, in the first case, the employment element is missing; therefore, we should avoid referring to those situations as domestic work (ILO 2014).

“Hazardous work” by children is defined as any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, health, and moral development.

The overall proportion of children involved in child labor globally has declined over the last decade, with an estimated 215 million children involved in child labor (ILO 2010). However, these global figures mask considerable differences between regions, genders, and ages. While the number of children (aged 5–14) working declined in all other regions from 2004 to 2008, it increased sharply in sub-Saharan Africa. Reasons cited for the high levels of child labor in sub-Saharan Africa include historical and cultural influences, the impacts of structural adjustment, economic restructuring and rapid growth of the informal sector in the poorest world region, the large youthful population, and the effects of HIV-related adult ill health and mortality (Bass 2004).

The majority of “child domestic workers” are girls who often start work at the age of 12 or younger, and the largest numbers of girls aged under 16 who work are engaged in domestic service (Jacquemin 2006). According to the ILO-IPEC (2004, cited in Jacquemin 2006), there are over 200,000 child domestic workers in Kenya. Due to their invisibility in the private space of the homes of their employers, child domestic workers are considered to be particularly at risk of physical, verbal, and sexual violence; they often face restrictions on their mobility, lack access to education, have poor health, and so on (Jacquemin 2006). Children's domestic work needs to be understood within the context of a long history of child fostering arrangements and reciprocal kinship responsibilities in many African countries, whereby children may be sent to live with relatives for extended periods as a means of accessing education and work opportunities in urban areas, in addition to providing domestic labor to households with care needs.

The focus of international policy and NGO action to date has been on abolishing *paid* work by domestic workers aged under 15 years (Jacquemin 2006). However, this overlooks the experiences of young live-in domestic workers who are *unpaid* or paid in kind, who may well be more vulnerable than paid domestic workers. Indeed, children's work as unpaid domestic workers in a *relative's* household (*not in their own home*) is particularly hidden and often overlooked in policy or practice. As Blagbrough (2008, p. 180) argues:

a child domestic worker is as likely to working for a relative as for a stranger – blurring the lines as regards her relationship with the employing family. In these situations the child works but is not considered a worker, living as part of a family but not treated as a family member.

Despite the significant social reproductive and productive contributions that children make to their families, the ILO definition of “children in employment” and “child domestic work” excludes work undertaken in the child’s *own household*, rendering children’s, especially girls’, unpaid work contributions within the family invisible (see Box 1). Girls’ greater workload of domestic responsibilities may reduce their spatial mobility and mean that they have less time available for schooling, private study, and outdoor play compared to boys, which can disrupt their school attendance, result in poor educational outcomes, and reduce potential opportunities for informal learning, peer socialization, and participation in the community (Koda 2000). International child welfare concerns, however, are focused on the exploitation of children’s labor in more visible forms of *paid* work, and the gender- and age-related impacts of children’s *unpaid* work within the family are rarely considered within development policy and planning.

The ILO acknowledges that excessive workloads and work which interferes with children’s education conducted in their own home might be tantamount to child labor and are similar to the work of child domestic workers. However, because activities are carried out *in the child’s own home*, the ILO states that this situation should not be referred to as child domestic work (see Box 1). If such work was considered “harmful” or “hazardous” and had negative outcomes on children’s education, such unpaid domestic and care work would be encompassed by the ILO’s definitions of child labor, hazardous work, and child domestic work. This would also relate directly to Article 32 of the UNCRC, which outlines children’s right to be protected from “economic exploitation” and “hazardous or harmful work.” This raises the question of how the terms “hazardous” and “harmful” work are defined and by whom.

This lack of clarity in identifying when children’s domestic work becomes child labor is particularly pertinent to the situation of children caring for family members with chronic illnesses, including HIV, and impairments or for those with other care needs, in their own homes. Among the Luo ethnic group in Kenya, Skovdal et al. (2009) found that young boys in high HIV prevalence and low resource communities actively engaged with domestic cooking and cleaning. Although traditionally not a duty undertaken by boys, it was seen as a strategy to prepare them for orphanhood or the possible premature death of their future spouse. Unpaid domestic and care work may therefore build resilience and strengthen family relationships, in addition to potentially leading to negative outcomes, depending on the extent and nature of the care work (Evans 2010). In such cases, should children’s care work be regarded as “inappropriate,” “harmful,” or “hazardous”? When, if ever, should children’s care work for family members be regarded as “child domestic labor”? Should these terms only be used when care work results in negative outcomes on children’s education, health, well-being, social participation, and so on? Before discussing policy and practice responses to these questions, the chapter explores the nature of children’s unpaid care work and how this group of children has been defined to date.

4 Defining “Young Carers”

The term “young carer” (“young caregiver” in US terminology) is used to describe children who engage in unpaid care work within the family in many countries in the global North. Becker’s (2000) widely cited definition emerged from research with children caring for family members with a range of physical impairments, chronic illness, and mental health problems, and the term “young carer” has now become an accepted policy and legal term in the UK, with accompanying rights and entitlements (See Evans and Becker 2009; Frank and McLarnon 2008). Researchers and policymakers in Australia and the USA have also adopted this term when investigating the experiences of children engaged in unpaid (informal) care work for a family member (Becker 2007). The term “young carer” is not widely used or recognized in international and national policy discourses or in local understandings of vulnerability in Africa (Evans and Becker 2009; Skovdal et al. 2009), although this may be changing as the research literature on young caregiving in the global South grows.

Becker (2007) and Evans and Becker (2009) argue that the extent to which children are involved in care work differs significantly within a spectrum, ranging from “caring about” to “caring for” a family member, along which all children’s caregiving activity can be located. Young carers would be placed at the “high” end of the continuum of young caregiving, that is, “caring for” a family member, which involves substantial, regular, and significant caregiving activities, in terms of the level of support provided, frequency, and time per week, undertaken usually for a coresident relative in close proximity. The continuum distinguishes between low levels of caregiving, with no evidence of negative outcomes, and high levels of caregiving, with evidence of significant negative outcomes for young people’s well-being, health, education, family and peer relations, leisure and social participation, and transitions to adulthood.

In common with the literature on “young carers” in the global North, the emerging body of research on children’s care work in Africa has identified a range of negative outcomes that are broadly comparable to or are considered more severe than those experienced by young carers in the global North (Bauman et al. 2006; Bray 2009; Cluver et al. 2012; Evans and Becker 2009; Robson et al. 2006). This is due to the fact that children’s care work in Africa is often located at the high end of the continuum of young caregiving, within a broader context of widespread poverty and lack of formal support systems in many African countries.

Evans and Becker (2009) note that it is difficult to distinguish the negative impacts of caring from wider processes of poverty, social exclusion, and marginalization that many children living in households where family members are living with HIV (and other impairments) are likely to experience. Research has also revealed that caring may be associated with positive outcomes which help to promote children’s resilience (Bray 2009; Evans 2005; Evans and Becker 2009; Skovdal et al. 2009). Positive outcomes of children’s care work identified in Africa

include developing children's knowledge and understanding about their parent's/relative's illness or disability; a sense of responsibility, maturity, self-esteem, and pride in taking on a socially valued caring role; fostering closer family relationships; and a range of life, social, and care-related skills and personal qualities, such as empathy, listening, and responsiveness (Bauman et al. 2006; Evans and Becker 2009; Robson et al. 2006; Skovdal et al. 2009).

Skovdal et al. (2009, p. 592) suggest that young people in Kenya "constructed positive carer identities" based on local cultural understandings of "childhood as a period of duty and service." Furthermore, in Kenya and Tanzania, caring did not appear to have any significant effects on some young people's school attendance or academic performance (Skovdal et al. 2009; Evans and Becker 2009). Young people usually managed to combine schooling with their caring responsibilities. The quality of the relationship between the child and person they care for and the strength of children's social ties and access to peer and social support in the community have also been identified as key factors that may help to protect children from the negative impacts of caregiving (Robson et al. 2006; Evans and Becker 2009; Skovdal et al. 2009; Thurman et al. 2008; Bray 2009).

The difficulty of separating experiences of young caregiving from wider experiences of poverty, marginalization, and disadvantage found within households affected by disability and illness raises a number of questions about children's rights and the value of defining "young carers" as a particular category of "vulnerable" children. Should poverty and a lack of alternative support be included in the definition of young caregiving? Should young caregiving be measured by the level or nature of support provided (such as number of hours per week or the type of care tasks performed by young people)? Or should evidence of negative outcomes on young people's lives be a fundamental element of the definition of young caregiving?

Evans and Becker (2009) argue for a cautious, sensitive approach to the application of the term "young carer" to the global South and specifically to HIV policy responses. In Tanzania and Uganda, research participants saw themselves first and foremost as children and youth and defined themselves in relation to other family members rather than necessarily identifying as "carers" (Evans and Becker 2009), supporting the findings of research with "carers" in a range of other contexts (Barnes 2006; Becker and Becker 2008). Furthermore, the continuing stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV means that identifying children whose parents are accessing anti-retroviral therapy and living well with HIV as "young carers" could potentially lead to the inadvertent disclosure of a parent/relative's HIV status and further stigmatization, both for themselves and their parent/relative living with HIV.

However, these issues need to be balanced with the potential advantages for some children of being identified and labeled as "young carers." The term may help to recognize and value the significant contributions children make and their roles and responsibilities in providing unpaid care for family members. Identification of this group of children may also help to facilitate access to community-based interventions and to opportunities for peer support with others in similar situations

and enable links to be made with advocacy and lobbying around the needs and rights of carers at the national and global scales. As experiences in the UK have demonstrated, when young people themselves acknowledge and value the label, it may lead to a sense of empowerment, peer support, and the emergence of collective identities which may provide the basis for mobilization and advocacy for the rights of young carers. Indeed, young people with caring responsibilities from the UK, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania who participated in the UK Department for Education and Skills' (DfES) "International Symposium on Young Carers (Orphans and Vulnerable Children)" in Nairobi, May 2006, formulated a series of recommendations for policymakers and practitioners, the first of which was to "Promote use of the term "young carers" as a positive and non-stigmatizing way of describing the reality of the role taken on by young people" (DfES 2006).

Becker (2007) argued that awareness of, and responses to, the specific needs of young carers in sub-Saharan Africa had not yet developed to the point where they could be characterized as *preliminary*, but rather were *emerging*, in his typology of levels of awareness and responses to young carers at the global level. He argues that the *emerging* category of responses is characterized as having an embryonic awareness of young carers as a distinct social group within the "vulnerable children" population, since:

there is virtually no official, professional or public recognition of the specific role and position of young carers, despite potentially millions of children being drawn into caring and other roles that go beyond 'normal' expectations of children's labor within these societies. (Becker 2007, p. 41)

Indeed, despite the title of the DfES symposium and the admirable goal of bringing young carers and young adult carers, professionals, and policymakers from the UK and Africa together to share experiences and learning, the aims of the symposium were explicitly framed within the dominant orphaned and vulnerable children discourse (DfES 2006). Within the discussion sessions in which Ruth (first author) participated, no distinction was made between the specific experiences and needs of "young carers" in comparison to the broader category of "orphans and vulnerable children" that dominates policy and practice responses to the impacts of the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

Given the stigma attached to the term "orphan" in many African societies, the term "young carer" may potentially offer a more positive label that recognizes young people's active roles in contributing to their families and communities in Africa. It also could potentially shift the focus away from defining this group of children solely in relation to HIV and instead lead to recognition of the broad range of situations where young people may have additional caring responsibilities, such as where family members are affected by other chronic illnesses or disability, where parents/relatives have mental health problems or drug or alcohol use problems, as well as where young people care for siblings in child- and youth-headed/sibling-headed households (Evans 2012).

In view of the potential value of identifying caregiving children as a specific group who may require support to ensure that care work does not result in negative

outcomes, some modifications to Becker's (2000) original definition of "young carers" are suggested. The definition below recognizes the cultural specificities of familial and communal responsibilities and care needs in Africa and elsewhere in the global South:

Young carers can be defined as children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care, assistance or support for a relative or community member. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility that would usually be associated with an adult in particular cultural contexts. The person receiving care may be a parent, sibling, grandparent, other relative or community member who has a need for care, support or supervision which is related to an impairment, chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition. The need for care may also be related to a sibling's/relative's/neighbor's young or old age and competencies. (adapted from Becker 2000, p. 378)

5 Implications for Policy and Practice

The perspective adopted by key stakeholders in relation to children's caring responsibilities may have significant implications for policy and practice. If a child labor abolitionist/child protection approach is adopted, the focus of policy and practice may be on preventing children being drawn into young caregiving in the first place and abolishing young caregiving. However, a "young carer"/child-centered rights perspective accepts that children have familial caring responsibilities, which may have positive as well as negative effects on their lives. By implication, efforts should be focused on supporting children and alleviating the extent and nature of their care work. The danger is that a focus on preventing young caregiving results in a lack of support for young carers and further obfuscates the work they do in the private space of the home.

As discussed earlier, distinguishing between culturally appropriate caregiving responsibilities and child labor is difficult. NGO workers supporting children with caring roles in families affected by HIV in Tanzania held a relatively narrow view of child labor in terms of economic exploitation and children's substantial involvement in income-earning activities. Care work within the home was therefore not regarded as "child labor," although NGO staff identified a number of potentially "harmful" impacts on children's lives, including disruptions to their education, emotional distress, and the potential risk of children becoming infected with HIV through their caring activities for a parent/relative with HIV (Evans and Becker 2009). Even though the NGO staff did not consider young caregiving a form of child labor, they did recognize the potential "harmful" impacts of young caregiving, which resonate with child labor legislation.

The lack of clarity in drawing a line between "appropriate" or "inappropriate" caregiving may explain why so little has been done to support caregiving children in sub-Saharan Africa. This was evident at a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2011, where stakeholders from the NGO community and government came together to discuss a way forward to support young carers. At the meeting, a senior official

from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in Kenya commented that “advocacy and support for caregiving children must not be a backdoor entry into child labor” (Skovdal et al. 2013, pp. 121–122). Through this comment, the Ministry representative not only linked young caregiving with child labor but also alluded to a potential impact of this association, namely, a fear that support for caregiving children could be seen as an endorsement of child labor. Such apprehensions may encourage public sector actors and agencies to err on the side of caution and adopt a more clear-cut abolitionist approach to children’s work (whether paid or unpaid), preventing the development of support services for the many children who are already providing care in communities affected by HIV. It could therefore be argued that legislation for one vulnerable group of children (namely, those in hazardous employment) may lead to inaction and a lack of legal protection and support for another group of children (“young carers” who are caring for sick and dying parents) (ibid.).

One alternative may be to intensify efforts aimed at preventing young caregiving. While there are obvious benefits to strengthening health and social welfare systems in sub-Saharan Africa, it will take a long time and many resources, before the necessary welfare infrastructure is in place to deal with the impact of HIV and disability on children’s lives. Moreover, young caregiving still takes place in countries such as the UK where “young carers” have been recognized in legislation and policy and significant welfare and family support is available for disabled parents and young carers. There is also a risk that efforts to prevent young caregiving undermine cultural understandings of kinship care and familial responsibilities. Given the challenge of preventing young caregiving and the lack of political will to support young carers, informed by an abolitionist approach to child labor, there is a need for a more “regulatory” approach to legislation (Bourdillon et al. 2009). Such an approach needs to draw on local understandings and definitions of what constitutes culturally inappropriate/appropriate levels of caregiving by children and considers local realities and responses.

In a consultation process with 283 members of a Luo community in western Kenya, Skovdal and colleagues (2013) unpacked community perceptions of young caregiving and their recommendations on how best to support children with excessive caregiving responsibilities. While community members felt that children should help out at home and thought that this was important for their socialization, they also said, in agreement with the ILO, that children should not provide round-the-clock care and be unable to attend school. Community members felt that children who find themselves in such a situation should be supported through a multi-sectorial response involving local community groups (see Fig. 1). This resonates with the findings by Evans and Becker (2009), where community health workers highlighted the role of the community in supporting caregiving children:

The community around the person with HIV/AIDS should be involved in helping to lessen the children’s burden so that they may be able to have time for doing things like private study. This will also help relieve the worry and stress that children may experience. (home-based care worker, Tanzania; Evans and Becker 2009)

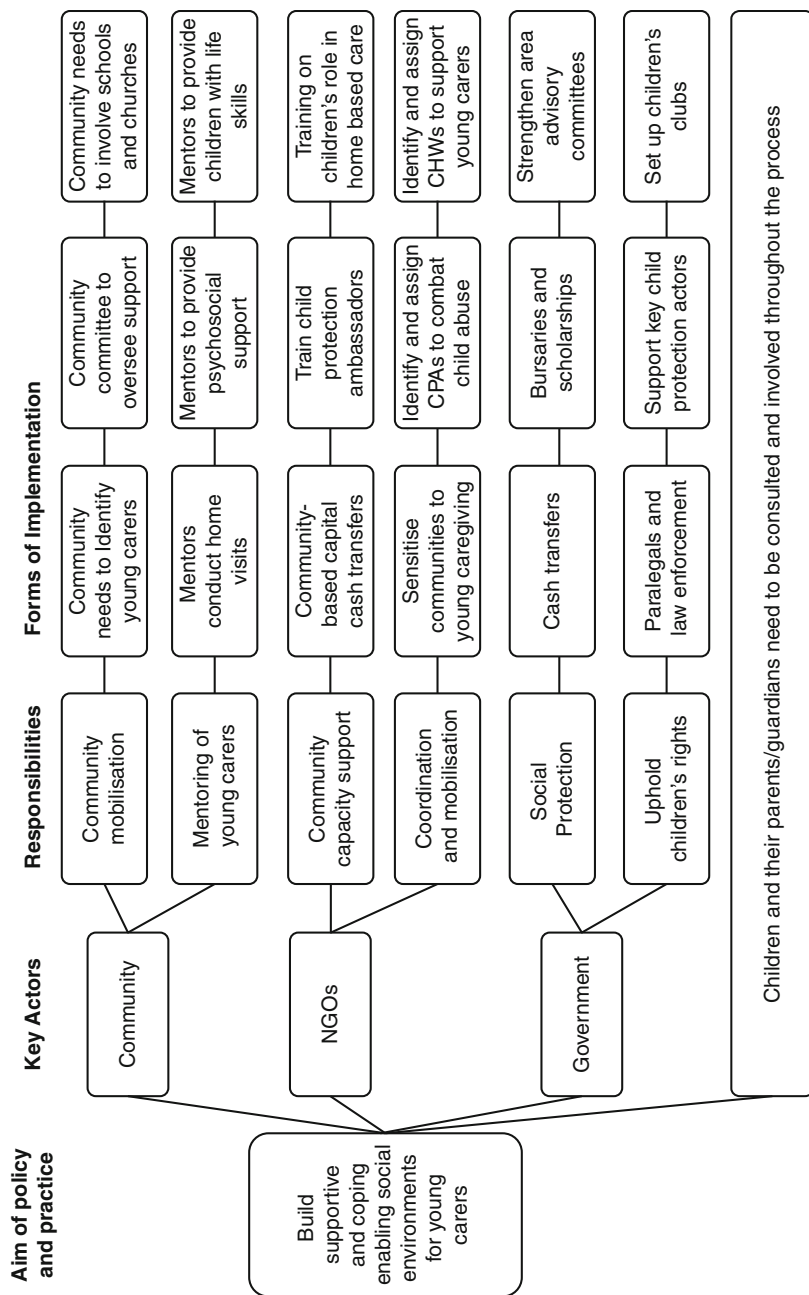


Fig. 1 Pathways to a supportive and coping-enabling social environment for young carers (Skovdal et al. 2013)

Adopting a contextual, multi-sectorial response, as recommended by community members in western Kenya and exemplified in Fig. 1, would go some way toward alleviating the extent of children's care work and reducing negative outcomes – moving children along the continuum toward “lighter” care work. Efforts that seek to support children with caregiving responsibilities must however be sensitive to the dangers of constructing caregiving children as “more deserving” than other vulnerable children. It is therefore important to involve children and youth in the process, listening to their views and perceptions of caregiving and their needs, using this as the basis for identifying levels of vulnerability within specific sociocultural contexts.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the spatialities of children's rights through a focus on how children's paid and unpaid work in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere in the global South intersects with wider debates about child labor, child domestic work, and young caregiving. Several tensions surrounding the universalist and individualistic nature of the rights discourse are evident. Policymakers, practitioners, children, and community members in many African countries have emphasized the importance of recognizing children's *responsibilities* to their families and communities, as well as their *rights*. This chapter has highlighted the limitations of ILO definitions of child labor and child domestic work and UNCRC concerns about “hazardous” and “harmful” work through consideration of the situation of children providing unpaid domestic and care support to family members in the private space of their own or a relative's home. Such work is often gendered as girls' responsibilities, due to assumptions about women's and girls' “natural” nurturing roles within private, domestic spaces. This can lead to reduced spatial mobility and perpetuate gender inequalities in access to education, health, and social participation. Research from Tanzania (Evans and Becker 2009) and Kenya (Skovdal et al. 2009) suggests however that boys are also involved in caring for family and community members when female relatives are not available, and thus young caregiving should not be associated only with girls.

The chapter has revealed the difficulties as well as the potential benefits of defining children undertaking care work for family and community members as a specific group. While the use of the term “young carers” to refer to children with caring responsibilities is not without criticism in the global South, the chapter proposes a definition of “young carers” that recognizes the diversity of kinship care arrangements and children's reciprocal responsibilities to their families and communities in sub-Saharan Africa. When used precisely to refer to a specific group, this definition could represent a potentially helpful way of recognizing children's active roles and responsibilities in supporting family members who have a need for care due to chronic illness, disability, and young or old age and identifying their support needs. Identification of “young carers” as a social group however should not preclude a research and policy focus on the views and

experiences of disabled parents and relatives. Debates between disability theorists and young carer researchers in the global North (Keith and Morris 1995; Olsen 1996; Newman 2002) as well as an ethic of care approach (Evans and Becker 2009; Evans and Thomas 2009) have revealed the importance of seeking to understand the perspectives of parents and relatives “receiving” care as well as children “giving” care.

Differing perspectives toward young caregiving have been adopted to date by policymakers and practitioners in East Africa, ranging from a child labor/child protection/abolitionist approach to a “young carer”/child-centered rights perspective. These differing perspectives have considerable implications for policy and practice, determining the level and nature of support and resources that children involved in care work may be able to access. A focus on abolishing child labor and preventing children from being drawn into young caregiving should not be used as a means of absolving government, development agencies, and NGOs from taking responsibility to support the many children involved in care work and their families, since they are often living in chronic poverty and lack alternative sources of support.

Material, financial, healthcare, emotional, and peer support targeted toward children and family members living with HIV and other chronic illnesses and impairments or those with age-related care needs may help to alleviate the extent and nature of children’s care work and move children along the continuum toward lower levels of caregiving and responsibility that are considered age and culturally appropriate, with no evidence of harmful outcomes on children’s lives. A contextual, multi-sectorial approach to young caregiving is needed that seeks to understand children’s, family members’, and community members’ perceptions of what constitutes inappropriate/appropriate caring responsibilities within particular cultural contexts and how these should best be alleviated. Research, policy, and development interventions should therefore start from an understanding of children’s, parents’, relatives’, and community members’ views and experiences and seek to provide holistic support, based on recognition and assessment of the interrelated needs of the person with care needs, children with caring responsibilities, other family and community members, and wider support networks. This would help to foster the development of supportive, coping, and enabling environments that seek to empower children, families, and communities.

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Privatized Rights, Segregated Childhoods: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Education Policy in India

2

Nisha Thapliyal

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Abstract

This chapter analyzes the cultural politics of rights-based discourses for education and children in India. It is empirically grounded in sociohistorical discourses about mass education with a focus on the 2009 Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (hereafter referred to as the RTE Act). This analysis explores the disjuncture between the RTE Act and the multiplicity and diversity of contemporary Indian childhoods. In particular, it shows how dominant discourses of childhood, education, and development intersect to promote the neoliberal project of the commodification and commercialization of education. In this context, it is argued that the language of rights has been co-opted to legitimize segregated and unequal schooling and, relatedly, promote the privatization of public education. The goal of this chapter is to highlight the need for contingent explorations of children's experiences of schooling in order to provide complex understandings of how children make meaning about themselves as well as other children in unequal social contexts.

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1 Introduction

I was born to a family of modest means. In my childhood I had to walk a long distance to go to school. I read under the dim light of a kerosene lamp. I am what I am today because of education. I want every Indian child, girl and boy, to be so touched by the light of education. I want every Indian to dream of a better future and live that dream

Former Prime Minister (PM) Manmohan Singh spoke these words in his Address to the Nation to mark the passage of the historic Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act. In addition to his personal account of hard work, perseverance, and eventual success, the PM underlined the importance of education to the nation: “We are a Nation of young people. The health, education and creative abilities of our children and young people will determine the wellbeing and strength of our Nation.”

At the time of this address, India had the largest number of illiterate people in the world (one-third of the global illiterate population), and pushout (or dropout) rates before completion of 5 years of primary schooling remained unacceptably high. A trillion dollar economy and the fourth largest in the world (Mehrotra 2010), India also had and has the largest number of malnourished children in the world, with rates of malnutrition greater than those in much poorer countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Mehrotra 2010). Disaggregated statistics reveal that the historically marginalized groups of Scheduled Castes (SCs, hereafter referred to as Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (STs, hereafter referred to as Adivasis) who together comprise a quarter of the country's population have the worst income poverty and human development indicators in the entire population. Children from these groups along with Muslims and poor girls across caste, religion, and rural-urban categories are significantly less likely to complete even 5 years of primary education, let alone reach tertiary education (Chanana 2006; Reddy and Sinha 2010; Matin et al. 2013).

Given this dismal state of affairs, the work of “selling” the Act to the Indian public was single-handedly taken on by Kapil Sibal, the media-savvy Human Resource Development Minister. On one 2009 prime-time news television program, *Face the Nation*, Sibal stated: “Ultimately, education is a product. It must be consumer-friendly.” In another 2010 televised appearance on *We the People*, he elaborated on the economic rationality underpinning the Act: “If we have a critical mass of people, children who... reach college, then wealth will be created in the university system because that's where the real wealth of a nation – the non-tangible assets – are created.” With the support of the corporate news media and its primarily middle-class viewing audience, the former Supreme Court lawyer encountered few criticisms of his unabashedly marketized vision of the future of Indian children and education.

This chapter analyzes the cultural politics of rights-based discourses for education and children in India. It is empirically grounded in sociohistorical discourses about mass education with a focus on the 2009 Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (hereafter referred to as the RTE Act). This analysis explores the disjuncture between the RTE Act and the multiplicity and diversity of contemporary Indian childhoods. In particular, it shows how dominant discourses of childhood, education, and development intersect to promote the neoliberal project of the commodification and commercialization of education. In this context, it is argued that the language of rights has been co-opted to legitimize segregated and unequal schooling and, relatedly, promote the privatization of public education. The discussion is organized into three main sections beginning with a situated overview of the sociohistorical discourses, which produced and legitimized educational segregation along the lines of caste-class. This section argues that schools continue to play a key role in maintaining and reproducing an unequal social hierarchy by regulating conceptions and distributions of cultural capital. The next section identifies the neoliberal conceptions of rights in the RTE Act and highlights the inability of this legislation to delegitimize segregated and unequal schooling. The concluding section highlights the need for contingent explorations of children's life worlds, including schooling, in order to provide complex understandings of how children make meaning about themselves as well as other children in unequal social contexts.

2 A History of Segregated Schooling

The scholarship on colonial and postcolonial schooling has underlined that the Indian mass education system was founded on the “express proposition of difference” (Kumar 2011, pp. 232–233) where hierarchical constructions of social difference legitimized deeply stratified and oppressive social arrangements, for example, culturally situated constructions of knowledge as sacred conveyed status but not economic security for teachers and students in precolonial Hindu and Islamic education traditions. Teachers and students of the classical traditions, including those from the upper castes, were entirely dependent on elite patronage or rather charity, for their day-to-day survival (Rao 2013). The introduction of the British colonial class-based system of education did little to improve the conditions of these groups. Instead, colonial education policy primarily served the purpose of restricting access to education and thus protecting the interests of the indigenous elite (the nobility and landowning classes) (Kumar 1991). The latter, who in time, came to include Hindu and Muslim, Western-educated nationalists, actively thwarted efforts to expand schooling on the grounds that the best education for poor children was to work, earn, and learn a trade (Rao 2013).

It is important to note that poor children were synonymous with low-caste children. Thus, in addition to thwarting access to schooling, Hindu and Muslim traditionalists demanded and established separate curriculum for wealthy, upper-caste and poor, lower-caste children. As a group of men with tremendous economic

as well as political power, they were eventually successful in stopping the 1910–1911 Free and Compulsory Education Bills introduced by Gopal Krishna Gokhale who argued that conditions for the poor could only improve through the universalization of free elementary education. Thus, nationalist elites played a key role in the establishment of a split, public-private mass education system to protect and reproduce the power and privileges of elite groups. From inception, access to high-status privately provided education was predicated on social and economic privilege. It was initially limited to boys and men from the landed aristocracy and upper castes and gradually to both sexes from the emerging educated urban middle classes (Fernandes 2006). However, some landholding lower-caste groups (particularly in south India) were able to successfully mobilize at various historical moments to establish their own fee-charging educational (primary and higher education) institutions. Kumar (1992) notes the symbiotic interaction between colonial utilitarian thinking and the efforts by Indian propertied and professional classes to protect their privileged position in the established social structure. The British actively supported “native self-help” initiatives to invest in private schools primarily intended to maintain a separation between SC and ST and other caste (upper and lower) groups (Kamat et al. 2004).

Thus, “quality for a few” dominated the logic of educational expansion in independent India. The Indian state, which emerged from the nationalist struggle, was a “coalitional” state (Kamat et al. 2004) where the state drew its mandate from multiple forces. They included mainly Hindu, male, upper-caste, and upper-class elites alongside a mobilized stratum of subaltern communities under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who envisioned a scientific, liberal, and socialist India. However, the imperative of economic development to “catch up” with the developed world drove most of his policies including education. Despite a plethora of alternatives for anti-colonial and anti-capitalist education constructed by eminent indigenous thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Aurobindo, the state adopted a capitalist, human capital approach to mass schooling where the rhetoric of meritocracy and “national interest” undermined demands for equity and social justice. For instance, Nehru prioritized the establishment of highly selective, high-quality public engineering universities (the renowned IITs) and left the challenge of universalization to state governments with widely differing resources and ideologies. At the same time, the state continued to subsidize elite English-medium private and government schools who together educated the children of the ruling classes.

After Nehru’s death, the rhetoric of socialism and state-driven equity policies faded rapidly from the vocabulary of leaders across the political spectrum. By the early 1990s, Nehru’s grandson Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was able to adopt the recommendations of the World Bank to implement structural adjustment and liberalization of the economy with the active support of Indian elites. During his tenure, the 1986 National Plan of Education expanded and institutionalized a multitiered system of segregated and privatized schooling through a wholesale

transfer of responsibility for public education from the state to the nongovernmental sector (see, e.g., Kamat (2002) and the collection of essays in Kumar (2006)). This was around the same time that India signed on to the 1990 Education for All global initiative and was officially labeled an E9 country – one of the nine with the lowest rates of primary school enrollment in the world.

The primary vehicle for universalization became the nonformal DPEP (District Primary Education Program), designed and funded by the World Bank (and other international agencies). It provided low-quality educational programs to the so-called hard-to-reach groups of children delivered by untrained and underpaid instructors. Other “targeted” initiatives such as selective government schools for meritorious students from disadvantaged groups (primarily girls and SC/ST) (the *Navodaya* or model schools) and hostels (residential schools) introduced new tiers of stratification under the rhetoric of public-private partnerships (PPPs) (Saxena 2012). After the pilot project, DPEP was renamed SSA (Education for All) and “scaled up” to the entire country. Despite research that demonstrates a wide variation in education quality and outcomes, the Indian government continues to borrow money from the World Bank (in exchange for structural adjustment conditionalities) to pay for SSA. The program also receives funds from other international development agencies and a 2 % cess (tax). Overall expenditure on education (as a percent of GDP) remains lower than rates achieved in the mid-1980s (Sadgopal 2009).

In the late 1990s, privatization accelerated with the mushrooming of unregulated English-medium “budget” or low-cost for-profit private schools in urban and rural areas. As a direct consequence, government schools, particularly in rural areas, emptied out of all students except children without purchasing power including poor girls, Dalits, and Adivasis (PROBE 1999, 2006). Since liberalization, opportunities to profit from education have expanded exponentially. Local educational entrepreneurs such as franchise private coaching/tutoring institutions (e.g., NIIT) prospered in the 1980s. Indian education has now become an important hunting ground for global venture capitalists such as the Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (created by the textbook giants multinational corporation – Pearson Inc.), Gates Foundation, and the International Finance Corporation (Ball 2012). Most recently, urban municipalities (e.g., Delhi, Mumbai) have handed over the management of publicly funded government schools to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) funded by a mix of corporate foundations, local philanthropic societies, and international donors (Kamat and Dhuru 2013).

In summary, the distribution of education can be imagined as an inverted, multitiered pyramid topped by a small group of exclusive or highly selective private schools and government schools. Exclusive private schools include a complex mix of high-cost, for-profit institutions as well as relatively lower-cost, not-for-profit minority institutions, mainly the schools established by colonial missionaries in urban and semi-urban areas. The vast majority of Indian children face a choiceless choice between barely functioning government schools, unregulated budget private schools, and nonformal education.

2.1 Schools as Stores of Cultural Capital

Schools play a key role in the production of “particular geographical imaginaries” which not only tell us who we are and who we can become (individually and ideally) but also tell us who we are and who “others” are collectively (Thiem 2009, p. 161). What can be inferred about the subjectivities and identities produced by a segregated and unequal education system? This section concludes with a discussion about how schools inform the ways in which children construct their own selfhoods as well as imagine and relate to children from other social groups.

It must be emphasized that elite or high-status schools are distinguished from all others by the efficacy with which they regulate the distribution of cultural and social capital (Thiem 2009). This cultural capital accrues historically from a complex mix of Hindu, upper-caste and upper-class, urban, Western-educated, patriarchal norms and dispositions (Kumar 1991; Manjrekar 2011). Although the ruling classes have always looked upward and outward to the Anglophone West, economic liberalization has meant that the middle and new middle classes also aspire to global marketability and mobility (Chopra and Jeffery 2005; Kamat et al. 2004; Fernandes 2006; Rahman 2009). Thus, for example, elite private schools now offer not just English-medium instruction in the “right” accent but also international curricula such as the International Baccalaureate and study abroad and student exchange opportunities. In his essay titled “Implications of a Divisive School System,” Krishna Kumar (1992, p. 52) argues that structural reform is impossible in India as long as elite schools protect “avenues of sponsored mobility” to exclusive higher education institutions and elite jobs. In these ways, high-status elite schools reproduce advantage and disadvantage in “places where schooling is consumed and produced” (Thiem 2009, p. 158).

It is also important to clarify here that high-status education does not necessarily conflate with Western conceptions of progressive, child-centered education. Emerging scholarship on progressive-oriented reforms reveals that child-centered pedagogy and curriculum are in a nascent stage and heavily mediated by the social locations of and relationships between students and teachers (Batra 2005; Chawla-Duggan 2007; Bajaj 2011; Majumdar and Mooij 2011; Sriprakash 2012). Qualitative research on everyday teaching practices emphasizes the enduring nature of precolonial constructions of the teacher-student relationship which privilege the teacher as the repository of valuable knowledge and educational practices (Sarangapani 2003; Alam 2013; see also Winkelmann and Hameed in Chopra and Jeffery 2005). Instead, dominant schooling discourse continues to place the responsibility for success and failure on children and sometimes their families. Within the dominant regime(s) of mass education, the child has been primarily constructed as “in the process of becoming” an object of future value to their family and society (Jenks 1996). This reductionist approach to education is pervasive in the entire hierarchy of the education system, where students are reduced to human capital who must be drilled in skills required by the marketplace.

A common thread in the emerging body of qualitative research on educationally privileged (e.g., MacDougall 2005; Banaji 2010, 2012; Rahman 2009; Linder 2011)

and disadvantaged children (e.g., Nieuwenhuys 1993; Sarangapani 2003; Morrow 2013) is the shared conception of academic success as something that benefits their family(s) as well as themselves. These findings suggest that children internalize an individualized sense of responsibility for success and failure, which transcends boundaries of caste and class. For example, Kumar (2011) and Page, Parry, and Jeffery in Chopra and Jeffery (2005) show that middle- and upper-class children who fail to “bring in returns” on the substantial investments in their schooling do not escape stigma and feelings of low self-worth. Research with poor children reveals an internalized discourse of “waste” (Morrow 2013) even though these children must negotiate competing demands of livelihood, schoolwork, and, in many cases, teachers who view them as “uneducable” (Sriprakash 2012). Given the dominant construction of “education as a frontier” in many poor families, success is not just about ability but endurance and luck as well (Nieuwenhuys 1993). The ones who persevere do so knowing full well that mere completion of school does not provide any guarantees of secure, let alone high-status, employability. For example, Balagopalan’s (in Chopra and Jeffery 2005) study of poor, urban children in a nonformal education program shows that these young people are keenly aware that their education provides them little more than basic literacy. In a similar study, poor rural children demonstrate their knowledge of the fact that their families are unlikely to be able to make further investments in their education to secure the necessary cultural capital for prized government service jobs let alone employment in the corporate sector (Morrow 2013).

While subjectivities of failure and low worth appear to transcend hierarchies of caste and class, less is known about how children imagine and relate to children from other social groups. Studies such as the PROBE reports (1999, 2006) on government primary schools provided qualitative insights into the embedded nature of cultural prejudices in the day-to-day practice of schooling among teachers, students, and parents (see also Chanana 2006; Bénéï 2008). Teacher training institutions are yet to require students to engage with questions of identity, diversity, and equity (Batra 2005; GoI 2012). In particular, there is a gap in the research literature about how elite Indian children perceive and relate to others who are socially constructed as less worthy and capable relative to themselves. As a whole, elite schools continue to ensure “that their students live in a restricted universe” which does not reflect lived realities on environments characterized by wealth and poverty (Kumar 1992, p. 46). Historically, the majority of high-fee private schools have shown few signs of social responsibility toward children from disadvantaged groups, even those schools legally required to admit these children in return for receipt of state-subsidized land and other subsidies (Juneja 2005). However, there is now a growing trend to “adopt” NGO schools that deliver nonformal education to underprivileged children. There are few studies on this growing trend toward privatized and corporatized social responsibility. One study on private school “outreach” by Ashley (2005) suggests that these initiatives do not interrupt the “parallel” educational tracks, which separate privileged and disadvantaged children. Emerging research on the philanthropic efforts of the new Indian middle classes suggests that education continues to function as a key site for the

reproduction of relations of patronage and charity. The current trend of “school adoptions” is merely a continuation of the tradition in which “liberal-minded” members of the middle class might provide an inferior quality of education to their domestic servants (and their children) as a conditional reward for lifelong and loyal servitude (Qayum and Ray 2003; Tolen 2000). However, these charitable urges have never extended as far as caste-class integrated institutions as evidenced by the sustained undermining of affirmative action initiatives – initially in higher education and now through the RTE Act in primary education as well.

This brief and partial review of the scholarly literature on childhood and schooling in India highlights a multiplicity of identities, subjectivities, and life worlds as well as structural inequalities that restrict the life chances of the majority of Indian children. To what extent does the RTE Act, passed 60 years after a mandate from the 1950 Constitution, respond to the scope of diversity and inequality identified here? The Preamble of the Act states that the overall goal is to inculcate values of equality, social justice, and democracy and create a humane and just society (the Statement of Objectives and Reasons of the Act Paragraph 3(a)). However, the next section argues that the Act manifests a neoliberal discourse of rights which continues to protect and promote the intersecting interests of the ruling class(es) and global capital.

3 Privatized Rights

The historical significance of the RTE Act lies in the adoption of the language of “rights-based” legislation to universalize primary education. The Act guarantees 8 years of free and compulsory education for children aged between 6 and 14 years from Class 1 to 8. Other historic reforms include the introduction of minimum norms and standards for recognition of all schools including fee-charging, unaided schools, the banning of corporal punishment, and the abolition of all examinations except at the time of school leaving in Class 10 or 12. The legislation also requires all schools to hire qualified teachers (without providing minimum criteria for these qualifications) and to make curriculum and assessment child-friendly. Other reforms are specific to certain social groups and kinds of schools. One of the most controversial provisions is the requirement that fee-charging schools to reserve 25 % of seats in Class 1 for children from “economically weaker and socially disadvantaged” (EWSD) groups.

The corporate news media chose to present the Act as a historic moment instead of yet another symbolic rights-based legislation that lacked the teeth for implementation. This ahistorical representation glossed over the 60 years that the ruling classes ignored mandates for the right to education and children’s rights in the 1948 Constitution (Article 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, and 21A). The fundamental rights and directive principles in the Constitution previsited most of the basic rights and needs of children enshrined in the 1990 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) (CRC) ratified by India in 1992 (Bajpai 2010).

It also ignored four decades of international work to elaborate the full scope of the right to education (in the 1948 UN Declaration on Human Rights) through the international legal human rights framework including at least 25 international treaties, declarations, and other documents relating to the right to education and another 14 at the regional level in Europe, Africa, and the Americas (Tomasevski 2006; De Beco 2009). Last but not the least, the corporate news media excluded several decades of local child rights activism which has highlighted the failure of the mass education system to be responsive to the situated needs of child workers, children with special needs, and Muslim, Dalit (pejoratively called “untouchables”), and Adivasi (indigenous) children (PROBE 1999; Reddy and Sinha 2010; Balagopalan 2014). It is important to emphasize that local discourse is not homogenous in its acceptance of Western, liberal, and apolitical conceptions of childhood that undergird UN child rights discourse. For instance, Raman (2000) notes that the passing of the CRC took place at the same time as the problems and consequences of structural adjustment programs in poor countries became globally visible. However, the corporate media is complicit in the silencing of discourses that challenge the dominant model of capitalist economic development and expose the concentration of economic and political power within the ruling classes.

Neoliberalism is a discourse which privileges markets as the most efficient (and neutral) social institution to distribute scarce resources and, relatedly, conceptions of freedom based on individual choice (Apple 2006). From a neoliberal perspective, the overarching goal of education is to build human capital. Children are constructed as future workers who need skills to compete efficiently and effectively in an intensely competitive world (Apple 2006, p. 32). Given the limitations of space and time, this analysis only focuses on sections of the legislation which construct children and their rights *to* and *in* education. Thapliyal (2012) makes a rights-based analysis of the entire legislation using the 4A Framework (developed by former UN Rapporteur on the Right to Education Dr. Katarina Tomasevski). To begin with, how does the RTE Act define children, and to which of these children does the state have an obligation to provide free education? And relatedly, does the RTE Act recognize any rights other than access to schooling?

3.1 Definitions of Children

The Act defines the child in Section 2(c) as follows: ““child” means a male or female child of age six to fourteen years.” It also constructs two categories of children as economically weak and socially disadvantaged as follows:

Section 2(d): ““child belonging to a disadvantaged group” means a child belonging to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, the socially and educationally backward class, or such other group having disadvantage owing to social, cultural, economical, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factor, as may be specified by the appropriate Government, by notification.”

Section 2 (e): ““child belong to weaker section” means a child belonging to such parent or guardian whose annual income is lower than the minimum limit specified by the appropriate Government, by notification.”

These definitions have been criticized as limited and exclusionary from a number of vantage points including children with disabilities and the age limitations in the definition. First, disability rights activists were quick to point out the exclusion of children with special needs: an estimated 30 million children in this age group. Within a month of its passing, the Act was amended to include disabilities covered by the National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999, in addition to the definitions covered by the 1995 Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act. However, in the absence of mandated requirements for disabled-friendly infrastructure and relevant pedagogies, the inclusion of this group of children remains largely symbolic.

Second, activists argued that the failure to provide education to children less than 6 years is in blatant violation of legal directives from the Indian Constitution and subsequent Supreme Court rulings (Sadgopal 2009). Furthermore, the limitation of the scope of state obligation to Class 8 is equally egregious in a context where no secure form of employment or higher education is possible without a Class 12 certification (Sadgopal 2009). Anti-child labor activists also pointed out that a “stronger” definition of “child” would put an end to child labor immediately – such as the one adopted in the 2008 Resolution on the “Abolition of Child Labor and Realization of Right to Education” by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). The Resolution defines a child as any person under 18 years of age and child laborers as all children who are out of school and child work as detrimental to children whether hazardous or not (Niranjanradhya 2009).

3.2 Which Rights?

The Act adopts a severely restricted conception of children’s rights in education beginning with the dilution of the child’s fundamental right to use his or her own language in the early years of his or her education to a matter of “practicability” (Section 29 (2) (f) of the Act). It also omits rights-based learning or pedagogies that are relevant and responsive to the needs of diverse groups of children (Article 12.1 of the CRC and Article 24.1(c) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). As other contributors to this volume such as Parkes (► Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education”) have argued, rights-based approaches must incorporate opportunities for children to learn about and enact their rights (as well as those of their fellow citizens) (Article 29 of the CRC), e.g., through school-based mechanisms for democratic participation.

Discrimination in educational settings is constructed only as a problem of individual or interpersonal and overt prejudice. The Rules (9.3) that accompany

the Act identify and prohibit discrimination based on caste, class, religion, and gender in admissions procedures (Rule 13), through segregation in the classroom and playground, during mealtimes, and in the use of toilet and water facilities (Rule 9.4). Unaided (private, fee-charging) and specified category (elite government) schools are specifically required not to discriminate in admissions or segregate or sort children in terms of class grouping, class timings, and entitlements and access to facilities like textbooks, uniforms, sports, ICT, and library facilities (Rule 11.2). From a rights-based perspective, these formulations fail to engage with the structural discrimination around caste, class, religion, and gender which permeate the broader culture (see, e.g., Teltumbde 2008) as well as the day-to-day practice of schooling: medium of instruction, textbooks, curricula, pedagogy, disciplinary, and governance practices (Thapliyal 2012).

It is clear then that the underlying logic of the RTE Act prioritizes social and economic efficiency over any notion of rights and equity. In addition to excluding a large number of children, the central government refused to make financial allocations to implement the RTE Act on economic grounds of limited resources and efficiency. However, the limited scope of the legislation also underlines the human capital ideology that underpins state commitment to free and universal education. The state only recognizes its obligations to those of its child citizens who are viewed to have the potential to be economically productive. From this perspective, education is not of intrinsic value and a fundamental right. Instead, it is instrumental to maintaining a diverse supply of workers for the shifting needs of global capital. The 25 % reservation component of the legislation provides the final example of how the language of rights has been co-opted to legitimize segregation and promote the privatization of public education.

3.3 The Legitimation of Separate and Unequal

The RTE Act requires private schools to reserve 25 % of seats in Class 1 for poor and socially disadvantaged children living in the neighborhood of the school. In what many consider to be a de facto “school voucher” initiative, the government will pay private schools the same amount of money which would have been spent on the child in a government school. Of course, this funding does not cover children who wish to continue their studies beyond Class 8. The government has asked private schools to “bear” the extra cost (or the wide gap) of educating these children as a form of social responsibility. Given the cultural politics of segregated education previously discussed, it should come as no surprise that private schools have devoted considerable resources to stalling and resisting implementation of this reservation scheme (Srivastava and Noronha 2014). In fact, litigation by the influential private school lobby halted implementation of the reservations for 4 years until the Supreme Court settled the issue in 2013. The ruling deemed the reservation scheme constitutional and on the same grounds granted exceptions to schools run by religious minority groups, which include some of the most expensive and exclusive residential/boarding schools in the country.

Regardless of whether and when the 25 % reservation is finally implemented, what is clear here is that the RTE Act represents a privatized conception of rights where access to education is determined by purchasing power and cultural capital. It also represents a redirection of state power to protect and promote the interests of capital through nonformalization, vouchers, deprofessionalization, and outright privatization. Five years after the RTE Act was passed, little has changed in government schools. Instead, state governments, including relatively wealthy states such as Karnataka and Maharashtra, have begun to “merge” or close government schools in unprecedented numbers or, as previously mentioned, transfer responsibility for management to private providers.

In this context, rights discourse becomes reconfigured into the neoliberal “right to buy” (Burman 2012, p. 432). Those without purchasing power are left vulnerable to the complementary discourse of charitable philanthropy, which normalizes and legitimizes deeply invasive interventions by the wealthy and privileged into the lives of subaltern groups. Thus, neoliberal rights discourse reconfigures notions of social responsibility to privatized and corporatized notions of volunteerism and philanthropy, which are disinclined to question the existing distribution of power and material resources. In liberalizing India, local discourses of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility resonate with the global discourse of “compassion” where idealized victim subjects, including children, are the target of “vicarious appeals by activists, philanthropists, and the state” and supported by ample “funds, protectionist laws, and images” (Sircar and Dutta 2011, p. 334). The privatization of social responsibility engineered by structural adjustment reforms over the last decade has now positioned not only adults but children from the Global North as “helpers” and “rescuers” of children (and adults) in the Global South. “Sister school” arrangements as well as for-profit international volunteering and service-learning organizations now help the former “ease the suffering” of their peers through a “fixed set of aestheticized” intervention tools based on liberal, idealized notions of modern childhood (Uberoi in Sircar and Dutta 2011). This discourse of individualized and privatized rights and responsibility facilitates “a larger process of exporting the blame from the decisions of dominant groups onto the state and onto poor people” (Apple 2006, p. 32). In the case of children, it permits the state to govern the youngest of its vulnerable citizens “from a distance”. This analysis underlines that a liberal conception of the state as the sole political authority in the domain of education is inadequate to the purposes of understanding the roots of educational exclusion and segregation in India. The conception of the state as mediator between the interests of capital accumulation and democratic legitimation provides more complex insights into the policy choices and actions of the Indian developmentalist state.

4 Conclusion

Idealized representations of children and childhood abound in social discourses beyond schooling. For example, children’s literature is a key space, which reproduces dominant notions of idealized childhood(s), based on Westernized, urban,

upper-caste, middle-class, and patriarchal norms and worldviews. Sreenivas (2011) identifies hegemonic representations of childhood as a time for innocence, play, and so on and, correspondingly, a tendency to essentialize childhoods in marginalized groups such as Dalits and Muslims. She argues that these representations perform the work of depoliticization by individualizing or separating the suffering of the marginalized child from his or her family and cultural context and foregrounding only the less contentious aspects of his or her cultural identity. As critical scholars have shown, exoticized representations of nondominant childhoods work to “other” different childhoods while at the same time “erasing” complex forms of marginalization.

Essentialized representations of children abound in the media including largely negative stereotypes about poor and marginalized children and positive ones about those from privileged groups. In India as elsewhere, images of middle-class children are now used to sell everything from Coca-Cola to laundry detergent to cars (Joseph 2007). The news media reflects a similar preference for educationally and socially privileged children (Linder 2011). Sarangapani and Vidya (2011) report that when education is reported in the news, it tends to reflect the educational concerns of urban, middle-class, English consumers. In doing so, the media plays a central role in the reproduction of the myth of meritocracy that has sustained and legitimized a segregated and unequal education system (Kumar 1992). Critical media analyses provide some situated insights into the production of children as consumers but not about how children mediate these productions (Banaji 2010, 2012). Similarly, children’s voices are markedly absent from most of the scholarly literature on schooling in India.

Formalized schooling plays a key role in the social and political construction of persons and citizens, albeit in negotiated or mediated ways (Bénéï 2008). Indeed, “school is not just a space for learning and official education but one of the most omnipotent manifestations of the state in people’s lives and/or surroundings that powerfully inserts itself into the imaginaries of social actors, whether literate and “educated” or not” (Bénéï 2008, p. 21). This chapter has provided a sociocultural and historical context for the wide disparities in education and life chances that characterize childhood in India today. It has focused on segregated schooling and problematized how schools influence the ways in which children “imagine” and “experience” one another’s realities in the context of life worlds segregated by caste, class, and so forth (McCarthy and Dimitriadis 2000).

The RTE Act has little to offer in the way of rights or equality to the children of India. Instead, this legislation actively depoliticizes and privatizes conceptions of children’s rights in the domain of education and beyond. What dominant discourse does not problematize are underlying unitary and romanticized assumptions about the relationship between childhood, education, and development (Raman 2000; Sarangapani 2003). As postcolonial scholars have pointed out, the journey to modernity in India cannot be conflated with liberal, Western, industrialized societies, particularly, in terms of the “romance” between modern nationhood and childhood (Kumar 2011, p. 225). A lens of “multiple modernities” requires research on multiple childhoods in ways that illuminate the “density of children’s

experiences, the ways in which they are acted upon, imagined and contested” (Balagopalan 2011, p. 295).

However, in the absence of children’s voices, this chapter can only offer partial insights into the cultural politics of children’s rights. Children are passive participants in their own socialization. As a number of other contributors to this volume, including Arancibia et al. (► Chap. 18, “Impact of Social Media on Chilean Student Movement”), have argued, children and young people are competent political agents who view and negotiate their worlds on their own terms. As much of the qualitative research cited here demonstrates, contingent or situated explorations of subaltern childhoods provide insights into the possibilities for “resistance to, resilience in, and reworkings of” hegemonic economic, political, and sociocultural structures (Holloway and Pimlot-Wilson 2012, p. 641). These studies begin with the premise that childhood and neoliberalism are sites of contestation. It then becomes possible if not imperative to foreground the ways in which children make meaning of their quotidian lived contexts and conditions. Critical, feminist, and postcolonial approaches to childhood studies have contributed to the deconstruction of the “victim” category that dominates discourse about children from subaltern groups. However, scholars are yet to ask how relatively privileged children make sense of adult-imposed selfhoods that foreground competition and achievement and broader discourses that reduce children to capital and profit. Given the dominant trend of privatized social responsibility, it is also imperative to ask questions about how these children make sense of their privileges and advantages relative to those of other children.

This chapter underlines the need for contingent or situated explorations of child rights and neoliberalism in the field of childhood studies. The goal has been to interrupt dominant instrumentalist discourse(s) about schooling, which legitimizes extreme educational and social inequality through a discourse of competition and segregation. It is a discourse, which is detrimental for all children – those who succeed in turning themselves into marketable commodities as well as those who do not. It is becoming increasingly clear to those positioned on the margins that, in India as in elsewhere, we are engaged in a “race to the bottom.” This hypercompetitive system is as unsustainable as the model of development it seeks to promote.

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Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care

3

Ian McIntosh, Samantha Punch, and Ruth Emond

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Abstract

The children’s rights agenda has dominated discourses around state care for children. Over recent years, a number of scandals relating to the abuse and maltreatment of looked-after children have highlighted the need for a robust and comprehensive monitoring of the day-to-day care experiences that such children receive. However, the *application* of rights is a complex process in which children themselves play a central role. In this chapter, we argue that by looking at how food and the practices around it are managed and experienced, insight can be gained to the lived *process* of “doing” right. It is suggested that food offers a window into the everyday enactment, denial, and negotiation of rights and the role that adults and children play in this. Residential care offers an interesting example of the multiple spaces that children move through and how these spaces can change in their meaning and impact. We consider how food is managed in such spaces and the ways in which such management is linked with understandings of children’s rights.

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1 Introduction

This chapter explores children's rights within the context of residential care, and it does so through an exploration of rights in relation to food and food practices. There is now a growing body of research which emphasizes the social significance of food practices in interactions between children and adults within a range of different spaces and contexts (Cele and van der Burgt, ► [Chap. 11, "Children's Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space,"](#) this volume; Daniel and Gustafsson 2011; Evans and Skovdal, ► [Chap. 1, "Defining Children's Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice,"](#) this volume Germov and Williams 2008; Howe 2005; Jackson 2009a, b; James et al. 2009a; Pike 2008, 2011; Punch et al. 2010, 2012). The study of food, while a taken-for-granted part of everyday life, offers a way to explore both the experience of care and caregiving as well as the lived enactment of children's rights. The recurring and familiar cycle of routines that surrounds food and food practices – from shopping to preparing, to consuming and cleaning up – can form temporal and spatial structures, which can vary across different national cultures, around which daily routines and interactions can gravitate (Dolphijn 2004; Emond et al. 2013; Guptill et al. 2012; Moran 2007; Marshall 2005). This is particularly pertinent within organizational spaces which children populate such as residential children's homes.

Food in relation to children is often considered from a nutritional perspective and, of course, plays a central role in basic well-being of looked-after children. However, its social dimensions and interconnection with wider care principles and objectives, such as the fulfillment of children's rights, can be crucial, if also easy to overlook (Bartos, ► [Chap. 7, "Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis,"](#) this volume; Germov and Williams 2008; Warde and Martens 2000). In relation to children's rights, food may be most readily associated with the provision of a healthy and varied diet and allowing for children to have a degree of choice and control over what they eat. However, more than this, access to food, and the negotiations that take place around it, can play an essential part in children's experiences of being in state care (Dorrer et al. 2010; McIntosh et al. 2010; Punch et al. 2009).

In order to explore these issues, we will variously draw on data from our study *Food Practices in an Institutional Context: Children, Care and Control*, in which we explored interactions around food within three residential children's homes in Central Scotland. The research included 36 weeks of semi-participant observation as well as 12 group and 49 individual interviews (plus 48 unstructured or spontaneously recorded interviews) with the staff and children of these homes, which we called Lifton, Wellton, and Highton. At the time of data generation, the homes catered for

different age groups, the youngest group being 9–13 years of age, a middle group of 12–16 years, and a slightly older group ranging from 14 to 18 years.

2 Food, Care, and Rights

Since the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the idea that children should be attributed specific human rights has become widely accepted and children's rights have increasingly been implemented in practice. However, even though as Morris notes, "A number of factors have conspired to place the concept of 'rights' high on the social, political and intellectual agenda" (2006, p. 1), very few rights are absolute and most are in some way limited or conditional and applied in partial manner. Rights are often understood and discussed in the abstract, but of course, realizing rights in practice can be a problematic and complex process subject to varying degrees of power, inequality, and interpretation.

This is even more the case in relation to less powerful individuals, and collectives, who are seen to have an ambivalent relation to full rights. Children are such a group whose rights have often been understood as partial or operationalized via more "responsible" adults (Jones and Walker 2011; Race and Bennett 2011). These issues are intensified in relation to looked-after children in residential care, a group whose rights are mediated through and maintained within a matrix of care relationships, adult responsibility, the requirements of the state, and the procedures and occupational rhythms of care workers.

Children in residential care live relatively public lives in the sense that they are surveyed by a range of adults (e.g., social workers and key workers) and can experience limited power in relation to the institutional system (Mayall 1996). They tend to be perceived as children who have not been cared for or controlled "adequately" within their own families, thereby representing, sometimes simultaneously, the child as "innocent" requiring protection from society and the "evil" child from which society requires protection (Davis and Bourhill 1997; Valentine 1996).

In many countries, commitment to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling children's rights has been evidenced in policy and legislation, and particular attention has been given to children in state care (Cele and van der Burgt, ► Chap. 11, "Children's Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space," this volume; Emond 2007; Hallett et al. 2003; Kendrick 2008; Smith 2009). The form such care takes can reflect culturally specific understandings of the "child," the role and responsibilities of "adults," and care and constructions of the "family" (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Kendrick et al. 2011; Petrie et al. 2006). In the UK, over recent times, residential children's homes have decreased in number and size in favor of "family-based" care. Arguably, this has resulted in those requiring residential care often being those children who have had repeated family and placement breakdowns or whose response to trauma and loss has resulted in severe emotional and behavioral difficulties. Many of these children will have had experiences of adults abusing their roles and power, breaching what might be constructed as

“basic human rights.” The context of the children’s home therefore offers a challenging arena for rights to be played out.

Over the last half century, there has been an increasing awareness of the variation in the quality of care being offered by the state. Many children’s homes have been described in positive terms by care leavers; however, there have also been those which have provided poor-quality care and others which have been neglectful and abusive. Therefore, while the level of surveillance of those living in residential care may be seen as greater, it has not always been the case that this has resulted in a clear understanding or awareness of the daily lives being lived within such institutional spaces.

Residential care homes are best understood as relatively complex spaces within which attempts are made to create a “family-home” environment while at the same being a both a workplace for staff and an organization which can be experienced as an “institution” by both staff and children alike. This often uneasy and dynamic mix of “home,” workplace, and “institution” shapes the place and understanding of rights and the creation of spaces to care.

Food and the practices that surround it may be viewed as a relatively concrete and tangible way in to explore some of the issues.

2.1 Rights in the Care Context

Our research strongly suggests that residential staff used food as a means through which a range of rights (such as choice, participation, and protection) can be operationalized in a way that is difficult to achieve in other ways. For example, children in care can exercise minimal choice over who they *live* with, but they can exercise choice in who they want to sit with at dinner. In the context of residential care, closer exploration of food practices can help understand more fully the ethos, beliefs, and aims of a residential care home and the issues that are involved in maintaining and applying the rights of looked-after children, even if food practices are also surrounded by conflicts and ambiguities that highlight the challenges of putting rights into practice.

However, as stated above, residential care in the UK at least (Kendrick et al. 2011; Petrie et al. 2006) is best thought of as an umbrella term for group living provision for looked-after children. Within this, there can be significant variety in how care is approached, understood, and provided. There are divergent organizational cultures (Morgan 2006) within which food and rights are understood differently, albeit that there are often some significant overlaps and similarities. For example, some children’s homes might focus on providing protection and structure for the children with a consistent implementation of clear boundaries and routines. In contrast, others might place emphasis on being “family-like,” developing connectedness both within and across the generations and building relationships. Residential homes therefore establish ways of doing things in their particular institutional spaces which emphasize different aspects, and understandings, of a rights agenda.

3 “Set Rules, Set Times”: An Institutional Space?

“Institutional” care has for a long time been associated with a set of deindividualizing characteristics: the predetermined and tight scheduling of activities, the congregation of the group, the degree to which residents need to adapt to the institution, the regulation of everyday life through formal and officially assessed rules, and the level of differentiation between staff and residents (Goffman 1961). Such characteristics still feature prominently in people’s understandings of what it means to be “institutional.”

In the social sciences, the concept of “institution” has very broadly been defined as “socially shared patterns of behavior and/or thought” (Dequech 2006) which involves stringent regulation and the reproduction of social structures. However, such regulation may also provide guidance that is enabling for individuals (Giddens 1984; Scott 2008). In residential as well as family homes, there can subsequently be different ways of being an “institution.” Spaces allow for “action opportunities” but tend to do so unequally depending on the different positions of actors (Löv 2008). For example, Punch et al. (2009) argue that the practice of providing regular meals for the children was frequently considered by staff to be important for reasons to do with health, a sense of togetherness and caring, and meeting the children’s needs for protection and predictability.

The regulatory power of adults as exercised through rules around the use of food and, for example, “settling time” at night may be resisted by children who draw on another institutional standard: the children’s rights agenda and within it the basic right to eat. Again, such ambiguity of interpretation can distinguish the residential home as a particular kind of social space from other spaces that people move through and inhabit. In the residential context, it can therefore easily be the case that “homely” practices such as the provision of regular meals and open access to food become engulfed in a set of rules that create an “institutional” space.

However, not being an institution as a public provider of care for children can clearly be problematic in practice. Thus, the implementation of what are considered to be “homely” practices by the residential staff can be experienced as authoritarian by children. Equally, some ostensibly “institutional” practices, for example, “set rules, set times” and “sitting down together,” can be experienced as being “cared for” and protected by children at different times. Thus, a reconciliation of the two principles – of promoting the best interests of the child and considering the child’s views – can require a careful consideration of how the child’s opinions have been sought and what assumptions underlie the judgments made by adults (Archard and Skivenes 2009).

Within UK residential care, relatively fixed times for meals are often seen as necessary to provide basic care and help structure the day (Kendrick et al. 2011). Given this, meals can become the dominant determinants of the rhythm of each day and of what people can, and cannot do, at particular times and in particular spaces. Health and Safety Regulation, crucial for providing basic “protection” for children, can further contribute to this over-structuring of time and spaces in a way which is regularly mitigated against the residential home being experienced as a “homely”

space (Smith 1997). Interestingly, “institutional” aspects that often concern adults, for example, the large number of people living together or having a cook, appear not, in themselves, to be of great concern to children. Indeed in a number of studies, many have said they preferred to stay in a care home than in a foster home (Emond 2008).

Allowing children to exercise their rights in relation to food can be crucial for children in residential care given their past experiences of food perhaps not being readily available and a host of negative experiences that they may have had in relation to food and mealtimes. However, even such a basic welfare right as the provision of food is not straightforward and brings out the uncertainties and ambivalences involved when delivering rights in practice in an ongoing and regular manner, for example, what kind of food children “should” be eating and where and when they eat. As one participant described:

I think children do have rights . . . and I always want to make sure they get their rights. . . but, you know, it's this thin line between you have a right to be nourished and fed, but do I have a right to make sure you eat your food? Where does my right to make sure you're fed stop and your right to refuse to eat begin and where's that middle ground? (Harold, manager, interview, Lifton)

We can see that applying rights in practice can lead to a bureaucratization of care (Emond 2007) that would not be considered “normal” with a family context. Staff often struggled to find a balance between maintaining the rights of the children in their care and giving them a sense of independence and agency in the form of “responsibilities” while trying to lose or at least minimize more institutional aspects of the residential unit. As a consequence, a rights-based approach can mean children are expected to take greater responsibility for their welfare and the fulfillment of their wishes as they are expected to conform to current policy agendas and exercise their right to make choices (James and James 2001; Emond 2007; Vrouwenfelder 2006).

Thus a number of conflicting and often vaguely formed notions and understandings of rights can clash in a way that makes clear decisions and actions in relation to food practices and rights difficult to carry out in practice. Staff and children have varied and frequently divergent views on what constitutes “proper” food and appropriate food practices, and often these are intertwined with ideas about the “family home” and the family meal and understandings of the limits of staff authority and legitimacy as well as notions of children’s agency and competencies (Archard and Skivenes 2009; Dorrer et al. 2010; Emond 2007; Freeman 2007; Mayall 2002; McKendrick 2004).

A tension can develop between a child’s right to protection and the right to participation. This is paralleled in the relation between an adults’ duty to act in the best interests of the child, as well as consider the child’s wishes and feelings. In practice as research has shown (McLeod 2007; Thomas and O’Kane 1998), when there is a conflict between the child’s wishes and the adults’ understanding of what would be in the best interests of the child, the child’s perspective tends to be viewed as inferior and can subsequently be marginalized or ignored. In relation to this

point, Thomas and O'Kane (1998, p. 150) quote Seymour (1992) when discussing a child's perceived capacity to make a decision:

... the tendency will be to assess this capacity by reference to what is thought to be the child's best interests. If the [child's] decision is felt to be contrary to those interests, the most likely result will be a conclusion that the child lacks the capacity to make it.

In this way, the more institutional tendencies within residential care can become prominent. This includes more subtle "institutional" practices which can be overlooked, for example, the disempowering potential of the mealtime "banter" around the table, which can function to reinforce hierarchical structures. As Higgins observed, residential institutions, in their effort to deinstitutionalize their service, "have concentrated upon improvements in the physical and organizational environment (more single rooms, more privacy, more choice, more resident involvement, etc.)" (1989, p. 173). As a way of actively countering moves toward institutionalization, the ideal of the family home can become important within the context of the residential home.

4 "Family-Home" Space

The UK policy tends to promote the view that children need "families" in order to grow, flourish, and develop, and this can be problematic within the context of institutional organizations. The nuclear home, as a social and spatial domain distinct from the workplace or school, continues to be regarded as the "normal" key space for the upbringing of children (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Kendrick 2008). Residential care home staff often consider food routines and mealtimes to be crucial for the creation of such a "family-like home" (Kohli et al. 2011). As a consequence, staff can draw on different ways of "doing family" (Finch 2007) and encouraging rights of participation for children. Again, food practices are crucial in this respect (Dorrer et al. 2010).

As we have seen, the complexity of the residential home with its overlapping spheres of "public" and "private," and the often uneasy juxtaposition of different spatial arenas can mitigate against the creation of a family-like environment and a sense of belonging. Children's rights as a bureaucratic process alongside a more generalized managerialist culture can result in the spontaneity, responsiveness, and affection – present in many families – being much harder to achieve. "Rights" in such a context are placed almost in opposition to care becoming an external set of codes rather an integrated, embodied way of being with others. The space where care can be done can therefore become more pressurized. In this respect, mealtimes around the table are a central social ceremony and crucial space in which to create some version of a "home."

A generalized conception of the "family home" as well as the care workers' own home is frequently used as reference points for [re]creating a family-like ambiance (McIntosh et al. 2011; Curtis et al. 2011; James et al. 2009b). In recent research on food in residential child care (Punch et al. 2009), several care workers suggested

that they incorporated activities from their own homes, such as the occasional weekend take-away dinner in front of the TV, as a practice that could give the children some experience of “normal” family life. Through the routine of having a change from the ritual of the dining room meal to the informal TV dinner, ideas about home life could be reinforced. In this case, the home is a space organized according to the demands of work and education on weekdays but turns into a leisure oriented, homely space during the weekend. However, ensuring that children stay healthy and safe could also require the restriction of their access to certain foods or food-related spaces in general.

Externally imposed pressures, such as Health and Safety Regulations, can contribute to this structuring of time, for example, the requirement that food needs to be served at a specific temperature. In an everyday sense, this can put pressure on everybody to come to the table quickly once food was out of the oven. Such practices and constraints can therefore mitigate against the residential home being experienced as a “homely” space in the sense that individuals, or children and staff as a group, could not determine their mode of eating.

5 A Work Space

Residential homes were also faced with the atypical situation of being both a “home” for children and “workplace” for staff. Certain food practices could mark the residential home out as an unusual workplace: the issue of not getting official breaks, staff being expected to cook for and eat with the children, and their colleagues, free meals, and staff’s use of access to food and drink throughout the day to make up for the lack of breaks. For staff to be able to help themselves to food and eat with the children was an important means for being able to join into “doing” home while being at work. Stopovers in the kitchen for a cup of tea or a sandwich could be common and could aid the shifting between the different roles of managing office tasks and spending leisure time with children. Sharing such food breaks with the children and eating the same as them could further bridge between the place of home and the place of work. Such practices could set further parameters around the extension of rights to children.

While the adults felt that the demands of the residential home impinged upon their personal time and space, it was equally the case that workplace issues can invade on what was considered the children’s “home”:

They take up all the rooms. They do it all the time. They took in here for changeover. They took the living room for a management meeting. I said ‘Look I am gonna be watching the TV’. They still took it. And I thought ‘It’s meant to be our home!’ (Matt, 15, informal recording)

Despite the emphasis on mealtimes as “family-like time,” this can often be used to welcome visitors or external workers to the residential home and function as a conspicuous and somewhat staged “display” of doing family (Finch 2007; McIntosh et al. 2011) as well as the quality of care work delivered by the staff.

Food practices can further create work spaces for both adults and children as they require the learning of rituals and rules of conduct. Mealtimes, in particular, therefore become a training ground and tester of the adults' and children's skills and discipline, either because of having to manage or cope with the exposed group setting or due to the adherence to explicit and implicit rules of conduct. From the perspective of staff, the spatial arrangement of the meal with children seated around the table can also provide an opportunity to carry out focused one-to-one or group work, for example, the discussion of school issues and the planning of activities.

Maintaining an ethos of "inclusive involvement" and "family values" are important objectives for staff, but these can at times be driven by practical, workplace-oriented reasons, such as getting more work time out of staff and using free food as an incentive to counteract staff turnover and recruitment problems in residential care. This highlights the ambiguity surrounding the care worker participation in food practices. Indeed whether mealtimes count as a break or are work time is a debated issue.

From the limited research conducted in this area, it would appear that in general, mealtimes without children present are considered by residential staff as a break from work. During such mealtimes, there was often an expectation that work will not be discussed at the table and that eating is about enjoyment, a bit of personal space that could be partitioned off from work time. Mealtimes together with the children were considered work, but the same expectations, namely, that it should be relaxed and enjoyable for all, were still applied. It may be argued that adults use food for the reproduction of a temporal structure in terms of work, public and shared time versus no work, and private and personal time, although the boundaries between could become blurred.

Food practices can create work spaces for both adults and children in that they require the learning of rituals and rules of conduct. Mealtimes, in particular, can become a training ground and tester of the adults' and children's skills and discipline, either because of having to manage or cope with the exposed group setting or due to the adherence to explicit and implicit rules of conduct. Mealtimes can be experienced as anxious times by the adults and children, with both becoming objects of surveillance (McIntosh et al. 2010). For the children, this could mean that there is little distinction between the "institutional" food practices and challenges experienced at school and the ones they are expected to participate in when they returned "home."

6 "Some Units They Don't Have Any Choice at All": Different Spaces and Different Rights

It would appear that daily practices around food are marked by significant tensions between open access to food, choice, individualism, identity, and freedom on the one hand and to health, education, quality of care, nondiscrimination, and safety on the other. While the former implies a staff role as providers of food that the children want and are familiar with, the latter set of rights seems to be understood as often involving

the exercise of staff power, i.e., setting limits to the children's participation and making choices on their behalf. This was a position that did not sit easily with the majority of staff across all of the homes (Punch et al. 2009). For example, it was felt that, on the one hand, a child's free access to snacks represented the right to choice and a sense of self-determination, ownership, and home. On the other hand, this could clash with an ethics of care and protection, and staff felt a responsibility at times to strictly control access to snacks in the interest of health, safety, and prevention of misuse.

Trying to cater for every child's preferences or stocking a range of snacks in the house may be explained by staff as being about creating the normal activities within an "average" family home (Dorrer et al. 2010). It appears to be a key way to overcome some of the constraints of and ambience of being an "institution" (McIntosh et al. 2010). However, an emphasis on allowing food choice as a way to let children express views freely and to have these views accorded due weight, also commonly resulted in ambivalence and uncertainty. In residential children's homes, conflict can arise in particular over providing open access to food and ensuring the health and safety of both the children and the staff (Milligan and Stevens 2006). As a member of staff suggested:

And then you've got at the back of your mind the health and safety aspects of it. I'm not trained. I can go into my own kitchen at home it doesn't matter but I'm not trained actually to go in – with the health and safety legislation that's about – to make meals for these kids. So if anything happened, like, I would be liable. . . Knives and cookers under lock and key, all the things you have to remember, I'm not trained in any way as a cook or in basic food hygiene. (Sally, care worker, Focus Group, Highton)

It would appear that although residential staff are driven by an ethics of care and participation – for example, giving children open access to the kitchen – worries about the risks involved can routinely mitigate against this. As a consequence, staff can feel they have little choice but to operate with a system of often quite stringent measures in terms of access to food and food-related spaces within the home. For example, the kitchen and dining room spaces in some children's homes can be frequently locked; whether or not a packet of crisps could be handed out could result in a protracted staff discussion; and there were frequent conflicts between staff and children over hand-washing procedures in the kitchen. While heavily emphasizing the child's right to express their views and to give them an equal weighting to those of adults, staff would routinely find themselves compelled to indulge in actions which would deny, or severely curtail, this right:

I don't see myself as an authoritarian person imposing rules just for the sake of it. And I catch myself doing that and I have to kind of watch . . . I'm here to make sure that they get fed – and not necessarily when I think it is right that they eat. But I definitely have that kind of feeling at times and I think because the food is my area it would be very tempting to use it as a weapon. (Scott, cook, interview, Highton)

A more quantitative "rights-based" approach rather than one guided by a more internalized, and hard to quantify, ethics of care suggests a compartmentalization of responsibilities, and more measurable specialized duties to ensure rights are met. As Smith (1997, p. 3) puts it:

... the ascendancy of 'rights talk' has gained momentum within a context of practice which has come to owe less to the social and emotional content of a caring relationship, than it does to the formal requirements of regulating, measuring and monitoring the externally observable contours of performance.

Such tensions are common in relation to food and food practices within residential children's homes. For staff, food routines involve a collapsing of a number of issues to do with extending choice to children, developing relationships, creating a "homely" environment, and balancing concerns with protection and well-being. Thus teaching children about responsibilities and respect through food could result in more control and regulation of children. Efforts to maintain children's welfare rights were also compromised by staff concerns that they may be instilling children with unrealistic expectations and a concomitant lack of skills to cope with the realities of their future-life circumstances:

Even the quality of food that they're given here is probably much higher than they would be able to afford initially when they move into adulthood. . . . and a concern that I have is that it seems that they only ever get more: more food, more choices, more availability, as opposed to more days where you open the cupboard and there's nothing. (Sandra, care worker, interview, Wellton)

The central tension for many residential staff in relation to the children's rights agenda was one which was concerned with "balancing these rights and responsibilities with issues of duty of care and responsibilities towards [children]" (Angus, manager, Focus Group, Lifton). The protection and promotion of children's well-being was here understood in terms of their emotional needs and their rights to privacy and autonomy, which outweighed concerns over health and safety:

I think the positive side about having an open kitchen is [that they] can have that access without bringing too much attention to themselves and being the focus. That if a young person goes to the fridge they've not got a member of staff at the back of them. They've got . . . privacy to say 'well I'm gonna make a sandwich'. (Beth, care worker, Focus Group, Lifton)

Often staff stressed that children also needed responsibilities with their rights. In terms of food practices, this could mean that staff would at times withdraw young people's access to food:

Cupboards and fridges and the kitchens are open. So the kids have a right to food. However, we lock away eggs because when we leave eggs out they throw them at other neighbours' houses and cars. So their responsibility is not to abuse that right of having access to certain foods. So at times we've locked the kitchen because the kids have been in such a difficult state. (Derek, manager, Focus Group, Lifton)

This notion of rights being inextricably linked to responsibilities is not a new one. However, in the everyday way in which rights are played out, this could result in a very different experience of being cared for. If rights are conditional on "responsible" behavior, then many of those children who are facing the pain and hurt associated with family trauma and abuse as well as movement into care may find it harder to be "awarded" their rights.

7 Conclusion

The ethos and organizational culture at the center of residential care can vary significantly cross-culturally and in relation to how staff perceive adult-child relations and the varied emphasis on children's protection versus participation rights (Kendrick et al. 2011; Petrie et al. 2006). Such variations in the approach are often operationalized in relation to food practices. Thus, for example, in one context children might have to attend mealtimes and would be removed from the table if they were not behaving, while at others, sitting at the table is optional. This illustrates how we can interpret and approach children's rights in different ways, emphasizing children's welfare rights by ensuring they eat healthily and regularly or perhaps focusing on children's rights to self-determination by allowing them more freedom in relation to deciding when, where, and what to eat. Such "rules" around food indicate the complexities and difficulties of "doing right" in practice in particular showing that there is a key tension between meeting the often contradictory set of protection and participation rights.

This chapter has brought out the difficulties of putting a theory of rights into practice within the everyday contexts of residential child care and used food practices as a lens to describe the difficulty of delineating social practices as either "homely," "institutional," or work oriented. A number of factors contributed to residential workers showing a strong commitment to creating a "homelike" environment for children and not being an "institution." Through their orientation to normative standards of "doing" family, care workers were, however, simultaneously and generally unintentionally recreating "institutional" spaces. The analysis highlights that in practice the three different spaces of "home," "institution," and "workplace" intersected and could not be construed in terms of an either-or trichotomy. This created a context of ambivalence in which the meanings of interactions fluctuated. While care workers aimed to juggle conflicting demands and concerns in child-centered ways, their practices were often ambiguous, in that they could be read and experienced in more than one way.

Overall, it would appear that staff in residential homes strive to realize the conceptual ideas proposed in the rights agenda and often do so by interpreting children's rights in different ways through the established working practices and organizational cultures of their residential unit (Kendrick et al. 2011; Petrie et al. 2006). In practice this means dealing with a range of questions in relation to, for example, the preparation, distribution, and consumption of food: what food should be provided and how, how many choices should be offered, what limits are to be set in the interest of health and safety, and how should different rights and responsibilities be balanced and should children eat at a table? The introduction of procedures, rules, and also the rights agenda is, arguably, driven by concerns and anxieties regarding children and care (Bessell and Gal 2009; Smith 2009) and seeking to control risk by making care measurable. This means rights can end up being translated into instrumental tasks that can be observed, such as a choice of dishes on the menu which caters for everybody's preferences or the conspicuous enforcing of Health and Safety Regulations. It is important that residential units have

a degree of control and flexibility over how they respond to the children's rights agenda and how they organize food practices in order to meet children's needs and foster the development of caring relationships. The risk is that a rights agenda can end up dominating social interactions rather than facilitating the building of relationships. For an institution to be a "children's space" rather than a children's service requires the balancing of adult-defined and predetermined actions and outcomes with those initiated by children to allow for a range of possibilities (Moss and Petrie 2002) and a focus on food can help create spaces to care. What is crucial in understanding the institution as a caring space is that it exists within a wider social, political, cultural, and bureaucratic space, a space within a space.

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Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education

Aisling Parkes

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Abstract

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, all children capable of forming views have the right to express those views in all matters affecting them including within the school space. Further, once the child’s views have been expressed, serious consideration or “due weight” must be given to their views in accordance with the dual criteria of age and maturity. This chapter considers what this legal obligation requires from the point of view of theoretical and practical implementation within the context of Irish schools. The practical challenges posed by listening to children in what may be considered to be a largely authoritarian environment are explored particularly in the context of disciplinary matters such as cyberbullying in schools in Ireland. Moreover, the need to understand through the contemporary geography of children and childhood how and where child participation takes place within the school system is vital in order to ensure that children and young people can most effectively participate in decision-making processes affecting them. Finally, the possibility of adopting a more child-friendly process through a restorative justice

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framework is explored – one that is focused on creating or making spaces for listening to children where they are given meaningful opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes tailored to their needs.

Keywords

Article 12 • Child participation • Schools • Cyberbullying • Restorative justice • Children's rights • Geography of childhood

1 Introduction

Since Ireland became a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC), there has been a heightened awareness around the obligation on those working for, and with, children, to provide spaces within which children may actively contribute to any decisions being made which will have a direct impact on their lives. As acknowledged by Hammarberg in the early 1990s, the CRC is “more than a dry document with some rules on how to behave. It has a vision” (Hammarberg 1995, p. ix). Indeed, it is as a result of this vision that respecting the views of children in all matters affecting them is a binding international legal obligation on States Parties to the CRC, and the benefits to including the views of children in decision-making processes are a testament to that. Article 12(1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 requires that all children capable of forming views have the right to express those views in all matters affecting them. Further, once the child's views have been expressed, serious consideration or “due weight” must be given to their views in accordance with the dual criteria of age and maturity. Thus, children have a right to be heard in decision-making processes at home, in school, in their community, as well as at national and international levels where the decisions concerned will affect them. Article 12(2) further highlights the right of children to be heard in legal proceedings such as juvenile justice or family law or in administrative proceedings such as those of a disciplinary nature in a school context. Indeed, one area of decision-making where the state must ensure that there are genuine spaces for children to be heard is concerning school discipline. Article 28(2) CRC requires that school discipline is administered in a manner that is consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the provisions of the CRC.

This chapter will explore the nature and scope of Ireland's children's rights obligations in respect of listening to children in Irish schools in the context of school discipline. The benefits for the child and society will also be discussed more generally. In particular, the recognition of schools as being central to the geographies of children and young people will be alluded to since, as acknowledged by Kallio and Hakli, “the contemplation of children's political agencies and geographies is valuable for the implementation of human rights” (Kallio and Hakli 2011). Furthermore, the extent to which children's voices are actually heard in reality in existing decision-making processes in the school environment such as in situations of cyberbullying will be investigated. Finally, the use of an approach such as that

offered by restorative justice to address disciplinary issues such as cyberbullying where it has occurred will be examined through a children's rights lens.

2 State Obligations

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC) establishes minimum benchmark standards for comprehensive and holistic law reform that requires states parties to examine the whole spectrum of laws and policies that affect the realization of children's rights in education. One of the core fundamental rights of the child and a general guiding principle of the Convention underpinning the CRC is Article 12 which recognizes the principle of respect for the views of the child.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the international monitoring body which oversees and monitors the implementation of the CRC worldwide. It offers countries theoretical and practical guidance in terms of implementing the provisions contained within the CRC as it applies to all areas of a child's life including in the context of education.

The Committee has stated that the actual wording of Article 12 leaves no room for discretion on the part of States Parties (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009). In fact, this provision places a "strict obligation" on States Parties to fully implement this right for all children (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009). Since Article 12 applies to all children capable of forming views, the Committee has specifically discouraged States Parties from introducing age limits both in law and *in practice* which may impact on the effective implementation of this fundamental right (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009). Thus in theory, in accordance with Article 12, all children capable of forming views should have the opportunity to express their views in all matters affecting them in school including in disciplinary proceedings. Article 4 of the CRC places a positive obligation on states parties to implement the civil and political rights of the child under the CRC. In 2009, the Committee, specifically in the context of Article 12, stated that "[t]he child's right to be heard imposes the obligation on states parties to review or amend their legislation in order to introduce mechanisms providing children with access to appropriate information, adequate support, if necessary, feedback on the weight given to their views, and procedures for complaints, remedies or redress" (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009, para 48).

From a practical point of view, educational law reform involves reviewing not only existing laws but also the measures necessary to effectively implement them including regulations, institutions, policies, budget allocations, and the overall process of reform in a country in general (UNICEF 2008, p. 2). Unfortunately, in many jurisdictions, the process of policy and law reform is not systematic and lacks a child rights focus. Indeed, law reform processes in Ireland specifically tend to be more ad hoc and relative in nature where changes to the law occur in response to a gap highlighted by a high-profile court case or an event as highlighted in the media. An example of the latter in recent times is the phenomenon of cyberbullying which

has attracted such media attention. In the context of children's rights specifically, this is despite the set of obligations enshrined within Article 4 of the CRC. Thus, States Parties, such as Ireland, are under an immediate obligation to ensure that there is a framework for ensuring that children are facilitated in expressing their views in all matters affecting them in the educational context including the context of school discipline. At a minimum, countries must introduce the legal measures required in order to translate the principles and provisions of the CRC including Article 12, into reality in each jurisdiction. According to UNICEF, states parties have a responsibility to ensure that existing and new legislation and practices involving children are compatible with the provisions of the CRC. This can most effectively be achieved by undertaking a number of basic steps, beginning with a comprehensive review of existing laws and policies, considering measures such as the incorporation of children's rights into the Constitution, developing specific laws to reflect the CRC principles and provisions, and adopting effective remedies for children and their representatives if children's rights are breached (UNICEF 2004, p. 1). Reading between the lines, Ireland is under an obligation to spearhead and encourage a culture change with regard to children in society. Nowhere is such a culture change more desirable than in Irish schools.

The importance of, and multiple benefits associated with, listening to children in matters affecting them, is well recognized and documented. Moreover, it has been acknowledged that not only *is* school a place – a geographical space where rules apply and activities occur – but it also *has* a place within the broader geographical context (Collins and Coleman 2008). Providing spaces for children to be heard in school results not only in direct benefits for the child concerned but all for other children in the school as well as the school itself. For children,

Participation in school can enhance their motivation as they see that teachers value their views and opinions; it allows for a wide range of student input into how and what exactly students learn in school and can improve the overall quality of learning as a result. The interpersonal and practical skills of the child are developed and it promotes a wider recognition of increasing independence of the students as they work their way through the system. (Parkes 2013, p. 129)

Lansdown et al. note further benefits, including the overall enhancement of decision-making and outcomes, the protection of children, as well as the promotion of citizenship, tolerance, and respect for others (Lansdown et al. 2014, pp. 6–8). In the long term, society also stands to benefit from effective child participation in school. Indeed, the encouragement of critical thought and the promotion of democratic principles actively contribute to a more widespread understanding of children's rights (Parkes 2013, p. 130). The latter is buttressed at European level, where the importance of ensuring that the rights of children are implemented in an appropriate way has been highlighted:

[w]hen promoting a meaningful participation by children, special attention should be paid to avoid putting them at risk in any way, and to avoid harming pressurizing, coercing or manipulating them; children should have access to child-friendly information, appropriate to their age and to their situation. (COE 2013)

However, as acknowledged by Marshall (1997, p. 103), adults cannot deny children the fundamental right of participating on the basis that it may prove damaging to the child.

3 Children's Voices

Collins and Coleman highlight the fact that while “schools are central to everyday life...” (Collins and Coleman 2008, p. 282), it is only in recent times that the geography of education has emerged as a recognized subdiscipline of human geography. For too long now, adults have been driving a school system where children and young people have been seen as “objects of education” (Holloway et al. 2010, p. 594). Yet, there is no doubt that an in-depth understanding of children’s geography within the educational context is essential in order to determine in what circumstances children can effectively participate in decision-making in school so that the children “. . . see change in their present times of ‘being’ rather than in the future times into which they are ‘becoming” (Skelton 2007, p. 177). The latter point is well made by Kallio and Hakli who note that it is not possible to ensure that children effectively participate in school decision-making if “we do not know *which* matters children find important to them and *how* they participate in such matters at length” (Kallio and Hakli 2011, p. 107).

Over time, states parties all over the world have sought to satisfy their international obligations with respect to Article 12 CRC in the educational sphere mainly through incorporating the voice of the child into existing legal frameworks, processes, and policy mechanisms. Lansdown et al. acknowledge that “authoritarianism, discrimination and violence continue to characterize schooling in many countries” (Lansdown et al. 2014, p. 4) and thus feature prominently in existing frameworks. Indeed, the involvement of children in decision-making processes affecting them in school becomes very difficult where

School days are regulated by routines, drills and detailed organisations of time and space: pupils “. . . spend most of their weekday in a very disciplined environment. . . where all their activities from arrival, registration and lessons, through to eating and playing, are governed by the daily routine of timetables and bells. (Holloway and Valentine 2003, p. 108)

Furthermore, the geography of power within the school context has a huge impact on the extent to which the views of children are heard in practice:

. . . school spaces, and the classroom in particular, are organized in ways intended to facilitate adult authority and surveillance, and aid social and behavioural control of children. (Collins and Coleman 2008, p. 284)

Yet despite the tight regulation of the lives of children and young people within this space, they informally still manage to “retain some agency even in the most adult-controlled spaces” (Collins and Coleman 2008, p. 289).

While violence is fortunately no longer an aspect of the Irish school system, it is for the most part still a system dominated by a culture of discipline and

authoritarianism. Indeed, recent research, which sought the views of Irish children on the extent to which they feel heard in school, concluded that this culture is one of the most prevalent barriers to effective participation by children and young people in matters concerning them in school in Ireland and thus in violation of Article 12 CRC:

... key barriers identified included age, the autocratic and hierarchical nature of the school system as experienced by the children and young people, the lack of opportunities and space in the school week for their voice to be heard was consistently highlighted, lack of or poor relationships with key personnel in schools, poor information systems in schools whereby policy changes or decisions regarding disciplinary procedures are not effectively communicated all emerged as important barriers to children and young people's voice in the school context. (Horgan et al. 2015, p. 113)

Moreover, this research, which investigated the experiences of children in primary and secondary schools in three counties in Ireland found that

Most children and young people . . . were generally dissatisfied with their level of input into decision making processes in school. They had very low expectations of schools being participatory sites and recognized that they had little say in anything apart from peripheral matters in school. (Horgan et al. 2015, p. 113)

Interestingly, this approach was prevalent in schools in England and Wales as far back as the 1990s. At that time, Jeffs noted that

Education legislation has always cast young people in the mould of powerless subjects within the system. It is an approach that is rarely questioned by educationalists or parents and it appears that whatever else may change within education, those with the power intend to keep it so. (Jeffs 1995, p. 25)

Unfortunately, it seems that Jeff's words still hold true in the current Irish context to the extent that children and young people arguably do not have a genuine and effective voice within the Irish education system. Irish schools are still characterized by head teachers remaining predominantly "control driven, obsessed with rules and good order, surveillance and monitoring" (Jeffs 1995, p. 28). There is no question that this serves as a violation of the rights of children under the CRC, not only in terms of the right to have their views respected but also in terms of ensuring their right to be protected in general (Thapliyal, ► [Chap. 2, "Privatized Rights, Segregated Childhoods: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Education Policy in India"](#), this volume).

4 Meaningful Opportunities in Education

Traditionally in schools, "discipline was thought of as an individual's ability to adhere to a set of school or classroom rules that were put in place to maintain good order, necessary for effective teaching and learning" (Morrison et al. 2005, p. 338). In the event that a child or young person fell foul of these rules, a zero-tolerance policy was employed where the wrongdoer would be punished according to the content of the school disciplinary policies and procedures.

In Ireland, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provides that the Board of Management for each school is obliged to establish a Code of Behavior for students which contains the disciplinary rules and procedures. In 2008, the former National Educational Welfare Board (the functions of this Board have now been taken over by the Child and Family Agency since 2014) issued Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour. Prevention of bullying, including cyberbullying, should form part and parcel of this Code.

Thus, “school order is maintained through establishing school rules and appropriate punishment for violation of school rules, by way of hierarchical accountability mechanisms” (Morrison et al. 2005, p. 339). Since the zero-tolerance approach is focused on punishment and retribution of the perpetrator, a by-product or consequence is that less emphasis is placed on maintaining the relationship between the parties and ensuring reparation is made to the wronged party. Moreover, with the zero-tolerance approach, there is little room for the children involved – both the victim and the perpetrator – to be heard and have a meaningful input into the disciplinary process. Significantly, the zero-tolerance approach has been proved to be ineffective (Martinez 2009; American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force 2008; Gregory and Cornell 2009).

4.1 Phenomenon of Cyberbullying in Schools

In recent times, advances in, and the increased availability of, information technology and the worldwide web have created additional challenges for those working with children and young people in the education context. While the Internet has certainly enhanced the overall teaching and learning experience for those who have access to it, it has also brought with it many unforeseen consequences including the phenomenon of cyberbullying. Indeed, today’s generation of children is becoming increasingly tech-savvy to such an extent that they are more experienced at navigating the Internet than their parents. While the ability to explore the cyberspace exposes children to a wealth of information, it also poses substantial risks.

In Ireland, cyberbullying has gained increasing attention over the past couple of years. A research report conducted into bullying in Ireland assessed the nature and extent of cyberbullying/e-bullying in a sample of schoolchildren aged 12–18 years. The research found that “the reported incidence of cybervictimization and cyberbullying was 17 % and 9 % respectively” (Cotter and McGilloway 2011, p. 48). Furthermore, a recent survey conducted by Amárach Research in Ireland noted a sharp increase in cyberbullying over the past year (National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals 2014).

The consequences and effects of cyberbullying are well documented. No matter what format it takes, cyberbullying can have a serious impact on the victim concerned, particularly where they are a child or young person, in addition to the wider community. It can prove detrimental to a person’s health, both mental and physical. Victims can feel social isolation and feel unsafe. It can lead to feelings of shame and anxiety, loss of self-esteem, concentration, and learning difficulties:

...significant risk of experiencing a wide spectrum of psychosomatic symptoms, running away from home, alcohol and drug abuse, absenteeism and, above all, self-inflicted, accidental or perpetrated injuries. The consequences of bullying extend into adulthood, as there is evidence of a significant association between childhood bullying behaviour and later psychiatric morbidity. (Bulletin of the WHO: Prevention of Bullying-Related Morbidity and Mortality: A Call for Public Health Policies 2010)

Moreover, there are reported incidents of people taking their own lives.

While the victims of cyberbullying can suffer serious harm, the consequences of cyberbullying from the perspective of the offender has received little attention to date – but in many cases, the reality is that these children are victims too. There is a lot to be said for looking at this process through the lens of a child – as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators. It is well recognized that there is a trend internationally toward new legislation being adopted with a view to punishing the perpetrators. Indeed, representations by the media of the severe negative consequences of cyberbullying can result in demands for justice. Yet many of these countries have ages of criminal responsibility which claim that children below a certain age are deemed too young to understand the consequences of a crime. Everyone has the right to be respected, safe, and free from any form of violence. Indeed this is a fundamental human right. Bullying of any nature is a human rights violation that impacts on a range of other rights. Thus, it requires a rights-based response according to international normative standards and the principles of children's rights.

Currently in Ireland, there is no specific law against cyberbullying. In the educational sphere, as a result of the issue receiving much media attention in recent times, the Department of Education and Skills drafted an Action Plan on Bullying in January 2013 (www.education.ie). This plan required that the 1993 anti-bullying procedures for schools be updated to reflect cyberbullying. Thus, soon after, the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Department of Education and Skills 2013a) were issued by the Department of Education and Skills. These require that an anti-bullying policy should be part of the written code of behavior in all schools. Each school is obliged to follow these procedures when developing its anti-bullying policy. The procedures are very heavily based on the prevention of bullying behavior by fostering a positive school culture and an inclusive and respectful environment. A whole-school approach should be encouraged to prevent incidences of bullying and address bullying behavior where it occurs. The anti-bullying policy should be made public and given to the parents' association. There must also be clear procedures for investigating, recording, and dealing with bullying. The school principal should report regularly to the Board of Management, and the latter must conduct an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The Department of Education and Skills also issued a Circular to all schools in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills 2013c) which requires all schools to have developed and formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that complies with the above procedures by the end of the second term of the 2013/2014 school year. In addition, the Department of Education and Skills published guidelines specifically

for teachers on child abuse and bullying: Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Department of Education and Skills 2013b). These latter guidelines reflect the particular circumstances of primary and post-primary schools and are based on the recommendations of the “Children First” report. While the emergence of each of the latter initiatives is welcome, it is worth highlighting the fact that these are primarily focused on prevention of cyberbullying rather than dealing with the consequences. The extent to which children and young people are involved in the actual implementation of such procedures and policies is unclear and is currently within the discretion of the school concerned. Moreover, the way in which bullying complaints will be dealt with is left to the school to decide and will inevitably fall under existing disciplinary procedures. In a country where schools still operate what is regarded as a zero-tolerance policy in an authoritarian environment, it is not difficult to see why children in school don’t feel heard in practice.

In Ireland, the latest recommendation by our Special Rapporteur for Child Protection gives cause for concern. He suggests that a legislative approach which may or may not have criminal consequences, is most appropriate

A review of the Post Office (Amendment) Acts should be undertaken with a view to incorporating emerging means of cyber-bullying. (Shannon 2013, p. 20)

There is no doubt that criminalization of children who engage in cyberbullying is at odds with the provisions of the CRC and particularly given the fact that children of 12 years of age in Ireland are deemed incapable of being criminally responsible (children of 10 years of age may be prosecuted for serious crimes). Furthermore, it fails to take account of the fact that the perpetrator in these cases may oftentimes be a victim too and, thus, are also in need of support. Moreover, the Rapporteur asserts that “disciplinary measures should be uniform nation-wide as schools currently have too much latitude to determine how to discipline each student who is engaging in bullying” (Shannon 2013, p. 112). Other countries have dealt with this issue in an arguably more child-friendly manner, despite the fact that the school culture may initially have started out as one of a largely authoritarian nature.

In the school setting, where a child has engaged in some activity which has impinged on the rights of another such as cyberbullying, they currently face a disciplinary environment, the form of which has been predetermined by adults. Unfortunately, in many cases the latter processes tend to go against the holistic nature of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC) which specifically requires that the implementation of children’s rights takes place in a comprehensive way so that the rights of all children are protected. Oftentimes punishments are handed down without a proper consideration of the views of all concerned. A zero-tolerance policy tends to operate in respect of cases of cyberbullying which can often result in suspension of the child concerned. This approach is at odds with our legal obligations to ensure that when implementing the right of the child to be heard, it must be done in a manner that is child appropriate and nondiscriminatory which ensures their best interests and protection of the child from harm.

5 Meaningful Opportunities in Education: Restorative Justice

Morrison reminds us that

Howard Zehr (2002), one of the founding fathers of the restorative justice movement, characterizes the process of restoration as a concurrent journey to belonging for both “victims” and “offenders,” creating opportunities to reweave their identities, to renarrate their stories, to recreate meaning in their lives. (2006b, p. 390)

Restorative justice originated in New Zealand and is now quite common in North America, some parts of Europe, and Australia. Common to all forms of restorative justice is a focus on healing, respect, and strengthened relationships. The arguments in favor of adopting a restorative justice approach for school disciplinary issues like cyberbullying are very persuasive. For example, the restorative justice setting serves as a safe space for the participants in understanding the harm that has been caused to the victim and the general community. One of the big challenges of cyberbullying is that the perpetrator does not see the immediate impact that their actions have on the victim as it is conducted in cyberspace. Unlike traditional disciplinary processes, the restorative justice process facilitates the perpetrator in acknowledging accountability and allows some form of reparation to the victim. It is arguably best accomplished when the parties decide together how the harm is best repaired. Unlike other forms of disciplinary processes, restorative justice focuses on the problem being the problem – not the person. The process is focused on addressing the problem. It encourages all involved to understand the effects of the conflict or the cause of the conflict on all involved and on the community more generally. The process involves inviting the taking up of responsibility while at the same time not pointing the finger of blame or shame. The process is one which promotes the healing of hurt. Restoration in the process requires that harm is understood and acknowledged and that some effort is made to repair that harm. The voices of all affected including that of the child or children are heard as part of the process.

Restorative justice programs seek to solve the present dispute and address underlying issues. Instead of just punishing the bad behavior, it aims to promote long-term healing of the relationship which not only serves the parties directly involved but also the school and broader community in the long term. Furthermore, the use of restorative justice processes in the school context promotes development in the sense that school processes and practices can serve to impact on the young person’s sense of agency and ability. This is ultimately what one terms the empowerment model. It essentially would work as a parental partnership with the school. It is also likely to be more respectful of cultural values and difference.

Rights-based restorative justice practices similarly encourage the voices of victims, offenders and young people to be heard in socially just sorts of ways through non-discriminatory, safe, authentic and full participation. (Moore and Mitchell 2011, p. 89)

The advantages of restorative justice processes are that they attempt to repair the harm done to relationships and give the victim the opportunity to address the offender. The disadvantages of restorative justice processes are that victims often

do not want contact with those who have harmed them, particularly in cases of violence, and that restorative justice processes do not necessarily guarantee due process rights. Bringing offenders, victims, and other interested parties together can give everyone an opportunity to understand the effects of the offense. By including community members, some of the underlying conditions that lead to offending can be addressed. Restorative justice reflects ancient processes of conflict resolution founded on holistic and communitarian values, full voluntary participation of all stakeholders, respect for the dignity of individuals and their social–environmental worlds, an emphasis on safety, mutuality, and the healing of harm through expression of thought and feelings regarding the impacts of “crime” (Moore and Mitchell 2009, p. 33). As acknowledged by Ashworth, “there is no single notion of RJ, no single type of process, no single theory” (2002, p. 578), and Morris points out that “there is no ‘right way’ to deliver restorative justice” (2002, p. 600). Indeed, restorative justice processes can come in many different forms: with victim–offender mediation being termed the forerunner of the processes (King 2008, p. 1105), family group conferencing being one of the most popular and influential processes (King 2008; Lynch 2010), police-mediated conferencing, community group conferencing, and the broader more inclusive circle method (King 2008). However, what unites all of the above approaches is the fact that they are processes where the characteristics of empowerment, dialogue, negotiation, and agreement take center stage. Moreover, unlike existing formal legal processes, the voices of those at the heart of the proceedings are the predominant ones, and the voices of the professionals take a back seat.

Significantly, the use of restorative justice in schools to deal with disciplinary issues such as cyberbullying has been used since the early 1990s in other parts of the world with one of the first school restorative justice conferences taking place in Queensland, Australia, in 1994 (Morrison et al. 2005, p. 337). Since then, restorative justice has become a common feature of many schools in the UK, Canada, the USA, and Australia:

...the practice of restorative justice in schools is much broader, and the challenges of implementation distinct. In school settings, the implementation of restorative practices is not simply a case of overlaying the justice model of conferencing and achieving sustained outcomes. As well as being microcosms of society, schools are discrete face-to-face communities made up of complex sets of relationships. Unlike the criminal justice setting, where victims and offenders may not know each other or see each other again, in schools these same individuals will most likely see each other the next day. (Morrison et al. 2005, p. 353)

It has been argued that “Restorative justice models provide schools with the opportunity to improve school culture by addressing disciplinary standards and creating a forum for peaceful resolution of conflict and misbehavior” (Pavelka 2013, p. 15). Three forms of restorative justice in particular are of particular note in this context including peer mediation, peer accountability boards, conferencing, and circles. Pavelka notes that there are a number of important supports required within the school in order to ensure sustained outcomes from a restorative justice environment. These include building collaborations, fostering a new school culture,

establishing a strong volunteer base, ensuring continuity between school levels, and establishing policies which underpin the restorative practices (Pavelka 2013). One of the major challenges of integrating restorative practices in schools where there currently exists a zero-tolerance policy in respect of school discipline is ensuring a total change in culture. There is no doubt that “Zero-tolerance policies in school districts have been widely utilized as responses to discipline and violence” (Pavelka 2013, p. 17).

However, within the school context, it has been suggested that widening the definition of restorative justice to restorative practice in the context of schools is more effective since

Restorative practices admit the centrality of power relations and the complexity of social structures, offering the opportunity for all those involved to explore more deeply the relationship between the internal and external tensions of schools and to focus on how and where possible solutions might lie. (McCluskey et al. 2008, p. 213)

In many conflict situations involving children and young people where there is a decision to be made, it is vital that we acknowledge the reality that since these are not adult situations, why do they have to take place in an adult-centric space? If we start out on the basis that children and young people are at the center of these cases, then we can proceed to fit adults into that structure as opposed to the other way around.

Since the use of restorative justice in educational settings is well established in some countries and has been subject to various forms of evaluation. Following a review of some such evaluations, the success of restorative justice as a means of dealing with disciplinary issues is well founded. McCluskey et al. have concluded that “restorative justice would seem to be meeting the need for solutions to rising indiscipline and an overall sense of turbulence in schools” (McCluskey et al. 2008, p. 200). The manner in which restorative practices can be successfully integrated into school settings is well known but is beyond the scope of this chapter (Morrison 2006a, b).

While generally, there are many recognized benefits to the restorative justice approach, there is potential for further benefits for children specifically when these processes are explored through a children’s rights lens. While the CRC and the rights reflected therein clearly predated the development of restorative justice approaches worldwide, there is no doubt that countries that engage these processes must ensure that they are CRC compliant where children are involved. In the specific context of children and young people in conflict with the law Article 40 CRC provides that

States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child’s sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child’s respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child’s age and the desirability of promoting the child’s reintegration and the child’s assuming a constructive role in society.

As Lynch points out following a review of statements from the CRC’s international monitoring body – the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – “it now

appears that restorative justice is a recommended part of a CRC-compliant youth justice system” (Lynch 2010, p. 167). In principle, it is arguable that in any other situations where the rights of children have been harmed, restorative justice processes are to be encouraged.

Thus where such processes are first being established, they should be developed within a children’s rights framework from the outset rather than simply using existing adult-based processes for situations involving children. Since a central component of restorative justice processes is that they facilitate face to face contact between an offender and a perpetrator where full, free, and informed consent to participation has been freely given, it is arguable that more realistic opportunities should be provided for direct and effective child participation in accordance with Article 12 CRC. In a case where the actions of one child/young person have negatively impacted on the life of another child/young person like in the case of cyberbullying, the restorative justice process allows both children to be heard as part of the process. The latter also allows both young participants benefit from freedom of expression under Article 13 CRC, a right which incorporates the right to impart as well as receive the benefit of speech, whatever format that takes.

In the context of a restorative justice process, it is essential that the participants be provided with adequate child-friendly information prior to the process in accordance with Articles 13 and 17 CRC so that they can not only make an informed decision about participation in the first place, but so they understand what they can expect from the process including alternatives available as well as any relevant outcomes. The stage of development of each child or young person, an approach which takes account of their age and maturity, is another important consideration in any case involving them. Depending on the situation, the families of the children and or the community may also be parties to the process, in accordance with Article 5 and 18 CRC. Moreover, the space in which the process takes place should be tailored specifically for the purpose of a restorative justice process for children which, unlike a formal court environment or indeed in a school context, will be specifically suited to the needs of children and young people involved. Furthermore, the children involved will be directly engaged in the drawing up of an agreed and negotiated agreement to which both children/young people actively contribute. Thus they would be part of the decision-making process as well as direct beneficiaries of the process from the outset. Moreover, the individualized approach that forms the bedrock of the restorative justice approach ensures that the personalities and individual characteristics of each child or young person are accommodated and respected, and discrimination is less likely in accordance with Article 2 CRC. With all of these core fundamental rights taken into consideration, there is a higher probability that the best interests of children or young people involved in such cases will be protected. It is essential that any children or young people involved in the process are protected from harm in accordance with Article 19 CRC. The restorative justice process for children has the potential to be of an educational nature where children/young people learn life skills in communication and negotiation as well as empathy in accordance with the aims of education under article 29 CRC.

6 Conclusion

There is without doubt a generalized global acceptance of the right of children to be heard in matters affecting them (see also McIntosh et al., ► [Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care”](#) and Percy-Smith, ► [Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces”](#), this volume). However, the practical implementation of this right in certain contexts still leaves a lot to be desired (see Millei and Imre, ► [Chap. 10, “‘Down the Toilet’: Spatial Politics and Young Children’s Participation”](#), this volume). In the Irish context, research has proven that one area of a child’s life where they do not feel heard is in school – a place where they spend a significant amount of their childhood. This is in part owing to the fact that “the school is an institutional space through which young people are both controlled and disciplined by adults, and within which distinct identities are (re) produced” (Collins and Coleman 2008, p. 285). Moreover, the ways in which schools discipline children in the event that they misbehave which results in harm to another as evidenced by the relatively recent phenomenon of cyberbullying are in many cases not compliant with the CRC since the voices of all children affected are not heard. The discipline of geography has an important role to play in this regard since as acknowledged by Matthews et al. as far back as 1999,

Children as ‘outsiders’ need allies and geography with its concern with the politics and power of space and spatiality is well positioned in this respect.’ (Matthews et al. 1999, p. 135)

What this chapter suggests is nothing new. The use of alternative approaches to address behavioral and disciplinary issues in schools is already done and done well in other jurisdictions. However, the use of restorative justice for children in Ireland for the most part remains narrowly confined to the youth justice sphere. This is unfortunate given the potentially transformative effect these processes can have. Moreover, these processes are more compliant with our children’s rights obligations under the CRC than traditional authoritarian discipline currently used in Irish education. The zero-tolerance disciplinary policies which continue to feature in many schools in Ireland today fail to make space for the effective participation of children in decision-making affecting them. The harsh reality is that “schools continue to treat children and young people in ways that would be unthinkable and intolerable for adults” (Jeffs 1995, p. 25). As highlighted by Freeman,

There is a certain irony in this, for one of the aims of education is to enhance the capacity for decision-making and yet in crucial areas participation in major decisions is removed from those most affected by those decisions. (Freeman 1995, p. 74)

The benefits of restorative justice processes are not confined to schools – they also serve the greater society.

Principles of restorative practice that contribute to civil society – for example, the engagement of relationships of mutuality and trust (Burford 2005) – also provide a valuable foundation from which human service practices can contribute toward a more just society: a common ideal across practice domains. (Connolly 2009, p. 318)

Creating safe spaces where stories of harm and of hope can be told and listened to “is an important social agenda for schools and civil society” (Morrison 2006b, p. 390) in other jurisdictions.

There is no doubt that Ireland has a lot to learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions in this area. These restorative justice processes, while coordinated by adults, involve all children and young people affected by the wrongdoing, who are given a voice in the process. The current disciplinary practices which operate in Irish schools fail to give a voice to all concerned. Thus, if schools fail to ensure that all children have a voice in matters affecting them, the “attempts to promote ‘citizenship’ and ‘political literacy’ therefore inevitably achieve little because. . . schools do not practice what they seek to promote” (Jefferies 1995, p. 28). In Ireland, the authoritarian culture and zero-tolerance approach, which is prevalent within schools, has led to children feeling largely unheard within this sphere (Horgan et al. 2015). This is an approach which is clearly not CRC compliant and certainly fails to adhere to the requirements set out under Article 12 CRC. Thus, with this in mind, there is no doubt that there is a need for an alternative approach which is child rights compliant.

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Paradoxical Moments in Children's Contemporary Lives: Childhoods in East Asia

I-Fang Lee

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Abstract

What is childhood in an East Asian context? How have conditions of living and learning come to constitute children's *lifeworlds* to elucidate social, cultural, economic, political, and education realities concerning ways of being in childhood? Seeking to understand the complexity of children's lifeworlds as well as to unpack the hopes and fears for children's being and becoming at the present and in the future, paying critical attention to the multiple definitions of the child and childhood across different spaces and places (i.e., home, school, community/society), this chapter offers an alternative reconceptualization of the dangers and limits of the global romanization of East Asian children's academic performance and achievement.

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1 Introduction

Assumptions about how children's rights have made observable progress and improvements in "developed" political economies are globally circulated. The relation and linkage between political and economic conditions and children's rights has been politically and economically crafted as causality. The concept of children's socioeconomic rights to provision, protection, and participation is nested within the complex grids of political, economic, social, cultural, and public policies, forming a general but dangerous system of reasoning that mobilizes economic development as a major marker to safeguard children's rights but that can be limiting opportunities for further reconceptualization of children's entitlements to rights.

Limited and framed by such rationality, children in East Asia especially have appeared to achieve good improvement on the topic of children's rights as economic growth in Asia has made international news. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, many of the international discussions about global economic growth and cultural influences within and across Asia have crafted a scenario of the twenty-first century as an Asian Century (for examples, see Australian Government 2012; Nair 2012; Sommer 2006). Asia as a region, an emerging dominant geopolitical region, is in the midst of sociocultural, economic, and political transformation (Asia Development Bank 2011). Experiencing the aftermath of colonization and imperialism while undergoing tidal waves of industrialization and globalization after World War II, parts of East Asia, specifically, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore, became known as the *four little dragons*. Soaring into the category of "developed" economies in the 1980s and 1990s, the four "little dragons" have achieved the status of "modern" societies and "developed" countries, to offer successful stories of national transformation from Asia in the twenty-first century (Vogel 1993). Additionally, in comparative international results from the recent rounds of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) held by OECD since the 2000s, Asian students from Shanghai, China; Hong Kong, China; Korea; Taiwan; Singapore; and Japan have outperformed other students worldwide and continue to dominate the international league table as leading and top academic performers (OECD 2011).

Ironically, in the combination of economic growth and global league tables of good academic performance, East Asian children's contemporary childhoods have been dangerously glorified for having *better and improved* outcomes. Therefore, when holding the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) as one of the *basic standards* to compare and measure children's circumstances and conditions of living across and within greater Asia, children from the four "little dragons" of East Asia seem to be advantaged in many domains. For example, at first glance, when looking into the three major types of children's rights in provision, protection, and participation in UNCRC (Thomas 2011), East Asian children may

appear to have already acquired entitlements of universal child/human rights, particularly when multiple strands of “success” stories of economic development and children’s education performance have traveled across geographical spaces and come to perpetuate a particular political and economic imaginary of the Asian Century (for an example, see Australian Government 2012). Such construction and imagination about Asia also mobilizes the assumptions of how East Asian children have made significant progress in achieving good status on the international discussion of children’s rights.

While recognizing that the social and economic conditions of well-being for East Asian children from Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have improved greatly in the past few decades, it is also important to note that the growing disparities are creating inequity and inequality for thousands of children and families. The old sociological saying that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer is certainly at work worldwide. Therefore, critical reflections on the following questions cannot be ignored: How is the global and universal concept of children’s rights being mobilized? How are discourses of children’s rights culturally as well as politically interpreted in the advanced economies in East Asia? What sorts of rights are being emphasized with culturally added values and political regulations in East Asia? These critical questions are particularly relevant in the midst of the ongoing political protests of *Occupy Central* to further complicate the livelihood problems and economic issues in Hong Kong.

Looking at the current sociocultural as well as controversial sociopolitical events to grapple with the changing situations and conditions of contemporary life in Hong Kong, the discussions in this chapter address questions such as the following: What does it mean to be a child living in Hong Kong at this particular historical moment under such political and economic conditions? What children’s rights are being conceptualized socially, politically, and culturally in Hong Kong? How is childhood culturally crafted and politically defined in Hong Kong? These discussions seek to elucidate the complexity of children’s different living experiences across multiple *lifeworlds* to unpack the hopes and fears for children’s being and belonging at the present moment, as well as in the future.

Drawing from a combination of critical theories, a sociocultural anthropological approach, and poststructural sensibilities to rethink and study children’s living experiences in East Asia, contemporary assemblages of “Hong Kong childhood” will be highlighted and problematized as a particular cultural case study. By presenting a case of a 5-year-old child in Hong Kong to further explicate the desirability/anxiety of academic success at the expense of children’s rights in the early years, children are conceptualized as “miniature students” (Lee 2014). Resonating with Chen’s (2010) work in *Asia as Method* that looks at inter-Asian spatial relationships of modernity and globalization, this chapter problematizes the global romanization and admiration of East Asian children’s academic performance and achievement. Paying critical attention to multiple definitions of the child and childhood across different spaces and places (i.e., home, school, community/society), this chapter seeks to open up possibilities for problematizing and opportunities for critical cultural imaginations of acknowledging and redefining children’s ways

of being and belonging as citizens and residents of Hong Kong within the broader framework of children's rights to survival, protection, development, and participation (these are highlighted as *The 4 Rights by Kids' Dream* which is the first child-led organization established in Hong Kong at the turn of the twenty-first century).

2 Struggling Between Political Colonizers for Rights and Freedom: Decolonization/Recolonization in Hong Kong

After more than a century of British colonization, the political handover from the UK to Mainland China (People's Republic of China, PRC) in 1997 marked a new era of decolonization/recolonization. As a special administrative region of China and under the political principle of "One Country, Two Systems," Hong Kong is a geopolitical space filled with contested political, social, cultural, and educational struggles. The ending of the British colonization period in 1997 opened up a new era of Chinese political colonization and regulation. Shifting between different political colonizers, from the UK to the PRC, within contemporary history, has given rise to paradoxical moments in Hong Kong such as the problematic political struggles toward democracy and issues of identity between Chinese-ness and British-ness, as well as the recent debates on Hong Kong-ness (for examples, see Chow 1992; Choy 2007; Clarke 1995).

Is Hong Kong an anomaly in postcoloniality (Chow 1992)? Not fitting in nicely into Western postcolonial theories and literature, the notions of decolonization/recolonization in Hong Kong need to be understood as twin concepts through which the interplay of decolonization and recolonization are shaping and crafting territories of lifeworlds through which new normative ways of being and becoming are fabricated. This political decolonization and recolonization are simultaneously at work in the reshaping of children's rights and freedom across multiple lifeworlds in Hong Kong.

The discussions here present selected contemporary sociocultural phenomena as threads of logics or driving forces which come to (re)shape the sociopolitical climates for children's living experiences for addressing issues related to children's rights and freedom. Moreover, these threads also come to elucidate the messiness and complexities of decolonization/recolonization in Hong Kong: (1) a new multi-language policy, (2) low fertility rate, (3) changing patterns of child-rearing, and (4) academicization of preschool education. Studying these "events" helps to map the political and sociocultural trajectories of contemporary historiography through which conditions of lifeworlds are emerging in Hong Kong to define "normality and desirability."

2.1 New Multi-language Policy: The Challenges of the "Biliterate and Trilingual" Policy

Education policies have the most "direct" effects on the (re)shaping of children's living and learning experiences. For example, after the political handover from the

British to the Chinese in 1997, the announcement and implementation of a new “biliterate and trilingual” language policy in all schools have interjected new challenges for children’s and young people’s education, as well as cultural identity formation (Poon 2004; Lai 2011; Lee and Leung 2012; Lee and Tseng 2013). Historically, until 1974, English was the only official language in Hong Kong during the British colonial era, at which time public demonstrations demanded equal status for spoken Chinese (Cantonese). In 1987, the Official Language Ordinance declared that both the English and the Chinese (de facto Cantonese) languages were the official languages of Hong Kong for the purposes of communication between the British Colonial Government or any public officers and members of the public and for court proceedings.

This political shift to recognize both English and Chinese (Cantonese) languages had major implications for children’s learning in the school system in Hong Kong. Particularly, after 1997, under the new language policy framework of “biliterate and trilingual” in the era of Chinese political recolonization, English and Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua and Cantonese) were all supposed to be recognized with *equal* political value and social status. However, the tensions between the different languages in Hong Kong have been complicated in debates on the question of *what should be the medium of instruction in schools* (Evans 2009; Hong Kong Education Department 1997; Hong Kong Education Commission 2005)? Under the tidal wave of globalization, the desirability of English language education has become legitimized throughout Asia (for examples, see Crystal 1997; Pennycook 2013; Tseng 2008).

For children, the learning of English is highly prioritized by parents in Hong Kong as English appears to promise future economic and educational opportunities as well as upward social mobility. Acknowledging parental desires for starting English language learning as early as the preschool years and responding to the government’s new language policy, all local preschools offer English and Mandarin/Putonghua in addition to using Cantonese as the primary mode of daily communication (Blaise et al. 2013; Lee and Tseng 2013). Learning to become literate under the new language policy framework of “biliterate and trilingual” can be complicated and challenging for young children.

Unlike dual language immersion programs that foster bilingualism, local Hong Kong preschools treat the learning of each language as independent and separate school subjects. A typical half-day (3 h) session at the preschools is systematically organized to cover English and Mandarin/Putonghua learning while having Cantonese as the primary medium of instruction and communication. Becoming biliterate and trilingual is expected in Hong Kong. This new language policy within the space of preschool has come to (re)define what constitutes politically correct and what becomes the normative pedagogical practice in Hong Kong (Ng and Rao 2013).

Therefore, the timetable in preschool is regimented and filled with *direct instructions* for early literacies (English and Chinese) and numeracy as academic learning outcomes. Preschool has become an academic preparatory transitioning program for primary school education with strong emphasis on learning outcomes in Hong Kong, despite official recognition of the importance of play as the vehicle

for teaching and learning in the early years (Cheng 2011; Curriculum Development Council 2006). What's at issue here is the unraveling of the cultural interpretation of children's right to play in the early years. As emphasized in Article 31 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC), children have the right to play and rest. However, as the concept of play has become a dominant and "best" pedagogical practice in the early years for all children across cultural and political boundaries, cultural (re)definitions of play need to be further problematized within the framework of children's rights.

2.2 Low Fertility Rate in the Twenty-First Century: The Shift to the Voluntary One-Child Family

During the past 10 years, several East Asian countries have been treating the low fertility rate as a national crisis since the aging population within the regions of East Asia can cause significant social and economic problems in the future (The Economist 2013; Jones et al. 2009). For example, in Taiwan, the dropping birth rates since the mid-1990s have created a new educational crisis in which empty classrooms and school buildings are growing to reflect the drop in the student/child population (Jennings 2011; Sui 2011). It has been projected that with such an alarming dropping fertility rate, one-third of the current universities might be forced to close without new intakes of students by 2016 (Taiwan Insight 2013). Similarly, Japan and Korea also face such social challenges of low fertility rates and the shift to one-child-only families.

Taking into consideration multiple factors such as long working hours, rising costs for raising a child/family, and late marriage, the drop in the birth rate is painting the picture of a worrying future in Hong Kong. According to the total fertility rate in 2013, 1,000 Hong Kong women would bear 1,125 children in their lifetimes (HKSAR 2014). This low fertility rate means that most families in Hong Kong *voluntarily* choose to have *only one child*. This new sociocultural trend of the voluntary one-child family has changed many children's living and learning experiences dramatically. Growing up in a nuclear family with no siblings has become a common childhood experience for many young Hong Kong children in the twenty-first century.

Such a shift toward a voluntary one-child family also highlights the production of the new sociocultural phenomenon of the *Kong Kids* (also known as Hong Kong Kids). Kong Kids, a sociological term first coined by Wong (2010), refers to Hong Kong children born post-1997. Kong Kids is a rather negative expression that refers to children who are lacking skills needed to look after themselves, who have low emotional intelligence, and who are vulnerable to adversity. Elaborating on the contemporary phenomenon of Kong Kids, various sociocultural characteristics such as the one-child family, academic first or academic only oriented, and middle-class working parents with in-home foreign domestic helpers/nannies have been highlighted as key factors shaping the formation of Kong Kids as "spoiled brats," not only in homes but also in public spaces (Ma 2013).

2.3 Changing Patterns of Child-Rearing: Foreign Domestic Helpers as Pseudo Parents

Culturally speaking, in Hong Kong, the responsibility for child-rearing has traditionally been with the mother (or other female relatives such as grandmothers and aunts). However, in recent years, due to increased female participation in the labor force, many families now have two working parents. As reported by the official Hong Kong Government statistics, in the 25–44-year-old age group, more than 70 % of Hong Kong women are in paid employment (HKSAR 2014). With such a high percentage of female participation in the labor force, most mothers would more than likely be working mothers and thus the need for childcare. However, due to the lack of institutional and systematic childcare provision in Hong Kong, particularly for children under 3 years old, families are left with few options but to hire foreign domestic helpers from the Philippines or Indonesia to act as nannies or maids for their children.

The importation of foreign domestic helpers as nannies and maids has been legal since the 1970s in Hong Kong. According to the Immigration Department Annual Report (HKSAR 2014), foreign domestic helpers are allowed to work in Hong Kong to relieve families from household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare. In 2012, the total population of foreign domestic helpers was 312,395, which was slightly over 3 % of the total population in Hong Kong (and the population for the age group of 0–14 was 791,100). While not all families with young children would be able to afford or choose to hire a helper, having a foreign domestic helper as a nanny or a maid who lives in the home to take care of the children certainly has complicated contemporary childhood experiences in Hong Kong. In some instances, the foreign domestic helpers, as primary carers, may spend more time with the children than their parents do and/or even become the children's academic mentors by having positive effects on their English language learning (Constable 1997; Ochiai and Molony 2008; Tam 1999; Tang and Yung 2012; Yelland et al. 2013). This can be interpreted in multiple ways for understanding contemporary childhood experiences in Hong Kong, meaning that traditional studies on parenting and child-rearing practices might not be sufficient to understand the changing family structures and new patterns of child-rearing in Hong Kong.

Considering that the foreign domestic helpers may often be the primary caregivers, acting as pseudo parents for the children under their care, it is ironic that these helpers are not well respected across multiple social and political contexts. For example, no matter how long a foreign domestic helper works and lives in Hong Kong, she/he would never be eligible for permanent residency. Evangelina Vallejos' legal case for permanent residency can be thought of as a classical case for problematizing the categorization of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong. In 2013, the highest court in Hong Kong ruled against Vallejos' application for permanent residency. Vallejos started her work as a foreign domestic helper in 1986, when Hong Kong was still a British colony, and she worked for the same family for over 20 years, with multiple legal renewals of contracts. Her legal fight

for residency in Hong Kong has opened up a number of discussions concerning the rights of foreign domestic helpers. Vallejos' legal case has been publicly discussed and politically debated in Hong Kong as an example of the inferiority of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

As a poster child for the foreign domestic helper, Vallejos elucidates the paradox of human and legal rights for domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Critical discussions concerning ownership of helpers are emerging to shed light on global importation/exportation in contemporary narratives of slavery (Amnesty International 2013; Lan 2006). In extreme and problematic cases, children may appear to be the *de facto owners* of their maids, who are in fact their primary caregivers. What this has helped to elucidate are the issues relating to politics of social, class, and ethnic differences, as well as problems of social equality and equity among and between Hong Kongers (employers, owners) and foreign domestic helpers (employees) in Hong Kong, which further complicates the spaces or lifeworlds of private homes in Hong Kong as a labor market.

2.4 Academicization of Preschool Education

One of the notable changes in the contemporary development of pre-primary education is the role of the Hong Kong Government. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the Hong Kong Government has been taking a more active role in regulating the field of early childhood education and care, conceptualizing it as a pre-primary education sector. Therefore, in responding to the recommendations of the Education Commission, the HKSRA Government has worked on promoting and building quality education and care in the early years through implementing several major initiatives and policies. For instance, the new "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (Curriculum Development Council 2006), the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) since the 2007/2008 school year (see, <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/preprimary-voucher/index.html>), and the Quality Assurance Framework since 2000 all work together to mark milestones in "building a new culture for quality early childhood education" (Hong Kong Education Commission 2000, p. 49). It is important to note that all kindergartens are private in Hong Kong. The only difference between them is that some are managed by nonprofit organizations while others are for-profit.

While preschool education is not considered "formal" education in the current 12 years of free public education, attending preschool at age 3 has become more than a basic children's right, a normal and typical childhood experience in Hong Kong. Supported by the universal preschool voucher scheme, the rate of preschool attendance is nearly 99.5 % for children aged 3–6 years. The importance of early childhood education in Hong Kong can be further elucidated through a new education phenomenon, known as *kindergarten battles*, in that queuing for a study place in a quality kindergarten is thought of as a typical parental responsibility in Hong Kong (Ng 2013). Kindergarten wars between different groups of parents and children in Hong Kong are sacred wars. In addition to paying

application fees, significant numbers of parents are willing to queue up outside of the kindergartens with good reputations for hours or even overnight just to acquire enrollment application forms for consideration of eligibility. Education in the early years has become a race for academic success and outcomes in Hong Kong.

Despite the low fertility rate, the numbers of *anchor babies* in Hong Kong have been growing significantly since 2003 (Sim 2012). The term *anchor babies* refers to children born in Hong Kong whose parents do not have legal residency. However, as legal “young” Hong Kong residents who are eligible to receive preschool vouchers for nearly “free” kindergarten education, most anchor babies often “return” to Hong Kong in search of a quality education/school. Thus, the demand by the anchor babies for places in preschools has grown significantly since the year 2006. The parents of these anchor babies and local Hong Kongers have been fighting for school spaces; this problem reached a peak in 2012–2013, when some school districts were completely full and out of any study place for either anchor babies or Hong Kongers (Siu 2013a, b).

In addition to being thought of as one of the children's rights, preschool education has become competitive for both parents and children in Hong Kong. As all kindergartens are private and require enrollment interviews for all young children, starting (pre)school can be stressful for both parents and children. All young children ready to be enrolled in preschool by age 3 will need to get “prepared” for the kindergarten interview even as young as age 2. Additionally, the current trend of academicization of preschool education has created new definitions of childhood for children in Hong Kong. Becoming a (pre)school student in the early years entails levels of adult regulations as well as children's self-governance, while preschools as children's lifeworlds are becoming sociocultural institutions with rules and codes of conduct (Lee 2014).

3 The Paradoxical Moments in Children's Lifeworlds: Rethinking Times and Spaces

The landscapes of children's lifeworlds in Hong Kong are ruptured by multiple trajectories of social, cultural, political, and economic events throughout the different periods of political decolonization/recolonization to interject paradoxical moments. These events open up possibilities for the coexistence of complex ambiguities of both pulling and pushing forces to scaffold the (re)shaping of lifeworlds through which children's childhood experiences are (re)configured.

Lifeworlds are spaces for experiencing living and learning. As Lan (2006) noted:

The concept of spatiality captures the ways in which the social and spatial are inextricably realized one in the other; in other words, space is no passive arena but is realized through the ways people conceptualize and experience time-space relation. The same space can hold distinct meanings and capacities for its various dwellers. (p. 106)

Co-inhabiting within the spaces of lifeworlds, the interactions between the humans (such as preschool teachers, children, foreign domestic helpers, parents)

and nonhumans (language policy, cultural expectations, school rules, and timetables) are creating paradoxical moments for children in Hong Kong. These moments of conflicts within and across the lifeworlds as the children embody different sociocultural and sociopolitical roles such as learner, student, child, and young citizen or even de facto employer of foreign domestic helpers come to redefine what being a child in this time within these spaces in Hong Kong might mean.

Positioning the child within the webs of lifeworlds and shifting to a poststructural perspective for understanding the different sociocultural events and sociopolitical changes as “lines of flights” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) can open up the possibilities for understanding the multiplicities of childhoods and how paradoxical moments are interlaced together. The concept of multiplicities allows different and broader ways of understanding questions such as the following: What does it mean to be a child in Hong Kong? What children’s rights are being conceptualized socially, politically, and culturally in Hong Kong? How is childhood culturally crafted and politically defined in Hong Kong?

Through a case of a 5-year-old girl’s learning and living story, it becomes possible to see multiple ways of being and becoming at this present historical moment in Hong Kong.

3.1 Katy: The Only Child

Katy is a 5-year-old girl who was born in Hong Kong in 2007. Her family lived in Hong Kong during her infancy but moved to Shenzhen because of her father’s work when Katy turned 1 year old. Shenzhen is a major city and a Special Economic Zone in China across the border from Hong Kong. Katy can be categorized as an anchor baby in the contemporary Hong Kong demographic system since her mother is Chinese. Katy is fluent in both Putonghua and Cantonese as her father is a Hong Konger who is a native Cantonese speaker. Both parents are working full time in Shenzhen and they hire a local Chinese nanny to look after Katy. Katy’s father is in the IT industry and her mother is an office clerk for a private business in Shenzhen. According to the Basic Law in Hong Kong, Katy is a legal resident, and she is eligible for the preschool voucher scheme, which would cover her preschool tuition, and she is also entitled to 12 years of free public education in Hong Kong. Thus, Katy travels across the political and geographical borders to attend an afternoon kindergarten session in a nonprofit preschool in Hong Kong.

Preschool education, as Katy’s mother defines it, is the foundation and the beginning of Katy’s school career. As Katy’s mother elaborates:

... picking the appropriate preschool in Hong Kong for Katy is one of the most important choices for me as a parent. I want to ensure that Katy has a good head start in life. She is our only child and thus I want to make sure she gets all the best that we could afford. When it was time for her to start preschool, we knew that preschool in Hong Kong would allow her the opportunity to become bilingual in English and Chinese. Being able to have an early start to learn English is very important for her future success... and it ensures better outcomes in the future. (Translated from an interview with Katy’s mother, 15 July 2013)

Katy's identity as an anchor baby is filled with complexities which position her at the center of multiple conflicts and paradoxes (for example, see Chen 2013). Traveling across the border between China and Hong Kong for preschool education, Katy's living and learning experiences as a child are filled with both hopes and fears about the present moments and imaginations of the future. Additionally, as articulated by Katy's mother, the hopes and fears concerning Katy's future outlook in life are nested within the scope of academic achievement and success, which might be at the cost of a very structured and regimented childhood in the early years.

A closer look into Katy's daily schedule could help to reveal what it means to be a child. As Katy's mother describes:

... Katy's day starts at around 8 am in the morning. I leave home for work at around 8:30. Our nanny/helper comes at 8 am. She gets Katy out of bed and cooks breakfast for Katy while I am getting ready to leave for work. Katy needs to get ready for preschool by around 10:45 in the morning before the school bus comes to pick her up at 11:00. It takes about 1 hour from where we live in Shenzhen, China to her preschool in Hong Kong. She comes back to Shenzhen and our helper goes to pick her up at the bus stop at around 5 pm. The helper would take Katy to her piano lesson on Monday and dance lesson on Wednesday in Shenzhen. Typically, on the days without piano and dance lessons, Katy and our helper would do other activities at home (such as homework, TV/cartoons, or games on the computer). Katy does not really go outside to play with the helper. On Saturdays, while we are at work, the helper looks after Katy and takes Katy to her English class in the afternoon. (Translated from an interview with Katy's mother, 15 July 2013)

This description of Katy's typical daily schedule paints a particular construction of childhood for a child who travels between spaces and borders for preschool. Packed with prescheduled activities, Katy's living and learning experiences as a 5-year-old reflect her parents' hopes and fears about the outlook for Katy's future as a successful student/girl/only child in the family. Moving and traveling between spaces create paradoxical moments in Katy's life. How is Katy being perceived across these different spaces? How is Katy conceptualizing who she is? These questions open up possibilities to reconceptualize and rethink ways of being, becoming, and belonging.

Katy is an anchor baby who physically lives not in Hong Kong but in Shenzhen, China, and her daily commute and border crossing between the two places/worlds mark the uniqueness of her childhood experiences. While Katy's story cannot be representative of all children in Hong Kong, her experiences help to shed light on the complexities of childhoods. Being a child like Katy in between the spaces of Hong Kong and China could be stressful. In the 2012/2013 school year, there were 7,454 cross-border preschool students like Katy, who traveled between geopolitical spaces for education. In the 2004/2005 school year, there were only 733 cross-border preschool students. Learning, for cross-border preschool children, is packed with anticipated outcomes which appear to ensure success in the future, while living is preplanned and highly structured under the guidance of parents but under the care of a domestic helper.

When reflecting on Katy's living experiences through the concept of children's rights, it may appear as if her rights within the framework of UNCRC are met.

However, reconceptualizing how children's rights may be culturally and politically reinvented in Hong Kong can unravel levels of problematic and paradoxical interpretations of them. Specifically, children's right to freedom (of expression and thought as examples) is questionable. As Katy's case elucidates, the concept of freedom is filled with paradoxes. Although Katy may appear to be well resourced economically by her family, with good material reality, and well cared for by her carers (parents and a domestic helper), it is important to note that Katy has very limited *ownership* about how her living and learning experiences are being organized, planned, and constructed. At home, Katy's experiences of and about living and learning are "preplanned" by her parents in order to meet parental expectations. At school, her experiences of and about learning are "prestructured" by her teachers to ensure certain outcomes. Katy's case provides insight into how childhood is culturally crafted and politically defined in Hong Kong.

4 Conclusion

Childhood, although adults like to romanticize it with notions of joyfulness and play, can be stressful, with limited agency and expression of individual interests. As Katy's story shows, contemporary childhood in Hong Kong can be structured and planned to reflect hopes and fears concerning present achievements and future outcomes.

What does it mean to be a child in Hong Kong at this present historical moment? Rather than experiencing post-colonialization after the end of British colonization, Hong Kong in the twenty-first century is undergoing a different period of Chinese political control, colonization, and oppression. At the moment of writing this chapter, a current and historic event, Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP), is ongoing. This political event and social movement reflect the complexities and paradoxical moments related to Hong Kong's fight for democracy in the midst of decolonization/recolonization between the British and Chinese Governments (both the HKSAR Government and the PRC Government). There are multiple ways to understand the meanings of OCLP, one of which paints the picture of a pro-democracy outlook for Hong Kong's future to challenge Beijing's notion of "One Country, Two Systems" between China and Hong Kong. The seeds of post-colonialism are growing. Childhoods in postcolonial Hong Kong are starting.

It is important to assert that the intention of this chapter is not to provide a summary of what Asian childhood is as a new grand narrative. Rather, by highlighting the location of Hong Kong as a case from East Asia, this chapter seeks to carve out new possibilities that allow us to re-narrate, decolonize, and de-imperialize the notion of childhoods. Additionally, the discussions here emphasize that without critical reflection on the multiplicities of Asia and without rethinking the spatial relationships of modernity and globalization, simply looking at Asia as a competitive powerhouse in the twenty-first century would hamper deeper understanding of Asia and childhoods across Asia.

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Youthful Political Presence: Right, Reality and Practice of the Child

6

Kirsi Pauliina Kallio

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Abstract

This chapter discusses youthful political agency in terms of political presence from three perspectives: as rights, practices, and realities. It proposes a focus on the relational politics of childhood and youth that are spatiotemporally embedded, identifying youthful agency as a concurrent state of being and becoming. “Presence” is discussed as relational existence in the lived world where children and young people are recognized and authorized as meaningful, active, and influential members of their communities, to a lesser or greater extent. “Politics” is understood broadly as an aspect pertinent to all communal life, devoid of association with particular scalar dimensions or spatial constructions. Empirically, youthful politics is acknowledged ranging from formal participation and civic activities to direct democracy practices, activism, and mundane engagements. From the perspective of *rights*, it is argued that youthful political

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presence is internally paradoxical, providing for communal positions that are constantly potentially shifting and thus unstable as bases for position taking and activities. Approached as *practices*, different interpretations of youthful political presence are introduced as defining to its feasibility, both in the form of authoritative interpretations and youthful negotiations unfolding in action. Third, the plurality of children and young people's political realities is seized through spatiotemporal situatedness, appreciating youthful agencies as conditioned by the past and compelled by the future. In conclusion, a move forward from approaches that contrast micro- and macro-political relations is suggested. Alongside their active roles, the situatedness of children and young people in their lived worlds of plurality and difference is proposed as an important starting point for future research, involving spatial as well as temporal dimensions.

Keywords

Political presence • Political agency • Paradoxical rights • Political practices • Political realities

1 Introduction

Youthful agency fits an ambiguous societal position. The present scholarly literature and liberal democratic policies largely share the idea that children and youth are *full social beings* along with other people entitled to *special protection* from exploitation, manipulation, and harm. They are also warranted the *right to be heard* in matters concerning them, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This does not, however, include the entitlement to *define* these matters or “the best of the child” in a given situation. Youthful subjects are hence appreciated as competent yet not fully accountable community members. When put in practice, this array comprises a paradox. As their political positioning is simultaneously recognized and unrecognized and authorized and unauthorized, youthful agency is established on some ever-shifting grounds.

Engaging with this ambiguity, the chapter discusses youthful political agency on a principled level in terms of political presence, including references to the empirically grounded studies introduced in other chapters of this volume. The term “presence” refers to children and young people's relational existence in their lived worlds where they are recognized and authorized as meaningful, active, and influential community members to a lesser or greater extent. “Politics,” in turn, is dissociated from particular scalar dimensions and spatial constructions and understood as a specific aspect pertinent to all communal life. Within this broad frame, youthful political presence is approached from three perspectives: as a *right*, *reality*, and *practice* of the child. In all three accounts, the focus remains on human agency as a coinciding state of being and becoming. In addition to spatiality that forms a cross-cutting theme in this volume, this starting point lays emphasis on temporality, making visible that as a *present condition* youthful political presence is always *historically grounded* and *future oriented*.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to youthful political agency, followed by three sections which each cover one of the mentioned perspectives. The ensuing discussion crystallizes political presence as a threefold concept that is offered as an analytical tool for the study of youthful rights and politics in various geographical contexts, and the concluding section sums up the main ideas of the chapter.

2 The Political Sphere of Youthful Agency

Broadly speaking, youthful agency can be divided into three intertwined yet distinguishable political contexts. First, public institutions, policy processes, and formal structures provide arenas for *civic activities* and *institutional participation*, including court houses, parliamentary apparatuses, school boards, NGOs, youth organizations, participatory projects, and other institutional activities (in this volume, see Millei and Imre, ► Chap. 10, “Down the Toilet’: Spatial Politics and Young Children’s Participation”, Mills and Duckett, ► Chap. 28, “Representing, Reproducing, and Reconfiguring the Nation: Geographies of Youth Citizenship and Devolution”, Nagel and Staeheli, ► Chap. 27, “NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon”, O’Toole, ► Chap. 13, “Beyond Crisis Narratives: Changing Modes and Repertoires of Political Participation Among Young People”, and Parkes, ► Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education”). To enter these, children and youth need to be assisted by their adult authorities or involved in collective participatory structures by their coevals. Second, *direct* and *activist* forms of democracy comprise less formal practices of political activity, including demonstrations; on-the-spot established protests and impulsive responses; squatting, graffiti, and urban space appropriations; committed social media gatherings, discussions, and debates; and other engagements in politicized issues (in this volume, see Arancibia et al., “Hooray for the Students!’: The Chilean Student Movement Through Blog Comments,” Ditton, ► Chap. 17, “Young People and the Cultural Politics of Paradise”, Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”, Wong, ► Chap. 24, “Theatre and Citizenship: Young People’s Participatory Spaces”). These are typically made available to children and youth by their families, peer groups, (ideological) organizations, and also researchers. Third, youthful agency may turn political in the everyday environments of home, school, hobbies, peer groups, and local communities, where power relations are realized, reimagined, and reworked through *mundane engagements* (in this volume, see Beazley and Miller, ► Chap. 15, “The Art of Not Been Governed: Street Children and Youth in Siem Reap, Cambodia”, Cele and van der Burgt, ► Chap. 11, “Children’s Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space”, Cottrell Studemeyer, ► Chap. 25, “Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia”, Evans and Skovdal, ► Chap. 1, “Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa:

Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice”, Habashi, ► Chap. 16, “Female Political Morality in Palestine: Children’s Perspectives”, Laketa, ► Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Marshall, ► Chap. 14, “Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine”, and McIntosh et al., ► Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care”). This form of political agency is available to all children and young people, as part of everyday living. Put together, these operational environments give rise to different lived realities where youthful political presence may take place (for manifold perspectives in this volume, see Azmi et al., ► Chap. 19, “Between Exclusion and Political Engagement: Conceptualizing Young People’s Everyday Politics in the Postwar Setting of Sri Lanka”, Bartos, ► Chap. 7, “Children and Young People’s Political Participation: A Critical Analysis”, Hörschelmann, ► Chap. 20, “Dissent and Youth Citizenship”, Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship”, Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces”, Trelle and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective”, and Wood, ► Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People’s Citizenship Studies”).

To capture this multiplicity conceptually, Fig. 1 introduces my conceptualization of the sphere of youthful politics that builds along two continua: one denoting the reflexivity of the actors involved and the other the explicitness of the politics at issue (see also Kallio and Hakli 2011a; Kallio 2012a).

In the empirical field of youthful political presence, civic activities are located at the down-left corner. This implies that their political relevance is so explicit that also the children and youth involved are usually well aware of the political character of their activities. Civic activities link with broadly politicized issues like health, economy, social policy, and the environment and employ politico-administrative practices and venues. The different forms of formal participation may take place and be oriented toward various scalar dimensions, ranging from school classes and youth clubs to local, national, and supranational contexts. Yet common to them is the explicitness of politics and reflexivity embedded in the involvement.

Moving a step away from this clarity, direct action can be found close to the center of the field. Civic and direct activities typically concern similar issues, but the latter ones are practiced outside institutional venues and administrative organizations, within movements, networks, and other active collectives. Also in these activities, the political relevance of the events is (made) somewhat overt to the youthful participants. When they take part in demonstrations and campaigns for environmental justice or are engaged in projects that seek to broaden their understandings of social equality, they know that what is at stake is something considered particularly important by the parties involved. As noninstitutional, these events do not, however, appear as “part of the system,” which diverts both the activities and the actors from being self-evidently political.

The clarity between political and nonpolitical issues blurs further in activities of improvising activism and equivalent emergent happenings. In these, also the adult participants are variably aware of the politics of their doings. The politicization of

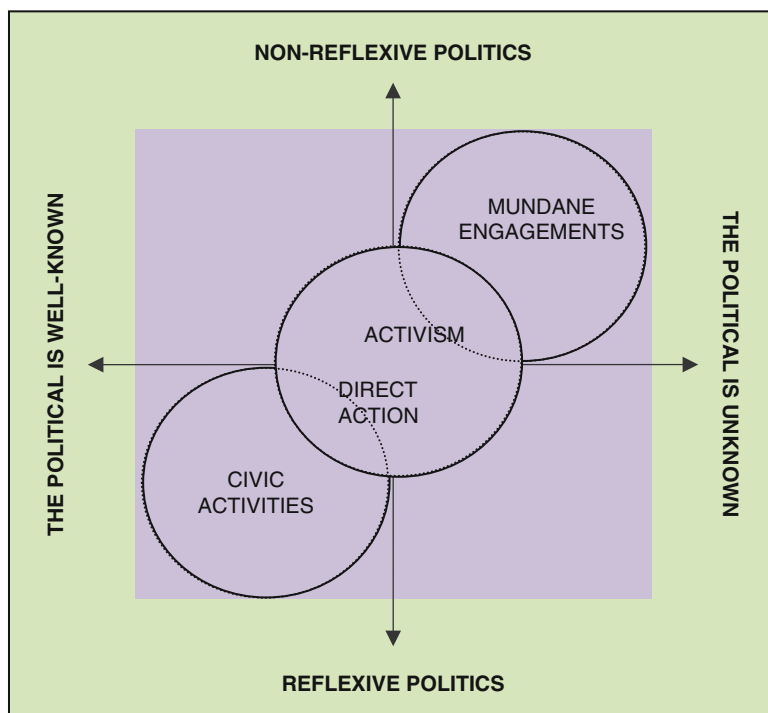


Fig. 1 Empirical field of youthful political presence

new issues is an important motivator of activist-minded undertakings, including attempts to relocate politics so that new issues, modes of acting, and people become visible. As partakers in these activities, children and youth are often not aware that they are participants in politics, but they may get the feeling of involvement even more than in civic or direct activities that may concern issues of little appeal to them. For instance, living in a squatted house or spending family time with homeless people may provide such intimate political experiences.

Moving up and right from activism that concerns issues which are being politicized in these very activities, the right-top corner in the empirical field of youthful political presence portrays mundane lived environments where neither adults nor children typically consider themselves as political agents. These everyday politics are being increasingly identified in the present scholarly debate yet at the same time problematized as they come to question the whole idea of politics (for literary reviews in this volume, see Bartos, ► [Chap. 7, “Children and Young People’s Political Participation: A Critical Analysis”](#), Hörschelmann, ► [Chap. 20, “Dissent and Youth Citizenship”](#), and Wood, ► [Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People’s Citizenship Studies”](#)). When people for instance fight for their rights, protect issues important to them, and strive for a better social status in their everyday communities, they are mobilizing forms of political agency characteristic to liberal democracy. Yet if the issues at stake have

not been politicized in the given context and the place where these activities take place is very mundane, they may not appear as political to anyone. For instance, taking the potato peels to the pigs did not appear as a political act 50 years ago, even if it was an important part of the sustainable way of living; nowadays, even young children may be in the know of the environmental-political relevance of composting. As another example, a fight between two differently minded groups in school may be politically charged if they are fighting over the right to use certain space or to perform particular identities, for instance, even if these power relations remain inarticulate. Similarly, a child's request for a football may seem totally apolitical in the first place; yet if the ball provides a respected peer cultural status, it may have great relevance in her/his everyday politics.

All in all, the empirical field of youthful political presence portrays that venues for political agency are many. Importantly, it needs to be noticed that these venues are variably available and accessible to children and young people who are situated in different ways in their communities and societies. Comparing for instance the rural and urban youth groups who took part in the studies by Trell and van Hoven (► Chap. 23, "Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective", this volume) and Cottrell Studemeyer (► Chap. 25, "Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia", this volume) reveals a notable variety in the political positions available for young people in the present Estonia. Moreover, different kinds of politics are accessed and used differently by the youthful subjects whose orientations, intentions, and ways of acting diverge from person to person, similarly to older people. Bartos' (► Chap. 7, "Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis", this volume) thorough discussion on "voice" makes visible how manifold the UNCRC-based request to "hear children" is, and Marshall's (► Chap. 14, "Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine", this volume) empirical analysis of children's everyday agencies in Palestine reveals how even young children act in variable ways to meet distinct ends in their constricted environments. Hence, as members of formal and mundane communities, young individuals find the opportunities to think and perform politically differently.

The next sections introduce three perspectives for approaching this plurality. First, the paradoxical nature of youthful membership in political communities is discussed in terms of rights. The next section considers how these rights are, on one hand, interpreted by legislative and administrative bodies, childhood and youth institutions, and professional and familial authorities and, on the other hand, negotiated by children and young people in different everyday life contexts. These accounts make visible how political presence is practiced. Third, the variety of youthful political realities is seized through situatedness by which political subjects are embedded in the past and oriented toward the future in their lived worlds. Together these three perspectives shed light on the spatiotemporally grounded dynamic processes of political presence where children and young people intersubjectively establish political agency in their communities, which is further elaborated in the following discussion.

3 Political Presence as Rights

Children and young people's unsettled societal positions have drawn the attention of various quarters throughout the twentieth century, and several attempts to refine them have been launched globally as well as nationally and locally. The development of children's global human rights is the most visible broad-scale effort in this endeavor, with the UNCRC as its latest accomplishment (for historical development, see Häkli and Kallio 2014a). In comparison to its predecessors, the emphasis on youthful participation and voice makes it a manifestation for liberal citizenship. This can be noted from the detailed accounts of the *UN Committee on the Rights of the Child* concerning the right of the child to be heard (see also Kallio 2012b):

States parties are under strict obligation to undertake appropriate measures to fully implement this right for all children—this article establishes not only a right in itself, but should also be considered in the interpretation and implementation of all other rights. (CRC 2009)

Children, including the very youngest children, [are to] be respected as persons in their own right. Young children should be recognised as active members of families, communities and societies, with their own concerns, interests and points of view. (CRC 2005)

This spirit has been largely welcomed by the Anglophone academia. It is seen as a step toward more democratic and equal communities where children are appreciated as human beings and not merely adults in becoming (e.g., Such and Walker 2005; Lister 2007; Skelton 2007; Whitty and Wisby 2007; Tisdall 2008). However understandable and timely, the ambition to detach age-based restrictions from citizenship is not easily implemented. When the more conventional rights of the child related to protection and provision are appreciated concurrently and evenly with the newly established rights to participation, the child is turned into an odd subject whose agency hovers between a “guarded ward” and a “liberal citizen” (for critique, see also Bartos, ► Chap. 7, “Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis” in this volume).

The communal positions that become available to children and youth within this ambiguity can be captured in terms of recognition and authorization, as presented in Fig. 2. As a whole, this conceptual field presents a map of lived citizenship where the mundane and the formal society interlace and intertwine in people's relational positionings (for empirical examples, see Azmi et al., ► Chap. 19, *Between Exclusion and Political Engagement: Conceptualizing Young People's Everyday Politics in the Postwar Setting of Sri Lanka*, Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People's Participation in Everyday Spaces”, and Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective” in this volume). It portrays a fourfold image where empowerment and status in a given community strengthens from the down-left corner toward the top-right corner, which is the ideal course in the development of (political) community membership. Yet this passage is far from many lived realities. The alternative positions are presented in the other two corners. In the top-left corner are situations where the formal status is provided but lived empowerment does not come about satisfactorily. As the opposite, the down-right corner portrays

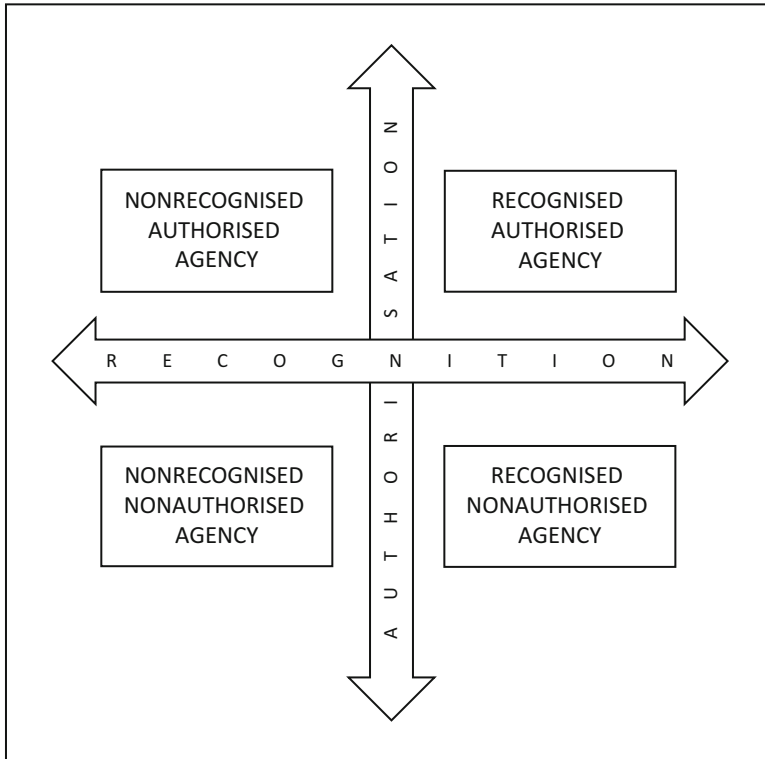


Fig. 2 Conceptual field of political presence

recognition in lived communities when the official status is weak or totally missing. All four conditions are potentially available to children as liberal subjects under guardianship.

How citizenship actually unfolds during the early years is an empirical question, meaning that opportunities to get recognized and authorized as a member of a political community vary from place to place (discussed in the following sections). Yet if children's rights are appreciated, age becomes a common denominator in these processes and complicates them. Following the UNCRC spirit, the conditions of youthful liberal citizenship cannot be nailed down because children's needs for protection and provision vary, not only geographically but also situationally. Therefore, the right to participation also needs to be assessed contextually and may not take fixed forms. In terms of political presence, this means that sometimes children find themselves as recognized and authorized members of their communities, alongside with other people, and other times as nonrecognized and/or nonauthorized subjects whose agency is narrowed down considerably.

This plurality exists within adult populations as well, to some extent, as citizenship status and recognized membership is not allowed equally to all people. Yet like Saskia Sassen (2002, p.285) argues, the denizenships typically employed

by adults – characterized by “the condition of being an actor even though lacking power” – are somewhat stable: people are *either* unauthorized yet recognized *or* authorized yet unrecognized in their communities. In children’s lived worlds, the four roles are, instead, constantly shifting, providing them fleeting positions as community members. This provides for agency that relies on situations rather than continuities, with trust in individual people rather than plural collectives and institutional structures. To display this paradoxality, consider the following examples, purposely simplifying to get to the core of the problematic swiftly. Clearly, these topics vary across diverse geographical contexts:

Food	
Provision	The child owns the right to be provided with sufficiently
	→The child shall be provided enough good quality food
Protection	The child owns a right to be protected from harm
	→The child shall be provided healthy nutrition and protected from unhealthy substances
Participation	The child owns the right to be heard in decisions concerning her/himself
	→The child shall be provided food that she/he feels comfortable with

Eating is an irreplaceable part of everyone’s daily life and hence a common matter of contestation in children and young people’s lives. Situations where the above-introduced set of rights contravenes are familiar to many (for a splendid empirical analysis, see McIntosh et al., ► [Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care”](#) in this volume). Contradictions related to food are prone to build when the question of eating is approached from differing directions by the involved parties, for instance health, social relations, cultural conventions, and beauty. Here are some examples of such contradictions and the related difficulties in appreciating children’s rights that individual adults and institutional actors constantly meet.

Many communities struggle with youths hanging around shopping malls and streets with their peers where fast food and intoxicants are easily available, often forming the *sine qua non* of their social life. At the same time, as they acknowledge the health and social risks embedded in this lifestyle – or lifeworld – attentive parents, childhood and youth professionals, and civil servants responsible for child and youth policy issues usually realize its irreplaceable significance to the participants. Complicated situations where diet and peer life intermingle arise also with reference to popular cultural trends. The visual imageries currently dominating the West-biased media have little respect to the healthy human body. When adopted in peer communities and imitated in real life, these embodied imaginations may lead to body control disorders and artificial modifications of the body, producing young figures suffering from self-inflected malnutrition and exhaustion or seeking to eradicate or customize certain bodily features through plastic surgery and other artificial means.

In these cases and others, it is the child’s *will* that sets against her/his authorities attempts to *care for* her/him, positioning participation and protection/provision against each other as rights of the child. Coupling the liberal democratic ideal of

free will and the welfare society principles embedded in custodial care thus appears difficult when the moralities and opinions between the child and her/his caretakers dissent (for further examples, see Rogers and Weller 2013 and Hörschelmann, ► [Chap. 20, “Dissent and Youth Citizenship”](#) in this volume). These problems do not pertain merely to the kinds of mundane politics discussed above but also to more formal politics that unfold in institutional settings, like school and home. Being the two major frameworks of childhood and youth, the home and the school are the institutional settings where children’s rights should be followed the most rigorously. They are also strictly policed in many countries. Yet again, appreciating youthful political presence is complicated in both. Consider the following examples:

Home	
Provision	The child owns the right to sufficient economic provision in her/his home
	→The child shall be provided public care if the family is not able to support her/him
Protection	The child owns a right to bodily integrity in her/his home
	→The child shall be protected from domestic violence and any exploitation
Participation	The child owns the right to be heard in decisions concerning her/his home
	→The child shall be provided the opportunity to state her/his preferences of familial life

As the “good home” is simultaneously defined from economic, conditional and experiential perspectives, the three rights are prone to draw in different directions in situations where these aspects collide (cf. Beazley and Miller, ► [Chap. 15, “The Art of Not Been Governed: Street Children and Youth in Siem Reap, Cambodia”](#) in this volume). Domestic violence is one case that typically involves such a dilemma. Should the violent person in the family be also the one chiefly responsible for family finances – not a rare case in most societies – protection from violence by separation may lead to economic difficulties and this again to child welfare reactions (e.g. custody). Any or all of these operations may be resisted by the child who is suffering from the violent home but wishes to live with her/his family (cf. problems related to domestic care work, Evans and Skovdal, ► [Chap. 1, “Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice”](#) in this volume). The question that arises is, if “the best of the child” is set as a starting point in solving the problem, which understanding about the child’s well-being respects her political presence the best?

School	
Provision	The child owns the right to be provided free basic schooling
	→The child shall be provided a place in the public school system
Protection	The child owns a right to be protected from harmful treatment
	→The child shall be protected from bullying in school
Participation	The child owns the right to be heard in decisions concerning her/his schooling
	→The child shall be heard in matters concerning her/his school life

Similarly the school faces difficulties in valuing youthful political presence as a whole (in this volume, Cottrell Studemeyer, ► Chap. 25, “Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia”, Parkes, ► Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education”, and Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces”, and also Millei and Imre, ► Chap. 10, “‘Down the Toilet’: Spatial Politics and Young Children’s Participation” on kindergarten). Situations where bullying becomes an insurmountable problem is one common example. Basic education is one of the fundamental rights of the child, considered so important that it should be not only available but obligatory to all children. Thus, if the child suffers in the school community and the situation cannot be fixed in school, she/he may not choose to opt out. Changing class/school is a common way to respond to the situation, and providing homeschooling is another (sometimes temporary) option. But there are plenty of cases where neither solution appears feasible, due to the small size of the school, remote residential location, financial issues, special orientation of the class, transportation opportunities, and so on. What may happen is that the child is sentenced for years to the school class where she/he is bullied. In such cases, the rights to provision and protection appear contradictory, and the child’s expressions of will make the dilemma ever more visible.

Approached from the child’s rights perspective, youthful political presence is thus fundamentally paradoxical. The above examples, presenting only a couple of rather simplified cases, make visible that the 3P principle proposes the child a subject position that does not exist in reality: a liberal citizen under several guardianships that are responsible for supporting the same agency that may contest their authority. Therefore, following these principles, children and young people are *recognized when suitable* and may act as *authorized if admissible* in their political communities. In other cases, they are *unrecognized as political subjects* and *unauthorized as political actors*.

4 Political Presence as Practices

Practice-oriented perspective provides another entry point to the ambivalent community memberships allowed to youthful subjects in the prevailing liberal democratic climate. Exploring childhoods and youths as they unfold in the world makes visible that children and young people are skillful actors in finding ways to state their opinions, influencing processes that they find important, making a difference in matters of personal significance, and joining together to strive for common good in a particular issue. By moving from one position to another, they create space for youthful political presence in formal as well as informal communities. Also, children and youth are not alone in their attempts. Many institutional and informal quarters make constant efforts to interpret children’s rights particularly to empower youthful agency, supporting authorized and recognized memberships in differently

scaled and politicized communities. This volume provides plentiful evidence of both the interpretations and negotiations over political presence, which I will next briefly turn to as prime examples of its unfolding in practice.

This book section “Spatialities of the Rights of the Child” introduces different interpretations of children’s rights. Sometimes these readings are purely institutional and/or authoritative, made *for* children and youth, but other times they are dialogical and involve children and young people as co-interpreters. Lee’s portrayal of Kong Kids is a cautionary example of what happens when children’s agency is constantly discouraged and the world is presented as ready-made for them. Thapliyal’s description of children’s right to education in India presents another case where children have little say about how their rights should be realized. Parkes’ article, instead, identifies the lack of “voice” in the Irish school system and makes visible some institutional practices through which it could be brought up to support individuals as well as the whole school community. Evans and Skovdal take up the question of child work in the sub-Saharan Africa in the child’s rights framework, to specifically underline the difference between the two approaches. They first present attempts to create general norms for children’s work and then display that what work means in children’s lives cannot be defined out of context. They therefore emphasize that, especially in the “liminal cases” such as domestic care work, children’s experiential understandings should play an important role in evaluating the hazardousness of their work, along with other perspectives. Children may reveal aspects that are (intentionally) hidden by the other parties involved in the circles of familial caring, which otherwise remain invisible to outsiders.

Continuing this theme, McIntosh et al. describe in very practical terms how the dialogical and contextual interpretation of rights may take place in institutions, presenting a case of residential care in Scotland where the institutional setting is simultaneously a home for the children and young people involved. They make visible that the professionals who take the 3P principle seriously are often in pains when these rights run up against each other and sometimes also take a collision course with their own rights as staff members. For instance, the ideal of “homely life,” which is sustained by the staff as an important element of well-being, may be challenged in the dinner table by a resident who finds eating together uncomfortable. This participation, in the institutional order that seeks to provide good care through common dinners and protect the residents from the harmful effects of not having a familial home, is one example of dissent political agency (cf. Horschelmann, ► [Chap. 20, “Dissent and Youth Citizenship”](#) in this volume). Noticing these contradictories and living with them so that no one feels undignified or silenced do not make the work of the professionals any easier and may be challenging for the children and young people as well. In their “politics of living together,” they need to learn how to negotiate a solution bearable to everyone – the *possible* best of the child in a given situation. However laborious and demanding, such agonistic democratic practices are a prime example of the contextual interpretation of children’s rights and the mobilization of youthful political presence.

In the three following book sections, many of the chapters portray how children’s rights to equal political membership can be realized. Millei and Imre’s

Foucauldian analysis in a rural Australian kindergarten comes to suggest that including children in institutional processes expects that their views are noticed as “qualified” alongside other knowledges (see also Kallio 2012b). They make explicit that even toddlers are capable of taking part in institutional planning processes that concern their living environments in collaboration with professionals, when given a real chance. Their agency is however also easily dismissed if the basic ideas of youthful participation are not known or respected. Percy-Smith provides examples from institutional settings in Scotland with early youth, where the hardest part is to provide them opportunities to *define* the matters in which they wish to be heard, as involving people in matters important to someone else does not lead to empowerment and is hence not inviting. Trell and van Hoven show that the same question can be posed in more mundane contexts as well, drawing from ethnographic research in rural Estonia. If youth cannot have an influence on their parents need to work in another country, to provide for the family, they may not appreciate their right to be heard in matters that are less significant to them. Rather, they take the initiative in their everyday lives to make things work as well as possible regardless of the undesired circumstances. Both chapters resonate with Wood’s analysis on the importance of “the everyday” in interpreting youthful citizenship. Based on her longstanding research on youth citizenship in New Zealand, she conveys that children’s voices are best heard in places where they are expressed, which concurrently reveals the matters that concern them the most at present.

Also mundane examples of youthful practices of political presence are presented in the next sections. Marshall argues that children may resist oppression through their everyday existence by performing mundane activities in contrast to adult expectations. In the Palestinian refugee camp that forms simultaneously the home, the nation, and the institution of oppression to them, the child participants in his study mobilized their right to participate in the political community on their own grounds. Such resistant moves include engagement with certain popular cultural trends that are not supposed to be part of their lives, turning household chores into play and social activity, and using public space in creative ways. Through these practices, they build subjectivities that are not based merely on the conflict society where they are forced to lead their lives. Discussing the same empirical context, Habashi proposes that by internalizing alternative political moralities, Palestinian children and youth may adopt communal positions that empower them to act for the kind of society where they would like to live, thus emphasizing the importance of political becoming that is based in the past, directed toward the future but formed in the present. Similar arguments are made by Cele and van der Burgt in two Western European contexts, Stockholm in Sweden and Bournemouth in England. Emphasizing the importance of the body in communal life, they show how in both locales children and youth take active roles in public space to “fit in” and thus be recognized as particular kinds of subjects. In some cases, this works better than in others, which makes visible that some children have better opportunities to practice their political presence than others. Ditton’s analysis on a coastal touristic district in Australia displays how such activities may take the

form of activism later in life. In her study, young people have found transgressive cultural activities as a way of forming collective resistance to the fundamental urban changes that are trashing their local community as a place of living.

These examples, drawing from rich empirical explorations in diverse geographical contexts, prove that youthful political presence is not only paradoxical but also full of potentials and prospects. Placed on the analytical fields introduced in the previous sections, they all point to the direction that the genuine acknowledgment of children and youth as important players in their lived communities empowers them as mundane political actors and encourages their active agency in more formal arenas as well. They hence make evident that the potential and power of youthful political agency are based more on social recognition than official authorization, i.e., the identification of children and youth as particular members of the communities where they may have “things at stake” (cf. Häkli and Kallio 2014b, also Vol. 1 in this MRW). Moreover, many of the authors in this volume portray children and young people’s activities and developmental processes as intertwined, to the extent that these aspects can be distinguished only analytically. In practice, political agency is always concurrently present and in the making. These spatiotemporal dimensions are often left unnoticed in research that concentrates in scrutinizing childhood and youth in the here and now, which is discussed further in the next section.

5 Political Presence as Realities

To lead the life of a child may mean so many things that an attempt to list them is doomed from the start. In this volume, there are examples from all around the world that make this more than explicit, ranging from South Africa (Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “[Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship](#)”) to sub-Saharan East Africa (Evans and Skovdal, ► Chap. 1, “[Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice](#)”), Lebanon (Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “[Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship](#)”; Nagel and Staeheli, ► Chap. 27, “[NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon](#)”), the occupied territories of Palestine (Marshall, ► Chap. 14, “[Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine](#)”, Habashi, ► Chap. 16, “[Female Political Morality in Palestine: Children’s Perspectives](#)”), Sri Lanka (Azmi et al., ► Chap. 19, “[Between Exclusion and Political Engagement: Conceptualizing Young People’s Everyday Politics in the Postwar Setting of Sri Lanka](#)”), India (Thapliyal, ► Chap. 2, “[Privatized Rights, Segregated Childhoods: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Education Policy in India](#)”), Hong Kong (Lee, ► Chap. 5, “[Paradoxical Moments in Children’s Contemporary Lives: Childhoods in East Asia](#)”), Singapore (Wong, ► Chap. 24, “[Theatre and Citizenship: Young People’s Participatory Spaces](#)”), rural and coastal Australia (Millei and Imre, ► Chap. 10, “[‘Down the Toilet’: Spatial Politics and Young Children’s Participation](#)”; Ditton, ► Chap. 17, “[Young People and the Cultural Politics of Paradise](#)”), urban and rural

New Zealand (Bartos, ► Chap. 7, “Children and Young People’s Political Participation: A Critical Analysis”; Wood, ► Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People’s Citizenship Studies”), Chile (Arancibia et al., ► Chap. 18, “Impact of Social Media on Chilean Student Movement”), Seattle in the USA (Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”), Ireland (Parkes, ► Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education”), Scotland (McIntosh et al., ► Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care”; Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces”), England (Cele and van der Burgt, ► Chap. 11, “Children’s Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space”), the UK (Pykett, ► Chap. 8, “Brain-Targeted Teaching and the Biopolitical Child”; Mills and Duckett, ► Chap. 28, “Representing, Reproducing, and Reconfiguring the Nation: Geographies of Youth Citizenship and Devolution”), Stockholm in Sweden (Cele and van der Burgt, ► Chap. 11, “Children’s Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space”), rural and urban Estonia (Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective”; Cottrell Studemyer, ► Chap. 25, “Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia”), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Laketa, ► Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina”; Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship”). Adding to this, my own studies are based mostly in Finland where yet again children’s political presence unfolds a bit differently. Apart from physical geographical diversity, there are many societal aspects that add to the plurality of childhood realities. Children are not situated only with reference to their regional, national, rural, and urban locations; their lived worlds are also ethnic, religious, cultural, economic, gendered, classed, raced, sexed, familial, (dis)abled, (un)healthy, educational, peer cultural, moral, ethical, aesthetical, (im)mobile, (dis)connected, (un)stable, and so on.

As a reality of the child, political presence hence get countless forms. Alongside with spatial analysis, a temporal approach to this situated agency is helpful in seizing the plurality. The temporality of youthful political presence has two distinct facets. Children and young people are political agents *in the present*, actors who participate in the lives of their communities in ways available and comfortable to them, adopting different positions and roles. This practiced political presence unfolds with regard to their *situated histories and futures*. As Katharyne Mitchell and Sarah Elwood (2013, p.35) argue, “the political formation of children is constituted in relation to the past and the future, and we note the importance of thinking beyond the present in order to consider children’s quotidian politics in a more comprehensive way.” This perspective sheds light not only on the development of children as political subjects but also the development of the political communities that endure and transform through their members (also Kallio and Häkli 2013). It hence combines both spatiality and temporality as elements of youthful situatedness, opening into two dimensions.

First, youthful political agency is situated in the past, or pasts, as there are many histories that place children in their communities (see Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship”, Laketa, ► Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”, and Nagel and Staeheli, ► Chap. 27, “NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon” in this volume). Some histories come by the family; others are embedded in the neighborhood, locality, and town; and yet different histories are carried on by countries, states, and cultural regions encompassing narratives of different peoples. All these histories, plural in themselves, contain a multiplicity of social orders and hierarchies that relate people with each other. Children become familiar with these histories first in their mundane environments where they seek their place in the family, peer groups, institutions of care, neighborhoods, and whichever communities that are part of their everyday lives. Different histories are also taught more and less explicitly by the institutions that care for them, including the home, nursing and day care systems, the school, and religious institutions. Moreover, variable historical truths are manifested in public and commercial space through architecture, advertisements, popular cultural products, media, and so on.

In engaging with this array of histories together with their significant others, children come to apprehend how they are positioned in their worlds in relation to other people, animals, natural elements, and material artifacts. In Hannah Arendt’s (1958, p.181) terms, this process is an excursion to relative difference, a journey during which children find out about “what” they are. By accepting shared characteristics and mutually recognized features with the other community members – often referred to as identity constructions – children become recognized subjects in their communities. Through this position taking that simultaneously unites and separates “us” with/from “others” – in other words spatial socialization (see Paasi 1999; Kallio and Häkli 2011b; Kallio 2014, 2016) – children and young people become particularly situated subjects who may express, negotiate, and struggle their political presence on certain grounds.

Whereas the past is an important *conditioning element* in youthful political realities, the future is a *compelling component* of situationality. Youthful political agencies are oriented toward the future, or futures, as futurity is no less plural than history. The post-1980s childhood studies tradition has emphasized the importance of seeing children and young people’s agency as meaningful in the present and their actions as influential “for today,” which has led to paying less attention to other dimensions. Future is a constant and evident element in youthful lives, including various dimensions and temporal ranges. These orientations can be noticed from many everyday encounters: in the nursery, the advanced children await to be transformed to kindergarten to join the more mature peer group; in the primary school, the senior class awaits to enter the secondary school that provides them a new status; in the family, the children whose siblings are going through confirmation or graduation await for their turn to take another step toward adulthood; in local communities, children await to be trusted more to improve their position in the social hierarchy; and so on.

Be it wishful or fearsome, children await a lot and prepare for realities that are not accessible to them in the present. It is not only the faraway horizon of adulthood that they gaze toward but also the next class in school, new peer cultural dynamics, bodily developments and affectionate desires, freedom and responsibility in daily movement, and many other apparently temporally nearby things that invite them to new communities, positions, and identities. The potentials and possibilities as well as despairs and disbeliefs related to these anticipations are part of youthful political presence, shaping the ways in which children and young people *seek to* position themselves among others. Even if conditioned, situated subjectivity is therefore not predestined through spatial socialization. Returning to Arendt's (1958, p.8) conception of political human condition, besides through relative difference, people relate with each other by relative equality: "we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who lived, lives, or will live." This "whoness" that is strongly oriented toward the future provides political presence with elements of novelty and unpredictability, adding notably to the human capacity of beginning things anew which, following Arendt, is the essence of politics.

Yet again futurity also appears in the form of external expectations in childhood and youth, especially in institutional and policy contexts (see Pykett, ► Chap. 8, "Brain-Targeted Teaching and the Biopolitical Child," Lee, ► Chap. 5, "Paradoxical Moments in Children's Contemporary Lives: Childhoods in East Asia," and Nagel and Steaheli, ► Chap. 27, "NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon" in this volume). Health monitoring is largely future oriented; educational choices are made with future prospects in mind; civic skills are enhanced for full citizenship performance; and parents have plans for their children's future. The cross-cutting early intervention ideology in childhood and youth institutions has made these expectations ever more visible. The attempt to cut short undesirable developments as early as possible is one way of saying that the "right path" is already known. This aspect of futurity has been the subject of fierce critique in childhood studies for the past 30 years or so, yet in institutional practices and as a pervasive ideology, it has rather strengthened than withered within this time. The institutional future scenarios are hence among those that invite, and sometimes request, children and youth to orient themselves toward certain projects that are directive to their political subjectivities and community memberships as well.

Enhanced understanding on youthful spatiotemporal situatedness provides methodological tools for accessing the plurality of childhoods and youths at play. The realities where political presence takes the form of rights and practices are not variable only between nation-states and cultural regions, but among different kinds of families and gender categories, school classes and sect/secular norms, health institutions and ethical cultures, and a number of other geographical signifiers that situate people in their lived worlds particularly. This situatedness forms the fundamental basis to how children and young people may find themselves as political subjects.

6 Youthful Political Presence as a Right, Reality and Practice of the Child

The previous three sections have portrayed political presence as a set of spatiotemporally grounded and contextually conditioned dynamic processes through which children and young people establish themselves as members of their communities, making at the same time sense of their lived worlds as contexts of living together. This presence is afforded different venues and opportunities, depending on which aspects of political living are appreciated and encouraged in the given society and, more specifically, how the people who live and work with children and youth interpret their rights to participation vis-à-vis protection and provision. Moreover, the actualization of political presence is also contingent on children and young people's own orientations. Whereas some find it comfortable to express themselves through formal channels as individuals or collectives, others are more attuned to direct action and activism as part of politicized movements and organizations, and yet again, the majority of the young are contented if they have the chance to influence matters important to them in their everyday living environments without an explicit political agenda. These preferences may take different directions if circumstances change radically – for instance, when a peaceful community gets enmeshed in a violent conflict or embedded in a strained geopolitical situation – but the variation itself is a consistent element of children and young people's political agency.

What results from this is that youthful political presence takes different forms that range from conventional political positioning to contesting activist practices to totally new creative ways of engaging with lived communities. This conception is based on a broad and relational understanding of politics, appreciating it as one of the basic dynamics by which human communities operate, persist, and change. As such, it brings children and youth from the fringes to the core of political life, first, as vividly developing political subjects who learn new things about the everyday worlds where they live in both cognitively and through mundane engagements and, second, as active political subjects who participate in the life of their communities alongside other people from their own situated positions. It also doubles political populations, as approximately half of the world's people are young (cf. Brocklehurst 2006: 1). Furthermore, the approach relativizes *adult* political presence, which can be scrutinized in a totally new way when it is no longer privileged as *the* way of being political (cf. Kallio and Häkli 2010; Skelton 2010). This relativization is part of a broader trend where the conventional understanding of political agency has been challenged first in terms of gender and race and later with reference to animals, natural elements, and material artifacts (e.g., Mitchell 1993; Staeheli et al. 2004; Marshall 2013; Pile 2014).

As political agency becomes an intergenerational human condition that has no other starting or ending points than those characteristic to human life in general, the central nodes of politics start to shift. This is not to say that for instance economy would cease to be political; it rather suggests a reconsideration of *which* economies are politically most relevant and *whose* positions and concerns should be taken into account. From this perspective, for instance the critique of global labor markets

could start paying more attention to child labor as a normalized part of the transnational economy, where children and youth are involved as important players. Currently, these questions are evaded by packaging child labor under child abuse that should not exist and needs to be fought against in the name of human rights – and forgetting the unpleasant truth. Why not, instead, take children and young people’s transnational rights as laborers to the fore, as the current case is that they play a notable part in the production of the goods that we live on? This would appreciate certain children’s political presence much more than the “worry talk” that identifies them only as victims.

Equally, bringing children and youth into the political realm as people comparable with others compels us to ask some basic questions related to democracy, including *where* the most pertinent venues for hearing people’s opinions reside and *how* they should be heard in order to reach the voice of the people as comprehensively and equally as possible. When only adults are concerned, it may seem fair to entail that people state their opinions verbally and justify them with rational arguments on public venues organized by politico-administrative institutions, if they wish to participate in the democratic society. Yet not all people find themselves as comfortable and competent in such roles as others or find their political attitudes represented by the political parties that are devoted to working for a certain nation-state. With children, such requests seem instantly out of place. Therefore, alternative ways of hearing their views and noticing their experiences have been developed, which could be employed also more broadly. It is easier for children to provide their views in urban planning processes if they have access to the place under consideration, which is true to anyone not familiar with professional planning. Children also reach better results in problem-solving and other complex tasks if they may work together with their friends and other people they share their lives with, rather than alone or in given groups. Such lived society-based activities are surely not effective only in children and young people’s communities, but would work well with many adults as well. This is to say that including children and youth in the political society may not only draw attention to *their* political presence but also to the adults who occupy weak positions in their communities.

Appreciating political presence as a right, reality, and practice of the child is hence not only “children’s business.” It suggests a new way of thinking about politics, as a matter pertinent to all human beings, taking different forms in different localities and positioning people with relation to each other in a myriad of ways, not limited to certain issues, venues, or actors but actualizing whenever, wherever, and by whoever. This is a dangerous suggestion from the perspective of those who currently “own” the political, as it challenges their legitimized positions and the matters important to them. When political life is afforded to everyone, the established power relations between people and places are prone to change. New “important” will arise at the expense of some others. This perspective will therefore not be taken up by the mainstream political scientific research that knows so well what is and what is not politically relevant and who are the key players in the political world. It is thus the task of critical scholars to engage with such novel conceptions of politics and introduce the other half of the world’s population to the political inquiry.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed youthful political presence from three perspectives: as *rights, practices, and realities* of the child. It has first presented the political sphere of youthful agency that ranges from formal participation and civic activities to direct democracy practices, activism, and mundane political engagements. Appreciating this broad conception of politics as a starting point, it has then argued that the liberal democratically based conception of children's political presence – embedded in children's global rights to protection, provision and participation – is internally paradoxical. The main problem is located at the ambiguous roles available to youthful agents, as (un)recognized and (un)authorized members of their communities whose potential and actual positions are constantly potentially shifting. Discussing political presence as it unfolds in the present, the third section has made explicit the interpretive processes through which youthful agency is (dis)empowered by institutional, mundane, collective, and individual authorities, sometimes in cooperation with children and youth. In this examination, recognition is identified as a powerful social dynamic that provides for better acknowledgement of youthful political presence and may also lead to more authorized positions. In connection with this, children and young people's own activities are introduced as formative to what political presence may mean in practice. The fourth section has engaged with the plurality of children and young people's political realities, presenting spatiotemporal situatedness as a prospective way for approaching it. It has suggested that youthful subjects are appreciated as situated in their pasts that condition their subjectivities as well as in their futures that compel different political desires. Finally, the last section has brought together the three introduced perspectives to political presence, formulating a theoretically informed methodological framework for approaching youthful political presence.

Within geographies of childhood and youth, this chapter proposes a focus on the relational politics that are spatiotemporally embedded, identifying youthful agency as a concurrent state of being and becoming. It hence suggests a move forward from approaches that contrast the immanent here-and-now micro-political relations with the structural and large-scale ones, accentuating one over the other. In the past decades, emphasis on the present has been justified with the critique of the 1950s–1980s developmentalist research agenda. In relation to children's rights, this trend can be understood as a parallel attempt to strengthen liberal citizenship as a global principle. Even if inadvertently, the study of children's competent agency and proficient social skills has paved way to thinking about them in terms of individual rights and responsibilities. Whereas critical research streams have sought to emphasize mutuality, intergenerationality, and communality alongside liberal agency, many policy-oriented studies and practical applications have drawn to the other direction, establishing neoliberal ideas of the child subject (for recent discussion, see Vanderbeck and Worth 2014). As an attempt to redirect this discursive development, this section suggests that alongside children and young people's active roles, more attention is paid to youthful situatedness, both spatially and temporally. Such approach paves way to the plural realities where children and young people lead their political lives.

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Part II

Children and Young People's Agency in Politics

Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis

7

Ann E. Bartos

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Abstract

This chapter interrogates some of the debates within childhood research regarding the concept of children's participation. The chapter traces the prevalence of the concept through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and academic discourse. Incorporating notions of participation in childhood research has encouraged researchers and development agents to include space for children's voices, involve children as research agents, and seek creative ways to incorporate methods that promote children's participation. However, there is often little discussion of the normative assumptions underlying participation projects and what this means for how and why we work with children in the ways that we do. Such normative assumptions implied and made visible through participatory discourses are that we need to listen to the voices of children, that they have individual human rights that must be upheld and honored, and that children, as *beings*, are important and need to be included in research. Each of these points has enabled children's participation in research to become

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normalized and legitimized. Likewise, children's researchers have made incredible strides in the international research community by promoting the value of children as political agents, publicizing the variety of ways children participate in P/politics, and demonstrating the ways they are indeed political. This chapter opens up the space needed to interrogate assumptions of children's participation in an effort to help us think more critically about our research programs so that we can challenge ourselves to entertain creative, ethical, diverse, and empowering research methods with the children and youth whose political agency we aim to better understand.

Keywords

Participation • Child rights • UNCRC • NSSC • Participatory research • Child's voice • Student councils • Research methodology • Embodiment • Relationality

1 Introduction

The concept of participation is often heralded as the most significant factor in understanding children's politics as well as their engagement in research projects. In order to unpack children and young people's understandings and practices of/in politics, researchers often look to both increase and expand the ways young people participate in P/politics, whereas big "P" politics includes state-centered, formal, and institutional politics, while little "p" politics includes the more mundane, personal, and micro-politics of everyday life. Likewise, a common concern and motivation for academics working with youth is to find new ways of including children and young people, in an earnest effort to increase their participation in the research project. This distinction between participation in P/politics and participation in research is rarely untangled in the literature. Rather, the normative goal of increased participation, *in general*, is a prevalent concern across childhood studies.

Increasing children and young people's participation in research projects or in P/politics may prove to be an effective way to expose challenges uniquely faced by youth, draw attention to various forms of agency, and empower youth to get involved, take initiative, and stimulate change in their communities. However, some scholars are beginning to engage in more critical dialogue regarding the overarching aims of participation and indicate an effort to unpack its unproblematized goals. Since the late 1980s and throughout much of the research today, the predominant focus on participation has not only been regarded as a requirement for most research projects with children and young people, but is often seen as the end goal. This perspective suggests a short-sighted approach to working with children and young people; we are bound to ignore other factors that also contribute to better understandings of the P/politics in young people's lives or illuminate new and innovative ways to work with children and young people in our research. As critical research on childhood and youth is growing in popularity, it is appropriate for us to take a step back, slow down, and pose provocative questions about some of the main tenets that drive so much of our research.

This chapter aims to highlight some of these debates around the concept of participation in an effort to move that conversation forward. I begin with an exploration of the concept of participation through its roots in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and through academic discourse. Building on this contextual background, I then discuss several concerns raised within the literature to provide a nuanced account of the assumed benefits of participation. This scholarship helps us think beyond participation as a goal in itself and into new realms of working with children and youth as political agents.

2 Participation in Context

Many researchers and development practitioners who work with children acknowledge that the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) marked a paradigm shift in how children and young people are understood: this was a watershed moment in which children were given expressly human rights. Throughout the world, the UNCRC has been the driving force behind the creation and management of many youth-related policies and is, arguably, the foundation of participation initiatives in development and research projects. In 42 Articles, the Convention outlined three primary types of rights that all children are entitled to “without discrimination”: survival and development rights, protection rights, and participation rights. Article 3 identifies the ground rule that the “best interests of the child” must be “the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them,” particularly in matters related to budgets, policies, and laws (UNCRC). Under Article 4, those countries that have ratified the Convention are required to take the child’s best interests into account when changing and/or implementing laws and policies that will have a direct or indirect impact on children.

The rights related to children’s participation are embedded throughout the entire Convention (Skelton 2007), but Articles 12–17 most specifically address: *respect for the views of the child; freedom of expression; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; freedom of association; right to privacy; and access to information*. Research and development projects concerning children’s participation tend to refer to Article 12 in particular, *respect for the views of the child*, in which “children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. . . This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making” (UNICEF 2014b). It is this Article that most directly draws attention to children having a *voice* that is distinct from adults and emphasizes the need for adults to *listen*. Article 12, thereby, is often identified as the foundation from which participatory projects begin (Wyness 2013a; Kallio 2012a; Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010; Skelton 2007).

The rights granted to children through the UNCRC indeed shifted the paradigm from viewing children solely as objects of care and in need of protection, either by parents, schools, or governments, to one of being active *participants* in their lives. The inclusion of children’s voices, particularly in decision-making processes, can arguably be understood as an effort to encourage and promote democracy and teach

young people how to engage in democratic processes. The Convention argues that there are long-term costs to society for *not* facilitating children's participation, which would result in a society of young adults unable to effectively engage as democratic (and arguably self-interested) citizens (Lansdown 2011).

While the UNCRC has undoubtedly shifted the legal terrain in which young people's lives are governed, the concept of childhood was also concurrently being problematized within the social sciences. It was only toward the last decade in the twentieth century that social scientists began to challenge the very taken-for-granted universalist ideas of childhood. These researchers, under the framework of the "new social studies of childhood" (NSSC), argued for two primary theoretical progressions: (a) that childhood is a social construction and varies across space and time and (b) that children are social actors in their own right and that they be recognized as *beings*, not only *becomings* (Holloway and Valentine 2000; James and Prout 1997). Sociologists, anthropologists, and geographers worked in similar ways over the past two decades to explore childhoods around the world to better understand the complications place, time, and social-political-economic structures have in influencing the creation of what we understand to be a time in life called "childhood." While all adults share a commonality in being younger at one point, their experiences of childhood have varied widely and therefore influence how we come to know childhood today. The recognition of the multiplicities of childhood has been a primary driver in exploring new techniques and methods for involving children in academic research projects.

The efforts made by youth scholars and the policies promoted through the UNCRC have truly changed the way that children and young people are involved in research projects. One substantial change is that today, researchers often refer to their research *with* children as opposed to their research *on* children (James 2007). In a radical shift from previous research which studied children as research subjects, today many researchers attempt to find ways to enable the children themselves to be part of the research design and dissemination of results (e.g., Punch 2002).

However, despite the best intentions of researchers and development agents to work with children, to listen to their voices, and to find ways to involve them in their projects, there is little discussion about the normative assumptions underlying participation projects and what this means for how and why we work with children in the ways that we do (cf. Holland et al. 2010; Beazley et al. 2009). Such normative assumptions implied and made visible through participatory discourses are that we need to listen to the voices of children, that they have individual human rights that must be upheld and honored, and that children, as *beings*, are important and need to be included in research. Each of these points has enabled children's participation in research to become normalized and legitimized. Likewise, children's researchers have made incredible strides in the international research community by promoting the value of children as political agents, publicizing the variety of ways children participate in P/politics, and demonstrating the ways they are indeed political (e.g., Skelton 2013; Kallio 2012b; Kallio and Häkli 2011; see also many of the chapters in this volume).

Despite these strides, Skelton argues “it is essential that there is a *continual critical interrogation* of what [participation] means and whether its practice is beneficial or detrimental for the children involved and children more generally” (2007, p. 169, emphasis added). It is also important to more critically explore what is missing from participation projects, for example, do we have participation “right”? Are there other ways to do participation in different settings, in different times, in different moments? Are there other ways to understand children and young people’s politics *without* their participation, or as they participate *differently*? Are these other methodologies and other perspectives equally valid and enlightening as traditional participatory approaches? Perhaps such questions have not been *continually critically interrogated* as Skelton advises, yet there is burgeoning critical scholarship that engages with similar questions around participation and that helps us unpack its generic positive claims.

The remainder of this review highlights some of this scholarship in an effort to help us think more critically about our research programs so that we can challenge ourselves to entertain creative, ethical, diverse, and empowering research methods with the children and youth whose political agency we aim to better understand. It is important to specify that in no way does this chapter make an argument to revert back to a time when children were meant to be seen and not heard; rather, this chapter hopes to highlight some important conversations that are taking place among social science researchers in an effort to help us think of more innovative and exploratory research approaches to working with young people and their politics.

3 What Is Participation?

Before we move on to look at some critiques of participation, it is necessary to provide an overview of its definitions. As discussed in the previous section, thinking of children as competent social actors was a novel concept as few as 25 years ago. At this time, researchers argued of the value of including children in research, but as it was such a new area of research, the early years of research with children were more empirically driven rather than theoretically complex (Ansell 2009; Vanderbeck 2008; Horton and Kraftl 2006). Perhaps the novelty of working with children and the inherent power dimensions present between child “subjects” and adult “researchers,” regardless of how inclusive the study design, contributed to the anxiety of doing empirical research the “right” way. Whether more persuaded by the UNCRC or the NSSC, one of the most challenging concepts researchers struggled to interpret within this new paradigm of childhood was that of participation (Hart 2008). To help relieve this anxiety within the former and specifically move the Convention forward, the UN published the essay *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship* by Roger Hart (1992).

In this essay, Hart drew on Sherry Arnstein’s (1979) ladder metaphor used to describe citizen (adult) participation. Hart modified Arnstein’s ladder to distinguish eight “levels” in which children can participate in their communities. These levels

include “nonparticipation” (e.g., manipulation, decoration, and tokenism) and “degrees of participation” (e.g., assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult-initiated, child-initiated and child-directed, and child-initiated and shared decisions with adults) (Hart 2008). While Hart’s original intention with the essay was to “stimulate dialogue on a theme that needed to be addressed critically” (2008, p. 19), researchers within and beyond the academy adopted his ladder metaphor as a prescriptive model for how to implement and evaluate their work (see also Thomas 2007).

According to Hart’s personal reflections on the import of the ladder nearly two decades since its initial publication (2008), he argues that this lack of critical dialogue resulted in inaccurate interpretations of the ladder. He argues that the metaphor was adopted too literally by researchers and inaccurately suggests a sequential development to children’s participation; the top rung became the most important level and the ultimate goal of any research project with children. Rather, the ladder was meant to draw attention to the ways that children *can* participate and the different degrees to which adults and institutions enable or prevent their participation. Higher up on the ladder implies higher degrees of children’s agency, but Hart argues that the lower levels can also encourage children to participate in ways that may be more comfortable. Hart believes that children do not always need to “perform” at these higher levels, but knowing that these higher levels are available to them is of value to children not only in the research project but also in their daily lives. Despite Hart’s attempts to bring attention to these nuances to his 1992 essay, the ladder was a highly influential metaphor that many early researchers adopted and remains relevant throughout research studies with children and youth today (Thomas 2007).

More broadly, the concept of participation was simultaneously receiving interrogation among social and development geographers around the same time as Hart’s essay. Inspired by the “cultural turn” and increasing attention to qualitative methodologies, geographers with interest and awareness of the multiplicity of people’s relationship to and with place and possibilities for social change turned toward participatory research methodologies (Pain and Kindon 2007). “Participatory research describes a family of approaches wherein those conventionally ‘researched’ are directly involved in some or all stages of research, from problem definition through to dissemination and action” (ibid, p. 2807). Participatory research approaches aim to do more than observe; they aim to incite change, empowerment, and possibilities. Participatory researchers also tend to focus on the relationship aspects of research projects, building trust, and negotiating issues of representation with research outputs (Cahill 2007a). Rather than simply recording how people relate to place, participatory research focuses on social action (Cahill 2007b; Pain and Kindon 2007; Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”, this volume; Wong, ► Chap. 24, “Theatre and Citizenship: Young People’s Participatory Spaces,” this volume).

An ideal participatory research project begins with the participants defining a problem in their community that they want to resolve, and the researcher acts as a facilitator in helping the community achieve their goal. This type of research

project is often referred to as “participatory action research” (PAR), although the distinction between PAR and participatory research is not always specified in the literature. However, within current times of project funding timelines and institutional emphases on academic outputs, such ideal participatory projects rarely come to fruition (Coombes et al. 2014). Researcher motivations may be well intentioned, and effort to achieve more radical involvement with research participants should not be avoided, but it is important to acknowledge that “ideal” participatory projects are often difficult to achieve (ibid; Ansell et al. 2012).

Hart’s ladder of participation in its various guises and participatory geographies are both incorporated into research throughout children’s geographies. At this point, there are a good amount of research papers and books that address the complicated, messy, and unpredictability of research with children, and some focus explicitly on particular research methodologies (e.g., Hadfield-Hill and Horton 2014; Ansell et al. 2012; Greene and Hogan 2005; Christensen and Prout 2002; Punch 2002). Much of this scholarship, however, insinuates that legitimate research projects are those that successfully incorporate children’s participation, regardless of how this term is defined or specified. The next section of this chapter critically interrogates some of the predominant components of participatory research as a way to help us think of children as political agents beyond the (inadvertently) narrow and linear definitions put forth by Hart and the more emancipatory approaches within participatory geographies.

4 Problematising Participation

4.1 The Child’s Voice

While there are a number of articles in the UNCRC that support children’s participation rights, Article 12 is often heralded as forming the basis for how the concept of children’s participation has been adopted (Wyness 2013b; Kallio 2012a; Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010; Skelton 2007). Article 12 was written in two parts. Part one states that a child has the right to express his/her own views in accordance with their level of maturity and age. Part two states that this child should be given the opportunity to be heard. Both components of Article 12 emphasize the predominant way to participate is discursive: the child has a right to speak and adults have a responsibility to listen. Regardless of this rather limited way of thinking about participation, the “voice” has become one of the most significant dimensions of participatory research with children today (Kraftl 2013; Wyness 2013b; Kallio 2012a; Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010; James 2007).

The focus on the voice encompasses both encouraging children to speak or express their viewpoints in comfortable and effective ways and also including their voice in how the research is presented to the public. Because it is often a key factor in gauging the “success” of participatory projects, Wyness (2013b) argues that the voice has become the “global standard,” a “powerful normative model,” by which all projects are measured. In fact, researching with children so

commonly includes attention to the child's voice that it is rare to find literature that does not specifically address this in some way or another. However, a focus on the voice, especially above all other aspects of the research project, raises at least five concerns that are worthy of interrogation.

Firstly, despite the researcher's best efforts at being truly "participatory," research projects are most frequently adult driven (Kallio 2012a; Malone and Hartung 2010; Thomas 2007). Adult researchers frame the research project; they decide the research question. While there is ample room for children to participate in the process of how the research proceeds, it is uncommon for children to truly begin a research project on their own accord. Therefore, because the vast majority of research projects involve children, but are led by adults, the voices of the research participants are only used to address a specific set of research questions based on adult interpretations of both child participation and the problem the research aims to investigate. Such inclusion of children's voices has raised concerns that this form of participation is merely tokenistic (Kraftl 2013; Kallio 2012a; Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010). Within development projects in particular, some child participants have literally voiced their concerns that they do not feel heard, despite being included and given space to speak (Thomas 2007; Wyness 2009).

A related concern is that the "voice" that is being nurtured in such participatory research projects is reliant on particular versions of adult Western democratic citizenship (Wyness 2013b). The space where this Western democratic citizenship more often is performed is on school grounds. Child participatory research in schools tends to primarily serve as an educational program meant to instill children with the tools and skills needed to engage in democratic participation as adults. Not only are these institutional spaces dominated by adult supervision but they also construct a hierarchical notion of power related to age and "maturity" (ibid.). While such research may be situated on the top rungs of Hart's ladder, it may not necessarily nurture the empowering dimensions of participatory research aimed for by scholars such as Pain, Kinson, Cahill, and others.

The student council is a good example of such a participatory research project with children: children learn about campaigning, voting, and serving their constituents in elected positions. While citizenship-type activities have incredible social, political, and educational value, relying on these kinds of participatory frameworks in institutions that are meant to mimic adult institutions leaves little room for alternative forms of education or more inclusive forms of democratic participation (Wall 2012; Thomas 2007). As researchers working in the Majority World point out, this narrow framework of democratic participation needs to be expanded (Tisdall and Punch 2012). Likewise, in Western democratic locales, the student council model potentially prevents young people from thinking of more progressive and empowering ways to engage in adult mediated/constructed democratic spaces (Taft and Gordon 2013; Wyness 2009).

Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that not all voices are equal; certain children are invited to the participatory table, other children are not. Whether this is in development projects or even academic research projects, it is important that we acknowledge that not all children have the same agency (Wyness 2009;

Vanderbeck 2007). Education, social capital, economic potential, family legacy, and a variety of other mundane factors play an important role in determining whose voice is heard and how comfortable the child is in expressing this voice. In contrast, some researchers aim to “listen” to underprivileged voices such as child “deviants” (Thomas 2013; Brown 2011), street children (Herrera et al. 2009; Beazley 2002; Young and Barrett 2001), or children with mind/body differences (Kelly and Carson 2012; Pyer et al. 2010; Holt 2004a; Skelton and Valentine 2003 and revised for this volume). However, it is more common for research to privilege the able-bodied, articulate, mentally stable, and polite children.

Thirdly, the “voice” is not singular; rather, there are a multitude of voices involved in research projects. Quarantining all young people as members of a category uncritically adopts one undifferentiated voice devoid of class, culture, gender, race, ethnicity, or any other marker of difference. Rather than reflect on *specific* children’s needs and voices, the effect of a singular voice for children has the potential to further disempower and silence those children who may not agree with the dominant narrative (James 2007).

Figuring out a way to both represent children and also incorporate their diverse voices poses challenges to how we reflect on our findings and how we decide to produce our research outcomes. To suggest that there is a universal “voice” for all “children” is not only fictional but also stems from adult perspectives of what the child’s voice could be or should be. These adult perspectives of (often) young researchers based in the Global North are certainly informed by their own experiences of childhoods, although self-retrospection or overt positionality based on our own childhoods is rare in academic literature (Hopkins and Pain 2007; cf. Jones 2003; Philo 2003). Acknowledging these contentions raises questions of “authenticity” and poses further challenges in regard to translation, interpretation, and mediation (Spyrou 2011; James 2007).

Fourthly, when the focus is nearly exclusively on the voice, and the right to “have a say,” other forms of everyday participation can be overlooked (Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010; Percy-Smith and Burns 2013; Jupp 2007). Children are actively involved in a variety of social processes every day that contribute to the well-being of their lives, families, and communities. Bringing attention to these more mundane acts of participation can be arguably more important to understanding children’s engagement in politics that goes beyond the institutional and structural formats prevalent in participatory projects seeking children’s “voice.” For example, Skelton (2007) reminds us that children serve as important agents in their households as a source of joy, particularly in households where adults are overworked and underpaid. Through the simple acts of laughing and playing, children participate in significantly increasing the family’s general well-being, which can have repercussions for how the family engages in a variety of political actions from the local/national scale to the scale of the body.

Developing research projects that aim to uncover these more everyday acts of participation is a challenge within the dominant frameworks focused on more formal political processes. Children’s researchers have traditionally turned to ethnographic approaches in these instances (Holt 2004b). During extensive lengths

of time spent with children, these researchers are better equipped to observe and analyze daily acts of participation that contrast to more formal acts of participation. Recognizing these everyday, mundane practices enable children who are sidelined or silenced in formal practices the right to have a voice in their own way. In these ways, ethnographic research tends to include participatory research methods and values by specifically emphasizing avenues toward empowerment for the children involved (Sharkey and Shields 2008; Holt 2004b; Katz 2004).

Kirsi Kallio (2012a) argues that methods aimed at promoting empowerment can also be achieved through *less* participatory research approaches. She argues that virtual (semi-)public spaces such as chat rooms, gaming worlds, and social media sites enable the researcher to observe how children themselves are active (and empowered) at representing themselves and presenting their views on particular issues of interest (see also Collin 2008; Harris 2008). Drawing on Katz's work (especially 2004), she also suggests situating historical childhoods in broader "sociocultural, politico-historical, and geo-economic" frameworks. Situating such knowledge found in institutions such as the school, the nursery, or the maternity clinic helps demonstrate a pluralistic understanding of children's voices without specifically speaking with these children. Using these less participatory research methods can enable children's diverse voices to be heard without our immediate intervention.

Some researchers are taking up another approach aimed at uncovering the diversity of children's quieter and embodied ways of communicating rather than strictly verbal discourse (cf. Kraftl 2013). In reflecting on her experience working with teenagers in a participatory mapping project that was less than illuminating, Eleanor Jupp (2007) encourages us to recognize that participatory research projects do not expose a singular form of local knowledge. Jupp argues that it is important to acknowledge and pay attention to embodied practices and experiences that contribute to their local knowledge production and feelings of "empowerment" that so many participatory projects emphasize. Through helping out elderly pensioners, socializing with friends, and even remaining silent, she argues that while the children in her study may not have participated in the ways that adults always wanted them to, they were still engaging in a variety of embodied and "unspectacular" forms of politics and thereby participating (see also Laketa, ► Chap. 9, "Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina", this volume).

And lastly, despite all of our best efforts to adequately and effectively represent the voices of children in our research programs, most often it is *our* responsibility to communicate the research outputs. Therefore, it is the adult who does the interpreting process of what was said, how it was said, and, ultimately, the intent *behind* a child's voice. The adult literally inserts the voice of the child into their own interpretation of the research events in order to make a point (albeit, an academic point). "As writers of texts, it is adults who retain control over which children's voices are given prominence" and how these voices are presented (James 2007, p. 265). While this raises concerns for how we convey our research findings in general, this is of particular concern in the context of child research because of

the emphasis on inserting the *voice* above all else. It is common for research findings to present long quotations, including all the “ums” and pauses, so that the voice of the child is prominent. However, we must remember that in our interpretation of the child's voice, we blur the boundaries between our own voice and the voice of the child we are aiming to best represent.

4.2 The Individual Rights-Bearing Child

Granting human rights to children, as the UNCRC effectively did in 1989, has certainly improved many children's lives around the globe, specifically in regard to their health and well-being. In fact, nearly 25 years since the UNCRC went into effect, UNICEF celebrates achievements in children's rights including “declining infant mortality, rising school enrollments, and better opportunities for girls” (UNICEF 2014a). Such successes were made possible through policy and discursive changes to how children were valued. As important social actors in their own right, children matter. Keeping them healthy, well fed, and free from disease, promoting safe learning environments, and recognizing that patriarchal norms result in stark inequalities are an incredible success for the international community and for many children's lives near and far.

And yet, the focus on the individual rights-bearing child has been criticized as de-emphasizing the need for more involvement beyond the child (Hopkins and Pain 2007; Wyness 2013a). As previously mentioned, regardless of the ways that children and young people are involved in participation practices, there remains a matrix of power that exists beyond participation projects in which they, in effect, have very little power. By focusing on the individual rights of the child, it can give a false sense of the empowered child and the role this empowered child is to have in creating the healthy, sustainable, safe environment in which they are to flourish. Adults can effectively be let off the hook under this paradigm, despite the fact that in many ways, they remain the gatekeepers to a child's productive future.

Mannion (2007) provides a provocative critique of the discourse of the rights-bearing child. He argues that to better understand children's lives, we need to better understand adult-child relations (see also Millei and Imre, ► Chap. 10, “Down the Toilet: Spatial Politics and Young Children's Participation”, this volume). He argues that rather than only researching children's lives as independent from adults, research needs to pay better attention to the spatial contexts where participation research takes place as these spaces are shared by adults and children and are important components to the production of the “cultures of childhood and adulthood.” The child-adult spaces of where daily participation occurs can help illuminate how intergenerational dialogue, learning, and identity formation contribute to the outcomes and insights of children's participation research (see also Hopkins et al. 2011). Children do not participate in a vacuum devoid of adult intervention. Rather, children's attitudes, empowerment, and level of engagement are deeply related to the attitudes, empowerment, and level of engagement of the adults intimately involved in their lives, as well as those far removed.

Similarly, Wyness (2013a) argues that in an effort to privilege the voice of the rights-bearing child, child researchers have the tendency to quarantine adults to the sidelines of participatory projects in an effort to uncover the mythical “authentic” participating child. This is problematic because in the effort to silence adults, a more “authentic” participating child is not necessarily gained. Wyness encourages us to challenge the UNCRC rights-based discourse and the ensuring participatory research methods which privilege individualism, self-reliance, and autonomy. Rather, we should begin to think about the interconnectedness of children’s participation as social and performed collectively not only with other children but also (and significantly) with adults. This in turn not only opens up new ways of thinking about political participation within childhood but also has the potential to inform how we think of political participation within adulthood.

More generally, the rights-based discourse fails to acknowledge the significant role relationships have in children’s lives. Unlike adults who not only have more autonomous power over children, they also are free to spend more of their time as autonomous individuals, making decisions on a daily basis on their own accord. While feminist scholars challenge the mythical self-made man from a framework of care politics (e.g., Tronto 1993), which argues that people are both interdependent and dependent on other people for their livelihoods, adults have more inherent freedoms to *be* independent. Children, on the other hand, spend the majority of their time in social caring relationships, whether those being at school or in the home. These caring relationships, in which they are both the recipients and the providers, emphasize how significant relationships are to children’s political participation. For example, in my own work with children in New Zealand, I have highlighted how children’s sense of environmental politics is deeply rooted in an ethic of care (2012) and that these caring relationships develop and are supported through their friendship networks (2013). Skelton (2007) raises similar concerns with children in the Majority World, demonstrating how children are key players in the health and well-being of the household through bringing joy and laughter into the lives of hard working families. Alternatively, Thomas (2008) demonstrates that not only caring but also uncaring practices influence how teenage girls participate in the spaces of the school and sites of their educational learning. These brief examples demonstrate how relationships of care influence children’s political participation and challenge the prevalence of the individual autonomous political subject.

Finally, participation discourses that stress the importance of the individual rights-bearing child tend to overlook both the value and significance of relationships in the lives of children and also the possibilities for participating beyond the traditional autonomous frameworks. As mentioned in the previous section, because adults are typically the leaders of the research projects in which children participate, children are partial to adults’ goals of the participation project. Under the guidance of adult involvement in child participation research, certain rights are deemed less important than others (Thomas and Percy-Smith 2010). For example, freedom of expression (Article 13); freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14); and freedom of association (Article 15) are rarely targets of participatory research projects (cf. Hopkins et al. 2011). The oversight of certain rights in our research

challenges us to think about participation for *what* (Kallio 2012a; Mannion 2010). Participation in traditional projects teaches, and arguably reinforces, the value of the individual child- and adult-driven visions for children's (democratic) future, but focuses less on the role of collective participation in addressing the power structures that prevent young people from having a more profound impact in social change.

4.3 The Child as *Being*

The paradigm shift brought about by both the UNCRC and the social sciences of childhood strongly emphasizes the value of children as beings; children matter right now, they are valid and important social actors, and their lives are worthy of academic attention and inquiry. Prior to the focus on children's "beingness," the psychological development discourse was predominant, which emphasized childhood as a state of "becoming." In this state of becoming, children were seen as objects to be studied; their lives were less significant in the moment of childhood than what their lives were to become in adulthood. However, the shift to view children's state of being has perhaps shifted the focus too far from the inevitable fact that they are indeed moving through childhood, simultaneously being, and also becoming (Hopkins et al. 2011; Uprichard 2008; Kesby 2007). Focusing on children's becoming nature is less fashionable at the moment, but I believe it should not be overlooked for at least three important reasons: childhood is temporary, age is relational, and aging leads to new and multiple beings and becomings. I explore each of these problematics below.

Throughout this chapter, I refer to "children's" participation, which, like the "voice," ignores the diversity of *children* participating at various times in their lives. The UNCRC definition of the "child" is anyone up to 18 years old unless the country specifies otherwise. However, it would be foolish to assume that the needs, expectations, skills, and "voice" of an 18-year-old are congruent to those of a 5-year-old (Woodhead 2010). It is also important to acknowledge that these children and their contextual experiences of childhood are temporary and change due to their own aging process and the social-cultural-economic-political conditions they experience.

Both exciting and intimidating, this urges us to remember that the concept of age is temporary. We are all aging with every passing second that goes by; acknowledging temporality requires an honest look at impermanence. In terms of conducting participatory research with children, acknowledging impermanence requires the adult researcher to honor the child's aging process. Uprichard (2008) argues that understanding both the being and the becoming dimensions of children *increases* the agency that the child has in the world; children are both present and future agents in the world they inhabit and are in the process of creating. By focusing participatory projects only on their state of being, researchers lose incredible insights into possibilities for social change and avenues for political participation in the near and distant future. Children participate as part of larger processes including their own development and the development of politics.

In order to better understand this idea that children are both simultaneously beings and becomings, some scholars are drawing attention to the concept of “relationality” (Hopkins and Pain 2007; see also Vanderbeck 2007; Vanderbeck and Worth 2014). Rather than strictly looking at “children’s geographies,” these authors argue that age and lifecourse stages are socially constructed categories resulting from interactions between people, space, and place. A focus on relationality moves away from a strict focus on the child as *being* to the child as part of a network of relationships. Such an approach “tends to focus more widely on families, generations and interactions, and situates people of particular ‘ages’ within these contexts” (Hopkins and Pain 2007, p. 288).

Drawing on this relational approach, Worth (2009) stresses the significance of temporality to not only our understanding of childhood, but how people *transition* through childhood. Focusing on transitions embraces the ways that young people are both beings and also becomings, allowing us to consider the multiple becomings that we encounter throughout the lifecourse. In her research, it is clear that the young people Worth worked with were very much aware of and concerned about their future and anticipated adulthood. Rather than ignore this and only focus on their participation as beings, she brings attention to temporality, instability, and change, which illuminates a multiplicity of futures (see also Jeffrey 2010; Valentine 2003). These moments of flux need to be acknowledged so that we don’t fall into the trap of trying to contain something as variable, fleeting, and uncontainable as childhood.

Rethinking childhood as a life stage, as a moment of temporality, as constantly in flux, requires us to think of our research projects as also temporary moments in the lives of our participants. We acknowledge that working with children requires time to build trusting relationships due to the inevitable power relations that exist between the adult researcher and the child participant. Spending time in the “field” with a group of children has the potential to help alleviate some of these tensions and encourage children to feel more comfortable not only participating in our research projects but also potentially taking more of an active role in the research design and process. As mentioned in the previous section, ethnographic methods work well in this instance where the researcher has time to establish these important relationships.

However, the time that an ethnographer takes to set up a research project and develop trusting relationships can also be too fleeting. Maintaining these kinds of relationships with place and with people moving through their life transitions in place is an invaluable component of not only increasing our understanding of children’s participation practices but also transitions from childhood to adulthood. Such longitudinal field-based intensive research projects are difficult to achieve based on a variety of realities of working within universities, but there are some notable exceptions that have been able to accomplish such work (e.g., Dyson 2014; Hampshire et al. 2012; Jeffrey 2010; Katz 2004; Azmi et al. forth coming). Longitudinal research with children enables us to learn more about how relationships (including intergenerational relationships) and structural factors interact to influence the construction of childhood, transitions, and political agency.

5 Conclusion

Over the past several decades, research with children and young people has burgeoned. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in tandem with social science scholarship on children and youth provided a paradigm shift for viewing children and young people as no longer subjects of our research but as active agents in their lives and the lives around them. This paradigm shift resulted in prioritizing investigations of children as *participants* in politics and in research. However, while researchers eagerly accepted the concept of participation across the spectrum, it has only recently been the subject of critical investigation in terms of its overall aims, goals, and outcomes. This chapter highlighted this relatively recent line of scholarship within children's geographies to bring attention to the complications of some of the most commonly regarded factors in research with children and young people: the child's "voice," the rights-bearing child, and the child as *being*.

The concept of participation is regularly attributed to Article 12 of the UNCRC which states that children have a distinct voice and that adults need to listen. However, Wyness (2013b) and others argue that the "voice" has uncritically become the "global standard" of gauging research "success" with children. Placing the voice on a pedestal above any other factors of children's participation raises several concerns for critical scholars. Some of these concerns include the failure to acknowledge that adults are often the drivers of research projects who seek to uncover a specific "voice," rather than a multitude of voices, silences, or less dialogic expressions of the "voice" resulting from everyday practices.

The 41 other articles in the UNCRC promote a variety of children's rights that member states are tasked to uphold. Granting children human rights is a profound step toward a positive, just, and equitable outlook in the lives of children around the globe. Yet the implications of focusing on children as human rights-bearing individuals suggest a move too far toward individuality and away from the realities that children are deeply connected in a variety of social and familial relationships that significantly impact their participation practices.

Radically shifting the intellectual direction away from children as adults in waiting to children as beings in the early 1990s is the third commonly regarded factor of research with children that I explored in this chapter. Similar to the emphasis on children as rights bearing, focusing on children as beings has tended to ignore the fact that childhood is temporary, our research is temporary, and we are all simultaneously being and also becoming. Bringing attention to the becoming nature of children is not frequently addressed in the literature at this point, but has potential to significantly alter our research approaches, methodologies, and theories.

I raise these critiques of participation to expose some of the critical scholarship currently underway and also in an effort to help us "continually critically interrogate" (Skelton 2007) our work with children and young people. There are certainly a wide variety of other topics that are currently missing from these debates; I support Skelton and argue that these topics need to be incorporated if we are to

better understand children's participation in politics and research. For example, are there forms of children's participation that we wish to *not* encourage, and who decides (cf. Hyndman 2010)? In our modern times, there are a vast array of examples in which children participate in their own ways, on their own terms, in an effort to create and sustain their lives, particularly on the Internet. Such Internet spaces, while empowering on the one hand, can also lead to dangerous and negative forms of participation at the expense of others. Cyberbullying leading to child suicides and online chat forums aimed to teach "best practices" for anorexics or "cutters" are such examples. Similar questions posed in this chapter should then resurface to investigate these negative forms of participation: where and whose "voice" is heard, how much autonomy is necessary, and what are the implications for such (dangerous) practices for their futures (cf. Skelton 2013)? Rather than continuing to investigate the variety of ways that children and young people are engaging in participatory projects which help our research aims and objectives, my chapter hopes to encourage us to also think about how our views and personal goals of participation can potentially be challenged if we invite research into less familiar, comfortable, or even safe territories.

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Brain-Targeted Teaching and the Biopolitical Child

8

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Abstract

Recent debates within the field of geographies of children and young people have highlighted the political tensions associated with the use of particular forms of knowledge about the body, brain, and behavior in the practices of governing “life itself”. This chapter offers an introduction to these debates. It uses the emergence of educational and social policies directed at children’s brains and influenced by neuroscientific knowledge to illustrate some of the geographical issues at stake in the making up of the biopolitical child.

Keywords

Neuroscience • Neuroeducation • Biosocial • Biopolitics • Emotions • Behavior • Brains • Context

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1 Introduction

The adoption of neuroscientific insights for improving teaching and learning has been heralded as nothing less than a revolution in education (Sousa 2010, p. 2). Gone are the days of “best practice” and “best guesses” in shaping educational policy and classroom conduct. With the advent of neuroscience in education, teachers’ work has the potential to be transformed into an entirely evidence-based practice, in much the same way that medical practice emerged from ignorance through the progress of Victorian science (The Royal Society 2011, p. v). Neuroscience promises to focus our attention on the biological differences between learners and learner abilities, promote better understanding of underlying learning disorders, and provide grounds for cognitive enhancement and emotional self-regulation. Neuroscience has also been used in developing public policies aimed at shaping the parenting styles, family life, and welfare of infants and young children in order to intervene early in the biophysical and psychological makeup of their developing brains (Allen and Duncan Smith 2008).

The influence of neuroscience and its emphasis on the biological are thus evident in a number of ways in the lives of children and young people. This influence includes neuroscientifically based strategies aimed at improving numeracy, literacy, and creativity, the development of digital technologies designed to target the brain’s reward system (Howard-Jones et al. 2011), emotional literacy programs which instruct children on self-governing and educational products and programs said to be “brain compatible,” “brain targeted,” or “brain training” (Blackwell et al. 2007; Jensen 2007; Hardiman 2012). While little is known about the degree to which teachers have been influenced by neuroscientific research or brain-based teaching and learning, vocal concerns have been raised about the educators’ apparent haste to adopt neuroeducation and to succumb to the so-called “neuro-myths” proffered by consultants and corporations with new markets in mind and profits to be exploited (Blakemore and Frith 2005; Goldacre 2006; Howard-Jones 2007; Randerson 2008; The Royal Society 2011).

These trends point to the ways in which researchers, policy makers, professionals, and sometimes parents and children themselves have come to see themselves in hybrid terms – at once through their social identities and their biological realities. For some, this marks a return to a dangerous era of sociobiology. It evokes the past injustices associated with racist and gendered craniometry, or brain size measurements, as well as the shadowy racialized and classed history of IQ testing and fears of biological determinism, reductionism, and medicalization. Others are more optimistic that contemporary neuroscience offers a holistic understanding of the brain which brings cultural, social, and environmental variables to its models of learning and regards the brain as able to change and develop across the life course through its inherent plasticity (The Royal Society 2011, p. 17). An emphasis on the biosocial determinants of children’s learning, educational outcomes, and life chances resonates with broader calls to develop hybrid accounts of social life which give adequate attention to the body, the biological, the nonhuman, the technological, the material, the vital, the neural, and the epigenetic aspects of

“life itself”. This endeavor has taken many forms within the social theory (Latour 1993; Rose and Abi-Rached 2013; Fitzgerald and Callard 2015), politics (Marcus et al. 2007; Hibbing 2013), and geography (Whatmore 2002; Thrift 2004; Greenhough 2006; Braun 2007; McCormack 2007; Guthman and Mansfield 2013), among other disciplines.

What concerns us in this chapter is the way in which biosocial knowledges are mobilized in the constitution and governing of childhood through practices and policies which target the brain as a site of social, educational, and political intervention. In this sense, the chapter uses the Foucauldian conception of bio-power which denotes “how life has become the ‘object-target’ for specific techniques and technologies of power” (Anderson 2012, p. 28) and is posed as a means by which a multiplicity of authorities seek to govern life simultaneously at the scales of the body and of populations (Rabinow and Rose 2006). In describing the shift to contemporary bio-power and the state’s growing interest in the body, Foucault (1998, pp. 142–143) argues that:

Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself: *it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body.* (Emphasis ours)

Scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which biosocial knowledges such as neuroscience and behavioral science have provided the means for governmental strategies in the service of neoliberal ambitions (Isin 2004; Choudhury and Slaby 2012; Thornton 2011; Jones et al. 2013) and have outlined the ways in which biology and the vitalist philosophies of the biological age have acted in the service of racism and anti-Semitism (Jones 2010) and racialized, nationalist, and eugenic forms of power across the centuries (Rabinow and Rose 2006), in nineteenth-century colonial projects (Duncan 2007) and in contemporary US cities (Brown 2009).

Such work clearly demonstrates the darker side of bio-power and points toward the need for critical research and action to interrogate the applications of biology and to understand the political issues at stake within its truth claims, institutional apparatus, and rationalizations of policy and practice. This chapter does not focus on these dark forms of bio-power. Instead it considers how the apparently praiseworthy spheres of public education and family support services must also remain subject to political contestation. They too have begun to evoke biological and neuroscientific rationalizations in ways which produce new forms of childhood subjectivity. To a certain extent, such rationalizations obscure the relevance of geography in understanding childhood differences, socioeconomic inequality, and the contextual specificity of contemporary educational ideals. In order to consider this biopolitics in more detail, the chapter provides an introduction to a number of ways in which the neurosciences have influenced education and family intervention policies that have the potential to greatly affect the lives of children and young people. These include neuroeducation, brain-based teaching and learning, the diagnosis and treatment of special educational needs, social and emotional educational programs, and early intervention policies. The chapter highlights the

implications of such trends for the citizenship and governance of children and outlines some of the existing political critiques which have been developed around these areas of policy and practice. In order to better comprehend the significance of these phenomena, the first section situates the chapter's concerns within contemporary debates regarding the body, emotion, and nonrepresentational ways of knowing which can be found within children's geography.

2 Understanding Children's Geographies at the Biosocial Nexus

Biosocial accounts of children and childhood have become increasingly prevalent in the field of children and young people's geographies, as well as in childhood studies more generally (Krafl 2013). The concern for researchers pursuing this approach is to address divisions between the biological and the social. Founded on nature-culture dualisms, these divisions turn out to be quite specific to Western contexts (Prout 2005; Lee and Motzkau 2011). Such authors have posited this split to be outmoded, and – inspired by the theoretical influence of the actor-network theory, complexity theory, and the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Donna Haraway – they offer a challenge in the form of an attention to the hybrid social-biological-technological “assemblages” which make up contemporary and future childhood. For scholars of childhood such as Alan Prout (2005, p. 3), an interdisciplinary approach is necessary in order to avoid separating the biological and social aspects of childhood. Contemporary sociologies of childhood have, for Prout (2005, p. 84), been guilty of “bracketing out or expelling biology, the body and even materiality” from their analysis. As a consequence, there has been little attempt, he argues, to deal with the intersections of complex hybrid phenomena such as psychopharmaceuticals, performance-driven schooling, information and communication technologies, and reproductive technologies. These trends have both material and discursive effects in terms of blurring the boundaries between childhood and adulthood and shaping future experiences of childhood and as such they need to be explored, understood, and interrogated (Prout 2005, p. 141).

Yet while sociologists may well have once been guilty of underemphasizing the biological and material in their analyses of the discursive construction of childhood, popular commentary on the heady mixture of cultural-cum-biological influences on contemporary children has been far from absent. Sue Palmer's *Toxic Childhood*, for instance, narrated a despairing account of a Western epidemic of neuropsychiatric childhood disorders and emotional problems, alongside fast-paced cultural change pertaining to children's everyday lives, parenting, schooling, nutrition, and exposure to new technologies. This she staged as “a clash between our technology-driven culture and our biological heritage” (Palmer 2007, p. 3). In this account, the biological is posed as a political appeal to “get back to nature” through engagement with family, learning through creative play, disciplinary yet loving parenting. Some obvious dualisms however reemerge in the related calls to resist the commercialization of childhood and the “unnatural” predominance of screen time in children's

lives. Similarly, in proposing a return for children's education and play to the outdoors and to nature, proponents of outdoor learning posit modern life as in some senses an assault on the natural, biological senses of the child. Richard Louv (2008 [2005]), for instance, coined the phrase "nature-deficit disorder" to describe the way in which children have become physically, mentally, and spiritually alienated from nature and socially, emotionally, and physiologically harmed by high-tech, risk-averse, and indoor-focused life. Here, engagement with biological nature is posed as the route to social, cultural, economic, and physical health.

By contrast to approaches which oppose the biological or natural to the modern, technological, and social, others have set out to rediscover the ways in which modern Western childhood has in fact always been forged precisely through an intersection of biological and social concern, through a "biosocial nexus" (Ryan 2012, p. 440). Kevin Ryan argues that the child has consistently been treated as emblematic of a political desire to know and act on primal human nature for the good of civilization (Ryan 2012, p. 444). This nexus has been at the heart of Western modern thinking on childhood and of educational practice over several centuries. Indeed Ryan shows how concerns with the child's body, emotions, and irrational minds and their inherent "animal" nature have influenced approaches to education from Rousseau in the eighteenth century through the deployment of developmental psychology in normalizing children and remedying social ills, to early twentieth-century playground designs aimed at mastering the messy processes of the child's bodily proclivities and behaviors – all in the broad pursuit of governing the future. It is thus argued that a biopolitical attention to life itself has been integral to the shaping of modern childhood, making social constructivist theories of the child look partial at best and unwittingly ignorant at worst.

Within children's geography, these debates have been addressed and extended in a number of ways. Three ways in which this is evident are in relation to attentions which have been paid to issues of embodiment, emotions, and nonrepresentational forms of knowing. These focal points go some way to countering the tendency toward biosocial dualism in theorizations of childhood, as well as having implications for the way in which the politics of childhood has been explored and conceptualized. First, research which has explicitly set out to reorient children's geographies around the importance of the body has been noted. This begins from the proposition that the body, bodily performances, and embodied identity are all integral to understanding the unstable social construction of "the child," "the youth," "the adult," and so on (Colls and Hörschelmann 2009, p. 2). Furthermore, a methodological attention to the body is said to bring into view hitherto marginalized aspects of children's banal, everyday, and material lives which *matter* to children (Horton and Kraftl 2006). There have been some criticisms of a resultant tendency toward the sometimes overly localized perspectives of children's geographies in their affinity with the microscale of children's embodied lives (Vanderbeck 2008; Ansell 2009). Yet this work also demonstrates a concerted effort on behalf of children's geographers to understand the intersection of physical and mental differences with macroscale cultural imaginaries which serve to normalize particular forms of embodied identity. Two examples include Louise Holt's

research in relation to children with varied disabilities and “mind-body-emotional differences” in UK schooling (Holt 2010, p. 25, 2004) and Mary Thomas’ analysis of racialized subjectivities in Los Angeles, USA (Thomas 2009). Both researchers in this instance use a set of theoretical resources from the social theory and feminist-inspired, performative notions of subjectivity (Judith Butler and Sara Ahmed) in order to examine the social and cultural processes by which the body is discursively inscribed with particular meanings within specific spatial contexts. As Holt (2004, p. 221) argues, in her embodied account of disability, “the body is defined as material and a social construct, simultaneously the site of experience and subject to multiple gazes, inscriptions and positionings.” In this sense, such work is integral to challenging biosocial dualisms which have seen embodied differences either as pre-social biological givens or as social norms which are reproduced in classroom and school spaces.

The second area of work which has troubled distinctions between the social and biological within children’s geographies is that which has concentrated on the emotional spatialities of children’s lives. Blazek and Windram-Geddes’ editorial of a special issue of *Emotion, Space and Society* (2013) provides a useful overview of this work. Geographers have, for instance, explored the ethical and methodological issues relating to research with children and young people as an emotional encounter (see, e.g., Hadfield-Hill and Horton 2014) or the centrality of emotion, imagination, and memory to the very construction of childhood (Jones 2003). They have also investigated the tendency of particular policy imperatives to marginalize certain emotions (and certain young people) in the pursuit of national goals, for example, in anti-obesity strategies (Hemming 2007; Evans and Colls 2009) – offering a challenge to the sometimes overly biomedicalized rationales of public-health-driven initiatives. This work pays attention to the ways in which children’s (from this policy perspective, biologically understood) bodies are part of “discursive corporeal regimes” (Hemming 2007, p. 353) which are contested by and confronted with children’s own values, experiences, and emotional responses. Evans and Colls (2009, p. 1077) thus describe how the governmental invocation of shame and anxiety associated with the use of body mass index indicators can be both ineffective in policy terms and damaging in relation to young people’s well-being and self-image. In this way, they highlight the value of more critically interrogating biomedical forms of knowledge. In so doing, they open up investigation into the way in which such policies are deployed as technologies for governing the behavior and *vital* statistics of populations and individuals in preemptive ways.

A third way in which a biosocial approach to geographies of children and young people has been forwarded is through work developed through an engagement with nonrepresentational theory. Often overlapping with studies of children’s emotional and embodied geographies, researchers in this vein have negotiated the sometimes complex theoretical territory between attending to affects or emotions. The former highlights “the complex physiological, somatic, neurological states and phenomena which can sometimes be felt and interpreted as ‘feelings’, but which can otherwise be unsaid, unsayable or unknowable,” and the latter refers to the descriptive expression or socially constructed meanings of these feelings (Hadfield-Hill and

Horton 2014, p. 137). The nonrepresentational approach, as one might expect, also foregrounds the research *encounter* (as opposed to its “writing up” as the key event in the production of knowledge) and prioritizes the noncognitive, precognitive, and embodied practice as both the focal point of research and, crucially, as sites of “micro-biopolitical” intervention (Thrift 2004, p. 67). In these ways, nonrepresentational research within children’s geographies has sought to shed light on apparently mundane or everyday phenomena which eschew straightforwardly discursive analysis (Harker 2005; Horton and Kraftl 2006). The emphasis on aspects of children’s everyday practices, embodiment, emotions, and noncognitive experiences which are said to evade representation has led to an important dialogue concerning the place of the political in this work. Some have argued that there has been a tendency for children’s geography influenced by the nonrepresentational theory to overexpand the very idea of politics, to locate agency everywhere, and thus to depoliticize the socioeconomic and historically specific determinants of (children’s) lives (Gagen 2004; Mitchell and Elwood 2012). These criticisms and responses to them are important in understanding what is regarded as politically at stake in approaching children’s geographies from a biosocial perspective and are explored in the following section.

3 From Child’s Play to Children’s Politics

One characteristic undercurrent of the debate between those who focus on the embodied, emotional, and nonrepresentational in research with children and those who want to engage in what they regard as more substantive political concerns (though the distinction, as ever, is rarely this clear-cut) is the degree to which children’s seemingly mundane practices and spatial experiences might matter politically. For some critics such as Mitchell and Elwood (2012, p. 794), an emphasis on children’s play has sometimes been at the expense of the wider political and economic forces shaping children’s lives. They find this particularly to be the case in nonrepresentational accounts of children’s play, which they regard as failing to anchor or locate children’s everyday practice within the existing social and political structures which shape children’s subjectivities. So too, they find nonrepresentational children’s geographies to lack methodological transparency, to underestimate hierarchies of power in the research process, and to overstate the importance of the research event. They are wary of the way in which the research event is witnessed individually by researchers at face value, at the expense of sharing findings with others in a way which can be “analyzed collectively” and used in important advocacy work, in the face of gendered and classed structures of subordination (Mitchell and Elwood 2012, p. 796). Mitchell and Elwood thus raise several important methodological issues regarding the interpretation of empirical material in children’s geographies and expose the representational politics which persists beyond and despite the nonrepresentational moment in human geographical research.

Responses to this critique have called for children’s geographers to move beyond debates concerning children’s voice and political agency and toward the

“‘more-than-social’ emotional relations” which characterize the lives of children and young people (Kraftl 2013, p. 13). While noting the important political gains made by childhood researchers in making space for children’s voices, Kraftl is mindful of concerns about the overvaluing of children’s voices in ways which are sometimes inappropriate (cf. Vanderbeck 2008; Philo 2011). A concerted argument is thus made for alternative and critical ways of doing children’s emotional geographies which precisely address the perceived shortcomings of both the nonrepresentational approach and more overtly political geographies of childhood. First, Kraftl highlights geographical research which has developed a sensitivity toward the way in which participatory research (i.e., that is aimed at giving voice to children) with children can be instrumental, can downplay the emotional outcomes of that participation, and can sometimes inadvertently marginalize children’s emotions through a constant pressure to vocalize and rationalize their feelings (Kraftl 2013, p. 15). Second, he reasserts the value of a nonrepresentational approach to children’s geographies in bringing attention to hitherto marginalized matters of great concern to children. These are matters which often cannot be reduced to the political, which suggest a need to expand what “counts” as activism, and which imply a need to focus on the emotional, affective, and embodied components of that activism (Kraftl 2013, p. 16).

Kraftl proposes this “more-than-social” approach to children’s emotional geographies as a means through which to move beyond the apparent impasse indicated in Mitchell and Elwood’s critique between nonrepresentational and political-economic analyses of childhood. To an extent, it is posited as a useful vehicle for eroding the assumed hierarchy between “big” political issues which matter and mundane everyday practices (Kraftl 2013, p. 17). But it is also a way of reimagining the realm of what counts in the construction of childhood subjectivities –to add to social and political relations a set of concerns for the technological, neurobiological, and nonhuman means by which a child is made up. Kraftl (2013, p. 18) gives the respective examples of a toy, neuroscientific knowledges pertaining to parenting, and food as indicative of each. His emphasis on the “more-than-social” is illustrated in two ways. Firstly, he describes how alternative educational practices (e.g., care farms and forest schools) combine the social and “natural” environment, as well as engagements with nonhuman animals and plants, in order to cultivate particular habits, channel emotional energies, and forge new ways for children to relate to themselves, to others, and to learning (Kraftl 2013, p. 19). The alternative form of education provided in such spaces can often matter in ways which for Kraftl, as for his research participants, could not be easily translated into political currency. His second illustration aims to acknowledge the role of neuroscience, developmental psychology, and genetics in studies of family and intergenerational relations. In reviewing recent research on attachment, Kraftl is cautiously optimistic that contemporary attachment theories, which focus on the proximate bonds (good or otherwise) between carers and children, can helpfully contribute to geographical conceptualizations of childhood. He is cautious because of the way in which attachment theories have been critiqued in the past as passing judgment, usually on the capacity of mothers to care for their children. But he is optimistic that

neuroscientific and psychological accounts of attachment will bring crucial aspects of material reality (“the genetic, chemical, and electrical processes through which human lives (and attachments) are formed” (Kraftl 2013, p. 20)) back into our conceptions of familial and social relationships. Here the “more-than-social” and the environmental are aligned in forwarding an explanation of childhood experience which is both neurobiological and social.

Crucially, Kraftl is sensitive to the potential concerns which might arise from a “more-than-social” approach to children’s emotional geographies. He notes the potential for biologically founded attachment theories to straightforwardly bolster state-led claims for the centrality and responsibility of the traditional, privatized, nuclear family in ensuring “good” nurturing. Furthermore, he warns of the potential dangers in prioritizing therapeutic approaches to education and the potential for labeling some children as vulnerable, marginalized, inadequate, or emotionally “illiterate” in some way. Finally, he notes that while children’s geographers have begun to interrogate the hybrid constructions of childhood, questions still remain as to how this emphasis on the “more than social” can be sufficiently contextualized and critiqued. So too, a renewed emphasis on the biological, technological, emotional, affective, embodied, and nonhuman must necessarily return to questions of children’s voice and agency.

While the approaches to children’s geographies explored here have emphasized the body, the emotions, and noncognitive or nonrepresentational aspects of experience in various ways, their engagements with avowedly biological accounts of childhood or with hybrid contemporary phenomena (e.g., those highlighted by Prout and by Palmer) and attempts to govern those phenomena have been relatively sparse. Elizabeth Gagen’s (2004) historical research on playground reformers in early twentieth-century America and work on neuroscientific approaches to children’s learning (Pykett 2012; Gagen 2015) as well as Evans and Colls’ aforementioned analysis of the biomedical approaches to childhood obesity have sought to address this gap by focusing explicitly on children’s biopolitics. Gagen (2004, p. 417), for instance, explains how physiological, psychological, and neurological knowledges were central to municipal park departments and physical education specialists in the USA from the 1880s. These knowledges were used in narrating the connections between children’s moral consciousness, neurological states, their muscular processes, and their national identity. Gagen’s work again highlights some of the limitations of a nonrepresentational approach to child’s play and children’s politics. Her study shows how the micro-biopolitics of the child’s body cannot be adequately understood through the conceptual apparatus provided by nonrepresentational theory. Indeed, she resolutely denies giving truth status to the body as it is dealt with by both the “progressive” ideals of the urban playground reformers in this case *and* nonrepresentational theorists in geography. The nonrepresentational approach is argued here to be limited to providing a de-historicized account. It fails to appreciate the symbolic importance of the child’s body in narrating the gendered nation and representing the modern US citizen’s apparent maladjustment to contemporaneous urban life. In light of the many reported shortcomings of nonrepresentational, embodied, and emotional accounts of

childhood geographies explored in this section, the following section examines what potential value remains in proceeding with biosocial analyses in ways which do not decontextualize, de-historicize or depoliticize. Neuroscientific knowledge adopted in the spheres of education, parenting, and family policy are used to provide an illustrative example, signifying but one emergent biosocial aspect of the everyday lives of children, particularly in the UK and USA.

4 Targeting Children's Brains

In this section, we briefly introduce a range of areas of policy and practice (neuroeducation, special educational needs, school-based emotional literacy, and early intervention programs) which are targeted at children and young people and which draw their rationales partly from neuroscience. These examples stand out as offering biosocial justifications for governmental intervention. The subsequent section then discusses the critiques which have been forwarded by geographers and others which echo some of the concerns raised by Kraftl in his call for a “more-than-social” approach to children’s emotional geographies.

The influence of neuroscientific knowledge on both educational practice and public policies concerning children’s development and family relationships has been growing in importance since the late 1990s. The cognitive psychological, biological, and neuroscientific disciplines are often now considered essential for understanding how children learn. Educational neuroscience has become a distinct research area referring to empirical scientific studies which investigate neural processes associated with learning, such as memory, cognition, language and numeracy, brain development, attention disorders, and emotional and behavioral problems. This research uses the techniques and technologies of neuroscience (e.g., functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG)) in studies of learning processes (Goswami 2008; Mareschal et al. 2013). This is sometimes distinguished from what has become known as “neuroeducation,” which refers more to the adoption of neuroscientific insights in classroom practice (Howard-Jones 2010; Sousa 2010). In practice, there is much slippage between educational neuroscience and neuroeducation (see Blakemore and Frith 2005). Its proponents are however at pains to distinguish both these scientific endeavors from “brain-based teaching,” “brain-compatible learning,” and “brain-training” products and services, which are more associated with educational consultants than neuroscientists. There have been concerted efforts made by neuroscientists and educationalists to dispel the so-called “neuro-myths” such as the now infamous “brain gym,” which prescribes a set of physical exercises ostensibly to improve the balance between left and right hemisphere brain function, as well as various speculative studies around the value of drinking several glasses of water per day or taking omega-3 fish oil supplements (Howard-Jones 2007; OECD 2007).

Nevertheless, brain-based teaching and learning programs, products, initiatives, consultancies, events, conferences, and training opportunities abound, most evidently in the UK and USA, although there is little research to attest to its prevalence

in schools or influence on teachers (see Pickering and Howard-Jones 2007 for an exception). CogMed, for instance, is a computer-based program owned by Pearson Education publishing company. It is aimed at improving the working memory function of children and adults with attention deficit disorders or who have suffered stroke or brain traumas. Another program is Brainology, owned by US company, Mindset Works. The program teaches children and teachers about how the brain works so that they can develop a “growth mindset” and rid themselves of the mental “baggage” which might prevent them from achieving their best (Blackwell et al. 2007, p. 259). Meanwhile, the Kagan Academy is a US company who provides training, accreditation, motivational speakers, and a vast range of worksheets, DVDs, books, and educational resources centered on their approach to “brain-friendly” learning. The fundamental idea behind these products is to shape classroom practice around the capacities and properties of the brain – though in reality they are often led by practical insights about what works well in classroom situations. The purpose of neuroeducation is, as one might expect, to improve and often accelerate learning, as well as to enhance performance and cognition.

There are a further set of related neuroeducational practices more explicitly directed at children with developmental disorders and/or emotional and behavioral difficulties. Diagnoses of such conditions in educational settings have rapidly increased in the UK since 2005 (Department for Education 2011, p. 20). There is a wealth of research on conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and learning difficulties, as well as on the educational experiences of children living with developmental disabilities such as autism. Children’s geographers such as Louise Holt (2004) have done important work in demonstrating the way in which such (dis)abilities are reproduced as individualized differences in school classroom environments and through policies and procedures focused on children with special educational needs. She suggests a need to challenge the biologically rendered framings of (dis)ability without losing site of the pre-social or material realities of children’s embodied differences (Holt 2004, p. 221; see also Hall 2005), and as such, “biosocial” seems an accurate moniker for this kind of analysis. Conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and the more recently inscribed sluggish cognitive tempo (SCT) (Barkley 2014) indicate that psychological markers are commonly (at least in the case of ADHD) used in the differential treatment of children and young people diagnosed with these conditions. In these cases, a medicalized language used in everyday educational contexts has located such disorders in the brain. This is despite an absence of any neurological or genetic evidence for the conditions, which are rather diagnosed through psychometric ratings provided by teachers and parents. The treatment of such disorders with psychopharmaceuticals (such as the drug, methylphenidate, commonly known as “Ritalin”) has not been uncontroversial, yet its use has rapidly expanded in several advanced capitalist nations especially during the 1990s (Hart and Benassaya 2009, p. 222; Cohen 2006, p. 14). Indeed Cohen notes an astonishing 7,600 % increase in stimulants prescribed between 1994 and 2004 in England.

Diagnosed special educational needs and emotional and behavioral disorders refer to conditions deemed by definition to “fall short” of the norms of education or

behavior. But an interrelated set of educational activities have also emerged as initiatives which are directed at shaping the emotional and social behaviors of *all* children. In the UK, the SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) program was introduced in primary schools in 2005 under the New Labour government, extended to secondary education in 2007, and then withdrawn under the Coalition government in 2011. In the USA, the proposed legislation to support social and emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools and teacher education was introduced with cross-party support in April 2014. These programs are intended to promote children's emotional skills and improve their well-being, emotional health, and self-esteem. They are also aimed at tackling a lack of motivation and engagement with education among disaffected children and behavioral challenges faced by schools. In this sense, as Ecclestone (2007, p. 461) notes, SEAL had various and sometimes contradictory goals, attempting to make education more personal, to go beyond an overemphasis on the cognitive aspects of education within an assessment-driven culture. It also proposed to utilize neuroscientifically inspired insights on multiple intelligences (Gardner 1999) and emotional intelligences (Goleman 1995) as a way of solving all manner of individual and social problems at a number of different scales. Emotional skills, self-management, and orderly conduct were to be regarded as essential characteristics of the successful learner and future adult. Both educationalists (Ecclestone 2007, p. 461) and geographers (Gagen 2015) have highlighted the ways in which neuroscientific knowledge has been selectively adopted in the justification of the SEAL program. They demonstrate how a strategic focus on the emotional well-being of children in schools is part of a broader attempt to shape the character and citizenly behaviors of children and young people. Gagen (2015, p. 145) in particular traces the appeal to popular neuroscience in the establishment and early promotion of the SEAL program in UK education policy, leading her to argue that the "refashioning of education as a medium through which the continuous process of self-scrutiny takes place has been possible precisely because of its foundation in neuroscience" (Gagen 2015, p. 146).

One further area beyond formal schooling in which neuroscience is aimed at shaping the lives of children and young people is in the policy development of "early intervention" programs. There has been much controversy in the USA over the initiation of "0–3 campaigns" which drew their rationale from the now-debunked theory of "critical periods" in a child's life (during which key neural connections were made). This neuroscientific evidence was marshaled in support of family and social interventions aimed at 0–3-year-olds. In 2000, a UK parliamentary subcommittee debated the need for stronger engagement between educationalists and neuroscientists in light of this policy agenda in the USA (Blakemore and Frith 2005, p. 1). Subsequent reports on early intervention (Allen and Duncan Smith 2008; Allen 2011a, b) have emphasized the importance of the first 5 years of children's lives as the *vital* periods during which to "detect and resolve social and emotional difficulties before they become intractable" and before the financial costs to the public purse escalate (Allen 2011b, p. x). There is much reference to neuroscientific evidence and understanding the "biopsychosocial profile" of the child within this agenda (Allen and Duncan Smith 2008, p. 56). The stated rationale

for early intervention is therefore a set of knowledges about early childhood experiences which impact on the plastic brain and which provide the key to understanding intergenerational cycles of dysfunction, aggression, conduct disorders, depression, and mental health problems and outcomes in later life. The solutions are notably not neurological or brain-based but targeted interventions directing social workers, medical professionals, and state agencies towards families with young children. Recommendations included the establishment of family nurse partnerships for vulnerable mothers, a national parenting campaign, improvements to preschool educational provision, a reconsideration of the maternity/paternity settlement, and social and emotional assessments for young children (Allen 2011b, pp. 1–2).

As this brief overview suggests, the brain has become an important site of educational and social policy intervention. There is no straightforward link, however, between the identification of a neuroscientifically ascribed “problem” and its solution. In this sense, the spaces and slippages between the biological and the social are politically salient – the way in which they are negotiated has ramifications for how educational and social policies are designed, how particular practices can be contested, and how alternative explanations can be offered. The final section outlines some of the existing critiques of policies targeted at children’s brains.

5 Challenging Biosocial Explanation

The advent of neuroeducation, controversial diagnoses and treatment of developmental disorders in childhood, children’s emotional literacy, and early intervention programs are all founded on particular accounts of neurobiology which imagine the child’s brain as the primary source of explanation and the target of governmental intervention. In this sense, these practices and the knowledge on which they draw are resolutely more biological than social. Yet such policies and practices are by no means blind to the social influences on children’s education, development, emotional well-being, or dysfunction. Proponents of these phenomena are well aware of the complementary influence of “nature and nurture” and – supported by topical insights on the brain’s plasticity and epigenetics – they are often keen to stress the importance of the child’s social environment, the resilience of the brain, and the capacity for the child to change. These are of course all necessary foundations for holding onto the very possibility of education. That said, there remains a tendency for hierarchies to emerge in the construction of problems, explanations, and solutions offered to children and young people and indeed in what counts as evidence for understanding what is going on. These hierarchies should remain of concern to children’s geographers. While the social and environmental are seen to play a role in shaping children’s behaviors and lives, it is often the brain which is held up as the basic unit of analysis, the rationale for strategic intervention, and the objective indicator of successful practice. There may also be unintended social consequences which are associated with the wide-scale adoption of these policies and practices which warrant attention. This section considers the critiques which have been

developed of each of these fields of policy and practice before the chapter draws some conclusions concerning their significance for biosocial approaches to children and young people's geographies.

At a basic level, geographers have argued against the de-spatialized and desocialized accounts of children and young people promoted by the advent of neuroeducation. Caution has been voiced against the reduction of childhood subjectivity to that which is visible and measurable within the brain, observable through behavioral/psychological science, or able to be readily evaluated as a learning outcome. Warning against a focus on the brain as "the major organ of learning" (Goswami 2008, p. 2), it has been argued that the brain must instead be understood in its embodied social and spatial context (Pykett 2012). This means valuing social science, arts, and humanities knowledge about what it means to be a person (gendered, racialized, classed, and so on) in specific times and places, including accounts of how personhood has been constructed in particular ways through neuroscience itself (Vidal 2009; de Vos 2014). It also requires that educators and educational researchers take seriously the broader contexts in which children learn, not limiting this to apparently common-sense assumptions about a child's socioeconomic disadvantage or family situation. Instead there is a need to situate the learning child within a complex educational system which has a specific and changing set of goals, in addition to a much noted reputation for providing unequal opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds (Pykett 2012, p. 35). There is a risk that both educational neuroscience and brain-based teaching and learning problematically decouples the child from their social context, although reassuringly there is also evidence that educators are actively resisting this tendency (Pykett 2015).

The privileging of neuroeducational expertise (and the methodological, financial, and technological demands of doing neuroscience) also poses a risk of de-skilling the teacher as a social actor who has intimate and tacit knowledge of the children they teach. Relatedly, educational policies which are addressed at the individual brains of learners and framed by a neuroscientific discourse can serve to depoliticize the wider public value of education, which many consider to be precisely about opening up the world to deliberation and scrutiny, not about training the interiorized brain in the pursuit of better, faster learning. To a degree, neuroeducation treats the learner in some ways as merely the vehicle by which the brain gets around and as a medium through which the teacher must strive to "get at" the brain. Even the more careful expositions of educational neuroscience and neuroeducation hold to the necessity of a "science-based education policy" in order to focus educational practice on *what works* (The Royal Society 2011, p. 19). In both cases, education and its neurological basis must necessarily be reduced to that which is measurable, whether through the apparently flakey self-evaluations and marketable success rates of brain-based teaching and learning programs or through the robust peer-reviewed research of educational neuroscience. Meanwhile, the apparent inherent value of "evidence-based" teaching and learning has been effectively called into question (Hammersley 2004; MacLure 2005), and it could be argued that the accounts of *what works* are set to replace public moral and political debate concerning what *should* be done in the field of education.

For many, the diagnosis of, treatment of, and educational provision for children with special educational needs raise a related set of ethical and political concerns. Neuroscientists and educators are optimistic that the brain and gene sciences will make diagnosis of conditions such as ADHD more accurate (The Royal Society 2011, p. 13), and while there lacks any consensus as to the most appropriate treatment for such conditions, there is certainly widespread medical prescription of psychoactive stimulants in particular national settings, as well as a general perception that this kind of treatment has benefits for such children and their teachers and their families. However, substantive fears over the long-term effects of Ritalin use, as well as sociological critiques of the very concept of ADHD, have long been voiced. A neurobiological emphasis on biomarkers for such conditions arguably obscures the way in which the social construct of the “twenty-first-century learning child” has become the benchmark for diagnosing such psychobiologically rendered differences. For critics, ADHD is not a disability or biological disorder but rather a threat to the social order and to a culturally and economically specific education system which seeks to retrofit diverse children into it (Kean 2009). The reported geographical differences in diagnosis rates attest to the way in which ADHD in particular is an ambiguous concept which varies across national boundaries and in response to countries’ distinct social and cultural approaches to disability and educational achievement (Jahnukainen 2010).

Social and emotional learning (SEAL) programs have also come under critical scrutiny by geographers who have recontextualized and re-historicized this initiative by tracing its neuroscientific knowledge base and examining the political rationalities underpinning the introduction. Elizabeth Gagen has brought together geographies of education and emotion in order to address criticisms sometimes leveled at these fields that they are either too outward or too inward looking (Hanson Thiem 2009, cited in Gagen 2015, p. 143), or that they are overly focused on the microscale details of children’s lives at the expense of political-economic analysis. Her analysis of the SEAL focuses on the way in which neuroscientific accounts of emotions are used as a governmental strategy in the shaping of conduct (Gagen 2013, p. 143). Drawing on the Foucauldian-influenced work of sociologist, Nikolas Rose, Gagen suggests that programs such as SEAL do not simply individualize in ways which are a threat to the social. Rather, emotional education has become part of a biosocial effort to shape citizens who are emotionally effective, governable, and employable in a service economy, able to deal with rapid technological and cultural change. This “emotionalization of conduct” – through its founding texts, policy documentation, and guidance for teachers – promotes ways of managing pro-social behavior which are “located in the neurons and synapses of the brain” (Gagen 2015, p. 143). Yet emotional management, the control of impulses, and the biological resource of the brain are, through SEAL, supposed to be put to use for the social good; in this case, it is the economic well-being of the nation. SEAL thus signifies a biosocial mode of governance, *par excellence*, one in which the child’s internalized subjectivity is directed toward national-scale goals (Gagen 2015, p. 145).

Critical sociological analysis has also been useful in understanding the broader political significance of early intervention schemes. Such work has highlighted how

the neurosciences have become part of a governmental framework and neuromolecular “style of thought” aimed at shaping citizens’ behavior and managing the mind (Rose and Abi-Rached 2013). Edwards et al. (2013) show how an emphasis on the brain’s plasticity has been used within early intervention discourse to responsabilize individuals (women and children in particular) for all manner of social ills, irrespective of the unequal gendered, classed, and racialized power relations which provide the context for the developing brain. Meanwhile, the medicalization of social and family policy and brain-based explanations for behavior have been further called into question as a means to justify these policy strategies. In a strong condemnation, Wastell and White (2012, p. 406) assert that “[d]evelopmental neuroscience is an intoxicating ingredient in contemporary UK policy.” Building on John Bruer’s influential critique of 0–3 programs in the USA (1999), they carefully assess the scientific basis on which the UK’s early intervention recommendations have been based. Both find little evidence of early childhood as a critical period of brain development, instead emphasizing the resilience and plasticity of the brain to adverse situations. Instead they caution against the use of neuroscience to legitimize social interventions which blame parents without providing adequate help, which threaten to remove children from their families on the basis of preemptive risk assessments, and which offer only targeted prescribed short-term “treatments” for families who are falling short of societal norms (Wastell and White 2012, pp. 409–410). A crucial concern for these scholars is that the rendering of neurobiological explanation can serve to depoliticize state interventions in the lives of children and their families without openly and democratically addressing the moral issues involved in deciding when, how, and to what ends such interventions should take place.

6 Conclusion

Children’s geographers have made significant contributions to understanding the methodological complexities of undertaking research with children, and to theorizing the body, emotions, and aspects of everyday experience which are difficult to interpret and problematic to represent. They have done important conceptual and historical work in demonstrating the social constitution of childhood and the social reproduction of difference and inequalities among children and young people. They have brought to the fore matters of concern to children and young people, have challenged the so-called “adultist” frameworks for representing such matters, and have engaged in ethically sensitive participatory and advocacy work for bringing children’s voices into the democratic sphere. They have done so by connecting microscale experiences with spatial imaginaries which take the national polity and the global economy into account.

In recent years, there have been calls to move beyond concerns over children’s political agency and voice and instead to develop accounts of the psychological, biological, technological, affective, and nonhuman complexities which make up the contemporary child. To this end, a sensitivity to the “more-than-social” foundations of children’s lives has been proposed as a way of giving due regard to the material,

vital, and embodied realities of those lives (Kraftl 2013). Kraftl (2013, p. 17) himself is careful not to use the term “biosocial” in an effort to avoid returns to a binary reading of childhood as either biological or social, as if these can ever be fully separated. His work is reflective of broader attempts within the social sciences to reach a rapprochement between, on the one hand, biological, behavioral, psychological, and neuroscientific research methods and concepts and, on the other hand, interpretative social analyses concerned with meaning making and challenging the social construction of particular forms of knowledge (e.g., Williams 2001; Cromby 2004; Pickersgill 2013; Rose and Abi-Rached 2013; Fitzgerald and Callard 2015). Adopting a biosocial vocabulary and expertise, taking the “vital” and material seriously, working in partnership with neuroscientists and biologists, and acknowledging the limitations of social constructionism have been central to this varied project. The examples of neuroeducation, treatment of developmental disorders, introduction of social and emotional learning, and early intervention programs demonstrate that while children’s lives may be increasingly hybrid, so too are biopolitical attempts to govern them by a multiplicity of authorities.

Interventions in the brains, minds, bodies, and behaviors of children which specifically target the spaces between emotion and cognition, which emplace “education” inside the brain, or which medicalize educational, social, or familial dysfunction necessarily return us to political questions relating to children and others’ capacity to discern, debate, and challenge such interventions. Geographers therefore have a continued role to play in describing the limitations of biological forms of explanation, spatializing, and re-historicizing such forms of knowledge and repoliticizing the uses to which they are put. There remains a need to be attentive to the potential slippages from the biosocial to the sociobiological and from evidence-based policy to political scientism. As scholars long at the cusp of interdisciplinary working, geographers are arguably well placed to understand these distinctions, expose disciplinary hierarchies, and re-contextualize the applications and political rationalizations of biosocial forms of knowledge.

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Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

9

Sunčana Laketa

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Abstract

From the mundane legacy of imperialism to more spectacular accounts of violence, geopolitical contestations permeate in numerous ways the landscapes of people's everyday life. In a world dominated by geopolitical conflicts and tensions, what is the role of youth in these relations of force? How are youth geopolitically positioned? Are they simply victims of larger geopolitical struggles, or are they perhaps actively involved in them? This chapter addresses the question of the politics of childhood and youth through geopolitical lenses. Specifically, it aims to understand the ways young people become important geopolitical subjects when struggles over identity, territory, and domination are being waged. In order to do so, the chapter turns to the feminist geopolitics literature, as it provides a useful route to rethinking and reconceptualizing the notions of public and private, as well as the hierarchical scalar thinking that permeates many discussions of children and youth politics. The youth and geopolitics nexus is explored through young people's notion of identity and

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belonging with particular attention being given to schools as geopolitical sites. These theoretical discussions are followed by some empirical examples of the geopolitics of identity in the high schools of the post-conflict city of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords

Feminist geopolitics • Identity • School • Divided societies • Bosnia and Herzegovina

1 Introduction

There is a certain unease within public and academic discourses when addressing the nexus of children and politics. The relegation of children and youth to being apolitical has long taken root not only in political theory but in everyday communication as well. The hesitation to fully incorporate children and youth as political beings has been partly motivated by adultist views on childhood as a time of innocence and an adultist desire to shelter that presumed innocence from society's different power struggles. As the word "politics" often connotes unequal relations of power and a struggle for domination, there exists an anxiety over implicating children in such relations, with the notion of the political child sounding almost like an oxymoron. After all, children are supposed to be unspoiled by society's ills as a time of refuge from the dirty world of politics.

The authors of this volume have in different ways attempted to challenge the silencing of the political child. Far from being sheltered from political struggle, these authors seek to acknowledge that children and young people are political and that they are fully immersed in power relations operating within a society. This chapter addresses the question of the politics of childhood and youth through geopolitical lenses. Specifically, it aims to understand the ways young people become important geopolitical subjects when struggles over identity, territory, and domination are being waged. From the mundane legacy of imperialism to more spectacular accounts of violence, geopolitical contestations permeate in numerous ways the landscapes of people's everyday life. In a world dominated by geopolitical conflicts and tensions, what is the role of youth in these relations of force? How are youth geopolitically positioned? Are they simply victims of larger geopolitical struggles, or are they perhaps actively involved in them?

In order to address these complex questions, this chapter turns to feminist engagements with geopolitics. This scholarship provides a useful route to rethinking and reconceptualizing the question of agency and the formation of geopolitical subjects. Moreover, employing the analytics of feminist geopolitics allows for a reexamination of the important notions of public and private, as well as the hierarchical scalar thinking that permeates many discussions on children and youth politics. The following section, therefore, gives us an outline of feminist geopolitics as a model for engaging with the youth and geopolitics nexus. The chapter then uses this model to address specifically the question of identity

formation in children and youth through a geopolitical lens. In other words, it explores the youth and geopolitics nexus as it is articulated through young people's notions of identity and belonging. Particular attention is given to schools as geopolitical sites that play a significant role in the process of forming young identities, from gender and ethnic/racial identities to national ones. These theoretical engagements are followed by some empirical examples of how young people negotiate identity and school geopolitics in a post-conflict city of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mostar is a city that during the war in the 1990s became segregated between two major ethnic groups in the region – Bosniak/Muslim and Croat/Catholic population – an event that generated major changes in the city landscape and the daily life of its residents. One of the most dramatic changes was the division of schools and the system of education between Croats and Bosniaks, producing an antagonistic and volatile climate that persists to this day. Finally, the chapter ends with a conclusion that summarizes the main points and provides guidelines for future research within this burgeoning field of inquiry.

2 Feminist Approaches to Geopolitics

Geopolitics, as a term loosely defined at the intersection of nations, government, territory, and violence, has often been associated with so-called “high-end” politics of international relations and foreign policy. It predominantly deals with the elite “intellectuals of statecraft” as actors active in the production of geopolitical worlds. Geopolitical analysis is traditionally centered on global and state strategies and territorializations, adopting a hierarchical view. Feminist geographers, on the other hand, choose to focus on the “everyday practices of geopolitics” (Smith 2009, p. 200) in order to render visible the individuals that are affected by them. Feminist critiques of geopolitics (e.g., Dowler and Sharp 2001; Secor 2001; Dixon and Marston 2011) urge researchers to consider using the microscale of the individual body when doing analysis rather than macroscale of the state. In doing this, feminist scholars open up the spaces of the political, as well as reconceptualize questions of agency and change. As Anna Secor (2001, p. 193) writes: “Unmoored from state and international scales, the political can be relocated beyond the dominant public sphere and reinterpreted as a process through which politicized identities and everyday spaces are created.”

To truly give voice to the marginal, feminist geographers argue for a more grounded and embodied geopolitics. The grounded geopolitics is the one that focuses on everyday practices that make geopolitics in situ, that is, the more mundane acts and performances that are in contrast to the top-down focus on the state. It is important to note that feminist geopolitics does not regard state technologies, institutions, and discourses as irrelevant; rather, it seeks to materialize their workings in a particular site. By focusing on material relations on the ground, this work aims to avoid an understanding of power relations as already set and predetermined. Rather, power within a society is recognized as dispersed and always in flux. Furthermore, feminists call for an embodied geopolitics in order

to recognize human bodies as affecting and being affected by geopolitics. Bodies are understood as “sites of performance in their own right rather than nothing more than surfaces for discursive inscription” (Dowler and Sharp 2001, p. 169). In other words, in contrast to a textual focus on discourse analysis and deconstruction, feminist geopolitics exposes the material intimate experience of violence and geopolitical struggles.

Through the focus on the everyday, feminist geopolitics seeks to give voice to those excluded by the classical geopolitical discourse. Researchers engaged in this work seek to uncover the marginalized – usually women and children – in ways that disrupt the public/private distinction and the dominant meaning of the political. In other words, feminist geopolitics focuses on that which is rendered invisible, rather than the visible, in order to unsettle the dominant narrative. It is, thus, unsurprising that within recent geographical scholarship that calls for politicizing young people’s geographies, many authors cite feminist literature as providing a theoretical, methodological, and ethical basis for their inquiries. In particular, Kathrin Hörschelmann (2008) engages with feminist geopolitics in order to question young people’s engagement with international politics, specifically the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. As the youth in her study present complex views on the war in Iraq and enact their political agency in an international arena, Hörschelmann states:

Feminist political theorists advocate a gender-conscious, embodied perspective in order to understand how scales and spheres intersect and position subjects politically. Such a refocusing of the lenses through which we seek to understand and critique formations of geopolitical power is well suited to the analysis of young people’s engagements with ‘the political.’ (Hörschelmann 2008, p. 590)

The question of geopolitical positioning of children and youth comes to the fore predominantly in places of warfare and strife (Brocklehurst 2006). When children and youth are discussed in situations of war and armed conflict, they are most notably identified as victims and sufferers in need of healing and psychological reconstitution. While this certainly is a case in many situations, this psychological discourse on the child as a traumatized individual often elides the larger political context, as well as renders the child’s political agency as passive. David Marshall (2013) critically approaches this language of trauma as it relates to the conflict in Palestine to claim that “trauma discourse summons a range of disempowering practices that aim to alleviate individual injury without addressing the structural violence of occupation” (Marshall 2013, p. 55). His research, by contrast, exposes the ways Palestinian children actively “perform and transform the aesthetics of suffering” (Marshall 2013, p. 54). The literature on feminist geopolitics has been particularly useful in exploring the everyday geopolitics of youth in situations of conflict and post-conflict (e.g., Hyndman 2010; Smith 2013). A particularly compelling example of discursive victimization of children in conflict situations is given by Jennifer Hyndman (2010) in her interrogation of the notion of a child soldier. Specifically, Hyndman deconstructs various geopolitical narratives through which the meaning of a child soldier is produced. As young people actively involved in armed struggle are often referred to as victims, but also sometimes as

“enemy combatants,” Hyndman draws attention to the important geopolitical and ethical implications of such discursive renderings, in which notions of innocence and guilt are differentially employed.

In addition to investigating the geopolitical positioning of children in wars and armed disputes, it is important to acknowledge the importance of “the political agencies of those children who are not activists or involved in conflicts per se” (Kallio and Häkli 2011, p. 24). To that end, this chapter engages more closely with the process of identity formation in childhood and adolescence in order to understand the ways geopolitical subjects are constructed and reconstructed in a more mundane environment of schools and educational institutions. The following section first discusses different geographies of power that underpin the development of young subjectivities in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and so on, with particular attention being given to the formation of national identity and national belonging. Consequently, the geopolitical implications of national identity formation are identified within a school setting. As schools operate as institutions where loyalty to the nation and the state is produced and reproduced, it makes them crucial sites for exploring the intersection of geopolitics and young people’s identities.

3 Youth Identity and Geopolitics

From the perspective of developmental psychology, childhood and youth are regarded as important periods in the formation of the self and in construction of one’s identity. Psychologists have long claimed that the question of identity, or who one is and with what and whom one affiliates, is one of the most important tasks a young person is required to resolve on his/her path toward adulthood. Erik Erikson (1994/1968), an eminent psychologist, postulated the famous notion of the “identity crisis” as an important stage of development and placed this quest for identity precisely in adolescent years. Childhood and youth are here understood as in a transitional period toward adult subjectivity, one often deemed stable and coherent. The widely accepted concept of the “identity crisis” is said to be resolved by coming to realize or actualize our internal individual characteristics, alongside getting to know who we “really” are as individual humans – all in a progressive trajectory of identity formation toward the “ideal” non-fragmentary integral self. What this dominant “ideology of interiorized selfhood” (Durham 2004, p. 591) elides are different power geographies involved in the production of the self. Identity formations in childhood and youth are never simply internal psychological processes, but rather they are deeply entangled within different geographies of power.

Non-essentialist theories in geography have been highly influential in challenging the notion of identities, such as gender, race, and ethnicity, as stable and fixed categories (Pratt 1999; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Peake 2009). These theories acknowledge the social construction of the categories, draw attention to the process of categorization by which identity appears as fixed and natural, and focus on the social powers that seek to fix and stabilize differences (Laclau and Mouffe 1985;

Natter and Jones 1997). Understanding identity as a performative and reiterative set of enactments (Butler 1990), geographers of children and youth investigate the myriad of socio-spatial practices through which identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed (see Hopkins 2010). The construction of race and the production of racialized subjects in childhood and youth are a particularly important segment of this literature. For example, Paul Watt (1998) examines the perception and the use of space by different ethnic groups in Britain, highlighting how spaces and places are racialized through young people's leisure activities. Besides young people's racial/ethnic identity, investigations of young subjectivities range from gender (Holloway et al. 2000) and religious differences (Smith 2013) to the development of neoliberal (McDowell 2002) and consumerist subjectivities (Vanderbeck and Johnson 2000).

One of the central tenets of geographers' engagement with young people's identities is the focus on corporeality and materiality of the actions and sayings through which different notions of identity emerge. Several authors stress the role of the body as central to the construction of children and youth identities (Herrera et al. 2009; Kallio 2008; Nayak 2010; Smith 2013). While some authors highlight the importance of visibility of differently marked bodies, others have focused on the role of intimate sensations, emotions, and affect in youthful identity formation. For example, Anoop Nayak (2010) investigates how race, rather than being a preexisting category that is imposed upon the body, can be understood as a performative practice in the constant process of becoming. In other words, he discusses race as assemblage that arises immanently through young people's affective and emotional experience of place. His research on racism and violence among the youth of English suburbia benefits from an ethnographic approach to the felt and experienced materialities of racialization. Finally, he presents compelling arguments that "studies of race and racism need to better engage with the visceral way in which affect and emotion seep into the lives of young people and enable the idea of race to pass from immanence to emergence in daily encounters" (Nayak 2010, p. 2370).

It is important to note that in many of these investigations, the notion of the political, or indeed geopolitical, is rarely central to the analysis of youth geographies. As Kallio and Häkli note:

Children's worlds are typically approached as social and cultural environments, but not as political arenas—i.e. spaces where the presence of human relations is organized by power. Even studies that explicitly focus on power or empowerment tend to overlook the political dynamisms that direct and transform the power relations embedded in children's lived worlds. (Kallio and Häkli 2011, p. 21)

There are, however, a few exceptions where the geopolitical positioning of young people's identities is explicitly theorized. In most of these studies, this relationship has been investigated in terms of a nation-building process (e.g., Benwell and Dodds 2011; Habashi 2008; Smith 2013). These authors highlight the importance children and youth play in the social reproduction of the society. They further investigate different processes of boundary formations and the

construction of “us” and “them” dichotomies central for the emergence of national identity in many contemporary societies. Jeanette Habashi (2008), for example, examines identity politics in Palestinian children and the discursive nuances in the construction of the self and the other. While Habashi (2008) draws attention to children as geopolitical agents in situations of war and immediate crisis in the West Bank, Sara Smith (2013) highlights young people’s everyday geopolitics in a place that is not under an immediate threat of an armed conflict. In particular, she investigates young people experiencing religious re-territorialization between Buddhists and Muslims living in India’s Jammu and Kashmir State. Smith situates her work within a corporeal geopolitics where young people’s bodies become sites of intimate geopolitical territorializations. In a situation of protracted disputes between Buddhists and Muslims in the region, the struggle for the control of the lives and bodies of the youth (through, e.g., the prevention of interracial marriage) becomes an important means of securing a bounded, exclusionary notion of a national and religious identity.

Finally, there is a growing body of research that investigates the nation-building and state formation processes through the spaces of the school. As young people’s identities are performed and enacted through the social spaces of the school and as education holds a central place in management and disciplining of young bodies, schools need to be understood as crucial sites where different, often contradictory, geopolitical discourses are deployed.

4 Schools as Geopolitical Sites

While exploring the processes of identity formation in childhood and youth, geographers play particular attention to the role of space and place. One site that has garnered significant attention as central to subject formation is the school. Claire Dwyer states (1999, p. 6): “Schools are important discursive spaces in the constitution of questions of multiculturalism and difference, and as social spaces within which identities are negotiated.” While Dwyer (1999) highlights dress as a visual marker of difference (in particular the role of the veil in young Muslim pupils in Britain), other authors discuss the social spaces of the school as racially and ethnically marked places. From school cafeterias (Thomas 2005) to university campuses (Hopkins 2011), the spaces of the educational institutions figure prominently in discussions on segregation, discrimination, and practices of exclusion and inclusion. A particularly interesting study of racial segregation is Mary Thomas’s (2009) study of the construction of different racial and social territories at a US high school. As her participants discuss the divided territories of “punks,” “gangsters,” and “populars,” Thomas investigates the complex geographies of the self that inform the contemporary forms of racialization in the US educational system.

Schools, in addition to being social and cultural arenas, need to be understood as geopolitical arenas as well. Schools are educational institutions that have historically enacted state power (see Ploszajska 1996). As such, many authors stress their role in the production of “docile” subjects, where specific behavioral ethics seem to

be inculcated or instilled into young people's bodies and minds (Pykett 2012; Müller 2011). Following the writings of Michel Foucault, these authors investigate the disciplinary power of school and its relation to state formation, arguing that "schools and universities are closely enmeshed with state formation and the education of 'good citizens', instilling loyalty to the state and patriotic thinking" (Müller 2011, p. 1). The educational establishment is where the modern self-governing subject is formed, and it is also where the notion of a particular national identity is said to be internalized. Education plays a significant part in young people's processes of socialization as a place where nationhood is learned, including both formal and informal education (see Mills 2013). As a hegemonic institution aimed at shaping young personalities, schools are understood as sites of different state propagandas where national and religious beliefs are said to be indoctrinated. Müller (2011), for example, investigates the formation of geopolitical subjects at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, paying attention to both banal and blatant technologies of knowledge production through which the geopolitical discourse of a "strong Russia" is formed (see also Benwell 2014).

Particularly interesting is the role of education in divided societies – places of extreme exclusion and segregation (e.g., Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, "Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship," this volume; Leonard 2007; Staeheli and Hammett 2010; Zembylas 2011). From Northern Ireland and Cyprus to South Africa, the crucial role of education in ensuring social reproduction of a society comes to the fore. As the geopolitics of education in such societies is marked by antagonistic and exclusionary relations between "us" and "them," the practices of reconciliation and peace building are often aimed at curriculum development (Cole 2007). Lynn Staeheli and David Hammett (2010), for example, examine the curriculum of citizenship education in South Africa that aims to mold new, more cosmopolitan, youth citizens by promoting liberal notions of diversity and multicultural tolerance. In addition to reflecting on the development and deployment of school curricula and critical engagement with school textbooks, it is necessary to be equally mindful how violence and exclusion are supported through the nondiscursive realm. Division and segregation are not only (re)enacted on the level of policies and texts, but are reinforced by the entire landscape, including affective spaces of the classroom and the school. To that end, Michalinos Zembylas's work (2008, 2011) is at the forefront of engaging with sentiments of resentment, fear, disgust, hatred, and pain through which geopolitical subjectivities are created within the spaces of the school. Drawing from his ethnographic study of a multicultural primary school in Cyprus, Zembylas presents riveting examples of how different affective economies, primarily of fear and disgust, circulate within the social spaces of the school in ways that condition, feed into, as well as contradict, school discourses and policies. Therefore, for Zembylas, "the emotional geographies of exclusion can be understood as manifestations of the racialisation and ethnicisation processes in schools – a finding that has important implications for how to understand the insidious power and tenacity in certain manifestations of these processes" (2011, p. 151).

Finally, concurring with Benwell that “there is greater scope for research which connects children’s geographies and the geographies of education with debates about the formation of geopolitical subjectivities and identities” (2014, p. 59), the chapter turns to further elaborate these issues as they unfold in the divided city of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5 Situating Youth in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Whether labeled as a post-conflict society, a transitional democracy, or a failed state, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is for most young people a difficult place to grow up in. With a rising unemployment rate that is one of the highest in Europe, and a volatile divisive political climate, prospects for a better future appear dim. Almost 20 years after the war devastated the country, BiH is still struggling to move toward stability in everyday life.

In order to understand the contemporary situation young people find themselves in, it is necessary to begin with a brief overview of the armed conflict that was waged on the territory of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. At the time before the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the six socialist republics representing the federation state of Yugoslavia. Following the fall of communism in the rest of Eastern Europe, each of the republics held multiparty elections in 1990, and Yugoslavia moved into a transition from a socialist system into a Western-oriented market economy. In 1992, a referendum was held in Bosnia and Herzegovina during which citizens gave their voice for the state independence. However, following the call for independence, the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and non-separatist Bosnian Serbs waged a war on the territory of BiH. The war in BiH officially ended in 1995 with the US-led Dayton Accords, separating the country between two entities: the Republic of Srpska with a Serbian majority and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a Croat and Bosniak majority (see Fig. 1).

Situated in southwestern BiH, the town of Mostar is often considered a microcosm that recapitulates the Bosnian state (Moore 2013). This vibrant multiethnic community witnessed violent destruction, killing, and displacement of its people during the 1990s. The town was initially attacked by the Serb-controlled Yugoslav National Army, but it was successfully defended by joined efforts of Croatian and Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak forces. Subsequently violent fighting began between Croat and Bosniak armies, with the former taking hold of the western bank of the river Neretva and the latter taking its eastern bank. The signing of the Dayton Accords ended the armed conflict, but the city continues to be informally separated between western “Croat” Mostar and eastern “Muslim” Mostar (Calame and Charlesworth 2009).

Among the many transformations that followed, from major changes in infrastructure and city administration to renaming of city streets, the division of schools had a particularly notable effect on the daily lives of its residents. Namely, after the war in the 1990s, all schools in Mostar became segregated between two ethnic



Fig. 1 Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina delineating two separate governing entities – Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (source: Author)

majorities – Bosniaks and Croats, including elementary schools, high schools, as well as two universities that operate in the city. The separation of schools and school curriculum for the Bosnian Croat, Serb, and Bosniak populations was one of the most immediate changes brought about at the very outset of the war in BiH. The rhetoric of competing national identities on which political leaders have embarked since the mid 1980s had the most dramatic effect on the domain of education. Previously mixed classes and schools experienced stark divisions that included different buildings, textbooks, curriculum, as well as different school holidays between the three ethnic groups. Bosnian Serb students adopted the curriculum of Serbia proper, Bosnian Croats took over the curriculum of Croatia proper, and Bosniaks developed their own curriculum. The Dayton Peace Accords that marked the end of the war did not effectively deal with this issue, leaving it to the will and judgment of local cantonal ministers (Hill 2011; Hromadžić 2011; Torsti 2009). Today, the violent ethno-nationalist project of fixing and stabilizing difference

among the diverse populations of BiH, as well as undermining common cultural heritage, is witnessed most strikingly through these segregated school spaces.

6 Geopolitics of Identity: The Case of Two High Schools in Mostar

In order to further delve into the geopolitics of identity in Mostar's educational system, two schools merit particular attention – *Prometna/Saobraćajna škola* and *Stara gimnazija*. Both schools seem to exemplify different geopolitical discourses as they are materialized at these particular sites.

Prometna/Saobraćajna škola (technical school for traffic technicians) is a high school in Mostar that operates under a specific model, widely known as “two schools under one roof” model, and as such, it presents a special case of ethnic sectarianism and its mundane divisions. Namely, “two schools under one roof” signifies that in this school, the curriculum is organized such that Croats take classes in the morning and Bosniaks go in the afternoon. This particular concept arose when the project of segregation of education in BiH resulted in a proliferation of school institutions, but a lack of school spaces. In Mostar, before the war, the majority of schools were situated on the western side. After the war, the Bosniak population, confined now to Mostar's east bank, was left with a lack of adequate school space. The “two schools under one roof” was invented out of such spatial necessities. Today, the school reflects many antagonisms and hostilities that permeate the everyday. Even though both Croat and Bosniak students at *Prometna/Saobraćajna škola* are undergoing the same vocational training for a traffic technician, all courses, teachers, as well as school administration is divided on an ethnic basis. Most students are not acquainted with their colleagues from the other shift, yet the situation creates many animosities among them. In particular, the school has been a site of several violent incidents between Bosniak and Croat students, until a few years ago when both school administrations decided to implement a 40 min break between the two shifts in order for students not to cross each other in the hallways. This and similar schools in Mostar and throughout the Federation of BiH continue to be criticized for the violation of human rights and promotion of segregating practices, but the situation continues to be unchanged, with main political leaders embracing the status quo.

By contrast, Mostar's *Stara gimnazija* (Old Gymnasium) is a high school that is at the forefront of various attempts to “integrate” Mostar's high school students. Rejecting the infamous “two schools under one roof” model, the Old Gymnasium implemented joint school administration and some joint student courses. However, Croat and Bosniak students continue to have most courses according to the “national” curriculum, among them the so-called national subjects – history, literature, geography, and religion. The first “integrated” school in Mostar holds a lot of promise in the national and international imaginary, but it also suffers from the same problem where education is “produced through governance of ethnically conceived spaces” (Hromadžić 2011, p. 270). With significant investments for the

first “integrated” school in Mostar coming from the so-called international community in BiH, it has been celebrated as an important step in the processes of reunification of the city. However, as Azra Hromadžić’s (2011) ethnographic work in the Old Gymnasium shows, the school continues to experience problems mirroring ones in the rest of the city and the country as well. Hromadžić stresses how the issue of integration is untenable given that it is based on a preconceived notion of “bounded, homogenous, and mutually hostile” ethnic groups in BiH (2011, p. 272), a situation promoted by the Dayton Peace Accords.

These two Mostar’s high schools best exemplify dominant geopolitical discourses of “us” and “them” that structure young people’s lives in Mostar. On one hand, the daily functioning of *Prometna/Saobraćajna škola* is a constant reenactment of ethno-nationalist ideology of fixed identities and irreconcilable differences between different ethnic groups in BiH promoted by the dominant nationalist political parties. *Stara gimnazija*, on the other hand, works to perform a different geopolitical narrative – one based on the notion of integration and a liberal approach to diversity promoted by the “international community.” In both cases, *Prometna/Saobraćajna škola* and *Stara gimnazija* draw attention to the ways its youth have become significant geopolitical subjects where struggles over identity and domination are being waged. In her discussion on relationships of citizenship, Lynn Staeheli notes: “As a site of citizenship formation, the school can be thought of as an aggregation of the aspirations, ideals, values, and instrumentalities wielded by the gamut of social and political agents in society, who draw on different sources of power as they attempt to mould citizens capable of functioning in particular ways” (Staeheli 2010, p. 395). Seen in this way, schools in Mostar can be understood as sites that carry the nationally and internationally important task of “molding” the ideal Bosniak or the ideal Croat. Classes in literature, history, and geography, in particular, each with its own unquestionable truth and antagonistic sentiment toward the other, are an essential part of the toxic nation-building process. Thus, the complex geopolitics of school spaces can be understood as an attempt to solidify the meaning of particular ethnic identity in BiH.

7 Negotiating Identity in Mostar’s Schools

From the ethnic division of schools and the construction of “national” subjects carried out during the very outset of war to ongoing discussions on the contentious issue of “integration,” the schools in BiH have become sites of overt political struggle. Various political actors, from a host of agents called the “international community” to dominant local political parties, are involved in construction of places such as *Prometna/Saobraćajna škola* and *Stara gimnazija*. However, in order to fully understand the role of schools as geopolitical sites involved in the process of national identity formation, it is important to expand on the discussion of the political consequences of the Dayton Peace Accords and the role of major national and international political players. In other words, in many studies, schools are analyzed as sites that operate as an extension of the central power of the state, as

capillary mechanisms through which state ideologies are circulated. The school as an institution is understood as an agent of the state involved in the process through which national identities are forged. Here, this analysis seeks to be extended in order to recognize the ways students are not simply passive recipients of the knowledge passed through the national curriculum, and the school is not a site of mere one-way indoctrination (see also Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship,”](#) this volume).

The feminist geopolitics literature, discussed earlier, directs attention to grounding and materializing geopolitical power relations in daily practice. This literature points to the ways different relations of power are negotiated and practiced in those spaces. The focus on daily life as an important arena of different power struggles is a common theme throughout research on politics of youth (Habashi 2008; Hörschelmann 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2011). This commitment to the everyday is often described in terms of difference between higher and lower case “p” in politics, where “Politics” is understood as a realm of institutional participation and official decision-making and “politics” is understood as the realm of quotidian negotiations and mundane environment. Rather than seeing children and youth as passive victims of larger power relations operating within a society, these researchers aim to retheorize young people’s agency in order to account for their active and pervasive participation in politics, broadly conceived.

Using feminist geopolitics analytics in order to understand the geopolitical positioning of schools in BiH opens up our understanding of the formation of various nationalist ideologies as not simply disseminated through the curriculum of national subjects, but rather supported by entire educational landscapes of divided and antagonistically positioned schools. This became strikingly evident in my conversations with Mostar’s high school students who recounted feelings of uncertainty, discomfort, and distrust during contact with students of different ethnicity. Most high school students do not socialize with peers of different ethnicity, some mention having acquaintances, and only a few report being friends with someone from the opposing ethnic group. Thus, the discourse on mutually hostile and exclusionary ethnic groups in Mostar permeates not only school life, but social life as well. The geopolitics of division is often reenacted and supported by young Mostarians. Even in situations when school curriculum, as well as school personnel, actively seeks to bring students of two major ethnicities together (such as to work on a joint project), the situation is oftentimes fraught with tension. Lucy (the name is a pseudonym chosen by the participant), an 18-year-old senior year high school student from eastern (Bosniak) Mostar, recalled a particularly dramatic event when she and a few of her classmates started working on a joint project with their colleagues who attend classes in western (Croat) Mostar. The project was designed by their professors as a common undertaking of Mostar’s Croat and Bosniak students. Students participating in the project were excited to take part in it and interact and exchange ideas with their fellow colleagues. However, a problem arose when Bosniak students came in person to visit the school in western (Croat) Mostar, where they were met with hostility when their presence was announced to other students. Lucy recalls how the school pedagog helped them escape through

the school window and run away as the situation was escalating into potential physical violence. Thankfully, Lucy and her classmates were not hurt.

Events such as the one Lucy experienced show the precarious position young Mostarians find themselves in. Hostility and antagonism are negotiated in the everyday in ways that feed into and support fixed and exclusionary notions of ethnic identity. This conclusion is in concordance with Hromadžić's (2011) study of the daily functioning of the Old Gymnasium. Namely, she notes how students' daily practices in and outside school reflect various mundane divisions and quotidian segregations through which identities are negotiated and reconstructed. Hromadžić (2011) also identifies an exemption to the overall school geopolitics, and she locates it in the school public bathroom. There, students of both ethnicities come together during recess break and hide in spaces of the bathroom engaging in an illicit activity – cigarette smoking. In a space that seems to even temporarily suspend the rules and norms of the school and the city, Hromadžić notes how students become involved in an exchange that, more importantly, enables experimenting with ethnic identity, as well as opening up to democratic possibilities:

With no adults present, the bathroom became a place of subversion, experimentation, risk, and playfulness. It was the only place in the school, and possibly in the city, for hanging out, sharing a cigarette, flooding the sink and toilet bowls, and discussing classroom work, fashion, music, and dating. These practices generated contingent and precarious feelings of interconnectedness and recognition of the other. (Hromadžić 2011, p. 279)

Evident in the aforementioned geopolitics of everyday life is that in these turbulent times of change and uncertainty that mark the post-conflict times in Bosnia, young people bear the burden of embodying ethnic identity as the most relevant marker of the self (see also Palmberger 2013). It is crucial to understand these processes of identity formation through the lens of politics in which they are embedded. In a divided BiH society, the geopolitical struggle between ethnic groups is materialized through the precarious process of youth identity formation. Their daily school life is a constant negotiation of national and international discourses of integration and division in different, sometimes contradictory, ways.

8 Conclusion

This chapter argued that geopolitics intersects with lives and bodies of young people in many different social, cultural, and political contexts. Using feminist approach to geopolitics as model for delving into the intersection of youth subjectivities and geopolitics, the discussions presented attempt to show how we come beyond accounts of grand global narratives of geopolitical power struggles. Confronting a top-down view of geopolitics that renders daily life invisible, nonpolitical, and passive, significant challenges are made to dominant understandings of power, agency, and the state. Such an approach to understanding relations of force that seep into the lives of young people will be central for providing a more accountable

and ethical understanding of the geopolitical. By giving voice to the marginal, this field of inquiry continues to yield undisputed benefits to many scholars interested in question of social justice and resistance to dominant modes of power.

As the lives and bodies of young people signify a political world to come, it makes them crucial subjects in the social reproduction of a society. However, children and youth are not simply passive victims of geopolitical power struggles; rather, they are active participants thoroughly implicated in a range of geopolitical practices. It is necessary, however, to further investigate these quotidian rituals and doings as material processes involved in everyday geopolitical practices and performances of young people. There is much need for research that pays attention to the constant unfolding of daily practice, from the mundane to the more spectacular, as it resists neat and exhaustive explanations of the multiple ways notions of identity, social space, and power emerge.

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Abstract

Educational settings for children have a role in (re)producing their societies’ political cultures and to dynamically shape children’s subjectivities, including their political understandings, feelings, and orientations. In this chapter, a particular preschool in rural Australia is understood as a political space that (re)produces those relations that are part of the democratic society in which it is situated. Through the multiple “stories” told on the renovation of the preschool bathroom, the authors trace the political culture of the preschool by paying

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special attention to the politics of space. “Stories” were generated through interviews with various stakeholders after the refurbished bathroom was opened. The analysis illustrates the interview participants’ struggle over authority and the agendas and power relations they invest through the discursive constitution of the bathroom space. These struggles are indicative of the preschool’s and the broader political culture in which it is located. The preschool’s political culture ultimately led to the exclusion of many ideas young children put forward and considered important in regard to their bathroom. To conclude considerations are made about the ways in which these power relations condition the possibility of including children’s views and their participation and the importance of spatial politics for young children’s political learning.

Keywords

Children’s service • Children’s space • Hygienic discourses • Intergenerationality • Minor politics • Participant discourses • Political culture • Political learning • Spatial politics

1 Introduction

Educational settings, such as the school and preschool, reflect the broad social characteristics of their communities, including “broader communities of interest operating at various spatial scales” (Collins and Coleman 2008, p. 282). Preschool/schools in this way are political spaces that, first, (re)produce those relations that are part of the democratic society in which they are situated and, second, political spaces that are related to much “adult-dominated politics” (Collins and Coleman 2008). The control and disciplinary regulation of young people in preschool/schools (re)produce social norms and “appropriate” conduct by prescribing particular ways to be and act (Foucault 1977, Pike 2010). In turn young people act within or against these norms and prescriptions by regulating their own conduct (see also Laketa, ► Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina,” Pykett, ► Chap. 8, “Brain-Targeted Teaching and the Biopolitical Child,” McIntosh, Punch, and Emond, ► Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care” in this volume). Educational spaces for children therefore have a role in (re)producing their societies’ political cultures, in governing children and adults’ conduct (Pike 2008), and in dynamically shaping children’s subjectivities, including their political understandings, feelings, and orientations (Kallio 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2011). In this chapter, through a case study that followed the refurbishment of children’s bathroom in a preschool and includes interviews with various stakeholders, the spatial politics of the preschool is examined. The analysis considers the ways in which power relations condition the possibility of including children’s views and their participation and the importance of spatial politics for young children’s political learning.

2 Spatial Politics

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau (1984, p. xiv) theorizes politics as the many practices by which "users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production" with the help of "clandestine forms of creativity of groups or individuals." de Certeau's tactics and his emphasis on the practice have been central to theorizations in research around children's geographies. It is "used to help illuminate politics from below, recognize forms of resistance not explicitly or intentionally articulated as such, and theorize the body as a site of children's politics" (Elwood and Mitchell 2012, p. 5) (see also Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, "Counter-Mapping for Social Justice" in this volume about how cultural history sediments into landscape and affects identity). de Certeau almost exclusively addresses practices of everyday resistance; in this way he is more interested in how people operate in everyday life, rather than how power operates. In addition, and as Frow (1991, p. 58) explains, for de Certeau the "flow of power is [...] all in the one direction and from a singular source." de Certeau claims that his view of power derives from Foucault, specifically from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. However, in de Certeau's conception of power, domination and resistance appear as "a binary structure with "dominators" on the one side and "dominated" on the other" (Foucault 1980, p. 142). This is a position on power that Foucault explicitly rejects. This chapter seeks to introduce a different perspective into discussions of spatial politics. It turns to Foucault's theorization of power as a set of relations that crisscross spaces, rather than a capacity that resides in people or social structures. It understands power as fluid, shifting and productive in nature. Consequently, it aims to analyze the politics of space in dynamic ways and explore how "power [is] . . . put into action" (Foucault 1982, p. 788).

There are examinations of children's participation and spatial politics that attempt to combine the use of Foucault's notion of power with de Certeau's notion of "radical creativity in the practices of everyday life" (Gallagher 2008, p. 144). In Gallagher's interpretation "'strategy' for De Certeau, is the calculation of power relationships that becomes possible when the subject of a power – a group, an organization, a person – locates itself within a place of its own" (Gallagher 2008, p. 145). "Tactic" happens in the space of the other as a resistance to that power/domination. Similarly, for feminist geographers space, as a constitutive element of culture, is socially constructed, filled with power, and struggled over (e.g., Massey 1999). This chapter focuses on how interview participants delineate or demarcate the space of the bathroom. It also examines participants' actual spatial practices that they refer to, to discuss the spatial politics of the preschool.

In this study, spaces are understood as not merely "bounded" but as "porous ones produced through their webs of connection with wider societies" (Holloway and Valentine 2000, p. 779). Space is viewed as filled with sets of relations as "space takes for us the form of relations among sites" (Foucault 1984, n.p). Foucault (1984) further explains in *Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias*: "we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely

not superimposable on one another” (n.p.). In his view sites in the social field are related, for example, sites related as forms “of temporary relaxation, cafes, cinemas, and beaches,” or as forms of care and education, such as family, preschool, school, holiday activities, after-school activities, teacher training institutions, and the like (Foucault 1984, n.p.). With the delimitation or formalization of spaces, particular knowledges are attached to them with their set of power relations. Foucault explains this further in his interview with editors of the geographical journal *Herodote* (1980, p. 63):

Once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power. There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tried to transcribe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory. (1980, p. 69)

Thus, the demarcation of spaces, relations to other spaces or territories, and associated power/knowledges “make up a sort of geopolitics” (Foucault 1980, p. 77) (see also Laketa, ► Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina,” and McIntosh et al., ► Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care” in this volume). For Foucault, the examination of power focuses on power relations embedded in discursive formations and in the techniques applied in everyday life in practices (Foucault 1982). This study therefore asks the following questions in order to explore the politics of space: How do interview participants demarcate the space of the bathroom? What relations to other spaces and discourses (power/knowledge) do they utilize? How do these discourses coexist with the preschool and broader society? What power relations and effects do these particular discourses produce?

3 Political Culture and Political Learning

Educational settings are part of the cultural (re)production of society, including its political culture (see Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship” and Nagel and Staeheli, ► Chap. 27, “NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon” in this volume about how forms of relations and habits sediment in political culture). The extant literature on political culture, usually based on Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba’s (1965) pioneering work *The Civic Culture*, remains as a defining categorization of what political culture appears to be in comparative democratic settings. Political culture for Almond and Verba (1965) includes the political understandings, feelings, and orientations of people. In their study Almond and Verba sought to discover what sort of people were active, articulate, and “responsive” and what sort of people were passive, inarticulate, and unconcerned in a number of democracies. In their comparative political study, they have developed nations’ patterns of orientations toward political objects and identified three types of political cultures.

For this case, the third one is the most instructive. It entails a participatory or “civic” culture, where citizens can vote, have rights that are protected, and participate fully in the political process.

A final point to be made before delving in to the actual study is the point about the concept of “political learning” (see also conceptualizations of political learning in Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship”](#) and Mitchell and Elwood, ► [Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”](#) in this volume). Early studies of political learning relied on a specific type of “civic education” that was promoted in North American and UK schools. These schools would often teach children about how typical liberal democracies functioned, debated various policy issues that bore directly on their lives and the lives of their families, and sought to instill a specific set of ideals that inculcated “liberal values.” Still an active part of these school systems (<http://new.civiced.org/home>), civic education, or “civics” for short, is usually not a critical political science approach, but rather a set curriculum relying on concepts and standard patterns of liberal democracy to be reenacted within a classroom setting. There is certainly scope for criticism of this, not the least of which includes a reliance on “Western-liberal” concepts and practices of democracy, promoting a singular form of democracy, and so on. Here, we are illustrating how even this kind of political learning has room for political change.

Our point here is twofold: one, that political learning has rarely been defined as equivalent to propaganda or indoctrination; and two, that power in this construct is still fluid. In keeping with the logic of these two points, political learning can indeed remain a lifelong practice (in agreement with Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship”](#) in this volume), even if the initial “instillment” of concepts around democracy and democratic practice will at first appear to be quite limited. From as early as the late 1960s (Jennings and Niemi 1968), empirical studies were demonstrating that political learning was a diverse and continuous practice including the change of one’s value structures and that hegemonic practices could be altered. We use a Weberian ideal type to explain how democratic practices operate in our study, but we do not see this as a finality. This is a set of results from one study that illuminates how power is practiced in a part of the world considered to be an established democracy.

4 The Study

The initial participatory research project with children elicited children’s views about their current and desired bathroom (Millei and Gallagher 2012). The design for the new bathroom was dominantly developed from children’s view. A few years passed and the preschool was successful in raising funds for the renovation. The refurbished bathroom, however, differed from the design sidelining many ideas of children. This outcome is not so indifferent to other cases where children’s views were solicited on their new preschool/school design (special issue of the journal

CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts (4(4)2008) mostly about the “Building Schools for the Future” program in the UK that called for children’s participation in the design of their schools) (see also Parkes, ► Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education” in this volume). Those case studies detail reasons for dropping children’s agendas. They also provide advice that strengthens future initiatives. Here these points therefore are not discussed. This study rather focuses on those discourses that provide insights into the spatial politics of the preschool.

The funding was received after the publication of the article on the initial project that included children’s ideas on their future bathroom. The article was assumedly read by all staff members; thus, they were all acquainted of children’s issues and wishes. During the preparation for the refurbishment, the discussion of the original plan raised a series of practical questions. These were deliberated during various meetings with the preschool’s management committee (composed of staff, parents, and independent community members). On-the-spot problem-solving also happened at the construction site usually with the presence of staff member overseeing the process and for most of the time with the teacher researcher (who led the original research). While the teacher researcher acted as representative of the children during the consultation, some of the practical considerations were also fed back to children, and their views were sought and brought back to adult conversations. Time available for the refurbishment of the bathroom was only 5 weeks during the summer break including Christmas. There were also particular regulations to which the building site and finished bathroom needed to conform. These last issues led to the change of building companies. The initial small building company with a builder who was more accepting of children’s perspectives was replaced.

The study aimed to produce participant discourses about the processes leading up to completing the refurbishment and the new bathroom itself. Therefore, participants were asked to tell “their stories” of the bathroom. In “their stories” they also positioned themselves. This method was inspired by Létourneau’s (2006, p. 73) method. In his study on young people’s understanding of Québec history, Létourneau aimed to produce stories that included their “general knowledge and sense of the representation of the historical experience.” His original question, “Please account for the history of Québec since the beginning, the way you see it, remember it, or understand it” (p. 74), was altered to “Please tell me *your* story of the bathroom.” The question explicitly asked participants to mobilize knowledge and to position themselves. If participants did not talk about their expectations for the new bathroom and the comparison between their expectation and the actual refurbished bathroom, a follow-up question was asked: “What were your expectations in regards to the bathroom, and how the bathroom [as it] is now, compared to those?” The interviews, which lasted for no more than 25–30 min finished with the two questions: “How do you see your place in the preschool?” and “Would you like to ask me a question?” It was assumed that participants were interested to find out about Zsuzsa’s view of the bathroom who participated in the original research; therefore, this question was included.

Altogether 21 interviews took place, 10 with educators (certificate-trained staff, 3-year diploma-trained staff, and 4-year university-trained teachers, director/teacher), three with administrative staff, two with cleaners/gardeners, two with parents on the management committee, and one with the first builder. At the time of the bathroom's official opening, three children who participated during the original research project were also asked about their views on the refurbished bathroom. During the preparation for and the actual refurbishment, the original teacher researcher kept field notes and photos were taken of the various stages of the refurbishment.

5 Introduction to Analysis

The transcribed interviews were subjected to inductive analysis to identify themes, larger themes composed of a number of themes, and power/knowledges they referred to. Foucault-inspired discourse analysis was used to examine the discourses mobilized by the participants and to identify bodies of knowledge they draw upon and participants' positionings in their own stories of the bathroom. The language/texts produced by participants and the cultural, social, and historical situatedness of those were examined as part of the discourse analysis. The analysis aimed to identify the bodies of knowledge and particular discourses referenced and the spatial deployment of discourses in relation to the social field. In this way, the analysis paid attention to the mundane discourses of the everyday circumstances of people interacting with the bathroom space.

The distinctions between the concepts of "children's service" and "children's space" were generative for the analysis of data. The differences between these concepts are due to the various conceptualizations of "the child" and "childhood," adults' position in children's lives, and the purposes of institutions. The two different concepts in turn "produce different practices, different relationships, different ethics and different forms of evaluation" (Moss and Petrie 2002, p. 9). Moreover, this distinction is representative of the social field where provisions for children are usually delivered on adults' ideas and nested in forms of instrumentality. For example, children's education is shaped in a particular way in order to secure a nation's future. In these kinds of provisions, there is usually an adult mastery over children.

"Children's service" is created for children by adults, to regulate children and "produce specific, predetermined and adult-defined outcomes" (Moss and Petrie 2002, p. 9). In the physical, social, cultural, and discursive space of "children's service," social norms, values, rights, understandings, and practices dominantly created by adults are passed upon and resisted. "Children's space" offers open-ended public provisions for children where children live their childhoods in the present. In "children's space" children and adults critically appraise, deliberate, and contest understandings, values, practices, and knowledge. Critical thinking enables all involved "to speak of questions and possibilities rather than givens and necessities" (ibid, p. 11). "Children's space" is a space for a particular kind of democratic

politics that Rose (1999) terms as “minor” politics (further on “children’s space”; see also in Parkes, ► Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education” and McIntosh et al., ► Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care” in this volume).

As Rose (1999, pp. 279–280) explains “minor politics” happen in the everyday by reworking relations and spaces of actions:

the ways in which creativity arises out of a situation of human beings engaged in particular relations of force and meaning, and what is made of the possibilities of that location. These minor engagements do not have the arrogance of programmatic politics – perhaps even refuse their designation as politics at all. They are cautious, modest, pragmatic, experimental, stuttering, tentative. They are concerned with the here and now, not with some fantasized future, with small concerns, petty details, the everyday and not the transcendental. They frequently arise in ‘cramped spaces’ – within a set of relations which are intolerable, where movement is impossible, where change is blocked and voice is strangled. And in relation to these little territories of the everyday, they seek to engender a small reworking of their own spaces of action. . . . a minor engagement with cramped space can connect up with a whole series of other circuits and cause them to fluctuate, waver and reconfigure in wholly unexpected ways.

The creation of “children’s space” requires a “turn away from an ethics of instrumentality and mastery that underlies so much of our discussion of children and the provision we make for them” (Moss and Petrie 2002, p. 54).

There is a different or narrower understanding of “children’s space.” In this sense “children’s spaces” are those places into which children invest imaginative energy. So it is children’s creativity and symbolic work that give a place a special identity and meaning (Rasmussen 2004). Here the cultural notion of space is dominant in which children are positioned as having their “own culture” and therefore separated from adults. This notion of “children’s space” refers “to romantic notions of “the playing, innocent child” living in their own separate lifeworlds within an age-segregated social order” (Kjørholt 2007, p. 33). Children, in this kind of “children’s space,” are conceptualized as autonomous participants in their own communities and are in intergenerational relationships with adults based on their differences and sameness (Hopkins and Pain 2007).

It is important to signal here that the concept of “intergenerationality” is contested (Horton and Kraftl 2008) and during the analysis it will be further explained. For now, it is enough to say that in this different kind of “children’s space,” children are not taken on par with adults but recognized for their particularity. As Kjørholt (2007, p. 33) further explains by drawing on Tingstad’s (2006) research, children are not only “passive recipients, but also social actors contributing to producing their own culture.” Children’s space in this understanding misses political elements of contestation as it leaves adults and children’s worlds separated. Therefore, it is also important to note again at the beginning of analysis that it is not assumed that “children’s space” lacks adult mediation or mainstream culture (Mannon 2007); thus, it is not considered as an independent space from adults’ authority and ownership, but rather that it is built on particular relationships

between children and adults based on particular images of what "the child" is brought about by knowledges, discourse practices, and a particular ethics (see in McIntosh et al., ► [Chap. 3, "Creating Spaces to Care: Children's Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care"](#) how children's rights are operationalized by more responsible adults in this volume).

6 Places for Children

In their stories participants mobilized hygienic discourses to describe the new bathroom space. They considered the new space as "clinical," "sterile," or "fresh" (sanitized of smell). They likened it to the hospital or claimed that the new space will address medical issues, such as "urinary tract infection." Investing emotions in the space, Elissa described, "It is cold and it is clinical, frankly as an adult I find it as a scary place," and then continued with a story:

I have had hmm . . . I remember one child she was just scared to go in there and I had to go in there with her because she said 'I don't like it, I'm scared' so I used to just wait at the door for her and so she could feel comfortable that she could go in by herself. . . . I think it is just dark too." (Elissa, pseudonym)

Relatedly, when asked about her role in the preschool, Elissa stated: "I see myself as the person for crying children, crying children don't worry me. I suppose I am a bit of a mothering type, I would take the time and sit specially with the ones that cry." In this part of her story, Elissa speaks her role into existence through discourses that constructs the space as clinical and scary, not suitable for children who need care, and her role as comforting children who are "scared" in this place and reliant on her. Hygienic discourses connect with spaces, such as those that regulated with hygienic regimes, for example, hospitals, medical centers, dental offices, and so on, all regulated through powerful medical and public health knowledges that construct children as inferior and putting adults in the position of mastery.

Participants discussed the bathroom by referring to its functionality to cater for children's bodily functions and to the effectiveness of its operation. Bodily functions are related to germs and infections; therefore, places for these practices – as it is also laid down in regulations – need to be hygienic. Participants described the bathroom: "it is very bland basic bathroom. . . . I am very disappointed, I think it is very bland, very clinical, there is no colour" (Jane); "It would be colourful and playful and it is sterile and clinical but functional" (Jill); "it functions as a bathroom, which is I guess the main purpose of it isn't it (smiles)" (Nora); or "I am kind of like old school you go into the bathroom to do your thing and then you come out" (Louise). Taylor clearly made reference to another hygienic place: "now as I walk in there it sort of reminds me of a hospital bathroom and not so much as a bathroom you find in a preschool that is designed by kids."

Notions, such as "designed by kids," "child friendliness," or "child drivenness," emphasize a space that is "for children" and "by children." Color, stickers, and

children's arts were characteristics of children's culture in participants' stories that separated children's culture from adults: "And it doesn't really look like a child designed stuff because it has got no colour. The kids wouldn't walk in there and pick those colours" (Anna); "I have to say that my bathroom at home has more colour in it, stickers that the kids put up and like (laughs). It is like a hospital bathroom" (Jill); "First [most important aspect] is the function of the bathroom and second that the children are visible in the space" (Nora), by visibility referring to children's "artwork" on display. Good practice guides often suggest children's artwork to be displayed around the preschools, and this supposedly demonstrates the way that spaces can reflect the inhabitants (Edwards 2006). Tanille added "... it's just a lot blander than what the kids have sort of designed with the teachers and staff input as well." The bathroom seemed as not reflecting children's culture, or being cultureless (bland), a non-place because it could be anywhere.

Notions related to "child friendliness" constituted a separate cultural space for childhood inhabited by the "tribal child" (James et al. 1998) with its peer culture or a space that is more in tune with the "nature" of children (child friendly or driven). James and James (2004) argue that "childhood" is constituted in a set of complex and contested discourses. One of those is related to generations, being a child or an adult in a relational and co-constitutive manner. Drawing on the same theorization, Horton and Kraftl (2008, p. 285) argue that "generation" is a discursively constructed concept. While the concept of "intergenerationality" is useful as an explanatory device, its analytical power is questionable (Hopkins and Pain 2007). As Hopkins and Pain (2007) explain, "generational differences themselves can be ascribed to much more powerful, cross-cutting differences in attitude, education, assumption, morality, experience (themselves intersecting with gender, class, ethnicity, etc.) which evade any loose correspondence with a particular 'generation' in whatever sense." Therefore, we find Mannion's (2007) research instructive to apply the concept of "intergenerationality." Mannion (2007, p. 409) argues that "spaces are invariably created out of the contested intergenerational knowledge and practices." Mannion here refers to the relations and power/knowledges that these discourses produce as they make up "childhood" and "adulthood." In participants' discourses the knowledges invoked to understand the preschool bathroom, such as being a childlike space or place for children's use, produce a separation between the generations. These discourses construct the bathroom as a separate space from adults' world. The physical space also attests this division as the children's bathroom is only used by children and adults have their own bathroom. Children use the bathroom with different purposes to adults. Children use it for their bodily function, to play, to socialize, and so on (Millei and Gallagher 2012). Educators use it to supervise and instruct children. Therefore, these generations' views and issues related to the bathroom are different. As it is demonstrated in this study, they often run parallel each other and are in contestation rather than meet (see also how children and staff claim a different ownership of dining places in residential homes by McIntosh et al., ► Chap. 3, "Creating Spaces to Care: Children's Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care" in this volume).

The renovation of the bathroom created a more enclosed space. Windows that previously provided visibility from as far as the end of the garden were exchanged

with a wall. The side windows looking through the classrooms were made smaller. The fitting of division walls between the toilets and lockable doors aimed to enable children's privacy. These were especially requested by children. The three children interviewed commented on this fact: Millei, "What about the doors?" Nick, "Very good, takes privacy away." Rebecca, while obviously not happy entirely with the new bathroom, stated "at least we have a private space to go to the bathroom." Sandi, "I like the doors on the toilet." Visibility and walls mobilized discourses in which observation and children's privacy were in contention: "it is good for the privacy, I don't know how the staff is going on not being able to see in compared to when we had the glass before . . . it is good for the kids with privacy and to have those doors on those toilets" (Tanille); "Now that there is less visibility I have to go into the inside of the room while I just used to walk along the veranda here and see and felt that I could see" (Cathie); or as Louise explained:

I am still struggling with the lack of visual. You know being able to see going from this big wide open space and now we've got one little window and that still concerns me a little bit that we haven't got the supervision aspect of knowing what's going on. . . . some undesirable things happening in there, ah boys looking at each other's penis and stuff like that.

The preschool is arguably the first place where children's socialization and "civilization" (Elias 1978) take place after the home (Millei and Cliff 2014). Visibility of children's bodies is crucial for these regulatory mechanisms to operate (Foucault 1977; Pike 2008). Some educators unproblematically performed their role of observation in the "panoptic bathroom" (Millei and Cliff 2014) before refurbishment. In the above excerpts they struggle to reconcile issues of privacy and observation, a form of disciplinary technique itself (Foucault 1977), to preempt "uncivilized" conduct. While they have accepted that children need privacy, this makes their work more difficult. Their assumed mastery over the space becomes evident in these interviews. They speak about the need to change their technique of observation to continue being able to regulate young children's bodies and conduct.

Discourses of "hygiene," "functionality," "child friendliness," and "privacy versus observation" draw on knowledge of public health and etiology, children's folklore, and socialization and construct the adults as knowers of children and their needs. They produce separate spaces from adults and spaces for "children's service." Therefore, these discourses close down child-determined possibilities and outcomes. They introduce instrumentality for the space and produce forms of mastery to act upon children. In relations of power these discourses constitute and maintain the privilege of adults and close down potentials for dialogue and contestation, "minor politics."

7 Children's Space

Discourses of "blank canvas" appeared as a dominant frame in which to understand the renovated bathroom. Fourteen participants either used the exact expression "blank canvas" or referred to the bathroom as "work in progress," which

encapsulated a similar meaning. Educators stated: “it’s very bland that’s all, it’s a blank canvas so we can only improve it” (Jamie); “It is like a blank canvas and we can go in and change it and do something with it but it is sad” (Anna). Articulated by these and other participants, these sentiments express a disappointment with the finished bathroom and their expectation of something different for children. Conceptualizing the bathroom as “blank canvas” might also acknowledge “the fact” that the bathroom could not be refurbished according to children’s views. In summary, the metaphor of “blank canvas” canceled the past and opened up possibilities, as Lorraine explained: “ahm, you know I think there is a long way to go to making it, you know personalising and making it . . . more of what the children would love and I suppose it is a blank canvas, so there is now the opportunity to work on that. . . . So it is very stark and everything but it’s something that can be worked on.” Nora said, “it functions as a bathroom, . . . and I think over time we’ll begin to see the impression that children make in there.” The metaphor of the “blank canvas” was productive in other ways too. It produced the understanding that the bathroom space belongs to children and in relation to that children do have agendas.

Discourses of “teaching” are manifested in two ways. First, information about hygienic practices, independent bathroom use, and issues of sustainability were passed onto children. Second, the environment was conceptualized as a “third teacher.” The environment as the “third teacher” refers to the affordances of spaces that children use imaginatively and is closely connected with the Reggio Emilia approach. In this approach “the role of the environment in teaching and learning draws deeply on how young children perceive and use space to create meaning” (Strong-Wilson and Ellis 2007, p. 41). It is about maintaining a balance between structure and children’s free exploration where educators pose “provocations” to spark discussion. Louise’ story connects with both meanings:

Like I didn’t want it to become a play area or somewhere where that was really pleasant. But I can see the experiences, the teaching experiences that you can actually have in there too. . . . Water conservation, one pushing [too much] the soap, not wasting the paper towel, I could see all that once we were starting to observing more of the bathroom and behaviour.

Jade imagined “a space where the children could clean up and be more independent and responsible.” Nora’s view stands closer to understanding the environment as the “third teacher”:

a place that is visually pleasing and I think you know we talked about features in the bathroom so having the hiding hole as the dressing room and all these cupboards with the doors [for children’s clothes], the path in the lino [yellow brick road] that never (laugh) came anyways, you know the shape of the basin, you know if it had all came together.

Jade’s notion of the bathroom environment was directly influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to children’s environment discussed in Ceppi and Zini (1998): “I think that we had the expectation that there would be more provocations available for the children in the bathroom and the sinks don’t give that,” and she continues “I really wanted this place to be a place that provoked discussion and you know was totally propagated for the children, that gave us open ended space to

explore water." Jade also refers to the open-ended space she desired for children with free "movement through space" and "having the sinks [in the middle of the bathroom as on original plan]. . . [to] give us that nice flow in movement." Jade was also conceptualizing the space as "transitory" where children come and go each year and can leave their marks as history.

Cathie and Jade emphasized the bathroom as a social space and space for social learning. In answering Zsuzsa's question "What sort of space is the bathroom?" Cathie answered, "Little bit social in times in there, where they can talk to each other with the washing of the hand, see each other in the mirror. It becomes a bit of a social focus point, doors, a lot of choosing to use the toilets with the doors." Jade added: "they do like, they do get in there, it has become a nice little social space for the children."

Teaching and learning are dominant agendas in preschools, and participants mobilized many discourses related to their expert knowledge base. For example, they talked about passing down information or provoking thinking in children or problem-solving. These discourses position educators in various ways, such as the master or co-creator of children's learning through dialogue. Organizing the environment to "teach" the child positions the educator as an indirect facilitator. In sum, these discourses open possibilities for "minor politics." As Moss and Petrie (2002, p. 9) explain, possibilities are "cultural and social . . . aesthetic, physical – some predetermined, others not, some initiated by adults, others by children: it presumes unknown resources, possibilities and potentials." They offer spaces for teaching and learning; for adults and children to be together, to negotiate, and to think critically about ideas; for children to be provoked, to imagine, and to socialize and play.

However, physical space is more than spatial practices and meanings. Architecturally the bathroom is not children's space. It was designed and refurbished on mostly adult grounds. The overall actual building work did not incorporate children's ideas. As Ellsworth (2005, p. 4) explains, "our experiences of a building arise not only out of our cognitive interpretations of the building's allusions to historical or aesthetic meanings but also out of the corporeality of the body's time/space as it exists in relation to the building." Teaching and practices of care open possibilities to occupy the same space where often diverse views and agendas meet. The corporeality of the bathroom however still separates. It produces different agendas for educators and children. The physical space, together with spaces that dominant discourses around the bathroom produce, opens only limited possibilities to become children's space, a space for "minor politics." The question remains what other politics or political learning the bathroom creates opportunities for.

8 Political Culture and Contestation

The issue of the bathroom highlights the preschool's political culture as a "contact zone of cultural contestation," an "in-between space for the intersection of multiple and contested stories" (Somerville et al. 2009, p. 7). Joslyn said:

At the time we envisaged yap we've got the bathroom design but hm . . . there were aspects of that that were not practical or weren't correct, you know couldn't be implemented so . . . I guess someone had to go and find out all about toilets and set out the distances and blahdy blahdy blah . . . and make sure that it would work. . . .

we went to Maitland community preschool and looked at the bathroom and I looked at that and I said 'woah' – 'How many kids do you have?' and I said they've got probably the same as us, I think 50 kids and their bathroom would be half the size of that . . . I guess it was partly that what made me think why would we be increasing the size of the bathroom sacrificing the locker room if we don't have to so . . . hm . . . I guess I could not . . . I couldn't really see the need to move the bathroom wall [as in original plan] to enlarge what was already a large bathroom.

Joslyn has coordinated the refurbishment. In her story she positions herself as "the facts and data person . . . what does the data tell us . . . and I hope common sense" (Joslyn in interview), a reasonable person, and as a person who decides on "evidence" based on her "research." She mobilizes powerful discourses that empower her to overrule other's points of view by delegitimizing them: "but maybe not . . . incorporating the interests of children so readily." She also constructs children's views laid down in the original plan as unreasonable or "incorrect," perhaps based on notions of children as immature or incompetent to live up to this task or to know what is best for them.

Other educators weighted and limited the kind of input they have given to the discussions and decisions. They based their decision to participate in the process of refurbishment on their position in the preschool, level of teaching expertise, or years of experience. For example, Nora expressed: "I am a teacher firstly, and I guess that is because of training and the position that I have got . . . I liaise a lot with parents and the community." Another educator (Tanille) stated: "I am *just* assisting the teaching staff and the children and assisting the parents." This resonated with the other educator's comment: "I am an educator. I am here to support the teacher to run the room. That's about it." Jill (parent on committee) articulated that "I feel a bit more empowered now, I had a year of observing, I feel like now I am gonna ask more questions." The other committee member parent stated that "I don't feel that I have a lot of personal ownership, I guess just playing my formal role of supporting the teachers." The administrator Dorothy felt removed from discussions and decisions: "I sort of stuck in the office I don't hear a lot of feedback, I watched it from afar."

Elissa noted that the discussions during the refurbishment were losing context. The original inputs from the children began to become decontextualized. Led by Joslyn, the discussions were focused on making decisions on already preselected choices: "we were deciding between these two colours and that is when the adults started to take over because we were just focusing on this one little thing and we lost the big picture . . . I think it just got lost" (Elissa). She continued:

Issues were the privacy and the doors, and the basins had lots of discussions, maybe we could have asked what the children liked and we compromised many things. But at the end we had to spend the money, we had to do it now. We had to make decisions, we had deadlines.

While acknowledging that children's views were decontextualized and disregarded, Elissa finds it reasonable to give in to pressures. Jade shares this

view: "So I think our priorities have got lost somewhere." Jade talked about a few developments that in her view culminated in losing "priorities" (children's views). For example, the original builder decided to withdraw, who was sensitive to children's ideas or herself being pushed aside as the advocate for the children:

And I guessed that is my fault, I tried to . . . I tried pushing and pushing and pushing for the things that we wanted but I guess eventually I just gave up . . . so I was just one voice and I was assuming that collectively people had their voices heard and acted upon and while I was away . . . we have changed the colours to a darker colour for the floor and then yet I said we agreed on something else . . . I didn't follow that through I thought while I was away they will take my vote.

In the "contact zone," considerations were narrowed, children's views were sidelined, and the project leader's reasoning about the pragmatics of building took precedence. Without the advocate's presence, educators gave in to constraints leaving the person in charge to decide. Others around her were differently political. Some were active, articulate, and "responsive" representing versions of children's views, but then they felt disempowered. Others remained passive, so they watched from the side. Yet others were inarticulate and felt that it is not in their role to voice opinions or felt lacking authority to do so. Others were unconcerned, who never considered the bathroom an issue. This situation raises the question about the kind of political culture or democracy these participants created in the preschool of which children are a part of.

The further developed concept of political culture by Lucian Pye (1988) resonates well with the political culture of this kind of democracy. Pye (1988) demonstrated the ways democratic political culture can be created around powerful personalities. He termed it leader democracy drawing on the Weberian problem of *Führer-Demokratie* (leader democracy) (Weber 1978). Leader democracy is a representative political system in which charismatic leaders rule, but citizens participate in their selection. The support that such leaders obtain insulates them from public pressures once in office, and this frees them to act responsibly in the public interest. Established democracies, like Australia, often revert to "leader-democracy" behaviors in its political participation. Leader democracy raises a real concern about the blunting of participation in established democracies and in this case the preschool.

For analysts of democracies as well as critical childhood studies and related disciplines, this remains a contemporary problem with no immediate resolution. Exactly how these dynamisms took place requires a more detailed reconstruction of events and some further analysis. What is clear is that the political culture of the preschool contributed to the bathroom becoming the "leader's space." The same political culture that produced this effect also socializes children into how to be, become, and act in the political culture of the preschool and the democratic society of Australia. Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, "Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship"](#) in this volume argue that broader uniformities of political habits are more difficult to change, but change is possible. Political culture is dynamic, is changing with larger socioeconomic and cultural changes, and hopefully with the changes that local actors might institute will have the potential to reshape forms of participation, political or otherwise, in the

preschool and society. Further, as we indicated above, political learning is continuous in a person's life and continues on as people gain a variety of experiences and encounter different practices to learn from.

9 Conclusion

Spaces for children and children's spaces are "particular sites for processes of cultural production and reproduction" (Kjørholt 2007, p. 33). Therefore, the focus in this chapter was on the discursive, social, cultural, and physical construction of spaces in a preschool that directly shape the opportunities for and the nature of children's participation (Percy-Smiths 2010) (see also Gallagher 2006; Mannion 2007). Constructions of childhood and other societal and expert knowledges about children entail spatial practices. They constitute spaces that produce power relations (Massey 1999) and the potential for "minor politics" manifesting in "small concerns, petty details, the everyday" that aim to rework their own spaces of action (Rose 1999). As discussed spatial configurations carried explicit messages about authority and closure but also opened some possibilities for tactics to challenge and transform dominant cultural discourses of childhood and participation. The examination of political culture in this study marked out important aspects to consider, such as authority, the hierarchy of agendas, and power relations, in regard to the possibility of children's democratic participation and political learning.

In this chapter, political learning was not considered as part of civic education that teaches about political systems, party politics, or voting. Rather it addressed learning about the spaces of action, authority, the hierarchy of agendas, and types of actors and actions in the everyday. The preschool understood as a space of politics raises a number of related issues in regard to the political learning of children. The most powerful issue is the problem that regardless of how well the universal values of "participation" in "space-creation" occurs, power relations, authority, and the hierarchy of agendas within a political culture can transpose all of these processes into a problematic (e.g., problems of regulation, structural limitations, or simple pragmatic "facts") that is constituted to evade the self-identified views and needs of the children and close down possibilities for their actions. Thus, spatial politics and political culture play an important role in children's participation and learning as political actors, and this necessitates an agenda for further research.

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Abstract

This chapter aims to show how politics are part of children's everyday lifeworlds and their social spaces and everyday spatiality are interwoven by what is recognized as political discourses and behaviors. Based on a synthesis of research, this chapter illustrates three different examples of children's politics in public space in which the material and discursive body plays a central role. In the first section, it is shown how children interpret and express feelings of exclusion and learn that there is a politics of injustice in public space and different bodies are treated and perceived differently, to which they also act upon. Children's own experiences of exclusion shape their political

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subjectivities. The second section focuses on spatial identity, how children understand and act on identities and discourses attached to different places, and how the children themselves ascribe narratives and identities to people living in specific places. The third section concentrates on how the body is central to the ways in which children negotiate and express their identity formation. It discusses how the physical body is used by children as a means of communicating political belonging, identity, and spatial belonging. These examples show how politics are entangled in how children use and perceive public spaces and that the practice of everyday life is important for how children form political subjectivities.

Keywords

Children • Young people • Everyday politics • Body • Identity • Spatiality • Public spaces

1 Introduction

In reflecting on a decade of increased cross-fertilization between political geography and children's geographies, Chris Philo and Fiona Smith (2013, p. 138) conclude that there is still work to be done in exposing the adultism of political theory, science, and geography. Also, after feminist, queer, antiracist, and postcolonial critiques, the human subject is often naturally thought of as an adult, although children's everyday lives are just as embedded by complex power relations as adults'.

This chapter aims to show how politics are part of children's everyday lifeworlds and their social spaces and everyday spatiality are interwoven by what is recognized as political discourses and behaviors. Children's social worlds are shaped by adult structures and regulations as well as their own interpretations and negotiation of these. A focus on politics as performed by children rather than affecting or controlling them has led to studies showing that children actively perform and relate to politics in their everyday lives (Wood 2012; Kallio and Häkli 2011a, b; Skelton 2010). Children are not political in the same way as adults are, and their means of expression and communication also differ from adults', as do their access to varying arenas and technologies that would help them access and express their standpoints (Skelton 2010; Cele 2013; Cele and van der Burgt 2013). However, children's everyday interactions contain many actions and reflections with political connotations.

The research in this chapter shows how the political is also part of children's lives and that children, like adults, construct their everyday lives within the structures and discourses of their particular societal context. This does not imply that children themselves always recognize their behavior as political (Philo and Smith 2013). Adults ascribe children's behaviors and narratives a political meaning they sometimes may, and sometimes may not, acknowledge themselves (Philo and Smith 2013, p. 143). But in many cases children act on political issues in their

everyday lives to influence people, discourses, or events they perceive as wrong or unjust, thereby positioning themselves as political subjects without defining themselves as political. Hence, children live their politics, and they “do” change rather than voting for it (Farthing 2010, p. 189; Bartos 2012, p. 159; McIntosh, ► [Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children’s Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care,”](#) this volume). Thus, the research published here acknowledges Hörschelmann’s (2008) highlighting of the subject’s position and understanding as political discourse (see also Skelton 2013; Kallio and Häkli 2011a, 2013) and underlines how children’s and young people’s politics takes its starting point in and through the concrete and lived body. The size and look of the childish body, as well as how certain behaviors and values are connected to this body, is at the core of how children are politicized. Also, it is at the core for how children themselves practice politics. Prout (2000, p. 17) argues that in order to be able to understand children as social actors, attention to the childhood body is crucial. James (2000, p. 28) shows that height is an important marker of social status between children, and children strive to become tall and to literally “grow up.” As they have little control over their actual sizes, children use bodily strategies to increase their social status. This chapter discusses the bodily strategies of children in public space, experiencing themselves as “invisible” due to their smaller size in this adult-dominated domain, and focus is on different ways that children’s bodies play a role in exclusion and belonging in public space.

The chapter draws on a synthesis of research based on fieldwork focusing on children’s everyday spaces (Cele 2006, 2013; van der Burgt 2006, 2008, 2013; Cele and van der Burgt 2013; van der Burgt and Cele 2014), but while doing so, the chapter recognizes Ansell’s critique (2009) of children’s geographies as being too “local,” thereby failing to connect to the larger societal structures affecting children’s lives. However, also in the “local,” children experience and negotiate issues connected to politics, such as socioeconomic processes as well as ethnic and gendered identities. The local is interconnected with other geographical scales (Massey 2005), and the processes local actors are involved in affect not only local but also other geographical and societal scales (Freeman 2001); therefore there is no contradiction in focusing on the local or microgeographies of children while including the “abstract” processes of the social world. As Ansell (2009) points out, the processes that shape the world children experience are no more local than those of adults, and as will be shown here, societal discourses shape, and are shaped by, how children negotiate place identities and stigmatized areas and how their behavior in public spaces is both classed and gendered.

2 Researching Children

How children understand and perform politics is dependent on their contextual setting (Biesta et al. 2009) as well as their age (Hörschelmann 2008). “Children” and “young people” are however contested and problematic terms in many ways, representing the adult-centered understanding of the world. As Philo and Smith

(2013, p. 140) note, these terms include such an array of difference, as age influences the human understanding and interpretation of social life, that it must be taken into consideration. This chapter draws on research involving “children and young people” aged between 8 and 17. In analyzing how children’s lives are political and in trying to understand children’s politics, age is important as it is one category through which children are socially positioned (Kallio and Häkli 2013, p. 6). The research presented here underlines that not only the child’s analytical understanding and “maturity” change with increased chronological age, thereby making the child more “adultlike,” but also age affects how a person is perceived and treated in various social contexts. In terms of access to urban spaces, age is the organizing norm for whether children are viewed as competent in the public domain or not in two different ways. First, age-based categories such as “children” and “adults” are regarded as homogeneous in terms of competence, where children are seen as incompetent and adults as competent. Second, with respect to children’s competence, increased chronological age is considered the same as increased competence. The younger the children, the less competent they are viewed by adults as well as by children themselves (van der Burgt and Cele 2014). This connection between age and (perceived) competence also affects how children relate to their contextual setting, and it thereby forms their political subjectivities.

3 Politics and Public Space

Children are social actors, embedded in power relations at various levels in their lives; they are engaged in their communities, making decisions and participating in society in ways that have political connotations and definitely affect their political subjectivities (Skelton and Valentine 2003; O’Toole 2003; Farthing 2010; Wood 2012; Bartos 2012). This also means that children are political actors in their daily lives, and the varying scales, actors, and institutions which construct their everyday lives mean that children are exposed to, and actively negotiate, politics as part of their everyday practices (see Kearns and Collins 2003; van der Burgt 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2011a; Skelton 2013, p. 125; Cele 2013).

Thus, it is through everyday life that children practice and negotiate politics (Cele 2006, 2013; van der Burgt 2006, 2008, 2013; Trelle and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume), and as Kallio and Häkli (2013) draw attention to, this can be related to identity construction and subjectivity development in relation to the family, peers, local community, or the sociocultural conditions influencing the communities in which the children live. Urban spaces are key sites in which children perform and are exposed to politics (Bosco 2010; Kallio and Häkli 2011a), and public space is an important domain for children to practice their everyday life and their own cultures.

However, research on children and public space shows how children are seen as “out of place” and have limited access to public space. A central theme in research on children and cities is children’s limited access to public spaces, and there is a

large body of research tracing the underlying reasons for and consequences of children's lack of independent access to cities (Christensen and O'Brien 2003; Childress 2004; Cele 2006). One underlying reason is the perceived inability of children to manage public space safely. There are strong discourses of children as innocent, vulnerable, and incompetent in public space, and studies have focused on how parental perceptions delimitate children's action spaces and freedom to roam. Children are seen as out of place in public space due to a position of being vulnerable and not competent enough to handle risks in public space (Hart 1979; Valentine 1997). Researchers even point at increased parental anxiousness and stronger vulnerability discourses regarding risks for children in public space (such as traffic, (sexual) violence, stranger danger) compared to some decades ago, resulting in further restrictions of children's access to public space (Karsten 2005). Another central theme in research on children's access to public space is the view of older children and young people as disturbances in public space. Children and young people hanging around in public space "doing nothing" are viewed as problems and set off moral panics (Cohen 2002) concerning the need of young people engaging in "proper" activities as well as concerns for criminal behavior.

The consequences of the exclusion of children are often discussed in terms of the negative impact it will have on spatial competence, health, and play behavior. Although these are crucial aspects of children's well-being, this paper also highlights children's own experiences of exclusion and how this shapes their political subjectivities. Research focusing on children's and young people's physical or social access to public spaces has pointed at children's right to use and interpret public spaces in ways that suit them and thereby to "redefine," "challenge," or "claim" spaces (Childress 2004; Valentine 2004; Cele 2013). The discussion frequently revolves around children's social and spatial practices in public space, where children go, what they do, how they do it, in what ways they socialize, as well as what this means for their positioning of an identity. Thus, it is concerned with children's social and physical position in urban spaces. However, although this is per definition a question of inclusion, exclusion, and adults' right to define "children" as a homogenous group with specific needs and requirements, there is still a lingering romantic view in society of childhood as a depoliticized and innocent stage of life and that children should be sheltered from the politics of urban life (Arendt 1958; Nakata 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2013). This way of thinking hinders the sociopolitical analysis of children's experiences and ways of living (Ansell 2009) as well as fails to recognize children as citizens with rights in the public sphere (Skelton 2010).

As Ansell (2009) points out, even in cases where children's activism or opinions are included in formal settings, these are often controlled and limited by adults to places to which children are confined in the urban environment, such as parks and playgrounds, and other signs of children's political engagement are frequently viewed as naïve (see Ruddick 2007). Ansell (2009, p. 205) argues that change is needed for children, and it is necessary to recognize that their lives are produced in interaction with others and their voices have to be heard also in spaces and policy areas not automatically associated with children's worlds.

4 Politics and the Body

While discourse is important for how the childhood body is represented, children's bodies are not only representational but also material entities (Prout 2000, p. 2), and a focus only on how discourse shapes the childhood body means a neglecting of many other aspects of children's lives (Prout 2000, p. 6). This includes shifting in analytical focus from discourse to practice (Whatmore 2006, p. 603). Discursive and material practices interplay in how the childhood body is categorized or represented, sometimes discursive practices play a more prominent role in this, and in other occasions, material practices do (Prout 2000, p. 12). In public space, the meeting between people and the material and social dimension of places occurs at the scale of the body. Houses are considered high or low, streets narrow or wide, and spaces feel empty or busy in relation to how they feel in the body. Likewise, people are put into social categories after being categorized by the look of their bodies. It is also through the body – as material and representational entities – that children are recognized as children, and it is through the autonomy children have over their bodies that their politics are formed. Thus, as Longhurst and Johnston (2005, p. 94) has pointed out, the body – its materiality, discourse, regulation, construction, and representation – is also crucial for understanding spatial relations. Kallio (2007, 2008) has explored the ways in which children's bodies are focal sites of social meaning making in various ways. Drawing on Bourdieu, she points out that the body is the scale of which political struggle is realized (2008, p. 285). Commonly, the childish body is perceived as “unruly” and in need of control in public spaces (Colls and Hörschelmann 2009, p. 1) as public spaces are constructed by, and for, the adult body. A focus on the body in public spaces includes a wide range of issues such as the body characteristics, its size, color, gender, clothing, as well as the social categorization of bodies and the movement of bodies in and through spaces. However, a body is not a fixed category as it is set in a continuous state of change due to biological processes, experiences, social empowerment, or exclusion, and this also makes strict distinctions between the categorization of specific bodies, such as “the adult body” and “the childish body” problematic (Horton and Kraftl 2006; Colls and Hörschelmann 2009).

Children's restricted access to public space is based on the belief that their unruly bodies are not suitable for the dense and hectic urban environment. However, participatory research with urban children shows how they more directly than adults use their bodies to explore and experience the urban landscape. When parents and children were asked to describe a route between home and school, the children's narratives included an urban landscape based on more diverse experiences than those of the adults'. By feeling, touching, listening, and smelling, the children experience their places more intensely with the use of their bodies and also refer to more multisensuous experiences than adults do. They also recognize that their smaller body size both hinders them from experiencing the city as adults are able to as the childish body is easily identified and hindered them from entering certain places or by being treated in other ways than adults are due to its childishness, but also that the childish body enables them to explore dimensions of the city that adults

are not able to such as to view a street from the top of a statue or by squeezing into restricted areas through narrow gates (Cele 2006).

Thus, a focus on the child's body and how the body matters for children's experience and access to public spaces may include a wide range of aspects on bodily practices, processes, and discourses (see also Bartos ► Chap. 7, "Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis," this volume). As will be shown, children actively reflect on and have to deal with political issues by positioning themselves in relation to them in order to handle upcoming situations in their everyday lives as a number of political issues are embodied in front of them, and the body is also at the core of how the children respond to these issues. But as will be shown, the body is also central to the ways in which children are perceived as "the other" in public space and how children use their bodies to negotiate and communicate their sociopolitical belonging.

4.1 Case 1: (In)Visible in Public Space

The following sections outline some empirical cases to show how the kind of struggles children are involved in through their day-to-day lives are political in many ways and also that many children are aware of the complex power relations they are embedded in and actively relate to these relations and structures. In these cases, the body and how the body matters to how children are perceived and how they themselves negotiate and understand their bodies are central to children's politics.

In a study based on ethnographic fieldwork in Stockholm, Sweden, and Bournemouth, England (Cele 2006), children, aged 8–11, expressed awareness of their marginalized position in public spaces and reflected a lot over justice and social behavior in public spaces. Many of the children felt they were being treated unfairly because they were children. In both countries, the children said that the way adults treated them correlated with how visible they were to the adult community. It was common to be treated unfairly by adults, whose behavior and social life were a source of much thought for the children, who seem to continuously redefine themselves in relation to how adults treat them (Cele 2006, p. 100). Many of the children said they felt invisible, and some were also of the opinion that they were of less worth just because they were children.

Thus, the narratives of public space are very much also narratives of exclusion and difference based on an embodied politics of difference, but the children's narratives also include various creative strategies to overcome this exclusion. In particular, friendship and family or other points of belonging helped them to feel more, or be more, included in their particular setting.

There was a difference in how their feelings of exclusion referred to feeling visible/invisible in public space. The Swedish children talked about feeling invisible on public transport and that adults pushed them around, stepped on their feet, and generally should show more respect to children by helping those who travel alone. The children emphasized how their smaller body size made it difficult for them in

crowded spaces, and adults should be cognizant that “not everyone is as big as they are” and be more aware of others than themselves. That many adults are disrespectful to children and make them feel marginalized, unwanted, and mistreated reoccurs in most narratives on interactions in public spaces. The children often refer to how their bodies and their “childishness” put them in situations adults would never accept to be put in or treated in “unacceptable” ways. Mitchell and Elwood (2012, p. 801) also note how children are time and again ignored, punished, or expelled for embodied practices that do not signify the adult world. Many of the children described grown-ups as rude, selfish, and impolite, something that several of them reflect on actively and sometimes also act upon. One boy even told a story of how he and his friend conducted experiments to see whether adults would notice them in the subway. By holding the door to the subway entrance open, they counted the number of people who passed without thanking them. According to them, it was “about a hundred people” and this signaled that adults are rude and children have less worth in public space. It also shows that children respond to actions they view as impolite by using “acts of care” as political acts (Tronto 1993; Bartos 2012), but this was not noticed as such by adults. Drawing on Tronto’s conceptualization (1993) of care, Bartos discusses children’s political agency in a study of what they deemed special in their environments. Bartos shows that children’s acts of care – such as being attentive, responsible, competent, and responsive – in relation to their worlds are political acts.

Thus, feelings of exclusion in public space and of being treated unfairly and as invisible are something these children actively reflect on and also experiment with; it was obvious to them that there is a politics of difference and that different bodies will be treated differently in public space. Public spaces are obviously intended for specific practices, and since children’s ways of being transgress these practices, adults confine them to designated areas where such behaviors are tolerable. But as these children experience, and experiment with, it is not only their actual behavior that affects how they are perceived but also how adults conceive of them in their everyday lives. Therefore, presenting the childish body as nice and helpful may still result in exclusion and being unwanted or not seen in public space.

The English children recounted similar stories, but they referred more to being visible in a negative way rather than feeling invisible as their Swedish peers did. The English children described how adults assumed they would behave badly and that children were not welcome in certain establishments. The children revealed how they often received negative comments from adults or felt they were being supervised very closely even if they were not behaving in a way that attracted attention. According to their description, “it is the fact that we are children” that makes adults behave badly, and this is hurtful and affects how the children use the public spaces they have access to. One boy described how he avoided walking along one of the streets close to his home as “there is a lady there who shouts” at him, telling him not to be there. Most of the English children recounted similar stories of how adults told them that they were not allowed to be in different spaces, and being told off in public simply because they are children made the children experience a politics of difference and exclusion which affects subject formation and their perception of exclusion, social position, and justice in society.

This exclusion was based on their lived experience of particular places as well as on shared experiences of being a child in a social context. Seemingly “banal” everyday experiences become representations of larger structures of power the children pick up on and are affected by. These experiences show the importance of thinking about such experiences as not only individual but also in relational terms (Hopkins and Pain 2007; Ansell 2009, p. 205;) since children’s lives take shape in social interaction with individuals and structures. Some children also described how certain places and people helped them to overcome the difficulties of being unwanted in public spaces, and this included various alliances (Mitchell and Elwood 2012) with individuals, such as friendly shopkeepers, or a group of children working together to assist each other to interpret and cope with upcoming situations.

Thus, the fact that children’s bodies are small in size and how this materiality affects their social position in public space is a central factor for how the children’s experience the urban environment. Children are identified as children through their bodily features, and adults do not expect the childish body to behave in accordance with the physical and social structures of the city. The child’s body is either made invisible, pushed around, and not shown sufficient respect to as in the Swedish case or, as in the English case, made visible through acts of verbal abuse and exclusion from public spaces. In both cases the child’s body is identified as “something else” than the adult body, and there is a politics of exclusion from public spaces based on this belief that the children are aware of and respond to.

4.2 Case 2: Spatial Identity Work

The above example focused on how the physical body in itself is recognized as a political body and that this forms the basis of exclusion from many aspects of public spaces. But there are also differences between bodies as discourses connect physical bodies with socio-spatial narratives. That children are active participants in their social contexts and negotiate the political discourses shaping their contexts (Cele 2013) was clearly demonstrated in a study of how 11–15-year-olds in a mid-sized Swedish town discussed and related to their neighborhoods. It was found that the way the children identified with their neighborhood was dependent not only on their experiences of it but also on local and/or media representations of this and other neighborhoods (van der Burgt 2008, p. 267). The children’s descriptions of what they liked and disliked about their own and other neighborhoods were not merely their experiences but rather ways of identifying with and against places and the local and medial discourses connected to them. This was done by the drawing of symbolic boundaries between quiet and non-quiet places, identifying with the former and against the latter. When talking about their neighborhoods, the children identified their own places as “quiet,” and nearby neighborhoods were referred to as “trouble” (pp. 258–261). Dealing with the image of the neighborhoods they lived in and defending them as “good” were part of their everyday identity work (Gustafson 2009). As also Wridt (2004) shows, defined territories and

boundaries are important for the construction of social identities. Bartos views children's response to discourses as a way of maintaining their worlds, of protecting and valuing "what they have, what they know, or what they believe to be true" (Bartos 2012, p. 160), meaning that the children in Bartos' study acted as protectors of their families and of other relationships with people they valued. In the research presented here, children acted as protectors of their neighborhoods, responding to negative discourses and taking part in the construction of their own neighborhoods as "good" and "quiet."

In the process, children actively engaged in the reproduction and production of and the resistance to stigmatizing discourses of places. Some children identified the "quietness" of their neighborhoods with a lack of immigrants, thereby reproducing stigmatizing discourses of skin color as the source of social behavior and connecting them to other places. Other children reacted when immigrants were mentioned as a reason for calling an area rough and insecure and a place with unpleasant people, arguing that it was prejudiced to talk like that. It is important to note that however the children reacted to stigmatizing discourses, most related to these discourses in everyday life not only in conversations but also in their daily mobility through avoiding these places (van der Burgt 2008, p. 265). Discourses of stigmatized places obviously play a crucial role in Swedish children's everyday lives. This is also apparent in a study of older teenagers that shows how these discourses are part of how they are socialized into using urban space as well as thinking about future neighborhoods to live in. These are places that have to be avoided both in daily mobility and as future living places (van der Burgt 2013, pp. 7, 13). Hence, children are not only involved in everyday politics through acts of care (Bartos 2012), they also very much engage in *acts of segregation*, through processes of categorization and distancing in relation to both places and bodies.

For the children living in stigmatized areas, the "rumors" and media image of their places were out of proportion to the reality of their neighborhoods. These children also felt good about their neighborhoods, but they had a hard time convincing others. Although the children oppose the negative discourses surrounding their own neighborhoods, they also take responsibility for them, behaving nicely and correctly on the bus or by dressing properly to show people that not everyone from this neighborhood is a bad person (van der Burgt 2008, pp. 264–266; see also Tronto 1993; Andersson 2003; Bartos 2012). This means the children are very aware that "outsiders'" knowledge of their places is based mainly on media discourses rather than personal experience (van der Burgt 2008, p. 267), and these socio-spatial discourses place them in a situation where they have to prove that they are "nice people" when meeting others in public spaces. Living in a stigmatized area means that the children's bodies are also stigmatized. To try and affect this identity, the children behaved in ways that would transcend this stigmatized discourse – thereby negotiating an identity projected onto their bodies as well as produced by themselves, by performing the body in ways which do not correspond with how they believe others understand their bodies. This extends Kato's argument (2009) about how teenagers are sensitive to the social interplay in public space to also include younger children as the children try to remedy a complex social

situation by being “nice.” These children’s bodies become “battlefields” (Kallio 2008) since both their “childishness” and social identities put them in a difficult situation in public space. To compensate for these negative discourses, children present their bodies as “nicely dressed” and “responsible” to show outsiders what they and their areas are “really like.” The children adopt socio-spatial strategies to negotiate the identity placed upon them by highly politicized adult agendas. As Simonsen points out (2003), a subject’s understanding of the world is based on her everyday practice, and children living in stigmatized neighborhoods become aware that their place in the world is a contested one, and so are they themselves. Identity processes are dependent on particular places, but neither places nor processes are static or objective (Casey 1993). However, stigmatizing discourses are pervasive and used as powerful political tools by children, who are constantly working to identify with and against places and their assumed characteristics (van der Burgt 2008, p. 267).

4.3 Case 3: Performing the Political Body

The above example shows how children use societal discourses in their identity work, negotiate the identities societal discourses place upon them, and try to affect these discourses through their everyday lives. This illustrates how politics are performed through social and cultural relations and the ways in which these are in turn continuous negotiations and interactions between the individual (body) and her surroundings. Another study (Cele 2013) has shown how teenage girls perform, negotiate, and resist politics through their everyday spatiality as part of their identity processes. By focusing on how teenage girls, aged between 15 and 17, use and relate to an urban park in Stockholm, Sweden, it was demonstrated how politics were embodied in front of these girls in ways they needed to respond to. Through the intense social interplay of the park, it became obvious how the act of positioning oneself and others is a process involving a number of macropolitical issues, such as discourses on gender, class, and ethnicity, but also conceptions of foreign policy, migration patterns, language, social events, and sexuality.

Moreover, in this study, the body was at the core of how the girls performed and interpreted politics, as it is through the body they express their identities, and it is also by interpreting other people’s bodily expressions that “the others” become politicized. Thus, the body is a gendered social phenomenon that is understood through embodied social interaction, and it becomes the site for sociopolitical experiences (Williams and Bendelow 1998; Fingersson 2005, p. 131). Just as in the earlier examples, the body becomes the basis for prejudice, but it is also through the body, its appearance, and behavior that prejudice can be challenged (Thomas 2009, p. 117; Cele 2013, p. 81).

The girls clearly displayed that the ways they presented, understood, and performed their bodies were political, and, to some extent, they also recognized this behavior as being political. By observing each other, they could understand cultural and political codes through which jackets, shoes, and jeans other young

people wore. Some of these codes are broad in that specific “looks” are connected to issues such as nationalism, racism, feminism, and gay movements, while others are subtle, such as different shoelace colors displaying a political identity. These symbols are filled with meaning and are interpreted continuously as part of subject formation and social interplay, but the meaning of these symbols can only partly be understood outside the initiated youth sphere. It is a creative symbolic work that involves sending a message about sociopolitical belonging with personal aesthetics, and this also sets the framework for who can socialize with whom.

Thus, social interplay in the park was formed in accordance with clear and unspoken rules based on the interpretation of each other’s sociocultural expressions. By observing unfamiliar groups of other young people, the girls interpreted their socioeconomic and political affiliation through identity markers, such as clothes, hairstyles, language, and behavior, and it is through these interpretations that the private and the public spheres meet and intermingle (Cele 2013, p. 80). Particular “styles” and brands of clothes but also social behavior were associated too with specific spatial belonging, such as certain neighborhoods and parts of the city. With only a few glances, the girls in the study decided whether a person was “one of them” or from another part of town they associated with a different political as well as socioeconomic belonging and thereby falling into the category of “someone you don’t hang out with.” Their discussions also showed how gender and sexuality are closely connected to how different styles are “valued” and following this how individuals are interpreted and treated. As the girls observe and remark to each other, many of their comments are connected to gendered expectations, expressions, and sexuality, but are often hidden in other subjects. Although they clearly played with their sexual identities, they were very aware of how this was done and the reproduction of “acceptable” behaviors was crucial. Many of the “acceptable” behaviors and identities the girls reproduced in this intense social interplay fall into established sociopolitical categories. However, when reflecting individually on these categories, most of the girls said this was a “game” and they played “roles,” which signified that they took for granted that their “genuine” identity should be hidden, and their interplay in the park was mainly a consciously constructed framework for social play and their “real” identities exceeded the narrow sociopolitical categories they said they belonged to through the political symbolism of their clothes and accessories. This means they needed to negotiate and resist these normative sociopolitical categories, and they underlined the importance of solitude and contemplation in order to find ways of allowing their subjectivities to exceed the social categories of their bodies (Thomas 2009; Cele 2013, p. 82).

5 Discussion

Children’s narratives of their experiences of public space are simultaneously also narratives of exclusion based on an embodied politics of difference. The body is at the core of how children interact with environments, but it is also central for how

adults attach (in)competence to children and exclude them from public spaces as they are believed to be “unruly” or not being able to cope with the urban environment.

Children handle politics in their everyday lives, even if this is not always recognized by themselves or, indeed, by adults. But if politics are understood as an important part of social interaction in everyday life, it turns out that many children are engaged in political issues, such as justice, identities, caring, welfare, and access to public spaces (O’Toole 2003; Bosco 2010; Farthing 2010; Bartos 2012). These political issues are performed and negotiated with and through the body, as children’s politics are performed and communicated differently from adults’ (Cele 2013). Children are political in a diversity of ways, they have strategies and tactics, and unless we recognize this, we might fail to understand both their everyday lives and important political processes (Isin 2002; Skelton 2013, p. 126).

In this chapter three main perspectives on children’s politics in public space have been illustrated and the discursive and the material body play an important part in the politics children are exposed to as well as the politics they produce.

First, the banal fact that a child’s body is small plays a crucial role in how children can use public space. Adults identify children by the look of their bodies, and as “children” they are believed to be incompetent in public space only due to their age rather than whether or not they have experience of these environments (van der Burgt and Cele 2014), and this forms the basis of children’s exclusion from public spaces. In describing their access to public spaces, the children reveal how they perceive and negotiate feelings of exclusion from urban spaces based on what the children interpret as adults’ normative and prejudiced views about “childishness.” Here the children express feelings of injustice and exclusion and learn that there is a politics of injustice in public space and different bodies are treated and perceived differently. Individual children are connected to a wide social body of “children” (James 2000) and this hinders them from using the city. This body may be interpreted as both discursive and material. It is discursive as it is a body connected with incompetence and exclusion. Individuals are believed incompetent as their bodies are connected to wider societal beliefs about the incompetent child. However, it is also very much a physical body as the child’s body does not fit the physical structure of the city. Urban spaces are constructed by and for adult bodies, and children have difficulties to see, hear, and be respected as they interact with adult bodies in public spaces. The children are aware of this and describe how they are pushed around, stepped on, and generally have difficulties reaching up and getting around in the city and in public transport due to their smaller body size.

Thus, children’s narratives of public spaces are based in the body and how this body often is the cause of exclusion from city, either by being connected to discourses of the incompetent child or by not fitting the physical structure of houses, streets, stairs, and public transport. The children also describe themselves as standing outside of the social interaction in public spaces as they express that they are not respected as citizens by the adult community.

Normative assumptions about a specific group in society are always political (Kallio and Häkli 2013, p. 5), and the negotiation and interpretation of such normative assumptions are central to how and whether the children have access

to public space. What may be perceived as “banal events” in public life was interpreted by the children as representations of larger structures of power that made them into subordinate citizens.

Second, there is also an embodied politics connected to spatial identity and how children reproduce and negotiate discursive bodies by means of the physical body. In focusing on spatial identity, how children understand and act on identities and discourses attached to different places, and how the children themselves ascribe narratives and identities to people living in specific places, it is obvious that as protectors of their own neighborhoods, children do not only engage in acts of care, they also engage in acts of segregation on a daily basis, distancing themselves from certain people and places. As the examples in this chapter show, this is something closely related to the children’s subject formation and it affects their spatial patterns and behavior. The children reproduced and negotiated discourses of stigmatized areas in multiple ways. For those living outside these areas, they reproduced these negative narratives and also connected them to racist discourses, whereas the children living in the areas used acts of care and responsibility, such as behaving “nicely” and being properly dressed in public space, to change people’s perceptions of their neighborhoods.

This means that the physical body is attached to a discursive body which relates to the neighborhood in which the child lives. Children are aware of these discourses and try to negotiate them by presenting their physical bodies in ways they believe will change how others view them. As children have no, or a very limited, voice in society, the main tool they have to meet and resist exclusion, segregation, and injustice is the way they perform and present their physical body when meeting others.

The final example is a more explicit focus on how the physical body is used by children as a means of communicating political belonging, identity, and spatial belonging. By focusing on teenage girls, it is shown how politics are performed, both directly and indirectly, through social and cultural relations, and how these in turn are continuous negotiations and interactions between the individual (body) and her surroundings. Through creative symbolic work displayed on and through their bodies, the girls position themselves socially, politically, and culturally. Their negotiation of different identities and representations shows how subject formation is never neutral and that it develops in relation to and against others (Kallio and Häkli 2013, p. 5). The body is used as a means of communication and expression but also a means of finding one’s space in urban environments. By using the body, either through its look or by physically taking up space, these teenagers also state their right to be individuals and to be allowed to use the city. Although they have more of voice in society than the younger children, they lack rights to vote or influence society through official methods. The body then becomes the means of communication available to them.

These examples have shown how politics are entangled in how children use and perceive public spaces and that the practice of everyday life is important for how children form political subjectivities. For many children, the political is a “natural” part of how social life is understood and performed (Cele 2013), and they may also react to sociopolitical discourses in society through their everyday actions designed to influence or change aspects they believe are wrong.

As children lack voices in public politics, the body is at the core for how children experience, negotiate, and communicate politics in their lives. Children live their lives dependent on the structures and power relations adults have defined for them; therefore, their politics are contingent on the mundane behaviors and interactions of everyday life as well as the negotiation and interpretation of adultism, power relations, and societal structures. As Wood (2012, p. 344) has pointed out, children's liminality and their navigation of liminal spaces enable them to gain perspectives that differ from those of adults, and in interpreting these perspectives, children develop and express their political, critical, and tactical selves.

6 Conclusion

Politics are present in many situations in children's everyday lives and children negotiate and interpret the structures that shape their lives. Children's ages form how they understand politics and communicate this as well as how adults perceive of them, which power structures they are dependent on, and how they understand and negotiate these. Nonetheless, children of all ages are political actors in their own lives, and an important part of understanding children and taking them seriously is to acknowledge the diversity of ways children are political.

In this chapter it has been shown how politics is a crucial part of children's use of urban environments. The body is at the core for how children are politicized as well as how they practice and negotiate politics of exclusion, identity, and belonging. As the examples have shown, children are aware that they have a marginalized position in society and their actions to meet this reveal that they have underlying intentions to negotiate and resist politics of injustice, and this labels their actions as political (Kallio and Häkli 2010, p. 358) as they intentionally relate to the subject positions offered to them by parental, peer, cultural, or institutional forces of socialization. Thus, children do actively negotiate both a physical body and a discursive body in their use of public spaces, and this affects both their spatial patterns, social interaction, and identity processes.

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Abstract

This study underscores the importance of place in the political formation of young people. In the research project, students from a middle school in Seattle were asked to map significant historical sites associated with women or an ethnic group in the city. The 29 seventh graders worked in teams and collaborated extensively on each of the mapping projects. The researchers used a participatory action research framework to study the varied ways in which the students began to comprehend how space is actively produced through human agency. Topics and themes that emerged as important included processes of spatial inclusion and exclusion for the historical groups that were studied, as well as

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the possibilities of challenge and contestation of those processes that were considered unjust. Some of these possibilities of challenge and political agency for the students were made evident through their own collaborative mapping projects.

Keywords

Mapping • Collaborative • Democracy • Citizenship • Urban • History

1 Introduction

This paper makes the claim that bringing geography to life by making it personal and relevant is critical to the political formation of young people. While social studies disciplines such as history and political science are understood to be core fields for the inculcation of informed and engaged young citizens, geography is generally perceived to be less important for this educational project. As Schmidt (2011, p. 107) points out, the problem with these kinds of disciplinary limitations is that teachers of geography can then feel “unburdened” by thoughts of how its “pedagogical and content learning contribute to the development of students’ citizen identities.”

In this chapter perceptions of geography’s irrelevance for civic education are countered with the argument that learning about place and space is integral to teaching for democracy. The approach here highlights the power of place and reconceptualizes geography and geography education as integral to the larger project of teaching for democratic citizenship (Gaudelli and Heilman 2009; Stoltman 1990; Mills and Duckett, ► Chap. 28, “Representing, Reproducing, and Reconfiguring the Nation: Geographies of Youth Citizenship and Devolution”, this volume). In particular, this project emphasizes the multiple ways in which a greater understanding of spatial production, such as processes of exclusion and inclusion or mapping and counter-mapping, can give students the knowledge, technical training, and will to challenge unjust but hegemonic notions about appropriate resource allocations and “normal” spatial patterns (see also Cele and van der Burgt, ► Chap. 11, “Children’s Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space”, this volume).

In this project the researchers underline the importance of collaboration and participation, beginning with the premise first introduced by the philosopher John Dewey and deftly highlighted by Walter Parker (2008, p. 65) that “democratic citizens need both to *know* democratic things and to *do* democratic things.” Geographic skills in the realm of geovisualization technologies are usually conceptualized as primarily based on memorization and computer manipulation. At the middle-school level, these might include simple skills such as finding locations or interpreting satellite imagery. But recent developments in geospatial technologies now allow educators to teach skills directly associated with democratic practice as well. These include the use of participatory GIS and other Web-based mapping tools; these tools can enable participants to interactively explore and discuss the

implications of specific decisions affecting their spatial surroundings (Bednarz et al. 2006). The section below indicates some of the broader effects of this type of collaborative mapping for political awareness and civic agency.

2 The Power of Counter-Mapping

The concept of counter-mapping begins with the premise that maps are never neutral but rather reflect power relations in society (Harley 1989; Wood 1993). The use of maps in the creation and management of empire has been well documented (Rabasa 1995; Edney 1997; Driver 2001), as has their ongoing importance in struggles over rights to land and resources between modern nations and indigenous groups (Sparke 1998; Chapin et al. 2005). Over two decades ago, the famous cartographer and map historian Brian Harley (1989, p. 429) noted that maps and mapmaking should always be viewed critically as tools that are generally at the disposal of dominant groups in society and whose fundamental purpose is to “codify, to legitimate, and to promote the world views which are prevalent in different periods and places.”

Although maps are often hegemonic in their orientation, they can nevertheless be produced in alternative ways for counter-hegemonic purposes as well. Harris and Hazen’s work (2006, p. 106), for example, indicates the possibilities inherent in increasingly democratized mapping, especially with respect to the “incorporation of alternative knowledges in GIS” (Geographic Information Systems). Research by Fiedler et al. (2006, p. 145) similarly demonstrates the usefulness of GIS when aimed toward mapping populations usually rendered invisible – such as recent immigrants and the homeless. Groups such as these can benefit from being *seen* and thus counted in assessments of vulnerability and/or the need for social services. These types of studies recognize the embeddedness of maps in histories and geographies of power and critique the notion of objectivity and neutrality in any mapping project. But, by the same token, they take into account the political possibilities inherent in modern geospatial technologies and actively and reflectively employ these tools in applied realms to further a critical politics of *counter-mapping*.

In a recent study of African American male attainment, Tate and Hoguebe (2011) offer a complex argument in support of the strategic uses of GIS tools. Tate and Hoguebe believe that geospatial distribution matters in multiple ways, including relationships to neighborhoods, schools, and jobs; actually seeing these relationships *visually* provides important new clues as to how and why. They are especially interested in the intersection of visual computation tools, growing political awareness, and increased civic engagement. The key concept that they develop in their work is the notion of “collective cognition,” which they claim is enhanced with visual political literacy. The argument proceeds that the more that relevant actors can see and manipulate visual data – such as layered digital maps showing inequitable spatial patterns – the greater likelihood those same actors will be able and willing to participate in an active and informed civic dialogue agitating for greater spatial equity.

Tate and Hogebe's other main observation that *out of school* factors (such as neighborhood effects on educational achievement) is important is also relevant to the study of middle-school students and mapping in Seattle. While normative foci in education tend to be on the individual, a wider scalar lens – such as is gained through an investigation of the spatial relationships between the individual and the resources and/or deficits of neighborhoods – can bring in critically relevant information (Elwood and Mitchell 2012). Seeing this information in a visually accessible form such as a map increases visual political literacy and can aid in increased civic engagement.

While Tate and Hogebe were primarily interested in “collective cognition,” there is also a large literature on the ways that the “subjects” of mapping – the people who are usually mapped – can also become agents of knowledge production through the acquisition of basic mapping skills. A significant amount of contemporary research in critical cartography focuses on the possibilities of an increasing democratization of knowledge and decision-making through the use of what has become known as participatory GIS. This body of work seeks to put the community at the center of community building through collaborative public participation and experiential computer mapping and analysis (Craig et al. 2002; Elwood 2008; Ramasubramanian 2008; Young and Gilmore 2013).

Early discussions concerning the social and political impacts of GIS often included critiques about the differential access and empowerment of these tools for different actors and communities. Participatory work in GIS in the United States sought to counter the exclusions and silences of previous eras through a more open, inclusive, and democratized style of mapping. These early projects often investigated and mapped the controversial locations of sites such as toxic hazards, community centers, and local parks (McMaster et al. 1997). This type of work emphasized bringing in a community-based perspective and facilitating access to publicly available information so that shared knowledge could “enable appropriate and ethical kinds of collaboration” (Aitken 2002, p. 358).

Community organizers worldwide have adopted participatory strategies such as these to further the voice and agenda of formerly marginalized actors. In Nepal, for example, participatory GIS was introduced into community forest management with the hope of collecting and analyzing useful data for local stakeholders while simultaneously increasing community participation. In the pilot project, this was particularly true for the interpretation of aerial photographs, which provided a kind of visual literacy and expertise to community members who might otherwise have been left out of the broader discussion (Jordan 2002; see also Kwaku Kyem 2002; Bugs et al. 2010).

In the urban United States, Elwood (2006) demonstrated how marginalized community groups were similarly able to use digital spatial technologies such as GIS to further their own political agendas. Being able to document neighborhood change and present visual evidence of ongoing transformations was an important strategy for West Humboldt Park residents in narrating the story of community needs to those in control of urban resources and planning. Elwood (2006, p. 338) argued that both “spatial politics” and “knowledge politics” matter in situations

where struggles arise over the appropriate distribution of urban resources; in situations such as these, GIS technologies often provide the trump card:

Digital technologies like GIS enable a user to try out different visualizations relatively easily and quickly, an invaluable capability for overtaxed community development institutions and staff members. Also important is the greater weight sometimes given to GIS-based representations of neighborhood or the greater expertise sometimes assumed of the individuals and organizations producing these representations.

3 Young People's Political Formation Through Collaborative Mapping

In the discussion above, it was shown how marginalized community groups can derive power and authority from participatory geovisualization technologies. The question then arises as to what kinds of benefits children and young people can derive from similar types of mapping projects. Three or four decades ago, the primary research on children's spatial awareness focused on the questions of whether children's mapping abilities are innate or learned and at what age they are able to comprehend spatial relationships and manifest them through various types of graphic representations. The geographer Jim Blaut argued strongly that mapping ability reflects an atavistic survival mechanism that is universal to all human beings, and that children have an innate and intrinsic ability to trace, navigate, and represent space, even at very young ages (Blaut et al. 1970; Blaut and Stea 1974; Blaut 1997; see also Landau 1986; Blades et al. 1998).

Piaget's influential theories contrasted with Blaut by foregrounding developmental stages in children's understandings of space and geometry (Piaget and Inhelder 1956; Piaget et al. 1960). Drawing on this body of work, other scholars in psychology and education emphasized a notion of learned, developmental levels of competence in mapping rather than basic innate knowledge. In contrast with the earlier work in geography by Blaut and his followers, these scholars argued for the importance of individual differences and concepts of graduated learning dependent on cognitive level (Liben and Downs 1997; Liben 2002). Although drawing on different literatures and emphasizing quite opposing viewpoints of learning and development, however, the two approaches shared a reliance on *the individual* as the key locus of mapping knowledge and ability; in other words, in both the nativist and the Piagetian traditions, children's spatial cognition was researched and understood on the basis of profoundly individual rather than social processes.

A third strand of research on children's spatial cognition focused on map learning and awareness as part of a broader contextual world of social relationships and cultural communication. This body of work drew from the legacy of Lev Vygotsky (1962), who promoted a view of schooling that foregrounded the social construction of knowledge and emphasized the context in which learning occurs. For the followers of Vygotsky, the collaborative and communicative *process* of mapping was of critical importance to understand, as it is through the sharing of knowledge between more and less skilled children (and adults) that spatial

relationships and cartographic concepts are best disseminated. Drawing on these insights, Wiegand (2006, p. 20) wrote:

Unlike some other domains, cartography does not consist of ‘natural’ or ‘given’ principles but of constructs and procedures which are shared by a cartographic community in order to make maps and advanced in order to promote the making of better ones. Thus cartographic knowledge is both symbolically and socially negotiated. Learning to make maps is not only a matter, therefore, of individual activity in an attempt to understand the appropriate concepts, but is also a socializing process by which individuals are introduced to a culture by its more skilled members.

In his research Wiegand (2002a, b) explored the relationship between collaborative learning – specifically the quality of student talk – and computerized map making (see also Leinhardt et al. 1998; Owen 2003). Using analytical linguistic tracking devices that code moves such as “Reason” moves (those that “provide explanations for mapping behavior”) and “Question” moves (those that “invite an explanatory response”), Wiegand (2006, p. 21) found that higher levels of student discourse were positively associated with map-based learning. As with others investigating similar processes (see, e.g., Tshibalo 2003; Leinhardt et al. 1998), Wiegand showed that collaborative learning can lead to improved spatial cognition involving tasks such as understanding scale and topology, calculating gradients and distances, and locating features on grids. Importantly, this research indicated a relationship between collaborative spatial learning and improved geographical knowledge; at the same time, other educational research has pointed toward a relationship between digital spatial learning and improved historical thinking (Lo et al. 2009). To date, however, there has been little investigation of the potential connections between collaborative learning, spatial cognition, and social justice.

4 Geography Teaching for Social Justice

In the participatory action research described in this study, the authors pursued this thread by introducing seventh-grade girls to ideas of counter-hegemonic thinking involving maps, visual literacy, and general spatial awareness. Research sessions were initiated with a discussion of the political importance of space, including teaching about how much of politics is often quite literally played out through the “taking” of space (cf. Millei and Imre ► [Chap. 10, “Down the Toilet’: Spatial Politics and Young Children’s Participation](#)”, this volume). For example, women and those categorized in various racial or ethnic groups often furthered their own political agendas through practices such as taking the streets, demanding the right to vote, or taking seats in buses, classrooms, and at lunch counters demanding the right to be served.

In these types of events, the narrow framing of the liberal public sphere as necessarily divided between normatively perceived issues that are “appropriate” for public discourse (issues purportedly related to the common good) versus those seen as “inappropriate” (supposedly private, individual) concerns is contested in

and through space. Over time, historical practices of hatred and exclusion that have been bracketed as individual or private have permitted a kind of silent violence to be perpetrated on many marginalized groups in society. In recent years, this type of violence has been successfully contested through bringing these issues quite literally into public space and thereby forcing them to become publicly recognized and debated. These moments of challenge in the United States have included bringing into public visibility issues such as domestic violence, homophobia, and racism (and their multiple material effects, such as disenfranchisement, segregation, and discrimination). The vaunted neutrality and inclusiveness of liberalism is thus put to the test when groups and individuals take public space to manifest the multiple and ongoing exclusions that the strict separation between public and private realms often produces and maintains (Fraser 1989, 1990; Eley 1992; Ryan 1992).

This level of abstract thinking may be beyond the capabilities of most middle-school students. However, their understanding of the *power* of space can be initiated through discussions and practices related to how communities have lost or won space through the course of political struggle. Additionally, students can be made more aware of how often marginalized communities have held space in a manner affirming group identity through time. This kind of approach to geography education advances a social justice or emancipatory agenda, but it does so through the relatively simple means of calling attention to certain kinds of spatial patterns, processes, and relationships through time.

Questions about the broader processes and patterns of spatial production and control and why particular events happened at particular locations elicit larger conceptual frameworks involving rights of association, property, habeas corpus, and other civic and legal rights integral to citizenship in the United States. When mapped and discussed within a historical framework, students are able to quite literally *see* the abrogation of key aspects of citizenship, through, for example, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II or spatial patterns of institutionalized racism such as redlining. At the same time, they can better visualize how subjugated communities might be enhanced or protected through spatial proximity or access to critical resources. Through discussion and further research, they can also become aware of changes through time: changes that were often the result of the activism of key figures, groups, or institutions asserting their rights to particular spaces and resources.

In the research project with middle-school students, the authors were interested in whether learning about these historical processes would seem more immediate and important to the students if they could visualize how and where these things occurred in the neighborhoods where they live. The students involved in the project were asked to investigate institutions such as immigrant enclaves, benevolent societies, multicultural centers, women's centers, and community headquarters as spaces of social, political, and economic safety for historically marginalized or terrorized groups. They also found evidence of exclusion and discrimination against these groups in processes such as redlining, steering, internment, quarantining, and incarceration.

5 Methods and Theoretical Framing

The term participatory action research defines and encompasses research in which participants are involved with researchers and all work together with a goal of social improvement (Kindon et al. 2008). The term incorporates a number of different approaches and provides for a more fluid and less hierarchical relationship between researchers and participants; it generally allows for more critical dialogues about the research process and findings. Action research typically involves linking research to action and theory to praxis, often through activities that are designed to both work toward a project's action goals *and* toward the goal of generating data and analysis (Wong, ► Chap. 24, "Theatre and Citizenship: Young People's Participatory Spaces", this volume). The research discussed here involved developing and implementing participatory technologies and learning activities while simultaneously using qualitative social science research methods to examine the forms of learning and civic engagement that emerged from them.

In education studies participatory action research blurs the boundaries between research, pedagogy, and politics and seeks to work "with" rather than "on" youth (Bartos ► Chap. 7, "Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis", this volume). The goal is to actively aid in producing socially transformative knowledge for everyone. Cammarota and Fine (2008, p. 2) emphasize, in particular, the ways in which youth participatory action research enables opportunities for young people to study social problems affecting their own lives (see also Cahill 2007; Cahill et al. 2008). It provides a place and set of relationships from which youth can challenge normative practices, expose oppression, and foster a radical collective imagination, in the process creating their own set of tools for current and future social justice work.

Participatory action research has shown particular promise in achieving two outcomes that are critical to the project discussed here. These are enhancing students' sense of their own knowledge and agency to impact their communities and developing research outputs that foster sustainable benefits (cf. Kindon et al. 2008). In this project a participatory framework was adopted because the researchers wanted to mentor students toward more active and engaged civic behavior in the greater Seattle region. At the same time, the researchers were interested in teaching and observing the students' reactions to the material that was being presented. The mapping project was rooted in the proposition that *place* – specifically a reflective knowledge about the places that are experienced in everyday life – can be a central catalyst in the development of civic agency and a commitment to civic engagement. The study thus explored the link between a critical awareness of shared concerns and the development of a collective social awareness that might enhance civic agency and commitment to social and political action.

The project involved 29 seventh-grade girls in a social studies class at an independent girls' school. The location of the school was in a relatively poor area of South Seattle. Of the children involved, 45 % were girls of color, and 30 % received some form of financial aid. The mapping component augmented

a teacher-directed project, where each girl worked in a team of four (or five in one case), conducting archival and interview research on the history of a specific group in Seattle. The five groups (out of several possibilities) that the girls chose to research included African Americans (researched by two teams), Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and women (researched by two teams). In the teacher-directed project, each of these four teams created a 7–10 min video documentary on these five groups, incorporating still images and interviews with local figures that had been prominent in the group's development or history in the city.

The research and video project was directed primarily by the class teacher and occurred over a 5-week period. The Web-based mapping component took place in six 1–2 h segments with the students during the second and third weeks of that 5-week period and was designed to augment the video documentary project through providing more spatial knowledge of these communities. This knowledge included where members of these communities were excluded or banished from space, where they formed community-building institutions and enclaves, who were the key players in these forms of spatial production, and how these patterns recurred and/or changed through time.

The research team consisted of two faculty and two graduate students. The first day involved introductions, a choice of pseudonyms for the students, and an exploration of the basic functions of an online mapping platform. The interactive Web-based platform designed by the researchers allowed the students to zoom in and out of different scales from street to globe, to use one of three symbols to locate things (point, line, or area), and to add additional media such as text, photos, and videos. Collaborative learning was facilitated through the comment function, which supported a running exchange of comments and responses associated with a map object.

The researchers were directly involved in introducing the Web platform to the class, helping students access relevant data and place it on the map, and in conceptualizing how social and spatial organization are interlinked. The researchers were also active participants in introducing ideas about democratic practice and civic engagement through the mapping project, deliberating together on what these things meant and how they were practiced, and working with the students and the teacher to create a social milieu that was open to considerations of social justice and political activism inside and outside the classroom.

6 Collaborative Practices and Spatial Thinking

In the first session with the students, each girl was asked to think of a place that was important to the history of the group they were studying and then to write down what that place was and where it was. Using a (paper) base map of Seattle, the students were then asked to locate it by drawing a point, line, or an area on the map. Most of the girls struggled with this part, saying, "I don't know where anything happened," or just circling "Seattle" as the location. Some of the girls needed hints before they were able to identify an important site. For example, they were asked

“did anything significant happen in a particular building or on a particular street?” After this prompt most of the girls were able to think of an important, geographically locatable site.

Once they had identified a historically important site, written about it, and added it to the base map, the students then put these places into the digital group map using the Web platform provided by the researchers. First, the students needed to bookmark the platform site and log in. From there, they each added their initial places and, without prompting, began to experiment with the commenting tools. They figured out new things on their own, like adding comments to points and then displaying the comment stream associated with a point. Their pleasure in doing this was expressed in positive, enthusiastic comments such as, “good it worked” and “you got it spongebob!!!” and “so cool!!!!”

The positive collaborative effects emerged almost immediately. In the African American team, one of the girls mentioned that she wanted to map Jackson Street, a street quite close to the girls’ school that was an important site in the development of West Coast jazz. As she pulled up the location on the computer, a girl from another team jumped in to ask, “what is it on Jackson Street that you want to map?” Their conversation with each other and with the researchers thus began to link the visual and the historical-political, beginning with a place, and using it as an entry point to a discussion of critical urban events. Significantly, the Seattle jazz scene is an important one in the history of music, yet it remains largely invisible in most histories and in virtually all of the tourist guidebooks of the city (see, e.g., de Barros 1993 for a discussion of this lacuna). It was brought to public view and interest for the students, however, through the team’s investigative research, followed by the mapping exercise and related comments.

In each digital map created by the different teams, the students placed pins on areas of historical significance to their group. One of the teams investigating the historical geography of African Americans in Seattle, for example, pinned the location of the “2nd Black Panther Headquarter” on one of their maps. When the mapping platform was active, a viewer could click on a pin or on an area, and a comment box would pop up to the right. Often the students would add some textual description of the place, a photograph, or another related site (and URL) for the viewer to visit. The conversations the students held about these pinned sites and corresponding text and photographs were mostly oral, but the researchers encouraged them to write some of their ideas into the comment box as well. The students used their pseudonyms and cleaned up their grammar and spelling when reviewing the sites the next day. One student responded to a verbal question as to why there was a “second” Black Panther headquarters by noting, “I think that the BPP got evicted from some of their buildings and that’s why they have multiple headquarters.” This spurred another “why” question, followed by a question from the teacher. In these types of exchanges, the written comments were used to stimulate more oral dialogue, but they also provided a record of ideas and exchanges that other students could see and react to at a later time or from a different place.

In another example from the Japanese team, a student mapped the Seattle Courthouse and explained why it was important to a university student named

Hirabayashi. She noted how Hirabayashi “refused the evacuation” and in his legal defense invoked the fifth Amendment in court. Students “Pengturt” and “Georgie” offered supportive comments after viewing the post. They also added additional information to the post, including a related website of interest. Significantly, one of the more advanced students in the class, Pengturt, answered a direct question posed by the teacher about the fifth Amendment’s relevance to the Japanese internment struggles. She showed her own understanding of the concept of due process and, at the same time, helped the other students to make further connections between the historical event of the internment and the idea of due process as a right guaranteed by the American constitution.

In a third example, a student located a general area of the map (the International District) by using the “line” tool. She uploaded a photo from a main street in that neighborhood as a vehicle for talking about the practice of redlining. In her text, she introduced redlining in a somewhat confusing way: “Many Filipino people lived in the international district because it was the only place that wasn’t red-lined. Red lining is when basically an invisible line is put dividing where Filipinos can buy land.” This prompted an oral question from a student outside the team, who had heard about it in relation to her own group’s spatial formation and identity.

The comments that appeared in the text box following this dialogue demonstrated the collaborative, spatially oriented learning process that occurred in the classroom as a result of this exchange. One student using the pseudonym Funnygummi indicated her initial confusion about redlining with the question, “How did redlining actually work if it was like an invisible?” This was answered by the teacher, who used the student’s question as a way of introducing the concept of restrictive covenants. Another student “Bee” then brought in her own understanding of the process, which she had learned from her research on the Chinese experience in Seattle. She noted authoritatively: “Filipinos were not the only people who got red-lined.”

7 Democratic Participation and Engagement

By the fourth mapping session, the research team observed that the students were thinking more critically and in more detail about the historical sites and social processes associated with their group than they had been earlier. In the first two sessions, most of the initial map objects were pitched at the neighborhood scale, with the historical cultural significance of the group articulated in very broad terms, sometimes even as simple as, “this is where Filipinos are.” By the fourth session, however, the map content was starting to be much more complex and detailed – with notations on things like the activism of individuals, forms of group resistance, spatial processes like internment, socioeconomic transformations such as women’s entry into the industrial work force during World War II, and gender stereotypes that led to women being tracked into particular sectors of the labor market.

Whether or not the students could articulate this as such, the maps also picked up on the role of civic institutions both as a locus for activism or resistance and as a site

for reinforcing cultural practices and community ties. Most of the teams included a cultural or community center such as the Japanese American Citizens' League, the NAACP, the Filipino Community Center, or a woman's association in the greater metro area. As well, several members of the teams were passionate about demonstrating their knowledge of public space and public events as critical sites of protest.

In the fifth session, a student volunteer chose a point from another group's map, which was then projected onto a screen so that the entire class could see it. She read the text associated with that point, and one of the researchers facilitated a discussion to draw out historical and geographical connections or to introduce critical concepts. In this session, both the spatial thinking and the collaborative element of the sessions were clearly having an impact on the students. This was evident when many students began to make connections between the various forms of segregation experienced by the different groups.

The researchers began by reviewing and commenting on the Filipino team's map pointed out at Port Townsend, indicating where 339 Filipinos were quarantined in the late 1920s because of the "threat" of spinal meningitis. When the research team asked whether other groups were also separated physically from the dominant society at some point in time, several hands went up, and many students talked about the experiences of their own groups. For example, the team working on the Chinese experience talked about the Chinese Exclusion Act, telling us quite a bit about the social implications of these types of exclusions. The African American team spoke passionately about the redlining of their neighborhoods.

The main geographical connection that was made in the sixth session was the relationship between social relations of power and the formation of ethnic enclaves – particularly how groups might end up in a spatial cluster for various reasons both positive and negative. In addition to the negative, external forces leading to enclaves such as restrictive covenants, some girls noted the importance of social groups advocating positively for their political rights as part of spatially concentrated organizations. Others, such as the Filipino team, spoke about the importance of sociocultural feelings of membership, which might be achieved through ethnic clustering. The research team also questioned them about the potential economic advantages of being in an ethnic enclave, and many girls responded with ideas about spatial networks and retailing and the importance of business nodes and links.

As is evident from these responses, many of the students used the mapping exercises as a way to inform themselves about both the geography and history of their own city and neighborhoods. Marking areas and sites of importance on their maps brought the cultural history of Seattle home to them and helped them to add to their existing knowledge of the city. They began to see the relationships between places, including where people live and where they work, and also on a broader regional scale, what it must have been like to have been quarantined or interned so far away from family and friends. This form of learning renders space and place "socially contextualized and *psychologized*" in ways that bring geography to life and makes it complementary to a broader democratic project of political activism and citizenship formation (Gaudelli and Heilman 2009: p. 2674; italics in original;

see also Cele and van der Burgt ► Chap. 11, “Children’s Embodied Politics of Exclusion and Belonging in Public Space”, this volume).

The students’ growing interest in their own neighborhoods was manifested in some of the civic engagement worksheets that the researchers had them fill in during the fifth session. Here the research team posed a number of questions related to social and spatial “problems” that each group had faced in Seattle. Three members of the African American team responded to these questions by noting, “redlining” and “discrimination” as well as the fact that “people couldn’t get jobs because they were black.” To the question of what members of the community did to solve these problems, the students responded by giving specific examples of individual and community actions and also noted that all of these actions or processes had been represented on their map. In response to a final question about how their class or they personally might get involved in solving any remaining problems their group encountered, many students wrote specific things that they felt they could accomplish. Bufanda, Bambi, and SS Edgar wrote, for example, “Stalk the police and keep a tally of what races are pulled over and for what; Join the non-profit organizations.”

Another group, which looked at the experience of Chinese Americans in Seattle, also described problems such as “laws that kept them from buying land (Alien Land Law), Exclusion Act, not allowed to be citizens until WWII.” This group also named a specific person (Wing Luke) and organizations (LELO, Chong Wa Benevolent Society, and the Chinese Information and Service Center) as people or institutions that had taken actions to confront some of these problems. The two student members of the Chinese team also noted their own possible role in responding to ongoing problems for the community by indicating that they felt capable of “Alerting people of these problems; Educating people; Video Documentary.” Of the 13 civic engagement worksheets that were received from the students, four pairs of students responded negatively to the question: “How might you or your class get involved in solving the(se problems)?” These negative reactions included responses such as “Nope” or “Our class can’t really get involved.” Eight pairs and one trio of students responded positively and with specific recommendations for activist engagement such as those quoted above.

8 Conclusion

In collaborative mapping with the middle-school students, the researchers found that a powerful alternative pedagogy was unleashed through spatial visualization. This geovisualization included seeing the multiple ways that cultural history becomes layered and sedimented in the urban landscape. Importantly, these visible patterns were not perceived as something fixed and unchanging but rather as features of a process in constant motion and contestation. Among the insights that the students derived, a key one was the understanding that both discriminatory actions such as redlining *and* the creation of affirmative locales such as benevolent societies are profoundly spatial processes critical in

both scope and impact to historically subordinated groups. Literally *placing* people, institutions, and events into the students' own neighborhoods through locating them on a map of the city and attaching historical and contemporary documents to each mapped space helped them to graphically and visually connect both geography and history to the present time and place and make it relevant to their own lives.

The researchers employed the students' neighborhood awareness and urban geographies to draw out their own "rich sense of place" (Cole 2009, p. 21; see also Gillespie 2010). In working with the classroom teacher, however, the research team also corrected many misconceptions of the city and augmented the students' understandings through archival research and primary sources such as interviews. The examples from participant observation, the students' maps, and the written and oral work presented here were selected to manifest some of the spatial cognition and shared concerns that developed over the course of the 2 weeks. On the whole, the researchers observed a growth in spatial awareness among the students as well as a strong new concern about "spatial politics" related to the positive and negative geographical processes affecting group identity. Bringing together history, geography, and emancipatory politics through a collaborative mapping project helped the students to understand how minority communities are formed in and through space and how important space is for maintaining solidarity and resisting oppression by dominant groups (cf. Grant 2011; Parker 2006).

Further, through the process of researching, mapping, and talking with each other about their own city and neighborhoods, the students showed a greater awareness that history is not necessarily a set of seemingly abstracted events that occurred sometime and somewhere else but rather can describe something that happened here, in "our" space. Mapping "our" culture and "our" history can render events and processes more immediate, visceral, personal, and potentially alterable in terms of their seeming trajectory. Collectively visualizing and discussing historical acts such as the quarantining of Filipinos (there were two girls of Filipino descent in the class) or redlining in the African American neighborhood where several of the girls lived, for example, seemed to galvanize a sense of collective responsibility for these spaces and the people who inhabit them.

In her work on New Orleans, Buras (2009, p. 428) wrote about the power of young people's counterstories in challenging normative ideas about market reform in the city. The students took on dominant white narratives through the use of "spoken, written, and digitally produced texts" to narrate struggles and expose silences in the urban history of African Americans and other minority communities. In a similar way, the middle-school students in this study used strategies of *counter-mapping* to resist hegemonic ways of representing space. They uncovered absences in the historical record and celebrated the multiple ways that women and minority groups had demanded and taken space in times past. Through this process, the students learned about and represented new spatial narratives of the city, and, as young "people's geographers," they became political actors in their own right.

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Beyond Crisis Narratives: Changing Modes and Repertoires of Political Participation Among Young People

13

Therese O'Toole

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Abstract

This chapter examines the crisis narratives on young people's political engagement. It evaluates the explanations offered for the decline in forms of electoral and party-political participation, paying particular attention to the question of why young people in particular seem less likely to engage in electoral or party politics. It then addresses the growing literature on shifting modes and repertoires of action among citizens in general to focus on forms of political participation among young people in particular. It critically engages with the emerging literature on new forms of political practice among young citizens, before addressing the question: if young people's modes and repertoires of political participation are changing, does it matter if they do not vote or join political parties? And what are the democratic implications of "new grammars of action"?

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1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, there has been gathering concern about the seeming withdrawal of citizens from democratic participation across established democracies (Norris 2011) – largely connected to falling voter turnouts and declining membership of political parties. Such concerns have frequently centered on the young, whose levels of electoral and party engagement tend to be lower than that of the population more generally. Consequently, young people have been characterized as politically apathetic, and debates about their seeming lack of political engagement have been underscored by evidence that their lower levels of engagement are not simply temporary life-cycle effects but that a generational effect is taking place – potentially signaling a more lasting decline in citizens' participation in democratic life. That perception has been countered, though, by a more recent, and growing, body of research questioning the view of young people as politically apathetic, asserting that they are rather politically alienated from political institutions and processes that they perceive as unaccountable and unresponsive to their concerns or that young people *are* in fact politically engaged – but in arenas and activities outside of the terrain of mainstream electoral politics. Connected to the latter contention is an emerging body of research focusing on alternative, everyday, “DIY” and online activism and forms of politicized cultural and social practice, in which it is said young people are perhaps more likely to be engaged. There is growing evidence to suggest that we are witnessing not citizens' withdrawal from democratic life but the emergence of different modes or norms of political participation and particularly among young people.

This chapter examines the crisis narratives on young people's political engagement to identify the forms of political participation that have been in decline. It evaluates the explanations offered for these, paying particular attention to the question of why young people in particular seem less likely to engage in, especially, electoral or party politics. It then addresses the growing literature on shifting modes and repertoires of action among citizens in general to focus on forms of political participation among young people in particular. It critically engages with the emerging literature on new forms of political practice, or “new grammars of action,” among young citizens, before addressing the question: if young people's modes and repertoires of political participation are changing, does it matter if they do not vote or join political parties? And what are the democratic implications of “new grammars of action”?

2 Crisis Narratives

Crisis narratives on political participation have been growing over the last two decades, with successive studies showing declining levels of engagement in electoral and party politics among citizens across several states. Following the end of

the Cold War in the early 1990s, observers noted that despite the sense of liberal democratic triumphalism that seemed to prevail following the collapse of the Soviet Union, citizens in established liberal democracies appeared to be increasingly voluntarily withdrawing from democratic life. As Hay comments: “Despite its near global diffusion, democracy motivates a seemingly ever smaller proportion of the electorate to exercise its right to vote in the states in which that right has existed the longest” (2007, p. 1). Stoker (2006) plots broadly similar trends toward political disengagement across advanced industrial democracies, including the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, and signs of political dissatisfaction among citizens of newer democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and East Asia also. Consequently, he remarks “it is difficult not to conclude – given the spread and scale of the evidence – that globally people in democracies are negative about their formal political institutions and politicians” (2006, p. 55) – although not necessarily about the idea of democracy itself.

While this has been a generalized phenomenon, it has been particularly acute among young people. In the UK, for example, turnouts for general elections saw a sharp drop to a postwar low of 59 % in the 2001 election, recovering very slightly in subsequent elections of 2005 and 2010. Among young people, however, this trend was even more acute, with turnout falling to only 39 % among 18–24-year-olds in the 2001 general election and dipping further to 37 % in 2005. While 2010 saw a small recovery, voters in that age range remained in the minority (see Table 1).

These trends are not isolated – similar patterns of youth voter disengagement have been identified across other states also (IDEA 1999; Martin 2012). These patterns of youth voter abstention have been accompanied by evidence of lower levels of identification with, and a reluctance to join, donate to, or work for, a political party among young people (Mycock and Tonge 2012, p. 143) and a general atrophy of youth sections of mainstream political parties in many states (Bennie and Russell 2012). There have also been studies articulating concerns about young people’s political literacy (Milner 2010), low levels of interest in politics (Pirie and Worcester 2000), and weak sense of civic responsibility (Park 1998; Pattie et al. 2004).

3 Countering Crisis Narratives

While these trends indicate that young people are engaging less with electoral or party politics, it is important to recognize that they are not in themselves evidence of political apathy. As Marsh et al. (2007) have argued, equating low levels of electoral engagement with political apathy rests on an overly narrow conception of political participation. Indeed, there is a growing body of literature challenging the characterization of young people as politically apathetic which argues against viewing young people’s nonparticipation in electoral politics in terms of a youth deficit (i.e., in terms of young people’s lack of interest, low political literacy, and weak sense of civic/political duty). Instead, this body of literature critically

Table 1 Turnouts in UK general elections 1992–2010

Election	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Total turnout	78 %	71 %	59 %	61 %	65 %
<i>Change on previous election</i>		–7	–12	+2	+4
18–24 turnout	63 %	51 %	39 %	37 %	44 %
<i>Change on previous election</i>		–12	–12	–2	+7
% point gap between total turnout and 18–24 turnout	–15	–20	–20	–24	–21

Source: MORI

examines the quality of participatory opportunities and representation offered by mainstream political institutions as well as pays attention to forms of political participation outside of these arenas.

Colin Hay's (2007) book *Why We Hate Politics*, for instance, reviews the data on falling levels of political participation among citizens across established democracies. Accepting that it presents a compelling portrait of citizens' withdrawal from aspects of political life, he is sharply critical of explanations for this withdrawal that focus solely on the political and civic capacities and tendencies of citizens – or demand-side explanations as he terms it. Rather, Hay highlights the significance of “supply-side” explanations that focus attention on the characteristics of the political system itself as causing citizens' disaffection with, and withdrawal from, party and electoral politics. Significant to supply-side factors is the depoliticization of decision-making by political elites, who, Hay claims, have internalized “public choice theoretic assumptions about the inefficiency of the public sector when compared to the market and the incapacity of politics to deliver public goods” (2007, p. 56). This is augmented by the transfer of policy making to quasi or nongovernmental bodies and the “rationalisation and insulation from critique of neoliberalism as an economic paradigm” (2007, p. 159).

In a similar vein, Bang (2005) argues that problems of political disengagement should not be read as a problem of political apathy but rather of political exclusion – brought about by governments' increasing reliance on expert forms of decision-making in order to address complex policy problems. He argues that the increasing professionalization of political deliberation, participation, and cooperation turns the public sphere into “expert spectacle” removing “lay people even further from exercising their creative capacities as lay people” (2005, p. 174).

For many, then, citizens' withdrawal from mainstream politics should be read as a judgment on the quality of democratic institutions. In relation to young people, Loader et al. (2014, p. 148) argue the “scepticism expressed by young people towards those who represent them rather than being taken as a measure of apathy could instead be seen as a perfectly legitimate democratic attitude of reflexively engaged citizens conscious of their personal circumstances.” Such accounts then portray nonparticipation less as apathy and more as alienation or even as “political non-participation” (Marsh et al. 2007). Loader goes so far as to argue that the “rejection of arrogant and self-absorbed professional politics may not be a cynical

withdrawal, but rather interpreted as the beginnings of a legitimate opposition” (cited Cammaerts et al. 2014, p. 646).

Surprisingly, perhaps, while young people’s participation in electoral politics is lower than that of adults, this does not appear to be because they are more cynical about politics or hostile toward democracy than older groups (Park et al. 2002). Indeed, studies frequently show very high levels of approval for democracy (Henn and Foard 2012) and forms of mainstream political participation among young people. As Cammaerts et al.’s (2014, p. 648) study of young Europeans found:

Although young citizens are the most likely to criticize the state of their political systems and apparently disengage from them, they are also the most likely, to a significant degree, to hold ambitious and idealist notions about what democratic participation should be like and about how involved they actually say they want to be.

This finding echoes the conclusions of Jennings and Stoker’s study of British citizens’ attitudes toward politics, which found that young people were less cynical or negative about electoral politics than older groups (Stoker 2014). Similarly, Horvath and Paolini (2014, p. 6), drawing on Eurobarometer data, suggest that young Europeans are less likely to vote than older people, but “despite their low electoral turnout, young people still trust electoral politics,” suggesting that political cynicism is *not* the explanation for young people’s disengagement from electoral or party politics.

Sloam (2014), in presenting evidence that young people are more likely to be engaged in protest politics than older citizens, suggests they are more likely to be “critical citizens” (and see Norris 2011), with higher expectations of democratic politics, and consequently are more likely to express their discontent with governance and the quality of participatory opportunities offered by the political system – exemplified by the protests of Spanish young “indignados” (the indignant) against high youth unemployment in 2011 (Sloam 2014). Indeed, a recurring finding in the research on young people’s politics is that while young people may be less likely to participate in conventional forms of political participation, they are more likely to be active in unconventional, “elite-challenging” forms of political participation, such as demonstrations and protests. Thus, Melo and Stockemer (2014, p. 49) found that while “young adults [aged 18–33 in France, Germany and the UK] participate less in conventional ways, such as voting, when compared to the older generations,” “the younger cohort is more likely to participate unconventionally, in demonstrations or signing petitions.” (Although we might question whether signing petitions should be regarded as “unconventional,” particularly if understood in Melo and Stockemer’s terms as “extrainstitutional,” since this activity can have a very institutional character – not least because politicians themselves seek to use petition signing as a mechanism for citizens to engage, as the UK government’s e-petition initiative demonstrates: see <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>.) Rather than a withdrawal from active democratic citizenship, then, these patterns of activism can be seen as constituting a claim to citizenship or express what O’Loughlin and Gillespie (2012) refer to as “dissenting citizenship.”

4 Explaining Youth Disengagement

It could be argued, though, that the deficiencies or failings of the political system outlined above apply to citizens as a whole, raising the question of why young people are relatively more disengaged from, or critical of, formal politics than older groups. This is perhaps all the more puzzling given the emergence of youth participation and inclusion as a policy priority in many states. Over the last decade, a raft of initiatives and policies have been introduced in many states with the aim of activating young people's political participation, including citizenship education programs, youth consultations, the establishment of youth forums and councils, and the enshrining of the principle of children's and young people's participation or voice in various legislative instruments. For example, Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the principle of consultation and participation in calling for children's views to be heard in relation to "all matters affecting the child." In England, this Convention forms an important frame of reference for standards frameworks including *Every Child Matters* and *Hear by Right*, which reinforce the notion that children and young people should be included and consulted in relation to services and policies that affect them (Tisdall and Davis 2004). Similarly, Article 165 of the European Union Lisbon Treaty emphasizes the importance of "encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe" (cited Cammaerts et al. 2014, p. 646). Yet, Cammaerts et al. (2014, p. 646) argue that despite this, there remain "systemic failures of the democratic system and institutions to facilitate youth participation in democratic life and to represent young people's concerns and interests at all levels of governance."

Indeed, many point to the unsatisfactory ways that political institutions relate to young people, criticizing the tokenism of much engagement with young people, whether in relation to the ways in which politicians address young people (Marsh et al. 2007), the quality of participatory opportunities provided by youth councils or forums (Matthews and Limb 2003), or the ways in which political parties include young people (Rainsford 2014). In the UK, Mycock and Tonge (2012, p. 139) argue, for instance, that:

Young people are frequently utilised in party literature and electioneering, providing a positive youth-orientated backdrop to policy announcements, campaign manifestoes and speeches. They are also seen to provide much needed lifeblood for political parties. But the interests and aspirations of young people are frequently overlooked in political debates and policy formulation.

Many attribute the tokenism that attends engagement with young people to the tendency to treat young people as "future citizens" (Cohen 2005) or as political apprentices, rather than as political agents with rights or interests as young people. Marsh et al. (2007) and Smith et al. (2005) argue that young people should be recognized as citizens with rights and political interests and perspectives on and experiences of politics that challenge researchers to develop less adult-centric concepts and methods for studying their political engagement (and see Philo and Smith 2003).

If young people's disengagement from electoral and party politics cannot be explained by either political apathy or cynicism, what factors do explain this? One approach to this question is to focus on life-cycle effects – that is, the factors that affect young people and which recede as they age. These may be connected to the particular legal status of young people in relation to rights or entitlements that they are able to access (e.g., voting rights or welfare benefits) or may be shaped by young people's experiences of transition to adulthood, such as the experience of moving from full-time education into employment or assuming responsibility for their own living arrangements or for other dependents. It is sometimes argued that these processes shape political engagement and increase the relevance of political policies to young people as they age. Additionally, the process of becoming an adult is thought to be attended by the acquisition of civic skills and political literacy that enhance young people's capacities to participate in politics.

García-Albacete (2014) addresses arguments that because the processes of transition from child to adult are now becoming longer, with young people's entry into the labor market or progression to stable independent living increasingly delayed, we are consequently witnessing a delay in young people's entry into politics – rather than *nonentry*. The stretching and fracturing of experiences of transition, then, have an impact on young people's acquisition of political interest and skills, depressing their electoral and party-political engagement. While agreeing that increasingly uncertain and complex conditions for youth transitions may be having an effect on young people's political participation, García-Albacete warns that rising levels of youth unemployment and welfare constraints may not just delay young citizens' "political start-up" but may have politically socializing effects, with implications for young people's political participation into the future.

This directs attention to the significance of period and generational effects in shaping political engagement. Period effects relate to factors that arise within particular time frames that may shape collective political experiences. These might relate to, for instance, the collective experience of events such as war, recession, etc., that shape political attitudes and behaviors, although the same factors may affect groups within a population differently (e.g., the effects of a war may be felt differently across age groups and gender). Generational effects relate to more durable changes that affect and shape the political attitudes of particular generations as they age.

5 Young People and New Citizenship Norms and Practices

Some argue that these longer-term effects are manifested in broader shifts in citizens' democratic engagement (Zukin et al. 2006; Giddens 1994), which have a particularly formative effect on the young. For example, Dalton's (2008) study of broader trends in citizens' democratic engagement in the USA identifies changing norms of citizenship – from dutiful to engaged citizenship – that are having a profound effect on the ways in which Americans engage in politics. He argues that:

Rather than an absolute decline in political action, the changing norms of citizenship are shifting the ways Americans participate in politics – decreasing electoral participation but increasing other forms of action. Compared to the halcyon days of the 1950s–1960s, the American public today is more politically engaged in more different forms of political action. (2008, p. 91)

Dalton argues that the norms of “engaged citizenship” are manifested in direct and individualized forms of political participation; thus he suggests, the “engaged citizen favors direct action over campaign work, and volunteering is preferred to party activity” (2008, p. 92). This resonates with Inglehart’s (1997) contentions regarding changing norms of political action, where he argues:

One frequently hears references to growing apathy on the part of the public ... These allegations of apathy are misleading: mass publics are deserting the old-line oligarchic political organizations that mobilized them in the modernization era – but they are becoming more active in a wide range of elite-challenging forms of political action. (1997, p. 207)

Giddens (1994) cites processes of “detraditionalization” and reflexive individualization as hallmarks of modernity and proposes that these have profoundly altered citizens’ attitudes toward forms of political authority and vehicles of mass, collectivist political mobilization, giving rise to a reflexive “life politics” in which identity concerns and choice are central. He argues: “Life politics, and the disputes and struggles connected with it, are about how we should live in a world where everything that used to be natural (or traditional) now has in some sense to be chosen, or decided about” (1994, pp. 90–91). Party politics, tied to debates between left and right, he suggests, have lost their appeal because they do not address these “new fields of action.” Adding to this analysis of the capacity of political parties to act as vehicles of political participation, Beck (1997) suggests that the end of the Cold War had profound implications for political ideologies and consequently for the role of political parties in articulating, struggling over, and mobilizing for grand competing visions, diminishing their mass-mobilizing role. Taking this view, then, the disconnection between political parties and young people can be attributed to the failure of political parties to respond to the social and political transformations that have been under way since the twentieth century. Rainsford’s study of youth memberships of political parties highlights a divergence between the norms of activism expected within political parties and those exhibited by young people, suggesting as a consequence there are “clear tensions within political parties over how they relate to their young members and the way that young people want to *do* politics” (2014, p. 49, emphasis added).

But, it is not just activism within political parties that has been in decline – similar issues of a declining membership or activist base have affected other collectivist movements such as trade unions – with the young increasingly unlikely to participate in such forms of activism. Sloam (2014, p. 677) suggests that an individualization of politics has taken place, with the consequences that “citizenship norms today more closely reflect the changing life experiences of young people than overarching collective (e.g., class) interests.”

Kevin McDonald's (2006) study of contemporary global movements addresses this issue of the significance of personal and collective identities in animating forms of contemporary political action. He describes social movements of the twentieth century, such as the labor movement and trade unions, as founded on what he terms "civic-industrial grammars of action." "Civic-industrial grammars of action" relate to norms and practices of political engagement that depended on a sense of "witness," where claims were made about a "collective actor," with representatives chosen to speak for the collectivity via formal, vertically integrated organizational structures. By contrast, he suggests, the grammar of contemporary movements is one of direct self-actualization where "there is little sense that actors regard themselves as represented by the collective, which can speak as well as act through its members" (2006, p. 87). Rather than activism being directed through delegates, representatives, rules, constitutions, and procedures, contemporary movements are characterized by more hands-on, loosely organized forms of action, where activists engage directly in concrete action to make a difference – without submerging their identity into the organization or movement. He identifies, then, a shift from formal, bureaucratic to more fluid, networked forms of organization that are "centered on the event and the experience" rather than on organizational matters or collective identities (2006, p. 84). Typically, then, he suggests, contemporary movement activists do not wish to invest their time in drawing up constitutions, membership rules, voting procedures, or political programs: in the movements that McDonald considers, there are no rituals of joining or membership cards. Instead, within these movements, activism is propelled by a "culture of urgency," where the "ethic of action [. . .] is framed in terms of the imperative of acting now" (2006, p. 76), as opposed to "programmatically or linearly attempts to shape the future" (2006, p. 64). He identifies a tendency of many contemporary movements, then, to come together temporarily to stage events, rather than to organize, build, or subscribe to a common ideological platform. Examples of this can be seen in the actions of Critical Mass, Reclaim the Streets, the anti-G8 protests or the Occupy movement, which had no central organizing body, spokesperson, or indeed common political or ideological agenda.

McDonald's analysis of grammars of action within contemporary global movements resonates with Bang's account of contemporary political subjectivities, which he suggests are founded on the ethic that the "political is increasingly personal and self-reflexive" (2005, p. 163). This manifests itself in "everyday making," self-actualizing, DIY forms of activism (Bang 2004), which are at odds with the forms of political engagement demanded within mainstream political institutions. Bang (2004) describes the political participants in his study as "everyday makers," who express their politics in ways that are "individualistic, more project oriented, more 'on' than 'off' and 'hit and run' [. . .] more pleasure oriented and more fun-seeking than is usually associated with being civilly engaged" (2004, p. 14). Consequently, he later goes on to suggest, "Activists [. . .] shun 'big' politics, because it does not allow them to feel immediately engaged in, and influential in solving, the many concrete policy problems that confront them in their everyday life" (2009, p. 122).

Sloam (2014) argues that young people who have grown up as citizens in late modernity exhibit distinctive characteristics that cohere with the broader social, political, and economic changes that have been underway, which have shaped young people's political subjectivities. O'Toole and Gale's (2013) study of ethnic minority young activists in the UK identifies "new grammars of political action" among young people in their study that cohere with broader changes in the ways in which citizens politically engage. Drawing on the work of Giddens (1994), Beck (1997), Bang (2005), and McDonald (2006), they characterize new grammars of action as exemplified by:

a preference for hands-on, direct forms of activism; a tendency to mobilise in horizontal, loosely organised groups or networks rather than vertically integrated institutions with highly formalised regulation of membership or activity; engagement with concrete projects rather than abstract debate; personalised (rather than individualised) modes of interaction that do not require activists to submerge their identities into formal organisations; a commitment to a politics of difference that is not separatist or inimical to concerns with universal rights or concepts of social justice; and above all a politics founded on the scope for activists to make a difference. (2013, p. 218)

This resonates with Vromen et al.'s (2014, p. 3) study of norms of "everyday, self-actualizing citizenship" among young people, which they contrast with "dutiful norms of citizenship" (which underpin forms of participation such as voting, joining parties, and reading the newspaper for political news). They argue that young people increasingly express "self-actualizing norms of citizenship," "now see and engage with politics in a much more individualized (rather than collectivist) way," "are involved in ad hoc issues-based campaigns (rather than long-term organizational commitment)," and "choose to work horizontally with their peers, rather than with hierarchical authority." Both these accounts highlight the impact of shifting norms and practices of contemporary citizenship on young people's political engagement.

5.1 Everyday Activism

A focus on the everyday can be seen in the expanding array of studies engaging theoretically and empirically with ideas of everyday political participation and citizenship – and particularly among young people (Vromen et al. 2014; Harris and Roose 2013). In part, this relates to the changing relationship between citizens and politics as outlined above and expressed by Ulrich Beck's (1997) concept of "subpolitics." Subpolitics in Beck's terms refers to the everyday individual activities and the informal politics of social movements that occur outside of, and below, formal political institutions. According to Beck, the world of politics is no longer that of "symbolically rich political institutions" but of "often concealed everyday political practice," which forms the basis of a contemporary "non-institutional renaissance of politics" that is occurring alongside the increasing "political vacuity of the institutions" (Beck 1997, p. 98).

As Wood points out, current interest in the significance of forms of everyday political engagement also owes a debt to feminist scholarship with its concern with the “hidden spaces” of the “private, the domestic and the ordinary” and its aims “to bring to light the embodied, informal practices of traditionally disempowered people”, such as the young (Wood 2014, p. 216). This perspective argues for a more differentiated account of citizenship that critically addresses the exclusion of particular groups (e.g., women, children, young people, or ethnic, racial, or sexual minorities) from mainstream political arenas in order to give voice to marginalized groups who have historically been excluded from the formal domain of politics. This is reflected in Harris and Wynn’s account of youth engagement when they suggest: “where personal experience, social interaction and everyday practice became part of politics, young people felt better able to articulate political views and take social action” (cited Wood 2014, p. 222). It has emerged as a focus of much children’s and political geographies’ research that seeks to explore the everyday life worlds of children and young people in the contexts of the spaces that children and young people occupy, in ways that recognize these as spaces where children and young people express and develop their sense of, and capacities for, citizenship (Kallio and Häkli 2011; Skelton 2013). Wood argues that a focus on everyday situations and relations offers a frame through which the experiences of marginalized groups can be recognized and connected to ideas of citizenship and political practice. Skelton (2013) outlines how this has shaped literatures on children and young people’s political geographies, which have focused on the recognition of children and young people as political agents in order to make visible the diversity of political practices among children and young people. Moreover, a focus on the everyday political practices of children and young people, she suggests, can contribute to a broader understanding of social justice.

The significance of the everyday in the study of young people’s politics can be seen as both an epistemological and an empirical shift. It is underpinned by a concern to explore how young people define and express their politics – in recognition of the limitations of analyses that confine young people’s political engagement to a narrow set of repertoires of participation focused on mainstream, electoral politics (Marsh et al. 2007). This, in turn, has facilitated greater attention to the empirical significance of everyday, flatter, more networked, interpersonal, “do-it-yourself” forms of political engagement and the ways in which these emerge as a distinctive feature of young people’s political engagement (Sloam 2014; Manning 2013; Vromen et al. 2014). Zukin et al.’s (2006) study of the so-called “Dotnet” generation of young Americans born after 1976, for instance, found high levels of engagement in volunteering and community problem-solving activities among 15–28-year-olds, alongside lower engagement in electoral activities. Similarly, Cammaerts et al.’s (2014, p. 646) study of young Europeans identified a wide variety of participatory practices in which young people engage “that do not necessarily comply with the old party-political structures through which young people used to engage in democratic life in the past and that expand the notion of political participation beyond elections,” and they pay particular attention to

volunteering on life political issues and forms of direct action. Loader et al. (2014, p. 143) also point to the significance of more direct and immediate forms of participation, including direct action and lifestyle politics, suggesting: “participation in social movements, rallies, protests, consumer boycotts all point to the possible displacement of traditional models of representative democracy as the dominant cultural form of engagement by alternative approaches increasingly characterized through networking practices.” These trends are reflected in the emerging body of research into political participation exploring “DIY,” everyday, and lifestyle forms of activism, whether through single-issue campaigning, blogging, hactivism, culture jamming, or forms of everyday, “subpolitical” action, such as ethical consumerism (see Micheletti et al. 2004), vegetarianism (Micheletti 2011), or the choices that activists make in relation to paid work and employment (Beck 1997). Addressing these “creative” forms of participation, Micheletti argues for a more expansive conception of political participation that explores how people “develop their politically productive capacities into creative activities to take responsibility for the common good of their immediate communities and societies at large” (2011, p. 2).

5.2 Online Activism

There is a growing number of studies highlighting in particular the significance of forms of online activism, suggesting that these constitute not merely an expansion in political action repertoires but cohere with contemporary grammars of action or norms of citizenship. Thus, the growth of information-communication technologies, such as SMS and particularly the Internet, since the 1980s, is credited with not just enabling activism across different spatial scales but also more creative and personalized repertoires of action (Bennett 2008), through which it is possible to engage with political issues and campaigns in everyday, DIY ways (and see O'Toole and Gale 2013 for an account of online engagement in struggles over the representations of young Muslims or Islam). Häyhtiö and Rinne's (2007) study of an online campaign against gossip magazines in Norway, for instance, focuses on the ways in which the Internet enables “de-medialized” and reflexive political action that allows activists to circumvent mainstream media to engage directly in online media production and consumption in order to protest against established media interests. Thus, the Internet emerges a site that enables expressive, DIY forms of activism, such as blogging, website production, online protests, signing e-petitions, and “swarming.” The concept of “swarming” evokes the viral character of web-based dissemination that allows, sometimes highly effective, online campaigns with little or no organization or leadership (and see Segerberg 2011) – as Häyhtiö and Rinne's account of the success of an online swarming campaign against gossip magazines explores.

Loader et al. (2014; and see Vromen et al. 2014) suggest that online forms of activism are particularly attractive to young people because of the ways in which they resonate with, and reinforce, self-actualizing norms of citizenship. Indeed,

they suggest that engagement with online forums and communication has emerged as a powerful form of political socialization, such that political socialization is becoming less determined by social ties to family, neighborhood, school, or work and more by young people's interaction through social networks "which they themselves have had a significant part in constructing" (2014, p. 143). They assert that the Internet is playing a particular role in creating "networked young citizens," such that the "historical reference points" of networked young citizens "are less likely to be those of modern welfare capitalism but rather global information networked capitalism and their social relations are increasingly enacted through a social media networked environment" (2014, p. 145). Social media and Internet communication enable participation in horizontal and nonhierarchical networks (rather than in formal political or civic organizations) and are thus conducive to everyday, reflexive engagement.

Sloam (2014, p. 676) also finds that the increasing significance of "lifestyle politics," rooted in "young people's own experiences in and perceptions of democracy," finds particular expression in online contexts. He cites the use of Facebook as an example of a space where young people construct their social and political biographies in ways which can be seen as a form of everyday political activism. This can be manifested in the use of Facebook to discuss political issues, through creating or liking Facebook posts or joining Facebook issue or campaign groups. Similarly, Coffe and Chapman (2014) explore forms of political expression on Facebook in their study of the phenomenon of users who change their Facebook profile in order to promote awareness of a particular issue (such as "the international campaign to support the democratic movement in Iran by greening profile pictures"; 2014, p. 1).

A key point that emerges from this literature is that recent social and political developments have led not simply to an expansion in the range of political repertoires that young citizens use to express their political engagement, with a shift toward more informal and less institutionalized forms of participation, but they have underscored a transformation in relations between citizens and politics, figured in the significance of everyday, networked, reflexive, and DIY ways in which citizenship is realized.

6 Democratic and Political Implications of New Participatory Norms

There are a number of political and democratic implications to the emergence of these more informal, everyday, DIY participatory norms. In the first place, they demonstrate that declining electoral engagement among the young is not a problem of political apathy per se – but focuses our attention much more on the dissonance between the norms of engagement on which electoral politics are founded, and the norms of engagement among young people. In particular, the highly mediated, vertically integrated, formally constituted norms of representative politics contrast with the highly personalized, horizontal, and informal modes of engagement that are increasingly prevalent among young people. The emerging interest in young

people's everyday politics and attention to the ways in which young people practice politics has undermined the characterization of them as apolitical or apathetic. O'Toole and Gale (2013, p. 218) conclude that these patterns of engagement potentially offer "critical insights into the democratic and participatory limitations of [especially national level] political institutions."

Acknowledging that the evidence demonstrates that young people are not politically apathetic but active in alternative forms of nonelectoral politics, Sloam (2014, p. 679) nonetheless argues that "increased engagement in nonelectoral politics does not make up for this lack of electoral participation," arguing that "poor turnout figures (logically) result in the low prioritization of youth issues by politicians." He suggests this further decreases young people's engagement in electoral politics – creating a mutually reinforcing cycle of disengagement. Other commentators concur with this view that the interests of young people are routinely neglected because politicians believe that they will not vote. As Henn and Foard note, "when elected to office, politicians in government will tend to pursue policies that favour older and other more voting-inclined groups at the expense of younger and more non-voting-inclined groups" (2014, p. 18).

Yet, it is important to recognize that young people's lives, and their educational, employment, and housing opportunities, are significantly affected by political decision-making that takes place within formal parliamentary and governmental institutions. In the UK, for instance, central government's austerity-framed funding cuts to local government budgets have led to a significant contraction in the provision of youth services, with many local authorities considering closing their youth services altogether. Across Europe, recent austerity policies have had a major impact on young people in many member states – particularly in relation to young people's access to welfare, further and higher education, housing, and the labor market. The political implications of this have been significant (and uneven) too. Thus, the levels of young people not in education, employment, or training (so-called NEETs) are disproportionately higher in the east and south of Europe, where the economic crisis has hit hardest, compared to the north, and in these regions protest and antipolitical and populist parties have flourished.

While arguing for a greater appreciation of more everyday, self-actualizing forms of political engagement among young people, Loader et al. (2014) also stress that young people are nonetheless still subject to regulatory norms and structuring processes that are enacted by mainstream political institutions. This can be seen in terms of the legal frameworks that govern the acquisition of children's and young people's formal rights, as well as the conditions of entitlement to welfare or education that underpin young people's access to social citizenship. Similarly, Philo and Smith (2003) caution that the emergence of more youth-centered understandings of young people's everyday politics should not result in a neglect of the significance of the role of political institutions in shaping the environments and contexts in which young people's politics are played out. They suggest, therefore, that researchers need to pay attention to the interactions between everyday and institutional politics in order to understand the conditions under which young people express their politics.

If the decision-making and regulatory norms that are determined within political institutions shape young people's lives, it is clear that their implications are not felt uniformly across young people, while patterns and levels of political and electoral participation across young people are not homogenous either. Melo and Stockemer (2014), in common with many other studies of political participation, find a strong correlation between levels of political participation and educational attainment: their study of young people in Germany, the UK, and France found that higher levels of education significantly increased young people's likelihood of voting, signing a petition, and demonstrating. In relation to more alternative forms of participation such as protesting, online activism, signing petitions, and boycotting, Sloam (2014, p. 664) flags that although these "alternative forms of engagement appear to reduce inequalities of participation based on age and gender, they tend to increase inequalities based on socioeconomic status." Worryingly, Melo and Stockemer (2014) found that those young people who believe they are discriminated against are less likely to vote than other young people (although they are more likely to demonstrate, suggesting perhaps a greater tendency toward critical citizenship). If, as the studies outlined above assert, there is a reciprocal relationship of mutual disengagement between young people and formal political institutions, then the uneven political implications of these across different groups of young people become all the more politically problematic.

7 Conclusion

As this chapter has highlighted, there has been a perceptible shift in both public and academic discourses on the phenomenon of electoral disengagement among young people, with much greater acknowledgement of the role of political alienation – rather than mere apathy – in underpinning falling voter turnouts among young people. This is accompanied by a greater sense that the contemporary mood of antipolitics across many democracies constitutes a critique of politics as business as usual, which is, as Painter (2014) puts it, nonetheless "intensely political" and occurring in a context where "a tech-enabled civic democracy is flourishing and new political forms are driven by the emergent individualism of Europe's people, particularly its young." This recognition has been accompanied by much greater attention to forms of, often innovative, political and democratic practices among young people that are taking place outside of the terrain of electoral and party politics altogether. This is exemplified in growing scholarly interest and research in young people's use of online action repertoires and participation in virtual publics via social media platforms or the phenomena of mass on- and offline political protests that mobilize significant numbers of people through highly decentralized and networked forms, such as the recent Anonymous or Occupy movements. The field has broadened its interests further in examining the emergence of lifestyle politics that make everyday social and cultural practices a matter of political choice: such as everyday politicized decisions over whether, and what, to consume. This expansion of the field of study of action repertoires has been enabled by a much

broadened conceptualization of the political that recognizes the political significance of everyday, intimate, and personal modes of engagement. These shifts in repertoires and modes of political action constitute not just a shift in the ways young people express their politics and sense of citizenship; there is growing research suggesting that these are underpinned by new political subjectivities that are driving these more personalized, networked, DIY grammars of action, such that in Bang's evocation of the 1960s feminist slogan, "the political is now personal and increasingly reflexive" (2005, p. 163).

Nevertheless, as this chapter raises, formal political institutions still matter in the lives of young people. Thus, the state remains a powerful agent of social, economic, and cultural regulation, reproduction, and change. Nevertheless, these shifts in understanding of young people's politics provoke a reversal of the question that has hitherto framed the problem of youth electoral disengagement, which has tended to be posed in terms of: how can young people be encouraged to engage with political institutions? Instead, there is a greater concern with the question: how can political institutions be reshaped to engage with young citizens? That question sits within a broader set of discourses on the need for democratic renewal across many states that recognizes, as Wood argues, that "the old order of parliamentary formalism and traditionalism will not do in the twenty-first century" (Wood 2014b). This perspective recognizes that addressing the "crisis" of electoral disengagement will require substantial democratic innovation, including more decentered and localized forms of decision-making that speak to these grammars of everyday, DIY activism – particularly if they are to reconnect with young people.

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Part III

Youthful Practice as Political Resistance

David J. Marshall

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Abstract

Normative representations of childhood shape the material spaces and embodied subjectivities of young people, who in turn reshape these subjectivities at the level of the body and everyday practice. Children may carry out these embodied resistant practices within an awareness of broader spatiotemporal contexts, geographic imaginaries, and ideals of social justice. In this way, embodied forms of resistance are inseparable from a politics of representation. Using the example of play, this chapter examines how Palestinian refugee children encounter and confront the Israeli occupation in everyday spaces of the camp. Through play, refugee children perform resistance to the circumstances of occupation and displacement and in so doing also challenge narrow representations of Palestinian children's lives as characterized only by suffering and violence. However, though play may represent a form of resistance against occupation, it can also reproduce exclusionary gender and age hierarchies. Girls use a variety of embodied tactics, including play, work, and study, to resist this, and they do so within a wider critique of gender inequality and occupation, as well as hope for the future.

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1 Introduction

The bodies and lives of children are intimately entwined within the politics of the so-called Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in a symbolic as well as material sense. The Palestinian child is an overdetermined subject, simultaneously playing the role of righteous resistance fighter, helpless victim, brainwashed pawn, and innocent child. Although Palestinian young people demonstrate their own political agency and will in resisting the occupation, often defying parental and political authority in doing so, representations of Palestinian children have a political life all their own. Images of Palestinian children hurling rocks at tanks, dressed as suicide bombers, or cowering with fear in the parent's arms seek variously to bolster or contest the moral legitimacy of the Palestinian cause. The relationship between the political *representations* of the Palestinian child and the political *agency* of young people in Palestine is complex. How do Palestinian children variously conform to and transform these competing representations of children in their daily practice and demonstrate political agency in doing so? Drawing upon research conducted in a West Bank refugee camp, this chapter illustrates how refugee children resist the material circumstances of exile and occupation at the level of the body but do so through and within specific representations of Palestinian refugee childhood. The overlapping and competing constructions of Palestinian childhood give rise to multiple, overlapping forms of resistance, not only to the occupation but also to the age and gender hierarchies within Palestinian society (see also Habashi, ► Chap. 16, "Female Political Morality in Palestine: Children's Perspectives," this volume). Resistance against both the occupation and social inequities takes on tactical, embodied, and immediate forms, but it also involves strategic and long-term thinking and imagination.

This chapter is situated at the nexus of both representational and embodied forms of children's politics. To begin with, the chapter offers a brief review of different theoretical approaches to children's political agency, resistance, and social transformation. Here debates in children's geography about representational and non-representational forms of politics are highlighted, with reference to play. From here, this chapter will then provide historical context specific to the Palestinian case, charting the changing contours of political power exercised in the occupied territories between the first and second intifadas and the changing shape of resistance in response to these developments. Finally, this chapter will examine two, often indistinct, forms of childhood practice – play and work – to understand how Palestinian boys and girls enact resistance through everyday practice yet performed with broader spatiotemporal awareness. These embodied practices variously, and at times strategically, conform to as well as resist the typical representational tropes that often frame the lives of Palestinian children.

2 Theorizing Children's Political Agency, Resistance, and Social Transformation

This chapter examines how Palestinian children encounter and contest not only the Israeli occupation but also representations of Palestinian childhood through everyday practice. As such, this analysis is situated within approaches to children's politics that emphasize embodied forms of agency and resistance (Bosco 2010; Colls and Hörschelmann 2009; Kallio 2008; Kallio and Hakli 2011a, b). Such an approach rubs against persistent debates in children's geography about the sites and scales of children's politics, as well as embodied versus representational or narrative forms of children's agency. Differing interpretations of children's play as resistance illustrate these tensions (see Woodyer 2012). Harker (2005), for example, challenges Aitken's (2001) theorization of play as an act of resistance to neoliberal forms of productivity. Although play may be a form of resistance, it is not entirely "separate from sedimented regimes of power-discourse" and thus just as easily reproduces as it resists existing power relations, including gender inequality (Harker 2005, p. 48). Play, Harker (2005) argues, is an embodied, affective practice that exceeds representation and has no stable identity, whether resistant or otherwise. Bodies signify and are signified through play, becoming subjects. But play also produces an excessive, asubjective affect, irreducible to narrow political categories like resistance (Harker 2005, p. 50).

This reluctance to categorize play as necessarily a form of resistance is, in part, informed by nonrepresentational critiques in children's geography, which caution against the "colonization" of young people's lives and experiences with adultist assumptions of what is useful, important, or political and how (Horton and Kraftl 2005, 2006; Jones 2001, 2008). However, Mitchell and Elwood (2012, p. 789) have argued against what they see as an "over-emphasis on the ephemeral, non-cognitive world of affect and performance" in children's geography, which they contend "comes at the expense of a more holistic analysis of the longer-term forces which help to produce and condition these practices and feelings." In this view, focus on nonrepresentational affect potentially distracts from an analysis of the broader socioeconomic and political processes at play in children's lives and may go against a foundational tenet of children's geography to foreground the voices of young people. Instead, Mitchell and Elwood (2012, p. 790) call for an understanding of political agency located between "modernist narratives of 'P'olitics" and "conceptualizations of affect and performance that locate individual politics and agency everywhere." In so doing, the authors seek to revalorize children's representational and narrative agency (Elwood and Mitchell 2012).

As this debate demonstrates, though, the boundary between embodied forms of resistance and narrative agency is not easily defined. As Harker (2005) suggests, embodied affective practices, like play, may exceed, but are not entirely separate from, representation. Clare Hemmings's (2005, p. 564) concept of "affective cycles" is useful here in understanding how an embodied affect and the social world of representation are linked together through interpretative judgment and reflection. According to Hemmings (2005, p. 564), affective cycles consist of

“an ongoing, incrementally altering chain – body-affect-emotion-affect-body, doubling back upon the body and influencing the individual’s capacity to act in the world.” Thus, an embodied affect is inevitably shaped by and interpreted through representational discourses, which themselves produce certain feelings, and so on. In this way, affective cycles form part of patterns, or habits, that are “subject to reflective or political, rather than momentary or arbitrary judgement” (Hemmings 2005, p. 564). In Hemmings’s reading, this is what Deleuze means by “maps of intensity,” affects which unfold in time, resonating with previously felt, learned, and patterned bodily affects. Such affective intensities are either “curtailed or extended” by reflexive judgment. Hence, nonrepresentational, embodied affect cannot be separated from the representational processes that reflexively pattern and regulate affect (cf. Cresswell 2006). As Ansell (2009, p. 200) puts it, embodied practices like play “are not simply perceptual, but always involve emotional, cognitive and imaginative engagement; they are always relational.” In this way, we can begin to view play as an embodied practice that at once reproduces social and cultural norms but also creates an imaginative space where such norms are questioned and challenged, in other words, played with.

Sullivan’s (2001) feminist reworking of John Dewey’s notion of habits is helpful for understanding how patterns of embodied affect and practice, such as play, become ossified over time, but also how they can be consciously reflected and acted upon as a form of resistance. According to Dewey, bodily impulses are organized by habits, which include practices, dispositions, and ways of being, feeling, and knowing (Sullivan 2001, p. 101). Bodies and spaces are made coherent and stable through these patterned activities, which inevitably come to acquire complex and layered meanings. This approximates Thomson’s (2009, p. 35) view of the self as being “situated, enmeshed and saturated in circumstances and obligation” in her account of gender detraditionalization. However, bodies are never fully contained by these habits. Rather, “there is an excess to bodily habit that remains uncontained by those habits and thus that can break up the sedimentation of habit, derailing habits from their familiar grooves” (Sullivan 2001, p. 100). As habits layer and shift over time, they begin to “constitute a variety of different and potentially conflicting dispositions,” thus making for “a complex web of overlapping habits in which individual habits began to wear upon and challenge and influence each other” (Sullivan 2001, p. 105). The “resulting friction,” Sullivan (2001, 105) suggests, weakens and disrupts our habitual way of being, “opening up possibilities for reconfigurations of habit and thus of culture as well.” For young people entering into a ready-made world of sedimented spaces and habits, the possibility for friction is ripe (Jeffrey 2013; Mannheim 1956 [1923]). In this way, change may be gradual, often involving a reworking of old ways of doing and being. It is where such change is prevented that revolutionary pressure is created.

Habits can be critically reflected upon and consciously changed through, among other ways, political activism. Embodied and articulated challenges to oppressive habits themselves become “exteriorized and sedimented” over time creating social change (McNay 2000, p. 114). In the critical education literature on student resistance, it is this conscious critique of oppressive social structures toward the

goal of social change that distinguishes transformational resistance. Drawing from the critical race theory, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001, p. 320) argue for an understanding of young people's resistance as "political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible." The forms that this transformational resistance may take, however, are multiple. Resistance may even appear conformist, as in when young people seek to "prove others wrong" by achieving despite social oppression, but is nevertheless motivated by the goal of transformational social change (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal 2001). In the empirical section below, examples of multiple forms of transformational resistance, oscillating between embodied and representational forms of agency, are given. Before this however, the next section provides historical context on the changing nature of resistance in Palestine and the changing historical role of the Palestinian child in this struggle.

3 The Changing Nature of Power and Resistance in Palestine

An entire generation of youth had come of age under occupation when the first popular uprising against Israeli military rule broke out in 1987. The intifada, or "shaking off," though, was not just a revolt against the Israeli occupation; it was also a shaking up of age hierarchies. Women and youth took on visible roles in confronting Israeli soldiers and active roles in organizing strikes and demonstrations (Abdo 1991). Media images of youth confronting soldiers changed the political landscape of the Palestinian struggle, placing youth at the political fore. In addition, the physical scars of beatings and torture imprinted on the bodies of young people transformed age-based hierarchies of deference within the Palestinian family. Youths who had endured imprisonment and abuse at the hands of Israeli soldiers acquired much higher social status and respect than was normally afforded to them (Petee 1994).

These challenges to traditional age and gender hierarchies created a great deal of social anxiety, which persists until today. Even youths who participated in the intifada expressed concern about the breakdown in traditional family structures that the uprising seemed to be engendering (Fronk et al. 1999). The intifada raised expectations among young women about achieving greater gender equality, more individual autonomy, and increased participation in the public sphere. Nevertheless, according to a study of youths who participated in the intifada, young women and men alike expressed a strong desire to maintain traditional family roles, perhaps in perceived response to the social and political instability at the time (Fronk et al. 1999).

The anxiety surrounding the social transformations that the intifada had prompted caused a backlash. The uprising against the occupying military regime, it seemed, had become a youth revolt against all forms of adult authority. Many adults felt that the youth were out of control and that a breakdown of all respect for teachers and parents had occurred, creating an intergenerational crisis in families and schools. By the 1990s, as the intifada was subsiding, adults sought to regain

control of the youth. For example, a communiqué circulated by the popular organizing committees in the early 1990s implored parents to reassert authority over their children and instill in them a respect for their elders (Amireh 2003). Even today, parents and teachers often blame the apparent unruliness of Palestinian youths on the deterioration of adult authority caused by the intifada, combined with the perceived tendency of Palestinian parents to spoil their children to make up for their own lost childhoods, sacrificed to years of struggle and fighting.

As fathers sought to reassert patriarchal authority in the family, a similar process was beginning in the national sphere with the exiled PLO leadership seeking to reassert its political control. The PLO sought to reassert control over the national struggle and in doing so found common cause with Israel, which was eager to find a way to manage an unruly Palestinian population. While the Israeli army was adept at fighting conventional territorial conflicts with its neighbors, it proved largely ineffective in confronting mass demonstrations and civil disobedience. The image of armed soldiers beating youths and being pelted with rocks by children dented the Israeli sense of moral and military superiority. The peace process promised the exiled Palestinian leadership all the trappings of a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (albeit with highly restricted political autonomy), in exchange for maintaining Israeli security interests, thus outsourcing the morally and materially costly business of policing the Palestinians to the Palestinians themselves.

While the Oslo process had raised the hopes of political autonomy for many Palestinians, instead what they witnessed was a massive increase in settlement building, the creation of numerous checkpoints that carved up the West Bank, continued Israeli military presence, and still no agreement on any of the outstanding political issues, including the status of East Jerusalem and the return of refugees. In a deliberately provocative move, then Likud opposition party leader Ariel Sharon made a visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque holy site with a massive security entourage, sparking off riots in Jerusalem. Demonstrations quickly spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, resembling the kind of massive, unarmed demonstrations that occurred during the first intifada. Israeli soldiers and police used lethal force in suppressing demonstrations, including inside Israel itself, and the Israeli army deployed tanks and began restricting movement throughout the occupied territories. Palestinian militants met the heavy-handed tactics of Israeli police and military with armed reprisals and the uprising quickly escalated into a full-fledged military confrontation. As Johnson and Kuttub (2002) argue, the overtly militaristic response on the part of the Palestinian resistance was, in part, due to an ongoing crisis of Palestinian masculinity caused by the humiliations of occupation and the disgrace of capitulation.

Israel's response to the increased militarization of the Palestinian resistance came in the form of an all-out assault on the infrastructure of Palestinian governance, including police barracks and government buildings. While the first intifada had seen Israel struggle to impose law and order on the occupied Palestinians, the second intifada saw a suspension of the law altogether (Gordon 2008; Gregory 2004). Meanwhile, Israel also intensified violence against domestic spaces, often targeting the homes and apartment buildings of suspected militants, sometimes as

punitive reprisals in response to suicide attacks. If the attacks on government buildings and police barracks represented the suspension of law and order, then the attacks and invasions of ordinary spaces represented the suspension of life itself. For many youths, for example, life milestones like obtaining a degree or getting married became impossible during the intifada. Curfews and school closures indefinitely postponed graduation for many high school and university students, while checkpoints and incursions brought commerce to a halt, making it impossible to build or pay for a home. As Hage (2003, p. 80) writes, for youth otherwise cut off from traditional routes to social value such as education and marriage, martyrdom provided “a path of social meaningfulness and self-fulfillment in an otherwise meaningless life.” Specifically, suicide operations provided a means for swapping “physical existence with symbolic existence.” In some families, martyr posters came to replace graduation and wedding photos.

For others, less spectacularly, the realm of everyday life became the ground upon which a struggle against the violence of occupation was waged. As Allen (2008, p. 475) notes, despite the legal and military control that Israel asserts over the “material production of space” in the occupied territories, Palestinians nevertheless manage to adapt to and reject the spacings of occupation. This adaptation process, Allen (2008, p. 476) explains, occurs largely in the “nondiscursive realm,” that is, in “moving through spaces,” through “silences and shrugs,” and in the “capacity to stop noticing, or at least stop noticing all the time.” It is difficult to determine whether such practices can be categorized as acts of resistance, acts of survival, or acts of resignation. Allen suggests that adaptation may be a middle ground between “quiescence and refusal,” an indeterminate act between “outright confrontation” and “submission” (ibid). For Palestinians, the notion of *sumood*, or steadfastness, can often mean the stubborn refusal to go away or to give up hope, even when there are few other options. During the first intifada, labor and student strikes, and the postponement of weddings and other festivities out of respect for the martyrs, saw the suspension of everyday life as a political strategy during times of resistance, in the hope that liberation was around the corner. This was a form of *sumood* that patiently yet hopefully postponed festivities until a happier time. However, during the second intifada, with normal life under attack and happier times further away than ever, ordinary practices, such as picnics on the beach in Gaza (Junka 2006), took on their own resistant meanings. Rather than calling off weddings, wedding parties were held at checkpoints.

But what of resistance in “ordinary” times? At the time of writing this chapter, Gaza has once again been subjected to overwhelming destruction, and tensions in the West Bank are once again running high. Nevertheless, since the end of the second intifada, the West Bank has witnessed several years of “relative calm” due to security cooperation between the Israeli military and the Palestinian authority. This perhaps fleeting calm should not be mistaken for a lack of violence. The occupation is still there, although it has undergone a spatial and temporal reordering. Where Israeli soldiers once set up flying road blocks, Palestinian security personnel now take up positions, while Israeli incursions typically taking place under the cover of night. How do Palestinian young people, who may only

infrequently encounter the direct violence of occupation, understand and resist occupation if not in open confrontation? How are Palestinian young people creating new forms of resistance, including challenging forms of oppression internal to Palestinian society? What historical memories or future hopes animate these modes of resistance? Beyond this, how are young people in Palestine refusing the “representational hegemony” of “occupational suffering” and “violent sensationalism” often imposed upon them by researchers, humanitarian aid workers, journalists, and other external spectators (Harker 2006)? The section below will examine how Palestinian refugee children make sense of and resist the occupation through everyday practice and do so motivated by both individual and collective hopes and informed by a sense of social justice that confronts the occupation as well as gender inequality.

4 The Ambiguities of Play and Resistance

Having outlined conceptual debates within children’s geography regarding resistance and political agency and having provided contextual background regarding the changing role of young people in the Palestinian struggle, the following two sections will flesh out these conceptual debates using empirical examples emerging from long-term ethnographic research with Palestinian refugee children in the West Bank (see Marshall 2013, 2014). This section will demonstrate how even acts of embodied resistance necessarily draw upon multiple discursive subject positions of the Palestinian child, reinforcing some normative understandings of childhood while resisting and transforming others. Before turning to these empirical illustrations, a brief word is needed about the background and methods of this research.

The following empirical examples draw upon extensive ethnographic fieldwork with young people in a West Bank refugee camp. With the cooperation of three different local community centers serving children and youth in Balata Refugee Camp, six children’s research groups were organized – two groups of boys, two groups of girls, and two mixed groups, with participants aged 10–13 years. Though the groups fluctuated in size over time, as some children left and others joined, the target group size was 6, making for a total of 36 participants. Children were recruited through the local community centers, and the consent of the participating children and their parents or guardians was obtained at an initial informational session about the research project organized at the center. Each research group met at least twice per week for about 3 months (some groups continued to meet after 3 months) and conducted a number of research activities throughout this time. Activities included mental mapping, drawing, photo-diaries, walking tours of the camp, and photo/video stories, as well as focus group interviews in which the process and products of these activities were discussed. These research methods served as both embodied and representational practices through which the children could reflect upon their daily lives and practices and how they felt about and made sense of these practices through wider spatiotemporal imaginaries. Interviews with parents, teachers, and youth workers, as well as participatory observation with

community organizations, humanitarian aid agencies, and UN schools, provided insight into the changing character of childhood in Palestine.

Themes of play and resistance came up repeatedly in this research, and it was on the theme of play that the competing and contradictory subject positions of the Palestinian child often pivoted. On one hand, play, typifying “normal” childhood experience, was talked about as something that Palestinian children lack, specifically in the form of healthy and spacious places to play. On the other hand, the children’s capacity for play, despite the restrictive conditions of camp life, was emphasized. Play itself is seen as an act of *sumood* or steadfastness in the face of dispossession and occupation. These themes arose in research with parents and children alike. Umm Suhaib, a mother who participated in a focus group in Balata Camp, put it succinctly: “The children here are suffering from something called ‘no place to play’ – there’s no place for them to be children, like in other places. Not like Europe or outside.” In many discussions, “the outside” is conjured up in contrast to the conditions of childhood inside the camp. As Saleh, a youth worker and older brother remarked, “I look at the TV and see how the kids live outside, and how they live here. I went to the Emirates, and I saw everything with my own eyes, and I was amazed. Every place was for children.” He added “All the places that we could go to outside have been made forbidden to us because of the occupation. . .like the ocean.” For many Palestinian refugees, who were driven from their homes along the coast of historic Palestine, the small joy of visiting the ocean represents national freedom and the right of return. However, Saleh’s sister Khadija, also a youth worker, framed children’s play within a broader language of rights: “Our children have the right to play. . .they have a right to safety and security.” Through the abstract language of rights, the specific, lived conditions of displacement and occupation are highlighted. The right to play here becomes a trope to talk about the circumstances of refugees. Playing *despite* the conditions of occupation becomes an act of resistance. As one mother put it, “our children are the symbols of suffering, but also the symbols of steadfastness [*sumood*].”

However, in discussion with parents, the resistant status of play takes on greater ambiguity and complexity. For example, many of the same parents, who lauded their children’s creative ability to make do with the cramped and confining spaces of the camp, also complained about the incessant noise, shouting, and general chaos of having children constantly playing in the street around their homes. One parent even wryly commented that children “occupy” the streets of Balata. Likewise, other parents seemed concerned that play, although a form of resistance against occupation, was also a form of defiance against cultural norms of Palestinian society. Playing on the computer, online chatting, and texting were of particular concern to parents (see Valentine and Holloway 2002). The time spent on digital devices, to many parents, signified a lack of purpose, wasting time, and a potential corruption of morals. As Umm Tayeb explained, “kids play on the Internet and they use it for the wrong reasons – you have to always keep an eye on them to make sure they’re using it for good purposes, not seeing anything they’re not supposed to or talking to someone they shouldn’t be.” In another focus group, Umm Yazan also distinguished between good and bad uses of technology: “We have to protect children

from the Internet and computers. . . if it's used in a good way, like for knowledge, we want that, but if it's just for wasting time, it's messing up the world." It is the lack of purpose that particularly concerned one father:

In the 1950s or 60s, if you went to any UNRWA school in any camp you would see every child in at a desk with his face in a book. They saw power in their books. By the time the *intifada* came, children saw power in the stones. Now, the children, they have neither books nor stones. Today they see the power in their mobiles, Facebook, and, what's her name, [Lebanese pop-singer] Nancy Ajram? What is that?

However, when asked what he thought of the youth in Egypt and Tunisia (see Jeffrey 2013), who at the time of the interview were using mobile phones and social media to help organize and sustain protests, the father responded: "For every period comes something. Every generation has a tool and a purpose, even if they haven't discovered it yet." For Palestinians who derisively compare the *jeel al-intifada* (*intifada* generation) with the "*jeel al-KitKat*," today's apparently soft and easily broken youth, it seems clear that the purpose and tools of the younger generation still await discovery.

These examples illustrate the multiple and competing subject positions of childhood. Children should experience a "normal childhood" of play, yet they are also expected to fulfill their role as agents of resistance against the occupation, while also being polite and obedient sons and daughters. Play serves at once as an excessive disruption that brings to light the suffering of occupation and places children in the category of "the people" who resist occupation. However, at the same time, this focus on the right to play also serves the purpose of restoring children to their place and reasserting the authority of adults eroded by the *intifada*. Similarly, concerns about technology show a concern for policing the spaces of youth and making sure that these technologies are used for the right purposes. Children are expected to challenge and resist the occupation, while still behaving like children and without challenging the authority of their parents.

Like their parents and other adults, the lack of places to play was also seen by children in this study as a major issue in their lives. However, while children used the lack of places to play as a critique of occupation, they chose mainly to emphasize the creative ability of children to play despite the conditions of refugee life. In a mixed research group of girls and boys, the group used the photos they had taken of the camp and arranged them into a photo story about the lack of places to play in Balata and the creative use of space that children demonstrate by playing in the streets. The children divided the photos into categories, pictures of the cramped conditions of the camp, and pictures showing children playing or using the space creatively. As Nour explains about her pictures:

I wanted to show the trash in the streets, to show it's not a nice or safe place for children, but it's the only place we have to play. These pictures clarify the special struggling and suffering of Balata Camp. Also, in these pictures, you can see the trash, it shows how we live our life. (Fig. 1)

Her friend Hadeel agreed, "Yes, the pictures show there is no place to play, and we suffer from the narrow alleys." The children then included images of boys



Fig. 1 Playing in the alleys of Balata Camp

playing football in the streets and riding their bikes up and down the alleys and girls playing with each other on steps and in doorways.

A disagreement arose about one of the photos, however, an image of graffiti on a wall showing a gun and a political slogan in support of Palestinian prisoners (Fig. 2) (see also Marshall 2014). Nasr, one of the boys in the group objected: “I don’t like this picture. It doesn’t fit with the story about children and playing.” Not only were there no children playing in the picture, but presumably the presence of a gun also shattered the image of an innocent childhood space – after all, the intended audience of this photo story was for “people outside.” However, Nisreen maintained that it fit the theme of creative use of space: “it shows that despite [the occupation], we still have abilities. Like, we have the ability to create pretty pictures even on the walls of the camp.” She added, “This could be the title of the film ‘The Struggle of the Palestinian People and their Skills’ or ‘The Skills of the Palestinian People and the Struggle Which they Face.’ Because these pictures show our struggle, how despite the difficulties, we still have life.” Here, Nisreen is using these images not only to show the difficult circumstances of life under occupation but that young people resist in creative ways. Beyond this, however, Nisreen also uses these pictures to resist the bifurcated framing of childhood practice as being either innocent childhood play or resistance to occupation. The image of the gun defies assumptions of childhood innocence, and her choice to foreground the creative skills of the people (with the children representing the people) *before* their struggle signifies a refusal to be only visible in the narrow

Fig. 2 Graffiti in support of Palestinian prisoners represents skill and creativity of Palestinian young people



confines of violent resistance to occupation. What this discussion helps to illustrate is that conditions of oppression are experienced and contested at the site of the body as well as through representational forms of resistance. Moreover, these representations of children are themselves sites of struggle and political contestation among children.

In this example of play, the sights, smells, and sounds of dirty, cramped, and crowded streets are experienced as embodied affects but understood in terms of struggle against the occupation. The streets are cramped and crowded because the occupation has displaced people from their homes and prevented them from returning. Play in these streets, then, has the potential to become a form of resistance. Images of children playing in the crowded streets of the camp make an appeal to a Western mode of childhood that Palestinian children have been prevented from accessing. This particular narrative, though effective in raising consciousness about the circumstances of occupation, closes the political space of children and pigeonholes them in the role of innocent victim. However, as the discussion between Nasr and Nisreen illustrates, Palestinian children are aware of this and between themselves debate whether, in their own political representations, children should be portrayed as the victims of occupation or an active part of resistance to it. Notions of resistance too are challenged. Does resistance only involved armed struggle (the gun), or can it involve something more creative (the picture of the gun)? Nisreen's comments suggest that by playing in the streets, children are not just symbolizing suffering or even *sumood* under occupation, but are directly resisting their present circumstances by imagining and seeking to create new spatial realities. In a focus group in Balata Camp, one woman, in a discussion about lack of play space in the camp, saw this as a distinct advantage and not a form of suffering. As she put it: "I believe the children who are most creative are the ones that have nothing, who have no space for themselves, so they are forced to create something, to create a space of hope. In my opinion, our society is not creative now. But these children will change that in order to have hope." In this view, play is an act of refusal and of creation: refusal to remain suffering victims and instead create spaces of hope, where different social formations can be imagined and enacted.

5 Gender, Resistance, and Working Toward Transformation

Although there is ambiguity about whether children's play resists occupation or reinforces normative views about childhood, the example of street play as resistance is ambiguous for another reason. The photo story referred to above was, according to the participants, specifically about how "the children" (*al aTfal*) use the cramped spaces of play creatively. This appeal to de-gendered notions of children negates how young people are gendered, especially in regard to their access to space. In fact, Nisreen and another girl in the research group had originally wanted to address the issue of inequitable access to play space in their photo story. However, they found it was difficult to depict girls *not* being able to play and decided to construct a narrative about the lack of space for all children. In this way, a critique of gender inequality was sacrificed in the service of a unified national liberation narrative. Viewing the cramped spaces of the street as a site of oppression by the occupation and as creative resistance to that occupation ignores the street as also being a site where restrictive age and gender hierarchies are reinforced.

In girls and mixed research groups, the issue of *tefriq*, that is, the unequal differentiation or separation of boys and girls, was raised just as frequently and often in connection with lack of space for children in the camp. Many girls characterized the streets not just as dirty, cramped, or generally unwelcoming to children but as specifically unwelcoming to girls. As Dima, a 12-year-old girl in a mixed research group conducted at a childhood center in Balata Camp, remarked, "I don't play in the camp. The only place we have to play is the streets, but the streets of the camp are crowded with impolite boys." For Dima, playing at her grandparents' house outside the camp or at the children's center in the camp was her only option. Many other girls in these research groups also disagreed with this inequitable access to space and advocated for more places for girls to play. As Taghrid, another 12-year-old girl from a different mixed research group at a neighborhood center in Balata Camp, explained: "We play in front of the house sometimes, or on the roof, but these are small spaces, so if we can't play in the streets then we need our own special/private places." While Nisreen and her friend felt as though girls' access to space did not fit the narrative, others saw no contradiction between advocating for free access to play space for girls and free access to national space for Palestinian refugees. As Taghrid's friend Abeer concluded about girls' lack of places to play in Balata: "We all suffer from lack of space, it is part of the occupation, we can't go back to our land, but we girls suffer the most from this. We must all work together to change this situation. All of us." In Abeer's rendering, that girls encounter multiple, intersectional forms of oppression does not create a dilemma of choosing which forms of oppression and resistance to focus on but instead places girls at the center of the struggle against all forms of oppression, including the occupation.

Although girls and boys debated representations of Palestinian children and childhood space, embodied forms of resistance were also discussed, specifically in relation to girls' access to space. Despite restrictions placed on adolescent girls from playing in the streets alone, when walking through the streets of Balata, it is



Fig. 3 Working or playing? Girls performing chores in Balata Camp (Marshall 2015)

not uncommon to encounter girls moving through the camp with relative autonomy, even at night. Very often it is the presence of certain objects, such as a bag of groceries and a handful of shekels, that indicates that girls are helping their mothers, transforming what would be a transgressive and shameful act into a commendable act of obedience (Fig. 3). As Dalia (age 12) from a girls' research group explains, girls sometimes use the appearance of performing a parentally sanctioned task to expand mobility:

Sometimes I get bored helping my mother in the house. But, I always agree when she asks me to do a chore outside, like take something to my aunt's house, or buy something from the store. I'll take a long time, and see my friends, and if my uncles see me I'll just tell them I'm doing something for my mom. If I come back a little late, it's normal. (focus group, 24 September 2010.

In this way, girls use their position within the family as household helper to realize greater mobility outside the house, in a sort of tactical *perroque* (de Certeau 1984, pp. 24–26) in which domestic labor is diverted toward creative, pleasurable, and nonproductive pursuits.

In addition to using tactics to expand their mobility outside the house, girls also use the space within the home to their own advantage (see also Marshall 2015). For example, girls have space to study at home, whether on the roof or in their shared rooms. In their leisure time, girls say they enjoy playing games on the computer and watching television – Arabic language soap operas and American TV shows like

“Hannah Montana” being favorites. The time they spend on the computer and watching American TV might account for the generally better English language skills that girls have compared to boys, skills which open greater career and educational opportunities for them in the future. In this way, tactical, embodied practices form part of long-term strategic forms of resistance against the combined restrictions of occupation and gender inequality. As one father and former UNRWA school teacher put it in an interview:

[...] our girls do not leave the house, their lives revolve around studying and education, and they feel that if they do well, maybe they can get out. So, parents sometimes feel more invested in girls’ education. If parents have a boy and a girl, the old thinking was to invest in the boy, because the girl will just be married off. But girls are the lucky ones now. Parents invest in the ones likely to succeed, the ones who have potential in this life and work hard – the girls.

Likewise, Khadija, the youth social worker quoted above, made a similar observation:

Girls today are enjoying much more freedom, and I don’t mean just more freedom than before, but actually more than boys. Girls can travel to study, there are sponsored trips abroad for girls who study hard, and they have opportunities to look forward to.

Many other parents and educators also confirmed this view. Although educational achievement has long been seen as a way for Palestinian refugees to overcome their negative circumstances, and though the introduction of universal education by UNRWA did much to advance gender equality in Palestinian society, today girls are making use of a variety of educational opportunities in the hopes of overcoming barriers to travel and mobility imposed upon them by the occupation and camp life.

In this way, these forms of strategic resistance do not just resemble work and obedience outwardly as an instance of *la perroque*, rather some girls see hard work, study, and dutiful obedience to parents as not only an integral part of national resistance but, at the same time, an individual struggle for personal achievement. For example, in a girls’ research group, Leila wrote about her goals in her research journal:

Every day I think about how I can achieve success. In school, I hope to have a 90 % average. I want to earn the love of God and the prophets, and to make my mom happy, and continue my education, to travel and be an architect, engineer or doctor. A life without dreams and love is torture.

Using pictures from her photo diaries and walking tour of the camp, Leila then created a photo story about her daily life, studying, and helping out at home. Leila said that, with her photos, she hoped to show: “the lives of ordinary people, like me, and how I hope to achieve the dreams of my mother, like anyone.” In the discussion that ensued, she explained how her dreams, the dreams of her mother, and the dreams of the nation to be free from occupation intertwined:

Researcher: What is your mother’s dream?

Leila: To have a life of freedom and safety.

Researcher: What do you need to do to achieve that?

Leila: We need to stop the occupation. With occupation, you can't go anywhere. The soldiers and weapons stop us from going anywhere. How can you have a free life if you are afraid and you can't go anywhere? We have to stop the occupation if we want to study, and travel and build our life. My dream is to have a free life like other countries, but how can I have that in this camp, with this occupation? We want to have a free life, we want the occupation to leave, and we want to stop being victims. We can do this by working for success.

In this discussion, Leila's sees her goal to please her mother and obtain the blessings of God and to be successful and travel as being indistinguishable from the national goal to end the occupation. To the extent that the occupation prevents her from achieving her goals, working toward her goals and insisting on living her life becomes an act of resistance.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that the lives and bodies of Palestinian young people are propelled in multiple directions by competing normative expectations and pressures. Children are symbols of both struggle and innocence and are expected to resist as well as obey. Children encounter, perform, and seek to transform these competing discourses at the level of the body and everyday space, but do so within a conscious awareness of the wider spatio-historical context of occupation as well as ideals of social justice. Past images of struggle and future hopes for liberation shape everyday performance, and Palestinian young people understand that images of children are meaningful to distant observers. Likewise, everyday spaces, such as the cramped streets of the camp, are experienced through immediate, embodied affect but are made meaningful through an understanding of historical displacement and a critique of occupation. In this way, playing and making do within this space become a kind of resistance to occupation, but a form of resistance that is nevertheless itself contested. Playing as a representational act risks shoeorning young people into the narrow political subjectivity of the suffering child, but as an embodied practice, it demands space for creativity and enjoyment.

As the discussion on habit and social transformation highlights above, the multiple and layered discourses of childhood provoke competing and contradictory impulses, which can give rise to unexpected social formations. Girls are expected to be polite and studious yet also resist occupation. Perhaps in contrast with the forms of self-sacrifice that characterized a previous generation of struggle, girls see future ambition and personal achievement as part of a long-term struggle against occupation. However, they also see this resistance as being inseparable from the struggle for gender equality here and now. By advocating for a redistribution of gendered space in the camp in the present, girls are resisting not only the confining spaces that the occupation has imposed upon them but also the confining spaces that gender inequality imposes.

This refusal to accept the status quo and the demand to change the spatial arrangements of the camp in the form of greater mobility and equal access to play also signal a profound departure from notions of *sumood* as patiently enduring

suffering until liberation can be achieved. As the above discussion on play illustrates, playing in the camp is not just a way of making do under restricted circumstances, it is a creative transformation of space that refuses the subject position of suffering victimhood. The willingness to improve the camp through creating new places of play represents a challenge to the spatial politics of refugee life. Palestinian refugees have often viewed attempts to improve the conditions of the camp as threatening to their refugee status and thus their right of return. In this way, even the demand for new places of play for girls and boys becomes high-stakes politics. However, it must be emphasized that many children and parents see play as a generative form of resistance, helping to create space for resiliency in the present, where new forms of struggle and new, more hopeful futures can be imagined. Just how these futures might take shape remains to be seen.

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The Art of Not Been Governed: Street Children and Youth in Siem Reap, Cambodia

15

Harriot Beazley and Mandie Miller

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Abstract

Street frequenting children and youth in many countries in South East Asia are perceived by the State and mainstream society to be upsetting ideological constructions of citizenship, based on middle class values and to be committing a ‘transgressive act’ by violating the moral boundaries of the ideal family, school and community (Cresswell 1996). The children who work on the streets in Siem Reap, Cambodia are not conforming to the desired image of the ‘ideal

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child' and their constant existence and mobility represents a menace to the success of the State, which is based on the sedentary lifestyles and the view that the family structure is irreplaceable, and the nation is modern and 'developing'. As a result of this perceived transgression, the State and dominant groups, attempts to stigmatise, oppress and conceal undesirable children, and to limit the physical spaces in which they can operate. Drawing on James Scott's (1990) concepts of 'hidden' and 'public' transcripts and 'the Art of Not Being Governed' (2010), this chapter examines how the children and youth who work on the streets of Siem Reap, are able to continue working and achieve mental and physical freedom from their psychic alienation from the State and society. An analysis of their subcultures reveals how they have been able to construct alternative identities as a form of resistance to the constraints placed on them. The subversive and geographical strategies provide a matrix within which they develop feelings of self worth, contest their marginalisation, and counteract the overload of identities attributed to them. These strategies can be recognised as political resistance and as a 'hidden transcript'. As such they may be understood as articulated feelings of passive resistance at the way they have been consistently ignored and alienated from society and the 'public transcript' (Scott, 1990:119).

Keywords

Angkor Wat • APSARA • Cambodian law • Microphysics of power • Milk scam kids • Pub Street • Public transcript • Siem Reap • Hidden transcript • History, culture and society • Milk scam kids • Positive identity construction • Tourism • Cambodian education system • Solidarity • Street children • Geographies and identities • Public space • Transgression • United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

1 Introduction

Street children and youth in many countries in Southeast Asia are perceived by the State and mainstream society to be upsetting ideological constructions of citizenship, based on middle-class values, and to be committing a "transgressive act" by violating the moral boundaries of the ideal family, school, and community (Cresswell 1996; Beazley 2000, 2002, 2003). Often operating outside of parental control, they are seen to be "out of place" and not conforming to the desired image of the "ideal child" in a modern society. Their mobility through urban spaces also represents a menace to the success of the State that wishes to give the impression that the nation is modern and "developing." As a result of this perceived transgression, the State and dominant groups often attempt to stigmatize, oppress, and conceal undesirable street children and to limit the physical spaces in which they can operate (Beazley 2000, 2002, 2003).

By drawing on James Scott's (1990) concepts of "hidden" and "public" transcripts and "The Art of Not Being Governed" (2010), this chapter examines how the lives of street children and youth in the city of Siem Reap, Cambodia, may be understood as a way of achieving mental and physical freedom from their psychic alienation from the Cambodian State and society. An analysis of their lives reveals how children have been able to construct alternative identities for themselves as a form of resistance to the outside world which would prefer that they do not exist. These geographical strategies provide a matrix within which they can regain feelings of belonging and self-worth, contest their marginalization, and counteract the overload of negative identities attributed to them. We argue that such practices can be recognized as political resistance and as a "hidden transcript" to the Cambodian State's "public transcript" (Scott 1990, p. 119).

The lives of street children in Siem Reap cannot be fully explained without first understanding the environment in which they attempt to live and work and the unique context of Cambodia's history and society. It is also important to understand the families from where they originate and the reasons that they work on the streets. The chapter provides a brief overview of Cambodia's history and the style of development which has dominated the country for three decades since the end of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979 and the departure of UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) in 1993. The Khmer Rouge was ousted by the Vietnamese who invaded Cambodia in 1979, but existed as a guerrilla and resistance movement into the 1990s (Chandler 2008, p. 276). Children and young people working on the streets of Siem Reap must be partly understood as an outcome of the country's economic growth strategy, aimed at integrating Cambodia into the global economy. Highlighting how the status of the poor, including street children, has changed during the "development" era in Cambodia, the chapter explains the State's reinforcement of sedentary lifestyles and the changing attitude of *élite* society to those "outside" the development process. We see this rhetoric as an "élite-choreographed public transcript" of domination (Scott 1990, p. 105).

Scott (1990, p. 67) defines a "public transcript" as the State's attempt to persuade the public of its power and to indoctrinate, awe, and intimidate subordinates "into durable and expedient compliance." Following Scott, the chapter uncovers how the current government and dominant groups have constructed their own "public transcript" based on Khmer culture and manipulated ideologies while pursuing an appearance of unity and harmony across the nation. Having established the specific context within which poor families try and survive, we focus on the lives of children and young people working on the streets of Siem Reap and the systems and techniques they exercise as their own "hidden transcript," in order to exist in a hostile environment. The chapter is based on participatory research currently being conducted with street-frequenting children and young people in the city of Siem Reap and which follows a child-focused rights-based participatory methodology. The research was conducted as a part of a PhD thesis with extensive field research being conducted during 2013 and 2014. Funding was provided from the Faculty of Arts and Business, University of the Sunshine Coast.

2 Cambodian History, Culture, and Society

A review of the Cambodian history, State, and society is essential before one can begin to perceive street children and youth in Siem Reap as a youthful practice of political resistance. As writers on resistance assert, “Relations of domination are, at the same time, relations of resistance” (Scott 1990, p. 45), and there can be no adequate study of resistance within any society without a prior study of the forms of power, domination, and suppression used by controlling groups and their agencies (Scott 1990, 2010; Scott and Kerkvliet 1986; Foucault 1981; Turton 1986; Pile and Keith 1997). This approach illuminates not only what is being resisted but also the power relations which limit, and occasionally enable, strategies of resistance to “manipulate, endure, and benefit” from them (Pile 1997, p. 3).

The city of Siem Reap is located in the northwest of Cambodia, approximately 6 km south of the World Heritage Site, Angkor Wat. Since the World Heritage listing of Angkor Archaeological Park in 1992 and the relative political stability that the country has enjoyed since that year, Siem Reap has grown from a sleepy riverside village into a major international tourist destination. According to UNESCO (2014), Angkor Wat is “one of the most important archaeological sites of Southeast Asia . . . [and] a unique concentration of features testifying to an exceptional civilization.”

Siem Reap was the center of the Khmer civilization during the ninth to fourteenth centuries, with the Khmer King declaring himself “king of the world” (Brinkley 2011, p. 18). The empire ended with the fall of Angkor in the fifteenth century (Tully 2005). The Khmer kings possessed the divine quality of a living god on earth, and this divine justification of a king’s rule enabled the Khmer kings to embark on massive architectural projects and to construct majestic monuments such as Angkor Wat and Bayon, the remains of which are close to modern day Siem Reap. The Angkorian monarchy survived until 1431, when the Thai captured Angkor Thom and the Cambodian king fled to the southern part of the country. The fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries were a period of decline and territorial loss with Cambodia caught between the power struggles of two powerful neighbors, Siam (Thailand) and Vietnam. Cambodia was a protectorate of France from 1867 until 1953, although the province of Siem Reap was part of Thailand, until it was ceded back to France in 1906 (Chandler 2008). Cambodian independence from the French in 1953 was followed by civil war, turmoil, and political corruption.

During the Vietnam war, the USA released over 2 and 3 quarter million tons of bombs on Cambodia in an attempt to prevent Vietcong troops from using eastern Cambodia as a sanctuary and as a supply route via the Ho Chi Minh trail (Owen and Kiernan 2006; Brinkley 2011, p. 34; Tully 2005, p. 160). This aggression led to further support for the rural-based communist leader Pol Pot and his communist Khmer Rouge entourage, who brought the country into the darkest days of its history, and the infamous “killing fields,” where nearly two million of Cambodia’s eight million population was killed or died of disease or starvation (Church 2012; Chandler 2008). Vietnam invaded Cambodia in January 1979 with the support of Cambodian anti-Khmer Rouge forces (Neupert and Prum 2005). Internationally it was agreed that a peaceful resolution could only be obtained with “an enhanced

United Nations role, in the form of UNTAC” (Brinkley 2011, p. 65). The UN left in 1993 leaving a “clique of thugs” to run the country, with no concern for the Cambodian people, who continued to live in poverty (Brinkley 2011, p. 89).

Today, Cambodia still struggles to overcome its dark history and is blighted with poverty, corruption, and trauma. Approximately six million land mines still scatter the nation, and forty thousand land mine amputees struggle to make a living. According to *The Economist* (2012: n.p.), the current President Hun Sen “is widely viewed as a dictator who has assumed authoritarian power in Cambodia using violence and intimidation and corruption to maintain his power base.” During 2007–2008, Hun Sen’s government sold 45 % of the total landmass (including national parks and private land) of Cambodia to foreign investors. As a result, more than 150,000 Cambodians were faced with forced eviction (Levy and Scott-Clark 2008). Brinkley (2011, p. 350) states that “Cambodians have been abused by so many leaders over so many years that they expect nothing of their government. In fact they remain convinced that any change will be painful, if not fatal.” However, Brinkley (2011, p. 354) concedes that “Hun Sen has given Cambodians one very important thing: more than a decade of stability and calm that brings some predictability to their lives for the first time in centuries.” In relation to the Cambodian population, Chandler (2008, p. 300) comments:

... with a soaring birth rate, poor health, and a government that seems to be unprepared to be genuinely unresponsive to people’s needs, the prospect for the short and medium term seem to be very bleak. However, the resilience, talents and desires of the Cambodian people, and their ability to defy predictions, suggest that a more optimistic assessment of their future might [be] possible.

Amnesty International (2012: n.p) further reflected that in that year:

... [f]orced evictions, land disputes and land grabbing continued on a large scale, with thousands of people affected. An increase in the number of economic land concessions granted to business interests by the government exacerbated the situation. Impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses and lack of an independent judiciary remained serious problems. The authorities continued to restrict the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly by threatening, harassing and taking legal action against human rights defenders in an effort to silence them.

Thus, while the Pol Pot regime has ended, fear of State intimidation through physical forms of coercion and persecution still exists, together with other political resources or methods of power which reinforce the public transcript of the Cambodian state. These methods are sustained through tactics which go beyond the microlevel to the reinforcement of the public transcript (Scott 1990).

2.1 Ideological Indoctrination: The Microphysics of Power

In Foucault’s (1981, p. 93) analysis of power, he talks of the need to examine forms of power which surpass the state and which are ensured by techniques and tactics over bodies – both social and individual – using a multiplicity of institutions, with

the help of what he calls the “microphysics of power” (Foucault 1981, p. 84). Gramsci (1979) believed that the reproduction of a capitalist society depends on the dominant class maintaining its hegemony through political ideological struggle. In such a way, the State can “work with velvet gloves” by means of seemingly respectable mechanisms, so that “the hegemony of one social group over the entire nation is exercised” (Gramsci 1979, p. 204). Social control in Cambodia, therefore, has depended on the dominant class legitimizing its hegemony and its moral boundaries. In this way, ideological indoctrination provides significant assistance to the State’s attempts to maintain power and to create a culture of conformity for uniting and reproducing a highly unequal society (Anderson 1991, p. 134). This is because in Cambodia ideological currents are seen as keys for explaining the complicated disorder of the contemporary world and presented by the elite as a way to open the door between ignorance and knowledge (Anderson 1991, p. 45; see also Foucault 1981, p. 98).

Cresswell (1996, pp. 19, 179) examines ideology in terms of Bourdieu’s (1977) ideas of *doxa* or “common sense,” as a mechanism for domination, and sees these ideas as resembling Gramsci’s conception of hegemony. Drawing on these works, Cresswell (1996, p. 18) contends that globally the State and mainstream society dictate what is natural in the “commonsense world” and considered to be appropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior is seen to be the opposite to common sense and is, therefore, regarded as a transgression of the “natural” boundaries set by the established order. These boundaries have affected society’s mental, moral, and spiritual development, thus mobilizing society to serve the needs of the State, to behave in certain ways, and to be acquiescent social subjects (van Langenberg 1986, p. 13). This authorized discourse is what Foucault (1975, p. 30) refers to as a “regime of truth” or in Scott’s words “the public transcript.”

Since the demise of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, the Cambodian State’s principal method for gaining legitimacy and consolidating the power interests of the State has been through economic growth and the systematic promotion of a development ideology, industrialization, low wages for “comparative advantage” over other countries, tourism, and the reintegration of the Cambodian economy with world capitalism while also promoting its cultural heritage (Chheang 2010, p. 91). Tourism development in Cambodia is driven by globalization and government policy and, after the textile industry, is the second biggest income contributor to the Cambodian people (Chheang 2009, p. 89). The Cambodian government considers tourism as the “engine of economic growth and poverty reduction, as well as national identity promotion” (Chheang 2010, p. 90). Cambodia’s “development” and integration into the global economy since 1992 has attempted to avoid negative images to the outside world and is keen to show Cambodia as a safe, Western-friendly tourist destination with the Cambodian government placing tourism as the number one priority for national development planning.

The development focus seems to have paid off with economic globalization and “commodity capitalism” encouraging materialism, consumerism, and individualism in all levels of Cambodian society. These changes in values have had far-reaching repercussions on class and changing patterns of middle-class ideology

which have, consequently, affected the family and gender relations. The urban élite today live a similar lifestyle to traditional Khmer elite with luxurious homes and consumer goods and access to privileges and rewards from the government's patrimonialist system.

The model for modern Cambodian culture and society, therefore, has emerged from a mixture of Western, urban middle-class values, together with Khmer feudal aristocracy, based on the maintenance of a social hierarchy. Development ideology has not only focused on technocratic techniques for economic development but has incorporated policies of social engineering and moral boundary enforcement. This has been partly through the intervention of the state into civil society in an effort to transform cultural norms and values and to determine the direction of development and social change. Thus, economic growth and the increase of an urban middle class have been paralleled by the expansion of a modern consumer culture, with élite control through ideological discourse formulating the expected norms of city life.

According to Foucault, the key to social control is through the body and sexuality and reproduction, which in Cambodia centers on the ideology of the harmonious family and the ideal child (Foucault 1981, p. 139). In this way, elite social groups provide models of authorized personal relations and family life. In modern Cambodia, families are not regarded as being "private" and may be seen as an "agency of control" for the élite and as an indispensable instrument for political control and economic development (Foucault 1981, p. 121). By making the family the smallest administrative unit, the family has been absorbed directly into the development process and the structure of power. In this way, the home is positioned in Cambodian State discourse as having a fixed agenda of values and interests that are heavily moralized. This is because it is the site of child rearing and the regulation of sexuality as well as the central site of consumption and thus of fundamental importance to the economy and development. The nation can thus be seen to be "invading the home" by providing cues for behavior in families, as they relate to the domestic environment (Sibley 1995, p. 90).

2.2 The Construction of the "Ideal Child"

It is well acknowledged that the meaning of "child" has been socially and culturally constructed in different ways in different times and spaces (Aries 1962; De Mause 1976; Cunningham 1991; Holloway and Valentine 2000). It is important to be aware of the effect of the Khmer Rouge genocide period on the "typical" family and the frequent and dramatic political changes that have occurred since. There is also the omnipresent influence of globalization and modernization on traditional cultural values, especially for the younger generation and young males in particular as they adopt Western attitudes that are significantly different from those of older generations (Gourley 2009, p. 10, Thapliyal, ► Chap. 2, "Privatized Rights, Segregated Childhoods: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Education Policy in India" in this volume) (see also Thapliyal, ► Chap. 2, "Privatized Rights, Segregated

[Childhoods: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Education Policy in India](#)” in this volume, for a discussion on the construction of childhood in India).

UNCRC values	Cambodian values
Equality/participation	Hierarchy
Transparency	Honor/reputation
Gender equity	Patriarchy
Empowerment	Patronage
Justice	Harmony
Individualism	Collectivism

Source: Gourley 2009, p. 14

Gourley (2009), in the table above, provides a point of comparison between Cambodian traditional values and those of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989), of which Cambodia is a signatory since 1992. The UNCRC represents Western development concepts and values and not those of Cambodian or in fact many Asian nations. The Convention in fact conflicts with “sociocultural understandings of childhood” and the lived experiences of children in the global south (Evans and Skovdal, ► [Chap. 1, “Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice”](#) in this volume). The UNCRC specifies that all persons below the age of 18 should be assured of certain rights, based on international development norms. In modern Cambodia, the UNCRC has become part of the elite’s public transcript, with a “transformation in representations of the role of the child and the nature of childhood,” where the child no longer has a role within the family economy and is not required to work. The children of the elite attend international schools or study overseas. This young, ambitious, and well-educated generation perpetuates the powerful dynasties and consolidates the opportunity and privilege associated with belonging to the “right people” (Leung 2004). “Cambodia has been colonised all over again, this time by its own greedy and ruthless ruling class . . . opponents have been silenced while loyalists have grown rich” (Marshall 2010: n.p.).

In Cambodia, education stands “as a cornerstone of national aspirations for modernity” and is seen as the means to social mobility (Ayres 2000, p. 461). Children aspire to attend and complete their schooling, and parents, increasingly aware of the future opportunities afforded, support the education of at least some of their children. The reality of the education system, however, is that it is inadequate, is under-resourced, and fails to meet the needs of the children that it is charged to educate (NEP and VSO 2008). For those children in the lower classes, the struggle for upward mobility is fraught with obstacles and frustration in a patronage system (knowing someone) for employment and the difficulties associated with attending school.

As a mirror of elite society, the Cambodian State has constructed the “ideal child” within the public transcript, where a child is expected to be shaped by the forces of the family and school, the two most powerful socializing influences in a child’s life and which are saturated with ideological discourse and values. Families

in elite Cambodian society demand that their children should be “seen and not heard” and stay close and loyal to their families. The education system in Cambodia is about transferring ideology rather than transferring knowledge, and through the State-controlled textbooks, it is anticipated that children will perpetuate State ideology and values into the future. In this way, the education system has been used by Cambodia’s leaders to “create good citizens, [and] promote their vision of the State” (Ayres 2000, p. 458). Education, while modernizing, still aims to “sustain the key tenants of the traditional policy” where the State maintains both leadership and power and personal legitimacy of the ruler is reinforced (Ayres 2000, p. 458). Children are thus taught what is expected of them by their parents and their teachers and how they should behave. There are also gender stereotypes for the socialization of boys and girls which are reinforced through the school system, with the girl child being brought up differently from the boy child (Gourley 2009; Miles and Thompson 2007; Walsh 2007).

3 Exclusionary Practices by the State

Following the listing of Angkor Wat as a World Heritage Site, the development of a “cultural heritage” industry has promised Cambodia “the restoration of identity, history, cultural sovereignty and national pride” (Winter 2008, p. 525). Tourism development in Cambodia has been driven by globalization and government policy, and the Cambodian government has identified tourism as the driver of economic growth and poverty reduction, as well as an opportunity for national identity promotion.

The growth of tourism in Siem Reap since 1993 has led to rapid urbanization, impacting on people’s lives as the city, the informal sector, and urban poverty have expanded. Over 50 % of the population of inner-city Siem Reap have migrated from other regions of Cambodia in the hope of gaining employment in the rapidly expanding tourist sector (Chheang 2010, p. 8). Despite the huge growth in the economy as a result of tourism, Cambodia has experienced major increases in inequity with those who are not part of this new economy much worse off in real terms (Cambodia UNDAF 2011). As a result, there has been a “deterioration in food consumption and hence in food and nutritional security” for the population at large; 40 % of children are stunted, 11 % wasted and 30 % receive inadequate nutrition (UNICEF 2012, p. 5). Only 50.5 % of the population have access to contraceptives (UNICEF 2013).

Within Siem Reap, 22 % of workers earn below the national poverty line of US\$0.63 per person per day, and 26 % earn below the international poverty line of US\$ 1 per day (CIDS 2011). The minimum wage of US\$61 per month exists only in the garment, textile, and shoe industries. All other industries are unregulated and 46 % of Cambodian workers earn below the minimum wage (CIDS 2011). More than 50 % of those living in the town of Siem Reap are employed in the tourist industry (Chheang 2010, p. 8). Incomes range from \$60 per month as a waiter, \$70 for a construction worker, or up to \$350 per month in the high season for a tuk-tuk

driver. Tourism development is positive in that it provides employment opportunities and income, of prime economic importance to local populations. However, competition and flooding of the market has meant that while a tuk-tuk driver made a comfortable living 2 or 3 years ago, today they struggle for fares, even in the high season (personal communication, Nov 2013–Feb 2014). Only 6 % of people living in the Angkor Archaeological Park, however, have work that is related to tourism (Chheang 2010, p. 8). These people are still very poor and few have benefitted from the enormous influx of tourists. Most still live their traditional subsistence lifestyles, although some are able to supplement their income by making and selling low-cost handcrafts.

People who have been unable to find work in the growing tourism sector or in the new textile or footwear factories springing up across the country have ended up trying to earn money on the streets, in the increasingly crowded informal sector. As the informal sector has grown, the street has become a reflection of serious economic imbalances and deep social inequalities which exist within Cambodian society. Street-frequenting children can be seen as a visible indication of this disorder, because children living in poor, lower-class families have been affected by socio-economic problems in the home. Poverty is frequently cited as one of the main causes of children first going to the streets to find alternative channels of income. They also say that they need to work to pay for their schooling (NEP and VSO 2008, p. 26).

3.1 A Different Reality

Poor families are, therefore, responsible for the socialization of their children in a way that contradicts State policy and the elite family values which the Cambodian government is trying to impose. This is because the “traditional” concepts of “family” and children’s roles in society as promoted by the State are the antithesis of the reality of the majority of lower-class families in Khmer society. Such ideologies are highly inappropriate and are merely an imposition of middle-class values which have molded “traditional” practices to suit the needs of dominant groups to create a passive, socialized workforce and to control overpopulation and unemployment. The dominant State discourse only sees women in relation to their husbands and children, thus understating their roles in the labor market and the fact that many women and children are economically independent and have to cope with the problems of poverty, unemployment, and oppression in their everyday lives.

The reduced birth and survival rate of those born during the Khmer Rouge reign, who are now aged 35–39 years, is clearly evident in Khmer society. Also of note is the lower number of males compared to females who survived this period and the previous years of war in every age group (CIA 2014). This reality has resulted in a demographic imbalance and a surplus of “women of marriageable age” during the 1980s and early 1990s (Walsh 2007, p. 10). Such changes to social structure have resulted in a decline in women’s status in the family and general community. Women head between 25 % and 30 % of Cambodia’s households and have, through necessity, assumed traditionally male roles and now “discipline male children,

build or repair houses, deal with community leaders and government officials, and fulfil the religious and social obligations” (Walsh 2007, p. 8). As the sole supporter, these women must also make critical decisions affecting the family. Socially and culturally, female heads of household are not accepted, and men find it difficult to interact publicly with single women (Walsh 2007, p. 8). Single women are frequently viewed with “suspicion, if not hostility,” by the married women who view them as a threat to their own marriages (Walsh 2007, p. 8). Although illegal, polygamy has increased as a consequence.

The lower social status of women means that they often suffer gross human rights violations, are treated as mere possessions, and are denied their rights and full participation in society (Walsh 2007). It is estimated that, on average, women in Cambodia are paid 30 % less than men for commensurate work (Walsh 2007). Such a truth means that women cannot stay at home looking after their children, but must go out to work. It also often means that their children must work too. Cambodian law states that children under 14 are not allowed to work, including selling on the streets. In reality, however, that many children are economically active is a result of necessity, culture, and poorly enforced child labor laws (Evans and Skovdal, ► Chap. 1, “Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice” in this volume). An estimated 45 % of boys and 44.6 % of girls aged 5–14 work in Cambodia (ILO 2013). Among working children 5–14 years, 76.5 % are employed in the agricultural sector, 5.8 % work in the industrial sector, and 17.7 % work in services. Of working children aged 5–14 years, 90.3 % are employed as unpaid family workers (ILO 2013). Unpaid work at home in a Western context is referred to as “helping around the house” or “doing their bit to help.” Paid employment is “earning some pocket money.” In Cambodia, the Western social construction applied is that work completed by a child is “child labor” and therefore to be discouraged.

Further, the discourse among tourism companies, tourists, and NGOs is that children in Cambodia should not work on the streets (Green Gecko, Friends International, Childsafe International, Personal communication, Feb. 2014). Within this Western view, the perception exists that the child’s parents are prohibiting the child from attending school in order to maximize and capitalize on the child’s ability to make money from tourists, because of the sympathy the “poor children” engender especially when they are young and “cute.” Tourists cite the information contained in the distributed campaign pamphlets and the advice provided by tourist operators as the source of their information and the reason that they would not buy anything from street children. A cultural stereotype has been developed and is being promulgated among tourists. For example, *Think Twice Cambodia’s* (2014) stated purpose “is to raise awareness among businesses in the tourist industry, NGOs and visitors on Child Labour issues and to encourage people ‘Not to Buy from Children’ but instead to support anti-child labour initiatives and support children to return to school” (*Think Twice Cambodia* (2014)). A number of NGOs actively promote this “earn or learn” dualism.

Within this public transcript, children (and their parents) are seen as deviant and transgressing if they do not conform to the hierarchical-based laws, regulations,

sanctions, and the Western construct of how children should behave and exist in public space. Children from poor, traditional Khmer homes live very different lives to their more affluent peers, as they are often required to work and to contribute to the family income. They are, however, viewed by mainstream society as deviants or misfits, a product of dysfunctional families and communities who are themselves to blame for their state of marginalization and poverty. This social construction has become informed by Western standards, which are superimposed onto the Cambodian landscape and subsequently inflicted on street-frequenting children everywhere. The attitude is reinforced and given momentum by tourist operators, NGOs, and *Tourism Cambodia*. Once on the street, therefore, street-frequenting children and young people are demonized and marginalized by the State and mainstream society, a society that believes they defy moral values and are “feral and untamed” (Beazley 2003; Ansell 2005). The very sight of them in public spaces is seen as illegitimate and as a social violation which justifies their intimidation, arrest, imprisonment, and physical removal.

In this way, the city of Siem Reap has been reconstructed into a “touristscape,” and Khmer children working on the streets are seen as transgressing simply by their presence. Research by Chheang (2011, p. 225) has shown that, prior to their arrival in Cambodia, “tourists perceive Cambodia as a relatively dangerous place due to the fact that [the] country has recently suffered from armed conflict, land mines, and crime” and that “tourists enjoy their visit but identified ‘local poverty’ as one of their issues of concern” (Chheang 2011, p. 238). Poor and dirty children working on the streets are often perceived by tourists as a threat (to personal safety or as potential pickpockets) or at best as an annoyance to tourists who are “constantly approached by children trying to sell things” (Tourist comments, personal communication, January 2014).

When visiting Siem Reap, the tourist gaze can accept the new Khmer middle class in their Range Rovers and Lexus, the restaurant staff, and even the culturally delightful *tuk-tuk* drivers, but it does not tolerate impoverished children or land mine victims. The destitute and disabled remind the tourist of Cambodia’s poverty and violent past and the still present threat of land mines, thus reinforcing the tourist’s preconceived ideas about the war-torn nation. This is not the image that Cambodia seeks to project. The Cambodian government has legislated to remove “these concerns” from the tourist landscape rather than prioritize the development agenda. Real and perceived security and safety issues have been addressed in recent years to ensure that Cambodia is in fact a safe tourist destination. Chheang (2011, p. 229) comments favorably that “[s]treet children and beggars are decreasing dramatically thanks to the assistance of several NGOs working in the region.”

During research on the streets of Siem Reap, tourists were observed physically pushing young children away and shouting at them. One man was observed placing his hand on a young girl’s face and roughly pushing her away. Most nationalities have a larger physical size, and as “white” or older people, they are given respect by the children. Many tourists were observed displaying anger and an intimidating presence when haggling and then demanding a lower price. These prices would leave no or marginal profit for the seller. Another child explained that sometimes

people say “go away,” “it is bad the way they talk sometimes, some people do not like me selling . . . I like to practice my English.”

3.2 APSARA

APSARA is the government authority charged with the protection and management of Angkor Archaeological Park; research, protection, and conservation of cultural heritage; as well as urban and tourist development. In 2006, the government, through the local police and APSARA police (a special corps developed to protect the heritage areas), legislated to prevent or restrict the locations from which young Khmer could sell in Siem Reap. Legislation was also enforced that prevents children under 14 from being economically active. This legislation had dramatic ramifications for those affected. The imposition of the law in 2006 has resulted in severe police crackdowns and a negative discourse on children selling on the streets. Many of the children that were working on the streets in 2006 were jailed and suffered inhumane treatment and displacement. Street sellers had their goods confiscated and fingerprints recorded, and they were made to sit in an area of isolation for a number of hours. Younger children when caught had their heads shaved (personal communication, Nov 2013–Feb. 2014, Nov. 2014). This treatment still continues. Children taken to prison have to remain there until a family member could pay to have the child released. “The police “train us” not to be on the streets by use of electric shock and being hit by a stick” (personal communication, Feb 2014). Cambodia does not have a juvenile justice system, and children aged 14–18 are tried in the adult criminal justice system and are subsequently detained and imprisoned in adult prisons. In 2014 approximately 95 children were held in Siem Reap prison where numerous issues violate their rights, despite Cambodian and international laws that should be protecting them (This Life Cambodia (2014), personal communication, Nov 2013–Feb. 2014, Nov. 2014).

The efforts of a number of NGOs to assist children on the street have reduced the number of incarcerations although children are still detained awaiting payment. Those that decide to remain on the streets in spite of the crackdowns make the unauthorized payment (bribe) to the APSARA police of \$10 per month that allows vendors to stay working on the streets. One child seller we met was forced out of Siem Reap in 2006 at 16 years of age. He now earns \$5 for a 12 hour day as a laborer making concrete statues at a pagoda in the south of Cambodia. His English language skills are very good, and he reported that as a child bookseller outside the pagoda, he was able to finance his ongoing schooling. At that time, with the new regulations in force and unable to afford the \$200 per month bribe the police demanded, he left school and migrated south in search of work.

APSARA police patrol the Angkor Archaeological Park daily on their motor-bikes. The “regular payments” demanded for a seller to continue operating is understood within the patronage culture and accepted by the local community. The polite greetings and acceptance of APSARA’s presence by the community are, as Scott (1990, p. 24) suggests, “intended in some sense to convey the outward impression of conformity with standards sustained by superiors.”

At Angkor Wat, there is an arbitrary rope line over which sellers are forbidden to display their items for sale. Sellers who are caught just “over the line” will have their goods confiscated. Sary (age 17) reported that “the police have taken my bag with money but gave the money back and kept the bag; they also took my jacket and scarf.” Similarly the stall holders are confined to the area behind the rope for their shop and a 10 m area in front in which they can approach tourists. The “10 m” selling zone is in fact based on the interpretation of the individual temple police and varied daily. This reinforced the power against the subordinate sellers.

APSARA police can, without explanation, tell a “shop” seller (items sold from a small two-wheeled cart) to move from their site; confiscate goods, a bicycle, and personal items; imprison a minor; increase fees payable; etc. The young people who sell from the “shops” are required to pay the APSARA police \$10 per month. The associated fear ensures that as far as the public transcript is concerned, compliance is ensured and “subordinates offer a performance of deference and consent” (Scott 1990, p. 3). The punishment for the “transgressing criminal” that is caught will vary. Girls may be taken away to have their heads shaved and later be released. Five girls during the research reported that this had recently occurred. Boys are often taken to the local police station. Proen (a 14-year-old male bookseller in Siem Reap) explained that “twice I was taken by police to the police station for selling and my parents had to pay \$30 each time to get me out” (personal communication, Jan 2014). Focus group discussions revealed the inconsistencies and the difficulty of interpreting the rules. “Police may kick us out and the rules are quite arbitrary and it depends on the person,” said Sary (16) (personal communication, Jan 2014). Sale items are confiscated and retained by the police, and personal items such as a bicycle will be seized and a \$5 payment required for the return.

Similarly, the children selling fruit to tourists to feed the long-tailed macaques near Angkor Wat reported that they were required to make payments to both the temple and APSARA police a total of \$40 per month. This payment is not official and will be retained by the police themselves. It does guarantee some level of security provided that the monthly payment is made. Failure to make payment results in the children being taken and locked up by the police, until their parents make the payment and an additional amount to have the child released.

4 Geographies of Resistance: The Hidden Transcript

If we are to understand the process by which resistance is developed and codified, the analysis of off stage social spaces becomes a vital task. Only by specifying how such social spaces are made up and defended is it possible to move from the individual resisting subject- an abstract fiction- to the socialization of resistant practices and discourses. . . The social spaces where the hidden transcript grows are themselves an achievement of resistance, they are won and defended in the teeth of power. (Scott 1990, pp. 118–119).

In the passage above, Scott is observing that the creation of a “hidden transcript” or subculture needs space. This is because it is through space that everyday experiences and identities are constructed, articulated, and enacted (Keith and Pile 1993,

p. 2). Spatialities are, therefore, essential not only to domination but also to resistance, as “resistance occurs in spaces beyond those defined by power relations” (Pile 1997, p. 26). Thus, in order to understand the street children community in Cambodia as a hidden transcript, it is vital to first appreciate how their social spaces have been won, created, and defended “in the teeth” of power.

Control by dominating agents may be seen as complete, but there is always the possibility of subversion. . . the relatively powerless still have enough power to carve out spaces of control in respect of their day-to- day lives (Sibley 1995, p. 76).

So far, the chapter has demonstrated how street children are both spatially and socially oppressed, through multiple forms of social control, marginalization, and powerlessness, and how everyday life for a street child can be like living in the enemy territory in Siem Reap. Public space, however, is a means of survival for street children and youth, as it is where they can access resources to alleviate their needs. It is indeed vital to their very existence that they find spaces in the city in which they can survive, even if it is a marginal space like the side of the road. Such appropriation of space by subordinate groups has been described as “carving out” and “chiseling away” spaces of control from the margins of power (Sibley 1995; Clarke et al. 1976; Scott 1990; Huang and Yeoh 1996).

In response to their subordination, street children in Cambodia have developed a repertoire of strategies which have contributed to the formation of a street child “cultural space,” including spaces on the street in which they can survive. These are spaces for coping that the children have negotiated and constructed for themselves, within the marginal existence imposed on them by the “government.” Street children’s production and use of space may be understood as “geographies of resistance” and are specific urban niches they have “won” for their everyday survival (Pile 1997). (See also Marshall, ► [Chap. 14, “Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine”](#) in this volume for a discussion on children’s play as a form of resistance).

Street children’s geographies are transient, and their relationships with different spaces are complex as they interact with, negotiate around, and react against different social groups and outside forces. This includes how different street children identify with particular areas, for example, the children who operate at the temple, the children who sell books at Pub Street, and the “milk scam kids” in the tourist area.

The young sellers from Angkor Wat and the booksellers from Pub Street in Siem Reap, rather than being the passive victims of a society and government that has failed them, have instead developed into successful and active agents that are affecting change and a future beyond poverty for themselves and their families. As Beazley (2003, p. 4) asserts:

The majority of society often construct street children to be deviant criminals, or they are over-romanticized by the press and charity groups, and portrayed as the passive victims of a ruthless society. . . street children should not be perceived within such rigid stereotypes. Instead, it is important to focus on street children’s agency in order to challenge those commentators who present them as total victims, or as cunning criminals. (Beazley 2003, p. 4).

Ansell (2005, p. 21) has also stated that it is “widely accepted that childhood is socially constructed . . . and that children are social actors, not just incomplete beings learning to become adults.” As a result of the 2006 government legislation, some street vendors have exercised their agency by migrating internally or into Thailand and Malaysia, to find work and to supplement the family income. Others, however, have opted to defy the law and to remain selling on the streets which can be understood as the child’s own solution to a personal predicament. They have taken responsibility for their own actions and have taken some control over their lives. They have developed strategies to avoid APSARA and the local police or are able to appease them via regular payments (bribes).

A hidden transcript has developed, within each of the groups, which help provide individual and collective support for each other and protection from legal consequences. The economic imperative is such that the young people are in direct competition with each other as they vie for customers. This is evident whenever potential customers are approached and each seller attempts to win space and therefore an advantage for a potential sale. More important than this, however, is the collective identity as a street child which seeks to ensure protection from the ever present threat from APSARA or the police (Beazley 2003). The remainder of this chapter will focus on the hidden transcript of two groups of children in two sites where street children operate, selling their good to tourists: Angkor Wat and Pub Street.

4.1 Angkor Wat

Outside Angkor Wat, a definite hierarchy of sellers exists, and young children will begin their selling careers by joining a group from the village. These groups of approximately eight to ten children are typically 8–14 years old. Beazley (2003) refers to the way the street boys in Indonesia “play on the fact that they look cute, thus gaining sympathy from the general public.” Older children in the group will mentor the younger ones, teaching them various methods by which to approach tourists and avoid the police. Focus group discussions constantly affirmed the value and protection afforded by the group and the importance of “looking out for each other.” As Scott (1990, p. 119) confirms, “a resistant subculture . . . is necessarily a product of mutuality.” For example, the sellers are often unable to generate sufficient money for a bribe, and solidarity between sellers dictates that no one seeks favor from APSARA. Scott (1990, p. 131) explains that “reputation in any closely knit community has very practical consequences.” Where survival and daily life are inextricably interwoven, perceived disunity can undermine social autonomy.

Solidarity is a characteristic of the poor the world over, and security networks emerge because individuals lack resources and need to help one another in the struggle for everyday survival. That the children can continue to sell and make at least some money to add to the family income is the result of their collective support group (Beazley 2003). Authority within the group is the result of age and success

and these children are treated with additional respect. A group of young boys (of approximately 8–14 years) at the temple are constantly on the watch for the tourist police and will dare to approach the temple gates once the ticket sellers and guards have gone home. This window of time provides an opportunity to greet tourists who are leaving the site, practice their English (or other languages), and sell postcards and books to tourists. On a number of occasions while chatting to a group of children that were selling books and postcards, they would run off and scatter without warning. APSARA or temple police would invariably be approaching. The children, ever wary, constantly vigilant, and with heightened senses, scour the area for police and benefit from the multiple eyes and ears that working as a group provides. They disperse on entering the surrounding forest and reappear when safe to do so.

The mobile sellers at the temples are typically less than 14 years (the legal working age). The young girls and boys selling their postcards and bracelets also operate in a group, wandering around the car park, shops, and restaurant area opposite the entrance to Angkor Wat. English language skills vary from three or four words to almost fluent. The extent of English was reflected in the success of being able to engage and communicate with the tourists. The APSARA and temple police will allow the mobile sellers to sell in front of the restaurants if they pay them \$5.00 per month. Selling only bracelets and postcards does not provide sufficient earnings to pay this fee, so the children must operate illegally and avoid detection. The girls are wary and on constant group surveillance. Group discussions would often end as the children suddenly ran off. They soon returned, and when asked why, they said that “it was because someone thought they saw the police coming” (personal communication, Jan 2014). Similarly, it was observed on many occasions that the children would run away and abandon a sale when the APSARA police were sighted.

The children are not forbidden from the area as this is where many of their parents work. The law prevents them from approaching tourists or, because of their age, selling. Those with small items for sale will often just hide them in a pocket or shoulder bag when they see the police. The older shop sellers were also frequently observed shielding the young children from view as the police approached. Young children have limited capital and will characteristically sell the traditional reed bracelets or bamboo flutes, made by older female family member, or the postcard packs. Items must be small, easily carried and transported, and most importantly hidden when necessary. If family circumstances are such that they are able to retain some of the profits, the children will buy guidebooks or books on Cambodia to sell.

Outside Angkor Wat, groups of children typically swarm around the approaching tourists, overwhelming them with numbers, items for sale, and a few rehearsed words of “please Madam you buy from me” as they plead for a purchase. Success is unlikely in this situation, and the negative discourse about street sellers is perpetuated from these experiences. The more street-savvy children who have been on the street for longer will teach the younger children the “soft skills” required for a successful transaction. This is dependent on the child having some English so that they can engage with the tourist. They learn to approach the tourists through

conversation and a connection rather than an en masse surrounding that is more likely to result in a negative experience for both parties. The children also asked the researchers for ways that they could develop their skills and more successfully interact with tourists.

Over time and as a result of the experienced tuition and life experiences of the older mentors, many children develop entrepreneurial and personal interaction skills. They will pass on their understanding of Western culture and the importance of addressing and approaching a tourist in a way that is considered acceptable by Western standards. These skills have been identified in various studies as lacking in the general population due to insufficient education and training (Youth Employment Service pers. comm. Jan–Feb 2013). That some children develop such skills through self- and peer education is a testament to their resourcefulness.

Developing the ability to speak English is acknowledged as most important and a necessity for moving beyond the cycle of poverty that engulfs the poor Khmer. Government schools do not have the resources to teach English. A few local NGOs and community groups provide English lessons, although for most, and the researched village in particular, this opportunity did not exist. Attending an English language school for 2 h per day at \$25 per month is prohibitively expensive. The young people in this study were only able to develop some proficiency in English, through their interactions with tourists. Learning the skills whereby this situation might be possible was taught through the hierarchy of the young people themselves.

The APSARA police payday also presents the opportunity for children to trade un-harassed. Police are paid in cash approximately once a month, although this is not on a specified day. Ean (age 17) reported that the young people:

... never know what day pay day is, but the police are there for a couple of hours and then all disappear and do not return for the day ...not sure why they don't come back, perhaps they have a party ... so on this day we can sell anywhere that we like. (personal communication, Ean Feb. 2014).

During these afternoons, the sellers are able to approach tourists over the entire area, although they would not move far out of their range and the years of practice ensured that they maintained their vigilance. This was a “very good selling time.” Public holidays such as Chinese or Khmer New Year, or the daily lunch break for the police, similarly provided further opportunities to trade outside the imposed geographical limitations and capitalize on the opportunity.

Although competing with each other for the limited number of tourist sales, the sellers constantly display their collective identity and solidarity with one another. A seller will never admit that they do not have the size or color requested. The item is instead quickly borrowed from an adjacent seller and then sold. Once the transaction has begun, camaraderie ensures that the potential sale will not be interfered with by another seller. Collectively, the sellers would watch the APSARA police and someone would always be aware of their location. As the temple police approached, one of the sellers would appear in time to warn of the imminent arrival. Collectively they were providing the opportunity for an individual to increase their chances of success and avoid detection.

Research has shown that the creation of a unified hidden transcript relates to the degree of risk involved, and where this is high, a commensurate degree of solidarity and collaboration is required to minimize the danger (Scott 1990, p. 135). These children and young people are united on the streets when selling and also have strong ties through family, village, and religious relationships. Their ability to work collectively and communally is at the heart of their ability to survive. When family are sick, when money or food are required, when there is work to be done, Ean explained, “we help another family, they help us back” (personal communication, Jan–Feb 2014). These are, as Scott describes, “communities of fate” which exist where social welfare and other government support mechanisms do not; survival is based on mutual dependency. Scott (1990, p. 135) further elucidates that it is “little wonder, then, that communities of fate create a distinctive and unified subculture.”

The children and young people often questioned us why information was being given to the tourists that children who sell do not attend school. They were at pains to express that increased earnings made their ongoing school attendance possible. Visiting the children in a variety of situations also verified the given information. Invitations to the village, homes, community celebrations, and their schools provided further insights into their geographies and identities.

4.2 Pub Street

The dominant discourse around children selling books to tourists on the streets in Pub Street (the main tourist street of Siem Reap) is that they are trapped in some kind of Fagan-type relationship, exploited by a “middleman” who will capitalize on the children’s ability to engage with tourists and a combination of engendered sympathy and “cuteness.” When asked about a “middleman” in the operations, the children replied: “it does occur, but mostly other children are like me and buy from the market or from the bookstores at cost and then add something.” Among their peers at school, a few are told that they cannot continue their schooling and must work either at home or on the streets as the money is important and the family does not value education. The parents in the case of the street sellers with whom we spoke want and take pride in their child learning English (personal communication, Nov. 2013–Feb 2014). Typically the parents value education and see it as an investment in the family’s future and a way to break the poverty cycle. Success stories within the village further encourage parents to, if possible, continue their child’s/children’s education. Where finances are limited, older children will typically leave school for employment so that younger siblings have an increased opportunity to pursue their education.

Although geographically mobile, young booksellers are not permitted to enter the many restaurants and bars on Pub Street and “annoy the tourists,” although a restaurant worker will often give some latitude to a young seller who is conversing with a tourist, provided that the exchange is limited to the perimeter of the

establishment and the tourist is a willing participant. Observations and the seller's comments confirmed that the smaller, locally owned restaurants had a greater empathy for and were therefore more accepting of the sellers. Larger or foreign-owned establishments had a zero tolerance. The children will not enter, however, the geographic space occupied by another group of children, known locally as the "milk scam" children.

The community of booksellers was a group of approximately 10–12 young boys and girls aged 6–14. The \$5 per week payment that each child makes to the tourist police provides some level of confidence that although illegal they are "allowed" to sell. However, as Scott (1990, p. 197) explains, "the logic of the constant testing of the limits alerts us to the importance, from the dominant point of view, of making an example of someone." Two sellers reported that they had been "taken by police to the police station and their parents had to pay \$30 each time to get them out." This appeared to be quite arbitrary, and the sellers were not, they believed, in a place or behaving in a way that contravened accepted norms. Hegemonic appearances are vital to the maintenance of domination, and the fact that they are often arbitrary further reinforces the status quo. The "Pub Street children" often expressed their feelings that the "government doesn't care about us, they only care about themselves." They would regularly emphasize that their earnings were a vital component of the total family earnings and essential if they and their siblings were to remain at school.

The children are careful to comply with the public transcript by maintaining a working distance from the tourist police so that they are not seen to be complicit in the deception via the weekly payment. They may walk the tourist area freely during the day but must not be in "Pub Street" at night. As with the community of children operating at Angkor Wat, the mentoring role of the older children in the group is practiced and learned and more acceptable to the Western tourist than the mass approach often experienced in other tourist destinations. Along with the multiple strategies the children have developed to placate the police on a daily basis, that these children can continue to sell is a demonstration of the cross-cultural communication and "soft selling" abilities that they have learned and developed in their interactions with the tourists.

The children in Pub Street, therefore, have developed fluid personalities and as entrepreneurs are able to modify their public persona depending on the interaction and where they are. Lucy, aged 16, for example, was always very polite during our interactions, and we were treated with the respect conferred by the Khmer culture on middle-aged women. However, discussions with an aid worker who was traveling with a group of eight men revealed that from her observations, Lucy was as a "bit flirtatious" in trying to attract and maintain the attention of the men. This adult type-behavior has been used as evidence of street children having a "lost childhood," but this very attitude is based on the Western, middle-class construction of childhood (Williams 1993, p. 835; Swift 1991 cited in Beazley 2003). In this particular example, Lucy is merely demonstrating her ability to perform different aspects of her identity depending on the situation, the person or persons with whom she is interacting, and her own needs.

4.3 Milk Scam Kids

The “milk scam kids” projected a very different collective identity and occupy a very specific geographic space and time in Pub Street in the center of Siem Reap. They were observed every day between 2 and 11 pm with a larger number appearing after 6 pm, when the tourists start arriving in substantial numbers for an evening out. The booksellers do not enter this area. The “milk scam kids” do, however, on occasion walk to the top end of Pub Street, part of the space occupied by the booksellers. The “milk scam kids” are young girls and boys, usually with a sleeping infant on their hip and an empty baby bottle in their hand. They approach tourists as they walk through the defined area, pleading “my baby is hungry, he/she needs milk, I don’t want money, just milk.” Attempts to give money are rejected, and the child will persist as long as they believe that there is a chance that the tourist will accompany them to the mini-mart at the top of the street to purchase milk powder. Once the tourist is inside the mini-mart, they are taken to a shelf where there is canned milk formula costing between US\$15 and US\$20, depending on the type and brand. When approached by the researchers, it was found that the children will not digress from the standard comments and repeated attempts at conversation were ignored. It was also impossible to ascertain if the children had some understanding of English or whether the statements were rote learned. Sustained observations showed that after a successful transaction, the children would pass on the can of formula to a waiting accomplice who later returned to the mini-mart with the can of baby formula and sell it back to the shop keeper. The money was then handed to a managing adult. It was also observed that the children were being monitored by two older women who sat outside of the mini-mart.

These children described above live and work within a very different hidden transcript to the booksellers on Pub Street. Investigations and subsequent discussions with NGOs state that “the group are managed/controlled by some mafia overlord and are completely left alone, having bought off the police” . . . “they refuse to be helped and are doing incredibly well financially.” The researchers were also advised: “do not pursue attempts to engage with those involved in the scam, the overlord is very dangerous” (personal communication, Jan–Feb. 2014). The perpetrators of this “scam” are, by all available information and observation, complicit with the police, who receive money for allowing these children to beg on the streets despite the law introduced in 2006. The children and police, although together in the same public space, do not acknowledge each other and thereby appear to play out the public transcript. The reality, it appears, is that the police, having been paid off, are no longer the dominant player. All obtained information from local NGOs and the booksellers suggests that these children have migrated to Siem Reap as a group, are self-contained, and do not attend school.

Standing within the area and with the “scam” going on around us, a researcher chatted to a policeman who had a good command of English. Asking general questions about tourist numbers and the weather at this time of the year, he happily conversed and appeared to appreciate the opportunity to practice his English. When asked about the young children with babies and their health, the policeman

immediately lost all ability to speak English and appeared to not be able to understand the questions. He then walked away.

The hidden transcript for this particular group of children is being successfully concealed despite attempts by the researchers and NGOs to talk to the children about their lives and investigate the operational hierarchy and management. The children have their brief which is to persuade tourists to purchase milk powder from the complicit store. These children are not able to deviate from this instruction and are closely watched. From the outside, it is clear that their agency is extremely “thin” and constrained, when compared to the children operating on the rest of Pub Street or at Angkor Wat (Klocker 2007). That they are unable to benefit from the opportunity to engage with tourists and thereby develop English language skills suggests a subordinate position within the street hierarchy. Whether a hidden transcript of resistance exists within the “scam” is unknown beyond the players themselves. It is impossible to discern the level of domination, exploitation, or control placed on these children, and if their recruitment is a choice, an economic necessity, or forced upon them. Their level of conformity suggests a very tight script. Scott (1990, p. 129) argues that a high level of conformity within a subordinate subculture “lies in the social incentives and sanctions it can bring to bear to reward members who observe its norms and punish those who deviate.” The protection of the subculture from within is evident with this group, and information regarding threats is widely distributed in tourist information. It remains for someone else to attempt to conduct research with this community of children.

5 Positive Identity Construction

Brake (1980, p. 175) states that resistant subcultures are often an attempt to resolve collectively experienced problems arising from contradictions in the social structure, alienation in society, and harassment by the law. He says that they appeal to those who feel that they have been rejected and provide an alternative social reality and status symbol which offer “rallying points” and “symbols of solidarity.” In a similar way to Beazley’s (2000, 2002, 2003) findings with street children in Indonesia, this research has also found that the subcultures developed by the sellers on the streets of Siem Reap have provided an opportunity to “redefine negative self-concepts by offering a collective identity and a reference group from which to develop a new individual identity” (Beazley 2003, p. 5).

Selling outside the temples or on the streets of Siem Reap provides the opportunity to learn a second language, to earn money to contribute to the family, and to have the ability to stay at school, all of which increases a child’s self-esteem. The decision to defy the public transcript by selling on the streets provides the possibility of a new identity, agency, language, education, small business skills, and a future beyond what would otherwise be possible. Further, the learned ability to speak a second language enables entry into the tourist economy beyond the menial level. The children also learn other information to enable them to entice a sale. Proen (15-year-old boy), for example, identified our Australian accents and proudly

told us that “Tony Abbott is the Australian prime minister.” His strategy worked, we immediately connected with him. Proen explained that Kevin Rudd preceded him and that Julia Gillard was Australia’s first female prime minister. When asked, he could name all the Australian prime ministers back to 1971 and William McMahon. Similarly he was able to recite the heads of State and various other facts about the USA, Britain, and, to a lesser extent, other European countries. Proen also has an excellent geographical knowledge, “but only for those countries where the tourists visit from.” These facts and skill were taught to him by a man in his village who also sold in the streets as a young man. “It will impress the tourists,” he was told by his mentor. “It is a tradition in our village to sell to tourists, we have always done it,” explained Proen (personal communication, Jan. 2014).

Lucy (age 12) also exhibits self-esteem and confidence. Her English language (with a slight American accent) has been learned at an English language NGO and paid for by her ability to sell roses and handwoven bracelets to tourists on the streets of Siem Reap. A future now exists well beyond what her parents could afford. When she is 14 and at a legal working age, she and the other street sellers will seek work in restaurants as waitresses. This is a sought-after next step in the working hierarchy of street sellers, as this job provides secure although seasonal employment and requires communicating with tourists. Pay rates of \$60–\$80 per month plus tips are possible.

The booksellers in Siem Reap and the sellers outside Angkor Wat take pride in their personal presentation. They did not want to appear as a poor, begging child, but rather as a young person with agency who was operating a legitimate business. These young people regularly expressed that they enjoyed this work and the opportunities it presented. Definitely this work was better than alternative employment options. They related their friend’s experiences where bosses speak rudely, pay is often not given, and working conditions are poor. The sellers expressed dissatisfaction with the government, APSARA regulations, and the police. However, they were very optimistic and generally agreed that given the limited options available, they were lucky to be working at something that they enjoyed. Within their community, this is seen as quite a high-status job. They are with and among their friends and have the ability to learn English (and other languages) and to operate their own business. “This is a good job!” They expressed pride in their achievements, their ability to contribute to their families, and their own independence. Two of the girls (aged 14) also started a small “school” in their village where they taught basic English for 1 h each evening to the younger children.

On one occasion, Ada, 17, a consummate seller, did not return the correct change when a researcher purchased a drink from him. Instead he charged more than the “fair price” and higher than the others would usually charge. The price instead was that initially and hopefully offered to tourists. Ada was immediately chastised by the three others standing in the group. A fairly heated discussion in Khmer ensued and the overcharge amount was quickly returned. The ethics of the group had been broken; it was an insult to treat someone who had been accepted by the group like a tourist. Beazley (2003, p. 18), drawing on Scott (1990, p. 130), has also noted how street children will police each other’s behavior and that pressures exist within the group to ensure conformity and the preservation of the collective ideals and interests of the group.

6 Conclusion

Cambodia's development strategy and government policies have impacted upon the lives of children and their families, with a patriarchal ideology of family life contributing to the marginalization of street children from mainstream society. This chapter has explained how the creation of a specific "public transcript" has affected social change in Cambodia and the city of Siem Reap and how the public transcript is sustained by the Cambodian State through the diffusion of specific ideologies and the adoption of particular practices in order to maintain power.

This chapter has investigated the nature of the State in Cambodia and the consequences of global cultural, economic, and social changes since the end of the Khmer Rouge regime. Such an approach has caused Cambodia to experience rapid urbanization, radical social change, and a widening gap between rich and poor. It is in this climate that many children have gone to work on the streets.

Government policies, however, have impinged directly on to the microstructures of the home and family through the construction of a "public transcript" and specific development ideologies based on "traditional" Khmer culture (Scott 1990). These ideologies have included the State's construction of the ideal family, mother, and child. The urban poor have little or no input into this "regime of truth" and its policies, which are inappropriate in relation to everyday life. In reality, only elite, middle-class, affluent women can afford not to work and to stay at home to be mothers and housewives, while women from poor families have had to go out and work, often sending their children too.

Children from poor, traditional Khmer homes live very different lives to their more affluent peers, as they are often expected to work and to contribute to the family income. The presence of children working on the street is not only due to poverty but also has to do with changing expectations caused by the pervasive growth of capitalism. For these reasons, children go on to the streets to meet their families increased needs, to pay for their own and their siblings' schooling, or to find enjoyment and earn their own money. In modern Cambodian society, this kind of behavior is considered unacceptable by the dominant social class and the State. This is because the street is perceived as somewhere outside of family control, and street children are marginalized by mainstream society because they are perceived to be upsetting the patriarchal ideological constructions based on middle-class values of the role of the family. The Cambodian State also perceives the danger of functional street children who visibly flout conventional family ideology as it has been constructed. Nieuwenhuys (1998, pp. 277–279) also discusses how, in the pursuit of a "global childhood" ideology, nation-States view street children as being "out of childhood" and to be trespassing that which is perceived to be the "acceptable lifestyle for children." This is because they are seen to be diverging from the "norms" of society and to be committing a "transgressive act" by violating the moral boundaries of the nuclear family, school, and the community. By operating outside parental control, they are not conforming to the desired image of the "ideal child," and their constant mobility is seen to represent instability and disorder. They are regarded as a menace to the regime's overall preservation of power, which is

based on sedentary lifestyles and the view that the family structure is irreplaceable and the nation is modern and “developing.”

Despite the huge growth in the economy as a result of export-oriented industrialization and tourism and the State’s claim that children represent the nation’s “future,” Cambodia has experienced major increases in inequity with those who are not part of the new economy much worse off in real terms (Cambodia UNDAF 2011). The State has not taken responsibility for street children and has no policies which benefit them. Instead, they have been systematically excluded by State regulations and rhetoric and must rely on their own resources while simultaneously being intimidated and harassed for violating the boundaries of the public transcript. It is only as a result of their own private hidden transcript, their defiance, and their ability to work around the law that they manage to survive and improve their lives.

Although working on the streets in Siem Reap transgresses the public transcript, such defiance enables young people to live at home while working in a productive, enjoyable, and relatively safe environment. If these young people did not have access to the tourist market, they would potentially be unable to go to school and possibly forced to migrate away from their families, to far more hazardous employment. In Cambodia, these worst forms of child labor include the commercial sex industry; rubber, tobacco, and other semi-industrial agricultural plantations; waste scavenging; brickmaking; stone and granite breaking; gem and coal mining; begging; and child trafficking (UNICEF 2006).

Finally, this chapter has demonstrated that within their own social worlds, street children in Siem Reap have developed a “repertoire of strategies” in order to survive, despite their subordination. These include the appropriation of urban niches within the touristscape, in which they are able to earn money, feel safe, and find enjoyment. In addition to “winning space” for their survival and existence, it is within these niches that street children have created collective solutions between themselves for the dilemmas which they confront in their everyday lives. As Massey (1998, p. 128) tells us, “the construction of spatiality can be an important element in building a social identity.” The spaces have become territories in which identities are constructed and where alternative communities are formed. They are what Scott (1990, p. 119) terms as “off stage social sites in which resistance is developed and codified” and where the “hidden transcript grows.”

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Abstract

The political morality of children is an integral part of political interaction whereby it gradually changes within local and global discourses. For the purpose of this paper, political morality is framed within the fluidity of community values of political power structure. Narratives of 17 Palestinian children illustrate the collective political morality and showcase children's perspectives on female political morality. Palestinian children articulated the expression of female political morality through the discussion of religion, socioeconomic status, and politics. This research is significant as it reflects the overall Palestinian political morality and helps in identifying female's contribution to the political decision-making.

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Political morality • Gender roles • Community political morality • Palestinian children • Religion

1 Introduction

This ethnographic research involves investigating the elements that constitute Palestinian children's political morality as related to the collective political outlook, particularly involving the Israeli occupation, gleaned from children's narratives. Specifically, this research examines Palestinian children's (both male and female) perspectives on female expression of political morality as it is presented in the community's and individuals' political reality. Examining children's pragmatic perspectives on political morality within the conflicted region of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPT) captures the local political discourse embedded in cultural practices, religious expression, and socioeconomic status (Helwig et al. 1995). Understanding children's perspectives of political morality is significant in showcasing gender norms and female's and male's expected roles in the political realm. These perspectives are shaped by community values and individuals' political actions.

While political morality is closely associated with government, it moves beyond state powers and authorities to include the community and individuals who are exposed to and affected by local and global political discourse (Katz 2004). However, to appreciate children's perspectives on this concept, it is important to examine the traditional construct of political morality that has concentrated on politicians and state powers. Political morality has been associated with government institutions and a state that functioned as a repository of moral principles to guide public policy, along with children's political development (Gross 1997; Youniss 2009). Within this view, governmental political morality should consistently adhere to a state's ideology; however, there is often a disconnect that exists between a state's proclaimed principles and its domestic actions. This disconnect illustrates that political morality is a complex concept and that even though states may affirm that their policies are indeed moral, in actuality state actions may contradict this notion. Moreover, the manifestation of political morality moves beyond state powers and government authorities to include the community and individuals who are exposed to and affected by the local and global political discourse (Aitken 2001; Katz 2004; Youniss 2009).

In the context of this research, political morality is best defined as "the collective analog of personal morality – the system of values meant to shape and constrain our treatment and expectations of others" (Sigler 2011, p. 422). Indeed, political morality is embedded into the collective personal morality, and individual political morality is significantly influenced by the collective political and religious discourse that does not necessarily adhere to the state power structure. The interaction between the collective and the individual is found in citizen's actions to maintain

the ethical foundation of society (Gross 1997). Hence, individual political morality defends, questions, and justifies power struggles based on political interest, yet this construct does not constitute right or wrong (Brilmayer 1994). Therefore, individual political morality is “predicated on the understanding that citizens know what moral principles regulate public policy and recognize violations of public trust, and armed with this knowledge, should undertake competent political action by voting, protesting and even rebelling” (Gross 1997, p. 2). This definition of political morality shows that individual’s political morality is not framed one dimensionally (Elbedour et al. 1997). This understanding suggests that children’s perspectives on political morality are influenced by the community discourse (Youniss 2009), and political morality stems from and exists within a local culture’s realities and community struggles (Brilmayer 1994).

Political morality, as defined in this work, can be examined in part through a social constructivist lens, especially in relation to religious and international relations research. While not specifically discussed in social constructivism, political morality and the ways that individuals express it can be seen as dependent on “the social interaction of actors and institutions, with these interactions refracted through the contextual prism of history” (Dawson 2013, p. 213). Awareness of local historical and political knowledge shapes children’s political development (Mitchell and Elwood, ► [Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”](#), this volume). Given this, children’s perspectives on political morality mirror the community in which they live as interactions between not only individual citizens but also state institutions affect the expression of political morality. In the case of Palestinian society, the interaction of the local and global reality of Israeli occupation and Palestinian national narrative as well as religious discourse shapes the expression of political morality.

Within the theoretical context of religious and international relations, MacIntyre (1998) discusses that moral values within a community are shaped by the interactions within that community. This is the case as political morality is often expressed in resistance and the discussion of inequality (Turiel 2008). Palestinian children’s perspectives on political morality are part of the local understanding of culture and politics (Mitchell and Elwood, ► [Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”](#), this volume) as well as the impact of global political discourse that manifests in multiple and fluid constructs. In particular, Palestinian children’s perspectives on political morality are shaped by Israeli occupation and the global powers that support such oppression. While it is important to examine children’s perspectives on this construct in general, it is necessary to focus on female expression of political morality, as it is often overlooked due to the limited perception of traditional gender roles, in this case, that women are not active in politics. To focus on female expression provides a holistic picture of interactions between community and individual expression of societal values. Also, understanding female expression of political morality provides alternative views to reshape community political actions. This is enhanced by examining children’s political morality in general because children are influenced by the community’s evolving values.

2 Children's Political Morality

This research reiterates the fluidity and multiple dimensions of political morality as it interacts with the local and global discourse. Such fluidity is particularly evident in political morality among children living in warlike situations as they are influenced by community struggle, although this is provisional and inconsistent (Youniss 2009). This is clear when comparing children's political morality perspectives in war zones to their counterparts that live within stable societies (Cook 1999; Garrod et al. 2003). It seems that children's political morality is the by-product of sociopolitical interactions with children capable of critiquing and challenging multiple power structures. As children's political morality emanates as an immediate response to the local events, it is influenced by the interactions of local and global discourse that are expressed in the local power structures (Brilmayer 1994; Youniss 2009). In Mitchell and Elwood's current work in the chapter titled ► ["Counter-Mapping for Social Justice"](#) (Chap. 12) the authors make clear that young people's political development is dependent on their awareness of the geographic reality of the area in which they live, which can be extended to the political and cultural narrative of their community. Jean-Klein (2001) suggested that the orientations of political morality could not be defined by a distinct action but rather by the converging impact of the local/global political, religious, and social sectors. Therefore, the morality of children is created by the simultaneous and often disharmonious influences that culminate into today's reality of cultural norms, religion, and political socialization (Habashi 2011). This interaction provides an insight into the effect of collective thought dependent on the intersection of political and religious elements that shape Palestinian children's political morality and, in particular, Palestinian female expression of this construct and how it is framed by the community.

Unpacking political morality in the Palestinian context of living under Israeli occupation assists in understanding gender differences that may affect children's development and actions as a by-product of collective values. This is significant due to gender roles: male expression of political morality is reflected in decision-making, while women are often removed from this process, leading to the invisibility of women's views and expression of political morality at a state level. While the first Intifada saw both women and youth participating in the resistance movement against Israel, maintaining traditional roles remained important to all Palestinians, perhaps as a method of resistance to Israeli occupation (Marshall, ► [Chap. 14, "Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine"](#), this volume). However, considering female expression of political morality within their roles in society might influence or reshape the decision-making within the community, especially given that "Eastern women have agency, too" (Abu-Lughod 2001, p. 105). This is the case in Palestinian society whereby females and males express political morality differently while holding the same goal for liberation from Israeli occupation that has been in place since 1948 (Habashi 2008).

Children's perspectives on political morality showcase these gender differences in the goal for liberation. Therefore, this research considers how the general

community perspective is inherent in Palestinian female expression of political morality and the context of Israeli oppression. It is impossible to understand female political expression without contextualizing the expectations of her family and community roles (Marshall, ► [Chap. 14, "Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine"](#), this volume). It is the collective that serves to create meaning of female constructs of political morality inherent in resistance, activism, and compliance throughout everyday living. Indeed, these elements are not separate but rather closely intertwined in the political and religious discourse that adds to the complexity of gender roles and norms in addition to the community and children's political expression (Reynolds 2005). Children's perspectives on female expression of political morality are filtered through the community politics and expectations of gender roles. The views of Palestinian children on female expression facilitate the understanding of dominant perspectives on community values and the opportunities for intervention. To facilitate this study, the paper is divided into five segments: (1) children's perceptions of Palestinian community political morality; (2) female construction of political morality; (3) a methodology section that identifies the procedure and analyses of the political morality data; (4) a discussion on two themes that emerged in the data, which are (a) *Palestinian political morality within Israeli colonization that is conditioned within the community narrative* and (b) *Palestinian children's perspectives on the expression of political morality and gender roles*; and (5) a conclusion that discusses the significance of the examining children's perspectives on female expression of political morality.

3 Children's Perceptions on Palestinian Community Political Morality

Elbedour et al. (1997) studied the differences in moral perspectives of Palestinian children living in the West Bank, Palestinian-Bedouin children living in Israel, and Israeli children as they are defined by their political status. Children living in the West Bank focused on rights and justice because of the constant struggle of Israeli occupation. Similarly, the Palestinian-Bedouin morality focused on equality as they are treated as second-class citizens in the state of Israel. In contrast, the political morality of Israeli children focused on *care*, which is fostered in a sphere of abundance and results in mutual care and respect. However, *care*, as a political moral construct, was also observed among Palestinians who care for the collective by deferring their normal life and privilege until there is an independent and free Palestine (Jean-Klein 2001). This "caring for the collective" is observed in another form as Palestinian children integrate political knowledge within the framework of political morality.

Errante (1997) argued that Palestinian children's knowledge of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict provided a sense of national belonging whereby it functioned as a political morality of resistance. Not identifying the local and global interaction embedded in Israeli occupation and the support of oppression by Western countries reduces the analysis of the children's political morality to one

dimension (Jean-Klein 2002; Katz 2004). Such an endorsement is consummated by categorizing thoughts, values, and ideas under the guise of morality without actually deconstructing the complex presentations of these concepts. It is within this process that children's voices become visible within the lens of local and global discourse. It is the purpose of this study to amplify children's voices in order to gain a better understanding of the collective political narrative, as it is important to uphold children's views and rights (Bartos, ► [Chap. 7, "Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis"](#), this volume). In addition, by examining children's perspectives on the female expression of political morality, a more holistic understanding of the collective Palestinian political morality is available as young people's views are shaped by their local surroundings. This is done through examining children's points of view and the way they perceive female political expression. Examining the community construct of the female gender role found in children's narratives helps to understand the female expression of political morality.

4 Female Construction of Political Morality

Daily routines highlight the construction of political morality through children's engagement and adherence to national, cultural, and religious beliefs. Generally, political morality principles show the gradual response to community struggles and the employment of specific religious and cultural practices, including gender roles (Jean-Klein 2002). These elements that change local morality are reinvented, not only by the local community narrative, but also by the effects from global discourse, thus creating diverse sets of political morality. The fluidity of local/global discourse equally evokes responses from children and adults (Katz 2004; Percheron 1982).

Jean-Klein (2001) described the practices and responses of everyday living as underlying characteristics of Palestinian political morality. Specifically, she addressed how Palestinian women exhibit a unique form of political activism called suspension. Suspension is an act of restraint from normality that creates a state of altered norms in daily living and is a method of exerting control over the immediate environment. Normality is the day-to-day activities that individuals would "normally" take part in if not under Israeli occupation (Jean-Klein, 96). The act of suspension is a method of exerting control over the immediate environment as it is under occupation. Suspension is also organized as a resistant act against colonial/global power that is charged within the local political morality as being both a victim and liberator (Habashi 2008). Some examples of suspension that Jean-Klein (2001) mentions are refraining from usual daily activities such as taking long strolls, holding extravagant wedding ceremonies, or "women's morning coffee circles" (p. 96).

The practices of women's daily resistance, including refraining from normality to dressing modestly, are defined by deferring past cultural rituals that are not significant to support the current political needs of the collective. Such daily practices of resistance are culturally/ religiously and politically appropriate and are embedded in local moral subjectivity to obtain freedom from colonial

dominance. The appropriateness of resistant activities is important in maintaining traditional family and gender roles in Palestinian society (Marshall, ► [Chap. 14, "Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine"](#), this volume). The weaving of political morality is depicted in Palestinian community living in which every loss, suspension, care, or collective empathy is a resistance to Israeli colonization. This produces a multiplicity of female political morality as it is framed within cultural and religious gender constructs, whereby the collective cause, as demonstrated in deferring social celebrations, empathy, or care, is an instant response to Israeli occupation. In short, living within particular political moralities that are infused into daily living is juxtaposed within the practices of gender differences. The interviews described in the research and methodology below show the interaction between the community and children's perspectives on female political morality as it is influenced by the local discourse and Israeli occupation.

5 Methodology

Ethnographic design serves the purpose of identifying children's perspectives on female expression of political morality since it is oriented in cultural behaviors (Crang and Cook 2007). This ethnographic framework is anchored in understanding social issues through contextualizing the historical and cultural structures of the participants' perspectives (Willis 2007). It is the process of cultivating cultural and political meaning that facilitates the understanding of divergent expressions of political morality.

5.1 Participants and the Context of the Study

The primary data collection for this study was developed from interviews involving 17 Palestinian children in 2006. During this time, the second Intifada (Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation) had just come to an end, and political tensions were extremely high. The demographic information of the participants ranged in age and location. This study was conducted in the oPT in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Children were interviewed from cities, villages, and refugee camps. Seventeen children were interviewed in all: two males and two females from cities, three males and seven females from refugee camps, and two males and one female from villages. The reason for the participant gender discrepancy is due to the limited access to participants in different geographic locations. The participants' ages ranged between 9 and 15 years. Leaders in the community such as teachers, directors of education centers, and children's rights advocates were responsible for recruiting and chose the participants. Both caregivers and participants provided verbal consent and assent. At the time of the study, each participant was enrolled in school in the demographic areas and was considered academically competent. The interviews were conducted in community centers as well as near the schools.

The questions were posed in a culturally relevant manner and were modified and revised during the semi-structured interviews; however, the initial questions asked during the participants' interviews included (but were not limited to) the following:

1. Do you think that boys and girls understand news and politics the same way?
2. Do you think that working in politics is the same for women and men?
3. Do you think that religion tells women not to be involved in politics?
4. Do you think religion influences how girls and boys learn about politics?
5. Do you think if a woman was elected to a political position her traditional role would change?

5.2 Data Analysis

The open-ended interviews produced substantial data that enhanced the understanding of female expression of political morality. Moreover, for the purpose of the research, the process of analyzing political morality avoids a category construct in order to facilitate the reader's recognition of several interactive elements presented in Palestinian children's perspective of female expression of political morality. Some of the interactive elements that are presented include religion, political knowledge, gender roles, and socioeconomic status. In an effort to increase the validity of the analysis, the translated interviews were reread and compared several times to the original records.

6 Emerging Themes

The analysis identified two themes that showed emerging patterns generated by the data (Creswell 2003). The first theme discusses Palestinian political morality within the context of Israeli colonization. The second theme elaborates on the intersection of Palestinian children's perspectives on the expression of political morality on gender roles and culture as all the participant's problematized different elements of socioeconomic and religious influences. This presentation of the children's narratives recognizes the impact of daily community living. This ethnographic approach reflects both male and female Palestinian children's voices by defining the intersection of community political morality and the framing of female political expression.

6.1 Theme One: Palestinian Political Morality Within Israeli Colonization

In 1948 the Palestinian society lost their land and livelihood due to the Zionist invasion that led to the expulsion of 80 % of the community and the establishment of the Israeli state (Khalidi 1992). Currently, Palestinians are living in Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, refugee camps in the region, and in other forms of exile.

Within this context the Palestinian people are continually politicized by Israeli colonization as political morality is transformed through the process of Palestinian community efforts for liberation (Mayer 1994), whereby it redefines the culture of resistance and political struggles (Habashi 2008). The effort to free Palestinian land from oppression has become the focus of Palestinians' political activity. Collective morality, oppression, and resistance are dimensions of national identity that are propelled by moral principles.

Many participants expressed that it is the moral duty of the Palestinian people to respond to the Israeli occupation, as they aspire to achieve freedom, independence, and statehood. Participants conveyed the collective morality of freedom, yet most acknowledged that this process is associated with loss and suffering, as one 10-year-old girl from a city stated, "We are in war, there is no hope, people are dying and Israel is taking more land." The daily presentation of Israeli occupation shaped Palestinian children's outlooks, as it is reflected in participants' responses to the interview questions. Children witness Israeli occupation through personal events that shape their political perspectives, roles in the struggle, and community stance on the issue of resistance (Hörschelmann 2008). It is the ongoing experience of the Palestinian political struggle against Israeli occupation that anchored the collective political morality and is observed in the determination to free Palestine, as a 15-year-old boy from a city indicated, "They [the community] talk about politics; they talk about how Israel invaded Palestine in 1948 and if we have martyrs."

These daily narratives of historical events express the collective Palestinian political morality associated with Israeli oppression as integrated within the Palestinian children's national identity (Habashi 2008). The function of freedom in national identity is affected by both local and global politics (Hörschelmann 2008). This interaction impacted children's perspectives on community survival and resistance to the local and global discourse (Aitken 2001) that forms collective political morality. Palestinian children's construct of freedom is manufactured by the constant struggle against Israeli oppression (Habashi 2008) as local history and narrative shape young people's views (Mitchell and Elwood, ► [Chap. 12, "Counter-Mapping for Social Justice"](#), this volume). Participants witnessed adults as well as children joining the community struggle and the call for freedom through utilizing local resources of culture and religious symbols (Habashi 2008, 2011). Children engaged in collective political morality through poems, storytelling, and social and political discussions while living under Israeli oppression. Indeed, the expectation to fulfill the responsibility or live up to the freedom construct of political morality was documented during the first Intifada (Palestinian uprising). Jean-Klein (2001) described that everyday resistance behavior is charged with the political collective morality of freeing Palestine.

Children identified the relationship between political morality and the Palestinian community experience as is manifested in the following quote from a 13-year-old boy from a village: "May this [the act of throwing stones] move children's feelings . . . to do something like throw stones on the Israeli Army." The demonstration of political morality is ingrained within local and cultural responses to the

Israeli occupation that is prospering with the support of global power. Children are witnessing the community struggle and joining the resistance. Hass (2003) attested that Palestinian children who endure family degradation and oppression are forced to engage in symbolic resistance such as throwing stones.

Oppression and the community narrative enforce a particular collective political morality, and children's experiences of oppression and community narratives alter their construct of freedom. Errante (1997) reported that children's cognitive knowledge of oppression not only helped them in expressing methods of liberation but also in connecting with the community political morality. Children's political knowledge is part of the local and global sociopolitical fabric and mirrors the community's diverse expressions of collective morality that are striving for the same goal of liberation (Katz 2004). Some political morality manifestations utilize religious symbols and discourse to ensure the continuation of resistance against Israeli oppression while countering the hegemony of global power. Framing the collective notion of freedom in religious expression is a method of advancing justice for the community (Habashi 2011). Religious symbolism is currently integrated into the community's daily environment in which certain cultural and political interpretation is redefined (Nyroos 2001).

Children's moral perspectives embodied political-religious struggles that mirrored the community's daily living experiences, as a 13-year-old boy from a village stated, "In my village people who are religious[ly dressed], they call them Hamas, people who dress up and put hair gel, they call them PLF [Palestinian Liberation Front] and Fatah is in between. I do not belong to any party, but because of the way I dress they think I am PLF." The dress discussion articulates the everyday presentation of religion and politics in relation to the collective political morality. Though the Palestinian community, regardless of an individual's political affiliation, agrees on the same national goal of liberation, Palestinians' diverse ways of integrating religious symbolism/meaning might demonstrate daily interactions and political morality methods utilized to achieve this goal. The contemporary usage of religious symbolism partially serves in the political morality enterprise within the Palestinian community. It is the diverse expression of collective political morality employing religion, culture, and politics that unify the community in striving for liberation.

6.2 Theme Two: Children's Perspectives, Political Morality, and Gender Roles

The Western depiction of Middle Eastern cultures distorts local meanings through highlighting imperialistic perspectives and biases (Said 1979). Abu-Lughod (2001) cautioned scholars not to examine Middle Eastern women's roles from an Orientalist lens, as Orientalism fails to explain integral codes related to female community engagement and religious practices. Therefore, perceiving gender roles as static would deny the complex meaning making of moral principles that women practice within traditional structures. The Orientalist lens negates women's capacity to reshape norms and proclaim religious beliefs. The infusion of community

political morality with cultural and religious constructs often problematizes traditional gender roles (Jean-Klein 2001). Generally, political activities and their moral dimensions are associated with gender cultural expectations. Participants' perceptions of gender roles informed the construct of social freedom, political morality, and culture as well as community obligations. A 9-year-old girl from a refugee camp entertained the cultural dimensions for both males and females, "Because boys become men of their houses, they will get money and be the providers. Girls become housekeepers and they will raise their children and manage the house." These dimensions are translated into political responsibility and roles as females are socialized to express political morality in private spaces, while males are expected to engage in the public sphere (Abu-Lughod 2001; Marshall, ► Chap. 14, "Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine", this volume).

The cultural roles of gender do not negate political morality of collective care and freedom (Jean-Klein 2001). The cultural gender divisions instruct women's roles in social and political morality, as a 12-year-old boy from a city deliberated, "No, girls could not go and throw stones but boys could." However, Palestinian women are not on the periphery when it comes to cultivating political morality. The practices of women's political morality might be perceived as confined to the domestic sphere, yet its implication is observed in the larger community as Palestinian women have the same objective as men and strive to liberate Palestine. While the gender-related experience of occupation and resistance is restricted by local cultural milieus, it also responds to global discourse (Habashi 2008; Katz 2004).

Jean-Klein (2001, 2002) and Peteet (1994) further suggested that Palestinian women's location in society and gender interactions enhanced their engagement in the community. Palestinian women's responsibility within and outside the domestic sphere is confined to the role of protector for their children. Furthermore, women are pillars of the family, especially if the man of the household is in an Israeli jail or was killed by the Israeli Army. A 12-year-old boy from a refugee camp articulated the cultural complexity in the division of gender roles while trying to liberate Palestine, "We both can protect Palestine even though the boy fights but she would write about it; which is as important." The evaluation of women's roles is that they are defined by cultural gender norms, while both female and male roles are connected to the collective political morality and strive to achieve liberation (Elbedour et al. 1997; Marshall, ► Chap. 14, "Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine", this volume). The different forms of women's cultural resistance that are distinct in application and networking, such as storytelling and insisting on continuing the gender separation (Abu-Lughod 2001), are an integral part of women's abilities to negotiate the pragmatic collective political morality and cultural and religious norms for Palestinian liberation (Habashi 2012). Such dynamics of womanhood infused a paradox related to national honor and liberation (Abdulhadi 1998). An example of this is that women are not jailed as equally as men, yet the Israeli policy of imprisoning women at all highlights their ability to contribute as equally as men. Moreover, the policy denigrated national honor by threatening them with rape and abusing them in front of their families.

Bringing shame to the family still holds cultural significance as a 10-year-old girl from a city echoed the Israeli methods of interrogation and its cultural consequences, "If something happens to the girl, it's a family shame." Palestinian female roles are dichotomous as on one hand they are part of the collective political morality, while on the other they are expected to have distinct cultural roles that are not necessarily compatible in achieving liberation (Rubenberg 2001). Nonetheless, honor as a cultural construct does not negate women from endorsing political morality principles of freedom but rather caused them to examine alternative methods of expression. Furthermore, female resistance is no longer confined entirely within traditional roles and has gradually become inconsistent since the Israeli occupation: "Attacks on the family, motherhood and on women's sexuality have incited Palestinian women to express themselves more militantly in [the] national struggle" (Mayer 1994, p. 63).

Political reality and historical knowledge affirm female children's political morality, as a 13-year-old girl from a refugee camp shared, "Of course, when the girl learns about politics she will have more freedom, power and will [be able] to do a lot of things. It will also give me independence." This articulation signifies that female knowledge will empower women's role in the community and enable them to contribute to the collective movement for freedom. Rubenberg (2001) reported that the Palestinian women's movement made early connections between liberating Palestine from Israeli occupation and liberating themselves from a patriarchal cultural structure. The movement perceived that the liberation of Palestine should result in equal status for Palestinian women and men in both public and private spheres. Yet, being equipped with political knowledge resulted in different views regarding personal freedom across family and community situations. Likewise, the Palestinian women's movement expressed the multiplicity of political morality of freedom, justice, and rights that are infused into the social moral orientation of collective care and sacrifices (Jean-Klein 2001). Women who encounter continual oppression and are aware of local occupation recognize that political morality principles of freedom coincide with liberation and personal mobility. According to the participants, such a shift happens when the political reality is transformed, as a 10-year-old girl from a refugee camp eloquently entertained this sentiment, "It [political knowledge] affects the way he treats his children, and the way he helps people in need, and defends the country." The expectation is that political knowledge is power and defines ways of liberation from the Israeli occupation. Political knowledge does not necessarily result in rendering cultural norms of women, especially since females' political knowledge and their contribution to the collective political morality do not always coincide.

Another challenge is that political knowledge does not necessarily facilitate social or socioeconomic mobility for Palestinian females and their expression in the collective political morality. Peteet (1991) explained the significance of the socioeconomic statures of Palestinian women and their response to Israeli occupation and political morality of freedom. Palestinians residing in refugee camps expressed the political morality of freedom in communal tasks and solidarity. Participants expressed the role of class and its expectations in the political morality

of freedom, as a 12-year-old girl from a refugee camp stated, "Even though the rich girl might know more, but that is not sufficient. The poor girls are more interested in learning about politics." This opinion was reiterated by a 14-year-old girl from a city, "Rich people do not interfere with politics. They are beyond these things. The poor people will participate." These views showcase that individuals who have low socioeconomic statuses are more connected to the community's political morality values compared to individuals of high socioeconomic statuses.

While the participants expressed that "rich" people are less likely to engage in the collective environment of resistance, the fact that "poor" girls are more interested in learning about politics shows that political knowledge does parallel the collective political morality. The notion of class and commitment to the collective political morality is reiterated by a 13-year-old boy from a village; "The rich see the situation in Palestine and if they do not like it they could always leave." Socioeconomic status and social class play an important role in how Palestinians view their individual political morality in addition to the collective political morality. Indeed, the complexity of the effects of political morality, while living in occupation, is not only confined by class and gender, but also by prevalent interpretations of cultural and religious connotations related to female collective political morality.

Religion is not explicitly synonymous with morality; however, in some situations it neutralizes inconsistent cultural expectations of political morality under occupation. Religious symbolism is becoming a major facet of Palestinian society, especially as it becomes intertwined with politics and resistance against Israeli occupation as well as the achievement of the collective political morality (Nyroos 2001). Abdulhadi (1998) described the use of religion as part of an integrated, contemporary political initiative to change moral codes in the Palestinian community. With the rise of Hamas, youth became the enforcers of moral codes whereby dressing modestly was not only an act of resistance, as described by Peteet (1994), but also an obligation placed on youth to act as the moral police. Youth assumed this role by defining what is appropriate for women to wear in public, and in the case that women's dress does not meet the *new* expectations, youth throw eggs or rotten vegetables. Hopkins (2007) emphasizes that religion plays a significant role in framing youth's identity and participation, which includes using religion and religious symbolism to enforce a certain type of morality. These practices alter the daily rituals as a method of rejecting Western culture and Israeli occupation (Nyroos 2001).

Participants emphasized that political morality is instrumentally weaved within religion, especially when women aspired to be the upcoming Palestinian president, as a 10-year-old boy from a village stated, "If the girl comes from a religious family, she cannot be a president because she cannot mix with men, but if she comes from not a religious family, she could mix and become a president." This opinion is not prevalent across the participants as there is a mosaic of religious interpretations regarding the role of Palestinian women in politics, as a 14-year-old girl from a city shared, "Yes, she should not mix with men because it is prohibited, and I agree. Religion is not against letting girls participate in politics." This view separated the cultural role of women and religious meaning of female leadership.

Women can be leaders according to religion while complying with gender norms and roles. The cultural roles and the religious interpretation reframe the expression of female political morality. This expression is reiterated as a 9-year-old boy from a refugee camp expounded on the dilemma of cultural gender roles, “Yes, she can be in a different office from men with other girls and work in politics.” The politically moral meaning associated with religion and female freedom enhances the reinvention of gender norms while complying with a specific religious interpretation, whereby moral principles are mandated by the political reality (Brilmayer 1994).

Drawing from this synergistic effect of political morality and religion to reframe female political morality, a 12-year-old boy from a city viewed religion as a separate entity when he expressed, “[The] Quran does not interfere in politics.” The discrepancies between the politics of religion and its moral mandates, whether in civil society or other forms, are local methods to respond to Israeli occupation (Nyroos 2001; Scupin 2003). Females are vulnerable entities in addressing the collective political morality of freedom, as they have to be concerned with the cultural and religious expectations of gender roles while aiming to liberate Palestine. A 10-year-old girl from a city recognized that there is a challenge in separating politics and gender roles from religion, as it is manifested in the political part of Hamas and insisted on keeping the political morality of living under oppression separate from religion, “Hamas, that’s why I say they are taking us back. They are very Islamic. Do you see girls supporting Hamas? They are very religious and closed up.” The juxtaposition of children’s perspectives on interpreting religion and the cultural expectations of female engagement in the community is consistent with women’s ability to reinvent their political morality principles, while religious interpretations are in flux. Participants negotiated female political expression within culture, class, and religion while demonstrating an understanding of the dynamic processes of the collective narrative and the moral principles of freedom. It is the personal and collective morality that shape and constrain our expectations of others and of self (Sigler 2011). The collective political morality of females is expressed in cultural roles and the discussion of religion. Children’s views on female expression are a reflection of the collective political morality while also expressing opportunities for defining alternative perspectives on societal values and the inclusion of female expression in the community.

7 Conclusion

Children’s perspectives on female expression of political morality are filtered through the community political reality and expectations of gender roles. The expression of political morality can be contextualized within international relations theories as the interactions between state institutions affect the response of the community to the local narrative. Palestinian children’s views of female expression of political morality facilitate the understanding of dominant perspectives on community values and the opportunities for intervention. The effect of Palestinian political morality, which culminates as a function of living under occupation,

culture, and religion, is observed in the continued struggle against oppression. Participants' principles of freedom are intertwined with the community and individuals' daily lives. Although political morality is an abstraction, children integrated social, religious, and cultural interpretations to address the ongoing change of local and global discourse whereby it is juxtaposed with children's political morality perspectives.

The local and global discourse and cultural practices of gender roles constitute a departure from traditional moral meanings and actions (Jean-Klein 2002). The fluid nature of collective political morality corresponds to ever-changing social political tensions, while it is also a representation of religion and children's perspectives on political morality. Moreover, gender roles must be taken into consideration as the participants' narratives make clear that female expression of political morality aims to achieve the collective goal of Palestinian liberation from Israeli occupation, although their roles and expressions are framed by the reinvention of cultural and religious discourse. It is vital to examine children's perspectives on female expression of political morality, because without such exercise a segment of society is disregarded. By not including these perspectives, we will omit a significant population of the community. The inclusiveness assists in empowering women in political decision-making and in the participation of local politics. In addition, by understanding female expression of political morality, which is usually disregarded when shaping official political and educational policies, will allow decision-makers to construct well-rounded and better-informed social programs and laws.

The challenge in understanding children's perspectives on female political morality within the bounds of research is unpacking the inherent intricacies that contribute to local and global discourse. Another challenge lies in considering its cultural and political implications on daily living without delving into what is deemed right or wrong and attempting to educationally design the morality of children outside their own reality. Therefore, it is imperative to closely consider the source and reconstruction of children's political morality and effectively educate local and global leaders on how morality is not merely developmental. Nor are its religious components of children's education a part of the community's political narrative. This is seen in children's perspectives on female political morality that are constructed by their voices and the community expression of political morality. Indeed, this understanding would facilitate children's future construction of political morality and assist in unpacking moral principles associated with the power structure, political struggles, and positive changes in the community.

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Abstract

In contemporary society, youth are depicted as having little political agency in relation to place. In popular media, youthful immaturity is celebrated, sensationalized by tabloids, and re-spun as cultural narrative. Moral panics are reproduced in response to the glorification of youth deviance, and these often become embedded in the cultural fabric of places. In a world regulated by adults and run to benefit "mature" populations, young people occupy seemingly liminal and powerless positions. Yet, youth are indeed political actors (Skelton 2010), engaged in shaping cultural imaginaries. They are formally and informally involved in the making and remaking of places. In tourism destinations defined by paradisaal "traces" (see Anderson 2010), youth are cognizant of their role in producing cultures of resistance. This chapter

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presents research undertaken on Australia's Gold Coast, a coastal paradise haunted by the tourist gaze. Through an in-depth analysis of young artists and cultural practitioners' subjective experiences of "trace-making," this chapter maps young people's cultural politics through the lens of place. In doing so, it describes how young people are working to disrupt and transgress hegemonic markers of place. Finally, this chapter repositions young people as "trace-makers," as ongoing participants in cultural politics, and as perceptive and imaginative shapers of places.

Keywords

Cultural geography • Gold Coast • Art • Place • Trace-making

1 Introduction

In popular discourse, young people are discounted as apolitical or at least apathetic. This is largely due to how young people are defined by their liminality; they are precariously suspended between childhood and adulthood and immaturity and maturity. This demarcation presents young people with different sets of privileges than adults or children, posing various other political challenges and excluding youth entirely from some forms of political participation. Despite their popular depiction, youth are politically charged subjects. Recent work in young people's spatial politics describes youth as involved in formal politics and everyday politics. Young people are indeed implicated in the politics of the every day, and they are also political agents of change: often they are both and these overlap in complex ways (Skelton 2010). This overlapping is perhaps most evident in young people's cultural engagements with place.

This chapter takes a culturally geographical approach to place (see Anderson 2010). It analyzes dominant cultural traces on Australia's Gold Coast in order to articulate what it is that the city stands for. It argues that paradisaical discourses act as dominant traces of meaning and making through which the Gold Coast is reproduced, materially as well as figuratively in the minds of Australians and visitors. It emphasizes young people's liminal position in relation to these dominant traces, and it describes how young people have come to be understood as "cultureless," "deviant," and "superficial" as products of these paradisaical traces. It shows how this marking process has a detrimental effect on the construction of youths' subjectivities and how in turn this spurs an underbelly of creative resistance. In doing so, it presents data on youth cultures that resist these hegemonic traces, carving resistant traces through their cultural practice. It describes how young cultural practitioners are involved in continual processes of trace-making, emphasizing their critical position as politically charged subjects in the production of place. This chapter draws on empirical youth research with the aim of shedding light on young people's cultural politics on the Gold Coast. In doing so, it aims to circumvent youths' current mythical status on the Gold Coast, reinforcing young people as cultural "trace-makers."

2 Young People's Spatial Politics

The spatial construction of youth is central to the categorization of youth (Massey 1998; Skelton and Valentine 1998). James argues that youth are defined by their liminality, by which boundaries they can and cannot cross (1986). For James, young people “exist by default rather than design” (1986, p. 156). This is true of how young people are typically (dis)positioned as becoming political in society and in the literature (Skelton 2010, p. 147). Skelton notes how young people's politics have traditionally been neglected in political geography. Indeed until very recently, the politics of young people were scarcely theorized beyond binary terms, lagging behind theoretical advances made in geography more generally. Skelton acknowledges the two strands of Political Geography that focused on young people's political agency: capital P Politics or formal politics and lower case p politics, or informal politics. In line with popular discourse, the former takes into consideration matters of policy and formal Politics (e.g., Matthews et al. 1999; Skelton 2010), and the latter refers to politics of the every day (Cahill 2007; Hörschelmann 2008; Thomas 2009). However, it is important to note that these two domains do not exist in isolation. Rather, they must be understood as intricately linked and overlapping (Skelton 2010).

O'toole (2003, p. 72) points out that one of the problems with much of the work examining young people's political apathy is that it is largely quantitative in nature and aligns with a narrow definition of the political. Skelton explains further that it is young people's absence from formal Politics that constitutes their popular depiction as “political subjects ‘in waiting’,” suspended inadequately between immaturity and adulthood:

Within Political Geography, ‘political’ is understood to relate to the state, nations, geopolitics, legal structures such as citizenship, enfranchisement, legislation. Such ‘politics’ could be defined as ‘formal’, ‘public’, ‘insti-tutional’ or ‘macro-’ politics; written here as Political. Young people are usually examined in relation to Politics because of their absence from such processes . . . (2010, p. 147)

Conveniently, Political status is reserved for adults who are legally able to vote and drink, for instance, and for this reason, this understanding of the political is exclusive. Indeed, this is a mutilation of what it means to *be* political and to *do* politics.

Harris and Wyn (2009) discuss the disjunction between the literature that emphasizes young people's political apathy and the research that acknowledges young people's participation in the local. Harris and Wyn point out that despite the emphasis on global mobilities, “young people are ‘embedded’ in their residential location,” and “young people's opportunities are still very much shaped by the resources offered by their local environments: families, schools and neighborhoods” (2009, p. 328). Harris and Wyn note that in contrast to the political apathy argument, young people are in fact concerned about local problems because they have personal connections to locally embedded issues. Massey states that “youth cultures claim their own spaces too, and may be as excluding and defensive about

them as any nation state” (1998, p. 129). “Political,” then, could perhaps be better conceptualized as “softer” politics, as “informal,” “personal,” “micro-” politics, and related to “participation” (Skelton and Mains 2009, p. 147). In this sense, young people most certainly have strong political presence.

Drawing together the intersections of formal and informal politics, Skelton argues that young people’s politics are in practice not bound to a binary position, but are instead complex and overlapping, bridging both domains of Politics/politics. Recent work in political geography has extended this position (e.g., Kallio and Häkli 2011; Wood 2012). Kallio and Häkli discuss the “voiceless politics” of youth in their study of a 10-year struggle between young people and the public regarding the use of park land in Finland. Their research shows how the park became contested space through its everyday “usage” as a site for resistance, rather than through reflexive, purposive action. In a New Zealand context, Wood (2012) describes three vignettes of young people’s everyday politics in educational contexts in New Zealand: Political/political, micro/macro, and public/private. In doing so, Wood describes how young people in liminal positions employ various political tactics, such as friendship, that move beyond each of these binaries.

Recent interdisciplinary research focuses on encouraging young people to communicate their Political/political selves using the performing arts as a vehicle for self-expression (Wong, ► Chap. 24, “Theatre and Citizenship: Young People’s Participatory Spaces”). Wong discusses Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* as a creative method of citizenship empowerment in Singapore. Using a participatory action research framework, Wong underlines the importance of enabling young people to articulate their embodied experiences and place-based anxieties; in this way, young people are encouraged to become “spect-actors,” expressing their Political/political realities in response to oppressive national norms. It is indeed this emphasis on young people articulating situated, Political/political subjectivities that is most interesting for the purposes of this chapter. In line with this transformative research, the remainder of this chapter describes a messy conceptualization of youthful cultural practice as bridging formal and informal politics in relation to place. It is important here to outline a culturally geographical approach to place from which this chapter embarks.

3 Cultural Geographies of Youth: Places, Traces, and Power

Cultural geographers have long been concerned with place and the construction of meaning (Cresswell 2010). As Anderson notes, “[w]e live in a world of cultural places” (Anderson 2010). Present and future places are the product of the political negotiations and the cultural legacies of past places. In other terms, place is produced politically through a multiplicity of “stories so far” (Massey 2005). How people represent and remake the history and the stories of a place impacts subjectivities and cultural identities associated with that place. These representations determine who belongs and who does not belong, which practices are considered “natural” and which are not, and who is included or excluded. With this

understanding, the “new” cultural geography emerging from the “cultural turn” of the mid-1980s has paid particular attention to matters of cultural politics (Horton and Kraftl 2014). Jackson (2003[1989]), for example, places culture at the heart of geographical analysis, insisting on the entanglement of culture and society. For Jackson, “the ‘new’ cultural geography . . . emphasises the plurality of cultures and the multiplicity of landscapes with which those cultures are associated” (2003, p. 1).

Drawing on the work of Stuart Hall, Jackson argues that “cultures are ‘*maps of meaning*’ through which the world is made intelligible” (2003, p. 2). Culture, in this sense, is not a stable condition but a contested domain, constantly in flux and sliding in meaning. As Raymond Williams famously noted, contemporary understandings of culture typically oscillate between culture as “the arts” and the anthropological “use to indicate the ‘whole way of life’ of a distinct people or other social group” (Williams 1995[1981], p. 11). For this reason, it is one of the most complex concepts in the English language. Importantly, as Jackson notes, culture needs to be understood as it intersects with society.

Culture emerges as a domain in which economic and political contradictions are contested and resolved. . . . Rather than analysing each of these domains in isolation, it puts the relationship between culture and society at centre stage, insisting on the relative autonomy of the cultural and exploring its specific intersections with the political and economic. This involves a shift in emphasis from culture itself to the domain of *cultural politics* where meanings are negotiated and relations of dominance are defined and contested. (2003, pp. 1–2)

To this end, Jackson argues that cultural geography should be “concerned with the extent to which the cultural is political” (Jackson 2003[1989], p. 1). As Anderson notes, “[c]ulture then can be seen as encompassing a wide spectrum of human life, it is not a separate entity from society, politics or the economy, but influences (and is influenced by) them all” (2010, p. 3).

Places can thus be seen as contested cultural sites. Cresswell notes that “[p]laces are neither totally material nor completely mental; they are combinations of the material and mental and cannot be reduced to either” (2002, p. 13). According to Anderson, “places are constituted by imbroglions of *traces*,” that is, material and nonmaterial “things” such as graffiti, street signs, and performances (2010, p. 5). Places have symbolic and material traces that are produced and consumed by individuals in communities; it is in consuming the traces of a place that the individual is linked historically and immediately to the material and social worlds in which they are embedded. Traces are not static markers of place; indeed they shift and slide as new traces are activated and old ones are usurped.

Traces can therefore be durable in places both in a material sense (they have longevity due to their solidity and substance as things), but may also last due to their non-material substance (they may leave indelible marks on our memory or mind). (Anderson 2010, p. 5)

Accordingly, “places should be understood as *ongoing compositions of traces*” (original emphasis, Anderson 2010, p. 5). Inevitably, some traces are more durable than others.

Dominant traces are reinforced in order to maintain normative geographies. “Geographical places and cultural acts are the tangible expressions of power, and through these trace-making exercises, and the meanings attributed to them, cultures take both shape and place” (Anderson 2010, p. 67). Cresswell examines what he calls the “geography of common sense” in discussing the relation between place and sociocultural power (Cresswell 2002). In examining expected behaviors in places, Cresswell points to the social function of places. By highlighting behaviors that are considered “out of place,” Cresswell discusses the production of normative geographies. In doing so, he calls into play the relationship between ideology and place and suggests that “[w]hen an expression such as ‘out of place’ is used it is impossible to clearly demarcate whether social or geographical place is denoted – place always means both” (Cresswell 2002, p. 11). It is important to interrogate, then, what kinds of processes determine which practices, or traces, are considered “out of place.”

The geography of common sense, or the maintenance of a place’s status quo, is a product of what Anderson describes as “dominating power” (2010). According to Anderson, this is

... power that can make individuals act against their own interests. Through imposing a range of ordering and bordering traces, dominating power manipulates, encourages, or enforces people to act in certain ways in certain places. . . . It makes people conform to another group’s vision of what the world should be like, whether it is in their interests or not. Dominating power is thus successful in imposing its ideology on particular places. (2010, p. 54)

In this sense, dominating power is the ability to create cultural norms and define the natural order of things. “Domingating power creates systems of ‘normality’ that we all should conform with to be ‘good citizens’” (Anderson 2010, p. 56). On the other hand, resistant power emerges when dominant power is confronted: “[r]esisting power seeks to transform the traces of dominating groups and dismantle their cultural orthodoxy” (Anderson 2010, p. 61). This understanding of the production of power can be seen in an analysis of the cultural politics of paradise and indeed the empirical research presented throughout the rest of this chapter. This approach is seated within a broader shift toward the commodification of place and the selling of paradise.

4 Traces of Paradise

Since the late twenty-first century, tourism and marketing research has predominantly been concerned with manipulating culture for economic ends (Philo and Kearns 1993). As such, place marketers have set about commodifying place and promoting it as a unified, singular product to be sold to the world (Philo and Kearns 1993). The practice of selling places has become natural to cities and regions alike. As Wright notes, places have thus become “commodified” (Wright 1985). Miles notes that in case of postindustrial cities, “[t]here is no choice but to compete, but this *choicelessness* creates a city driven by marketing needs rather than one driven by the needs of its residents” (Miles 2010, p. 166). Human geographers have explained how this practice of commodifying place has emerged from

“the postmodern condition” in which neoliberal doctrines have been glorified as a “guide for all human action” (e.g., Harvey 1989). Rather than places surviving to provide communities with basic needs, places are now subject to the condition of producing compelling narratives in order to thrive in an increasingly globalized market (Levine et al. 2005).

Paradise is a one compelling narrative, or trace, that tourism destinations rely on to produce and sell place. In his analysis of the concept of what he calls “paradiscal discourse” (1998), Costa maps the origin of paradise as producing the other. Costa describes how Hawaii as paradise became the original earthly “object of consumption” (Costa 1998, p. 323), the first site of hedonistic pleasure. “In the Western paradise, rules and obligations are largely suspended, resources are abundant, and hardships associated with quotidian earthly existence are lacking” (Costa 1998, p. 317).

The paradiscal tourist site and its residents are subordinate, inhabitants of a peripheral time and space construed as existing primarily for the consumption experience of others, known and represented by the West, to be gazed upon and consumed, objects for commodification and consumption, dependent upon the economic whims of the “dominant” tourist, to be penetrated and controlled, backward, natural and lush, lacking in human presence, characterized by an uncontrolled sexuality, primitive, resident in a liminal space and living at a leisured pace. (Costa 1998, p. 339)

Costa describes how places come to view themselves as other through the paradiscal discourse: “In the end, the host culture may define itself primarily in terms of the perceptions of the tourist” (1998, pp. 339–340).

Skelton’s research on the Pan-Caribbean demonstrates the disjunction between paradiscal discourses and lived realities. Like Hawaii, the Caribbean suffers from reductive representations: “The Caribbean struggles to resist external representations which reduce it to sun, sand, surf and sex . . . The Caribbean is sold, marketed and stereotyped as a paradise for play, an idyll of adventure and a construct of consumption” (Skelton 2004, p. 9). These traces become entrenched in place materially and nonmaterially, reinforced by the dominating power. In this way, sun, sand, surf, and sex underpin the cultural politics of paradise because they are privileged as dominant traces of place. It is important to note that these paradiscal traces are not necessarily negative; indeed, they are often indicators of a healthy and vibrant coastal community. Nonetheless, it is critical to note that paradiscal traces are reproduced by the dominating power, and as such, they are not indicative of a whole way of life. Although often occluded by the tourist gaze, subcultures do indeed thrive in resistance to paradiscal traces. This is an important point of departure for the following case study of Australia’s Gold Coast.

5 Conversation as Method

The research for this chapter was conducted using a mixed methods approach with 60 participants and a total of 70 participant experiences on Australia’s Gold Coast. The strategies included large focus groups with up to 40 participants, small focus

groups with up to 6 participants, one-on-one interviews with young people (under 30), and adults involved in youthful practices. All participants identified themselves as cultural practitioners in some shape or form, whether that be as an “artist,” as “producer,” as a “cultural consumer” as part of the “creative or cultural industries,” as involved in “creative or cultural work,” or as “a community worker” involved in the production of culture. By engaging in honest, open conversation with participants about culture, the aim of this research was to provide the conditions for the articulation of community. Since the research was an analysis of the culture of the Gold Coast, questions did not explicitly refer to “politics” or the “political,” although there were some questions about policy. Although the interviewer understood the cultural to *be* political, it was never expected that the resultant data would be overtly political. However, this is what inevitably transpired: accounts of the politics of culture on the Gold Coast.

The underlying methodological tool focused on in this study was conversation, drawing on Adam Smith’s understanding of the term. This is because, as Henry Clark points out, in Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, conversation is perhaps the only way to “reconcile virtue and self-interest” (Clark 1992, p. 186). As a methodological device for this study, conversation is grounded in the philosophy of politeness popularized in seventeenth-century England. John Brewer notes that “the proponents of politeness set out to create an ecumenical, urbane community of those who shared a vision of the world,” “seeking not to impose uniformity on society but to understand and celebrate its diversity” (Brewer 1997, p. 103). The notion of politeness is valuable to this study because, as Smith notes, “frankness and openness conciliate confidence . . . [w]e trust the man (sic) who is willing to trust us” (Smith 1790, p. 398). Further, conversation understood in this way can be considered a catalyst for a kind of cultural voice, as described by Friere (1972).

6 The Case of the Gold Coast

The Gold Coast is the sixth most populace city in Australia with over half a million people which makes it the largest noncapital city (ABS 2013). An hour by car to the north of the Gold Coast is Brisbane, the State capital of Queensland, and to the south is the border of New South Wales. The Gold Coast is made up of a constellation of suburbs, in lieu of a city center or town square. While the Gold Coast has recently named a CBD, this is yet to be recognized in practice. Rather, suburbs are dotted along the coastline, extending inland through a complex canal system into the hinterland. The northern seascape is defined by dramatic high rises congregating around Surfers Paradise, the heart of tourism on the Gold Coast. Waterways snake back through luxury canal estates toward rural villages nestled in the bushland. Along the length of the coast white, sandy beaches meet barrelling waves from the Pacific Ocean, producing the perfect conditions for surfing. The ocean and bushland is bountiful, and the weather is almost always warm and sunny. It is not difficult to see why real estate developers marked the Gold Coast as paradise (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 “Burleigh Heads” (Source: Dean Oakley)

“Famous for fun” (Tourism Queensland 2014), the Gold Coast is Australia’s “first city built as a pleasure-dome and, along with Canberra, is Australia’s only conceptual single-purpose city” (2011, p. 29). Described by Bosman and Dredge as a “hyper-neoliberal city” (2011), the Gold Coast has long been infatuated with development and mass consumption. Over the last 60 years, the sleepy coastal region has rapidly morphed into a “tourism mecca” as the city’s population has mushroomed (Stimson and Minnerly 1998, p. 194). In Wise and Breen’s terms, the Gold Coast is “a dehistoricized place” (2004, p. 163), where “spaces for consumption” are preferred over traces of heritage and where “new beginnings” are ideologically imposed in contradistinction to “origins” (see Zukin 2010). This is because the Gold Coast’s mandate has “been to give visitors respite from their own historically located and determined lives . . . its project has been to be outside history” (Wise and Breen 2004, p. 164). Surfers Paradise, the Gold Coast’s touristic heart, is not a part of the urban space that many Gold Coast young people choose too frequent. And, to many holidaymakers, “Surfers” is indeed the first word that comes to mind. The Surfers Paradise imagination is etched in the nation’s psyche (Ditton 2014). Paradise has indeed become the most dominant trace of place. In this way, the Gold Coast has come to be defined exclusively by the tourist gaze (Fig. 2).

Despite its production as paradise, the Gold Coast has long been considered Australia’s cultural wasteland. This image is a product of its paradisaical traces, its relentless promotion and production as a pleasure playground. With the Gold Coast’s successful bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2018, much effort has been made in recent times to shift perceptions of place, to embolden



Fig. 2 “Surfers Paradise by night” (Source: Dean Oakley)

community, and to diversify the economy. The City of Gold Coast’s new Arts and Culture department, for instance, has been instrumental in creating new cultural initiatives and nurturing emerging festivals and arts organizations to this end. As a consequence, the city has been steadily accumulating cultural capital, drawing artists and cultural practitioners to the region. Despite this increased emphasis on cultural life, the City of Gold Coast has made clear its key objective: to become a “world-class city” (2014). In this way, the Gold Coast is propelled by place competition, first and foremost, and thus the dominant value is placed on consumption through the selling of place as paradise. This production of paradisaical traces has enormous implications for people who engage with the city in myriad ways, and it produces particular sets of challenges for young people (Fig. 3).

Hailed as the “Crime Capital of Australia” by national media (Smail 2011), the Gold Coast’s underbelly is embellished in local and international imaginations. Young people bear the brunt of the Gold Coast’s paradisaical tracings, as they are frequently labeled “problematic,” “deviant,” and “superficial” in media and popular discourse. Baker, Bennett, and Wise note that “(t)he region’s newspapers share a preoccupation with crime reporting, with the regional tabloid, *The Gold Coast Bulletin*, using ‘big’ crime to portray the city as having a dark underbelly on par with big cities like Melbourne” (2012, p. 104). The maintenance of the Gold Coast’s hedonistic, criminal, and leisure identities propels a discourse of youth as problematic for society. Griffin’s claim over 15 years ago that “we are witnessing the emergence of a new paradigm of urban planning and symbol-making on the Gold Coast” might negate “the construction of the Gold Coast as a “bad city” is yet to materialize (1998, p. 290).



Fig. 3 “Soul” (Source: Dean Oakley)

Baker, Bennett, and Wise note that “all around the Gold Coast the notion of youth as ‘problem’ looms large” (2012, p. 109). Moral panics are mobilized around youth events such as Schoolies, a week in which thousands of young people from around Australia migrate to the tourism precinct of Surfers Paradise to celebrate their end of schooling. During this time, Surfers Paradise transforms into a chemical playground; youth are encouraged to hire apartments with friends, and many engage in the consumption of alcohol and drugs. This celebration has become a rite of passage for many youth who come from all over Australia. The Schoolies moral panic is identifiable in an analysis of the comments responding to a recent article about the event. A number of concerned citizens took to commenting on a news article about Schoolies in the Sydney newspaper *Daily Telegraph* (comment on Auerbach 2013). The article, although not actually damning in its assessment of Schoolies, presented footage of a young person being arrested as well as images of disorderly Schoolies partying. One comment accurately reflects the anxiety around the event and calls for the event to be shut down: “Isn’t about time this so-called right of passage was put an end to. Only an excuse for drugs, unprotected sex, violence, drinking” (Comment on Auerbach 2013). One young person with an insider’s perspective took to responding:

I think this is highly sensationalized rubbish, I attended [S]choolies on the gold coast in 2012 expecting this drunken crazy festival of non-stop partying but to be honest it was fairly tame, well not as over dramatic as stated above. The people commenting have obviously only heard all the negativity portrayed in our ridiculous media. (Comment on Auerbach 2013)

These two attitudes accurately reflect the dominant perspectives on Schoolies. The former is in line with the moral panic, while the latter highlights the negative portrayal of Schoolies in the media. While the event could arguably do with some more cultural content, it is perhaps not as dangerous and immoral as newspapers would suggest. This intense spotlighting of reckless, hedonistic behavior only works to demonize young people and further demarcate them from the adult population, many of whom engage in chemical cultures and are every bit as “immature.” Despite popular media discourses, research has shown that Gold Coast youth reject their stereotype. Lloyd et al.’s study concludes that “despite the images perpetuated by the media and tourism operators, life on the Gold Coast does not, for young people, live up to its mythical status” (2005, pp. 25–26). Nonetheless, these representations inspire an underbelly of creative resistance from young people wishing to produce and promote more positive engagements with place.

7 Resisting “Surface Parasites”

Young artists and cultural practitioners on the Gold Coast understand their role in shifting perceptions and realities about place. As young people, they know what it feels like to be marginalized, to be stereotyped, and to be pigeonholed as one thing or another. They know that these representations do not accurately portray their culture, and they understand that realities are reproduced through this lens. So they actively work throughout everyday life and through their cultural practice to create more nuanced traces of place that cater for a diversity of their needs. Young trace-makers work to recalibrate spaces for consumption that disturb the dominant culture. That is, they work to disrupt paradisaal traces, to shed light on inequalities and unsustainable activities. While these young people are in some ways delimited by the culture they are implicated in, and they are complicit in their consumption to an extent, they can also be seen as trace-makers. This is because these young artists and cultural practitioners seek to test the boundaries of spaces for consumption, to navigate in and around them in nontraditional ways, and to think outside of them.

Discussing the Gold Coast’s identity in relation to dominant traces of Surfers Paradise, Dean, a drum teacher and drummer in a local band, emphasizes outside perspectives. Of particular note, Dean relays his experience living in Logan, a low-socioeconomic area straddled between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. In doing so, Dean makes reference to the “bogan” stereotype of the Gold Coast, that is, the representation of Gold Coast people as uncultured, uneducated, and superficial:

... I always felt like a lot of the Gold Coast’s identity came from people that were outside the Gold Coast – like tourism. And like from being in Logan, like everyone would come down in their cars, with like some stupid exhaust, and like, and bloody wreck their tyres all weekend, spewing up on the road, and then that was like, Gold Coast is full of bogans. If you want to go hang out with bogans, go to the Gold Coast. And like, and no one, like no one would ever talk about Burleigh, Palm Beach, Mermaid. They’re always talking about Surfers Paradise. (Dean 2010)



Fig. 4 “Paradise is Ours” by Alex Lehours, Alley, and John Kaye (Source: Dean Oakley)

Dean further elaborates on the commodification of place, stating “[i]t’s strange what tourism has done to the Gold Coast. Like it’s really, really got this like influence that’s . . . it’s got a massive branding” (Dean 2010). Just as Las Vegas has been described as a “city of literal superficiality” (Bégout 2003, p. 20), so, too, has Australia’s Gold Coast. Vanessa, a young creative director who’s been involved in cultural development on the Gold Coast in a range of capacities, states: “[the] Gold Coast has this superficial aesthetic, very like, you know a lot of money being spent on being a certain image . . .” (2010) (Fig. 4).

Sean makes a direct link between the commodification of the Gold Coast and the dominant culture. He gives a succinct overview of how the Gold Coast was produced as a paradisaical space for consumption:

I think what’s different about the Gold Coast is that, you know, like 40 years ago, or maybe 50 years ago now, the Gold Coast wasn’t anywhere. Like it just wasn’t a place you know, and like in 10 years they went oh shit we’ve got beaches. Fuck, Sydney’s got beaches. Oh shit, our beaches are kind of similar. And all of a sudden we were a place. And it was purely focused and developed as a town to bring people into it and to sell them shit. (Sean 2010)

Sean’s apt description of the city’s rapid development as a tourism destination goes a long way in explaining the hyper-neoliberal history of the Gold Coast. Sean accurately describes the Gold Coast as a place where the primary objective has always been to attract tourists and sell them “shit.” In other terms, the Gold Coast established itself as a space for consumption very early – and young artists understand this. This is also in line with the Gold Coast’s reputation as a breeding ground for con artists, pleasure-seekers, and gamblers.

Vanessa emphasizes the pervasiveness of the “economic-capitalist mindset” in planning and policy on the Gold Coast: “if you’re a developer with money, you dictate the direction that the council takes with its money. So you know it doesn’t go towards all these little emerging this and that . . .” (Vanessa 2010). This inevitably translates to a fetishisation of the “new” and “modern” in planning, with little attention paid to cultural heritage. The architectural fabric of the Gold Coast is therefore constantly morphing and changing as ultramodern skyscrapers supersede the old ones, competing with the clouds. In Zukin’s terms, “new beginnings” are prioritized in contrast to “origins” (2010). Tanya laments the impermanence of the physical fabric, making reference to the erosion of her own cultural heritage in the context of her lifetime: “The thing that frustrates me most . . . is that everything that we have, like, in our lifetimes that has been iconic on the Gold Coast keeps getting bulldozed” (2010).

The paradisaical discourse of the Gold Coast as space of leisure is particularly important here. As Sean rightly notes, paradise is part of the Gold Coast way of life, but it is not the only culture that exists.

I think this guy said an interesting thing the other day – he was saying how he hates it when people say Gold Coast is cultural wasteland, devoid of any culture . . . But he’s like, if you think about what culture is – Gold Coast is incredible . . . Things like beachside photos and frangipanis – all that bullshit – he’s like, you know, Gold Coast is one of those key places that’s figured out how to market these really simple little things about the beach culture, about our lifestyle . . . It’s like all that is actually culture. And that’s the thing. Like I mean we’ve got culture because culture is everywhere, like you know our culture is just more spread than most and if it’s an art culture then it’s an art culture that perhaps is a little more underground and smaller than most. (Sean 2010)

Tanya, a young graphic designer, picks up on the dichotomy between the dominant culture and the underground culture:

. . . there’s like two different sort[s] of streams on the Gold Coast that are happening. Like supposedly art is more of an undercurrent, that’s growing a lot, but there’s this whole other platform of the glitzy white suit, gold chainy, white shoes wearing people that buy the, you know . . . [Frangipani stickers] (2010)

Vanessa discusses how this latter, dominant culture has shaped her subjectivity in her transitions postsecondary education. She shares her experiences of returning home from traveling abroad and her disillusionment with old school friends. Vanessa describes her strong attachment to the creative scene:

Like I think when I first got back from Europe, like the people I [was] used to associating with were very culturally creative and really cool, so I got home and the immediate group of people I came home to were friends from high school. So it had been a couple of years and they drove Skylines with blue lights underneath. The girls were getting Botox, like you know, it wasn’t the person I was. So if I met anyone even vaguely creative, I felt that I kind of clung to them. (2010)

Matt, a young visual artist, articulates his experience growing up on the Gold Coast as a teenager. He describes having to travel to Brisbane for cultural engagements beyond the Surfers Paradise experience. Matt is reflexive about his artistic experiences and engagements with place:

Well, the thing is like I've been a street kid since I was 15, 16. I've been in places, sneaking into all the parties with all the art things then. So I've been in the art scene for a long time. Even when I was like a young kid, I used to go photograph the guys doing graffiti at night-time. Mum and Dad would be like, where are you going? I'm going out. You film them and you watch them. Even when I was studying – what, when I was 17 in Brisbane, I wasn't coming home until 12 o'clock at night because I was going to go watch the guys do graffiti. Things like that. Then when I turned 18, people would go, let's go out to Surfers. I'm like, no there's something in Brisbane. I'm going to Brisbane to go to an art exhibition. It doesn't matter if they were all 50 years old. I'd rather just walk around and look at the art. Appreciate that more than, let's go to Surfers and write ourselves off. I did that for – I'm 21 now coming. So now it's looking back like what have I learnt from then? What can we do now? Because I don't want to leave here and go down in that cold weather [in Melbourne]. (2011)

At the time of interview, Matt was involved in the creation of blog that facilitated a space for artists to connect and to promote their work. Matt explains his reason for creating the blog:

The main thing I want to do for the Gold Coast is to link all of these people together because they don't talk to each other enough. And I want to do it with our blog and use our blog as a pathway between them. (2011)

Matt identified a disconnect in local cultural networks, and he acted on this by collaborating with other local youth, extending this interstate. The blog, which grew to include artists Australia wide, provided artists with a promotional platform to showcase their work. Matt has since carved a successful career as an artist on the Gold Coast and continues to work at the intersection of place, culture, and politics.

For many artists, like Matt, politics is indeed a motivating force. Sean discusses the political impetus behind his choice to become an artist and what that has meant for him living on the Gold Coast. He expresses his frustration at current formal Politics and laments the loss of his political will. Despite self-identifying as “almost apathetic” when it comes to formal Politics, Sean's artistic practice is clearly motivated by more everyday forms of politics:

Initially I got into art to protest, like I didn't want to just – like I saw art as like an awesome medium to be able to like touch people with like emotion and provoke thought, and I guess like the whole time I was just like expressing myself, like it was only kind of like after that sort of process of creating art to protest against social issues and politics that I realised how important it is for just individuals to feel a little bit of freedom, you know, in their lives, like just to express themselves and just as a relief. And now it just feels like, you know, when it comes to politics I'm so fucking over these people who are just talking nonsense most of the time and both sides are talking fucking nonsense, so I don't really care. Like I'm almost apathetic about politics now, which really saddens me, but you know I used to like be all current with like political issues and stuff like that and now I'm just kind of more caring about how I can travel and tell other people stories that need to be told. (2010)

Vanessa further comments on how the laid-back, comfortable lifestyle on the Gold Coast occludes inequalities and how this actually produces apathetic realities:

As [Sean] says, like protest was an inspiration for his creativity, and I feel that, like I am involved in the arts because I think of it as a very powerful vehicle for change and inspiration, but when there isn't the need for that powerful change and inspiration ...

You know, you might look at the people and go oh you're just apathetic, but the reality is you can be. (Vanessa 2010)

Sean agrees with this, picking up on the paradisaical culture that exists and how this in turn produces a culture of apathy:

Like I was born in . . . a Third World country or developing Third World country at the moment, and I arrived to Australia as a refugee, so knowing that back [home], like I couldn't become an artist. Like I couldn't like go to uni because you have to pay for it yourself straight up. I'd have to study something that would actually earn money. And the fact that here . . . on the Gold Coast right now we've got a room full of artists, musicians, film makers, that have like gone through uni, through the dole to like be working and earning some kind of income, eating amazing food, just living right next to the beach, what the hell can we complain about you know? (2010)

Despite the comfortable Gold Coast lifestyle, Sean explains how a local issue ignited his passion for making art:

. . . [I]t wasn't until this year that I actually found like a story worth telling on the Gold Coast – like in terms of people who need their story to be told and it was with like child and safety officers. Like, you know, they get no funding whatsoever you know and like these people who are supposed to be going to check if the parents are taking care of children in a proper way are so disgustingly under-funded that you know they're not able to do their job and they're not able to send people out where they should and follow-up on things – that it's so like just grossly under-funded. I have said that twice now that – nobody knows about it. I wasn't even aware of it and it's only like – kind of that was the first thing in about like five years that here on the Gold Coast that I've felt genuinely passionately about and wanting to like use art to protest through or create awareness. (Sean 2010)

It is clear that Sean has a sophisticated understanding of his position as a trace-maker and feels compelled to make cultural change by creating awareness of social issues through this artistic practice. Many Gold Coast artists and cultural practitioners are invested deeply in place and continue to strive toward making positive change. Tanya articulates her reasons for digging her heels into the Gold Coast: "it's that hope, there's always . . . it has potential" (2010). Sean also echoed this remark: "There's the hope, yeah. It's all about the hope" (2010). Since the interviews were conducted for this research, these young cultural practitioners have all been successful in carving out cultural careers. Although two of the participants have moved to Brisbane for a lifestyle change, all participants are still actively engaged in producing culture on the Gold Coast.

7.1 Sold Coast

Sold Coast is one recent example of a collective of young people embedded in cultural politics on the Gold Coast. A group of local cultural activists, Sold Coast, emerged in 2013 with a commitment to interrogate the Gold Coast's cultural norms by confronting and redirecting projects that are not socially and environmentally responsible. Sold Coast developed when a group of young activists, including the author, united with a vision to disrupt the Gold Coast's status quo and engender

cultural change. The collective consisted of practitioners from varying backgrounds in design, cultural work, contemporary art, coastal management, policymaking, filmmaking, and community engagement. Sold Coast positioned itself in explicit resistance to the Gold Coast's hyper-neoliberal doctrine of development. The collective aimed to provide the community with more responsible alternatives and in doing so transform its culture. An interdisciplinary lens enabled Sold Coast to create responses that bridged world views, knowledges, and disciplines, foregrounding the committee's experience in relation to place. The site-specific nature of Sold Coast's practice informed their perspective and redirective response.

Sold Coast's first project took the form of a symposium held on 20 June 2013. The event was tailored to a broad audience and brought together artists, cultural practitioners, academics, policymakers, and community. The event was produced in partnership with Rabbit+Cocoon creative precinct and Griffith Centre for Cultural Research and supported by Queensland College of Art and local creative businesses. The symposium was future focused, inviting presenters and audiences alike to present their visions, dreams, nightmares, and predictions about the Gold Coast in the year 2063:

This symposium asks the question, what does the Gold Coast look like in fifty years time? In a risk society, where stability is not guaranteed, how can we work together to provide for the future generations of our city? Are there more productive ways that we can collaborate to achieve social, cultural and environmental outcomes for the betterment of our society? (The Sold Coast Project 2013)

The symposium was used as a platform to launch a multilayered discussion about the future of the Gold Coast in the next 50 years. It was received by an audience of over 120 people including 21 speakers, with the aim of elevating the current dialogue to a critical position. The four themes addressed were: (1) (post)-tourism, placemaking, spacemaking, urban renewal; (2) Cultural borders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and others – inclusiveness under whose terms?; (3) Young people's voices, political participation and digital belonging?; (4) Local/global imaginaries, disaster management, risk, adaptation, mitigation. The committee chose these themes because they represented problematic areas that they felt the Gold Coast needed to urgently address. Robust discussion ensued with the conversation continuing on Twitter following the event (Fig. 5).

Shortly after the first event, Sold Coast was invited by City of Gold Coast to partner with council on another event. On July 28, Sold Coast staged a public provocation in response to the City of Gold Coast Draft Culture Strategy 2013–2023. Six provocateurs were invited from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise to reflect on and interrogate the strategy. Over 100 community members, artists, policymakers, and academics attended. The event was a kind of unprecedented partnership in that such a collective had not before been entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating community consultation in conjunction with council. In this way, the event opened up channels of dialogue between artists and cultural practitioners, academia, council, and the community. For council, this represented a turn toward more risky creative partnerships as well as more inclusive community



Fig. 5 “Sold Coast” (Source: Sold Coast)

consultation. Since the last event, Sold Coast has been on hiatus but the collective is planning to reemerge in the near future with new lines of action.

8 Conclusion

The research presented in this chapter has argued that young people’s varied cultural practices can usefully be understood as forms of political resistance. This resistance is articulated through formal Politics and informal politics in complex, overlapping ways. Political resistance is articulated through the cultural politics of every day as young people seek to challenge and subvert paradisaical traces. This is communicated through young people’s cultural practices (e.g., making a film or artwork or even through conversation) as well as through their consumption of cultural products. Young cultural practitioners in this study are forthcoming in their critique of culture, demonstrating strong political engagement with place. Young people also express their resistance through more formal attempts to interrogate normative geographies and transform the culture of the Gold Coast. In the empirical data and the subsequent case study of Sold Coast, young people articulated sophisticated understandings of society’s inequalities, and all strived to engender cultural change in resistance to paradisaical traces of place. This suggests, in line with recent research in political geography, that the political does not exist purely in one realm or another for young people and does in fact overlap as politics and Politics bleed together. The field of cultural geography would benefit from more empirical

research into how young artists and cultural practitioners are impacted by paradisaal traces of place and, in turn, how they articulate complex systems of resistance in response to dominant traces.

This chapter has sought to contribute to the literature on cultural geographies of place. By referring to empirical data on young people's cultural practice as a form of political resistance, it has situated this research within a broader analysis of the cultural politics of paradise, referring to Gold Coast as a suitable point in case. It has discussed how hegemonic placemaking processes project unidirectional discourses that do not cater to a multiplicity of engagements with place, thus marginalizing young people's subjective experiences and often negatively impacting their cultural identity and sense of self. In doing so, it has described how young people are, in turn, disrupting these dominant traces with the aim of creating cultural change. Finally, it has described how homogenous spaces for consumption offered by commodified places ignite in some instances courageous and creative responses from young people who seek to challenge and subvert dominant traces of paradise. It is evident from the data presented in this chapter that young people are political subjects heavily invested in and embedded in processes of trace-making. Indeed young people actively resist hegemonic traces in their everyday shaping of places.

9 Cross-References

- ▶ Counter-Mapping for Social Justice
- ▶ Theatre and Citizenship: Young People's Participatory Spaces

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Abstract

In 2006, over 700,000 Chilean secondary students took to the streets in demand of educational equity. This *revolución pingüina* was quieted by promises of solutions coming from a multidisciplinary group of specialists summoned to tackle the crisis. In 2011, university students organized massive demonstrations to call for the end of a neoliberal economic model that had shattered public education and fostered inequality. In these movements, the emergence of digital social media, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and blogging, becomes an effective catalyst for raising social awareness over social, political, historical, and economic factors that perpetuate inequality in the Global South. The aim of our study is to describe the construal of the discursive representation of the student

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mobilization in a corpus of 349 blog comments to editorials and opinion columns of online Chilean newspapers. Our research adopts the theoretical-methodological framework of two paradigms, namely, the tenets of the critical discourse analysis and the principles of the systemic functional linguistics. Both paradigms throw light on the meaning that ideational resources – expressed by the presence of taxonomic relations (repetitions, antonyms, synonyms, etc.) and nuclear relations (participants connected to a series of activities) – have in the construction of portraits of reality in discourse. The results of our exploration into construction of the representation of social actors in the comments posted by e-citizens showed that the Chilean student movement is construed as an instance of restitution of the citizens' rights and the restoration of honesty and dependability in the political sphere. This study is part of a research funded by the **FONDECYT Project 1120784**.

Keywords

Chile • Education • Social movements • Digital media • Critical discourse analysis

1 Introduction

The silence of deserted school yards is suddenly interrupted by the yelling of youngsters struggling to make their voices heard by their peers in one of the many student assemblies held during weekends in schools' classrooms along the country since 2006. These meetings have aimed to unveil a global agenda that calls citizenship to view market-driven practices as the sole guiding path toward progress, freedom, and growth. Undoubtedly, the student movement in Chile has changed politics. In 2006, secondary students initiated a month-long national protest against the inequities of a market-oriented educational system. The student movement of 2006 was so successful in its protests against privatization and low-quality schooling that they got a presidential audience. The dialogue between national representatives of secondary students and President Michelle Bachelet proved fruitful. An agreement that compromised a new education law and an end of for-profit schooling had finally resolved this flare-up, the conflict over public education. Five years later, however, none of the changes promised had been accomplished, and 2011 marked the beginning of a transformed youth activism led by the iconic faces of university students Camila Vallejos, Giorgio Jackson, and Gabriel Boric, among many others. These activists took to the streets, resisting brutal police repression to demand changes in the market-driven paradigms that had for over 30 years fomented an entrepreneurial modality of Chilean citizenship. The student-driven struggles over public education, then, have been on the vanguard of democracy Chileans would live in since 1990, the post-dictatorial era.

In 1973, the military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet shattered the sociocultural roots of a multiparty system and the democratic organisms of civil society. This shock had broken the gains sought by voters, most of them from lower

classes, who had trusted Allende's leadership to take the Chilean society of the early 1970s toward a more egalitarian social order. The power elite, threatened by the menace of losing their long-standing oligarchy, sought help from the United States. This pressure finally led to Pinochet's takeover. From 1973 to 1990, the military dictatorship thwarted any kind of grassroots collectivism and installed a market-driven system that accesses to education, health, housing, and worker pensions into a privatized and choice-based system. Thus, led by his *Chicago Boys*, a generation of economists who had earned their graduate degrees in economics and business from the University of Chicago, Pinochet turned Chile into the world's first neoliberal laboratory. Though the military junta may be gone, the marketization of Chile persists. Marked polarization exists between working and affluent social classes, a rift that the education system reproduces. The split between private schools for the wealthy, the partially private subsidized schools for the middle class, and public schools for the poorest echoes the socioeconomic divisions felt nationwide. So education has become a primary post-dictatorial point of struggle. The new student movements, with their ability to shut down traffic and organize through digital media, have come to question the ethical legitimacy of the contemporary mode of Chilean democracy and capitalism, negotiated through efficiency and choice.

This chapter provides an analytical overview of theoretical issues that constitute the foundations of the research presented in this chapter. First, our study deals with the role of public digital media in social change; this section explores how the immediateness of information that renders social networks has opened a new arena for deliberation. The latter contributes to the construction of an e-democracy where social movements play a fundamental role. The second issue examined is the historical context in which the Chilean student movement arises. Finally, the chapter presents a critical approach to the discursive configuration of the student movement built by adult bloggers through the perspective of the SFL.

2 The Role of Digital Media in Social Movements

The Chilean students' movement has been a Southern Cone iteration of a global flourishing of protest movements, and scholars have grappled with the import and outcomes of such collective action. Apropos to our project here, for the last 10 years, there has been a growing debate over the role that public digital media may have had in social change. Since the early 1990s, Rheingold (1993) and Corrado and Firestone (1996) argued that technology would facilitate the creation of a conversational democracy, a *deliberative public sphere* (Habermas 1989; Held 2006) that would revolutionize political conversation and debate. These so-called cyber optimist views (Wright 2012) have been criticized by more cyber-realist standpoints (Margolis and Resnick 2000). The arguments in favor of a more materialist perspective toward the impact of technology in contemporary society claim that technology per se fails to determine human behavior; nonetheless, technology influences and potentially restrains what counts for political action

while prompting a reevaluation of communication networks and practices of power (Wright 2012).

It is hard to ignore the wide popularity of digital social networking. Sites like Facebook and YouTube and the textual interactions via online newspaper blogging are reconfiguring the ecology of political communication undertaken by political elites. In fact, Habermas (1989, 2006) and Wolfsfeld (2011) claim that communication networks in politics have been traditionally founded on the principle of *political power*, understood as the hegemony held by influential groups who wield the ideological power of the media to place political actors in a superior position. For example, pro-Pinochet news outlets in the 1970s and mid-1980s attempted to mollify the dictator's despotic visage and portray him as elder statesman who defended Chile from chaos. At present, however, the unprecedented growth of social media has allowed for immediacy and ubiquitousness of information transmission. These, in turn, provide ordinary anonymous online citizens with the possibility of becoming informed and contesting a variety of issues exposed by hegemonic political groups in different platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, among others.

The open access to social media, consequently, has created a new arena for deliberation that contributes to the construction of an e-democracy with its own new agenda for online debate (Wright 2012; Macnamara 2012). The concept of e-democracy can be traced back to the mid-1990s as Internet began to take off (Chadwick 2009), its birth was preceded by a period of growing popular alienation from formal political institutions. The online two-way interactive communication afforded participation and voice to digital citizens who engaged in dynamic participatory social debates online. The latter led citizens to sense that the citizenship of representative democracy had become rather obsolete. In its place, social networking, in Chile as elsewhere, involved elements of digital public involvement that in the past unfolded in neighborhood organizations, unions, and public libraries. Textual practices born from online debate such as blog comments, tweets, and Facebook postings have engendered a form of democratic participation that is hard to ignore (Keren 2010).

Newspapers with an online-based legacy, like Chile's *El Mostrador*, the first left-leaning online newspaper, and EMOL, a traditional right-leaning online news portal, have played seminal roles in fomenting online citizenship. Woodly (2008) argues that social media, particularly the blogs of online newspapers, have assumed a fundamental role in the birth and development of new patterns of democratic participation. The constant accessibility to this new form of community empowers citizens to voice their dissent toward naturalized political practices among political partisans of all ideologies.

During 2011, world citizens would become witness to massive digitally connected parallel movements from North Africa to Chile. The March of Indignant, for example, involved citizens around 81 countries who took to the streets to demand the end of austerity measures. In Chile, students mobilized over promoting higher-quality public education based on the Chilean legacy of neoliberal decentralization and privatization.

In all, global collective action in the form of marches and massive adherence reveals increasing local dissatisfaction. The latter is explained by the rise of a global era of *soft power*, a feeble accountability of political institutions and its authorities. The frail liability on political authority has urged people to seek for a *popular representation*, the representation of people by grassroots citizens (Wright 2012; Wolfsfeld 2011; Gaventa and Tandom 2010). Nowadays, the traditional equation democracy equals voting (Mayol 2012; Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006) fails to satisfy the critical condition that entails the practice of active citizenship; people and specifically youngsters occupy the streets to oppose and resist the tie and suit politicians who have distorted the concept of democracy with their alliances with corporate powers. As Fairclough (2010, p. 397) claims, “It is only through action that people develop the judgment, the capacity to see things not from ‘one’s own point of view but in the perspective of all those who happen to be present’, which converts mere opinions into public discourses.” Consequently, the blogosphere emerges as a public virtual space that enables bloggers to air their views, establishing a rational dialogue between equal status-free participants (Keren 2010).

The construction of public discourses as Fairclough points out suggests ongoing negotiations of meanings in public sphere events. In this context, online newspaper blogging constitutes an instance of digital deliberation where individuals gather in a virtual public square or café to debate/read or hear about issues of public concern. It is in the critical exploration of blog comments posted in response to editorials and opinion columns of online newspapers that we attempt to explore the identities of social actors construed and negotiated by bloggers.

3 We Are Students, Not Customers: The Chilean Student Movement

Research on collective action and social movements has tried to decipher the reasons that may drive individuals to organize around what they judge as a collective benefit. On this concern, Tarrow (1997) asserts that the origin of social activism, in the past, was closely connected to conflictive situations that directly affected the immediate wellbeing of individuals. These groups, according to Hill and Rothschild (1992), build up prototypes of protests or riots based on learned behavior from previous demonstration protocols inscribed in the history of the country. Historians like Salazar (2013) and Loveman and Lira (2000) assert that the drive to engage in collective action is deeply rooted in the profound contradictions that emerge in the external scenario that surrounds individuals. The Chilean student movement emerged in reaction against a highly segregated education system that consists of municipal schools, dependent upon public funds; public subsidized schools, which receive public monies but can also demand for additional parent fees; and the traditional private schools. This system has generated a ghettoized access to schools that deepened the inequality gap to fair social ascent for more than 40 years.

Likewise, Tarrow (1997), two decades later, Salazar (2013) and Loveman and Lira (2000) point out that the dynamics that shape collective action are *political opportunities*, that is to say, a number of factors nested in the immediate sociohistorical context in which individuals move (Hörschelmann, ► Chap. 20, “Dissent and Youth Citizenship”, this volume). A critical factor that most certainly triggers activism lies in the particular condition by which individuals enter a subjective state that allows them to become conscious of their own alienation. Once people become conscious of their current state of rupture with hegemonic order, their insertion in a social network allows them to exchange memories, thoughts, and feelings with peers to transform alienation into a socially blatant phenomenon. Since the arrival in office of the new president Michelle Bachelet, her tax reform, which would allow for the implementation of an education restructuring, has been widely criticized by representatives of entrepreneurs, right-wing political parties, and international journals (see “Assault on the Chilean Miracle” published on the *Wall Street Journal* on 4 May 2014). Most bloggers posting their comments to the opinion column – All that glitters is not gold – published in *El Mostrador* in response to the article issued by the WSJ remark that unlike what Americans believe, the Chilean miracle just reached few people, most of them upper-class citizens. Consequently, the political violence exercised by hegemonic groups via online debate becomes a crucial step toward constituting social activism (Scott 2012; Vallejo 2012).

Our project on the political opportunities for participation through blogging, however, focuses on how opportunities for participation can lead to wider mobilization. Meyer (2004), in reviewing the key aspects of what he calls political opportunity structure, noted a cluster of variables that conjugated with the individual process of acknowledging one’s own alienated condition and looking for allies or support groups. Meyer suggests that other interrelated variables may lie in the level of stability of political institutions; the existence of possible divisions in social, economic, and political elites; and the level of repression or facilitation of dissent by the state. Disruptive political action from grassroots movements often finds favorable opportunities for mobilization when shifts in political opportunity structure open up the chance for citizens to become critically involved in cultural and institutional change. We see this occurring in the events that originated the 2011 student movement. At the beginning of the academic term in March 2011, the Ministry of Education had trouble coordinating the delivery of a card that allows students to have free access to public transport. This problem added to difficulties tertiary education students had to obtain loans from banks to pay for tuition fees generated apprehension among groups of youngsters who began to gather in groups in their schools and universities to discuss the current conflicts education was going through. Consequently, the delay in the delivery of a card to use the public transport along the country was the political opportunity that triggered numerous gatherings between high school youngsters and tertiary education students. Students’ assemblies, in turn, resulted in massive marches that originated in the month of May and that have continued throughout 3 years. Protests have allowed students and civilians to express accumulated grievances inflicted by a market-driven system that commodifies all aspects of everyday life, leaving everyday citizens vulnerable to the ambitions of entrepreneurs.

The increased integration and globalization of politics, in Meyer's opinion, has unveiled the configuration of a supranational structure of political opportunity. In other words, globalization has allowed for the construction of a globalizing citizenship, empowering and inclusive, that advocates for horizontal solidarity among fellow citizens of the world. In this context, the student movement in Chile emerges from path-dependent political opportunities, built up during a period of four decades in which the country underwent the effects of market-based policies.

Youth activism in Chile raised awareness over the fact that Chilean young people had been increasingly removed from the inventory of social concerns by the democratic governments that preceded the return to democracy in Chile (Salazar 2013). Since 2011, student marches have become terrain contestation that engages ordinary citizens in critical reflection over hegemonic practices that had long been perpetuating abusive and corrupted practices by privileged rich classes. Marching across streets and squares for over 2 years has meant reclaiming control over public space to draw citizens' attention to issues that nowadays constitute a public agenda (Alvarez et al. 2014; Flores Leiva and Quezada 2013; O'Malley and Nelson 2013). Concrete public activism in streets, squares, universities, and schools constitutes critical pedagogic action aimed to occupy the terrain of public discourse to condemn free market fundamentalism and propose the urgent need of critical changes in the entire system (Ditton, ► Chap. 17, "Young People and the Cultural Politics of Paradise", this volume; Horschelmann, ► Chap. 20, "Dissent and Youth Citizenship", this volume).

4 The Study

The discursive representation of the students' movement by adult bloggers who contribute their opinions about youth mobilization to online newspaper blogs is approached from two complementary theoretical-methodological frameworks. On the one hand, the critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2010) is an analytical perspective that studies the way social power is enacted, reproduced, and resisted in spoken and written texts. On the other hand, the functional systemic linguistics (hereafter SFL) is a socio-semiotic theory that sees the system of language as a cline of instantiation of meanings that is realized in the lexicogrammatical strata of the target language (Van Leeuwen 2008; Martin and Rose 2007; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). The corpus composed of 500 blog comments to editorials and columns selected from the Chilean digital portals *El Mostrador* and EMOL debates over the Chilean students' demonstrations from March 2013 to March 2014. The blog comments selected for this study correspond to an intentional sample of postings to examine how bloggers respond to the student movement.

The representation of the student movement in discourse is observed in this study in the construction of the ideational meaning that lies behind the grammar of the clause. Ideational meaning is realized grammatically through a configuration of core elements, namely, participants, processes (verbs), and circumstances. The

analysis we propose aims to identify *taxonomic relations* realized by means of repetitions, synonymy, and contrasts, among other resources, and *nuclear relations* the connection established between people and things (noun phrases) with processes (verb phrases), circumstances (adverbial phrases), and qualities (adjectives and adverbs). For the purpose mentioned above, we have divided the text into clauses by using double slashes. Clause complexes, that is to say sentence boundaries, use triple slashes. Core elements have also been identified using different colors. Participants are signaled using bold type, while processes are colored according to Halliday's (1994) classification. Material processes are colored green, relational processes are colored red.

Both linguistic resources contribute to the construction of a picture of experience by members of a culture. In our study, the linguistic resources identified contribute to the construction of a portrait of reality that visualizes student terrain contestation and cultural resistance through the standpoint of Chilean grassroots *netizens or e-citizens* (Castells and Cardoso 2005; Yus 2010) that debate over *the pedagogical intents* displayed by youth to assume public agency for justice (Montecino and Arancibia 2013; Montecino 2011).

5 The Discursive Configuration of Youth Political Resistance in Blog Comments

The comments analyzed show how the cautious comments in praise of a student movement that had survived its first year of massive demonstrations in the period corresponding to 2011–2012 segued into numerous postings in which civilians express their admiration toward students' perseverance and firmness of purpose (Somma 2012). Consecutive marches during 2013 opened a youth-only terrain contestation that an important number of civilians applauded. The youthful impulse to visibilize anger and frustration against the flagrant corruption of public and private institutions in Chile motivated massive support among citizens. For nearly a year, the student movement had been insisting on the indifference of political authorities toward violations against the law that forbids for-profit activities that had affected private tertiary education institutions for more than 30 years.

5.1 Hooray for the Students!

In March 2013, a constitutional accusation would remove Piñera's Minister of Education from his position, a process which, in Chilean law, occurs when a Minister is involved in unlawful activities or has neglected official duty. In the case of Piñera's former Minister of Education, he was accused of neglecting his official duty when he did not investigate complaints filed against private institutions accused of for-profit activities. Blog comments to applaud students' tenacity in their struggle to add together the support of an important number of politicians to their cause are posted to discuss editorial texts and opinion columns that debate the

Participant	Process
With these youngsters	That have been striving (pr:material) constantly
Chile	will become (pr:relational) more honest, fairer, and less small minded
Hooray for the students Chile	supports (pr:behavioural) your effort to defeat (pr:material) the corrupt political class of this country

Fig. 1 Representation of students' agency in discourse

impeachment of the Minister. The following example corresponds to a comment posted in the portals of one of the most important online newspapers, *El Mostrador*. The comment provides an overview of the portrait of students' activism constructed by ordinary citizens in the context of the impeachment to a public official:

With these youngsters that have been striving constantly, Chile will become more honest, fairer and less small-minded. Hooray for the students; Chile supports your effort to defeat the corrupt political class of this country [*Con estos jóvenes que han estado dando la batalla constante, Chile será más honesto, más justo y menos mezquino. Vivan los estudiantes, Chile los apoya en su esfuerzo para derrotar a la lacra política de este país*].

The comment initiates with a hypotactic clause that places youngsters in a thematic position linked to a material process (process of doing), which emphasizes students' agency in the current political and social situation affecting the country (Fig. 1). The use of the material process *striving* establishes an implicit reference to a series of activities that derive from the students' struggle in the streets. In fact, besides marching, students are also engaged in artistic activities to tackle the repression the movement has been subject to by police forces. The main clause in the hypotactic construction places Chile in a thematic position linked to a relational process that construes the country as the prospective carrier of the attributes: *more honest, fairer, and less small minded*. The latter highlights the restoration of the three qualities subordinated to the determination of the students to fight relentlessly against the system. The last clause in the comment opens with an exclamation praising the students' resolution and construes Chile connected to a behavioral process that encourages students to continue their struggle to overthrow corrupt politicians: "Hooray for the students; Chile support your effort to defeat (. . .) the corrupt political class."

5.2 The Occupation of Streets

As stated earlier, the student movement reinstated in 2011 in Chile was the result of the increasing exclusion of young people from the inventory of social concerns by a market fundamentalist system that naturalizes practices that lessen corruption and deepen inequality. Student mobilization aims to engage the political class, the media, and particularly ordinary citizens in critical reflection and concrete action against a market-driven economic model that has augmented socioeconomic inequality and

Participant	Process
Marches	are (pr:relational) a good plea to the responsible actors: the Alliance and the Coalition
so that they	can put an end (pr:material) to the recklessness in education in the last 30 years

Fig. 2 The power of marches to resist corruption

hindered social mobility. The following comment posted in May 2013 published as a response to an editorial text in the online portal *EMOL* is an example of how people regard student's protests as a mechanism to create awareness of what the blogger nominates as "recklessness in the last 30 years in education":

Marches are a good plea to the responsible actors: the Alliance and the Coalition so that they can put an end to the recklessness in education in the last 30 years [*Las marchas son un buen llamado a los actores responsables: Alianza – Concertación para que puedan poner termino a la irresponsabilidad de los últimos 30 años en educación*].

The comment is an example of how civilians discursively represent the student movement as an urgent demand for concrete action over a neglected public education system. The blogger depicts the student protests as a plea that urges a change from the social actors trusted with the administration of public goods and whose performance on this matter is being firmly questioned. The identification of the two political coalitions as "responsible actors" ascribes them with an agentive role in the political scene, a role whose expected function could not be properly executed neither by the Alliance, a political group that gathers right-wing supporters, nor by the Coalition, the umbrella of political parties that support center-left to far-left ideologies.

The opening of the comment as shown in Fig. 2 construes a material process (marching) as a nominalized agent whose actions make a strong statement to the two leading Chilean political parties, namely, the Coalition and the Alliance. The second clause places both prominent political parties in a thematic position and construes their roles as having taken the lead to bring education to the critical situation that it is facing nowadays. It is important to highlight at this point that the blogger's disapproval of the Chilean political class represents the visible sign of the frustration that ordinary people feel toward representative democracy for not having changed a system inherited from Pinochet.

5.3 At Last the Masks Worn by Those Who Represent Darkness Begin to Fall

At present writing, post 2011–2013, the ongoing student movement has continued its steady commitment with the demands that inspired that of 2011. The unexpected massiveness of the protests of 2011–2012 has coupled with a strong presence of presidents of university students' federations, a political organization that wield

Participant	Process
GUYS	WELL DONE
We	Are getting to know (pr:mental) the real truth about everyone
Anybody left	There won't be (pr: existential)without being seen (pr:mental) as they really are (pr:relational)
At last, the masks of those	who represent (pr:relational) darkness begin to fall (pr:material)

Fig. 3 The discursive support of citizens to the students' movement

great power in and outside of campus life, in the media every time education is being discussed in congress. Moreover, youth activism has been reinforced by the presence of former leaders of the student movement in the low chamber of the Chilean Congress. This situation has alerted political parties nationwide, as they have apprehensively witnessed the emergence of a new order of discourse that seeks to challenge the dominant political practices imposed by conventional partisan activity in a strongly conservative Chilean Congress. The media, along with intellectuals in the public and private sectors, has covered the student leaders taking seat in a parliament, which is the traditional dominion of by old-guard political parties.

If traditional political actors disregarded the new politics, popular reaction has been praising the young parliament members' action. The following example illustrates such approval:

WELL DONE GUYS!!!... We are getting to know the real truth about everyone. There won't be anybody left without being seen as they really are. At last, the masks of those who represent darkness will begin to fall [*BIEN MUCHACHOS!!!!... estamos llegando a conocer la verdad intrínseca de todos y cada uno. ...no quedará uno solo sin que se muestre tal cual es Por fin empiezan a caer las máscaras de quienes representan la oscuridad. . .*].

10 de abril de 2014 hace 10 horas

The comment construes the action of former student leaders as the establishment of a new order of discourse that advocates for ethical and dependable behavior from the political class. The parliamentary salary-cutting bill allowed people to identify the groups that resist the modification arguing the measure would hurt their personal finances as their salary would be reduced to half the amount they actually receive.

The comment, as shown in Fig. 3, opens with an interpersonal adjunct (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) that praises loudly the valor of students' former movement leaders and nowadays parliament members: "WELL DONE GUYS." This proud outcry is followed by a clause that places an inclusive "we" to represent grassroots everyday citizens on a thematic position and linked to a mental process. The latter portrays citizens as becoming conscious of the true goals sought by the political class. The latter is reaffirmed by the introduction of an existential process with

negative polarity – “There won’t be anybody left. . .” – which is a plea to cast off the possibility of remaining in the comfortable ignorance that had dominated the country for the last 30 years. The last clause in the comment construes the political class in terms of opposite concepts *light* and *dark*, coupled with the implicit association of both notions to their corresponding connotations *good* and *bad* (Montecino and Arancibia 2013). Citizens interpret the presentation of the bill as an opportunity to visibly recognize the true faces of those who see public service as a means of making profit at the expense of the taxes honest citizens pay. The Congress is taken as a polarized terrain where, nowadays, masked ambitions cohabit with true public service.

6 Conclusions

This paper has briefly explored the positing of the current political and social topography of Chile through the conflict that has affected Chilean education for over 30 years. Nowadays, thanks to the access everyday citizens have to online newspaper portals, the digital arena has seen the birth of new patterns of democratic participation of citizens in online debates about local and global news.

The sample of online newspaper comments to editorials and opinion columns gathered from *El Mostrador* and EMOL from March 2013 to March 2014 displays the opinion of readers of online columns and editorials whose authors either support or oppose the current student mobilizations that struck the streets of cities along Chile. The brutal commodification of education in Chile has been the cause of increasing segregation and inequality; this is commonly expressed in online comments in support to the student monthly marches: “Privileged education for those who can afford to pay for it, technical schools for the middle class and public schools for the working class.”

Comments to online newspapers’ editorials and opinion columns during this conflict have usually interpreted the youth struggle as the *victory of the street*. The construal of student marching as the conquest of a public space not only refers to the successful occupation of a geographical space but also suggests that this accomplishment has been attained by the feeblest agent in the asymmetric battlefields between the streets and state-run institutions. Citizens and students occupy the streets, while the Congress and ministries become the trenches where political power guards its interests. Throughout the analysis of the 500 comments, we have observed that civilians usually praise student determination, to resist the hegemonic practices of political classes. Comments such as “We have witnessed how the street rat could frighten the elephant of power” and “Hooray for the students!” illustrate the construal of a discursive representation of the student movement by adult bloggers as *street rats*, *a moral hope*, and *new blood to congress*, while, on the other hand, members of the Congress are referred as *elephants of power*, *hyenas*, and *traitors*. The semantic load of the words used by the bloggers in the comments attempts to construct a portrait of the role that each social actor represents in Chile’s political scene. On the one hand, students embody

a marginal display of rebellion that may disperse as rats do when scared; however, their outgrowing number has resisted repression and continues struggling. On the other hand, the construal of the Chilean Congress as an elephant of power demonstrates the political influence this institution enjoys in Chile. At this point, it is interesting to mention that most traditional politicians have largely criticized the new young Congress members for what they consider an unwitting amateurism; this disqualification presents a noticeable parallel to the ways the political elite flip-pantly discredited the protest practices of the student movements as raging hormones rather than politically cogent strategies (Figueroa 2013). In the context of the fierce discredit the student movement has had in the media, blog comments have become armaments in the discursive battlefield over public and private education, corruption, student protests, and legislative amendments. These online exchanges help construct the meanings that shape public debate, tapping into the chances of the socially equitable exchanges of *immersion* (Trifonas 2010) and the multiplicity of common-interest-based *affinity spaces* (Hayes and Gee 2010). The textual practice of posting comments to newspapers' editorials and opinion columns becomes part of the democratic movements that participants address rather than residing on the sidelines of the struggle.

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Between Exclusion and Political Engagement: Conceptualizing Young People's Everyday Politics in the Postwar Setting of Sri Lanka

Fazeeha Azmi, Cathrine Brun, and Ragnhild Lund

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Abstract

Drawing on findings from research on youths in postwar eastern Sri Lanka, the aim of this chapter is twofold: first to develop a framework for understanding young people's everyday engagements with politics in the context of the transitions that a postwar setting involves and second to develop an understanding of

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young people's political everyday engagement in a context where the state has clearly and quickly moved from a postwar stage to a development stage. The authors find that the different experiences of the violent past and a politicized postwar setting continue to play a role in young people's lives and form a constrained context in which their political engagement is shaped. Unemployment and lack of involvement in ongoing development initiatives by the state exclude Tamil and Muslim youths from political spaces and from having a political voice at the national level. Instead they are enmeshed in societal and spatial power relations in a political environment that impacts negatively on their identity construction and subjectivities.

Keywords

Youth • Everyday politics • Postwar transition • Exclusion • Sri Lanka

1 Introduction

Conflicts do not disappear easily and become replaced by a peaceful state of existence (Moore 2000). Moving from war to postwar has been a profound transition in young people's lives in Sri Lanka. The official government story of transition toward peace in the country and the experience of that story by young people in war-affected areas are entirely different. Young people's political engagement in the postwar setting of Sri Lanka explains a particular generation's experience of the transitions taking place from war to postwar and further toward an unknown future.

This chapter analyzes the ways in which Tamil and Muslim young people become political through particular experiences of exclusion in the official discourses on post-conflict issues as well as in their access to employment and welfare, participation, and development. The politics is conceptualized as the relationship between electoral politics, state policies, and the ways in which people may struggle to find their place and fight for inclusion and emancipation from what they see as marginal places (Azmi et al. 2013). The aim is to unravel the spaces of everyday life and hence explore how young people's political engagement is developed. Achieving this aim will contribute to understand how differences and positionalities are negotiated through access to particular social spaces through which influence may be gained (e.g., Bartos, ► [Chap. 7, "Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis"](#), this volume). Thus, reference is made to recent geographical work on youths that has contributed to an understanding of how young people make, politicize, and challenge space (Jeffrey 2008; Wood 2012).

After a discussion of the context and methodology, the chapter provides a discussion of the transformation that takes place from war to a stage of postwar and young people's experience of such a transformation in a war-affected area of eastern Sri Lanka in relation to the official discourse of transformation created by the state, which mainly concerns the physical infrastructural development and reconciliation (Schubert 2013; Uyangoda 2011, 2012). The purpose of the

discussion is to develop an understanding of young people's political everyday engagement in a context in which the state has clearly and quickly moved from a postwar stage to a development stage, but the different experiences of the violent past and a politicized postwar setting continue to play a role in young people's lives and form an important context in which their political engagement is shaped. The following section introduces the Sri Lankan context and methodology and is followed by a presentation of the analytical framework used in the study. Thereafter, young people's experiences of exclusion from the official discourse on Sri Lanka after the war are discussed, and some of the spaces of political engagement identified by the young people are analyzed. Based on data collected during the period 2009–2014, the final analytical section explores the changing conditions for political engagements among young people. The chapter concludes with reflections on the spatial and temporal dimensions of the relationship between social exclusion and political engagement among young Tamils and Muslims in eastern Sri Lanka since the war ended in 2009.

2 Context and Methodology

Youths' involvement in politics in Sri Lanka dates back to the pre-independence period, but it was not until independence was gained in 1948 that the country saw the development of youth uprisings by rural youths, unemployed educated young people, and nationalist groups mobilizing around ethnicity. While political issues in Sri Lanka before the 1960s were centered on socioeconomic stratification and ethnic identities, repeated violent political actions in the late 1960s affected a whole generation of youths (Amarasuriya 2009; Fernando 2002; Hettige 2008). Discrimination was based on class, caste, ethnicity, religion, ideology, place of origin, education, and employment, resulting in youth uprisings against the socioeconomic and political exclusions that continued during the 1970s and 1980s and took the form of paramilitary political action. The civil war was fought between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government forces from 1983 to 2009. It was not just a bipartisan conflict, but spread beyond the ethnic boundary between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, to include also the minority group of Muslims (recognized as an ethnic group in Sri Lanka). As a result of this history of youth uprisings and conflict, youth politics in the country have been understood as violent and troublesome. During three decades of war, the entire nation suffered in various ways. People in general lived in fear and mistrust, and youths were vulnerable in multiple ways: they either served as combatants or hid themselves from public spaces in fear of forceful recruitment and to avoid surveillance by the government security forces.

In eastern Sri Lanka, Tamils and Muslims were both profoundly affected by displacement, loss of family members, lack of education and livelihoods opportunities, and restrictions to their mobility. In terms of political participation, while Muslim youths' political participation continued through their affiliation with mainstream political parties and through the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress,

Tamil youths lacked access to exercise their political rights through political parties; their only avenue for political participation was through militarism. Since the defeat of the LTTE in the east in 2007 (and in the north in May 2009), the government of Sri Lanka has initiated large-scale development and infrastructure projects in the eastern part of the country. However, the recovery process has been fraught due to differing access to resources and unequal progress in recovery (Brun and Lund 2009; Hyndman 2007; International Crisis Group 2009; Ruwanpura 2009). For young people living in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, the period immediately after the war was characterized by a continuation of militarized social life. During the time of research, the official political discourse has been dominated by the strong leadership of President Mahinda Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Freedom Party and has rhetorically moved from militarism to development and recovery. In this context, many people are fearful of speaking out or being politically active. Instead, they try to mobilize and express their opinions in less obvious ways by not articulating their opinions openly or by having a discrete presence and engaging politically from safe places. As youth politics have traditionally been considered problematic in Sri Lanka, there is a need to investigate how "normal youths" (i.e., young people outside the political parties) engage in politics today in eastern Sri Lanka.

Despite the end of war in 2009, the areas in which fieldwork was undertaken were still militarized and people there continued to fear for their safety. In such circumstances, the ethical considerations required for understanding researchers' responsibilities become crucial in order not to cause any harm. The measures taken during fieldwork to maintain the safety of the research participants and researchers alike have been described extensively elsewhere (Azmi et al. 2013; Brun 2013; Lund 2012), but in short safe spaces were enabled by encouraging the young people to help in determining where interviews could be held and what could be talked about. To maintain anonymity, the locations where the fieldwork took place were not disclosed, but the areas under study represented both urban and rural areas, areas formerly controlled by the LTTE, areas affected by war and the presence of LTTE, and areas with little LTTE influence but that were nevertheless affected by war.

The fieldwork and follow-up interviews were conducted in three stages in between 2009 and 2011 and 2014. In the first stage of the study, in 2009, key informants were interviewed, including government officers in charge of youth projects, persons representing civil society, and other resource persons. In addition, youth organizations and other places where young people (Tamils and Muslims) are present were visited, including playgrounds, universities, sports arena, and NGOs. The second stage was developed between 2009 and 2011. Group discussions were held with university student groups, sports groups, internally displaced young people, groups of young people living in a tsunami resettlement village, and women activists and NGO workers. In order to obtain updated information, youths we interviewed between 2009 and 2011 were approached by phone in February and March 2014. Seven former interviewees were reached through helpful parents and friends and were willing to share the latest news in their lives and in their villages.

3 Political Engagement and Social Inclusion and Exclusion: A Youth-Centered Perspective

Literature on young people and politics emphasizes the *intersections* between micro- and macro-politics and Politics (with a capital “P”) (Häkli and Kallio 2013; O’Toole 2003; Skelton 2010) and the accompanying coming together of different political practices (also see Mills and Duckett, ► Chap. 28, “Representing, Reproducing, and Reconfiguring the Nation: Geographies of Youth Citizenship and Devolution”, this volume). There are particular connections between politics and youths in Sri Lanka that need to be understood in order for young people’s politics to be understood. As mentioned above, youths’ participation in politics in Sri Lanka has been perceived as inherently violent. Youth protests erupted initially in the 1960s and continued to unsettle the politics of the country until it culminated in war in 1983. While much has changed in Sri Lankan society since the war started in the early 1980s, experiences of social exclusion have persisted among Tamil and Muslim youths currently living in the eastern part of the country, as shown in this chapter.

Sen’s (2000) research on social exclusion has focused on relational features with deprivation of capability among poor people. Recently, such research has been directed toward understanding structural as well as social processes that lead to individuals and groups living on the margins of society (Gingrich 2008; Vandeyar 2013). Understanding political engagement based on social exclusion focuses primarily on relational issues and social ties, such as family, friends, local communities, state services and institutions, and more generally the societies to which individuals belong (Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997). Such a multidimensional approach to understanding social exclusion includes the closely interrelated dimensions of economic, social, and political processes. The political dimension of social exclusion refers to citizenship rights, namely, civil, political, and socioeconomic rights (Staeheli et al. 2013), and consequently a range of formal and informal processes that determine people’s inclusion in and exclusion from a variety of symbolic and material spaces and resources (Brun 2003).

An important connection between social exclusion/inclusion and political engagements is formed by the social spaces in which young people engage in politics. For example, the more safe and included people feel, the more involved and vocal they can be. In the research context presented in this chapter, such spaces are limited to the family or the university. However, when young people feel excluded they also feel voiceless. In the case study in question, this happens when access to education and work is controlled by others or when participation in development activities is denied to them. The emotions triggered by the experience of social exclusion gave rise to political reflexivity among the young people interviewed (Lund 2012).

Kallio and Häkli (2011) distinguish between *political presence* and *political involvement* in order to understand how aware young people are of the political aspects of their actions when engaging politically. Their distinction is useful for understanding the emotional and reflective process toward being and acting political among young people in eastern Sri Lanka. Those young people’s political engagements in various social spaces and how they make safe spaces for political

participation have been analyzed in an earlier article (Azmi et al. 2013). The discussion is continued here, by analyzing the particular ways in which young people relate to, identify with, and dissociate themselves from the state and by particularly considering the official discourses of the state and the president after the war and how the young people associate with those discourses. To facilitate the analysis, this chapter also examines the axis between *voiceless* and *vocal politics* (also derived from Kallio and Häkli 2011), which concerns how much voice young people have in politics. In this regard, the aim to make more explicit the spatialities of the youth-centered perspectives on the political and politics, as much of the literature on social exclusion, ignores its spatial aspects (Cass et al. 2005). In the studied context, young people maneuver spaces of restricted freedom of speech and high security risks and make safe spaces for political engagement. Their claims of lack of access and socio-spatial exclusion unravel both earlier and contemporary exclusions.

4 Sri Lanka's Official Discourse of Postwar Development and the Young People in Eastern Part of the Country

This section examines the extent to which young people feel included in the reality portrayed by the state/government and President Mahinda Rajapaksa (MR) and how their political presence and involvement are reflected in processes of inclusion and exclusion.

Throughout Sri Lanka the president's and the official government's discourse is prominent in the state-controlled media. In the programs broadcast on the TV channels accessible to most people in the eastern part of the country, MR the president is portrayed as a hero who downplays minority status and ethnic differences. Almost daily on the news programs, the president is shown taking part in the opening ceremonies for roads, bridges, and schools or ceremonies in which letters are handed over containing the promise of new development projects in the future. Although the ceremonies are not necessarily located in the eastern part of the country, they give an impression of a president who takes development seriously while talking about the government's achievements in eradicating terrorism and creating a peaceful life for its citizens. When the ceremonies include Tamils, MR speaks in Tamil. The printed Tamil-speaking media (*Nawamani Veerakesari*, *Vidivelli*, *Sudar Oli*, and *Muslim Murasu*) are critical of the government in general, but are still subject to governmental control and censorship. Young people are highly aware of this bias, and therefore relating to the official discourse is an essential way of understanding how people experience social exclusion, as shown in this section.

4.1 One Nation/One Community: There Are No Minorities Anymore

Understanding ethnicity in the Sri Lankan context is closely connected to the notion of "minority." The terms "minority" and "majority" are not only about shares and

numbers in the Sri Lankan context but also about the political and “ethical,” whereby the minority must be subservient to the majority (Ismail 2001). While Muslims have been termed a “good” minority because they have accepted their status as a minority in politics, Tamils have been considered a problem because they have refused to accept the status of minority and have fought for a separate state. Hence, there are good reasons to find out how the prominent discourse of no minorities and the irrelevance of ethnicity resonate with the young people.

In his speech at the ceremonial opening of Parliament on 19 May 2009, MR said:

We removed the word minorities from our vocabulary three years ago. No longer are there Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, Malays and any other minorities. There are only two peoples in this country. One is the people that love this country. The other comprises the small groups that have no love for the land of their birth. Those who do not love their country are now a lesser group. (Rajapaksa 2009)

MR was implying that for 30 years there was a terrorist problem in Sri Lanka, not an ethnic conflict, but the root causes of the conflict have not had any recognition in this official discourse. MR attempts to recast the paradigms of ethnicity that have divided the country and continue to downplay ethnic identities (Schubert 2013). Schubert shows how MR, through *Mahinda Chinthana*, the development plan for the eastern regions, has formulated a very clear victim-victor discourse, which portrays all Sri Lankans as victims against the LTTE:

a community united by the shared experience of the LTTE's ‘murderous terrorism’... the President builds on the idea of this multi-ethnic body, to point out that the collective identity of this multi-ethnic body (or nation) was forged because of the common/shared experiences of victimisation at the hands of the LTTE. (Schubert 2013, pp. 11–12)

Although the sentimental “one nation” rhetoric received wide attention in the media (especially appealing to the majority), people from minority groups felt it hard to accept a “false one nation identity,” due to the long-standing tension between majority and minorities and the differing consequences of the war on them. The current situation raises questions regarding the “one nation” when it comes to the identity of minorities, as the increasingly ethnicized everyday life of Sri Lankans shows that the postwar years have not helped to remove the term “minority” from the vocabulary; rather, the term “minority” is acquiring a thick negative meaning. In contrast to the official discourse, Tamil young people are still left with the experience of losing the war and an intense feeling of continuing to be a minority, and they feel humiliated. Similarly, Muslim young people in the eastern part of Sri Lanka feel that their identity is being threatened, and the expansion of Sinhalese settlements in particular toward Muslim-inhabited areas is perceived as a threat that continues to make ethnicity a prominent aspect of their daily lives (for a detailed study on youth identity and geopolitical contestation in Herzegovina, see Laketa, ► [Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina”](#), this volume).

During the interviews, ethnicity often emerged as a theme around which young people became political. The interrelated identities of ethnicity and minority continue to influence their political awareness and agency. In 2009, 2010, and in the follow-up interviews held in 2014, all young Tamils and Muslims interviewed in

eastern Sri Lanka saw their position in society as marginal and emphasized that the major cause was ethnicity. Today, youths emphasize the ethnic boundaries in terms of eastern origin, language, and religion. Both Muslims and Tamils feel that they are largely excluded from public places elsewhere (i.e., other than their local areas) and are reluctant to go to the capital, Colombo, because they do not speak Sinhalese and feel that people look down upon them with suspicion due to their attire, which reveals cultural/ethnic/religious identities. In 2014, young people reported the following restrictions and disillusionments:

Ethnicity is not a problem as long as we stay in the east. LTTE is also defeated. (Young Muslim man, telephone interview March 2014)

We went on a family trip to Colombo. It looks like a different country if we compare [it] with our village. We are also people born here in Sri Lanka . . . but born in a wrong place. (Young Tamil woman, telephone interview March 2014)

Clearly, the young people felt excluded from MR's one nation discourse, and they have no reason to feel unity with the Sinhalese majority. They reflected the experience of being distanced from the rest of the country in many ways – that their world was limited to the eastern part of Sri Lanka. In their understanding, they continued to be a marginalized minority and their ethnic identities continued to play a major role in their exclusion when they related to the national context in terms of employment and education opportunities. Feelings of being neglected and rejected on ethno-religious grounds caused deep frustrations. Consequently, the president's attempt to define a common identity will constitute a challenge and perhaps an unrealistic aim, as Sri Lankans continue to be divided economically, politically, religiously, and ethnically.

4.2 Economic Development and Democracy

A key feature of postwar Sri Lanka and its official discourse is how the “postwar” discourse has been made irrelevant and replaced with a discourse on development, largely as economic and infrastructural development. In terms of infrastructure development in the eastern part of the country, a large-scale infrastructure development program titled *Nagenahira Navodaya* (Eastern Revival) was implemented when the government fully eradicated the LTTE from the east and established its military power in the Eastern Province in 2007.

The solution to the conflict and what has been described as a terrorist problem is disarmament, democracy, and development:

Economic and infrastructure development seem to constitute the mainstay of the Rajapaksa government's approach to managing potential ethnic tensions in the post-civil war phase. The approach is based on the notion that the political and economic reintegration of the Tamil minority into the Sri Lankan state will be easier when the benefits of rapid economic and infrastructure development are felt. (Uyangoda 2011, p. 135)

In this sense, economic development has been considered the main strategy for addressing and resolving minority grievances. Uyangoda (2012) explores possibilities for reconciliation after the war. He questions the ability of Sinhalese political

leadership to understand and respond to the worries of the war-affected people and describes how the future in the postwar situation is differently perceived among Sinhalese and Tamils.

According to Schubert (2013), MR has made it clear that future developments in the north and east of the country will be heavily militarized. After the end of the war, military personnel were employed in the construction, service, and agricultural sectors in other parts of the country. In the eastern part of the country, involvement in similar activities was not viewed positively by youths interviewed even though the military did not exert force to the same extent as earlier, which was once part of everyday life. As Goodhand (2012, p. 133) says: "Those living in the north and east have limited political voice or recourse to justice, and therefore lack the power to influence or shape development processes that are rapidly transforming the Tamil-majority region."

During the interviews, the young people recognized that the improvements in infrastructure and development have made life easier: roads and bridges in particular have reduced traveling times, and there is improved access to formal education, including classes in English language, tailoring, and computing. There is considerable NGO involvement in the development of youths' skills. However, the different types of training and skills-development programs targeted at youths have not led to them securing their anticipated jobs. For example, when they do not have customers to make clothes for in their villages, due to the villagers being too poor to buy the clothes, the training in tailoring has little value. Whether organized by the government or NGOs, it is important that skills training is related to existing demands in villages or at least to demands in the wider region. The interviewed youths also felt that such developments are comparatively poor and low in quality compared to developments of other areas of the country, especially in Colombo. In addition, they highlighted that although they needed such developments, they also had other priorities such as access to the labor market and the same services as found elsewhere in the country:

Although education is much better ... employment is so limited and [the] government's role in employment is something related to politics. (Young Muslim man, telephone interview February 2014)

The majority of the interviewed youths expressed continued frustrations about the exclusion of Tamil-speaking youths from employment in higher decision-making positions at the national level. Even the government of Sri Lanka's youth policy acknowledges the exclusion of youths from minority ethnic and religious groups (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development 2014, p. 16). Discriminated and exploited youth groups are treated as priority target groups that deserve special attention. In February 2014, when some of the young people interviewed in 2009 and 2010 were interviewed again, many lamented the lack of *relevant* development initiatives undertaken by the state. Jobs in the public sector are scarce, people from outside take up the available jobs, and young people are forced to move long distances or travel abroad to secure a better future. For youths who grew up with war and who do not have much exposure to outside world, confronting unfamiliar spaces locally and globally is both a threat and a challenge:

Opportunities for employment are a big problem . . . especially for youths. (Young Tamil man, telephone interview March 2014)

Although youth unemployment continues to remain a critical problem throughout Sri Lanka (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development 2014), youths from the eastern part are marginalized in the employment market and also face underemployment. The war has changed the economic base of the villages and households, making them more vulnerable to poverty. In the absence of an attractive private sector, youths from eastern Sri Lanka have to depend on public sector employment. Although postwar development paved the way for vast infrastructural programs directly handled by the presidential task force under Basil Rajapaksa (cabinet minister of Economic Development and MR's brother), such developments fail to meet the real needs of the war-affected people. This trend has been highlighted and criticized repeatedly by Tamil politicians, academics, and researchers. Postwar development programs and projects should be planned in a way that recognizes the victims. The state should not undermine the fact that it was poor youths from deprived and marginalized communities who resorted to political violence against the state in the first place.

With regard to democracy, reconciliation, and politics, young people are generally highly disillusioned and feel excluded from official discourses:

What we hear about reconciliation has become a joke. Reconciliation is not only about arranging meetings/workshops/sports meets friendly visits for youths from all communities . . . they are just shows only . . . real understanding should be cultivated in the minds of people. (Young Muslim man, telephone interview February 2014)

In the media, "reconciliation" has been a popular word in the context of postwar Sri Lanka, although the meaning of the word is not well known among the people we interviewed. Uyangoda (2012) highlights the difference between the Western notion of reconciliation and the Sri Lankan government's conceptualization. While the former has liberal and Christian and humanistic moral roots, highlighting peace and a situation of no victors and no losers, the latter's notion of reconciliation is one of "forget the past and move forward." In this regard, it is important that "reconciliation" cannot be instilled in people from the top through meetings, workshops, and sports meetings arranged by the state to demonstrate the participation of all ethnicities. Such events take place in all of the war-affected areas, including those in the east. However, the real output of such programs may be questioned.

5 Creating Spaces of Political Engagement

Experiences of exclusion are expressed as anger, resignation, fear, and frustration. This section unravels how young people in the eastern part of the country engage in politics following their experience of exclusion, the extent to which they associate with and pursue a political voice, and the ways in which they are excluded/silenced or enabled to create safe spaces for inclusion.

5.1 Formal/Informal Politics

Young people relate to politics in different ways. From the interviews held in 2009 and 2010 until the follow-up interviews in 2014, an increasing critique of formal politics and decreasing faith in politicians was observed. The young people said that formal politics had become a farce and more open to direct criticism. Still, youths do not want to object openly to what politicians are doing, despite complaining about it in private:

Politics is openly criticized ... people are fed up as no politician come to our village. They visit only during the election ... I want to tell you more ... but [I am] scared to tell you over the phone. I am always skeptical. (Tamil young woman, telephone interview March 2014)

[The] President is making an effort to show the world that we are fine ... But we are not ... because we are forced to be silenced ... youths like us do not want any further problems in the country ... we have to tolerate the situation. (Young Tamil man, who was president of a youth club, telephone interview March 2014)

Muslim and Tamil young people alike feel politically marginalized. They are aware that the “correct” political connection is important in order to secure a job in the public sector. Considering their low level of trust in politicians and political parties, youths do not consider political parties the best avenue for participation and exerting influence on issues concerning them. Instead, many youths have turned to what they term “informal politics” by which is meant when you involve with politics for your own interests and is often accompanied by corruption. Part of the explanation for this shift may be found in the employment situation in the eastern part of the country, which has created increasing competitiveness and vulnerability in the new society:

I must tell you [that] people are more concerned about politics these days. They are more particular about selecting whom they want to send to Parliament or local government institutions. They are interested in national-level politics also ... but it is so sad to note that young people's involvement in politics targets only personal benefits ... they don't have a political vision ... if they believe the politician whom they support can give them a job or a promotion or get their transfers (government servants) done, then they vote for him. When they were in the university, they were making propagandas for a radical social change ... everything becomes 'zero' when they are coming out from the university. (Young Muslim woman, telephone interview March 2014)

5.2 Exclusions: Silencing

In many cases, young people adopt silence as a political strategy. Silence may be used in the sense of political presence and political involvement. Voiceless political presence cannot simply be equated with nonparticipation. Youths' presence varies according to the social space in question. Tamils and Muslims use silence as a way to stay safe in unsafe spaces, but as shown below, silence may also be a strategy to challenge the status quo. Many young Tamils said they still felt that they were considered terrorists when encountering either the military in their own area or the

majority Sinhalese outside their area. Raising one's voice in public may run the risk of harassment and abduction.

In 2009, young women pointed out that they were fearful and kept silent in order to keep a low profile when they had to pass unsafe places such as checkpoints, but they also kept silent because they did not want to be associated with the military or police. Their political strategies were thus founded in silence and non-performativity (Kallio and Häkli 2011; Scott 1985; Thrift 2004):

It is in the private spaces, such as our homes, that we can dance, sing, and do many other things that we can't do in public spaces. There will be restrictions and we have to think about the society too. (Young Tamil woman, interview March 2010)

Since then, the military presence has become less visible, but the "normalization" mentioned by Goodhand (2012, p. 133) still does not exist, and thus, people are still cautious and even scared to talk about politically controversial topics. During the phone interviews in 2014, interviewees would often say things like "I can't tell you over the phone" indicating fear in talking freely as there were suspicions that telephone lines were monitored.

Political engagement is thus closely related to the feeling of social inclusion and exclusion, as well as to what extent people feel safe and recognized as full members of the spaces in which they participate:

We do not talk politics or terrorism in public spaces. It will create unnecessary problems for us. (Tamil and Muslim women, group interview February 2009)

5.3 Safe Spaces for Political Engagements

Most young people in eastern Sri Lanka position themselves outside politics by defining their participation in society outside party politics.

The young people interviewed identified the home – a private space – as the safest arena in which they could discuss politics. In this regard, they were particularly concerned about how the recovery projects in their areas were run by the government recruiting people from outside to work on the projects, thus contributing to the youths' feelings of exclusion from national politics. They mentioned that they would discuss the political system and how the political system should change to benefit the minorities in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, such as by introducing federalism. In private, they readily admitted that there is no place for the rights of minorities in the current system and they would come up with explicit political solutions. Given the history of war and militarism of the area, parents also continued to be unhappy about their children's involvement in politics because of the association between youths, politics, and violence. Thus, there is a dual exclusion, based on both ethnicity and generation, that enables young people to be politically vocal in controlled, generally private spaces, but with limited opportunities to transgress those spaces.

During fieldwork, it was found that when youths talked about their political interests and affiliation, they were only comfortable about openly expressing their

views to a person from their own ethnicity or to foreign researchers. This made the researchers (i.e., the authors of this chapter) attentive to the fact that when the youths considered it was “safe” to be with them, they became vocal. These constructions of safe spaces during fieldwork contributed to understandings of how young people’s political engagements unfold (overtly or covertly) in everyday life. Similarly, the experience made the researchers attentive to the youths’ ability to negotiate spaces and be flexible in their engagements outside the private spaces that they considered safe.

Still, young people conform by participating in activities that are accepted as involving the participation of good citizens. The interviewed youths participated in youth groups, helped with arranging funerals, participated in antialcohol campaigns, and organized sports meetings and other communal activities. They saw their engagement as a productive way of contributing to society but also as a way to gain status in society; they were building safe spaces for participation that might also provide access to political engagement. The youth clubs (which are organized by the government) were particularly seen as an opportunity to gain access to politics and politicians, who are often involved in club activities. Such spaces of political engagement represent a way for youths to engage with the political, but do not open up possibilities to challenge the existing system and mainstream politics and hence are a form of voicelessness. Nevertheless, youth clubs represent an alternative space that may help young people to gain status in their community. Even if youths cannot make the clubs safe places for vocal political involvement, they can influence the spaces and develop their own political involvement.

6 Changing Conditions for Relating to the Political

The historical changes in Sri Lanka since the end of the war have affected young people’s political engagement; a democratic political space for youths lies in the acceptance of youths and their past. Formal political structures should be constructed to allow the voices of the youths to be heard. Are there more possibilities for political participation today, and have the contexts of enabling or constraining political participation changed? Following a group of young people over a time period of 5 years has indicated that a number of changes have occurred in their lives as they have moved toward adulthood. The coming together of different timescales – the history of transformation from war to postwar and the young people’s individual histories from young to adulthood – can be understood by looking at the changes in the lives of university students.

It is possible to identify cautious optimism with regard to what politics can achieve, as two of the research participants pointed out:

Once people were afraid of being young in the east, but now the situation has improved. We feel a little bit fearless and we want this situation in the future too. (Muslim female student, interview March 2010)

I think young people are important in a society. They can make changes. (Young Tamil woman, interview March 2010)

While most of the groups and individuals that were interviewed were vocal about what they considered safe spaces (i.e., home and ethnically homogeneous spaces), universities represented spaces in which groups could be more explicitly vocal. Although most students tried to avoid politics, it was almost impossible for them not to be included. According to them, university spaces have become increasingly unsafe since the war. One representative of a Tamil student group explained how university politics might not be safe due to external threats:

But again, I have to mention that even in these types of networking there is politics. Sometimes we cannot negotiate in student politics, as the leaders acquire some outside powers [referring to political contacts]. Although we are interested in doing many things, we cannot do so due to some pressures. (Tamil university students, group interview March 2010)

Party politics are highly influential in most spheres of university life. Still, while most of the students placed themselves outside party politics, both Tamil and Muslim students found it more difficult to stay outside political spaces when adopting a strategy of vocal political involvement. For example, depending on which political group had most power in the university where the interviews were held, students were expected to contribute money for banners and to participate in protests organized by student unions. The politicized environment also restricted other activities because students felt under constant control and scrutiny, as one female student stated during an interview with Tamil students in March 2010: “sometimes students are controlled in university. This is just because we are students.”

During the interviews, the youths expressed disappointment with politics and politicians. They felt they had been let down and controlled by politicians despite being considered future political leaders. The situation does not open up new avenues for political engagement because there is no space for challenging the official discourse on reconciliation and development, thus reflecting the unequal power relations between ethnicities and the majority and minority ethnic groups:

I don't engage in formal politics now. When I was a university student, through the student union I was engaged in formal politics . . . within the university space. But outside we were too young and did not have enough power and money to engage in informal politics. Besides, people will look for where we are coming from . . . what is our family background. (Young Tamil man, telephone interview March 2014)

In terms of politics, I think our expectations as youths were not fulfilled. Politics is different from political privileges. We are discriminated politically when searching for employment, without any proper reason. (Tamil student, group discussion with university students, March 2010)

The young people interviewed in 2014 reported that people in Sri Lanka have turned to “informal politics” in order to gain sufficient personal power to ensure their individual needs. This implied using bribes to obtain jobs and dealing with politicians’ “thugs” who pressurize potential followers. Such forms of political involvement contribute to insecurity and fear and are happening at the same time as there is an observable tendency toward more vocal political presence. These new boundaries faced by young people coming from eastern Sri Lanka indicate that

spaces for participation remain restricted. The youth feel delineated from the rest of the country and unsafe.

7 Inclusion and Exclusion: Societal and Spatial Power Relations in Youths' Everyday Politics

We are still not in a position to speak freely. (Tamil university students, group interview March 2010)

This chapter has shown how young people's political engagement is shaped by their experiences of economic, social, and political exclusion. Feelings of exclusion from the official story of Sri Lankan politics have created a political presence among young Muslim and Tamil people in eastern Sri Lanka that despite a restricted social space are being articulated in multiple ways. The space where young people talk most freely about formal politics is in their homes, whereas political presence and involvement in public spaces take place in more concealed ways. Safe spaces to a large extent corresponded to where the interviewees felt their position was fully recognized – where they felt included. In spaces where their membership was precarious (including as citizens), their political engagement was increasingly restricted. Political involvement and being vocal thus varied according to the different levels of safety in the political spaces created by youths, and the nature of young people's encounters differed according to how much they placed themselves in an exposed position.

Hence, the existing *intersections* between micro- and macro-politics as mentioned by O'Toole (2003), Skelton (2010), Häkli and Kallio (2013), and Laketa (► Chap. 9, "Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina", this volume) are disrupted and limit effective political practices.

Young people's networks were actively employed to make safe spaces for political participation. The spaces in which young people employed a strategy of vocal political involvement had different degrees of exposure and security (also see Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, "Counter-Mapping for Social Justice", this volume, on young people's awareness about spatial politics, which affect their group identity). Particularly in activism and more vocal political involvement, one way of creating safe spaces was through support networks. Young people would seldom work alone, but in groups, as a strategy to enhance their security. Nevertheless, such spaces of involvement for youths were restricted to the local level and largely outside the official discourses of the state at the national level. The opportunities that they hoped for after the war had materialized only to a limited extent, and this experience of exclusion and marginalization contributes to their political presence and involvement.

The studied young people's presence continued to develop between 2009 and 2014, the period during which they were interviewed. One theme that spurred strong feelings and political engagements was discussions around how identities other than belonging to the national polity of Sri Lanka dominated young people's

positions. The interviewees' minority status was expressed uniformly across the Tamil and Muslim divide as more important than their identity as young people. Accompanying young people's minority status is a strong sense of disillusionment, fear, and social exclusion: they do not feel they have anyone to represent them, and they feel vulnerable and struggle to find safe spaces in which they can talk openly. Power – both direct and relational – is a prominent feature in young people's lives (Skelton 2010, p. 3): "This should not just be about the effect of power on young people, but also the political power young people wield through their practices, resistance, strategies and challenges." Difference and positioning are negotiated through the access to particular social relations and networks through which one may gain influence. In the case of youths in eastern Sri Lanka, the study revealed that their political action is conditioned by the history of marginalization and limited to political participation during war, development activities organized by the Sri Lankan state, and the continued military presence. Youths' concern with national politics is mainly due to the way the politics affect them locally or how the politics affect their ethnic groups. This concurs with the findings of Mills and Duckett (► Chap. 28, "Representing, Reproducing, and Reconfiguring the Nation: Geographies of Youth Citizenship and Devolution", this volume) that young people's lived experiences and own articulations and understandings of national identity highlight the fragmented and often contradictory spaces of youth citizenship and participation within the current political landscape. When discussing politics, their minority status is often highlighted as more important than their youth identity. Additionally, fear and anger are embedded in their ability to engage in vocal politics. This concerns youths' experiences of feeling that they are discriminated against and where they are treated differently, which angers them.

Changing conditions for political engagements among young people should be understood on different temporal scales such as following the historical changes in the country and the young people's movements toward adulthood. Over the few years that the young people in Sri Lanka were followed as part of a larger study, their possibilities for political engagements changed. First, social and physical spaces such as the university are no longer available to them because they are moving on and moving toward adulthood. Second, young people are forced to become more competitive and individualistic and their political engagements have become more informal. This happens while ethnic backgrounds and histories continue to differ significantly. While Tamils have largely been deprived of the opportunity to have an active political life outside militarism, Muslims have continued to have opportunities for political participation through political parties since the civil war ended. However, both Tamil and Muslim interviewees expressed the same feelings of marginalization and exclusion from political spaces and from having a political voice at the national level. Instead, they are enmeshed in societal and spatial power relations in a political environment that impacts on their identity construction and subjectivities.

This chapter has examined the axis between *voiceless* and *vocal politics* (after Kallio and Häkli 2011), which concerns how much voice young people have in politics. In this regard, the aim to make more explicit the spatialities of the

youth-centered perspectives on the political and politics has been discussed. In the studied context, young people maneuver spaces of restricted freedom of speech and high security risks and make safe spaces for political engagement. This shows that young people “learn citizenship,” by maneuvering individually and collectively in a new political terrain (Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship”](#), this volume). Young people’s claims of lack of access and socio-spatial exclusion unravel both earlier and contemporary exclusions. The political dimension of such exclusion rests on citizenship rights and consequently the range of formal and informal processes that determine people’s inclusion in and exclusion from a variety of symbolic and material spaces and resources (Brun 2003; Staeheli et al. 2013). Furthermore, young people adopt silence as a political strategy. Silence may be used in the sense of political presence and political involvement. Voiceless political presence cannot simply be equated with nonparticipation. In the studied context, youths’ presence varies according to the social space in question and how they could maneuver their presence.

The research findings presented in this chapter highlight that the aspirations of the interviewed youth revolved around freedom to move, better education, political participation, suitable jobs, and access to various important facilities. These opinions were related to their exclusions in mainstream society (Azmi and Lund 2010). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that youths are potentially valuable contributors to rebuild the social and economic fabric. Making available avenues for meaningful engagements will definitely lead us to see great dividends in the years to come.

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Abstract

This chapter reviews key debates on the question of youth dissent, drawing on both geographical and wider social science literatures. It shows that the question has been central to youth research in many disciplines, but that the starting point has too often been a problematizing of dissent rather than its exploration as an inalienable aspect of any politics. Focusing particularly on the recent research that has analyzed the discursive construction of youth dissent and has foregrounded the capacities of young people to engage actively as participants in political processes, it considers whether changes in citizenship education and toward greater participation have created sufficient space for the articulation and exercise of dissent. The chapter argues that challenges posed by young people to the state and to existing relations of power that uphold a range of injustices are still too often regarded with skepticism or even criminalized. Drawing on the work of critical education researchers and on agonistic approaches to politics (Mouffe, C., *On the political*. London: Routledge, 2005; Rancière, J., *Dissensus*:

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On politics and aesthetics. London: Continuum, 2010) the author considers the implications of paying greater attention to conflicts between young people and to the difficult questions that arise from the diversity of forms and aims of dissent.

Keywords

Dissent • Difference • Citizenship • Education • Participation

1 Introduction

Conflict is a key aspect of politics. Indeed, one could argue that there is no politics without conflict. Yet, the “doing” of conflict itself is rarely unproblematic or straightforward. People not only have different concerns and opinions. Their capacities to protest and attitudes toward different forms of conflict and dissent also differ. Further, they are situated in highly diverse circumstances affecting the need, ability, and consequences of dissenting. Some forms of protest involve violence and activities outside the laws of a given state, which some might argue is necessary, or inevitable, in order to challenge structures of oppression and exclusion, while others would see them as never, or rarely, justified because of the harm they cause. Considering questions of conflict and politics is not possible, therefore, in purely abstract terms but requires careful attention to historical and geographical circumstances and to the power relations which saturate conflicting relationships at, across, and between political scales.

In order to understand young people’s political subjectivities and agencies, it is crucial to examine closely how young people understand and exercise conflict, protest, and dissent, how their dissent is represented in wider public discourses, and how it is responded to by state and society (cf. Staeheli et al. 2013). It is also necessary to consider these questions in relation to the diversity of young people, the issues tackled, the contexts in which dissent arises and is articulated and exercised, and how it transforms places and social relations. This means looking closely at the geographies of young people’s politics and the spaces and scales of political action.

The aim of the following chapter is to make a contribution to this task by presenting a (necessarily incomplete) review of literatures that have grappled with the question of youth dissent, drawing on both geographical and wider social science literatures. It will show that the question has indeed been central to youth research in many disciplines, but that the starting point has too often been a problematizing of dissent rather than its exploration as an inalienable aspect of any politics. The problematization of youth dissent has been related to understandings of youth as a phase of transition, instability, and becoming (Valentine 2003). Such understandings feed into and echo popular perceptions of youth as a potential risk for (adult) society, a challenge to consensus, and a threat to normative values and practices (Jones 2009, p. 30, also see Sharkey and Shields 2008).

Paradoxically, young people are also castigated when they are seen to be “inactive”: a key concern for policy makers and researchers alike has, in fact,

been the apparent “apathy” and lack of interest in formal politics on the part of many young people. Related to this is the contradictory complaint that young people articulate and exercise dissent either in ineffective or in inappropriate ways (i.e., just stylistically or too radically/destructively). It could be argued, with Gill Jones, that

[w]hatever young people do, they get blamed for. Even when they are just ‘hanging around’ and doing very little, the rest of ‘society’ seems to come down on them like a ton of bricks . . . as a society we seem to allow very little ‘public’ space for young people; it seems we would really rather they did not exist. It seems we live in a culture of blame. (2009, p. 30)

Jones refers to Stan Cohen’s (1972) work on *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* to explain that the creation of moral panics about youth is often a response to solutions that oppressed groups such as working-class youths develop for tackling problems generated by wider society. The construction of youth subcultures as “folk devils” allows these problems to be attributed to youth as an age group and wider responsibilities to be declined. Young people themselves become essentialized, their concerns turned into age-specific problems (rather than related, for instance, to socioeconomic, gender, or ethnic exclusion), and their dissent delegitimized as it comes to be seen only in terms of delinquency.

Research in geography and sociology over the last two to three decades has, however, largely dispensed with the view of youth dissent as inherently problematic and has, instead, dedicated significant efforts to the task of analyzing how such perceptions are discursively constructed, how they affect the capacities of young people to engage as political agents, how young people themselves understand politics and their place within it, as well as analyzing the diversity of forms of political engagement by young people (cf. reviews and commentaries by Kallio and Häkli (2013), Skelton (2013)). The vogue of interest in young people as political agents has been inspired by the rise in political movements to promote active participation by children and youth in decision-making processes that concern them, as well as by shifts in theoretical perspectives invoked by the New Social Studies of Childhood (cf. James and James 2004). There is now a rich, and growing, body of work on the politics of young people, including young children, highlighting their agentic capacities as well as the many obstacles to effective participation (cf. Horschelmann and van Blerk 2011; Kallio 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2013; Skelton 2013). However, it could be argued that questions of dissent and protest are still too rarely tackled. One reason for this is that much new research in geography and sociology has focused on scales, spheres, and forms of action that have traditionally been marginalized and misrecognized for their political content. As such, the forms of dissent that have been addressed in these contexts (for instance, in the home, in school, and among peers) are still too rarely acknowledged as part of a continuum of critical engagement. However, the current moment shows (once again) that young people’s dissent includes highly public challenges to authority and injustice, such as the Occupy movement, demonstrations against the raising of tuition fees in the UK (cf. Hopkins and Todd 2015), the revolutionary movements of the “Arab Spring” (Staeheli and Nagel 2013), as well as street

protests against austerity policies (cf. Jeffrey 2012). As Giroux (2013, p. 16) notes for the USA, young people “make diverse claims on the promise of a radical democracy in the streets, on campuses, and on other occupied sites, articulating what a fair and just worlds might be.”

Beyond attention to outright challenges to state authority, however, this chapter also draws attention to the need to be more attentive to differences between young people and how these are negotiated between them. This is because “dissent” also brings us to the limits of democratic representation, i.e., who can speak for whom and who is excluded in a politics based on representing the interests of collectives. In other words, can some young people act as spokespersons for others, simply by virtue of their age, and who is excluded when they do? Are there youth-specific issues that can only be included in political processes through a system of group representation? To debate and illustrate these arguments, the chapter draws on the theoretical work of Chantal Mouffe (2005) and Jacques Rancière (2010), who advocate an agonistic approach to politics that regards conflict as inevitable and crucial to democracy. The author will conclude by flagging up some of the tensions and problems that remain unanswered in “agonistic” approaches to politics because of the difficulties of drawing boundaries between agonistic and antagonistic dissent.

2 Dissent as Deviance

Debates on youth resistance and dissent have predominantly focused on whether or not young people are particularly prone to rebel and, if so, whether this is due to biological changes during adolescence, to socially produced pressures of growing up or to a combination of both. How this alleged tendency to rebel should be responded to by “adult society” has further exercised the minds of many psychologists, sociologists, criminologists, politicians, and social commentators. The conclusions drawn by researchers and wider publics have often depended on the degree to which youth rebellion was understood to be deviant and illegitimate or whether it was seen as a “normal” part of growing up and potentially a positive for society as it provoked necessary social and political changes. It is crucial to contextualize these debates, however, as they have primarily focused on Western, industrialized societies and have been based either on the assumption that findings from these contexts could be transferred elsewhere or that adolescence (and therefore the issue of youth dissent) was specific to modernization and could be explained by it.

The association of youth with delinquency and crime is frequently traced back to the work of psychologist G. Stanley Hall on *Adolescence* (1904), although complaints about youth as disobedient to their elders have probably been a constant for much of European history (cf. Jones 2009). Hall “asserted that adolescence is inherently a time of ‘storm and stress’ when all young people go through some degree of emotional and behavioural upheaval before establishing a more stable equilibrium in adulthood” (Arnett 2006, p. 186). He partly explained this through reference to biological changes but also argued that adolescence as an age stage was a relatively novel phenomenon resulting from industrialization, the transformation

of child labor laws, and the extension of schooling (Arnett 2006). The instability of adolescence, constructed as a stage between the irrationality of childhood and the settled rationality of adulthood, presented opportunities as well as threats to society for Hall (cf. Jones 2009).

Developmental psychologists following in the footsteps of Hall frequently saw biological changes during puberty as a key reason for the perceived “storm and stress” of adolescence, and this understanding has continued to affect perceptions of youth and their positioning in society to the present day in many Western contexts (cf. Griffin 2013). If “instability” and “irrationality” are defined as biologically determined, however, then they are stripped of their political content and young people’s capacities to dissent as reflective social agents are negated while their protests are denied both effectiveness and legitimacy.

While developmental psychology has since focused on defining and empirically proving the existence of universal stages toward the attainment of adult characteristics, social psychologists and sociologists have increasingly considered the apparent upheavals of adolescent transitions as a result of contradictions produced by industrialization and modernization. Thus, it has been argued that the institutionalization of young people’s lives at the time of early modernization in Europe created a situation where young people were faced with major new challenges, such as the need to reconcile and resolve tensions between different value systems of their families and those promoted in institutions such as schools. *Functionalist* researchers have sought to understand the *political socialization* of youth against the background of such novel challenges, considering how institutions can support transitions toward “desired” forms of adulthood and channel the perceived rebellious energies of youth along socially accepted developmental paths (see, for instance, Parsons and Bales 1956). In such work, youth dissent is still seen largely as a problem *for* society (cf. Jones 2009; Maira 2009).

3 Conflicts of Generation or Structural Inequality?

A less normative approach to the political agencies of young people was developed by the German sociologist Mannheim (1952 [1928]; Hörschelmann 2008a), in the years shortly after World War I. Mannheim proposed that, under certain historical conditions, a generational politics could emerge that gave young people a different political outlook from other age groups. Two important caveats to this need to be mentioned; however. Mannheim adopted a historical perspective, where generational politics did not always and inevitably arise, and he was acutely aware of the significance of differences within age groups, as shown in his use of the concept “generational units,” which precluded universalistic and essentialist shortcuts to a presumed age-based politics. What is valuable in Mannheim’s work, and what makes it highly relevant for research on youth politics today, is exactly the tension between recognizing the historical situatedness of young people qua the confluence of historical factors with their stage in the life course *and* the variations in political outlook that result from social difference (Hörschelmann 2008a). Young people’s

politics can thus neither be deducted from their age nor from the historical period in which they are coming of age, but this needs to be examined in specific empirical situations.

A further perspective that differed significantly from the dominant understanding of youth dissent as “delinquent” was developed by Marxist scholars at, and influenced by, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Britain (Hall and Jefferson 1993). These researchers addressed explicitly how and why young people articulate resistance in class society, with a focus primarily on the cultural practices of working-class youths and their relationships to wider society. British Cultural Studies scholars adopted a Gramscian understanding of hegemony, which recognizes that dissent is inevitably produced by the inequalities and tensions that characterize capitalist society, but that these tensions are frequently reconciled at a cultural, superstructural level by generating consensus even with those who are oppressed and subordinated by class society. Scholars working within this neo-Marxist, critical mode of thought often adopted ethnographic methodologies and produced a rich body of work on the cultural practices of working-class youths, highlighting both their creativity and agency as well as their intricate relations to working-class “parent cultures” (cf. Jones 2009). They did not consider youth resistance as a generational issue but as an expression of class struggle, frequently fought on a cultural level (Hebdige 1979; Brake 2013). A key concern for these scholars was what they perceived to be the reproduction of the very structures of class oppression that youth subcultures appeared to be protesting against. Paul Willis’ book, *Learning to Labour* (1977) is frequently mentioned here, as he sought to understand the paradox between young working-class men’s forms of cultural resistance and the ways in which these forms of resistance contributed to reproducing their exclusion.

While much of the work conducted by these Cultural Studies researchers concentrated on male youths, it has been the subject of extensive critiques by feminist scholars as well as queer and postcolonial theorists (cf. Brake 2013). As a consequence of these critiques, researchers have had to examine much more carefully how they conceptualize resistance and to what extent their own research might unwittingly contribute to the marginalization and exclusion of other concerns and forms of resistance. The focus on young people’s agency and creativity, however, has remained central to research on youth cultures and has also been taken up in the wider field of sociological and geographical research on childhood and youth, as demonstrated in the following sections.

4 Agency: Youth Inclusion, Participation, and Dissent

There has been a major shift in recent years toward foregrounding the perspectives, motivations, and explanations of young people themselves, which is reflected well in these edited volumes on the Geographies of Children and Youth. Participatory research in planning and geographical research inspired by the New Social Studies of Childhood (James and James 2004), for instance,

has foregrounded young people's own perspectives on constructions of place and their experiences of inclusion and exclusion in spatial planning, as well as in their everyday, embodied spatial practices in a wide range of settings (Holloway and Valentine 2000; Kallio and Häkli 2013; Laketa, ► Chap. 9, "Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina", this volume; Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, "Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People's Participation in Everyday Spaces", this volume; Trell and van Hoven, "► Chap. 23, "Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective", this volume; Skelton 2013).

As a result of attending more carefully to the perspectives and experiences of young people, as well as to their diversity and the complexity of socio-spatial power relations, this research has, almost inevitably, thematized how and where young people articulate dissent, how their dissent is received by wider society, and how it is responded to when it is seen to be challenging a given status quo. While mostly welcoming the move toward greater participation that has taken place in many contexts of decision-making, these researchers have noted with some concern the persistence of stereotypes about youth as delinquent rather than as political agents who express legitimate dissent. The frequently tokenistic nature of schemes to enhance participation and of some active citizenship programs has also drawn much critical comment (cf. Matthews et al. 1999).

Significant contradictions have been pointed out with regard to conflicting demands on young people and the gap between what expectations are laid on them, by the state, and what the state in fact delivers in turn (cf. Walkerdine 2003). Edwards (2007), in her summary report on the Australian YES, thus, notes that

[w]hereas the policy discourse sees young people as 'civically deficit' for not voting, a reassessment of the issue through their eyes and voices indicates that young people are being chastised for not participating in a system that constructs barriers to participation in the form of marginalisation of young people's subjectivity, interests and issues, as well as one that fails to adequately represent them. (547)

She identifies a number of structural and social barriers to electoral participation which particularly affect marginalized young people, such as those in precarious housing situation. Others, like O'Toole (2003) and Buckingham (2002), have argued that "young people are highly interested and concerned with political issues, and keen to participate, but that their concerns are not echoed by major parties or that they feel their input is discouraged and discounted" (Manning and Ryan 2004, p. 4; cf. Hörschelmann 2008b).

Research on young people's understandings of politics has unearthed a wide kaleidoscope of issues that matter to young people, and it has been shown that these are not restricted to specific scales and spheres, although certain contexts such as schools have been argued to carry particular significance for the formation, articulation, and experience of political struggles and subjectivities (cf. Holt 2004; Laketa, ► Chap. 9, "Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia

and Herzegovina”, this volume; Mitchell and Elwood, ► [Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice”](#), this volume; Pykett 2012; Weller 2014). In addition to broadening understandings of the issues that matter for young people, researchers have also begun to explore more carefully how young people themselves judge certain forms of oppositional politics. Manning and Ryan (2004) thus found that, while protest was seen as a key right of citizenship by participants in their research on youth and citizenship in Australia, the young people they interviewed differed in their support for protest movements and those who took part in them. Some defined these movements as undemocratic, while others were disappointed by what they saw as their limited effectiveness. This point was raised particularly by those who had participated in the protests against the war in Iraq in 2003. Participants in Manning and Ryan’s research also reflected on the different rights granted to young people and what this meant for their citizenship. Thus, the students they interviewed observed that the right to strike was not one they had access to, as they were legally compelled to attend school: “The participants concluded that while they are citizens in some senses, their rights are limited and they cannot be considered ‘full’ citizens in the sense that they do not enjoy the full rights of citizenship” (2004, p. 70, italics in the original).

Research such as this brings into focus a range of questions that have, perhaps, been asked too little, namely, what are the different ways in which young people articulate dissent and why and how do such articulations and the issues that they address differ between young people? How do different young people judge the acceptability and effectiveness of different forms of protest, and how strongly do they associate rights and opportunities to protest with citizenship rights? Related to this is also the question of whether it matters that *young people* are doing the protesting or whether a more suitable approach is to accept that dissent arises in any form of politics and at any age. It is thus to be expected that young people will articulate dissent. Are there youth-specific issues? Who defines these and is it sufficient to represent young people’s perspectives via youth representatives? It is to these questions that the chapter now turns.

5 Learning to Dissent in Neoliberal Times?

Despite the tremendous growth in active participation programs and campaigns for more democratic citizenship education (rolled out not just in many Western states but also promoted globally by many NGOs, see Nagel and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 27, “NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon”](#), this volume), it has been argued that the dominant perspective adopted is still one that prioritizes consent and regards youth dissent as problematic. Many critical scholars have noted with concern how the emphasis on factual learning about political systems and the adoption of models of “good citizenship” as exemplified by cohesion, loyalty, and consensus, rather than conflict, opposition, and dissent, delimits from the outset how and on what issues young people can exercise citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne 2003). As Maira (2009, p. 17) explains:

The traditional literature on the political socialization of youth often suggests that they need to be drawn into ‘consensual citizenship’, inherently maintaining the status quo and leaving the definition of citizenship or national belonging largely unchallenged (France 1998, p. 105). Such approaches imply that young citizens must be socialized into adult norms of political involvement, rather than considered as thinking agents who may express important critiques of citizenship and nationhood, even if their rights are limited (Buckingham 2002, p. 13). Researchers interested in citizenship suggest various ways young people should learn about citizenship, for example, through ‘apprenticeship in democratic citizenship’ (Storrie 1997). However, these approaches are generally based on a normative view of citizenship in which ‘terms such as good citizenship, democratic citizen, and involved citizen are used almost interchangeably, without much questioning of what ‘democracy’ really means (Sigel and Hoskin 1981, p. 39). There is also an assumption that citizens should feel ‘loyalty and affection’ for the nation and express patriotic citizenship (Sigel and Hoskin 1981, p. 39), as particularly evident in post-9/11 America.

Staheli et al. (2013) and Staheli and Nagel (2013) develop a similar argument in their research on student protests in the UK, and on the role of youth in the “Arab Spring,” pointing out that young people apply with great creativity the skills they acquire through citizenship education and active citizenship programs. This creativity and the capacity to reflect on ideal models versus actual experiences of democracy are still often unexpected even by those who promote more active participation:

... various institutions and organizations attempt to mould youth as ‘active’ citizens, who are engaged in their communities and in civil society, but who will not fundamentally challenge the state or the normative social order ... Yet youth do not simply receive and act upon their lessons in citizenship, but instead work with that information, compare it with other lessons and what they observe around them, and adapt it to meet the challenges and experiences of daily life. The paradox of efforts to develop responsible citizens who work in support of government and community is that youth will also develop the skills to challenge them both. The politics of an engaged citizenry, then, are not pre-ordained, but instead emerge through contestation ... In other words, the development of the self-governing political subject requires the development of creativity that holds the potential to act in ways that may challenge, rather than reinforce, the state and social order. Efforts to foster citizenship amongst youth traverse these contradictions of autonomy. (Staheli et al. 2013, pp. 89–90)

Like Staheli and her colleagues, Basok and Ilcan (2006) critique citizenship education programs such as those promoted by UNESCO as leaving too little room for the expression of dissent due to their emphasis on “good citizenship” and the focus on transmitting certain shared “moral” and “ethical” qualities (also see Skelton 2007). They relate the refusal to critically interrogate the meaning of dissent for youth citizenship to a contradiction between greater calls for participation on the one hand and neoliberal governance on the other hand:

Under advanced liberalism new techniques and forms of liberal rule are being developed to motivate agency while simultaneously reconfiguring the limits upon the freedom of choice of particular agents, or what Rose (1999) would call “governing through freedom”. While citizens are conceived as individual subjects freed of need, aspirations, interests, choices, and rights, and free to act independently, citizens’ freedom is structured, shaped, predicted and made calculable (see Walters and Haahr 2005). In this way, the concept of the “free subject” under advanced liberal government is rendered as an object to be shaped by governmental practices for the purposes of achieving certain objectives. (Basok and Ilcan 2006, p. 312)

Others have argued that there has also been a shift toward neoconservative politics, for which neoliberalism has paved the way and which dramatically reduces the hard-won social, cultural, and political rights of young people. Brown thus argues that

[n]eoconservatism sewn into the soil prepared by neoliberalism breeds a new political form, a specific modality of governance and citizenship, one whose incompatibility with even formal democratic practices and institutions does not spur a legitimation crisis because of the neoliberal devaluation of these practices and institutions that neoconservatism consecrates. (Brown 2006, p. 702)

Worrying examples of this can be seen in the USA and UK with the increasing promotion of military values and practices in school education, such as the current “military ethos” program in Britain and the establishment of military academies that are targeted especially at socially excluded young people, such as the Rathbone Military Academy in Middlesbrough, UK (for the US, see Robbins 2008).

While the rise in social inequalities and the reduction in civil liberties that have resulted from the combination of neoliberal/conservative policies together with recent economic crises and post 9-11 security politics have affected all age groups, young people are argued by many social researchers to have been at the coalface of this. Henry Giroux (2013) notes the change in public attitudes in the USA from youth as a generation invested with hope to the disinvestment in, and criminalization of, youth:

Since the 1970s, there has been an intensification of the anti-democratic pressures of neoliberal modes of governance, ideology, and politics. What is particularly new is the way in which young people are increasingly denied any place in an already weakened social contract and the degree to which they are no longer seen as central to how the United States defines its future. Youth are no longer the place where society reveals its dreams but increasingly hides its nightmares. (Giroux 2013, p. 9)

Many critical scholars further argue that that the criminalization of youth dissent is not universal but particularly targeted at, and affecting the democratic rights of, socially excluded and ethnic minority youths. Robbins (2008) has thus critiqued zero-tolerance schemes and exclusion policies in US schools for reinforcing the marginalization of poor students, particularly from ethnic minority backgrounds. He considers these schemes as tools to minimize and criminalize dissent. Maira (2009) has likewise shown that a climate of increased suspicion, fear, and patriotism has ensued from political and media responses to the World Trade Center attacks of 9-11 and that this has led many Muslim immigrants to the USA to be increasingly hesitant to express political critique or dissent. Her work with South Asian Muslim young people has led her to propose “dissenting citizenship” as a key practice of transnational young people’s engagement with the nation-state. She argues that

[d]issenting citizenship is still a form of citizenship, and so it still engages with the role and responsibility of the nation-state and the question of belonging and rights for subjects, however marginalized. Thus it encapsulates the contradictions of challenging the state while seeking inclusion within it. (Maira 2009, p. 201)

Extending her arguments further, and connecting them to what has been said above about the centrality of conflict to politics, it could be said that dissent is in fact crucial for forging a sense of belonging in a political community, as it articulates a care for and an interest in different collective futures.

While there has thus been substantial criticism of the foreclosure of dissent through neoliberal and neoconservative policy making, some scholars have nonetheless voiced cautious optimism and argued for greater recognition of the diversity of channels, forms, and spaces for political engagement. Aihwa Ong (2006, p. 502), while critical of the exclusions entailed in the neoliberal citizenship models that are exported by many Western NGOs, thus, nonetheless acknowledges that conditions for greater political activism have also arisen from the mix of market opportunism and citizenship in different global contexts:

In non-democratic countries embracing market-driven policies, new arenas are opening up for ordinary people to claim justice, accountability, and democratic freedoms. The confluence of market forces and digital technologies have pried open cracks in the interstices of highly controlled societies, thus creating conditions for exciting outbursts of popular demands for democracy by ordinary people. (2006, p. 502)

Ong cites a multiplicity of street movements in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and India which “articulate an array of civil, political, and social rights” (2006, p. 503), as well as the creation of a cyber-public that uses online spaces to articulate and circulate criticism of the state, even in a socialist market economy society such as China.

Pykett (2012), in her review of geographical literatures in citizenship in a UK context, likewise advocates a “more generous account of Citizenship Education under New Labour in Britain”. She is particularly mindful of the arguably far more problematic consequences of seeking to reign in such programs by conservative governments than the efforts undertaken by many practitioners to promote the development of skills and knowledge that young people need to exercise citizenship:

... Citizenship Education is the only subject which is aimed explicitly at equipping ‘young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life’. (QCA 2007, p. 41, ...)

In the face of much criticism, teachers and teacher-trainers got on with the task. And both within and (uncharacteristically for schools) beyond the classroom, young people were given the opportunity to take part in activities such as visits to local council offices, off-timetable days in celebration of diverse cultures, and UK youth parliament meetings. They also debated contemporary political issues such as migration and diversity, local and parliamentary decision-making processes, human rights, freedom of speech and the role of the voluntary sector. Perhaps more crucially, Citizenship Education promoted students to consider the question of how they as citizens are made governable. It is arguably this question, and the performative space of the school (that is, the sense in which education policies generate meanings, subjects and social relations through everyday material and semiotic practices) in which the question becomes pedagogically powerful, marking the significance of Citizenship Education to the lives of children and young people. (Pykett 2012, pp. 32–33)

The foreclosure of dissent noted above is thus not a necessary consequence of citizenship education and active participation programs. They also deliver skills and promote competencies that can be, and are, used by young people for their own ends (see Staeheli et al. 2013, above, Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “[Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship](#)”, this volume, and Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, “[Counter-Mapping for Social Justice](#)”, this volume). As Stitzlein (2012, p. 2) has argued, schools are well placed to “cultivate skills and dispositions necessary for the next generation of citizens to successfully engage in political dissent.” She notes a considerable growth of dissent in the USA in recent years, on both the left and right, and asks schools not to “miss out on the unique opportunity to enhance democratic living by using and responding to the changes in political life propelled by these movements” (p. 12):

[S]chools can serve an important role in improving the practice of dissent and better preparing students for a world where dissent is active. We have reached a powerful moment where we can not just prepare children for an ideal political world through lessons and textbooks, but also build off their experiences with and knowledge of dissent around them to work with them to improve democracy as it is unfolding now and to guide them toward envisioning and enacting a better way of democratic living in the future (ibid.).

Stitzlein distinguishes between “good” and “bad” dissent, a distinction that could be critiqued for being overly normative. However, drawing this distinction may be valuable for provoking the much-needed discussion on some of the less palatable implications of promoting dissent, namely, that protest and conflict also come at a cost and are not necessarily “positive” or “progressive.” They can incur harm, be conducted with the intent to inflict damage on others, and/or be justified by some as necessary to achieve certain aims, even if “regrettable.” And, as Mouffe (2005) explains, the conflictual nature of politics means that there is always, inevitably, a struggle to exclude, marginalize, or subordinate others.

Before returning to these difficult questions, it is worth considering how Stitzlein understands the distinction between “good” and “bad” dissent. For her, “good dissent” is about hope and collective futures:

[W]e must teach children that good dissent may be accompanied by anger at times, but is grounded in hope. Good dissent must provide a positive and hopeful vision to guide change . . . To achieve dissent grounded in hope will require concerted efforts in education, both in and out of the classroom, in forming habits of hope through encountering difference, grounding critique in hope, and engaging students in despair. Teachers must cultivate persistence, resourcefulness, and courage in order to sustain hopefulness and develop good dissenters. (2012, pp. 15–16)

Agreeing with Mouffe (2005), she also proposes that “[i]t is not enough to merely acknowledge pluralism or views on the good life. Instead, we need to celebrate and legitimize conflict and disagreement as not just facts of life, but sources of better living” (2012, p. 72). Kraftl et al. (2012), in their conclusion to the edited collection on *Critical Geographies of Childhood and Youth*, make a similar point, namely, to reconnect youth and childhood with the future and to consider children as collaborators in developing collective “goods.”

6 Agonism and Difference

As briefly mentioned above, a key consequence of considering dissent as crucial to the exercise of democratic citizenship is the need to pay more attention to conflict and difference *between* young people, how it is articulated, and what happens to such differences on the way to representing certain issues as youth specific, so that they are “heard” in representative democracies. Frazer and Emler argued this point nearly 20 years ago, when they noted that

We know little about young people’s resources for engaging in conflictual relationships, whether with their peers or with authority, and we know little about their approaches to communication and relationships with those who are ‘different’ from themselves. (Frazer and Emler 1997, pp. 188–189)

As “[s]ocial groups are not things but relations” (Isin 2002, p. 26), conflict inevitably arises in young people’s political engagements, and it will entail exclusions and marginalizations that lead to further contestations and dissent (cf. Hörschelmann and ElRefaie 2013, 2014). In order to develop a better understanding of citizenship and youth politics as areas of conflict and contestation, it is particularly helpful to draw on the work of Chantal Mouffe (2005) and Jacques Rancière (2010). Mouffe contends that the conflictual dimension is ineradicable in social life. Instead of undermining the democratic project, it “is the necessary condition for grasping the challenge to which democratic politics is confronted” (Mouffe 2005, p. 4):

A well-functioning democracy calls for a vibrant clash of democratic political positions. If this is missing there is the danger that this democratic confrontation will be replaced by a confrontation among other forms of collective identification, as is the case with identity politics. Too much emphasis on consensus and the refusal of confrontation lead to apathy and disaffection with political participation. Worse still, the result can be the crystallization of collective passions around issues which cannot be managed by the democratic process and an explosion of antagonisms that can tear up the very basis of civility. (ibid. 104)

It is impossible, Mouffe argues, to reach a consensus based purely on rational debate that somehow dissolves power. To assume so is dangerous for democracy and ultimately leads to antagonistic rather than agonistic political struggles. Antagonism, for Mouffe, positions political opponents as enemies, while agonistic politics is the struggle for (temporary) hegemonic dominance between adversaries that recognize at bear minimum the right of the other to participate in democratic debate. One of Mouffe’s key aims is to identify ways of transforming antagonism into agonism. She suggests that this is necessary, though not universally done.

Rancière (2010) further clarifies why consensus driven deliberative politics risks emptying the political of significant content. Consensus, he argues, consists of “the reduction of democracy to the way of life or *ethos* of a society – the dwelling and lifestyle of a specific group” and of “the attempt to dismiss politics by expelling surplus subjects and replacing them with real partners, social and identity groups and so on” (p. 71). For young people, this means that too often their conflicts with the state, and *between* them, are “turned into problems to be resolved by learned

expertise and the negotiated adjustment of interests” (ibid.). The representation of these conflicts as “youth issues” denies the existence of plural subject positions and political opinions among young people, meaning that “young people’s interests” can be represented by “experts” or “representatives” without any further need for reflection on the differences between young people (cf. Hörschelmann and El Refaie 2014). Dissensus is crucial for democratic politics in Rancière’s view, as it inserts “a division . . . in ‘common sense’: a dispute over what is given and about the frame within which we see something as given” (2010, p. 69, also see Kallio 2012).

Hörschelmann and El Refaie (2014) cite an example from their research with young people from different ethnic backgrounds in Bradford, UK, where such a dispute arose in a discussion on humor and its potential to offend. While the dominant tenor of the discussion was that humorous, satirical portrayals of different ethnic groups and nationalities should be permitted and that people should not get offended because it was just “funny,” a significant change occurred in the group when the focus shifted to cartoons about the Prophet Mohammed that had been published by a Danish newspaper in 2005. As Hörschelmann and El Refaie (2014, p. 238) explain:

Up to this point, students in the group had agreed that the portrayal of cultural stereotypes in humorous media was permissible and should not cause offense. However, a Muslim student then introduced some nuances into this discussion, showing why satirising certain subjects was not unproblematic:

Interviewer B: I don’t know if you guys remember there was cartoons – some Dutch [sic] cartoons . . .

Alex: Oh yeah [. . .]

Interviewer A: Mohammed.

Interviewer B: [. . .] What do you think about those? Did you think those were funny? [. . .]

Mundhir: About the prophet? [. . .] That was offensive though weren’t it Miss. I found that offensive.

Alex: I think they took that too serious; it won’t really a laugh was it?

Mundhir: It’s like, no, that was out of order. It wasn’t like comedy was it.

Without the interviewer’s intervention, the Muslim student’s departure from the group consensus could easily have been missed, potentially reinforcing power relations that would have placed views such as his on the margins, discounting them as ‘overly sensitive’.

As even this minor example shows, therefore, it is not sufficient to challenge young people’s exclusion *as* young people from different formal political realms. It is also necessary to go beyond the identification and representation of “youth issues” toward the greater articulation of divergent views.

7 Conclusion

The above discussion has shown the significant extent to which perceptions of youth dissent are dependent on understandings of, and attitudes toward, young people’s positioning qua their age in society. It is the apprentice status of young people in many political socialization and citizenship debates that divorces their

political views and actions from “society” by way of exclusion and binary opposition. This provides for a highly uneven playing field, where processes of delegitimization and age-related power place young people in inferior positions from which to articulate dissent and make it matter. As pointed out above, many practitioners who work to promote youth participation have witnessed this and describe it as one of the key challenges for participatory work. Without critiquing the power relations which separate youth from adult society and position them in subordinate roles, it is thus difficult to promote forms of participation that allow room for dissent and for the working through of differences between young people.

Equally significant is the fact that the portrayal of young people’s political interests as age specific distracts from the many shared issues and cross-cutting power relations as well as from young people’s collaborative agencies as coproducers of the worlds they share. There is also the risk that “society” is absolved from responsibility for the problems that young people’s protests address.

The question is particularly pertinent with a view to radical forms of dissent. If radicalism is understood as primarily a youth phenomenon, then wider networks of shared dissent over similar issues, expressed through different means, are overlooked. This is a dangerous oversight. Extreme right-wing organizations, for instance, not only tend to present themselves as representing a majority view (i.e., “we are just acting out what you all think”), but they are also often funded and supported by political agents of older age groups. Researchers on other radical political organizations point to similar issues. It is notable also that the boundaries of age shift quite significantly in discussions on radicalism, so that activists who would otherwise be classified as adults become described in terms of youth.

As alluded to in several places throughout this chapter, a particularly difficult question that arises from this is whether or not there should be limits on dissent. How democracy can retain radical openness while keeping those forces at bay that would destroy the very preconditions for radical democracy and dissent is a contradiction that is difficult to resolve in abstract terms. Yet it is faced by many young people in their political everyday lives and by those who work alongside them to promote greater participation rights. It has little to do specifically with youth but matters deeply nonetheless to youth politics. In many ways, it is not just a question about the aims of dissent and the issues it articulates but also about the forms that dissent takes and the effects of those forms. Violence and aggression thus radically undermine the potential for certain groups and individuals to make their voices heard and their concerns matter. If “dissent” is recognized as an inevitable aspect of politics, and if it is to be more widely promoted in youth citizenship and participation programs, then the problematic implications of certain forms of dissent, including their effects on the potential of marginalized and excluded others to articulate different standpoints, cannot be excluded from debate.

In conclusion, this author would wholeheartedly endorse the efforts of many scholars in geography and cognate disciplines to attend carefully to the diversity of forms of young people’s dissent; the different contexts in which it arises; the relations of power that affect whose dissent has more capacity to affect change than others, with what consequences; and the plurality of issues and concerns that

young people address as *collaborators* in efforts to change the world they live in. It is crucial to ask what issues are actually being protested about and not to assume that they are youth issues simply because young people are involved or are leading a protest movement. The extent to which youth-specific concerns are addressed needs to be established carefully and in relation to other issues and cross-cutting concerns. In most empirical situations, the political struggles involved are far more complex. No justice can be done to this complexity, and to the capacities and concerns of young people themselves, if they are regarded solely as youth issues and if differences between young people are ignored.

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Part IV

Youth Citizenship: Practice, Performance and Experience

Bronwyn E. Wood

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the concept of “everyday citizenship” by children and young people’s geographers. But what are the origins of “everyday” approaches, and what can an everyday approach offer the field of children and young people’s citizenship? This chapter undertakes a brief disciplinary and theoretical genealogy of the everyday and how it has emerged as a feature of analysis within children and young people’s citizenship. This examination also traces the integration of the everyday into citizenship research through feminist theory and the “new” social studies of childhood. The second half of the chapter examines how everyday citizenship has been applied across a range of disciplines. Applying everyday citizenship approaches in research with children and young people has contributed to expanded notions of citizenship through a closer examination of spatial and relational attributes of young citizens and an interrogation of what constitutes acts of citizenship. The chapter concludes by raising a number of issues that require further debate and consideration.

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1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the concept of “everyday citizenship” by children and young people’s geographers. This concept has been articulated in a number of ways and has been applied within children and young people’s geographies to explore spatiality, politics, and citizenship. But where does this concept originate? And what can it offer to the exploration of children’s citizenship? These questions are explored within this chapter in order to understand how this idea has become part of an emerging body of work within children’s geographies. The overall aim of the chapter is contribute a more dynamic and inclusive understanding of citizenship and how this applies to children and young people.

The focus on everyday citizenship in this chapter builds upon a small but growing body of research which has expanded traditional conceptions of citizenship to recognize young people’s citizenship in more inclusive and everyday ways (Biesta et al. 2009, p. 212; Clark and Percy-Smith 2006; Harris and Wyn 2009, 2010; Kallio and Häkli 2011a, b, 2013; Lister 2003, 2007; Llewellyn and Westheimer 2009; Marsh et al. 2007; O’Toole 2003; Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces,” this volume; Staeheli et al. 2013; Staeheli et al. 2012; Tereshchenko 2010; Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume; Wood 2010, 2012a, b). Knowing how children and young people’s understandings and experiences are shaped by the everyday is especially significant in youth citizenship research, as young people’s access to formal and public opportunities for participation in society remains constrained (Bessant 2004; Lister 2007, 2008). Therefore researchers within this tradition have sought to examine the relationship between young people’s everyday and ordinary lived experiences and their engagement and expressions of citizenship.

The chapter is divided into two sections: the first explores the theoretical and disciplinary background of the “everyday” and the second examines how these ideas have been applied within the children’s geography research. It begins by tracing how the everyday and the ordinary has moved into a more central position (but maybe not quite center stage, as de Certeau (1984) suggests) as the focus of inquiry, rather than relegating it to the periphery. The chapter traces how the sociologies of the everyday which arose in the 1960s and 1970s influenced spatial theorists such as de Certeau and Lefebvre. The significant contribution of feminist research in exposing the everyday and the mundane is explored and how this shaped developments in children and young people’s geographies. The link between the feminist theory and children’s citizenship is then detailed to provide a backdrop to

the arrival of “everyday citizenship” in children and young people’s research. Knowing this background helps us to understand what this concept can offer and how it can help us to gain richer understandings of children and young people’s everyday citizenship participation.

The second half of the chapter outlines the ways that everyday approaches have been applied within political, sociological, educational, and geographic studies. These are then examined to consider what they have contributed to our understandings of citizenship and, indeed, the youthful citizen.

2 Section I: A Genealogy of the Everyday

The “everyday” has not always received attention from academics and theorists. A notable exception was the sociologist C. Wright Mills who chose in the 1950s to focus on the “ordinary man” [sic] (Mills 1959) when most sociologists were looking at positivist, macro-level patterns and theories. The prerogative of his focus on the daily life was to enhance an individual’s awareness and ability to “. . . grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves at minute points at the intersections of biography and history in society” (Mills 1959, p. 7) in order to develop the quality of mind which may be called the “sociological imagination” (Mills 1959, p. 5).

A focus on the everyday began to attract more widespread attention from the late 1960s onwards by researchers from a range of disciplines including sociologists, geographers, and anthropologists. This revival of interest followed many years of neglect which Jacobsen (2009) attributes to the difficulties that studying and quantifying the everyday presents to researchers, as well as the long-standing preference of sociologists to study more “important” aspects of society represented by policies and institutions. A central impetus of this everyday focus was a growing dissatisfaction with both positivist and critical sociology which were seen as overly deterministic in their portrayal of the individuals in society. These traditional approaches tended to portray an overly passive and deterministic view of actors and failed to capture the complexity of daily existence (Adler et al. 1987). In response, a number of researchers began to turn their focus upon the life of “ordinary” people in their natural contexts. In de Certeau’s words, “the floodlights have moved away from the actors who possess proper names and social blazons, turning first toward the chorus of secondary characters, then settling on the mass of the audience” (de Certeau 1984 preface).

The everyday life sociologies in the 1960s and 1970s saw an explosion of interest in mundane topics and the life of “ordinary” people in society, including detailed explorations of subcultural groups with an everyday perspective (Adler et al. 1987; Jacobsen 2009). Jack Douglas (1980), one of the early sociologists of the everyday, reflects that this focus was characterized by three approaches: first, the sociologist of everyday life studies social interactions by observing and experiencing them in natural (not clinical) situations; second, the focus is on natural and not contrived social interactions; and third, the analysis of members’ own

meanings is important to elicit, not just those of the researcher. These characteristics led to a sociology that was far more aware of the “partial situatedness of life” (Douglas 1980, p. 3) that could make fewer claims to knowing all truths. Jacobsen (2009) suggests that this also shifted the focus from more macro-oriented agendas to more micro-oriented and creative areas, leading to a revival in innovative research methods as well.

Collectively, by making the ordinary the focus of inquiry, these everyday researchers also raised the awareness of groups which had previously been marginalized in society and underscored the significance of the everyday in understanding social and public life. A focus on the everyday therefore can also serve to fulfill a political agenda – to encourage a critique of the familiar in a way to make it appear strange and to make the unfamiliar appear less strange (Jacobsen 2009). In this way, a focus on the everyday is inherently political.

2.1 A Spatial Theory of Everydayness

These ideas had a significant impact on spatial theorists who began to trace the significance of the everyday and its links and insights into space and spatial practices (de Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1971, 1991). A key theme of Michel de Certeau’s (1984) theoretical work was to “privilege the anonymous and the everyday” (de Certeau 1984, preface) by a focus on everyday practices and lived (or practiced) space. In contrast to geographers who mapped spatial patterns and trajectories, de Certeau drew attention to “the act of passing by” (p. 97). He suggested that people make meaning of space through multiple and diverse individual spatial practices. These “spatial stories” are imbued with emotions of habit, memory, and familiarity. Moreover, spatial stories “carry out a labour that constantly transforms spaces into places” and organize the “play of changing relationships between places and spaces” (p. 118).

His focus on the everyday and ordinary pays close attention to daily practices and usage of place, arguing that through these repetitive practices and their associated spatial stories, space is transformed into a “practiced place” (p. 117), thus overcoming alienation. Within such everyday places, de Certeau draws attention to the “art of practice” (p. 24) and the use of ruses, tactics, and manipulations of imposed spaces which people use every day. He argues that a focus on formal *strategies* – the calculation planning and processes of organizations that are imbued with power – can be contrasted with *tactics* – “a manoeuvre [sic] ‘within the enemy’s field of vision,’ and territory. . . . It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of opportunities. . . [to] build up its own position, and plan raids” (de Certeau 1984, p. 37). He suggests that many everyday practices (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) can be seen as tactical in that they are “‘ways of operating’; victories of the weak over the strong, clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things. . . .” De Certeau proposes that tactics are an “art of the weak” (p. 37) and illustrate everyday forms of resistance and, at times, subversion. In this way, de Certeau married the twin foci of space and everyday and

also suggested ways in which this could present a theory of action for the “weak.” These ideas have been applied within research on children and young people as a way to understand how their tactics are also political (Elwood and Mitchell 2012; Kallio 2007; Skelton and Valentine 2003; Wood 2012a).

Similar to de Certeau, Lefebvre (1971) drew attention to the creative rhythms of everyday life woven through familiarity and recurrence, believing that everyday life should be a work of art. His theorizing about the everyday preceded his thinking about the production of space (Lefebvre 1991) but the two were closely related in his mind. Philip Wander, in the preface to *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (Lefebvre 1971), states that “It is not that Lefebvre politicizes everyday life; rather he unveils its ideological structure” (p. ix). His argument is that everyday life is in fact a “sociological point of feed-back” (Lefebvre 1971, p. 32) that sheds light on not only where we live and consider natural but also on how these experiences are shaped by society in general. Lefebvre’s meta-philosophical project is his concern with the possibilities for change by identifying “third space” (Soja 1996, p. 31), a space of radical openness. In other words, Lefebvre’s approach is concerned not only with the forces of production and the social relations that are organized around them but also *moving beyond* these to new, unanticipated possibilities. This is where his ideas are useful to the children’s everyday citizenship as they accentuate the conflicting spaces children occupy between private and public realms (Kallio and Häkli 2013).

2.2 Feminist Theory and the “New” Sociology of Childhood

While a focus on the everyday unites researchers in this area, it is much more difficult to locate this multidisciplinary group theoretically. As Jacobsen (2009, p. 17) explains, “all everyday life sociologies contain a certain amount of theoretical and philosophical substance on how to understand, approach and investigate, describe, analyse and communicate everyday life.” Yet, it is impossible to pin this down to one theoretical framework, and indeed it would be foolish to try. Instead, it is more helpful to see theories of everydayness as associated with philosophical paradigms including phenomenology, interactionism, existentialism, pragmatism, and hermeneutics (Jacobsen 2009). In the following section, the influence of feminist theory is outlined as a key pathway by which everydayness entered into the lexicon and research of children and young people’s geographers and initiated ideas of everyday citizenship. The feminist theory is not alone in this focus on the everyday. Queer, Marxist, postcolonial, antiracist, cultural studies, and other critical theorists have also sought to expose the ordinary and everyday to demonstrate the ways in which the state is enmeshed in the spheres of the daily and also the political possibility of such spaces (Staeheli et al. 2012). The “new” sociology of childhood (James and Prout 1990) has also played a considerable role in establishing a focus on children and young people and this is discussed as well.

A key early theorist in feminist approaches and the everyday is Dorothy Smith. Writing in the 1980s, Smith (1987) suggested that sociology has been written from

the standpoint of men located in the relations of ruling in our society. To counter this, she proposes a “sociology for women” which can develop “analyses, descriptions and understandings of their situation, of their everyday world, and of its determinations in the larger socio-economic organisation to which it is articulated” (p. 88). Her approach was fixated on “the everyday world the locus of a sociological problematic’ as [it is] that world we experience directly. It is the world in which we are located physically and socially. [...] It is necessarily local – because that is how we must be – and historical” (Smith 1987, p. 89). Importantly, Smith believed that an everyday focus precluded a wider societal focus:

Locating the sociological problematic in the everyday world does not mean it is confining the inquiry to the everyday world. Indeed it is essential that the everyday world be seen as organised by social relations not observable within it. Thus, an inquiry confining itself to the everyday world of direct experience is not adequate to explicate its social organisation. (Smith 1987, p. 89)

These ideas have been developed by feminist geographers who have endorsed this everyday focus and widened it to include a more explicit spatial focus (Dyck 2005; Lister 2003; Marston and Mitchell 2004; Massey 1992; Pain 2014; Skelton 2010; Skelton and Valentine 2003; Staeheli et al. 2004). Such theorists have argued that disproportionate attention has been paid to formal and public (male-dominated) expressions of social life, thus overlooking the “hidden places” (Dyck 2005) of the domestic and the ordinary. This includes a disproportionate focus on global, public events, such as the war on terror, rather than the private and apparently mundane experience of events such as domestic violence (Pain 2014). Feminist analysis therefore has worked to bring to light the embodied, everyday, informal practices of traditionally disempowered people – such as women, children, young people, immigrants, asylum seekers, prisoners, and others – operating at various scales (Dixon and Marston 2011). Such approaches provide insights into the banal, gritty nature of everyday life, as “...taking a route through the taken-for-granted activity of everyday life in homes, neighbourhoods and communities can tell us much about its role in supporting social, cultural and economic shifts” (Dyck 2005, p. 234), and how gender is reproduced through everyday social practices.

Feminist contributions on the everyday have been important for not only widening the approaches to social research but also for drawing into question the status of marginal groups in society – including children and young people – thus reworking the very concept of the political (Staeheli et al. 2004). Within citizenship studies, such a focus has highlighted the traditional preoccupation with public/formal/mainstream expressions of citizenship (e.g., voting, political representation, and political processes), thus overlooking domestic, informal, private spaces of participation which are frequented by women, children, and young people (Lister 2003, 2007, 2008; Pain 2014). One significant way feminist citizenship researchers have done this is by highlighting the embodied and everyday nature of expressions and experiences of citizenship – or in Lister’s (2003, 2007) words, “lived citizenship.” If we see everyday life as a lived process within which citizenship acts accumulate, we come closer to understanding “how everyday life can also operate

as an arena for the contestation and transformation of dominant, often oppressive modalities of citizenship” (Dickinson et al. 2008, p. 105).

A second key influence to the emergence of everyday citizenship approaches within children and young people’s geographies has been the contribution of the “new” sociology of childhood. In 1990, James and Prout (1990) set out a “new paradigm” of approaches to childhood which were informed by sociological theory and developed this further in *Theorizing Childhood* (James et al. 1998). Drawing a clear distinction from developmental psychology approaches that construct childhood as a period of development, they called for children to be recognized as social actors (shaping their own and other lives around them) as well as being shaped by their circumstances. The focus on children is not on *becoming*, which they argue is the domain of developmental approaches to childhood, but rather on *being* – a child in his or her own right, a competent social actor (James and James 2008; James et al. 1998). These sociological ideas paved the way for much of the early work in children’s geographies and citizenship participation (see, e.g., Holloway and Valentine 2000; Weller 2003, 2006, 2007) as it demonstrated the agency of children as social actors through theoretical and empirical contributions. The connections were also made possible by Ruth Lister’s seminal work in children’s citizenship which is outlined in the following section.

2.2.1 Children and Citizenship

Lister (2008) advances these ideas further specifically in regard to children and young people’s citizenship. Drawing parallels between the grounds given in previous times to exclude women’s participation as citizens and children’s exclusion from citizenship today, Ruth Lister (2008) provides four often cited reasons why children as citizens are viewed as problematic. First, their capacity and competence are brought into question on the grounds of their age (Kulynych 2001). Second, their lack of economic independence and their level of dependence on adults are often seen as barriers to full citizenship as the autonomy of the rational individual is deemed central to modern liberal thought (Kulynych 2001; Roche 1999). Third, the presence of children and young people in mainly private spheres rather than public also serves to perpetuate young people as citizens in waiting. Finally, the differences between children/young people and adults (such as the rights and responsibilities they hold) have also been given as a reason for their exclusion. As Roche (1999) comments, “save from the ‘child liberationists’, no one is arguing that children are identical to adults or that they should enjoy the same bundle of civil and political rights as adults” (p. 487). Instead, Lister (2008) suggests that the responsibilities young people do exercise should be recognized, and their right to participate/not participate must also be respected.

To help find a way forward in addressing the problematic status of youth citizenship, Lister (2003) advocates for a “differentiated universalism.” Rather than setting up an absolutist category which defines children and young people as citizens/not citizens, a differentiated universalism approach provides a lens through which to acknowledge the ambiguities of youth; children should be regarded as equal citizens with the right to belong as “differently equal” members of society

(Lister 2006, p. 25 in Liebel 2008). In the same way that women are different to men, yet equal, children can be recognized as different to adults, yet equal. This shifts the debates from extending an ever-expanding circle of adults' rights (and obligations) on to children and young people and recognizes "that their citizenship practice (where it occurs) constitutes them as *de facto*, even if not complete *de jure*, citizens" (Lister 2008, p. 18).

A feminist-informed perspective on citizenship participation therefore acknowledges the citizenship constraints experienced by children as a result of their differences from adults in status, access to resources, and power in society and also sees these everyday spaces as ones infused with political potential and possibility (Lister 2003). This approach opens up new avenues for the exploration of children and young people's citizenship within their everyday and domestic spheres. A focus on the everyday therefore is also a political stance that aims to give voice to marginalized groups and pay attention to spaces previously rendered invisible by normative conceptions of citizenship.

The examination of the everyday and of citizenship outlined in this chapter thus far has therefore reached an intersection whereby we now have a genealogy of the "everyday" and how this has been embedded in "children's citizenship" to give rise to "everyday citizenship" as a term and as a concept, founded upon the disciplinary and theoretical history outlined here. This intersection provides an explanation for a newfound interest in everydayness within children's citizenship as it conveys new ways to explore the conceptually difficult terrain of children and young people's status and positioning as citizens. In the second half of this chapter, an examination is made of how this term has been applied within research and to what effect.

3 Section II: The Everyday Citizenship of Children and Young People

In this section, an analysis of the integration of "everyday" ideas within children and young people's citizenship research is outlined. In keeping with the interdisciplinary origins of everydayness, the application of everyday citizenship has also been found across a number of disciplinary fields. While the depth of these fields cannot be covered adequately in this chapter, four key disciplinary fields (political science, education, sociology, and human geography) will be examined briefly to consider their integration of the everyday within children and young people's citizenship studies, beginning with political science.

Early in the twenty-first century, political science researchers began to question the narrow, adult-centric measures of citizenship which rely on formal and public expressions of politics (Marsh et al. 2007; Norris 2003; O'Toole 2003; O'Toole et al. 2003; Vromen 2003). They argued that such definitions potentially overlook the everyday ways young people experience and express their place in society (Lister et al. 2003; O'Toole 2003). In contrast, they argued for more fluid and flexible conceptions of "what counts" as citizenship. Importantly, they also pointed out that it is essential to give opportunities for groups such as children and young

people to express what citizenship participation means to them and how they understood this in their own lives (Marsh et al. 2007; O’Toole 2003; Vromen and Collin 2010).

Similarly, some researchers in citizenship education have become aware of the limitations of narrow definitions of citizenship actions. For example, Llewellyn and Westheimer (2009), reflecting on their own research process, describe how their initial interviews with Canadian high school students in civics classes appeared to confirm declining rates of youth political engagement and knowledge. However, a secondary analysis of young people’s discussion of daily (and generally non-political) topics revealed their keen interest in everyday and ordinary politics through the “lens of their own experiences” (p 52). The significance of young people’s informal and daily everyday citizenship encounters outside school in shaping their emerging citizenship dispositions and subjectivities has also been highlighted in a number of studies (Biesta et al. 2009; Pykett 2009). For example, Biesta and colleagues (2009) describe that while participants knew about international events and politics, they had a stronger focus on local and personal issues that had a direct bearing on their day-to-day lives and over which they were able to exert some control (Biesta et al. 2009, p. 21). They suggest that finding out about young people’s everyday contexts, relationships, and dispositions revealed far more about their citizenship learning than what an exclusive focus on the curriculum and schools would have rendered. Similarly, Pykett (2009) concludes that young people’s citizenship was overdetermined by the socio-spatial identities that they brought to schools, constituted through their everyday power and social relations.

A number of youth sociologists have also contributed considerably to the field of everyday citizenship. In particular, a seminal paper by Anita Harris et al. (2007) captured this emerging area well in what they termed an “everyday perspective” on young people and citizenship. They questioned how growing levels of globalization and individualization had impacted young people’s citizenship identities and practices, suggesting that “it might be necessary to bracket adult-centric views of what engagement means and explore the everyday ways in which young people experience their place in society” (Harris et al. 2007, p. 7). Their findings highlighted how young people were strongly connected to others through informal activities and family and friendship groups. While they seldom participated in conventional political activities, they were interested in issues in the “micro-territories of the local” (Harris and Wyn 2009). These ideas culminated in a special issue of the journal *Young*, edited by Harris and Wyn (2010). Ideas of everyday citizenship were explored in this journal through examinations of “ordinary” young people (Harris et al. 2010) through varying scales and sites, including through partying (Riley et al. 2010), consumer behavior (Vinken and Diepstraten 2010), and “ordinary” daily interactions (Vromen and Collin 2010).

Within children and young people’s geographies, early interest in everyday citizenship coincided in many ways with a growing sense of the social agency of young people and an interest in their “microgeographies” (Holloway and Valentine 2000; Matthews 2003; Matthews et al. 1998, 1999). These studies contributed to a growing sense that young people’s participation was best examined within the lived

realities of everyday lives and relationships (Clark and Percy-Smith 2006; Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume). Susie Weller’s (2003, 2007) research on teenager’s citizenship began to conceptualize this field further with her focus on the “everyday political-spatial” experiences of teenagers and how they carved out spaces of citizenship within their school (Weller 2003) and neighborhoods (Weller 2007). Her attention to the nuances of citizenship within everyday conversations and actions was closely connected with a focus on space: “space matters at the micro-level as it illuminates teenagers’ performative role as citizens” (Weller 2007, p. 171). Weller’s research drew attention to the current practices of youth citizenship and how young people were enacting citizenship roles now, not just acting as apprentice citizens. Wood (2012a, b) expanded on these ideas in her exploration of New Zealand young people’s perceptions of “important” issues and their responses to them within their citizenship education programs and the wider community. Many of the social issues young people noticed were shaped by their lived experiences in everyday social-spatial interactions within communities and schools, enhancing their sense of agency and responsiveness as citizens. The study also highlighted the strength of young people’s citizenship imaginations as current critics, observers, and carers of places.

Within children’s and young people’s geographies, notions of the everyday have also become a more common theme within studies of young people’s politics. For example, a recent special issue of *Polity and Space*, edited by Kallio and Häkli (2013), focused on children and young people’s “politics in everyday life.” While some have drawn a distinction between children’s citizenship and children’s politics (Skelton 2013), in many ways this overlooks what both these bodies of research are seeking to achieve: to gain greater understandings of how young people participate in society. For this reason, it is perhaps useful to break down these semantic boundaries (of “politics” and “citizenship”), not collapsing them, but acknowledging how the ideas of everydayness influenced and shaped both discourses, research, and understandings in how children and young people *participate* and *engage* in society. The following section explores the contributions of these ideas in greater details to consider how “everyday” approaches have deepened our understandings of citizenship.

3.1 The Contribution of Everyday Citizenship Approaches

One significant contribution of everyday citizenship research has been the attention it has drawn to informal, daily, and often mundane spaces of citizenship participation. Focusing on the significance that “common and modest cultural youth spaces such as school, peer networks and family households” (Harris and Wyn 2009, p. 342) has rendered a very different landscape of participation than traditional approaches which have emphasized public, formal spaces. A focus on the everyday has necessitated bringing the lens in closer to the “microgeographies” (Matthews et al. 1998) of children and young people’s lives. For example, a focus on the

spatiality of participation in schools highlights the ways in which “inclusion in, and exclusion from participation in decision-making within schools is manifested spatially, as well as, the alternative and often hidden understandings and acts of citizenship and participation in which many teenagers engage” (Weller 2009, p. 3). This also provides opportunities to understand the struggles, challenges, and contradictions inherent in the acts of citizenship which occur in these spaces (Dickinson et al. 2008; Weller 2007) and how citizenship is made and remade (Staheli 2011) (for further examples, see Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces,” this volume; Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume).

An everyday approach has also shed new insights into relational aspects of children and young people’s citizenship. While citizenship has frequently been recognized as status (an entitlement to rights) and practice (a set of duties), Osler and Starkey (2005) suggest that it is “probably most immediately experienced as a feeling of belonging” (p. 9). This draws attention to the processes of living in community and the complex geographies of citizenship in daily life (Bartos 2013; Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume; Staheli et al. 2012; Wood 2013). Staheli and colleagues (2012) argue for the importance of understanding citizenship as based on relationships between individuals, groups, communities, and the state. Such relationships are tied up closely with interpersonal and emotional relationships which are inseparable from gendered, classed, and raced experiences of *being* citizens in spatial locations (Wood 2013). Friendship relationships are also integral to the development of citizenship dispositions and actions. Annie Bartos’ (2013) research with children in a rural area of New Zealand reveals the significance of lived spatial experiences. By focusing on the spaces children use through their daily practices, Bartos carefully teases out the relationship between friendship and the development of a sense of place and the politics of place and how to care for, nurture, and relate to certain environments – what she defines as pre-reflexive political identities (see also Bartos, ► Chap. 7, “Children and Young People’s Political Participation: A Critical Analysis,” this volume).

A further contribution made by everyday citizenship research has been to interrogate and define more expansively the notion of citizenship action. This has involved peeling back the layers of largely adult-defined notions of “action” to discover subversive and tactical but frequently overlooked responses by children and young people. For example, Sarah Mills (2011), drawing on feminist geopolitics to examine the girls’ scouting movement, suggests that an emphasis on seemingly banal, embodied practices like dressing, writing, and crafting circumvented the mechanistic governance of the organization which was set up for boys. These transgressive, everyday, and embodied practices, she argues, give insight into the more formal and grandiose geopolitical visions and showed how an “analysis of an everyday space using feminist geopolitics can benefit from a historical perspective in order to examine changes in how individuals negotiate their geopolitical existence over time and space” (Mills 2011, p. 135).

A further example of how citizenship actions have been redefined and imagined through a focus on the everyday is shown in Tereshchenko's (2010) example of "unconventional" participation during the Orange Revolution by young people in post-socialist Ukraine. In the context where school-aged young people felt excluded from the national political "project," they joined in peaceful protests by making fashion statements (such as wearing orange – the color of protest – or tying blue ribbons on their bags or around their thighs) or cutting school to join the demonstrations. These "everyday" actions highlighted a political consciousness and assertiveness at a time when they had no or little ability as citizens to change their future. In such examples, children and young people are performing "acts of citizenship" (Isin 2008) as minority members of society for whom the status of citizenship may not even be a given. In Isin's (2008) terms, such actions of performed and enacted citizenship constitute the "practices of claim-making citizens in and through various sites and scales" (p. 16) (for further examples, see Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, "Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship,"](#) this volume).

3.2 Conclusion

At the heart of issues of everyday citizenship are questions about how we understand the hotly contested and debated notion of citizenship. Traditionally views of citizenship have centered the status bestowed on full members of a community and who are thus endowed with rights and responsibilities as citizens of that community (Marshall 1950, pp. 28–29). This narrow position has been sharply critiqued by feminists (as discussed above), along with many other critical theorists. The intrusion of the "everyday" and the exposure of the seemingly mundane acts or micropolitics have played a significant role in challenging previous narrow assertions of citizenship as status and highlighting the diverse ways that people live as citizens and form their political identities (Staeheli et al. 2012; Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, "Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship,"](#) this volume).

In sum, the integration of everyday citizenship has led to enlarged and more inclusive notions of citizenship and also the youthful citizen. As Staeheli et al (2012) argue, "the ordinary, the quotidian, the everyday plays a powerful role in the way citizenship is structured, practised, and enacted" (p. 13). These examples outlined here illustrate the multiple and diverse ways that everydayness has shaped the questions we ask, the procedures we use, the places we imagine, and the conclusions we draw. As such, the everyday has refocused our attention on to the local, the micro, and the mundane and also on the intersection of these spaces with the global, the macro, and the political. As Kallio and Häkli (2013, p. 2) state: "This expanded and enriched research has successfully shown that, just as is the case with adults, the politics involving children and young people are heterogeneous, complex and unpredictable." Yet, at the same as celebrating the insertion of the everyday into citizenship, it is apparent that the debates are far from over. In fact, they have really only just begun. I conclude by highlighting two challenges (among many others) that remain, requiring further analysis, critique, and research.

One significant challenge that still needs further consideration in everyday citizenship studies is a methodological one: the expansion of conventional definitions of citizenship to include the everyday raises a key methodological challenge related to the difficulty that researchers face in attempting to “capture” young people’s everyday citizenship actions and perceptions. How can we research the everyday in a meaningful way when, at this stage, we only have weakly developed conceptual and methodological tools for gathering and analyzing empirical data on children and young people’s everyday citizenship and politics (Kallio and Häkli 2011b)? Another profound limitation to such research is children and young people’s own uncertainty and ambiguity in describing what “counts” as citizenship beyond the formal and adult-centric definitions which they are likely to have been exposed to in their life course (Wood 2012b). Creating opportunities to attend to the everyday as a feature of the research, rather than viewing it as polluting or interfering, is an important aspect of everyday citizenship research, recognizing that the prevailing tendency of much research is to ensure that the noisiness and unpredictability of the everyday are excluded (Hall et al. 2008).

In response, a number of youth researchers have begun to work more strategically to allow the everyday – its noise, randomness, and interruptions – to interfere in the research encounter and, indeed, form the focus of research (Christensen 2004; Clark and Percy-Smith 2006; Dyck 2005; Hall et al. 2008; Quijada 2009; Wood 2012b). For example, Quijada (2009) found that the “messy” car conversations that occurred during the drive home following youth-facilitated diversity workshops provided a “dialogical space” for young people to discuss their collective struggles and investments in social justice in a way that formal interviews could not. Wood’s (2012b) use of café-style focus group interviews similarly provided opportunities for more everyday conversations to be captured in the data. Reexamining what she initially discounted as rambling, off-task, uncertain, or divergent data led to new insights about young people’s lived understandings of citizenship that were constituted within everyday spatial, dialogical, and social interactions.

A second key challenge centers on lack of conceptual and theoretical transparency and consistency within discussions on children and young people’s politics (Kallio and Häkli 2013; Philo and Smith 2003, 2013; Skelton 2013). Kallio and Häkli (2013) explain that while important inroads have been made in this research, basic “political” vocabulary still varies from study to study, producing “certain ambiguity where conceptual gaps lead to contradictions, in turn leading to misunderstandings, which in turn lead to juxtapositions, thus hindering methodological and theoretical advancement” (Kallio and Häkli 2013, p. 3; see also Vanderbeck 2008). This critique within children and young people’s politics has close overlaps with research on their citizenship, as both, through concepts such as the everyday, have purposefully made space to examine, recognize, and acknowledge the political and citizenship as grounded in the everyday, this enabling a politicization of new matters, actors, and places (Kallio and Häkli 2013).

So, while the everyday has opened up fresh opportunities to see the political in the personal and the ordinary, it has also left conceptual and definitional challenges that have not yet been resolved. More work is needed on the interstitial divide

between Politics/politics (Philo and Smith 2003; Skelton 2010; Wood 2012a) in the same way that work on the now-but-not-yet status of young people as citizens is still required. Rather than making claims that “everything is political” or indeed that “all actions are those of citizens,” the challenge is to find far more nuanced theoretical and semantic frameworks to analyze the liminal experience of children and young people (Kallio and Häkli 2013; Philo and Smith 2003). A number of approaches which have been applied in everyday citizenship attempt to juggle this divide. For example, Staeheli and colleagues (2012) argue that citizenship is best understood as constructed “through the interactions of both status and positioning. It is part of daily life, something we enact, even as it is part of a broader system by which order is maintained” (p. 4; see also Nagel and Staeheli, ► Chap. 27, “NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon,” this volume). This approach simultaneously recognizes citizenship as constituted and experienced within daily lived experiences and also positioned within complex institutional and global spaces of citizenship, as demonstrated by Pain et al.’s (2010) analysis of young people’s everyday hopes and fears which were bound up with geopolitical change, reinforcing the inseparability of the global everyday (see also Smith 1987). It is important to continue these conversations and debate these “thorny” issues, for, as Philo and Smith (2013) note, engaging with the tensions within this field is “not destructive, but rather productive, constructive, creative and creating” (p. 141).

In conclusion, this chapter has taken us on a journey down a very everyday road, tracing the emergence and integration of this concept into the theoretical and empirical frameworks of research pertinent to geographers of children and young people. Michel de Certeau’s (1984, p. xi) emphasis on the significance of daily routines, places, and actions stated that his goal would be achieved:

if everyday practices, ‘ways of operating’ or doing things, no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity, and if a body of theoretical questions, methods and categories, and perspectives, by penetrating this obscurity, make it possible to articulate them.

The aims of this chapter similarly will have been achieved if we have placed at the forefront the everyday and, through tracing its genealogical origins, come to recognize what this concept has done for our understandings of children and young people’s citizenship.

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Abstract

This chapter takes a critical look at children and young people's participation in the context of ideas about citizenship. In particular, counter to assumptions about children's competence to participate and their ambiguous status as citizens in waiting, the chapter will discuss how, in spite of their marginalization within society, children and young people are in reality already participating *de facto* as active citizens within the spaces of their everyday lifeworlds. To that extent the central focus of this chapter is to discuss how participation as active citizens can be understood in terms of the cultural geographies of children and young people and the way in which the views and values of different young people are

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articulated through their participation within, and in relation to, the wider social contexts in which their lives take place. The chapter will begin by critically reflecting on some of the major issues in the field of children and young people's participation focusing on some of the contradictions and paradoxes at play in reconciling ideals of participation with realities in practice in the context of adult agenda. The chapter will then rehearse some of the developments in citizenship studies and crucially how the status of childhood and debates about children and citizenship open up possibilities for reconceptualizing participation as active citizenship. Recent contributions to the citizenship literature are discussed focusing on citizenship as a dynamic process of active negotiation in relation to context. The chapter will then draw on empirical findings to discuss how changing trends in children and young people's participation and citizenship are played out in the everyday spaces of local neighborhood, schools, and local services.

Keywords

Active citizenship • Agency • Everyday contexts • Participation • Young People

1 Introduction

Participation and involvement are now commonplace in policy rhetoric and across service sectors. However, there is a growing critical discourse exploring the way in which participation is understood and realized in practice (Percy-Smith 2010; Cockburn 2005; Tisdall 2008; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Liebel 2008). To some extent, the focus here is about the effectiveness of the workings of democracy and the structures and systems that serve it, in particular the extent to which the views and perspectives of diverse groups are represented in local governance. Yet, as the movement to involve children and young people in local democratic processes grows, there is an emerging parallel discourse that seeks to expose the inequalities and injustices in the way power is exercised and decision-making controlled by adults. To that extent participation and in turn citizenship are conditions imposed from above rather than realized through practice in everyday life or, as Pells (2010) argues, a "tendency towards 'performed' rather than 'lived' participation." In the previous chapter, Wood provides a genealogy of the everyday to understand the way children and young people's citizenship is structured, practiced, and enacted. However, while Wood is concerned with the way in which children and young people's identities shape and in turn are shaped and reproduced by space, this chapter is concerned more with the active participation of children and young people in terms of agency and action through self-determination as they negotiate the everyday contexts in which they live (Percy-Smith 2012; Percy-Smith and Malone 2001; see also Trell and van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, "Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective," this volume). Lister (2008) makes a useful distinction here between "being a citizen" – enjoying the rights of citizenship necessary for social and political participation – and "acting as

a citizen” – actively fulfilling those rights. A major dilemma concerning young people and citizenship is that while they may not have citizenship status conferred de jure, they are de facto citizens by engaging in citizenship practices as a result of their participation in everyday social life. This situation has led some critics to refer to children as *semi-* or *partial citizens* (Roche 1999).

These developments in discourses of active citizenship have in turn been unfolding within historical global social changes characterized by changing relationships between the state and citizen in what Crouch (2004) refers to as an era of post-democracy characterized by a progressive detachment by citizens from politics and institutions. Gifford and Mycock (2013) interpret these changes in terms of a tension between on the one hand a decline in accountability and relevance of established structures of governance and on the other increasing individualization constitutive of late modernity in which individuals no longer seek to show deference to public decision-making bodies but instead exercise their own agency and self-determination as architects of their own lives. These processes of social change pose significant challenges to assumptions about how young people participate in organizations, services, and society at large. Indeed there is an irony at play in that professionals increasingly seek to involve children and young people in democratic processes, yet these systems are increasingly losing their value and significance for an increasing proportion of the population in different countries. Instead, as the importance of the public sphere as a domain of social practice declines and the virtual world of the Internet becomes ever more pervasive in people's lives, there are increasing possibilities for children and young people to evolve their own new forms of democratic processes in new democratic arenas (Cornwall and Coelho 2007).

A key feature of these shifting relationships between citizens and state is a process of *democratic deepening* (Gaventa 2007) involving a challenge to the professional-led, service-driven agenda of public sector involvement by attempting to reclaim the radical tradition in public arenas (Fielding 2009; Fielding and Moss 2011; Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Percy-Smith 2010, 2014a). For example, Cooke and Kothari's (2001) critique of participation focuses on the way in which the rhetorical claims of empowerment in participation discourses often fall short in practice in development contexts. Tisdall (2008) on the other hand concerns herself with the extent to which participation is transformatory in terms of children having a real opportunity to bring about change. For Percy-Smith (2010) (as with Jans (2004) in the context of children and play and Fielding (2006) in relation to schools), the challenge is in shifting the balance from professional adult agenda of what Fielding refers to as “participation for effective services” to participation that supports the well-being and flourishing of human communities or, in Jans's (2004) terms (following Habermas), a shift in attention from systems to lifeworlds and as architects of their own lives.

Following Jans, there is an emerging shift in discourses focusing on the “deinstitutionalization” of children and young people's participation marked by a focus on participation in everyday settings where issues of identity, agency, and self-determination rather than voice and representation define the nature of participation

(see also Marshall, ► Chap. 14, “Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine,” and Wood, ► Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People’s Citizenship Studies,” this volume). The underlying rationale is that for young people to participate effectively as active citizens, the emphasis needs to be directed toward *social participation* and the multifaceted ways in which young people participate more fully in everyday community spaces through their actions, choices, relationships, and contributions. Trell and van Hoven (► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective” this volume) also acknowledge the significance of the everyday for young people illustrating how young people in Estonia derive meaningful participation within contexts where citizenship is realized through everyday relations, learning, and experience.

This chapter takes a critical look at children and young people’s participation in the context of ideas about citizenship. In particular, counter to assumptions about children’s competence to participate and their ambiguous status as citizens in waiting, the chapter will discuss how, in spite of their marginalization within society, children and young people are in reality already participating *de facto* as active citizens within the spaces of their everyday lifeworlds. To that extent, the central focus of this chapter is to discuss how participation as active citizenship can be understood in terms of the cultural geographies of children and young people and the way in which the views and values of different young people are articulated through their participation within, and in relation to, the wider social contexts in which their lives take place. The chapter will begin by critically reflecting on some of the major issues in the field of children and young people’s participation focusing on some of the contradictions and paradoxes at play in reconciling ideals of participation with realities in practice in the context of adult agenda. The chapter will then rehearse some of the developments in citizenship studies and crucially how the status of childhood and debates about children and citizenship open up possibilities for reconceptualizing participation as active citizenship. Recent contributions to the citizenship literature are discussed focusing on citizenship as a dynamic process of active negotiation in relation to context. The chapter will then draw on empirical findings to discuss how changing trends in children and young people’s participation and citizenship are played out in the everyday spaces of local neighborhood, schools, and local services.

2 Deepening Democracy: Evolving Discourses of Participatory Citizenship

In spite of advances in theory and practice with respect to children and young people’s participation and citizenship, these changes have had limited impact on the position of children and young people in society. Gaventa (2007) talks of a wider crisis of citizenship reflected in a decline in trust and accountability in the state and a growing disillusionment in governments. Instead he argues for the need to reexamine the understanding of rights and citizenship in different contexts and how citizenship is claimed and rights realized through the agency and actions of

people themselves (see also Mitchell and Elwood, ► Chap. 12, “Counter-Mapping for Social Justice,” and Marshall, ► Chap. 14, “Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine,” this volume). For Gaventa, this involves a process of *democratic deepening* marked by shifts in modes of citizen participation from voting and civil duties within institutions of the state to more direct forms of involvement in the form of expression of identity and difference in the spaces of everyday life in what Cornwall and Coelho refer to as “new democratic arenas.” Fielding (2009) reasserts the importance of “public life” – spaces not controlled by the state or the market but instead “agoras” (Bauman 1999) or multiple interpersonal spaces (Fielding 2009, p. 506) where a democratic tradition can be reclaimed.

At the heart of this democratic reconceptualization is a contestation of static notions of citizenship as simply encapsulating rights and duties as a member of a community, and instead argues for new models of citizenship as active practices in which citizenship is negotiated in relation to others (Cockburn 1998; Roche 1999; Jans 2004). Cockburn (1998) in his seminal chapter argues for a *socially interdependent model* of citizenship in which participation is based on mutual and reciprocal relationships and the negotiation of intersubjectivity (Fitzgerald et al. 2010). Moosa-Mitha (2005) in a similar vein argues for a *difference-centered approach* to citizenship based on rights and equality giving rise to a horizontal model of citizenship (Roche 1999) where citizenship is not based on status according to a priori criteria but rather involves *acts of citizenship* (Larkins 2014) embarked on by empowered citizens as they reflexively negotiate their place in society in the everyday spaces of their lived contexts. Martelli refers to this shift as an emergent form of participatory citizenship that combines participation, civicness, and autonomy, which usefully opens up possibilities for rethinking active citizenship beyond institutional structures. Hart (2007, p. 321) similarly states: “Identity comes through action, that is, through daily activities which are ‘acts’ of communication collectively shaped,” suggesting that the “everyday” becomes a fluid space in which individuals articulate their own meanings and manifestations of citizenship practice. Hence as Percy-Smith (2010, p. 114) argues, rather than ask “Do children have a say?” as a proxy for democratic citizenship, we should be asking whether children are able to fulfill their rights as equal and active citizens by articulating their agency through different forms of participation in a range of everyday settings.

Like Martelli (2013), Cornwall and Coelho (2007), and others (see, e.g., Cockburn 1998, 2005a; Roche 1999; Jans 2004; Larkins 2014) also see possibilities for new forms of active citizenship at the interface between state and society in what can be called the “participatory sphere” (Cornwall and Coelho 2007) in which citizens can engage in democratic processes in more empowered ways. For Cockburn (2005a), the participatory sphere in which children’s citizenship is realized happens in liminal spaces between public and private domains (see also Soja’s ideas about “third space”). It is within these new democratic arenas that Gaventa (2007) and Cornwall and Coelho (2007) see possibilities for moving out of liberal representative models of democracy into new opportunities for democratic participation through direct involvement where identities and agency can be

articulated and dialogue and deliberation can happen. Hence as Thomas, quoting Young (2000, p. 6), states:

On a deliberative understanding of democratic practice, democracy is not only a means through which citizens can promote their interests and hold the power of rulers in check. It is also a means of collective problem-solving which depends for its legitimacy and wisdom on the expression and criticism of the diverse opinions of all the members in society. (Thomas 2007, p. 207).

Gifford and Mycock (2013) argue for a distinction between *being citizens* and *becoming citizens*. “Being citizens” they argue involves integration into preexisting collective identities such as nation states. Becoming a citizen involves a dynamic process intimately connected to social and cultural learning and the creation of new civic virtues and sources of recognition. Hence, as we shall see in the following section, citizenship involves the participation of individuals and groups in a “struggle for recognition” (Thomas 2012 after Honneth 1995) through “participation” in everyday spaces. This realignment of citizen and state can be referred to as “the contemporary project of developing and sustaining more substantive and empowered citizen participation in the political process . . .” (Gaventa 2007, p. x) involving a shift from *status* to *process*.

3 Children, Young People, and Citizenship

Just as new discourses have sought to reconstruct citizenship as a fluid and active process of negotiation, writers have simultaneously been grappling with the specific issue of children and young people with respect to citizenship (Cockburn 1998, 2005, 2012; Roche 1999; Devine 2002; Jans 2004; Mooza-Mitha 2005; Invernizzi and Williams 2008; Percy-Smith 2014b; Larkins 2014). Until recently, children have essentially been excluded from discussion about citizenship as a result of the way they have been marginalized in society. Yet developments in the sociology of childhood that have reconstructed children as competent social actors challenge the historical marginalization of children in citizenship debates providing a basis for retheorizing children as citizens albeit not on the same terms as adults (Jans 2004). As Cockburn (1998, p. 112) observes: “traditional notions of citizenship will have to change to accommodate children.” Roche (1999) states that “The demand that children be included in citizenship is simply a request that children be seen as members of society too, with a legitimate and valuable voice and perspective” (479) (see also Bartos, ► Chap. 7, “Children and Young People’s Political Participation: A Critical Analysis,” this volume). He contests the argument that children do not have sufficient understanding, competence, or moral development to participate as citizens. Instead he cites Coles (1997) who argues that the “reasoning and moral capacities of many 9 year olds are as sophisticated as those of many adults” (481). Roche (1999) goes on to quote Held (1991) who states: “If citizenship entails membership in the community and membership implies forms of social participation then citizenship is above all about the involvement of people in the community

in which they live” (20). Such a conceptualization of citizenship has major implications for children, as Liebel and Saadi state: “If participation could be conceived of as not only consisting of speaking and being heard, but also of active and routine inclusion into vital social processes, new prospects could be opened up for the situating of children in society”(Liebel and Saadi 2010, p. 152).

The participation and citizenship of children and young people are intertwined with conceptions of childhood and youth as generational categories. Customarily citizenship has been aligned to adulthood and therefore achieved once young people undergo the transition from youth to adulthood. However, both transitions to adulthood and citizenship itself are increasingly problematic for young people as a result of the decline of the youth labor market and increases in house prices. For Martelli (2013), this has given rise to a tension between conventional forms of participation and citizenship and emerging forms of youth participation as young people seek out ways of negotiating a stake in society. Walther (2012) notes the de-standardization and individualization of life paths that make universal meanings of participation in daily realities difficult to grasp. As a result, these changes have initiated debates about participation beyond the neoliberal managerialist assumptions of “involvement” of children and young people (and indeed adults) as consumer citizens (Jones and Wallace 1990) to instead begin to widen discourses of participation as active citizenship (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Percy-Smith 2014b) involving new forms of participation and new “modes” of citizenship devised through action by young people themselves. However, as Martelli (2013) argues, there is still limited knowledge about new styles of participation of young people.

As new ways of understanding citizenship emerge, the contradictions and paradoxes in conventional justification for children and young people’s citizenship (non) status become ever more evident and indeed flawed. The crisis in citizenship with respect to young people can be most acutely observed in the extent to which they are able to participate as active citizens (Gifford and Mycock 2013). The contradiction here is that, as Gifford argues, inclusion, cohesion, and belonging (see also Hall et al. 1998) are key to citizenship yet it is as a result of adults devaluing young people in society that gives rise to marginalization and alienation. Devine (2002) and Gallagher (2006), for example, reveal how the structuration of child-adult relations and power inequalities in schools affects the extent to which children are able to participate (see also Parkes, ► Chap. 4, “[Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education](#),” this volume). Gallagher highlights the problematic nature of spaces for the participation of children as a result of the ambiguous interplay between structure and agency as played out through generational imbalances of power. (See also Marshall, ► Chap. 14, “[Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine](#),” this volume for a contrasting discussion of young Palestinians engaging in resistance in contexts where participation is otherwise constricted.) As Devine goes on to argue, power is central to any analysis of children’s rights and citizenship (303). “Children’s identification of themselves as citizens is influenced by the discourses concerning children and childhood which

govern their world” (Devine 2002, p. 305). She goes on to argue that a change in children’s rights and citizenship status will “only come about by challenging the structural positioning of children and adults in society” (305). For Devine, this comes about by reconstituting the time and space that frames children’s lives through institutionalized practices and control.

4 The Changing Spaces of Children’s Participation

Participation is the medium through which citizenship rights are claimed. Within representative democratic systems, this has traditionally involved voting in local and national elections. Accordingly attempts to increase the participation of children and young people in local governance have tended to surf on the back of representative structures such as community fora, children’s councils, and advisory groups as well as the involvement of children and young people in research. In the health sector in the UK, it is now almost impossible to secure funding for research without a statement of how you will involve patients or members of the public in the research. However, in spite of the inclusive rhetoric of “participation” and community/public engagement initiatives, these are on the whole toothless vanguards of ailing liberal representative democratic systems. Indeed in many cases, these initiatives are not truly participatory in terms of young people being involved on an equal basis as other stakeholders in collaborative processes but rather refer to young people sharing their views with adults who make the final decision. As Thomas states:

there is a great deal of activity going on which is much more genuinely ‘participatory’ .. that is often experienced ... as exciting and dynamic, but that does not connect in any clear way with ‘real’ politics ... with the result that there is little sign of young people participating in processes that actually produce important political decisions or define the terms of policy debate or even expressing their common interests as a social group. (Thomas 2007, p. 207).

Consequently many writers have argued for the need to understand children’s participation not simply in terms of expressing a view but in collaborative relationships with adults (see, e.g., Cockburn 1998; Percy-Smith 2006; Mannion 2007; Fitzgerald et al. 2010). Percy-Smith (2006) utilizes Wildemeersch et al.’s (1998) interpretation of social learning to develop an alternative approach to addressing community tensions between adults and young people in neighborhood settings. According to Wildemeersch et al. (1998), social learning can be understood as:

The learning through participatory systems such as groups, networks, organizations and communities, in conditions which are new, unexpected, uncertain, conflictual and hard to predict ... when solutions have to be found for unforeseen contextual problems. ... emphasis is on the optimal use of the problem-solving potential of which a group, institution or community disposes. Social learning is action- and experience-oriented, it is critically reflective, meaning that actors question the validity of particular opinions, judgments, strategies, actions, emotions, feelings, etc. It is cooperative and communicative, which means that the dialogue between actors is crucial, continually involved in implicit or explicit processes of negotiation. (adapted from Wildemeersch et al. 1998)

Participation as social learning in this way provides a credible alternative to understanding how stakeholders can be involved in responding to community-based issues in ways that community groups themselves can retain, rather than give away, influence over their affairs and more meaningfully realize their citizenship status. Similarly Acharya (2010) provides an account of the child reporters of Orissa who identify and “research” issues in their neighborhood, explore solutions, and report to community elders to bring about change. In contrast to dominant Western European approaches to participation where decision-making about solutions to community problems is removed from the community for “professionals” to deal with, instances such as this provide a credible example of how children can participate in more meaningful ways as active citizens in the context of their everyday community spaces.

As critics are realizing the limitations of mainstream approaches to young people's participation in adult-/service-led decision-making, increasing attention is turning to how young people participate as active citizens in relation with adults in the context of everyday life settings such as schools, neighborhoods, and public services (Percy-Smith and Malone 2001; Percy-Smith 2014b; Fielding 2009; Mannion 2007; see also McIntosh et al., ► Chap. 3, “Creating Spaces to Care: Children's Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care,” and Trell and van Horen, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume). In one sense, this signals a shift in attention from formal to informal participation. At the same time, it signals a deformatizing of citizenship practice widening the focus of participation beyond the narrow confines of adult-controlled spaces of public sector decision-making. The underlying recognition here is that participation, as an act of citizenship, does not just concern the exercise of, and input to, (adult) political power but also concerns autonomy and self-determination as individuals “participate” in relation to their own agenda and values. As Percy-Smith (2010) argues, the world is not shaped solely by politicians and professional decision-makers but also through the actions and choices people make in the context of their everyday lived realities.

Rethinking participation and citizenship in the context of everyday spaces necessarily places a focus on issues of agency and identity and the contribution of individuals to community and society (see also Wood, ► Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People's Citizenship Studies,” this volume). As de Winter (1997, p. 24) states: “In practice this comes down to regarding [young people] as fellow citizens, people whose share in society is appreciated and stimulated because of the constructive contribution they are able to make. Participation, which we may provisionally define as opportunities for children and young people to be actively involved in [the decision making on] their own living environment is a major condition” (quoted in Roche 1999, p. 484). Hence it could be argued that participation might be better interpreted as: “The democratic action and involvement of individuals and groups in the production and reproduction of their lives and communities” (Percy-Smith 2006).

Changing the context for participation does not, however, remove the implicit power relations between actors and between young people and place. Mannion (2010),

drawing on Massey (1994), points out that space is not simply a backdrop to action but rather is part of the action in the sense that it affords different possibilities according to how space is designed. Kesby et al. (2007) argue that participation can better fulfill its potential for empowerment if it is conceptualized as a spatial practice involving the socio-spatial interplay of people and settings or, as Kindon et al. (2007) argue, the result of the way power is negotiated as mutually constitutive relations between people, participation, and space.

5 Participation as Active Citizenship in Everyday Spaces

One of the key conclusions from Percy-Smith and Thomas's (2010) text *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation* was the importance of *social participation* – children as active citizens making contributions and taking actions within their everyday life settings, where roles and responsibilities are shared and agency rather than voice is the main marker of citizenship. Marshall, (► Chap. 14, “Existence as Resistance: Children and Politics of Play in Palestine” this volume) in a similar vein discusses the possibilities for the exercise of agency in constricted contexts of life in Palestine. Social participation can provide for a greater degree of ownership and self-determination than is often possible in public decision-making settings. As Williams et al. (2010) argue, rather than seek out diverse voices in competition for scarce resources which fragment communities, a focus on social participation can provide a basis for an appreciative, asset-based approach to young people's participation building on the skills and knowledge of different groups in the community (cf. Bartos, ► Chap. 7, “Children and Young People's Political Participation: A Critical Analysis” this volume).

Much formal participation takes place in spaces abstracted from children and young people's everyday lives. Participation in everyday contexts by contrast allows all children and young people to participate than is possible with representative structures offering opportunities for children to gradually acquire the skills of active citizenship through participation. In this respect, “participation” could be defined as “the social practice of active citizenship” (Percy-Smith 2014b). Hence participation is not about having a say, but about a democratic process of people working together to increasingly influence and make decisions. Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to this as *legitimate peripheral participation* in which participation is understood as a situated social learning activity involving the negotiation of knowledge and meaning as well as an individual's own position in any given context of values and power. Relations between children and adults and the quality of their collaboration are therefore key to children's participation as active citizenship. Emphasis on relationships places the focus on agency, learning, and cooperation between groups when children participate. As Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 35) state: “Learning (and therefore participation) is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived in world.” However, as critics increasingly raise questions about the efficacy of existing approaches to participation and indeed participation per se, we need to be critically reflecting on

the extent to which variable models of democracy, on which manifestations of participation are based, are indeed conducive to young people deriving meaning in their participation as citizens.

The remainder of this chapter uses three different everyday contexts to explore further some current issues concerning participation as active citizenship. In so doing, issues and prospects for deformalizing participation as an everyday act of citizenship are discussed and core principles for understanding participation as active citizenship developed. This exploration will focus on three everyday spaces that children inhabit: neighborhood, school, and local services.

6 Children, Young People, and Community Participation in Local Neighborhoods

There is now an extensive literature that documents the importance of neighborhood space for children and young people (Chawla 2002; Valentine 2004). However, the way children and young people value and use local places is frequently marginalized in relation to other adult users of public space (Percy-Smith 1998). Percy-Smith (1998) argues that failing to respect the value of urban neighborhoods as sites for young people to construct their own geographies is in essence a denial of their rights to play and freely associate but also a devaluing of their rights as members of a society. Ensuring children's rights of citizenship is not simply a matter of ensuring they have appropriate spaces to spend time, but equally involves acceptance and accommodation of their local geographies. Intolerance of children's use of space – as an articulation of their values and interests – reflects their value and position in society as somehow “less than citizens.” However, inclusion is not just about accommodating or tolerating a particular set of values or groups in society but about valuing and appreciating the contributions they make to the collective as an active part of everyday life. Many of the decisions that shape the lives of children and young people are made within the course of everyday life rather than in more formal decision-making contexts.

The extent to which children and young people are able to actively participate with adults as equal members of society with something to contribute is therefore central to children and young people's sense of inclusion and value within society. Yet communities and society are not static entities into which young people contribute but rather, as stated earlier, are the result of an ongoing dynamic and reflexive relationship between citizens and society. Whether and how young people are able to participate in the life and future developments of their community is reflective of the extent to which they experience, and are able to derive, a sense of active citizenship. Young people may do this through formal processes of neighborhood development through representation in local planning and development processes. But evidence suggests that participation is more meaningful when their participation is ongoing and integral to the life and function of the community (Day et al. 2015). This happens not just through their involvement in local decision-making processes but also by valuing and accommodating their expression of

values through their actions and behaviors in the community, for example, through their use of local places and presence on the local landscape.

Children's geography studies in the 1990s were instrumental in contributing to a growing understanding of young people's use of local spaces (see, e.g., Valentine and McKendrick 1997; Percy-Smith 1999; Matthews and Limb 1999; Chawla 2002). Percy-Smith (1998), for example, drew attention to three different ways in which young people are marginalized on urban landscapes: through inadequate local provision, alienated by active geographies of exclusion as young people are systematically demonized as a polluting presence on the landscape (Lieberg 1995), and through exclusion in local planning and decision-making processes. Projects such as the UNESCO Growing Up in Cities project (Chawla 2002), in which Percy-Smith's work was part, modeled a participatory action research approach to involving young people as researchers in evaluating and improving their local neighborhoods. Involving young people as partners in research is one way in which they can counteract their marginalization and, through their research, re-author their role as active and equal citizens. Shier (2010) similarly presents the experience of the *promotores* in Nicaragua in which children gradually acquire the skills of community and citizenship through a rights-based approach and increasing roles in community-based activities (see also Sancar and Severcan 2010). Projects such as these document the competence of children's participation as actors of change.

The *Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation* (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010) provides numerous diverse examples of children and young people engaged in acts of active citizenship wherein participation in everyday contexts can often offer opportunities for more direct and meaningful involvement than public decision-making settings. Young people's role as active citizens in communities is not constrained just to "projects" but goes on all the time as they reflexively engage with local places. Percy-Smith (2012) following in the spirit of the likes of Heft and Chawla (2006), Hart (1978), and Moore (1984) draws attention to the extent to which young people are already actively participating in their local neighborhoods as they make choices about how they engage with and mediate their local social and environmental context. Wulff (1995), from an anthropological perspective, refers to this in terms of young people being *active cultural producers* as places are shaped by the values of different groups of young people. The quality of children and young people's place experience, in relation to each of the threefold dimensions to young people's marginalization of local neighborhoods outlined above, is a direct reflection of their citizenship status. Hence, as is argued in UNICEF's Child Friendly City initiative, a good city is one in which children can participate to the full extent of their abilities. Yet, numerous studies of young people's experience of local environments and community life highlight that young people are not routinely included and respected as fellow citizens but rather are constructed as a nuisance and in need of close guidance, provision, and surveillance through what Valentine (1996) refers to as *regimes of regulation*. The marginalization and exclusion of young people in local neighborhoods in this way highlights the extent to which the citizenship status of young people is intertwined by dominant social constructions of childhood and youth and, in turn, power between generations.

In the next section, the chapter will explore how the structuration of adult-child relations in schools affects young people's status as active citizens.

7 Children and Young People's Participation in Schools: Active Citizenship or Passive Compliance

Just as young people's use of public space is governed by social constructions of childhood and ideas about "appropriate" use of public space, the role of schools and young people's experience within them are similarly structured according to the position of children and young people within generational discourses as citizens *in futurity*. Schools have conventionally constituted training grounds for young people in acquiring the skills needed when they leave school and embark on their transition into adulthood. Beyond the acquisition of qualifications, schools have always been understood as a space in which to undergo appropriate moral and social development – although as something to be taught rather than learned through practice – in order to fulfill one's duties and responsibilities as adults. In this sense, citizenship education becomes an apprenticeship for adulthood rather than rights for children as citizens now. In the UK, the Crick report (1998) on *Education for Citizenship and Teaching of Democracy in Schools* become pivotal in reframing citizenship education in schools and with a view to producing a nation of engaged citizens (Lockyer 2008). However, as Lockyer (2008) notes, the transformative potential of the Crick report was undermined by a centripetal tendency toward reproducing the status quo (Parry 2003). Without spaces for deliberation and conflict, the foundation for citizenship is weakened. At the heart of this endeavor are the competing philosophies of liberal and republicanist views of citizenship education (Lockyer 2003). The former being concerned with "facilitating the autonomy and maximising the opportunity of persons to live their chosen life," the latter based on an ethic of civic engagement involving an obligation to duties and contribution to the common good (Lockyer 2008). However, as Prout (2000) argues, so often a tension results between control and self-realization.

At the heart of the Crick report were three key foci: social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy. While the first two have to some extent been possible within the existing culture of education, equipping young people with the skills of political literacy through the development of capacity for debate and experience of, and involvement in, democratic processes in schools has been evidently more difficult to achieve. In addition, Haydon (2003) argues that thick descriptions of citizenship based on values and virtues can give rise to tensions within multicultural societies as the values of certain groups dominate over others. What is at issue here is what James et al. (2008) refer to as "the cultural politics of children's citizenship" in which policies and regimes within schools seek to prescribe the social and material environments which affect children's experience and possibilities for active citizenship. Paradoxically, as James et al. argue: "As the rights agenda has gained momentum, [. . .] governments have created a wider net of social control [. . .] that is permeating more areas of more children's

lives than ever before” (88). The result is that schools, as spaces of possibility for children and young people to participate and realize their status as citizens within everyday school life, are constricted as a result of the restrictive and overarching anxieties of adults about children and young people being empowered and the economic imperative of schooling a compliant workforce for the future. The enduring hierarchies that characterize schools are therefore not conducive to the development of participatory citizenship.

This tension plays out within social policy reflected in the simultaneous growth in pupil voice discourses within increasingly controlled educational environments. As an expanding literature seeks to promote the value of student participation (see, e.g., Fielding 2006), there is simultaneously a critical backlash in response to what is frequently seen as tokenistic or ineffective practice (Lewars 2010). Devine argues that “children’s capacities as active agents are underutilized, with consequent negative implications for children’s construction of identity as citizens within the school “(316) and for their own developing sense of social actorship. Fielding (2006) has been pivotal in advocating for a “new wave” student voice as key to the renewal of civic society reasserting the case for a radical collegiality and “reclaiming our radical heritage through learning from past experience” (such as Alex Blooms’ Stepney in the East democratic school). Central to this endeavor, Fielding (2004) argues for a person-centered education for developing education for civic society and human flourishing involving the creation of “spaces and practices within and between our organisations that nurture dialogue, not as exotic or special features [...] but as integral practices of human learning and daily encounter” (211). Fielding (2009) argues that key to enhancing democracy is *public space* – not dominated by the state or the market, but an “agora” (Bauman 1999) where people can come together to “reflect on matters of mutual importance.” For Fielding (2007), reconfiguring spaces in schools as public space, where children can more readily participate in collaboration with adults, involves “an intended mutuality, a disposition to see difference as a potentially creative resource, and more overt commitment to co-construction which requires quite different relationships and spaces and a different linguistic schema to form such aspirations.” Moss and Petrie (2002) also focus on the way in which adult-child relations are configured by identifying different spaces for interaction in terms of *physical space*, a setting for children; *social space*, a domain of social practices and relationships; *cultural space*, where values, rights, and culture are created; and *discursive space* – where dialogue, confrontation (exchanging different views and experiences), deliberation, and critical thinking take place.

In a small action research project to develop participation beyond school councils with a cluster of primary and secondary schools in a Scottish city, Percy-Smith (2014a) identifies three key issues at play affecting children’s participation. The first concerns the limitations of student voice (see also Parkes, ► [Chap. 4, “Making Space for Listening to Children in Ireland: State Obligations, Children’s Voices, and Meaningful Opportunities in Education,”](#) this volume). While there are a range of structures and systems in place in these schools for students to have a say (class committees, eco-committees, pupil councils, suggestion boxes, etc.), students

widely reflected that they feel they have insufficient voice and influence in sharing their ideas and making suggestions to bring about improvements in the school as previous research has shown (see, e.g., Burke and Grosvenor 2003). Even when children do express a view, they often do not feel listened to and valued and then often do not even hear what was then decided if any decisions or actions were taken at all:

Teachers don't listen to what you have to say most of the time . . .

When you tell adults things they say they will try to sort it out but they don't.
(Secondary year 8 students)

Yet interestingly staff themselves also talked about not having a voice in the system either:

There is a paradox that as we seek to empower children, teachers are feeling more disempowered in the sense of having what they do prescribed with no entering into dialogue amongst staff. (Secondary staff)

One of the dilemmas here is that participation is interpreted simply in terms of children's views inputting into adult agenda, rather than a process of active and collaborative learning and action within a context in which enterprise and initiative of staff as well as children are celebrated as part of a culture of participation in schools as learning organizations.

The second issue concerns the importance of active collaborative engagement involving respectful relations between children and adults when children participate. Interpretations of participation as *voice* stand at odds with children's own orientations toward participation as a more active process of collaborative involvement in projects and change initiatives:

It's about involvement, getting involved – 'doing the idea'; that's different to pupil voice which is giving suggestions to others. (Primary student year 6)

Participation is about leadership, organizing stuff and trying to make things better.
(Primary student year 6)

A key challenge for schools is how they can relinquish some control to allow children to get involved more actively in these ways. This relates to Moss and Petrie's ideas about spaces for projects of mutual concern wherein students and staff engage in joint inquiry in response to questions such as: "how might we work together to resolve this?" Key to effective participation in schools therefore is the quality of relationships between staff and students. Yet, unlike primary schools, staff-student relationships in secondaries are often confrontational and based on an insidious mistrust of young people reflected in differences between staff and students' views about young people's ability to participate.

The third issue concerns the need for developments in children's participation to be scaffolded by a whole school culture of participation. This needs to involve children exercising greater self-determination in their learning, facilitated through person-centered learning and social pedagogic approaches. But equally whole school approaches need to recognize children as agents of change in wider decisions within the school and with the surrounding community.

Finally, a participatory culture needs to be characterized by respectful and democratic relations between children and teachers. For children's participation to become an integral part of school life, children need the freedom to participate more as autonomous agents as well as in collaboration with adults to exercise initiative, have their contributions valued, and take on roles and responsibilities. This requires a different culture and attitudes toward children and young people and a belief in their ability to participate. As Fielding (2009, p. 516) states: "the familiarity of questioning, of joint exploration, of adventure, of mutual learning and of shared responsibility woven into the fabric of a school's daily life makes engagement in something like a school meeting a natural extension of familiar norms rather than an exotic exception to quite different realities."

One example of this type of democratic school is *Escola da Ponte* in Portugal, a unique educational model developed over two decades, which includes the participation of children (6–16 years) as a basic principle. It is organized according to a unique logic of pedagogic and institutional organization, within which students participate in mutual learning. Each student is an author and actor of their own educational pathway, enabling active participation in the process of knowledge construction as well as full involvement in the processes of school decision-making at all levels. The school agenda is therefore shaped by all children and young people (Day et al. 2015).

8 Service User Involvement as Active Citizenship

Within health and social care settings, there is a growing literature concerning the involvement of service users in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services (see, e.g., Carr and Beresford 2012). However, in contrast to children and youth participation which originates in rights discourses and is therefore informed by a philosophy of participatory democracy, service user involvement has emerged within a context of a consumer citizen discourse (Jones and Wallace 1990) driven by policy (DH 2012) and guided by a philosophy of giving choice to the service user. However, children and young people have been comparatively neglected within these debates. Where children and young people have been involved as users of health services, this has tended to be limited to relatively powerless roles such as on advisory groups. To a greater extent, the participation of users in health contexts is not about widening participatory democracy but rather is characterized simply in terms of involving patients and members of the public in adult professional decision making with the presumption of enhancing the economic efficiency of service provision.

In social care, however, there has been a growing body of evidence concerning the participation of children and young people in social care matters including family group conferences (Kirby and Laws 2010), children in care councils (Thomas and Percy-Smith 2012) and in peer-to-peer work (Dadich 2010). In Thomas and Percy-Smith's (2012) evaluation of children in care councils across London, limitations and possibilities were evident in the extent to which children

could actively participate. While children and young people were motivated to participate by their desire to bring about change in decisions affecting the child in care experience, the extent to which children could influence professional decisions in reality was limited by the socio-structural position of children in the care of the state and conversely the state's responsibility to them. However, young people were able to derive a sense of active citizenship through participation within the informal context of their everyday lives through positive peer relationships with others and developing capacity for self-determination and autonomy in their lives. As Thomas (2007, p. 206) states:

There is a discourse that is more or less overtly political – that speaks of power and challenge and change. Alongside this there is an alternative discourse of . . . participation that is predominantly social – that speaks of networks, inclusion, adult-child relations, and of opportunities for social connection . . .

Dadich's (2010) work with a self-help support group of young mental health service users illustrates how the participation of young people in acts of active citizenship often reveals itself in informal and sometimes hidden ways, embedded in informal spaces of everyday life providing meaningful opportunities for participation.

In recent evaluation of children's participation across the EU (Day et al. 2015), some of the most interesting examples of good practice are about children taking responsibility for their own decisions as well as in providing education and support through peer-to-peer work with others, where children and adults are engaged in mutual learning to reframe the quality of relationships and decision-making as a collaborative endeavor, or through child-led initiatives in services. Some of the examples concern children providing peer-to-peer support. For example, *Safety Net* involves 20 peer-to-peer counselors providing information and social support to asylum-seeking children (12–18 years) in reception centers in Finland (ECORYS 2014). *Navrat* in Slovakia also uses a peer-to-peer approach to provide mentoring support for children coming from institutional care into foster care (ibid). Liebel (2008) refers to these “grassroots” forms of participation as “citizenship from below” – “a form of everyday action that may appeal to rights, but can also take place totally independently of these, [. . . wherein] actors do not wait for their rights to be granted” (38). Lister refers to this as “lived citizenship” understood in terms of “a dynamic process-oriented understanding of rights” (Liebel 2008, p. 34). As Roche (1999, p. 479) notes: “Children have to start from where they are socially positioned. This means that they have to make their own space in spaces not of their making.”

9 Conclusion

The examples of informal participation in everyday life settings provided in this chapter are not expressions of citizenship according to “moral” codes, duties, and responsibilities laid down by the state and enshrined in law. Nor are they

necessarily opportunities to be “actively involved” (albeit invariably in constrained and limited ways) in adult decision-making according to the agenda, priorities, and initiative of adult professionals. Instead informal active citizenship is initiated and constructed by young people themselves in spaces of their choosing and in ways they decide. For young people to participate as active citizens, they need to activate and reclaim their own power as social actors in response to the generational inequalities they find themselves. As Block (2008) argues:

To succeed at transforming the social order, we must be able to recognize and facilitate the process of democratic self-development in the young and to build educational and institutional settings in which their evolving characters and identities can flourish. (Block 2008)

This means ensuring that within every day spaces such as schools, neighbourhood and public space, young people have the opportunity to articulate their values and visions and use their creativity to contribute to everyday social life as active and equal citizens and be valued for those contributions. As Hart (1992) stated in his landmark publication: *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*, it is only through practice in everyday contexts that children and young people develop the confidence and competence as active citizens.

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Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective

23

Elen-Maarja Trell and Bettina van Hoven

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Abstract

This chapter discusses young people's citizenship experiences and learning in rural Estonia. The focus is on the key everyday *relations* and *contexts* – home, school, and leisure places – where citizenship is *situated*. The authors argue that such different contexts provide different opportunities for acting and being and thus different opportunities for participation and citizenship learning. The age group in focus is young people between 15 and 19. This age group is of particular interest in political studies as a group close to accessing most formal (adult) political processes (18 years for many countries) and therefore a target of enhanced political awareness campaigns (such as civics education). The chapter concludes with a discussion on the relevance of recognizing young people's everyday engagement.

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1 Introduction

Recent studies on young people's political engagement (defined as "citizen oriented activities such as voting, joining groups and voluntary work," Wood 2014, p. 215) highlight young people's disinterest in formal political engagement and cast a pessimistic future for this group with regard to participation in future political processes (Shultz et al. 2010; European Commission 2013). Within the European Union countries, young *Estonians* in particular (together with the youth of the UK and Slovakia) are found to be the least interested in politics and political participation (Shultz et al. 2010; European Commission 2013). Such developments are often linked to a breakdown in structured pathways to adulthood, the diminishing relevance of formal institutions and the disintegration of traditional civic affiliations (Harris et al. 2007).

As a response to concerns over the lack of societal engagement and political participation of young people as well as deterioration of social norms and values, in the past decades, citizenship education has been introduced into school curricula throughout Europe (Pykett 2009). Biesta et al. (2009) contend that such an approach, which sees young people as "not yet citizens" (p. 5, original emphasis), ignores that citizenship learning takes place not just as cognitive process, but "it rather is a process that is *situated*, that is *relational* and that is uniquely linked to young people's individual *life-trajectories*" (p. 9, original emphasis). In addition, recent research on young people's everyday engagement highlights that "measuring" young people's attitudes toward the "formal" politics may not be the best way to understand youth civic life (Harris et al. 2007; Biesta et al. 2009; Wood 2014). Instead, there is a more nuanced way to understand young people's participatory practices: young people may be connecting with civic life on another, more local scale and in new ways that are directly related to their more fragmented and individualized biographies (Harris et al. 2007).

As a result, researchers have called for a critical review of citizenship definitions and practices and move toward "inclusive, generous and youth-centered conceptions of citizenship participation" (Wood 2014, p. 12; O'Toole et al. 2003). In so doing, exploring (the meaning of) participation in young people's everyday places and spaces needs to become a central concern (Wood, ► Chap. 21, "A Genealogy of the 'Everyday' Within Young People's Citizenship Studies", this volume). These places and spaces are quite different from those used by adults and therefore "render a quite different landscape of participation" (Wood 2014, p. 13). Such a focus is necessary to reveal "the ways in which [young] people's social and cultural and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens" (Lister 2007, p. 695). Furthermore, focusing on the everyday places and context enables researchers to

move “beyond apathetic or activist youth” and find new ways of considering how “ordinary” young people are participating in society – music, art, everyday cultures, sports clubs, hanging out with peers, web-based activities, and communities (Harris et al. 2007).

In line with Biesta et al. (2009) and Wood (2014), in order to explore young people’s citizenship in rural Estonia, in this chapter the authors focus on the key everyday *relations* and *contexts* – home, school, hobby/leisure places – where citizenship is *situated*. This chapter argues that such different contexts provide different opportunities for acting and being and thus different opportunities for participation and citizenship learning. The focus in this chapter is on young people between 15 and 19 years of age. This age group is of particular interest in political studies as a group close to accessing most formal (adult) political processes (18 years for many countries) and therefore a target of enhanced political awareness campaigns (such as civics education).

2 Citizenship as Practice

The production of daily reality does not occur somewhere beyond our reach in, say, the ‘higher’ echelons of the state, and is then imposed upon us. Rather, the reality of everyday life—the sum total of all our relations—is built on the ground, in daily activities and transactions. (Burkitt 2004, p. 212)

Geographical enquiries into “citizenship” make a distinction between the classical, formal–legal form of citizenship of the public sphere and the sociocultural form of citizenship as shaped by and articulated through everyday places (Painter and Philo 1995; Philo and Smith 2003; Dickinson et al. 2008). The discourse of rights and responsibilities is at the center of classical citizenship theories (Marshall 1950). In these works, responsibilities are considered primarily political and imposed by the state. In the context of citizenship education, in addition to political responsibilities, social and moral responsibilities are mentioned as a key to effective citizenship (Kerr et al. 2004; Pykett 2012). Pupils’ participation and involvement in communities are seen as a process of learning civic responsibilities as well as values such as “tolerance,” “fairness,” “respect for truth,” and “respect for difference” (Kerr et al. 2004). In relation to youth citizenship, the classical formal form of citizenship has been criticized by several researchers (Lister 2008; Biesta et al. 2009; Wood 2014). Just as feminists have exposed the male template underpinning traditional meanings of citizenship, Lister (2008) argues that children are compared against an adult template. As a result of their differences in capacity, independence, and access to resources, children are generally found to be deficient in most aspects of citizenship (status, participation, and rights) when compared to adults or, at best, regarded for their capacity as citizens of the future.

As an alternative to the classical form of citizenship, Lister (2007) proposes a “lived citizenship” approach which takes into account the multiple different ways that people may participate as citizens at different points in the life course. In line with Lister’s (2007) work, several chapters in Section 4 of this volume engage with

citizenship as practice or an active process on the everyday level (cf. Percy-Smith, ► Chap. 22, “Negotiating Active Citizenship: Young People’s Participation in Everyday Spaces”, this volume; Wood, ► Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People’s Citizenship Studies”, this volume). Lived citizenship, everyday citizenship (Dickinson et al. 2008), or “citizenship as practice” (Lawy and Biesta 2006) all are concerned with relationships between individuals and their immediate, local communities and relationships and the associated social skills and capacities that develop through direct experience and interaction. Viewing citizenship as a practice and participation in a wider sense opens up a possibility to recognize young people as citizens *now* and provides a more robust framework for discovering what it *means* to be a citizen (Lawy and Biesta 2006).

A focus on the everyday necessarily draws attention to the space, place, and scale of the everyday lived experiences. As Weller (2007) states, “space matters at the micro-level as it illuminates teenagers performative role as citizens” (p. 171). In the tradition of feminist geographers (Lister 2003; Dyck 2005), a focus on everyday experiences of young people redraws our attention to local and domestic sites. Lister (2007) suggests that one key tenet of feminist citizenship theory is a commitment to challenge the public–private dichotomy by viewing the domestic and the private as spaces of citizenship potential. In this vein, a number of authors have explored the ways that care constitutes citizenship (Sevenhuijsen 1998; Kershaw 2010). According to Young (1995) responsibility is closely intertwined with *independence* and with *care* (cf. Evans and Skovdal, ► Chap. 1, “Defining Children’s Rights to Work and Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tensions and Challenges in Policy and Practice”, this volume). Young (1995) makes a distinction between independence as autonomy (the ability to make and act upon one’s choices) and as self-sufficiency (not needing help or support from anyone in meeting one’s needs and carrying out one’s plans). In general, young people are considered to be care receivers but in some cases also care providers. As such, the work involved by young people in providing care would be recognized as the exercise of citizenship responsibility in feminist frameworks. Young people may also help adult care providers in the home in various ways, particularly in two-earner and in lone-parent families (Miller 2005), or as is discussed below where parents are absent during long periods of time due to employment abroad. Harris and Wyn (2009) suggest that in contrast to the popular portrayal of young people today as citizens of global communities, local spaces remain of high importance to young people. Recognizing the mundane tasks that young people already carry out and the contribution that young people already make in their local spaces is relevant for considering them as “citizens now” instead of “citizens in becoming” (Lister 2008).

As a result then, Biesta et al. (2009) call for a better understanding of *how* young people learn citizenship in various contexts in their local communities and everyday lives (cf. Wood, ► Chap. 21, “A Genealogy of the ‘Everyday’ Within Young People’s Citizenship Studies”, this volume for a discussion on the theory of “everydayness”). The impact of different contexts is mediated by *relationships* within those contexts. Mannion (2007) suggests that to gain a deeper understanding

of youth participation, we need to “go relational” in addition to “going spatial.” His argument is that research on youth participation can become more spatially and relationally sensitive by acknowledging the intergenerational aspect of much participation of children. He suggests that “without a focus on the relations between adults and children and the spaces they inhabit we are in danger of providing a narrow view of how children’s ‘voice’ and ‘participation’ are ‘produced’” (Mannion 2007, p. 417).

Indeed, John Dewey (1987) noted the active role of “*all those* who are affected by social institutions [. . .] in producing and managing them” (in Biesta et al. 2009, p. 9, our emphasis). In the process of participating in such social institutions, young people partake in a learning process through which they develop intellectual dispositions that are beneficial to actively shaping and reshaping social institutions. As a result, young people’s (joint) experience of belonging and having a say shapes democracy. Dewey’s (1987) writing then points out that everyday processes, practices, and experiences are key to citizenship learning, i.e., being a citizen.

In order to explore the ways in which different everyday places and relations facilitate youth citizenship experiences and contribute to citizenship dispositions, in this chapter the focus is explicitly on three key aspects: (1) opportunities provided for youth for (meaningful social) *participation*; (2) situations, places, and times where young people take or are given *responsibility*; and (3) situations, places, and times where young people are treated *equally* and *recognized* (for their achievements). In the data analysis below, the aim is to establish whether, where, and how these aspects are experienced and can be stimulated in young people’s daily lives. By focusing on young people’s everyday places, practices, and relations, in this chapter the authors attempt to contribute to the recognition of young people as citizens now.

3 Youth Citizenship Learning in Estonia

Young people’s experiences and negotiation of citizenship in Estonia cannot be seen in isolation from the turbulent changes that shaped Estonia in the past two decades. From 1991, after regaining independence, Estonia rapidly moved from communism and a socialist, centrally planned economy to a market-oriented democracy. The built environment, access to consumer goods, and the ability to travel and to imagine different futures transformed everyday life. Alongside the structural changes, what it meant to belong to a national community, the skills and dispositions needed to be a “good” citizen changed. The path to a successful transition into adulthood and the role of different institutions in structuring the life course of an individual were also reconfigured (Katus et al. 2001). In Soviet-Estonia, the Estonia where most of today’s young people’s parents grew up, the authorities largely controlled youth transitions to adulthood, integration into society, and becoming a “proper citizen” (Nugin 2008). The school was in charge of recommending a student to a university or a future employer based on the student’s behavior, study results, and, most importantly, political affiliation. The excessive

demand for labor, characteristic to centrally planned economies, secured a smooth transition from school to work (Katus et al. 2001). Municipal authorities were responsible for allocating young people to a job and providing them with a municipal apartment (the private market was illegal and virtually nonexistent) (Nugin 2008). Thus, just over two decades ago, for young people in Estonia, having a secure future depended less on the individual and more on the system.

After Estonia regained independence, such arrangements disappeared. In today's Estonia young people's citizenship learning is based on the principle of individual efforts in achieving status and prestige through economic success (Sutrop 2004). The experiences of the older and the younger generation thus contrast and conflict. For the older generation, Estonian transition implied that in addition to having to reconfigure the practical aspects of their living arrangements (e.g., employment, accommodation), they also had to reconsider their long-held beliefs, orientations, and collectively shared values as many of their traditional life paths and identity roles lost credibility (Nugin 2008). As a result of these changing circumstances, the parents and the teachers of many young people of today are in a difficult position in terms of giving guidance to young people, and young people in Estonia encounter many and varied discourses of citizenship, identity, and belonging (Nugin and Trell 2015; Cottrell Studemeyer, ► Chap. 25, "Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia", this volume). Focusing on participation opportunities across generations, the transition had very practical implication for *rural* young people. Namely, along with the dissolution of the Soviet rural agricultural structures, organizations for youth disappeared as well (Nugin and Trell 2015). The reason for their disappearance was not only economic but also ideological: youth organizations were traditionally communist organizations (i.e., pioneers, Komsomol). In many rural areas in Estonia, a new institutional base for young people is only now slowly emerging but is still occasional and chaotic. Such developments further differentiate youths lived experiences (of growing up in rural Estonia) between generations and the opportunities that young rural people have for participating in the society.

The changes affecting youths lived experiences of citizenship in Estonia and the context of citizenship learning are not only differentiated between generations but also along geographical lines. *Rural* areas in particular are often considered among the greatest "losers" of the post-socialist transition. Unwin et al. (2004) describe the effects of transition on rural life as "overwhelmingly negative" (p. 121), a sharp contrast with the experiences of transition of the "winners" in the urban context (Trell et al. 2014, but see also Cottrell Studemeyer, ► Chap. 25, "Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia", this volume, for a discussion about the differences in lived experiences and opportunities for participation of ethnic Estonian- and Russian-speaking youths in Estonian urban contexts). Statistics indicate that people in rural areas of Estonia have fewer opportunities for education or work and are restricted in mobility due to the limited availability of public transport (Statistics Estonia 2014). That leads to the older generation in rural areas sometimes idealizing the Soviet past, while in Estonia in general, the official memory policy perceives the Soviet

time as the era of lost statehood or rupture. In making sense of their country's past and finding their own place in the society, *rural* young people are thus confronted with conflicting and competing narratives and discourse at home and in the wider community (cf. Jones 2007 for a discussion of power, childhood, and rural space).

The above illustrates that a few decades ago a successful transition into adulthood required very different skills; there were different opportunities for participation in the society, and what it meant to be a citizen was guided by different values, institutional arrangements, and practices then today. Thus, the role of young people's key places such as home and school in their citizenship learning and the disposition of the parents, teachers, and the adult generation should not be considered in isolation of the post-socialist transition and changes that took place in Estonia after that.

4 Research Location, Methods, and Approach

4.1 Järva-Jaani and the Context of Rural Estonia Today

Järva-Jaani is a small town in central Estonia. It is located in one of the most agricultural and least densely populated areas of Estonia (12.4 per sq. km compared to the Estonian average of 32 per sq. km) (Statistics Estonia 2014). Employment in agriculture is the main source of income for local people, followed by employment in the food processing and forestry sectors. In 2008, approximately 1,000 people lived in Järva-Jaani town (Järva-Jaani Municipality 2008).

In a way similar to other peripheral rural areas in Estonia, during the past decades the population of Järva-Jaani municipality has been steadily decreasing (Statistics Estonia 2014). Over the past two decades (1989–2009), the population has decreased by more than 30 % (Järva-Jaani Municipality 2008). In addition to people moving away, many adults (and parents) who are officially registered in Järva-Jaani, in practice, share their time between working abroad or in the capital city and their home (and family) in the countryside. The Estonian census reveals that, in 2011, 24, 907 Estonians were working outside Estonia and most were employed in Finland (15 140) (Ibrus 2011). Population decline and economic hardship are visible in Järva-Jaani in the number of abandoned and deteriorating buildings. However, unlike many surrounding rural towns and villages where basic services have been closed, due to its central location, Järva-Jaani town is still able to provide many services.

4.2 Research Approach and Methods

The aim of the broader study this chapter draws on was to map the key places and practices of rural youths and to investigate young people's sense of belonging and well-being in rural Estonia. Potential participants were contacted via teachers, the activity counselor of the local high school, as well as information posters. During

the first meeting with potential participants, the aims, activities, and research methods of the project were introduced by one of the researchers. Informed consent was sought and information about confidentiality and use of the data given. Six girls and 11 boys between 15 and 19 years of age were involved in this project. The researcher and the participants met on average twice a week, mostly at the local high school, but occasionally also at other locations, such as the town square, “House of Culture” (a center for social and cultural activities, inherited from Soviet times), or a local café.

In this research, a participatory approach and a mix of qualitative methods (video, peer-led and researcher-led interviews, questionnaire, mental mapping) were used. In so doing, the authors adhere to a feminist approach that seeks to bring to light perspectives on (everyday) citizenship by marginalized groups as well as highlight spaces previously left unseen as a result of normative, adult-centered definitions of citizenship. Using a participatory approach implied that the respondents helped define the focus of the project, formulated questions, and led the process of data collection. By using a mix of multiple, qualitative methods, it was possible to explore different facets of everyday contexts and relationships relevant for citizenship learning. In addition, young people with different skills got a chance to express themselves in ways other than words and were motivated to develop and practice new skills (Trell and van Hoven 2010). The contributions of using a mix of methods in youth research, ethical considerations, as well as ways in which such an approach can enhance the research process has been discussed in more detail in Trell and van Hoven 2010. This chapter draws mainly on qualitative interviewing and questionnaires, because the themes of participation and belonging most clearly emerged from these data.

It should be noted that, in spite of the researchers’ attention to the everyday, it is likely that a wide range of understandings and actions exhibited by young participants that held the potential for citizenship learning were still overlooked. As Wood (2014) argues, despite using a participatory approach and a mix of methods, it is almost impossible to untangle the complexity of differences and similarities between young people and adults as they are constituted in everyday life. To a certain degree, the everyday and the everyday citizenship, in its ordinariness to all individuals, will continue to remain elusive to the researcher (cf. Wood 2014).

5 Everyday Citizenship for Youth in Järva-Jaani

In light of the discussion above, and specifically the emphasis on citizenship learning as situated, relational, and linked to young people’s individual life trajectories (Biesta et al. 2009), it is important to view the experiences of the respondents in the specific context of the places they spend most of their time (cf. Holloway and Valentine 2000). In line with Biesta et al. (2009) and to account for the diversity of contexts and relationships through which citizenship experiences and learning happen, this chapter explores three different types of contexts: the unavoidable context in which young people have limited choice of whether they want to be there

Table 1 Key places for youth in Järva-Jaani

Key place	Type of context	Relations	Influences and opportunities
Home	Unavoidable	Parents; siblings	Responsibility (working; taking care); social participation, identity work, and opportunities (work; inspiration); absence of parents (independence; free space)
School	Compulsory	Teachers; peers	Facilitation of participation/relations with wider community (Christmas gala) Facilitation of self-realization and interaction (video and fashion project)
House of culture	Adult-sponsored; leisure/hobby place	Teachers/trainers; peers; audience	Participation (teamwork); Equality (working as a group); achievements (school dance); recognition

or not (e.g., familial home), the compulsory context where young people have limited opportunities for having a say (e.g., school), and the adult-sponsored context (e.g., leisure/hobby places) where young people have a certain amount of control and can choose whether they want to be involved there (see Table 1).

The home provides different opportunities for citizenship learning and can be quite different from opportunities afforded by the school environment, particularly in terms of the visibility and impact of and feedback provided on young people's engagements. Within the leisure/hobby context, the relationships between young people and adults are structurally different from their relationships with parents and teachers. All of these contexts provide "qualitatively different opportunities for action and hence qualitatively different opportunities for learning-from-action" (Lawy and Biesta 2006, p. 45). In some contexts and situations, young people are taken seriously and have real opportunities for shaping and changing the conditions of their lives. In other contexts "young people are not seen as legitimate participants, their voices are ignored and they have little opportunity for shaping and changing the situations they are in" (Lawy and Biesta 2006, p. 45).

5.1 Home

The home is a place where young people are "subject to controls by parents over the use of space and time" (Sibley 1995, p. 129). Parents commonly determine the proper use of space and time at home and make rules which young people have to manage, negotiate, and may often contest. The key relationships in terms of everyday citizenship skills and practices at home are then also those with parents and siblings.

However, for young people in rural Estonia, the link between home and the presence of parents may not be as self-evident as one may expect. As indicated above, rural areas in Estonia suffered several negative consequences after the post-socialist transition. As a result of the economic difficulties and the lack of

competitive ability of Estonia's rural regions today, many adults have to leave to look for work elsewhere, most often in Estonia's capital city Tallinn or in Finland (Ibrus 2011). Rural places in Estonia face a particularly significant "dad-loss" due to the migration of strong young men to work on the construction sites or in transportation sector in the north (Finland) (Pärismaa 2013). Karl (male, 16) illustrates:

K: My mom is at home with my little sister and my dad is working in Finland, on a truck, delivering goods.

R: Is he away during the weekdays?

K: I don't even know actually. It used to be that he was away a certain time and at home a certain time. But I don't know anymore [...] I don't understand it at all, I have lost track of time. One day he is gone, the next day he is home and I don't know how long he's been gone. It doesn't even make a difference anymore.

Several young people from the research group had similar stories of their parents working abroad. All respondents had or knew a friend with one or both parents who spent up to a month at a time working abroad. To illustrate, Tõnis (male, 17) from the research group was living alone 3 weeks at a time because his mother was working in Germany and his father living in Tallinn. Kaido (male, 16) saw his father once in 2 weeks because of his job in Finland. Olav (male, 16) was living at his grandparents place or alone while his father had moved away to work in Tallinn and his mother had passed away.

What such work migration means for young people in rural Estonia is that they grow up without one (or both) of the parents present and may *have to* take full responsibility for themselves, the whole household, and their younger siblings at a crucial period in their transition to adulthood (cf. Young 1995; Miller 2005). For example, some young people in the research group had to very carefully plan their allowance every few weeks not to get into financial trouble with sustaining themselves while the parents were gone. Tõnis (male, 17) illustrates his living arrangement:

T: My mom is away two months at a time. So basically half a year each year. Then I'm home alone. So right now for example I have 'free space' at home. It has been like that for three years or something.

R: How has it influenced you?

T: I don't know. I think I'm more independent, can take care of myself better. But I don't know, I'm not complaining, I like it that way. Honestly. It's normal to be home alone.

R: Living by yourself, you have to also take care of the finances? Your mom sends some money every month?

T: Yes, usually per week

R: And then you have to see for yourself?

T: I pretty much divide it myself, decide what I spend it on. Some part for fuel [for the car], some for food and some just miscellaneous.

According to Ibrus (2011), the parents of high school kids leaving for work abroad think that to survive on their own, it is enough to have an adult to check up on the young people every once in a while and a certain amount of money put on their bank account regularly. Indeed, as Tõnis illustrates above, the absence of his

mother has made him more independent and competent of caring for himself. However, as Ibrus (2011) found, not everybody can handle the sudden freedom – young people can start having problems with studying at school, very young people move in with their partners and start facing different types of problems, and some young boys in particular may start to behave badly while their fathers are away. In line with Ibrus (2011), our findings illustrate that the absence of parents from home can create a potentially damaging environment for young people. For example, when the parents of young people in our study were away for longer periods of time, young people considered the “free space” at home to be a suitable environment for experimenting with drinking or testing one’s limits. Such parties often resulted in conflicts and drinking in excess (Trell et al. 2014).

The importance of the *presence* of the parents at home for the young people in our study was especially pronounced in connection to parents being positive role models and providing young people opportunities for meaningful/shared participation in the household. For example, some young people in the study were given a certain amount of responsibility by their parents for looking after the house or taking care of younger siblings or pets. Karl (male, 16) describes his daily responsibilities:

In the winter every day when I come home from school, I have to go to the shed, get a crate of wood for the fireplace then two crates for the stove, one for the sauna. Keeps me busy. . .

Although the young people did not always appreciate the “responsibilities” they were given in the household, they did reflect on the importance of taking care of the vulnerable and “being there” for their family in challenging (financial and economic) times in connection to such trivial household chores. Massey (2004) argues that the capacity to notice social issues in the context of wider societal factors (through the sociological imagination) is a starting point for taking responsibility for them and an indication of young people’s “geographies of responsibility.” Much in the same way that political responsibility is positioned at the core of classical citizenship thinking (Marshall 1950), capacity and willingness to take responsibility and care about others in their daily lives can be considered crucial aspects of everyday citizenship (Bartos 2012). In addition, as Section 1 of this volume has shown in discussions on children’s rights, care is a core theme.

But the influence of parents extends beyond the parental home. The findings from this research show that one of the key parental influences in terms of youth identity work and constructive social participation is the opportunities that the parents provide for young people for gaining work experience. Several young people in this study had, for example, gained summer jobs (in the local town as well as in Tallinn and abroad) because of the connections and recommendations of their parents. Access to (quality) employment has an important influence on young people’s feelings of belonging and, by extension, their ability to participate in the community (Beauvais et al. 2001). Thus, by gaining work experience, young people can gain self-confidence and develop their communication, negotiation, and planning skills and eventually have the opportunity to become more independent and in control, both important qualities in terms of everyday citizenship (cf. France 1998).

In addition to directly providing opportunities for work, parents may provide young people with certain skills or inspiration that helps young people to establish themselves, work on their identity, and make a successful transition to adulthood. The example of Ivo (male, 18) illustrates the significant influence of home and parents on youths' identity work:

I was definitely influenced by my father, he also used to be a tailor and make clothes for himself and for mom. And we always had this old 'Singer' sewing-machine at home and I used to play around with it as a child. When I was 16 I made my first so-called 'collection' and then I got such good feedback from the professionals who said that I am stupid if I don't pursue a career in fashion. And then I realized that maybe I really have talent.

At the end of this research project, Ivo was working as a fashion designer in Tallinn and often participated in national fashion shows with his collections. The example of Ivo illustrates that parents can be very influential for young people as positive role models and for their transition to adulthood, and sometimes they do not even need to do much more than simply be present. Kallio and Häkli (2013, p. 5) argue that identity formation is a politically laden process since "each way of being and becoming in the world is intersubjectively constituted and oriented in one or another way." Considering that youth is an essential time for identity formation, the importance of this process (as well as the influence of parents on this process) should not be undervalued in discussions of youth everyday citizenship. In addition, from the point of view of everyday citizenship, the role of parents for motivating young people and facilitating constructive social participation should be highlighted. In her research on children's and youth citizenship, Lister et al. (2003) identified constructive social participation as the essence of everyday citizenship for children. In addition to empowering young people, experiences of constructive social participation and engagement can be valuable for the promotion of specific values, rules, skills, and knowledge of rights and duties (cf. Cutler and Frost 2001). Giving young people responsibility for caring for younger siblings or carrying out household duties and recognizing their supportive role in the family emerge from the data analysis as key contributions of home toward everyday citizenship learning. While caring may not be considered a political act within classical citizenship theories, Bartos (2012) argues that young people's everyday caring practices are not only an essential part of their lived citizenship but also political as they "can allude to the values and concerns they [children] have for their world and the political landscape they are willing to preserve and (re)create" (p. 159). At the same time, it is important to note that there is a difference between involving young people in the "care work" and household tasks and leaving young people alone with *all* responsibility for running their homes. As this research illustrates, the long-term absence of parents from home due to their work obligations elsewhere does not mean that young people will automatically be able to handle the extra obligations and become ideal citizens but conversely, it can result in potentially damaging environment for young people's health and social participation (cf. Trell et al. 2013).

5.2 School

The second key context where young people spend a great deal of their daily lives is school. School can have an impact on students' citizenship learning through the formal citizenship education but more importantly from the point of view of "everyday citizenship" and also through opportunities it creates to participate in various less formal activities (within and beyond the school context). In 2009, the third International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) was carried out in 38 countries around the world, including Estonia (Kerr et al. 2010; Shultz et al. 2010). The results of the study show that although civic and citizenship education is compulsory in Estonian education as both a specific subject and integrated into subjects throughout the curriculum, little attention is paid to other, less formal, activities and experiences such as school assemblies, participation in local community, or extracurricular activities through which citizenship and civic experiences and values can also permeate. In Estonian school's approaches to civic and citizenship education in the curriculum, the emphasis is traditionally on *learning* citizenship in the classroom and not through activities beyond the curriculum (Kerr et al. 2010).

However, the findings from this research illustrate that for young people in Järva-Jaani, school serves as an important citizenship learning arena also and perhaps *especially* outside the classroom. From an everyday citizenship perspective, the school emerged as an important place for young people in this research for facilitating (and sponsoring) their participation in various regional and national events and encouraging young people to take part in organizing activities within the local community.

The events that the school facilitated in which young people participated were ranging from sports competitions to science fairs to fashion showcases to meetings of regional student councils. The facilitation of the school could happen in the form of providing transportation for young people to the events, providing space for the organizers of the events to introduce the events at school, or providing financial support and facilities to the students to prepare for the events. Ivo (male, 18) illustrates the importance of such participation experiences:

In Paide [bigger town near Järva-Jaani] there is this national event FashionPark [MoePark] and the organizers came to introduce the event at our school. First I thought, ok, I'll maybe go for fun but then I started taking it seriously. [...] And when it [his collection] was finished I was so satisfied – I had achieved something! [...] It would have been very tough for me to start all this alone if nobody had supported me. But they [his friends] were all there for me and we had a lot of fun doing this [the fashion shows] together. [...] I am very grateful to my friends and definitely also to my school because the school paid for all these trips, whether to Pärnu or Tartu or Tallinn. [...] Otherwise this all would have been impossible at that moment.

By providing Ivo with the transportation to the event, the school enabled Ivo's participation and encouraged him to work toward his goal which eventually led to a sense of pride and an experience of success and recognition (Ivo was encouraged at that event to pursue a career as a designer and later moved to Tallinn). This event

was important for Ivo as it encouraged and enabled him to put forward his own views and ideas. It should be noted that the success of Ivo in this event is also strongly linked to the encouragement and inspiration that he received from his parents. It was not only Ivo who gained from participation at the event. By involving his friends in his project, a larger group of students gained an experience of working together as a group and a sense of shared success. Such experiences are relevant for young people for feeling appreciated and in control which in turn can facilitate young people's move into independent membership of society and toward being the "acknowledged" citizens (Hall et al. 1999).

In addition to participation outside own school, young people in Järva-Jaani were in charge in various management and organizational tasks within their school. Some young people in the research group were members of the (regional) student council, some were writing for the school newspaper, others helped to make promotion material for school. School also served as a meeting place for the students and sometimes facilitated organizing their annual hiking trips. While participation in these activities and clubs was based on personal skills and interests, there was one school activity in which all of the participants were involved in – the annual school Christmas gala. The gala is a key activity organized specifically for and by young people (13–18 years old). The gala is a formal event with an evening program that consists of ballroom dancing, a playback show, a few surprise acts, elections of the ball prince and princess, and Christmas presents. The organization of the gala is the responsibility of 10th grade students (16-year-olds) and their class teacher and involves fundraising for food and drinks, contacting entertainers and musicians, and arranging the evening program. Organizing the gala is considered an important opportunity for the students to come into contact with different entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as to practice their organizational and performance skills. One month before the gala, a ballroom dance course is organized, and this culminates in the dancing competition at the gala. In addition to learning new skills by organizing and performing at the gala, the gala provides a context for informal social mixing between the students and their teachers (Trell et al. 2012).

Another activity directly connected to student participation and empowerment at school in Järva-Jaani was the promotion of the school. School promotion is an essential activity for small rural high schools in Estonia who compete with each other for attracting students from the primary schools of neighboring counties and not being shut down (Uustalu 2008). A few times a year, a number of students were asked to promote their school. In those instances students were selected and approached based on their specific experiences or skills. The students were thus acknowledged by their school as skillful, reliable, and representative experts. Incidentally, as a result of participating in this research project, one student was asked to introduce the opportunities for extracurricular activities at her school. Weller (2007) points out that the extent to which young people feel able to have their opinions and expertise respected has the potential to shape their engagement with wider community; such acknowledgment by the school can thus contribute to youth's everyday citizenship learning.

At another instance, two boys from this research project were asked to make a promotion video for their school (together with the researcher). During the participatory research project, the boys had received a short course in making and editing movies, and the school principal was interested in working with them. In that case, students were not only recognized as being helpfully involved, they were officially hired and got a small compensation from the school for making the film. Making the promotion video included shooting a number of background scenes and also interviewing their teachers, peers, as well as officials of the city council. During the film-making process, it was notable how the roles and responsibilities shifted from being a student to being a professional videographer. The students acted with more confidence and seemed comfortable with and interested in taking charge in, for example, making appointments for interviews, setting up the camera, and deciding on the location, positioning, lighting, and sometimes the text for the shoot. There was an almost visible shift in power imbalance during their interview shoot with the school principal where the principal was clearly unfamiliar with the details of filming and the students had to instruct her. It seemed amusing for the young people to be in the position of instructing their principal, a situation that was later reflected upon with many laughs. As citizenship education programs explicitly promote community involvement, participation, and taking action as key to effective citizenship, the activities discussed above serve as everyday examples of youth citizenship learning (Kerr et al. 2004).

The findings from this research indicate that by involving students in extracurricular activities, facilitating their participation in national events, and by asking students to take on organizational and management tasks within school, the school provides students opportunities for (meaningful social) participation. Especially outside the classroom, by recognizing students for their strong skills and abilities, the school encouraged and stimulated their participation in the wider society.

5.3 House of Culture

The key place for young people's hobby activities in Järva-Jaani is the House of Culture or "Kultra." Kultra is a place where activities are provided for young people by adults who also supervise the activities. These activities are mostly extracurricular hobby activities, in which young people interact with each other and with adults usually according to adult norms and values. In their research on youth identity development, Pugh and Hart (1999) found that participation in hobby activities enabled young people to gain self-confidence, explore their interests and values, and find alternative social comparisons. Through such experiences also citizenship learning can take place.

One of the most popular hobby activities at Kultra is dancing. Whereas other hobby clubs meet in smaller rooms, at Kultra once or twice a week, the dancers claim the big rehearsal halls almost every day. In 2009, roughly 8 % of the entire population of Järva-Jaani municipality were members of the 11 dancing groups that met and rehearsed at Kultra (Mõttus 2009). There is a dancing group for

toddlers, older children, young people, and adults. The members in the oldest dancing group are in their 60s. At Kultra, dancing is an important factor in people's sense of belonging, and Kultra has an important role in Järva-Jaani for connecting generations. While preparing for a shared performance, young people meet and work together with the older as well as the younger dancers. But it is not only learning new skills, dancing moves, and combinations which motivate young people to join the dancing groups. "We dance for the sake of it but also because we want to belong somewhere," a member of a dancing group explains (Mõttus 2009). As dancers spend many hours practicing together, friendships develop that extend beyond the rehearsal space of Kultra. For many young people, especially young men, friendship groups and good company are reasons to continue dancing in their teenage years. Madis (male, 19) explains: "I have stayed in the dancing group because it's impossible to leave such a good company." While "mingling" would rarely be described as a citizenship action, its importance as a way of getting to know others and how they are treated adds political weight to the idea of socializing as citizenship. Biesta et al. (2009) propose that the interactions which happen within community contexts are possibly among the most significant in regard to citizenship learning as these are contexts where young people feel valued and able to exert some control over issues which have a direct bearing in their day-to-day lives.

In 2009, one of the youth dancing groups (16–18-year-olds), where the young people involved in this research also participated, became national champions in the annual, prestigious "school dance" competition (Mõttus 2009). Their accomplishments and the recognition of their accomplishments in the media created a sense of pride among young people and the local community (Trell et al. 2012). One of the dancers explains, "Our greatest accomplishment was winning the national school dance festival, where we showed that dancers from the countryside can also become the best dancers in Estonia" (Eneli, female, 18). Shared success and accomplishments play an important role in generating a positive group identity and a sense of belonging. In addition to generating a positive group identity through recognition in the national media (Mõttus 2009), young people's rural identity received positive attention. This was mirrored in the survey for this research, as well as in additional interviews with both members and nonmembers of the dancing groups. As a result, even the young people and adults who were not members of the dancing groups reported the dancing groups to be "the pride" of Järva-Jaani.

Working together at Kultra, developing their own dancing routines, designing costumes, and organizing performances for the local community illustrate the opportunities that young people in Järva-Jaani have in their everyday context for constructive social participation and the situations where they are treated equally and given responsibility. It also highlights the importance of the intergenerational aspects in youth participation (Mannion 2007). Studies focusing on initiatives that have encouraged and enabled young people's social participation show that such opportunities and activities can "strengthen young people's sense of belonging to the community' as well as equip them with skills and capacities required for effective citizenship" (Cutler and Frost 2001, p. 6).

6 Young People Reflecting on Local Community and Participation

It is important to note that during this research project, the topic of participation was central to many of the discussions between the researchers and the young people. When brainstorming with the research group for the questionnaire which was to be distributed to their peers, a question arose – has anybody ever been asked for their opinion about (the development of) Järva-Jaani? The answer was a unanimous “no.” Except for the researcher’s suggestion to discuss a hypothetical situation where the students would be in charge of changing one thing about Järva-Jaani nobody had ever been approached with such questions. Young people did not feel as if they had any say or power to make a contribution to their local community. The questionnaire that was conducted by students reflected similar tendencies: 79 % (37 out of 47) of the respondents had never been asked to express their opinion about their town or municipality. Two out of three who reported to have been asked listed the questionnaire of this research project and the project itself as an example.

However, participants involved in in-depth elements of this research demonstrated varying degrees of interest in community life and a sharp eye for their community’s problems as well as concrete and constructive ideas for improvement. During the peer-led interviews, the group agreed that the first thing they would change about Järva-Jaani would be to create some more places for youths. They seemed to enjoy the idea of being involved in a project for local young people and during a peer-led interview enacted an imaginary situation in which each of them had a different role in the creation of a future youth center. Similarly to the research group, most of the young people who filled in the questionnaire had very clear vision of what Järva-Jaani should look like and what changes should be made in order to make Järva-Jaani a better place. Many students cited tangible outcomes (new facilities, cleaning the lake and the streets, tearing down old abandoned houses). Several outlined wider issues, calling attention to the safety on the road, unemployment, excessive drinking, or lack of public transportation. In addition, solutions benefitting young people were brought forward: “I would create a youth center,” “I would make a good quality music room in the culture house,” “I would fix the stadium,” “I would organize events for computer-friends.” The results demonstrate that in contrast to the notion of “teenage apathy” (Shultz et al. 2010), young people are aware of, interested in, and concerned about local environment as well as local community. It is important to note, however, that it is the everyday context and everyday familiar places that seem to best bring out citizenship responsibility for young people. When focusing on the everyday actions that young people had actually participated in (organizing the Christmas gala; making a petition to have lights installed on their football field; organizing a dance performance) or could see themselves participate in, the young people in this study were more confident of their contributions (cf. Wood 2014, p. 222). In a similar vein to Harris and Wyn (2009), the findings from this research indicate that, “where personal experience, social interaction and everyday practice became part of politics, young people felt better able to articulate political views and take social action” (p. 342).

7 Conclusion

The examples discussed above illustrate that youth everyday citizenship participation is framed by the places they inhabit and the interactions with key people in these sites, such as parents, teachers, and friends (cf. Wood 2014). This chapter argued that acknowledging the importance and influence of these daily places and relationships brings us closer to an alternative understanding of youth everyday citizenship learning, the acceptance of young people as citizens now, and the view on citizenship as a continuous process. As Marston and Mitchell (2004, p. 101) suggest, “an emphasis on citizenship formation allows us to see citizenship as something that is unfolding and constantly changing, rather than a finished product.” Viewing citizenship as a process rather than a state allows us to recognize the ambiguity, contradictions, and heterogeneous nature of citizenship understandings held by young people – much the same as many adults’ understandings.

Lister (2008) points out that, while at one level all young people are members of the community and therefore have the status of citizens in this sense, recognition of young people as citizens in a thicker sense of active membership requires *facilitating their participation* as political and social actors. This chapter has highlighted various ways in which mundane places such as the school, home, or hobby places and influential people encourage constructive social participation and can by extension empower young people and contribute to their everyday citizenship skills and learning. Whether it is encouraging and enabling young people’s participation at a national fashion show, giving them responsibility for taking care of the household, or planning a dance performance together, all such activities can facilitate young people’s agency and create potential for participation in the wider society and at an older age.

The above also illustrates that in order to understand young people’s citizenship learning, it is relevant to focus on everyday context and relationships. Taking a stance on an issue such as the inadequate state of street lighting or road safety in their town or highlighting problems connected to excessive drinking requires young people to make an evaluation which is based on moral, ethical, and political grounds. Within familiar territory, it is possible to glimpse young people’s citizenship imaginations at play – observing, caring, critiquing, and (re)imagining their community with the aim of shaping the society we want to live in.

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Abstract

This chapter considers the ways young people's citizenship can be performatively conceptualized and methodologically operationalized using theatre techniques. It highlights how geographers' theorizations of young people's political agency are in tandem with current theatre research that champions alternative spaces of citizenship expression. Young people's citizenships can be allegorically scripted and the ways in which they respond expresses the contradictions of a discourse of citizenship through statecraft. Despite the wealth of successful examples, there are important considerations when employing theatre methods under the participatory action research framework. In addition,

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the debates and issues within theatre itself should also prompt social science researchers who are contemplating to employ such methods to not reduce theatrical techniques to a set of tools. Hence, the chapter concludes by discussing the ways in which theatre can be an alternative space for young people to circumvent stifling political geographies and express ideas and opinions about being a Singaporean and its potential benefits in future geographical research.

Keywords

Theatre • Citizenship • Interdisciplinary research • Creative methods

1 Introduction

Children and young people's geographies have always been concerned with methodological questions about young people's participation in research. Young people's terms of participation require careful consideration as adults may dictate those terms to perpetuate their ideologies *on* young people (Cockburn 2013). The spaces of research present itself as a kind of microcosm and simulacra of the politics and citizenship that young people face in society. As a response, participatory action research (PAR) in geography actively acknowledges young people's roles in knowledge coproduction. It has sought to address these unequal power relations by giving young people spaces to metaphorically write their own script and at the same time understand how they are currently negotiating with the scripts they were given.

This chapter begins by discussing how young people's citizenship and political agency can be conceived performatively through practices and lived experiences despite the fact that young people do not always have legal participatory rights. This has been explored through a symbiotic melding between theatre and geography, as the former sought to advocate a praxis for young people's inclusivity, while the latter continues to develop frameworks for understanding young people's citizenship. The second part of this chapter will raise issues about geography's utilization of the performing arts methods in research and the value of such methodologies when working with young people. Lastly, this chapter provides an illustration of the effectiveness of theatre and its accompanying techniques through a Singaporean case study where theatrical techniques allowed young people in Singapore to reclaim political spaces and openly speak about their anxieties of being Singaporean.

2 Young People's Citizenship Through a Performative Lens

Kallio (2007) urged children and young people's geographers to consider how introducing performativity as an aspect of children's political agency opens interdisciplinary borders that may help in the discovery of new theoretical avenues in childhood research. She suggested that children should be recognized as political actors through nonrepresentational and performative lenses to analyze children's

lived spaces. So far, while there is no explicit mention as to which disciplinary borders children and young people's geographies can consider crossing, the trend seems to suggest toward the performing arts (see Rogers 2012) as they both share similar emphasis on the sociality of space. Research of this kind is already under way within theatre scholarship. For instance, Eaket (2008, p. 47) demonstrated how the performativity of space could then be understood as the "acting-out" of a place through social practices. This implies that performativity under Butlerian terms, while presented as a kind of challenge to normalized identities, need not always be formative, but can be expressive (Rogers 2012). The expression of identities and performativity understood within theatrical research foregrounds young people's agency, which also simultaneously acknowledges them as political actors. By tapping upon the interdisciplinary nexus, we are able to consider how identities are at once *both* formative and expressive.

2.1 Young People's Scripted Citizenship

Children's citizenship practices constitute them as *de facto* citizens, even if they do not have all the rights of *de jure* citizens (Lister 2007). This results in the state and other institutions acting as patrons for the well-being of young citizens – a term that is politically laden and interest driven by the agendas and motivations of those in power. Hence, as a result, young people often find themselves being handed over a script complete with expected behaviors and norms that they ought to exhibit as well as the ideas they should possess to be a "good citizen." The rehearsals for the "play" of citizenship often take place in schools, through citizenship education and interactions, which are aimed to strengthen the social contract between young people and the state. Pykett (2009) demonstrated how young people are made into citizens via various discourses and practices in schools within the framework of geographies of education. In Singapore, the script of individual moral responsibility and communitarian ideals has been instilled in students as part of their citizenship education coupled with daily performative practices such as taking of the national pledge and singing of the national anthem in schools (Tan and Chew 2008). However, young people are not *isolated* from being citizens as there are attempts by governments to include young people in urban planning (see Alparone and Rissotto 2001) and semiofficial parliamentary processes (see Kallio and Häkli 2011). Yet Bessant (2003) is skeptical regarding the official talk about democratic participation and how citizenship for young people is not employed as a solution to political problems, but rather as a strategy of government designed to extend management of them.

This management is justified by a predominant perception of certain groups of young people as "failing" to perform perfectly their roles as "citizens of the future." Through discourses, regulating bodies label such young people as "youth at risk" or "troubled teens." Such discourses also exist within theatre research, and it was Conrad (2005) who challenged applied theatre's use of "youth at risk" as a problematic category that needed "saving" through finding solutions in a group

during community theatre sessions. These moral panics behind young people's nonparticipation subsequently legitimize the bid for stronger citizenship education, which, in turn, frames young people as sources of apathy and individualizes blame. The relationship between young people and the state becomes extremely tenuous and precarious when young people reject the hegemonic script of citizenship because the discourses presented no longer resonate with the difficulties they face.

Many scholars have already noted the trend, reasons, and effects of such a disenfranchisement (see France 1998; O'Toole 2003). Yet, such withdrawals will result in compounding implications on young people's representations in the realm of formal politics as they are also less likely to vote (see Russell et al. 2002; Henn et al. 2005; Harris et al. 2010) which continues to perpetuate their underrepresentation in policies. The lack of engagement of young people with top-down measures of citizenship participation highlights the limitations of a single script, which essentializes all young people under the umbrella of "citizens of the future." There is a need to consider the other "scripts" of citizenship practices that young people are currently writing and the ways in which they "perform" them.

2.2 Young People's Citizenship: Participatory Action Research, Theatre, and Empowerment

Children and young people's geographies have thus considered the myriad of ways in which young people's activities and expressions of citizenship can be recognized as political agency (see Skelton 2010) and how age is another dimension of intersectionality. This is reflected in the ways research has been conducted. For instance, new social studies on childhood have shifted research *on* children, to research *with* them. There are many studies in both geography and theatre that value young people's own experiences (see Matthews 2001; Hughes and Wilson 2004; Weller 2007; Holdsworth 2007; Deeney 2007) that recognize the agency in young people as research participants, instead of subjects. Within theatre, Peters (2013, p. 111) found through his participatory theatre project that young people could teach him about alternative citizenry relations that stem from recognizing that life experiences vary due to age and life course; we might come to understand citizenship differently from each other. It is by no means a coincidence that geography and theatre recognize the value of young people's voices.

Both PAR in geographical studies and applied theatre stemmed from Freire's (1970) work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which was a landmark in its contribution toward research that acknowledges the agency of individuals and communities within research and climates of oppression (see more of this from Cahill 2007; Kinson et al. 2007; Babbage 2004). The idea of empowerment and Freire's post-structural critical consciousness – what he terms "conscientização" – lay the foundation for the aims and purposes of PAR as well as applied theatre, and such ideas have also been carried out increasingly in research with young people (Cahill 2007). Applied theatre presents a wealth of resources for geographers to create spaces for young people's citizenship so as to tilt the balance more toward the

action for the community within PAR while simultaneously also creating meaningful academic conceptualizations. This is already under way, as researchers have utilized theatre projects in exploring young people's self-representation (see Mattingly 2001). As a PAR method, it fits uncomfortably in a climate of control and containment (Pain et al. 2007) and is precisely the capacity for participants to exercise agency in PAR that problematizes the autocratic and oppressive space that young people face. It presents a way of knowledge coproduction, as the interactions between participants during discussion and other theatre games become a rich field of understanding.

2.3 Theatre and Young People's Empowered Participation

In the subfield of applied theatre, forum theatre has been most prominent in advancing a political understanding of citizenship with young people. Forum theatre, a model first devised by Boal (1979, 1998), is a format of performance, in which a problem or issue is staged before an audience. The play is performed again, and this time, the audience can replace actors on stage and try to change the outcome of the story vis-à-vis the facilitator (or also known as the "joker"). In Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, forum theatre constituted one of the major techniques. He used those techniques at *Arena Conta Zumbi*, which later took a nationalistic turn when political situation in Brazil turned tumultuous due to army revolt (Babbage 2004). He would later pen his experience and forum theatre model, in his years of exile when the political situation in Brazil worsened. Upon meeting fellow Brazilian and education pedagogy theorist Freire, he would further develop forum theatre for Alicia Saco's program to eradicate illiteracy in Peru. The principles of the program followed Freire's belief in not treating illiterate adults as children, but rather to come to assume that those being taught were intelligent human beings that deserved respect and not patronage (ibid). These ideas of emancipation were clearly etched in Boal's writings – where the voice of the oppressed, if not revolutionary in itself, "is without a doubt, a rehearsal of revolution"; it forms not to produce relief of catharsis and passivity that comes from witnessing an incident, but "a sort of uneasy sense of incompleteness that seeks fulfillment through real action" (1979, pp. 141–142).

The effect of Boal's applied theatre method presents a powerful and compelling way for children and young people's geographies to consider how empowerment can be executed through research methods – and not simply rendered as a by-product. Boal's theatre allows young people the space to explore and evaluate what it means to participate as full citizens while, at the same time, allowing geographers the chance to learn about young people's citizenship practices. It is a compelling performance, as audience members who first assumed that they might be "too shy to participate" find themselves irresistibly drawn toward the stage later (Howe 2009). Since young people's subjugation to the dominant political and societal discourses, the script of citizenship has little space for negotiations, forum, or legislative theatre, as it is sometimes called, becomes increasingly

powerful for young people to start to form subjective understandings on how they might behave if they were empowered to do so. Forum theatre spaces allow young people to negotiate structural constraints within a safe space – to tentatively experiment within the moment of the performance. As a performance, it inevitably becomes a vehicle for young people’s ideas and politics to a larger audience. The duality and dialectical relationship between research and action can be said to come together under a performative project where young people learn about citizenship and are also simultaneously called to contest and reimagine it (see Peters 2013). Young people’s participation gains gravitas through theatricality, which simultaneously gives them access to public spaces of discourses.

There are many examples of this. Notably in Vancouver, Headlines Theatre’s *Practicing Democracy* project became a site for corporeal policy analysis, where Vancouver citizens built collective knowledge about public policy and in turn teach each other about the diverse experiences with policy since much of the power of government systems hinges on obfuscation of information and privatization of experience (Howe 2009). There are many other examples of forum theatre work with young people in the UK, Canada, and Australia (see Babbage 2004; Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman 2005) that seek to allow young people a way to engage with policy by creating spaces of participation (see Scullion 2008). In Singapore, *Drama Box* has been a main proponent in using Boal’s model in various projects with young people, as they prepare their Forum Theatre Movement as part of the Community Theatre Festival 2015.

This is especially crucial for the case in Singapore where some areas of speech are still strictly out of bounds for citizens. While Boal’s applied theatre can reclaim these spaces, they are also subjected to censorship from the state. These areas consist of racial and religious interrelations and tensions and politics, as defined by the dominant People’s Action Party as activities of political parties – in which theatre groups have been singled out to not “meddle” in such affairs (Chua and Kwok 2001). In this case, the spaces of democracy and politics of places are not imagined but are *real* spaces of oppression by the state. Without theatrical projects strategically essentializing and contesting seemingly nondemocratic spaces, young people in stifling political climates may find it difficult to participate within citizenship discourses at all. A recent conference at the Singapore Drama Educators Association 2013 *Masak Masak* (Malay word for child’s play) has shown how many theatre companies such as The Necessary Stage and Theatre Connect are taking young people’s views about their country seriously. Therefore, for research to be empowering for young people, confiscated spaces of citizenship discourses had to be reclaimed through participatory action research through the praxis of theatre to express and materialize young people’s previously censored citizenship practices.

Conceptualized this way, PAR and forum theatre present a way in which researchers recognize young people as spect-actors, who engage in strategies, or what de Certeau terms as “tactics” (see Skelton and Valentine 2003) to renegotiate the terms of the social contract and belonging between themselves and the state. PAR recognizes that personal transformations constitute as a form of empowerment, as the cultivation of new forms of subjectivity or other possibilities of being

in the world (Kallio 2007), which allows the participants' eyes to be "opened" to the different ways of conceptualizing discrimination.

Theatre practitioners consider similar ideas of empowerment, which tend to focus on ideas of young people's self-esteem. Kronenberg (2007) surmised theatre practitioner's definition of empowerment as constituting both self-worth and self-efficacy. Thus, she argues that empowering theatre practices and research should allow individuals or groups to have the capacity to produce change. Geographers have since questioned the efficacy of *change* within PAR. Empowerment, "when defined at all, is imagined as a more or less linear process of 'enlightenment'" (Kesby et al. 2007:23). This suggests a call among researchers for a materialization of change that is more tangible and consequential. Theatre practitioners are also addressing such questions.

Thornham (2014) and Kallio (2008) observed that concepts of "empowerment" are framed through different kinds of discourses – depending on particular positionalities and ideologies – which may lead to very different outcomes for the participating community. This highlights how research projects are inherently situated within economic, political, and social systems, and there is no general way to transcend geographical issues when research is conducted. This implies that empowering communities through research requires situated knowledge that exists within contextual spaces that leave opportunities to learn from other perspectives and ways of knowing, to engage in translation exercises across nonreducible knowledge (Pratt 2000, p. 641).

Therefore, while creative methodologies such as theatre have the potential to empower individuals, the sociopolitical context in which it is conducted has to be taken in consideration. In addition, researchers should not attempt to generalize that creative methodologies are *always* democratic (see Barker and Smith (2012)). Firstly, not all participants are equally proficient at acting, or being in front of an audience. It requires careful negotiation of what participants are comfortable with and respecting that they too, like adults, might feel nervous about having their work critiqued or commented upon by peers. From experience, participants often open up better when researchers themselves participate in the activities. Secondly, power relations have to be managed between participants, especially when working with young people of different age groups. Older participants act on their assumptions of younger participants that stifle their participation indirectly or directly. Therefore, the role of the researcher becomes that of a facilitator (or in Boal's terms a "joker"), by allowing certain members to have time and place to express themselves. Younger participants could be "disadvantaged" in focus group interviews because they do not possess the same range of vocabulary due to different levels of schooling. By employing theatre methods such as improvisation and playacting, young members of the study were observed to have more "fun" and were less self-conscious as their older counterparts. Thus, the value of theatre is its ability to democratize the research space by allowing alternative methods of expression that will allow younger participants to participate as much as the older ones.

As such, "empowerment must therefore be re-conceptualised as an effect of a form of *governance* that enables people to forge a *common will* and work with others via

negotiation and persuasion” (Kesby et al. 2007, p. 22; italics in the original). Theatre coupled with a socio-geographical analysis offers possibilities of transcending the representational limits of academic discourse by offering subjects more authority over the representation of their voices and speaking to audiences outside of academia (Mattingly 2001). It is also more than disseminating conventional social science research through creative writing and performance to create a more vigorous political debate; it will also call for reflection upon new ways to consider conventional academic writing (Pratt and Johnston 2007). In this case, presenting theatrical “data” can become tricky, as is the case of presenting social science ideas within theatre. With regard to the former, the data will never be translated perfectly in academic writing because theatrical performance encompasses gestural movements, voice, tone and inflection, blocking (the actors’ and directors’ decisions in the characters’ positions on stage have semiotic significance), and the script. Theatre and its techniques are more than simply methods in geographical research, because as a discipline, it bears its own interests and intellectual histories which need to be taken into consideration when *operationalizing* interdisciplinary work.

3 Geographical Research: Creative Methodologies

There is a rise of using creative methodology with young people, which is associated with the “performative turn’ that moves away from the purely textual, representational, and descriptive quality of creative methods (Robinson and Gillies 2012). However, this is not to suggest that textual ways of understanding and writing do not constitute part of the “creative.” Currently, creative methods have been employed by geographers as an alternative and supplementary to “conventional” methods such as interviewing and focus group discussions to access young people’s worlds that allow research participants to describe and analyze their experiences and give meaning to them (Jeffrey 2012). As such, geographical scholarship witnessed a proliferation of creative methods such as photography, videography, walk-along, theatre workshops, and photo diaries (Pratt 2000; Punch 2001; Mattingly 2001; Weller 2007; Barker and Smith 2012) to access the life worlds of their participants, especially for young people.

The justifications for such are hinged upon an increased attention to a child-centered approach to doing research and allowing for a more subject-centered understanding of young people’s lived experiences. Therefore, the use of photography, diaries, and walk-along constitutes the methods deployed as geography shifts toward young people’s sociocultural and political experiences. While the point is not to essentialize young people to have methods that are tailored specifically for them, it is also important to recognize that young people do engage in different ways. These differences are not surmountable to warrant that a whole genre of methods be employed specifically for them, as geographers have shown effectively that young people do and can respond to interviews.

In this regard, the value of employing creative methodologies in children and young people’s geographies lies in their ability to also engage with young people’s

imaginations. Imagination is not foreign to geography, as we so often employ the “geographical” or “sociological” imagination to conceptualize our work. Research on and with theatre can also be geographically and discursively analyzed despite the performing arts employing a wider vocabulary of semiotics that transcend linguistically representations that geographical research is dominantly based on (See Pratt 2000; Mattingly 2001; Rogers 2010; Johnston and Pratt 2010). Firstly, this might result in a more democratic way of repositioning the researcher and the participants, where the narrative authority does not lie solely in the hands of the researcher. This is because the entire play building process is not linear, but a spiral in which the stages of collection, analysis, and dissemination overlap as one influences the other. Secondly, citizenship is intricately bound with other forms of identity politics and, drawing upon the participants’ imaginations, therefore informs us of the ways in which intersectionality of age, race, gender, and social class might affect their citizenship status. It offers a performative way of knowing – a unique and powerful access to knowledge, drawing out responses that are a spontaneous, intuitive, tacit, experiential, embodied, or affective, rather than simply cognitive (Courtney 1988). Dirksmeier and Helbrecht (2008) have gone further to advocate for participative and open methods of performance, such as theatre, dance, and pantomime, to be favored over traditional methods of the generation of representations like the interview, as the center of the method spectrum so as to capture the complexity of performance and performative life. Yet, this contemporary creative shift is not being substantively conceptualized or carefully and critically theorized (Bondi 2005).

One such way to conceptualize the employment of creative methodologies in geography is to analyze the performative turn with reference to nonrepresentational theory. Nonrepresentational theory (NRT) opens new ways that focus how subjects “know” something of the world in the form of intuitive understanding without “knowing” it in the scientific sense of the term (Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2008). This, to Thrift (2007), is the movement away from reliance on text and discourses to instead the micro-body politics of movement and practice. This in turn foregrounds and opens up new research avenues that include the performing arts within geographical inquiry. Horton and Kraftl (2006) have neatly summarized the works that have employed affect within geography and suggest new areas in which children and young people’s geographies can also develop new research areas within NRT. There is cause for caution, and the utilization of NRT methods within research stands to be questioned. Some geographers have reservations with NRT and argued that its methods disguise the politics of the research because it emphasizes on the ephemeral, the personal, and the affective (Mitchell and Elwood 2012). Geographers may run the risk of over-romanticizing and overemphasizing the affectual quality and effervescency without a similar discussion of the discipline and process of negotiation that occurs within. Rogers (2010) has discussed how scripts seem to be fixed predictable forms of textualized behavior that limit or “constrain” performative creativity, which works against the dominant idea within NRT that performance is spontaneous, irretrievable, and always enacted with the potential to be otherwise. A director’s work with actors, in both devised and scripted works, is

tightly bound within rules and structures. Even Boal's seemingly spontaneous forum theatre is highly planned and executed in a manner that follows a certain trajectory set by the "joker." It is integral to creative and imaginative work, as it presents a kind of structuration – a Bourdieuan game in which participants negotiate with the rules to come up with strategies. The roles of a theatre director and workshop facilitator require intensive training that is both time-consuming and intellectually/physically demanding. Creative methods such as theatre require researchers to become at least familiar at worst or as best gain competency over a period like any form of performing arts. Furthermore, the performing arts are varied and multiple which involve many disciplines – music, dance, theatre, visual arts, traditional arts, etc. Geographers who wish to deploy creative methods, i.e., theatre, need to also understand the kinds of training and skills involved to effectively produce work that lies at the critical junctures of the interdisciplinary nexus. It is therefore ironic that Thrift (2002), while persuading geographers working with creative expression need to gain some fluency in creative disciplines in order to avoid established critiques about research tourism in unfamiliar or eroticized cultures, draws such disparate conclusions about performing arts.

3.1 Contentions Within Research About Using Theatre

Schools and practitioners commonly employ theatre as a learning method for young people and this has been termed as Theatre in Education (TIE) and Theatre for Young Audience (TYA) within the scholarship. Scholars have acknowledged the effectiveness of theatre as research and learning tool but also raised concerns that TIE has been reduced to simply tools and techniques. Scullion (2008) was also concerned that in pursuit of young people's citizenship educational agendas, the theatricality and the aesthetical value of performance is being sidelined which becomes a missed opportunity to open create critical audience awareness.

Firstly, it is possible that TIE and TYA can be used to reinforce hegemonic understandings of citizenship among young people and as a biopolitical tool, which reproduces governmentalities. For instance, Sweigart-Gallagher (2014) illustrated how American Republican "vacation liberty schools" utilized role-playing to allow young people to engage emotionally about history and economic principles during the period of American colonists. These examples highlight how ideologies govern the outcome of the tools employed, which raises the importance for critical reflexivity in scholarship. Kronenberg (2007) highlights the various landscapes in which TYA – from prescribing moral imperatives for young people in the form of narratives of "good" behavior to the contemporary form of theatre as recognizing the multiple voices and identities in young people. In so doing, she raises an evaluative account of the various attitudes adult practitioners hold toward young people and cautions against a moralistic evangelism of what young people "ought to be" to instead recognize the intersectionality of identities through young people's own narratives. Conrad (2005, 2006) tackles this issue head on, as she questions the category of "at-risk" youths through her doctoral research and TIE's constant

construction of certain groups of young people as “risky.” Conrad’s research presents a melding of a critical social science perspective, which arose from her applied theatre research that explains the various reasons for young people’s so-called misbehavior. This effectively orientates the paradigm framing in TIE, which recognizes the agency of young people and explores other possibilities of constructing an alternative citizenship politics for marginalized groups.

Secondly, theatre, like other social science research, is centered on people and can be subjected to the practitioners’ values and ideologies. While practitioners often cite themselves as an alternative to the main educational paradigms, they can also hold adultist assumptions and attitudes toward young people during theatre workshops – especially when young people do not respond or participate in the workshop activities (Thornham 2014). The simulacrum of an applied theatre workshop becomes a microcosm of the reproduction of power relations that young people face in society. While theatre methods can be an alternative form of democratic research, the issues of unequal power relations between the researchers and researched do not entirely shift. Therefore, discussions of positionalities and power relations in research resonate for both disciplines, and given young people’s marginalized statuses, the reflexivity and ethical considerations for doing research with young people (and their multiple identities) become crucial for any researcher.

3.2 Safe Spaces for Young People’s Participation

Research spaces have been a relative neglect in the discussion on how place makes a difference to methodology (Anderson and Jones 2009). Given the context, Barker and Weller (2003) reflexively analyzed how the spaces of research may impact upon the research process and the data produced. As Skelton (2008) highlighted, there is a need to consider the safety of vulnerable groups by ensuring safe spaces in which to conduct research such as interviews. Ho (2008) in her study of Singaporean transmigrants in London noticed how Singaporeans utilize self-censorship when asked politically sensitive questions about rights. If Singaporeans feel that they are unable to express their opinions toward their citizenship, does this imply they do not harbor such views? Since young people are not being taken seriously by adults because of their marginalized position in adult-dominated society (Punch 2002), they are doubly marginalized. The Singaporean case study was developed to understand if adopting creative methodologies might be able to remove the specter of the state by transforming the research space into a “game” for young people.

Henn and Foard (2014) noticed that image theatre followed by an interview allowed students in the UK to take more risks and speak about themselves. Similarly, image theatre as well as improvisational theatre games allowed participants in this research to *exhibit* as well as *express* more openness when shared through their characters/role-playing and in their discussion afterward. Employing theatre techniques followed by a discussion of the session helps remove the socialized fear, as a result of continued punitive action from authorities, i.e., the

state or teachers in schools, and of expressing one's personal opinions. Therefore, while the state is not present, speaking through a character creates a psychological safety barrier against the pressure to conform in "reality."

Gebauer and Wulf (1995, cited in Veale 2005) argued that mimesis in theatre is something that "makes it possible for individuals to step out of themselves, to draw the outer world into their inner world, and to lend expression to their interiority" (pp. 2–3). This is exemplified in a particular theatre workshop, where young participants were called to make a tableau – frozen images that constitute to form a collective – around the topic of "Singapore." The various tableaux by these participants challenged issues of the increasingly congested public transport and the liberal immigration policies through satire. These activities express the lived experiences of *being* a Singaporean, as opposed to a discursive narrative on what a Singaporean should be.

Such community theatre projects (of which this project can be considered as such) are a deliberate means of representing a place and the people who live in it (Mattingly 2001). It is meant to exhibit young people's theatre not as "young adult's theatre" and respect that young people have their form of aesthetics and engagement. The performance space also challenges the readers' perspective, which renders them divided, more aware and more challenged by her/his multiple partial identifications (Pratt 2000).

4 Executing Using Theatre as a Creative Methodology: A Singaporean Case Study

4.1 Background

The origins of this case study require a foregrounding of the political climate of Singapore. The oppressive political climate of Singapore is characterized by the state's paternalistic attitude toward its citizens. Minister George Yeo, as reported in the Straits Times (1995), pointedly told Singaporeans how they must not treat the ruling elites as equals. He maintained that it is unacceptable for Singaporeans to be *bo dua, bo suay* (which literally translates to "no big, no small" in the Singaporean Chinese-Hokkien dialect), a term used to scold children when they are insubordinate to older members of the family. Singaporeans are viewed as "children" who are deemed by the state to be incapable of making meaningful decisions about issues that can affect the fate of the nation. Thus, citizenship education in Singapore's general syllabus present is not a space for young people to discover their citizenship, but is, instead, tailored to citizenship training as an instrument of statecraft (Tan and Chew 2008). By extension, young people are discursively groomed under statecraft, to "be rational, politically informed, well-meaning, constructive, and consensus-seeking". In short, "they have to be super-citizens [...] if these conditions are not met, then to even talk about active citizens would create the cruelest of illusions" (Ho 2000, p. 447). This is the result of a fear that although "Singaporeans are free to speak up and criticise the government, [they] must be prepared to have

their views put under the microscope” (Deputy Lee Hsien Loong 1995, cited in Ho 2000).

Therefore, after many instances of punitive actions taken by the state's leaders on individual Singaporeans in the form of defamation lawsuits, discussions on politics have been foreclosed in the public sphere. This, coupled with the high-stakes exams, stifles any kind of critical discussions of citizenship within the space of the classroom (Ho 2010). Within the Singaporean education context, “high stakes” refer to secondary school students requiring good grades (usually distinctions) for the mandatory “combined humanities” subject. This subject is split into two components where students have to take both social studies and literature/history/geography to qualify for consideration when applying to the only two tertiary education academic institutional tracks – polytechnics and junior colleges. Yet, young people are commonly blamed for being apathetic citizens and unwilling to step up to participate in politics as “the next generation” to further Singapore's interests. It suggests that the state expects young people to participate, but only on their terms instead of negotiating and opening up discussion. While there are spaces for young people to speak to ministers, for instance, like the pre-university seminar and other dialogue sessions held in universities, the topics of discussion are not decided by young people themselves, but are, instead decided for them based on what policy-makers and ministers feel young people should and ought to be interested in. Evidently, alternative spaces are not commonly present to address the challenges of citizenship in Singapore, and taking cue from other theatrical projects from scholarship and local efforts, safe spaces of this research for young people were created amidst the strict and constraining forces of statecraft to understand and express their opinions as a Singaporean.

Even alternative spaces like theatre are constantly policed by the state through censorship boards and are refrained from discussing issues that pertain to race, religion, and politics – narrowly defined as activities of political parties. Furthermore, there were age-related restrictions placed on young people from watching or participating in plays of such “sensitive” matters. This research would not have been empowering, if it did not find a way to negotiate the field of power relations of governance so that young people's voices can be heard. Thus, by employing tactics of resistance by reporting this performance as an “experiment,” as well as keeping it private and small (audience of not more than 40), the scripts and performance need not undergo local censorship. Such a tactic inevitably evokes spaces of change to transform the way participatory citizenship is practiced in order to accommodate young people.

4.2 Efficacy of Theatre Methods: Contesting Views of Being “Citizens in the Making”

After exploring young people's understandings and issues of citizenship in the first half of this theatre workshop, they were invited to write a short script that speaks to their narratives as citizens in Singapore. They were later presented with the option

to have their script performed by other participants, and all of them agreed to do so. Thus, this evokes the collaborative process outlined in PAR, where the participants had decision-making powers to drive the direction and outcome of the research. The discourses raised from the scripts were multifarious but point toward a general theme of struggle with being in a multicultural society in Singapore and the anxieties and pressures over the expectations that family, state, and schools have on young Singaporeans.

For instance, one of the scripts is *The Menara* – which is a metaphorical and liturgical play on the Malay word “tower” which pointed to the high-rise living conditions of most Singaporean families as well as subtly reminded the audience members about Malay, which, despite being the official language of Singapore, is rarely used. In this narrative, the scriptwriters presented a story of discord among siblings who were the “winners” (perfect grades in schools, which will allow them to enter tertiary education institutions) and the “losers” (siblings who were failing in schools and seemed to be bound for technical institutions that were seen as far more inferior). One of the scriptwriters stated that the script resembled his family’s experiences:

When my brother collected his A’ levels, he was so nervous because what if he don’t have good grades to go uni[versity]? I mean it’s like game over. So that’s why I feel scared too, because what if I’m not as smart as him? I will be outted [kicked out].

Hence, the fictional stories of young Singaporeans expressed elements of truth and, as a medium, allowed for the articulation of young people’s anxieties in “not meeting expectations.” This illustrates the anxieties faced in this participant, a young male student, and reflects the results of a state’s elevation of employment and material life to the highest values, with educational achievement and individual merit as an expression of one’s chances of that “success” (Chua and Kwok 2001). Young people were able to wholly own their narratives and, through fiction, express certain truths that they face in their daily lives that are not immediately apparent or explicit to them.

Children and young people’s geographers have highlighted how citizenship is formed by practices, lived experiences, and legal status; it seems that young people in Singapore place a stronger emphasis on interpersonal relationships as forging sense of place and belonging. This theme was salient throughout the workshop and even through the other scripts like *The Box*, which showed the resolution of another inter-ethnic conflict through friendship. The writers for *The Box* also expressed skepticism for the educational system as their synopsis wrote:

Family and friends. Schools and teachers. Are they exemplary? Do they shape you to who you should be like? Is that good?

This project presents an enriching insight into the possible ways that young people can express and participate in citizenship discourses outside the scripted and formalistic school spaces and reclaim the confiscated places of discussion that enable them to imagine the values that they want as Singaporeans and the ways in which being a citizen means in this country. Hence, theatrical techniques, spaces,

and stories become the tools in which researchers are able to illicit rich data and uncap the political pressures on young people's form of expression that can bring forth honest opinions about the challenges of being a young Singaporean in this country. However, taken within the geopolitical context of Singapore, such projects are only possible because of the shifting political landscapes. The continued efforts of theatre practitioners in Singapore have tried to educate and raise questions about being a Singaporean, but stop short of recognizing young people's own experiences as already engaging in practices of citizenship. In this regard, Weller (2003) also called for children and young people to be recognized as a diverse and competent social group and integrated as far as possible into the political mainstream by acknowledging their practices and spaces of engagement.

5 Conclusion: Considerations for Interdisciplinary Research Spaces

This chapter is a discussion for geographers to seriously consider the spaces of research. As research sites and fields of inquiry grow, the attention to the geographies of research grows increasingly important as a means of active reflexivity. Geographers like Anderson and Jones utilized the concepts of microgeographies to draw attention to spaces of research. However, the term microgeographies might be misleading because it evokes ideas of research spaces and sites of study as small and localized. Instead, research sites and participant responses (or lack thereof) require careful consideration by situating it within the larger political and sociocultural contexts that might influence the subject matter of research itself. In this regard, theatre sensitiveness to space makes it a valuable resource to use as a method of research, as well as a site of study. It melds the notion of empowerment and research together as inseparable and dialectic (Peters 2013) and can potentially mobilize the duality of the PAR framework as simultaneously an academic and advocacy project.

However, there are real practical limitations with using theatre to conduct PAR, especially in the context of political suppression, because authorities might not sanction the implementation of such projects in the first place. Therefore, researchers also engage in tactics and strategies across time and space to realise and materialize research spaces that empower participants, which may not be immediately apparent to the reader. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research with a praxis-based discipline such as theatre requires a more-than-academic appreciation. It is necessary to immerse oneself while also simultaneously adopting an ethnographic approach, which raises questions about the etic/emic positionalities in social science researchers. Hence, collaboration between disciplines can be messy, political, and lived since collaborators may not always agree and participants may not always be comfortable with all aspects of the study. This messy and lived nature of research spaces is perhaps simulacra of the reality researchers themselves are all enmeshed in.

Despite these considerations, theatre and geography can mutually benefit from existing research synergies. Geography can help theatre map itself to a broader

sociocultural context, while theatre can assist geographers in finding methods to engage with young people that allow them to step out of present hegemonies, as well as provide them with alternative spaces to express their identities *as themselves*. It is an exciting prospect to consider how theatre researchers and geographers can work together to meld the longtime dichotomy between theory and praxis and explore how research can be considered as a performance (of empowerment) and how performance can be taken into consideration in research with young people. Furthermore, theatre has shown in this instance long-term impacts on young people, ranging from more participation of theatre projects to higher interest in social issues and even with geography itself (one of the participants went on to pursue geography as an undergraduate in Singapore). These present the result of the halo effect from theatre to facilitate and propagate geographical work that extends beyond the immediate research space.

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Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia

25

Catherine Cottrell Studemeyer

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Abstract

This chapter explores the potential of contemporary multicultural citizenship discourses to complicate, rather than to alleviate, the tensions between majority and minority groups that affect understandings of citizenship and belonging in culturally diverse societies. The complexities that arise from the simultaneous circulation of multiple citizenship discourses are particularly evident in post-Soviet nation-states that are liberal democracies and European Union member states but remain socio-spatially polarized along ethnocultural and ethnonational lines, such as Estonia. After reestablishing independence upon the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Estonia retained a large Russian-speaking population, made mostly of those people (and their descendants) who migrated to Estonia during the Soviet era. The lingering tensions between the two groups were (and are) exacerbated by Estonian nation-building practices, which also coexist with the universalisms of liberal democratic ideals and values like equality, cultural pluralism, and tolerance in Estonian society. Drawing on

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focus groups conducted with 18- and 19-year-old young people from Tallinn, Estonia, in late 2012, this chapter analyzes the students' narratives of how they encounter, understand, negotiate, and perform multicultural citizenship in the spaces of their everyday personal geographies. The students' perspectives suggest that the discourses of multiculturalism they contend with are not well articulated and therefore do not provide them with meaningful resources to address and alleviate conflicts between ethnic Estonians and Russian speakers. Indeed, the ambiguous nature of multicultural citizenship discourse, it is argued, allows for its potential to actually complicate and multiply the terms of citizenship and belonging.

Keywords

Multiculturalism • Nationalism • Citizenship • Estonia • Divided societies

1 Introduction

Discourses of multicultural citizenship are a steady presence in Western liberal democracies and are a significant part of what young people encounter as state and non-state actors take an interest in shaping future citizens of the nation-state and of a globalizing world (Banks 2008). Multiculturalism is a broad term for the “on-going disruption of ideas about nationhood and culture and the articulation and negotiation of cultural differences” (Nagel and Hopkins 2010, p. 2) that arose out of theoretical and policy-driven critiques of citizenship and access to rights in postwar liberal democracies that had “universalized” citizenship across majority and minority groups. As the inherent heterogeneity of nation-states came to the forefront of debates surrounding full and equal access to the political, social, and civil rights of citizenship in Western societies (Marshall 1964; Young 1989), young people became implicated in citizenship projects aiming to reimagine the national community along culturally diverse lines. But nation-building projects, aiming by and large to universalize dominant identities and ideologies as the basis for national unity, continued to be a significant part of young people's everyday spaces, notably (but not singularly) in the school through civic education curricula.

Discourses of multiculturalism remain in complex coexistence with more exclusionary conceptualizations of citizenship that obscure cultural difference in favor of a homogenous community. But multiculturalism is itself a contentious concept and is fraught with myriad interpretations and intense disagreements between advocates and opponents. The confusion and lack of consensus, both in academic and policy circles, about how multicultural citizenship is practiced, or whether it even should be practiced, seep into the discourses of citizenship that are specifically targeted at young people. As a result, young people contend with discourses of multicultural citizenship that have the potential to buffet against sometimes competing, sometimes complementing, discourses of national citizenship.

This chapter explores the potential of multicultural citizenship discourses to multiply and complicate the particularisms that delineate bounds of citizenship and

belonging rather than to create unity through the alleviation of conflicts between majority and minority groups. It draws on a larger study conducted in late 2012 on how young people understand and conceptualize citizenship and belonging. The study engaged 18- and 19-year-old ethnic Estonian and Russophone students in their last year of secondary school in Tallinn, Estonia. (The term “Russophone” is used instead of “Russian” to acknowledge the pan-Slavic heritages of many people in Estonia whose mother tongue is Russian.) Estonia provides a compelling context in which to investigate youth conceptualizations of belonging and citizenship. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Estonia, like many other newly independent nation-states in Eastern Europe, embarked on simultaneous projects of reconstructing its national community (often along ethnonationalist lines) as well as “return[ing] to Europe” – i.e., introducing and instilling liberal democratic values and ideologies distinctly lacking in the Soviet Union, such as equality, freedom, universal citizenship, and respect and acceptance of cultural diversity (Kuus 2004, p. 476; Deets 2006). As a result of these ideologically divergent yet simultaneously occurring processes, multicultural and nationalist conceptualization citizenship continues to coexist uneasily in Estonia over 20 years later.

This chapter’s analysis draws primarily on focus groups with student participants in which they discuss and debate the discourses of multiculturalism that they encounter. The students’ narratives suggest that the universalisms of a vaguely defined liberal multiculturalism exist in tension with the particularisms of identity that structure the terms of belonging in Estonia. A result of this tension is that, in the students’ narratives, practicing cultural plurality becomes another mechanism of Othering (Said 1978), perpetuating existing divisions rather than alleviating them. The chapter begins with a brief overview of multicultural citizenship and why young people in Estonia provide a useful context in which to investigate its relationship to and effects on understandings of citizenship in contemporary, liberal democratic societies. It then examines the student participants’ narratives and interpretations of what it means to be a multicultural citizen in Estonia. The chapter concludes by considering what the findings in this study suggest for the directions of future research on young people’s engagement with multiple, coexisting citizenship discourses as they develop their own political subjectivities.

2 Citizenship and Multiculturalism in Liberal Democracies

The concept of multiculturalism entered into liberal democratic citizenship discourse in the decades after World War II as part of a larger trend of reimagining national communities and addressing cultural diversity in Western societies. The persistent inequalities faced by minorities despite the universal extension of formal citizenship to historically marginalized groups in liberal democracies prompted the reexamination of nationhood and culture. As the role of “articulation and negotiation of cultural difference” (Nagel and Hopkins 2010, p. 2) in the realization of full and equal citizenship for minority groups became the foci of debates and, indeed, intense disagreements in policy circles and academic scholarship, multiculturalist

ideals and values became coexistent with discourses of nationalism in everyday spaces. As future citizens of culturally diverse national communities, young people became, and remain, principle subjects of the multicultural discourses that have become ubiquitous in Western societies and permeate their personal geographies. As an integral part of youths' everyday lives, the school is a key space in which they encounter and learn about multicultural values as part of a wider citizenship education curricula that will also include particular conceptualizations of nationalism and belonging to the national community (Benwell 2014; Korostelina 2013). However, given that young people's personal geographies extend beyond the classroom, they also encounter and contend with multicultural discourses within wider socio-spatial spaces such as the home and places of leisure (Trell and Van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, "Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective", this volume; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Smith et al. 2005). Consequently, multiculturalism is a marked presence in the political landscape in which young people continually negotiate their citizenship identities and political subjectivities (Smith et al. 2005; Stevick 2007; Thomas 2008).

However, despite its ubiquity in contemporary Western societies, multiculturalism is a highly contested concept characterized by myriad approaches, interpretations, configurations, and criticisms (Doppelt 2001; Kymlicka 2012; Nagel and Staeheli 2004; Uitermark et al. 2005). Advocates of liberal multiculturalism maintain that recognition and affirmation of cultural diversity is crucial to minority groups' meaningful and full access to citizenship rights (Kymlicka 1995; Modood 2008). Critics argue that recognition of group difference is a direct threat to national unity and will only lead to dangerous social fragmentation (Phillips 2009; Schlesinger 1991). Despite these intense debates in policy circles as well as in the academic arena, multiculturalism "still has a great deal of currency in everyday language" (Nagel and Hopkins 2010, p. 2) and tends to carry positive connotations in contemporary society (Soysal 2011). However, the uncertainty that surrounds multiculturalism (even its advocates do not agree on how appreciation of cultural diversity is to be practiced) makes its ubiquity all the more troublesome. Many scholars have suggested that the inarticulate yet routine nature of liberal multiculturalist principles has effected nonsensical, mindless, and meaningless celebrations of cultural difference "while doing little to address deeply entrenched racism" (Nagel and Hopkins 2010, p. 5). Thomas (2008, p. 2964) argues that this is particularly evident in schools, which suggests that young people often bear the brunt of "uncontextualized and unexplained" discourses of multiculturalism in their everyday geographies (see also El-Haj 2007).

The young people from Tallinn, Estonia, that participated in the study presented here have developed understandings of citizenship in one of the many countries that navigated the breakup of the USSR. The collapse of the Soviet Union was an unprecedented geopolitical event, and the reemergence of democratic countries in Eastern Europe saw "West European norms" about rights, identity, and governance "reinterpreted... in novel ways" by titular groups reclaiming sovereignty after decades of Soviet political and sociocultural oppression (Deets 2006, p. 419). A key part of such reinterpretations was a "resurgence" of nationalisms that were

and are legitimized by government assertions that nation-building projects are processes of self-determination and crucial to the preservation of titular majority culture (Feakins and Białasiewicz 2006; Kolossov 2003). The nation-building project in Estonia organized the terms of belonging and citizenship around patently Estonian traits, perpetuating lingering tensions between ethnic Estonians and the significant Russophone minority, most of whom are products of Soviet era migration into the Baltics. It also caused Western Europe, in the form of the EU, to press Estonia for a more multicultural outlook that embraced its country's cultural diversity rather than policies that accentuated the cleavages between Estonians and Russophones (Brosig 2008). As a result, the Estonian nation-building project continues to coexist and interweave with liberal ideals of multicultural integration, complicating and blurring the boundaries within which young people work to conceptualize the terms of belonging and citizenship. Young people in Estonia, as "targets of political awareness campaigns, like civic education" (Wood 2012, p. 338) and denizens of a society socio-spatially fragmented along ethnolinguistic lines, have been perhaps most privy to the complexities of conceptualizing citizenship and belonging amidst liberal ideologies and cultural diversity.

Young people, as frequent negotiators of citizenship discourses that may complement and/or contradict each other, are a cohort whose perspectives form a valuable "site of knowledge" through which construction, contestation, and negotiation of belonging in liberal democratic nation-states can "be more clearly understood" (Leonard 2013, p. 326). The inherent tensions between discourses of nationalism, liberal democratic conceptualizations of universal citizenship, and multiculturalism are thrown into sharp relief in divided societies, particularly ones like Estonia that are liberal democracies situated within Western systems of political governance. In all societies, the "relationships between economic, political, and social contexts influence the meaning of and potential for citizenship" (Staheli and Hammett 2010, p. 669), but in divided societies, the historical underpinnings of conflict tend to exacerbate hostilities within the contexts that citizenships are made meaningful (Laketa, ► [Chap. 9, "Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina"](#), this volume; Ahonen 2001; Barton and McCully 2005; Stevick 2007).

The 29 students that participated in this study experience socio-spatial division in their everyday, personal geographies, including the space of the school, their homes, and their city. As Estonia's capital and most populous city, Tallinn is home to large numbers of both ethnic Estonians and Russophones, providing a rich environment in which to explore how young people negotiate their citizenships in a diverse Estonian society. Students were recruited from four schools in Tallinn. The Estonian school system is divided between Estonian language-medium and Russian language-medium schools, but all schools abide by the same national curricula standards. There is a large (but not complete) overlap between students' ethnolinguistic heritages and the language medium of their school (Kulu and Tammaru 2004). As a result, the majority of students spend a considerable amount of time on a daily basis in a relatively homogenous space, decreasing their chances for meaningful interaction with the Other group. Fifteen students from

two Russian-medium schools and 14 students from two Estonian-medium schools participated in focus groups, which were conducted in English but with Estonian or Russian interpreters present. What follows is an analysis of their narratives and understandings of citizenship in a “multicultural” Estonia.

3 Navigating Multicultural Citizenship Discourses: Student Narratives

The prevalence of multicultural discourses in the everyday spaces of the student participants’ personal geographies is evident from the consistent verbal espousal of multicultural values in the focus groups. To be sure, these discourses buffet against nation-building practices and nationalist discourses that are explicitly contradictory to the values of celebrating diversity and respecting difference. But the “multicultural” approach to citizenship is generally mentioned first in the focus group conversations and is tacitly understood as the “right” way to conceptualize belonging in a liberal democracy.

The student participants are quick to use the language and terminology of multiculturalism early in the focus groups when discussing broad, basic questions about what defines Estonian citizenship and who belongs within the citizenry. Both ethnic Estonian and Russophone students ascribe multicultural characteristics to their “forward looking” generation (Ivan, Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school) that embraces the “Western” ideals of respecting human rights and divorcing citizenship status and rights from ethnocultural identity (Andres, Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school; Anu, Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school). Common themes, phrases, and concepts from liberal multicultural theory are present in their school curricula as evidenced by review of student projects, interviews with civic education teachers, and in-class observations. Programs and rhetoric of state and non-state actors that target young people, for instance, “language camps” and “common activities on democracy” aiming to “support intercultural dialogue” (MISA 2014) and EU projects promoting diversity (Comenius Programme: Europe- Unity in Diversity 2012), are also shot through with multicultural rhetoric. These concepts and terminologies nominally make their way into the students’ narratives early in the discussion of how Estonia’s culturally diverse society operates. For instance, the positioning of liberal multiculturalism as the antithesis of assimilatory nationalisms (Modood 2008) is a theme called on by several student participants to demonstrate their espousal of cultural pluralism:

Today, [nationality] is not so important. But when nationality is taken into consideration. . . and if that’s why you’re making some decisions, only based on nationality, it is not right. It means that the person is living in the past, and today society is different.

Vasily, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

I personally reject the notion of nationalism. I think that nationalism is an idea that is quite absurd in the current geopolitical state of the world.

Toomas, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

Such comments suggest that the discourses of multiculturalism are formally associated with the Western (read: correct) way to approach citizenship, belonging, and identity in the school. It is prudent to note that multicultural citizenship is addressed in varying degrees of intensity in each of the four participating schools. But the consistency, and immediacy within the conversations, of the students' utilizations of its terminology and associated concepts demonstrates the ubiquity of multicultural rhetoric within their school and other everyday spaces.

The student participants' comments on multicultural citizenship in Estonia, however, tend to be descriptions of how Estonia should be rather than how it actually is (as evidenced by their accounts of their movements within and through everyday spaces other than the school). The easy recitation of words and phrases like "respect for other people," "tolerance," and "open-mindedness" gives the feeling of a call and response exercise, particularly as the focus group conversations progress into discussions of "actually existing multiculturalisms" (Uitermark et al. 2005, p. 625) – that is, the ways in which individuals and groups encounter and negotiate cultural difference in the everyday spaces of their personal geographies. The unevenness of the students' narratives on multicultural citizenship in Estonia suggests that, as observed by Thomas (2008), multiculturalism has a tendency to go unexplored in meaningful ways within the spaces that the students encounter it. For instance, students remark on teacher engagement (or lack thereof) with multiculturalism and difference in the classroom:

If we do something connected to other cultures, teachers are like "Yay! We are doing that!" But they don't start talking about it themselves that much.

Mae, (Mixed heritage, Estonian-medium school)

Our teacher is Russian, so he wants to be neutral. He doesn't want to raise these questions that are maybe providing some tension in society.

Viktor, (Russian heritage, Russian-medium school)

These young people, then, are cognizant of the fact that they are taught that liberal multicultural values are the values of "good" citizens in Western democracies and of the fact that there is a conspicuous paucity in the ways in which it is articulated. Mae's assessment of her teachers' somewhat hollow enthusiasm for discussing cultural plurality and its modalities speaks to how multiculturalism may go "unexplained" to students; a reluctance on the part of Viktor's teacher not to address controversial subjects surrounding ethnic Estonia and Russophone relations is illustrative of how it may go "uncontextualized" (Thomas 2008, p. 2864; Barton and McCully 2005). Furthermore, the young people in this study have experienced attempts to foster culturally plural values and encourage integration that fall short of achieving significant results in spaces outside the school as well:

I've been to youth camps, and there was like half Estonians and half Russians. But actually, it was meant to make us come together and to work together and communicate with each other more. But as I was there, still Russians were with just Russians, and Estonians were with just Estonians. Although we had mixed groups and so forth, you still really didn't, like, talk to them.

Maarja, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

Many of the summer programs Maarja refers to are coordinated by the Estonian Integration and Migration Foundation (MISA) and are part of the Estonian government's larger, ongoing series of "State Integration Programmes" aimed at increasing "mutual acceptance and respect of various social groups" (Integration in Estonian Society 2014). Maarja's experience at youth camp indicates that state actors will assume that simply putting young people together in the same setting is enough to break down barriers between majority and minority groups, a phenomenon that has also been observed in Northern Ireland (Leonard 2010) and Lebanon (Staeheli and Nagel 2013; Nagel and Staeheli, ► Chap. 27, "NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon", this volume). Such flimsy reproductions of multicultural citizenship discourse are obviously not lost on the young people who encounter and experience them. But these young people are constantly moving through and within spaces where they must confront, negotiate, and make choices about situations where cultural difference intersects with citizenship and its attendant rights and responsibilities.

As the focus group conversations move past initial considerations of multicultural citizenship, the students' rhetoric begins to demonstrate the importance of situating the school within a wider set of socio-spatial relationships (Hromadzić 2008; Weller 2003) when investigating how young people develop their own conceptualizations of citizenship and belonging in a culturally diverse society. Citizenship discourses are absorbed and acted upon differently by each individual, and the student narratives from this study illustrate the ways in which these young people negotiate and interpret the varying discourses presented in their schools within the wider contexts of other spaces in their personal geographies. As a result, they develop their own interpretations of what it means to be a "multicultural" citizen in Estonia. The young people's initial, rather reflexive, verbalizations of the mutual respect between ethnic Estonians and Russophones emphasize an attitude of pluralism that *unifies* people "within a logic of multicultural diversity" (Thomas 2008, p. 2868). But the students' early use of multicultural terminology describing pluralist attitudes that unite people amidst diversity soon gives way to particularisms that multiply and complicate divisions.

Two main trends appear in the focus groups with regard to how multicultural citizenship discourse tends not to alleviate conflict and/or confusion between the majority and minority in the students' everyday spaces. First, many of the student participants have ideas about what makes a "good" or a "bad" multicultural citizen and what the characteristics of those citizens might be, thereby multiplying the number of particularisms used to delineate citizenship and, subsequently, creating a certain power hierarchy based on performance of multicultural values. Second, and far more contentiously, the student participants have widely varying understandings of how multicultural citizenship is practiced, e.g., whether the majority or minority group is responsible for "extending the olive branch" first, among other things. Their uneven narratives surrounding how multicultural citizenship is practiced are bound up with other, often competing, discourses of national citizenship, demonstrating that "young

people...perceive citizenship in multi-dimensional, fluid, and dynamic terms” and that “different perspectives of citizenship can be inclusionary or exclusionary” for youths (Smith et al. 2005, p. 441).

The lack of consensus among the young people in this study about how cultural pluralism is operationalized in the context of citizenship rights suggests not only that discourses of multiculturalism remain poorly articulated but also that they affect and are affected by the particularisms that structure more exclusionary notions of citizenship. The young people’s experiences and negotiations of uncritical or conflicting versions of multiculturalism in myriad sociocultural and political contexts and in a wide variety of everyday spaces imply that multiculturalism has the potential to simply replace old divisions with new ones and even perpetuate existing ethnocultural tensions.

3.1 Who Is a Good Multicultural Citizen? Multiplying Citizenship Categories

Contemporary citizenship discourses are shot through with norms of what makes a “good” or “bad” citizen (Dalton 2008). Although multiculturalism is a contested concept that is revealed to be inarticulate upon close inspection of its discourses and the myriad modalities associated with it, the broad suggestions by liberal multiculturalists that “diversity should be harnessed by citizens as a valuable attribute” of society and that difference should be respected remain a pervasive influence on citizenship discourses, particularly in educational spaces (Thomas 2008, p. 2864; Republic of Estonia Ministry of Education and Research 2011; EU Eurydice Network 2012). The narratives of the young people in this study demonstrate a common understanding of the basic norms and acts associated with multicultural citizenship. One similarity between conversations in all of the focus groups is that respecting difference and communicating positively with Other groups are defining acts of a multicultural citizenship in Estonia:

I think that you should respect the culture of Estonians and the local culture, and then we will be respected also.

Alexi, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

... be open-minded and accept other people. [Ethnic Estonians and Russophones] can practice tolerance—both ways.

Tiia, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

Many foreigners think that Estonians have a war with Russians. But it’s absolutely not true. We are very good friends. We get on well.

Alexander, (Mixed heritage, Russian-medium school)

The general opinion among the student participants that mutually tolerant practices make for an Estonian society that is *united* by its diversity rather than *divided* by it seems to indicate that multicultural citizenship is a point of unity that has the potential to provide common ground for diverse people. During the focus

groups' initial forays into multicultural citizenship, the young people are ascribing certain norms to the performance of "good" multicultural citizens using very universal, inclusive language. The centrality of normative acts in the students' narratives suggests that "the idea of the good citizen is primarily about what citizens *do*" rather than simply being framed as a status (Pykett et al. 2010, p. 527, emphasis in original; Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, "Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship", this volume). But by associating particular norms and behaviors with proper performance of citizenship (even if it is dressed in universal terminology) is by default associating the *lack* of particular norms and behaviors with "bad citizenship."

This delineation between good and bad multicultural citizens is revealed as the focus group discussions progress past cursory mentions of cultural pluralism. As the students expand upon how respect of sociocultural rights is performed, multicultural citizenship discourses become a vehicle for marking individuals and groups that do not meet the "universal" standards of multiculturalism, thereby multiplying the divisions that structure citizenship and belonging. Specifically, there is a consistent delineation by students at both Estonian-medium and Russian-medium schools between "good Estonians" and "bad Estonians," "good Russians" and "bad Russians."

There are two types of Russians. One type is the bad type, because they're more like, "It's still Russia!" They don't want to learn the [Estonian] language, they don't care about [integrating]—they just live here.

Vlad (Russian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

I think that there are two groups of Estonians: those who don't want to communicate with Russians—they joke about it. But also there is another group of Estonians who really don't mind and they communicate with Russians.

Pyotr (Russian heritage, Russian-medium school)

These Russians who are intelligent and more. . . open minded—they understand Estonian [culture].

Rebeka, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

There are Estonians that think Estonian nationalism itself is bad or should be avoided—cosmopolitans. [Others] have stereotypes, or prejudice [against Russophones].

Andres, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

These comments reveal that many young people's contention with ideals of cultural pluralism and their connections to full belonging in society have the paradoxical ability to use universal language and terminology to redraw lines of exclusion. The students' rhetoric of affirming cultural difference and advocating cross-cultural communication is a desirable alternative to outright rejection of such things. But the discourse of multicultural citizenship has multiplied the number of particularisms that are used to delineate belonging in Estonian society by categorizing "good" and "bad" multicultural citizens. This implies that multiculturalism has a real potential to complicate the politics of belonging by adding another layer of political discourse about who belongs and on what terms (Thomas 2008).

3.2 Who Deserves Respect and Acceptance? Complicating Multicultural Citizenship

This potential becomes even more apparent as the young people begin to describe their conceptualizations of multicultural citizenship in more specific terms through accounts of their personal experiences of negotiating and addressing cultural diversity as they move within and through their everyday spaces in Tallinn. These parts of the students' conversations allude to the uneasy concurrence of differing citizenship discourses in their everyday spaces, where well-articulated ethnolinguistic politics of identity, tempered by specific readings of history, affect and are affected by "ambivalent" contemporary multicultural citizenship projects (Fortier 2007, p. 108). As the focus groups progress, students' increasingly detailed and specific explanations of encounters with cultural difference expose widely varying understandings of how multicultural citizenship is, and should be, practiced.

The majority of the students' understandings privilege the particularisms of a certain ethnolinguistic identity. The heart of the varying opinions on the essence and performance of multicultural citizenship is the question of onus – which group is responsible for initiating integration and accommodating the Other? Previous scholarship has suggested that the onus of minority integration is on the dominant group due to the universalization and naturalization of its particular identity, which requires different groups to assimilate or face exclusion from substantive rights (Kymlicka 1995). But the unique and proximate history of the Soviet era and the early 1990s about-face of sociocultural and political control that abruptly altered the "dominant group" in Estonian society interact complexly with divergent beliefs about whose sufferings were/are worse, presenting new challenges to "deliberating historical oppression" in "divided pluralistic societies" (Bashir 2008, p. 67).

In students from Estonian-medium schools, there is a strong tendency to legitimize Estonian nation-building ideas and practices by using what Hughes (2005, pp. 748–9) terms a "decolonization" discourse, couching the reassertion of the Estonian language and traditions as a reclamation of their rights to self-determination and cultural identity. The Soviet era is not only associated with authoritarian Sovietization (read: Russification) policies and the suppression of Estonian culture but also with the Soviet usurpation of the Republic of Estonia's sovereignty at the dawn of World War II. (Only one focus group mentioned the Nazi occupation bookended by the initial and then lasting Soviet presences). To many of the Estonian-medium school students, the prominence of Estonian ethnolinguistic heritage in spaces of citizenship is simply an expression of cultural identity that for so long was denied, and that its reassertion in Estonian society is on par with the actions of historically oppressed minority groups in other Western countries. As such, historical memory of an oppressed Estonian culture is the platform upon which the terms of multicultural citizenship are conceptualized, with the onus being on Russophones – remnants of an occupation – to accommodate the Estonian ethnolinguistic traits that were associated with the identity of citizens long before Soviet interloping.

Most of the Estonian-medium school students premise the recognition and affirmation of Russophone culture on the idea that respect must be extended to Estonianness first. This is primarily expressed through language norms. Language is a primary marker of identity the world over and is particularly so for Estonians because of the small size of their ethnolinguistic group and subsequent vulnerability to decline or erasure (Pavlenko 2008; Kulu and Tammaru 2004). The Estonian language is also linked inextricably to formal citizenship, as its protection is enshrined in the country's constitution, and the naturalization process in part requires completion of a language exam. The protection of cultural identity – a kind of right to cultural identity that these students see as a key element of multiculturalism – is used as the basis for characterizing language politics as a valid part of the practice of multicultural citizenship in Estonia: “[It is fair to have language requirements] because otherwise the Estonian language wouldn't survive” (Maarja, Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school). Conversely, a reluctance or refusal to learn Estonian is seen as a failure to demonstrate respect for cultural self-determination.

Why don't they learn Estonian so they can speak with us? It's our national language, so the Estonian language is more important than the Russian.

Rebeka, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

A lot of Russians think that we should belong to Russia. . . they don't think its fair that we get to be independent. They are just against everything Estonian. They don't think they should learn the language because they don't acknowledge our independence that much.

Lili, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

Further, many of the Estonian-medium school students do not view the universalization of the Estonian language as a threat to the cultural rights of Russophones. Addressing the official educational requirement and de facto socioeconomic requirement to learn Estonian, one student put it rather succinctly:

They live here, they don't live in Russia. They have always lived here, so I don't think [that they will lose their Russophone heritage]. They can speak Russian at home, nobody takes that away from them. So I don't think it's a bad thing [to privilege Estonian language].

Paula, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

These students are more than happy to consider Russophones as full citizens of their culturally plural society, and to “respect” their Russianness, as long as Russophones make an effort to embrace Estonianness and, it would seem, hide elements of their Russianness by relegating it to the private sphere. Any reluctance on the part of Russophones to be accepting and respectful of Estonian culture and traditions becomes a de facto indication of a “bad” multicultural citizen that is not practicing multicultural citizenship correctly. The focus groups with Estonian-medium school students illustrate how nationalist discourses permeate and are permeated by multiculturalism. They readily acknowledge the cultural diversity that is within their society but structure the affirmation and acceptance of that diversity around the Estonian identity, which they speak of as a neutral, legitimate basis for citizenship rights. The remembering of “our” Estonian space and “our” Estonian values, which predate the arrival of Russophones, completes the

naturalization of Estonian nation-building project. The spaces structured by nationalist citizenship discourses subsequently become the “neutral” sites where multicultural citizenship is practiced. Acceptance of Russianness becomes predicated on the Russophones’ performance of a multiculturalism that privileges Estonianness:

For me it depends, for a Russian who is living here, on their attitude. Because when they are “yeah, we want to rule you” in the same manner as the Russian Federation, then I don’t like them. But if they’re like, “Ok, we’re living here and we’re trying to learn” and be more open to our society and community, then I am ok with it.

Anu, (Estonian heritage, Estonian-medium school)

This is an illustration of what Fortier (2007, p. 108) describes as the “ambivalence” of contemporary multicultural citizenship projects: “embracing the other ‘as other’ in the name of multiculturalism, while pushing him or her away as never fully ‘integrated’ unless he or she embraces ‘our’ values.” Multicultural citizenship within nation-states will always be bound up with and permeated by particularisms, which are universalized by the dominant group (Laclau 1992), that delineate access to spaces of rights. This interaction will be interpreted and contended with by individuals and groups situated in myriad spaces and contexts, which indicates the potential of multicultural citizenship to actually complicate the particularisms that delineate citizenship rather than alleviate tensions between diverse individuals and groups.

The students from Russian-medium schools have a strong inclination to emphasize what they interpret as the hypocrisy of the ethnic Estonian community with regard to respecting the Russophone culture within Estonian society. The ethnic Estonians’ privileging of their own history of oppression as the basis of exercising the right to preserve their fragile cultural identity is roundly viewed as nothing more than a way to perpetuate discrimination by cloaking it in the language of multiculturalism. Many of the Russian-medium school students delegitimize their ethnic Estonian peers’ performances of multicultural citizenship because they fundamentally conceptualize multiculturalism differently. Multiculturalism, to many of the Russian-medium school students, is about the dominant group proactively accommodating their Russophone identities and customs. As the minority group in question, with a very recent history of political exclusion and social marginalization, they place the onus on the Estonian majority to effect culturally plural attitudes toward Russophones.

I think that the level of population in Estonia is dropping, and so the Estonian government should think somehow to appease the population, not thinking about the Estonians, but the other nations that live here—Russians.

Viktor, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

Again, particular readings of Soviet and post-Soviet history are used to buttress their conceptualizations of multicultural citizenship as something that is performed by accommodating the Russophone minority first. The Russian-medium school students often perceive the Estonians’ use of “their” version of the Soviet era as a mechanism to avoid respecting and accommodating Russophones’ cultural identity.

... for example, [Estonian] young people say “I don’t know why I hate Russians, but it comes with my family because my grandma said, my mom said, and now I think that too.” But they don’t understand why!

Yekaterina, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

[On the government’s removal of a Soviet Army memorial in 2007] They should have proved to be tolerant! They should respect the people who live here—maybe they have different opinions about the Soviet times.

Svetlana, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

These students’ perceptions that their culture is vilified by Estonian versions of history – versions that the Russian-medium school students think happen to gloss over Russophone marginalization in recent decades – fuel the feelings that their rights and privileges as citizens of Estonia are being encroached upon. The multicultural values and ideals that structure a culturally plural society are, in their eyes, lacking in many Estonians’ practices of citizenship.

Some students in the Russian-medium school focus groups further explain how Estonians are failing to perform multicultural citizenship properly by using their own culturally plural behaviors to demonstrate how multiculturalism is really supposed to be practiced. For instance, Alexander (Mixed heritage, Russian-medium school) notes that “We know many situations where Estonians just laugh about Russians’ speaking of Estonian, about their accent and everything.” Alexander’s implication is that Russophones’ use of the Estonian language is proof of proper multicultural practice rebuffed by unappreciative and intolerant Estonian responses. Other students conceptualize multiculturalism as a modality of citizenship that allows them, as members of the minority group, to choose if they want to integrate with Estonians at all.

I don’t understand why we have to learn Estonian. For example, in Sweden, they have the second language as Finnish. Even though there are not so many Finnish people living there [the Swedes] learn Finnish. And I don’t understand why we are forced to learn Estonian.

Mikhail, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

It is better to enforce the second state language as Russian [than make Russophones learn Estonian].

Stanislav, (Russophone heritage, Russian-medium school)

The students from Russian-medium schools express a variety of opinions of varying intensities about how they and ethnic Estonians perform multicultural citizenship. But a common thread weaving through their conceptualizations of citizenship is the implicit assumption that the Russophone minority is entitled to act in order to preserve and celebrate their own identity but that ethnic Estonians are not necessarily entitled to the same privilege. While there is much discussion of how ethnic Estonians can do better to ensure that Russophone citizens have full access to their rights while maintaining their differentiated identity, there is little or no discussion of how the ethnic Estonians also have a right to maintain their differentiated identity as well. These trends in the focus groups with students from the Russian-medium schools, like those in the focus groups with students from Estonian-medium schools, appear *after* cursory mentions of the importance of affirming both cultures give way to more detailed conceptualizations of how multiculturalism is practiced, by whom, and when.

Similar to many of the Estonian-medium school students' narratives of the practice of cultural pluralism, many of the Russophone-medium school students' discussions seem to indicate that cultural recognition and affirmation is a zero-sum game to some extent – the only way “our” culture can be protected, respected, and affirmed is for “their” culture to be hidden away or classified as less deserving of recognition on the basis of historical grievances. Such slippages between various understandings of liberal multiculturalism are evident across all of the focus groups, alluding to a paucity of clearly articulated discourses of multicultural citizenship within the everyday spaces of the student participants' personal geographies. Uncontextualized ideas about respecting the diversity in society circulate simultaneously with discourses of national citizenship that are often very well articulated. The fact that Estonia is a divided society with a unique history and majority and minority groups that have well-defined historical grievances against each other tends to increase the complexity of the terms of cultural pluralism. The vast majority of the student participants' versions of multiculturalism fail to go “beyond the wall of language” (Fortier 2007, p. 111) in order to work toward a critical, mutually beneficial assessment of the conflict between ethnic Estonians and Russophones. This suggests that the discourses of multicultural citizenship that they encounter are neither well contextualized nor well explained and as such have a real potential to multiply and complicate the particularisms that delineate belonging to the citizenry in Estonia.

4 Conclusions

In light of the persistent and intense presence of debates within Estonia on pluralism, citizenship, belonging, and their interrelatedness, research on everyday encounters and conceptualizations of multicultural discourses is both apt and timely. But the arguments made in this chapter also contribute to wider discussions of how multicultural citizenship discourses are directed at, engaged with, and understood by young people. They prompt turning a more critical eye to how multicultural citizenship discourses affect and are affected by young people who are the subjects of a vast number of (often competing) political projects, notably citizenship education aimed at helping students “acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to function effectively within their cultural community, nation-state, and region in the global community” (Banks 2008, p. 129). The findings of this research suggest that effect of contemporary disagreements, confusion, and general controversy surrounding multicultural citizenship has been to muddy the waters through which young people must wade when conceptualizing and negotiating cultural difference in their own lifeworlds.

By comparing the ebbs and flows of certain discourses in the focus groups with the youth participants in this study, this chapter has attempted to illustrate the potential of multicultural discourses to complicate and multiply the particularisms that delineate the terms of full, meaningful access to rights and privileges in the nation-state. Paying particular attention to the students' rhetoric reveals that the

language of multiculturalism has permeated their narratives, but that its vocabulary often obscures more exclusionary ideas about the terms that delineate the bounds of citizenship in a culturally diverse society. Looking at the contradictions that exist in the narratives of students from ethnic Estonian and Russophone backgrounds, it can be suggested that discourse aimed at developing a multicultural citizenship is going to have limited, or at least uneven, effectiveness as long as there are persistent tensions surrounding how cultural difference is addressed and negotiated.

Multiculturalism aims to address differences, alleviate the tensions that arise between majority and minority groups over the terms of citizenship, and explore how much difference the status of citizenship can tolerate (Modood 2008; Rosaldo 1994; Joppke 2007). But this research with young ethnic Estonians and Russophones in Tallinn, Estonia, problematizes the possibility that multicultural citizenship in its current forms can reduce the number of particularisms that delineate the bounds of citizenship in the national community. The narratives of the students suggest that injecting an uncritical and nebulous multicultural citizenship discourse into a liberal democratic nation-state that is nonetheless divided along ethnolinguistic lines will tend to – at different points in the dynamic, fluid negotiation of citizenship meanings – either replace old divisions with new ones, perpetuate existing divisions, or complicate the particularisms that structure the term belonging. Certainly complicating things for the young people in this study is the reality that there is both an explicit notion that espousing culturally plural attitudes is what good citizens of democracies do *and* an implicit ambiguity and ambivalence within multicultural citizenship discourse. Furthermore, the roles of historical memory and competing visions of righting of historical wrongs in Estonia seem to introduce even more permutations of multicultural citizenship in these young peoples' narratives as they attempt to reconcile their cultural and political identities. In future research, it would be useful for studies in other societal contexts to evaluate more fully how multiculturalism is transmuted through young people's experiences of cultural differences in a wide variety of spaces. Such studies may shed greater light on how multiculturalisms are "actually existing" (Uitermark et al. 2005) and continuing to "shape, and to take shape in, the spaces of everyday life" (Nagel and Hopkins 2010, p. 2).

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Abstract

Learning citizenship in post-conflict settings involves the development of new forms and relationships of solidarity that link individuals and the collective in ways that are not associated with previous conflicts or divisions. In this chapter, we describe learning as a socio-temporal process through understandings of relationships and new ways of being are developed and sedimented through habits and customs. Learning, in this sense, does not refer to teaching through formal or informal education, but rather refers to a process by which perceptions and relationships are changed. Our concern in this chapter is with the ways in which young people learn new forms of citizenship, as manifested in the relationships between individuals and collectivities. Efforts to promote, or to teach, citizenship often emphasize particular forms of behavior and active participation in civil society; these behaviors are associated with civility. But in learning citizenship, normative expectations of civility and relationships in civil society are often reworked, questioned, disrupted, and challenged. As these questions

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and challenges are thereby raised, we can glimpse the kinds of solidarities that youth might imagine, yearn for, and seek to stabilize or to change.

Keywords

Citizenship • Civil society • Civility • Learning • Teaching • Pedagogy • Habits • Nongovernmental organizations • Identity • Solidarity • Collectivity

1 Introduction

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter BiH), an event that was simultaneously remarkable and unremarkable happened in 2013: a census was held. It was the first census since 1991, before the war and the peace process that, in combination, created and solidified a new ethnic geography in the country. The census was promoted by the international community as part of a reconciliation process, but it was highly contentious. The questionnaire forced respondents to classify themselves in accordance with ethno-religious categories that many people believed shoehorned them into categories that did not describe their identities and the ways they wanted to be recognized as individuals and citizens. Rather than identifying along ethno-religious lines as Bosniak, Croat, or Serb, many people sought other identities, such as Yugoslav, Bosnian, Roma, or a completely different identity that was not bound up in war. Indeed, it is estimated that in a trial of the census form, nearly 37 % of young people chose an identity other than an ethno-religious identity or did not answer that question at all (Pasic 2013).

In Lebanon, a different struggle over identity and citizenship is also being waged. In that country, “personal status laws” assign individuals to religious sects based on paternity. The sect cannot (easily) be changed, but often bears no relation to an individual’s religious beliefs or identity. While often irrelevant to one’s faith, the sect that is indicated on identity cards (such as birth certificates and passports) can limit one’s options in important ways. Most controversially, perhaps, it is difficult to marry a partner outside of one’s sect, without leaving the country or renouncing citizenship, which in turn is both difficult and dangerous unless able to claim a second nationality. The ability to act as a full citizen *without* a sectarian identity is folded into many activist movements in which young people (as well as others) participate. Yet in many ways the Lebanese government and nation depend on this sectarian scaffolding, thus pitting a particular collective identity (that of the sect) and national interest against those who claim the right to chose their own identity as citizen.

In South Africa, the dismantling of the apartheid regime required a new language to talk about its citizenry. There was a keen desire to imagine a new way for all South Africans to be named and recognized as members of the community, as being in the world. *Ubuntu* was offered as a way of expressing this new relation between individuals who are recognized as citizens by virtue of their basic humanness and the bonds that link humans to each other. It is an optimistic, even utopian, way of imagining a new South Africa no longer divided by past racial classifications.

Yet by invoking *ubuntu*, the lingering persistence of racialized identities and racialized opportunities seems unspeakable. If everyone shares a common humanness, what can explain the conditions of existence that remain divided and deeply unequal? A language was developed in the 1990s and early 2000s to describe this division as between “previously disadvantaged” and “previously advantaged” groups; this was followed later by a language of “cultural communities.” The language, however, fails to describe the embodied difference – and perhaps identities – that remain significant in the social locations and opportunities for South African citizens.

These three examples may seem unconnected, yet each country is witnessing the articulation – tentative and incoherent, perhaps – of new relationships of citizenship. These are relations between individuals, communities, nationalities, and states, and they are positioned within complex topographies of social, economic, and political locations. Those locations, however, are also material, meaning that these relationships are built, experienced, and contested in the homes, streets, and cities in which people live and that also contribute to the ways they see and learn their worlds. That they are each emerging from recent violence and conflict lends a particular sharpness and urgency, even as there are efforts to dull and blunt the ways in which conflict and politics are waged. And in each case, the struggles to define a new imaginary of solidarity involve the intervention of international and translocal entities that may not have been directly involved in conflict.

The chapter uses learning as a central concept in exploring the constitutive tensions between two aspects of citizenship that these efforts must traverse: as individual (in the sense of identities, rights, and political subjectivity) and the collective (in the sense of communal identities, solidarities, and alternative subjectivities). Through learning, we argue we can analyze youth activism around politics, citizenship, and new ways of being and acting. The very term “citizenship” embeds the constitutive tension in efforts to promote it and in the ways that young people learn to be citizens. The suffix “-ship,” for instance, connotes both individual attributes or qualities and the state of being in a collective. Our concern in this chapter, then, is in the ways that young people learn citizenship, traversing its individual and collective aspects.

We understand learning as a socio-temporal process through which understanding of relationships and ways of being are developed, perceptions of communities and societies are changed, and goals and expectations are formed and acted upon. Learning, in this sense, is not a direct outcome of teaching through formal and informal education systems. Rather, it is a process by which new information and experiences interact with sedimented habits and understandings to change perceptions and ways of being in the world. It is, in some ways, transitional but also cumulative and potentially transformative. And if learning conditions the ways in which people imagine themselves in the world, we can expect there will be efforts by external agents to change those imaginations through teaching or, in other words, by efforts to intervene in sedimented habits and understandings.

Our concern in this chapter is with the ways in which learning citizenship involves a negotiation of citizenship as a relation between individuals and

collectivities. In those negotiations, we expect that young people will question – and perhaps challenge – the existing order of the collectivities in which they live (e.g., communities, cities, states, ethno-religious groups, and so forth). In other words, these negotiations may involve efforts to teach particular forms of citizenship, but that these are subsequently reworked as citizenship is learned. In the challenges thereby raised, we can glimpse the kinds of solidarities that youth might imagine, yearn for, and seek to stabilize or to change.

The chapter is organized in three further sections. In the first, we elaborate our conceptualization of learning as a process in which information is translated and made relevant to people's lives and new habits are internalized. The second section of the chapter explores the emphasis on teaching and learning within civil society that is evident in international and translocal efforts to create new citizens in countries that have been marked by division. We argue that the ways civility (as ordering and as behavior) is taught and learned are critical to the ways that youth imagine, renegotiate, and perhaps seek to reorder citizenship. Finally, we argue that rather than necessarily solidifying forms of state citizenship, the practices and consequences of learning citizenship mirror and embody the precarious and contingent nature of political life in diverse locations. The argument is based on a multisited ethnographic analysis of youth and citizenship in Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and South Africa.

2 Learning to Be a Citizen

In each of the countries mentioned in the “Introduction,” there is a concerted effort to produce a new generation of citizens who can help the country overcome division. These efforts are premised on a belief that it is possible for young people to learn to be good citizens (see also Laketa, ► [Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina”](#), this volume). Learning is an important word in these efforts, because there is an unquestioned belief that good citizens will not emerge without programs and curricula to encourage new habits and values. In the absence of such efforts, it is feared that old enmities and bad habits that allowed – and that sometimes emerged from – conflict will surface, perhaps in more virulent form. Politicians, communities, and families are often indicted as permitting or even encouraging un-citizenly behaviors, such as intolerance, bias, disengagement from public affairs, and corruption, and so they are unlikely to foster this new generation of citizens (see Staeheli and Hammett 2010; Hammett and Staeheli 2011). To create such citizens, a loosely organized network of nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, government agencies, and academics has emerged to teach and encourage citizenship. But young people are not likely to passively accept such teaching, so the question is raised: what does it mean to “learn” to be a citizen?

Learning occurs in a variety of settings and is not limited to a formal curriculum presented in a classroom (see Thapliyal, ► [Chap. 2, “Privatized Rights, Segregated Childhoods: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Education Policy in India”](#), this

volume). McFarlane (2011, 3) defines it as the “specific processes, practices, and interactions through which knowledge is created, contested, and transformed” and through which “perception emerges and changes.” In this way, learning requires engagements – practices and interactions – and is different to receiving information that is taught. Significantly, those engagements may involve contestation and challenges to an established order or accepted knowledges (Staeheli et al. 2013). McFarlane further argues that learning involves several processes. First, there is a process of translating knowledge as it passes from different spaces (e.g., from think tanks in the West to classrooms or programs in post-conflict countries) and in different forms (e.g., a document to a project that is part of an “active citizenship” program). Second is the process of coordination whereby materials and practices are adapted and mediated to suit and be made meaningful in particular contexts. This often requires some level of change or reconstruction of systems – such as a curriculum – but might also involve intermediaries; in this way, it is closely related to translation. Finally, learning involves some level of haptic immersion, lived experience, or relationships between individuals, other groups, and environments. In this way, our conceptualization of learning attends to the ways that it is embodied, felt, and practiced, often through everyday experience. Approaching learning from this perspective highlights the difference between information and how knowledge is constructed, gives meaning, and shapes action, even as it is acted upon. It is an approach in which learning is signified by changes in perception and action, not necessarily by acceptance of what is taught. The “outcomes” of learning cannot therefore be predicted, but instead are likely to be contingent and ambiguous.

The latter point is critical. Learning involves more than changing perceptions; it is active and even, perhaps, transformative. It is also cumulative in the sense that it interacts with knowledges that have been previously learned and accepted. Thinking about these interactions, American educational philosopher John Dewey (1922/2012) suggested that knowledge and the ideas and practices that sustain it constitute a form of habit, by which he means repeated activities or practices that take on meanings beyond the activities themselves. Habits, he argues, reflect past knowledge, but also guide the future, as activities are both a reflection and reinforcement of knowledge. These habits become sedimented over time and are layered onto other habits. Knowledge and habits are not static, however, but instead change as they interact with other knowledges and other habits, often in unpredictable ways (Sullivan 2001). Efforts to promote a new kind of citizenship in post-conflict societies can be thought of as attempts to change the habits of young people through the introduction of alternative and perhaps disruptive knowledges and ideas so that youth might act as citizens who create new habits and ways of being.

In encouraging these new ways of being, a pedagogy of citizenship is circulated by international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, governments, and academics that attempt to coordinate changes in the practices and outlooks of young people in post-conflict societies. Critical education scholars understand pedagogy as the production and maintenance of dominant discourses to achieve particular sociopolitical ends (Pykett 2010). In this case, it provides the

translations of different normative underpinnings of citizenship and attempts to coordinate them in a consolidated, democratic society and state. The pedagogy is a shared knowledge that circulates, and it is hoped and instills new habits. Yet the interactions with previously sedimented knowledges and habits lend an unpredictability to what is learned from this pedagogy (Staeheli et al. 2014).

To encourage habits of engagement and tolerance, the pedagogy of citizenship that is promoted within post-conflict societies emphasizes forms of cosmopolitanism and engagement or participation in civil society (Staeheli et al. 2014). Across our three case study countries, we found myriad training courses in intercultural communication and opportunities for young people to discuss ideas and to build networks. These programs, however, move beyond opportunities for encounter (such as through discussion) and ask that young people work on projects together; they are typically projects that involve action in civil society, rather than through the state. Learning new habits of citizenship required action, not just dialogue, according to the project directors we interviewed. Much as Dewey (1922/2012) anticipated, embodied, haptic forms of learning were seen as key to instilling new ways of interacting with other citizens, citizens who may be different to themselves.

To dislodge preexisting norms and habits requires concerted effort (Sullivan 2001), such as that reflected in the pedagogy of citizenship. These interventions, however, operate largely at the individual level and are indicative of the ways that citizenship is *taught* and only secondarily *learned*. It is hoped that young people will participate in activities and programming and that their behaviors and ways of acting as citizens will change. In this way, it is anticipated that the habits of a new kind of citizen will be repeated and become part of the subjectivity of the individual. To the extent that they are habituated, they create norms that come to be “a given feature of reality” (see Lumsden 2013, p. 73). The extent to which such individual changes might occur, new citizens might emerge, but effecting a change in the collective aspects of citizenship requires broader changes.

Following Lumsden (2013, 72), it also, however, requires a change in customs. If habits are individual, customs are “modes orientating practice . . . at the collective level” (Lumsden, 72) or “widespread uniformities of habit” (Dewey 1922/2012, p. 58). Much as program directors might wish otherwise, programs to promote citizenship to youth rarely achieve a change in customs; directors, instead, recount “success stories” of changes in the way that individual young people behave and the norms that they have internalized or learned. Returning to the definition of citizenship presented in the “Introduction,” it seems that young people might have learned to be citizens – to have internalized and habituated norms of acting as citizens – but that the broader uniformities of habit are more difficult to achieve and typically require interventions in social, economic, and political structures to make them more democratic and inclusive. Such changes are difficult to achieve in any context, but are arguably more difficult to achieve in states and societies that have emerged from entrenched conflicts, precisely because the causes of division are rarely addressed through war, through reconciliation processes, or through post-conflict pedagogies (Jarausch and Geyer 2003). Instead, post-conflict pedagogies often suppress discussions of the past and involve a forward-looking perspective, seeking

to create new opportunities that might ease tensions and create new, non-conflictual collective identities as citizens grounded in place, but participating in the world (Osler and Starkey 2005). Central to this effort has been the coordination of opportunities for interaction that transcend difference and that might create new habits of cooperation. Civil society has been prioritized as the “location” for such interactions, reflecting long-held beliefs in Western society that civil society can be a realm where citizens engage, discuss, and build identities that are not encumbered by difference, but instead are enriched by it (see Nagel and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 27, “NGOs and the Making of Youth Citizenship in Lebanon”](#), this volume). As we argue in the next section, it is hoped that new solidarities and forms of citizenship may take hold in individuals and, through aggregation, create customs that are consonant with the habits of presumably democratic citizens.

3 Civil Society, Civility in Society, and Citizenship

Efforts to promote a particular kind of citizenship have assumed that the reinvigoration of civil society is critical (Putnam 1993). In all three settings under consideration in this chapter, civil society has been central to the pedagogy of citizenship, through internationally sponsored donor initiatives, promoting social movements (albeit within certain ranges), and nurturing domestic discourses of democratization. Indeed, international interventions in the post-Cold War era have repeatedly emphasized the need to foster civil society organizations as a means of resolving conflict, establishing a counterweight to the state and/or developing popular support for new sovereign institutions. In this respect civil society is a flexible signifier that allows a celebration of renewed forms of public collective action while also removing such public competences from the state itself. Consequently, it is a term that celebrates the collectivity while also emphasizing the requirement for certain forms of individual behavior and comportment; in terms used previously, it encompasses both habits and customs of civility. In the ideal, the pedagogy of citizenship in civil society traverses the two, allowing the possibility of alternative articulations of the political and social ideas and action, the fertilization of social capital, the development of a post-conflict political society, and even the possibility of insurgency.

In all three of our case studies, civil society remains ontologically significant despite its seeming lack of conceptual consistency. The imaginaries of civil society voiced by the interview respondents illustrated – and in some senses celebrated – alternative and shifting interpretations of this term. These interpretations could be mapped on to different understandings of learning at the individual level that hold the potential to incorporate new collective identities signified by inclusive citizenship. In particular, we have observed how agents involved in both teaching and learning citizenship often cleaved civil society into two, often complimentary, concepts. The first was a social understanding, where nurturing civil society stands as a means through which associations could be fostered that were distinct from state or the family. This sense of the potential of an arena of associations has been recounted in many liberal accounts of the political role of civil society, perhaps

most notoriously in Alexis de Tocqueville's *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (Democracy in America) (1835) which rated "associational life" as a key democratic expedient (Kaldor 2003, p. 19). But following Boyd (2006), we argue that this narrow focus overlooks a different understanding of civil society, not as a realm of associative life but rather as an arena within which practices of civility – in the sense of particular behaviors – are debated, practiced, and learned. Recalling classical interpretations of civil society as a realm in which difference is negotiated without recourse to violence, a focus on civility draws attention to moral and behavioral interventions that are made under the banner of fostering civil society and citizenship. Parsing the civil from society allows us to analyze how these different interpretations of the term both cohere and diverge, but perhaps most importantly using this separation serves as a means through which the expectations and contradictions of civil society may be examined and in some senses coordinated. In this way, it traverses a topographic relationship similar to that between the individual and the collective embedded in citizenship.

Taking first the interpretation of society, the interviews illustrate that the mechanisms to cultivate civil society imposed a framework that divides a hybrid social and political life into clear political, economic, and social sectors. Part of the reason for the durability of civil society is its imagined political positioning "outside" state structures, which were often presented as corrupt, unreliable, or captured by single-party interests. For example, a representative of an international agency in Lebanon explained the significance of investing in civil society:

[We] work with state institutions as well as civil society. But there is mistrust in state institutions, while the state considers civil society to lack knowledge. On the other hand civil society is needed to promote mechanisms of accountability.

Erasing the possibility of overlaps between members of formal political structures and civil society organizations – what Ananya Roy (2010) might refer to as a "double agents" – civil society is presented in such comments as a virtuous sphere that holds the state to account (see Amoores and Langley 2004). It is this enduring image of the external pressure emanating from civil society that stems from post-Socialist transitions of the late 1980s and continues into the present.

The simultaneous assertion that civil society "lack[s] knowledge" stalked a number of the interviews and echoed sentiments of international officials in BiH from previous research that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) do not know how to articulate their needs or comprehend the complexity of processes of state consolidation (see Jeffrey 2012, p. 121). The response to this perceived lack of knowledge operated on two levels. In the first frame, donors and government agencies sought to use civil society organizations as conduits through which ideas of citizenship may be conveyed. In the second, strategies were put in place to educate citizens about the democratizing role of civil society itself. In these terms civil society was both conduit and apparatus for processes of teaching – and perhaps learning – citizenship.

The research has been replete with examples of the use of civil society as conduit for teaching or promoting new habits of citizenship and thereby, they hope, customs

of citizenship. In particular, interviewees often returned to the concept of civil society to emphasize the need for more “active” understanding of citizenship roles. A youth organization in Tuzla, BiH, sought to use its activities as a means to educate individuals about the possibilities of more transformative forms of politics:

[W]e’re trying in this past year, to let people know that’s it’s really important to be active in the civil society. Because things are not going to change by themselves. And not just because it’s a really bad situation in Bosnia. [. . .] I can tell you for sure in the past 6 years, we’ve always had problems with the fact that the people are really passive.

In these terms, the youth civil society organization used its resources, in particular funding from a US donor, to cultivate a more active form of urban citizenship in Tuzla structured around ecological projects designed to improve the local environment. The respondent was particularly animated about the threat of passivity, stemming from a sense of anomie linked by the interviewee to both a legacy of a Socialist past and the post-conflict economic malaise in BiH. Civil society acts, in this case, as an educational conduit that seeks to motivate individuals to resolve local issues without recourse to formal state structures. Yet program directors despaired of being able to document (for their annual reports to donors) that changes to individual habits were leading to new customs of citizenship at a collective level.

But there is another aspect to the social imagining of civil society. The presentation of civil society as an apparatus suggests that the very presence of associative life is a democratizing force. The worrying allusion here is that the external promotion of civil society organizations, through donor initiatives and short-term program funding, leads to democratic consolidation. Rather than the more practice-based attempts cited above, the creation of civil society as an institutional realm is treated as evidence of newly learned citizenship. In McFarlane’s terms, it assumes that the translation and coordination of information about citizenship would lead to changes in the habits and haptic experience of learned citizenship. While this was a concern for program directors as they completed their reports, there is a deeper significance to this assumption that has important effects on the qualities of democratic governance.

One of the key criticisms of “gentrified” civil society (Jeffrey 2012) is that it acts as a means through which governmental mechanisms may penetrate society. Consequently, the discourse of strengthening civil society may be read as part of a mechanism through which bureaucratic power is embedded in social structures (Ferguson 1990; Jeffrey 2007). As opposed to fostering autonomous and potentially transformative forms of citizenship, this perspective emphasizes the ways in which collective or individual agency is disciplined through reliance on particular forms of civil society; not all possible habits of citizenship are encouraged, it seems. Where civil society organizations begin to undertake governmental functions, slippages can occur as social activism shifts into the realm of subcontracting state responsibilities and may soften or dull the political impact of their work. One NGO member in Lebanon, for instance, described this as a move from “demanding” to “supplying” change as a subcontractor to the state:

So instead of demanding, we supply change. This was the shift in the mind-set from demanding to supplying change. We want to supply them with change because when we were NGOs and went to demand for a reform of the Ministry of Social Affairs, they didn't do it. But now they call upon us and pay us money so that we reform the Ministry of Social Affairs. It is a total shift of the paradigm.

This example illustrates the forms of social imagining that encircle discourses of civil society development and point to the close proximity, noted by Mitchell (2003), between civil society action and neoliberal practices of entrepreneurialism. From the perspective of some, learning citizenship entails the cultivation of customs that celebrate associative life that *conforms with* – rather than *challenges* – neoliberal governmentality. It is worth noting here that these visions of society crosscut the framework of state/non-state. As agents – both citizens and NGOs – operating within civil society assume responsibilities that had been in the realm of the state, the boundaries between public and private spheres are blurred and even perhaps erased. These boundaries and their changed “location” or nature also have implications for the habits of citizenship that are learned and the relations between individuals, communities, and the state.

These accounts point to the forms of social and political segmentation (inside and outside the state) and solidarity (through associative life) that characterizes many of the discussions concerning civil society, in both scholarly and practitioner fields. But studying the mechanisms by which particular forms of citizenship are taught in these diverse contexts highlights a second – though interlinked – aspect of the desire to embed these activities in civil society. Largely implicitly, the process of teaching citizenship also emphasizes the requirement to nurture civility. These attempts remind us that civil society is not simply a social or political construct, but a relational process of individual interactions, within which there are certain norms of appropriate conduct or desired habits. As Boyd (2006: 864) has asserted, civility has both formal and substantive attributes: it emphasizes sets of customs and behavior while also gesturing at an individual's standing within a political community. Necessarily, then, civility is always plural as the codification of behavior is collectively established and reinforced. In this way – and this is Boyd's point – civility is a form of minimal moral obligation within a particular political community where forms of political or ethical consensus are not possible. Mirroring ideas of agonism (Mouffe 2005) or politics of propinquity (Amin 2004), civility is a term that draws our attention to habits through which difference may be accommodated within a moral and political framework. Civil society invoked in these terms requires the cultivation of certain forms of political and social subjectivity and behaviors. From this perspective, political contestation is not necessarily inconsistent with civility, as long as debates and actions are conducted within socially recognized and validated limits, such tolerance and nonviolence.

The cultivation of civility was a key aspect of the work of youth NGOs in the three sites under consideration. Mirroring Boyd's findings, the organizations often blended the cultivation of civility with a sense of the individual's position and responsibilities within a society, conceptualized across local, national, and global spatial scales. For example, a youth development organization based in

South Africa saw the cultivation of “emotional intelligence” as directly linked to transformative political action:

[We are] really looking at, sort of, non-cognitive skills and sort of self-awareness and those things so it’s very much based on [. . .] emotional intelligence, and that’s a sort of what we hang our content on for the leadership development stuff, and then finally getting them to take all of that, and channelling it into a tangible action that they can take when they go home. And for us, that action that we are getting our young people to take is to come up with their own ideas and solutions to problems. By coming up with a project that they can run, they can make that actually happen.

This account of self-provisioning – of young people learning to rely on themselves to effect change – shares much with the ecological urban politics of the Tuzla-based youth NGO mentioned above. But the focus on the emotional intelligence links their practices to a politics of civility. In particular, the reference to “taking learning home” locates the practice of learning citizenship within a nested set of spatial locations, from the civic association, the home, the city, and the nation. In addition, the generic way in which learning is imagined adds a cosmopolitan scale to these processes, where the rights and responsibilities of community membership are inscribed through the recognition of duties to others.

But the cultivation of civility extended beyond the inscription of emotional conduct within society; it was also grounded in specific places. A second South African youth organization linked the cultivation of responsibility with the establishment of a coffee shop:

[T]he founder started a place off as a coffee bar. So while they are selling alcohol and liquor and stuff next door, what you get here, well you walk in here, there’s a coffee bar. [. . .] Just if you’re not into the alcohol and that, where is there that you can go? [. . .] we want them to be responsible citizens because there are so many factors that impacts on that responsibility that they have.

Recalling a sense of the historic links between temperance and civility, coffee houses played a central role in historical accounts of European cultivations of civil behaviors and civil society, at least for bourgeois men (e.g., Habermas 1991). Their prominence in contemporary accounts points to a potentially more exclusionary impulse within understandings of civility, where adjudications of civility are attached to bourgeois behavior rather than impulses towards others. The significant issue here for our argument is the temporal framework within which both this and the earlier account place civility: it is a set of dispositions to be learned collectively, through training activities in the first case and drinking nonalcoholic drinks together in the second. Civil society is not, then, a reflection of natural law, but a set of habits and customs that are cultivated through collective action. It is also the site in which the pedagogy of citizenship is activated and habituated and citizenship might be learned, free from the pernicious influences of politicians, sects, the state, and the family.

Yet the means through which ideas of citizenship are taught and practiced do not play out within a single normative framework. While some organizations emphasize civility in terms of affective politics of inclusivity and tolerance, others have

interpreted civility as characteristics that assist the individual within the labor market. These neoliberal interpretations of civility – which intersect with earlier discussions of entrepreneurialism – were evident in a number of youth development NGOs in all three contexts, such as this organization in Sarajevo, BiH:

[b]ecause our definition of empowerment would be, that you have young people that are not marginalized, that are not out of the job, and that are active in society. And so, you cannot be active in society and at the same time be poor and out of the labour market. So I would say that, somehow, it goes together.

Rather than self-provisioning, this account points to the sense that developing civility requires the correct forms of credentials that may be attractive to employers. This is a collective, though hierarchical, exchange of civility. Rather than the moral equality emphasized by Boyd and the youth organizations mentioned previously, this points to the ways in which concepts of civility may discipline individuals to comport themselves in ways that are conducive to particular social norms. Here civility serves as a set of social and cultural characteristics as opposed to a more abstract set of moral obligations.

This section has outlined the ambiguous role played by ideas and practices of civil society within youth citizenship programs. Though concepts of civil society are central to processes of learning citizenship, we have argued that this is not simply a reflection of the particular institutional context within which social interventions take place. Instead, the utilization of civil society pointed to two, interlinked, maneuvers. In the first frame, international donors and social activists saw the construction and utilization of civil society as a means through which social concerns may be aggregated and political influence channeled. As the evidence from the interviews attests, this was not necessarily a form of transformative politics; liberal governmental functions can be distributed through civil society agencies despite their imagined non-state status. But to focus on this alone would both reify an imaginary of civil society as a distinct sector of social and political life (which could be contested in all three cases) and overemphasize the significance of these institutional elements for learning citizenship. Instead, it was the focus on the *civil* aspects of civil society that framed many of the activities of the organizations under investigation. Though civility often conjures rather bourgeois notions of appropriate behavior, the processes of teaching citizenship were often structured around shaping individual behavior. Just as notions of citizenship conjure ideas of both collective and individual elements, attempts to intervene in behavioral practices point to the collectively inflected ways in which individual behavior is judged.

4 Conclusion

On June 5, 2013, demonstrations began outside the BiH parliament in Sarajevo as a show of protest against the failure of the government to issue a *Jedinstveni matični broj građana* (JMBG, Unique Master Citizen Number in English) for newborn babies. The dispute itself stems from a well-established fault line in post-Dayton BiH:

political parties in the Republika Srpska (RS) wanted a new law for the JMBG which would stipulate a baby's origin in one of the two postwar entities (the RS or the Federation of BiH). This would entrench the existence of the two entities, an arrangement that members of the Federation of BiH (and, in the main, international actors) would like to dismantle through constitutional reform. The next day, protestors – mostly young people coordinated through a series of youth NGOs with international funding to promote youth's participation in the civic realm – blocked the entrance and exits of the parliament building. This move sought to disrupt the activities of the legislators and demonstrate their frustration at the state's inability to pass a new JMBG law. During another round of protests on June 11, where estimates suggest around 10,000 protestors were present, the deadline was set for June 30 for an adoption of a law on the JMBG, but this deadline was not met. The direct cause for the protests, organized primarily over the social networks, was the case of the 3-month-old Belmina Ibrisevi, who needed a bone marrow transplant but could not leave BiH as she was prevented gaining the appropriate visa without a JMBG number. Belmina finally died in October 2013, despite eventually receiving treatment in Germany.

The JMBG protests illuminate the ambiguities of processes of “learning citizenship” addressed through this chapter. Just as the discussion has interrogated the plural forms of learned citizenship enacted through civil society, the forms of civic action on show during these days of unrest in central Sarajevo can be interpreted in a number of different ways. The first is to understand the protests as forms of “active citizenship.” As we have discussed, citizenship education emphasizes the importance of individual competences and self-motivation to the success of building civic institutions and forms of social solidarity. The “good” habits of a civil society are similarly structured around a sense that there are certain forms of individual and collective disposition (i.e., civility) that are conducive to well-functioning polity. The central role of youth NGOs in the protests illustrates the inculcation of forms of active citizenship, where young people came together and sought to lobby parliament to change laws and to function with greater competence. The focus on the parliament building and surrounding streets emphasized the target of state-based formal political institutions. In this vein the protests can be taken as evidence of new forms of responsibility and collective action in BiH, especially if they are read as a desire to retain civic citizenship identifiers in the face of ethno-political pressure.

The protests have received alternative interpretations. The use of practices of civil disobedience – in particular trapping legislators inside the government building – points to the ways in which “learned citizenship” exceeds narrow spatial or behavioral templates. As argued earlier in the chapter, the competences and affiliations inculcated through learning citizenship are not spatially or socially bound: they often involve debates concerning rights and senses of justice that challenge existing institutional or territorial formulations. This sense of potential “rights to come” is only underscored by the discursive position of youth as political actors whose citizenly identities and behaviors remain in a process of becoming. The activism during the JMBG protests targeted the BiH government, but the appeals had a more complex geography than merely state territoriality. The claims to rights were simultaneously made internationally, in terms of both the message (the desire

not to ethnically mark babies at birth) and the media (the use of social media to communicate the protest beyond the borders of BiH) and, locally, in terms of reclaiming public space as a means through which rights claims may be asserted. In these terms the protests mark a radical shift in political strategy in BiH, in that claims to rights were disconnected with assertions of territorialized identity. But more significantly, they also point to forms of activist – and even insurgent – citizenship that looks beyond the existing nation-state structure as a locus of justice.

Rather than trying to assert neat categorizations of active or activist citizenship, the focus is on learning points to the interwoven nature of these two expressions of political mobilization. As McFarlane (2011) asserts in relation to urban Mumbai, the lens of learning allows a focus on the embodied ambiguities of attempts to communicate, consolidate, and practice citizenship. Rather than straightforwardly generating practices of acquiescence or resistance, the responses to citizenship programs in the diverse locations under examination have often exhibited complex mixtures of the two, where campaigning for changes in government policy sits alongside more radical attempts to provoke social or political transformation. In parallel, learning points to the tensions between individual and community are contained within notions of citizenship. While learning is suggestive of forms of developing individual competence, these developments are only achieved, understood, and given meaning within collectivities. In this way learning is a dynamic and situated practice that points to the potential inadequacy of some of the key tensions that have informed citizenship studies: between civic and ethnic, civil and insurgent, active and activist.

In sum, our concern in this chapter has been to chart the ways in which learning citizenship involves a negotiation of citizenship as a relation between individuals and collectivities. Focusing on learning captures the dynamism and plural ways that youth learn citizenship across the three case study locations under examination. Our approach to learning is not designed to look beyond these differences, but rather to emphasize the complex interplay between different understandings of solidarity, temporality, and space that coexist within such citizenship initiatives. Crucially, the process of learning is not path-dependent: the outcomes cannot be predicted in advance, and in all three locations under examination, the discourses of learning citizenship have not fed through to unitary and uncontested ideas of civic identity. Instead, learning places an emphasis on the interplay between individual consciousness and the formulation of (potentially new) ideas of solidarity and collectivity. Consequently, and as we are seeing in the case study countries, the responses by young people towards such processes are contingent and ambiguous, at times reifying elite narratives of civic identity and at others promoting alternative claims to justice or legitimacy.

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Abstract

The making of citizens and citizenship is a key feature of the modern nation-state, and in making citizens, states often target young people. Public education traditionally has been the primary means of training young citizens in the norms and skills required for full societal membership. But citizenship has never been the exclusive domain of the state. Rather, myriad non-state actors have played a part in inculcating youth with political values and virtues. The role of non-state actors has become even more salient in the present day with the proliferation of “civil society.” This may be particularly important in post-conflict societies, where state institutions may be partly superseded by international organizations and NGOs. Drawing on the case of post-civil war Lebanon, this chapter explores the kinds of youth-citizenship discourses and practices promoted by NGOs in

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post-conflict settings. At the same time, we use the case of Lebanon to highlight the limitations of NGO discourses in transforming political realities. Citizenship discourses, in this respect, are situated among and compete against multiple articulations and infrastructures of societal belonging. While the fragmentation and contested nature of citizenship is perhaps most evident in post-conflict societies, it is a feature of all national contexts.

Keywords

Youth citizenship • NGOs • Civil society • Lebanon • Post-conflict societies

1 Introduction

Since the end of its 15-year civil war in 1990, Lebanon has witnessed the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), many of which are funded by foreign donors and are dedicated to the development of liberal-democratic values and citizenship. Many of these NGOs target youth with initiatives focused on cultivating “active citizenship,” as well as social cohesion, empowerment, dialogue, and other qualities and values seen as necessary for national development to take place. These kinds of activities and the citizenship pedagogies that inform them are not unique to Lebanon. Rather, they are indicative of internationalized citizenship discourses and practices that have been articulated as a response to concerns about the political disengagement of youth and patterns of “social exclusion.” These citizenship discourses and the practices associated with them have been promoted and implemented through global networks of donors, aid agencies, foundations, think tanks, academic institutions, and NGOs (Staeheli et al. 2014). Through these discourses and the pedagogy associated with them, international citizenship norms are invoked to address a wide array of social problems, including poverty, corruption, and sectarian/ethnonational violence.

This chapter discusses the ways in which the NGO sector in post-conflict settings participates in the implementation of internationalized citizenship ideals and norms, and it explores the ways they may shape the political practices, outlooks, and subjectivities of youth in post-conflict settings. In its focus on the formulation of citizenship norms by powerful international institutions and actors, this account might be viewed as a step back from recent critical scholarship in the field of youth geographies, which has sought to recover young people’s voice and agency in discussions of youth citizenship (e.g., Hörschelmann 2008; Kallio and Häkli 2011; Skelton 2010; Weller 2003; also Jeffrey 2012b for a review). Youth geographies scholarship has tended to cast a skeptical light on official citizenship narratives, highlighting young people’s subversion of, or disregard for, state efforts to mold and channel their political energies; this literature has also shifted attention away from the state altogether, locating youth politics in everyday relationships and spaces (Trell and Van Hoven, ► Chap. 23, “Young People and Citizenship in Rural Estonia: An Everyday Perspective,” this volume). While we share these critical

perspectives, we suggest there is value in understanding the institutional and organizational contexts in which ideas about youth citizenship are animated in both formal and informal education and curricula. Internationalized citizenship discourses, while not monolithic, provide an important framework in which young people and adults alike come to understand and talk about citizenship, even if they ultimately reject or modify its teachings.

This chapter begins with a brief explanation of citizenship pedagogy and the role it has played historically and in the present day in the development of youth political subjectivity. We then give special attention to the emergence of citizenship discourses revolving around “active citizenship” and cosmopolitanism and the circulation of these discourses in the Global South and in post-conflict societies through networks of foreign donors and NGOs. At the same time, we consider the limitations on these citizenship discourses and practices, giving particular attention to the complex political contexts in which NGOs operate. NGOs constitute an important source of citizenship discourse and practice, but they exist among, and must compete against, many other forms of political mobilization and expression.

The following discussion draws on information gathered in Lebanon between September 2010 and June 2011 and again between May 2013 and April 2014. We draw here on semi-structured interviews conducted with employees of 41 NGOs, all of which had a youth-based component and all of which had received at least some funding from a foreign donor (governmental, quasi-governmental, or private). In addition to interviews with NGOs in Lebanon, we conducted interviews with 17 representatives of international organizations based in Lebanon, Europe, or the USA. Finally, we spoke with two Lebanese MPs and with seven educational professionals familiar with citizenship and civic education in Lebanon.

2 Making Citizens: The State, Youth, and Citizenship Pedagogy

Modern, liberal-democratic nation-states built around constitutions, laws, and systems of representation have shaped people’s relationships to each other and to state authority in profound ways. State formation, in this sense, involves a process of citizen making, whereby the state and non-state actors formulate norms and practices that define membership in the nation and the body politic. Citizenship signifies legal membership within a territorial state with attendant rights and privileges, but it also signifies membership in a “community” whose members are governed by certain values and obligations to each other. The “glue” holding together the community of citizens in the modern nation-state context (ideally, anyway) is nationhood, and access to formal rights is often contingent upon membership (or perceived membership) in a national community bound together by mythical origins and a sense of common destiny. In this way, citizenship is a cultural production – not just a political production – wrought by processes of inclusion and exclusion.

States govern territory and people, so, as might be expected, they have a vested interest in fostering citizens' compliance with state authority and with norms and rules of conduct that assist in governance. The state accomplishes compliance both through the threat of violence (i.e., policing) and through more subtle means of establishing legitimacy, including the banal habits of nationalism (Billig 1995). Many state practices designed to foster compliance and to discipline populations are aimed at young people, who, as "citizens in the making," require training and tutelage. Formal and informal educational programs do much to instill citizenship through teaching history and civics and by elevating and encouraging certain social values and behaviors that are conducive to a "good society" and a productive workforce (Staeheli and Hammett 2013). These might include practicing good personal hygiene, being physically fit, learning to "wait for your turn" and to work in teams, and caring for the environment. As noted, these values and behaviors are promoted in schools and formal educational settings and also through the informal curricula that structure many scout meetings, summer camps, and youth athletic clubs (Mills 2013; Cupers 2008).

The production of citizens, of course, varies from context to context and changes over time in response to new "threats" and social problems. For the past decade or so, pedagogical experts have been preoccupied with young people's supposed political apathy and their inability to compete in an increasingly globalized economy; "social exclusion" and a lack of "social cohesion," as well, have been causes for concern. There has been a pronounced shift in school-based citizenship pedagogy in response to these supposed problems. Mitchell (2003), for instance, has commented on the shift away from multiculturalist ideals, which gained traction in the 1970s in response to the political claims of racialized minorities but which have been attacked in recent years as contributing to social fragmentation. Multiculturalist ideals have not entirely disappeared but have been integrated into (or perhaps subsumed by) a language of cosmopolitanism that lends itself to notions of entrepreneurialism and the achievement of global competitiveness. For advocates of cosmopolitanism, knowledge of the world and the ability to appreciate and to engage in dialogue with foreign "cultures" become part of a toolkit for creating competitive global workers and self-reliant national citizens.

This discursive move toward cosmopolitanism dovetails with the promotion of "active citizenship." The idea of active citizenship, with its emphasis on the virtue of serving one's "community" and taking responsibility for the community's well-being, has a long history in civic republican thinking and has more recently been embraced by communitarian thinkers, who view the bonds of trust and reciprocity created by a vibrant civil society as necessary to counteract the atomizing, alienating tendencies of liberalism and capitalism (for an accessible overview of communitarian thinking, see Bell 2012). In school settings, the idea of active citizenship suggests that young people, despite their lack of full legal rights, are capable of "making a difference" in their communities. Schools and other youth-based organizations, guided by pedagogical experts, have been eager to "empower" young people to solve problems in their communities, especially through volunteer and service-learning opportunities (see, e.g., Camino and Zeldin 2002). In many ways,

the concept of active citizenship, with its emphasis on community and obligations to one's fellow citizens, is at odds with the individualism and entrepreneurialism that is central to contemporary cosmopolitanism. Yet critics note that active citizenship and communitarianism conform to a neoliberal agenda of scaling back state-provided social welfare and encouraging citizens to be responsible for their own well-being (Jessop 2002). Young people, it seems, are increasingly expected to solve societal problems on their own (or with other members of the "community") and not to rely on the state for managing risk or reducing vulnerability. The overall effect, critics argue, is to depoliticize youth and to deflect attention away from structural causes of poverty and inequality (Kennelly and Llewelyn 2011; Staeheli and Hammett 2013).

Discourses of active, cosmopolitan citizenship have achieved global reach through the workings of aid agencies, foundations, and international organizations, which have assumed greater importance in governance in post-conflict settings (Staeheli et al. 2014). These discourses take on particular meanings in contexts marked by civil conflict, deep poverty, and/or a lack of state legitimacy. In such contexts we need to ask what purpose internationalized citizenship discourses serve, how they are implicated in the building of new national institutions, and how they are instrumental in reimagining the body politic. In the following section, we briefly explain the role of NGOs and their donors in articulating and implementing citizenship ideals for youth.

3 NGOs and Youth Citizenship in Post-Conflict Societies

Nongovernmental organizations have become an important component of civil society in the contemporary world – so much so that some scholars and development practitioners use the terms "civil society" and "NGO" interchangeably. Civil society refers to voluntary, associational activity led by citizens. Political theorists imagine this associational activity collectively as a sphere that is separate and autonomous from the state and the market. Like the "public sphere," civil society is often idealized as a crucial democratic space of argumentation, deliberation, and debate through which people engage with centers of economic and political authority (Kaldor 2003). Those advocating democratic transitions in post-conflict or authoritarian societies often view civil society as central to political transformation, with the understanding that citizen mobilization is necessary both to form bonds of trust and reciprocity between individuals and to hold state leaders to account. A great deal of energy and resources has thus been poured into the development of civil society, especially in the form of the NGO.

The rise of NGOs as key players in civil society is usually traced back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, a politically turbulent time in which protest movements erupted worldwide in opposition to state development policies, militarism, and the political exclusion of women, students, and racialized minorities. Many of these movements were organized at the grassroots and transnational levels, bypassing the nation-state and giving rise to global networks of voluntary, nonprofit, and

nongovernmental organizations. Many of these movements and the NGOs they spawned used an internationalized language of human rights and global action in pursuing societal change. Some of these NGOs gained a voice within the United Nations and other international and multilateral organizations dedicated to advancing international human rights norms.

In the 1990s, structural adjustment policies in postcolonial states and economic “shock treatment” in the former socialist societies of Eastern Europe added further impetus to the growth of NGOs. Structural adjustment policies were closely associated with the free-market, neoliberal orthodoxy that took hold in multilateral financial institutions in the 1980s, and critics argued that they generated poverty, insecurity, and inequality for millions of people worldwide. The outcry among international NGOs like Oxfam generated pressure on multilateral financial institutions to adopt (some would say co-opt) a poverty-reduction and sustainability agenda in poor and transitioning countries. Multilateral institutions and development agencies, along with a number of private philanthropies and foundations, became major backers of “sustainable development” and “participatory development” projects carried out by local and/or international NGOs. At the same time, international development agencies in the Global North, increasingly concerned about the security situation in politically unstable and post-conflict countries, plowed resources into NGOs to support democracy, good-governance, and civic-participation initiatives (Basok and Ilcan 2006).

Many scholars and development practitioners have greeted the global surge of NGO activity (and the proliferation of associational activity and volunteerism more generally) with enthusiasm, seeing in NGOs and the expansion of civil society a growing commitment to citizen participation, democratic practice, and human rights (Salamon et al. 1999; Scholte 2002). Salamon et al. (1999: 5) provide the following glowing assessment:

Because of their unique position outside the market and the state, their generally smaller scale, their connections to citizens, their flexibility, their capacity to tap private initiative in support of public purposes, and their newly rediscovered contributions to building ‘social capital’, civil society organizations have surfaced as strategically important participants in this search for a ‘middle way’ between sole reliance on the market and sole reliance on the state that now seems to be increasingly underway.

These scholars have interpreted the proliferation of NGOs (and the concomitant expansion of civil society) as a popular, democratic response to the failure of states to deliver on the promises of development, economic well-being, and security – a means of effecting political, social, and economic transformation from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Through NGOs and other forms of collective mobilization, this narrative suggests, citizens have forced accountability on state institutions, involved themselves in national development, addressed interests and needs typically ignored by mainstream political process, and delivered much needed services. In doing so, NGOs have helped to usher in a new, multilayered, global political system, thereby ending the state’s monopoly over politics (Scholte 2002).

Other interpretations, however, have been less sanguine in tone. Kaldor (2003), for instance, while a believer in the emancipatory potential of “global civil society,” has called NGOs “neoliberal civil society” and “tamed social movements,” describing them as a mechanism through which wealthy, powerful states and institutions have facilitated market and political reforms that serve their own interests. Indeed, as alluded to above, states and multilateral institutions have often been the impetus for NGO formation, using NGOs as a means to roll back state welfare systems, to smooth out the implementation of neoliberal market reforms, and to cultivate forms of political expression compliant with Global North security aims. Critics argue, moreover, that in many countries with weak state institutions, NGOs have, in effect, become quasi-state agencies, adopting a bureaucratic structure and top-down operating style. Unlike states, though, NGOs are not subject to formal democratic control, calling into question the extent to which NGOs, in fact, represent a move toward democratization. Numerous case studies have detailed the warping effects of NGOs on local political systems in post-conflict societies. Jennifer Fluri (2009), for instance, describes the severe economic and political disjunctures caused by the flow of billions of dollars of aid money into the country and by the presence of hundreds of Western consultants and NGO workers. Likewise Alex Jeffrey’s (2012a) account of post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina describes how donors used their largesse to confer legitimacy on particular political practices and groups while sidelining others, leading to considerable insecurity and competition among civil-society actors (see also Wedel 2001). These critical assessments, in exposing the ways in which donors shape the activities, stances, and politics of NGOs, and the ways that NGOs themselves become agents of governance, cast doubt on the notion of civil society as an autonomous, democratic, participatory realm.

3.1 NGOs and Youth Citizenship

In questioning the workings of the NGO sector, these analyses have shed critical light on the problematic conceptions of citizenship favored by NGOs and their donors. A growing, interdisciplinary body of critical scholarship has explored the ways in which donor orthodoxies relating to citizenship have been incorporated into citizenship education and training in post-conflict societies via NGOs. Donor agencies often view themselves as neutral and technocratic and as implementing civic values and “best practices” that are universal in their applicability. In reality, they favor highly specific norms that reflect their own, ideological conceptions of the “good society” and good citizenship. Doyle Stevick (2008), for instance, describes how the American civic-education consultants who descended upon Estonia after the fall of the Soviet Union attempted to hasten the transition from socialism to a market economy and liberal democracy through education reform. American donors (including a number of right-wing foundations and think tanks) sponsored teacher-training workshops and worked with local actors to devise civics curricula revolving around favored topics, including the rule of law, electoral participation, and free enterprise. As important as the content covered in such

workshops, Stevick notes the content *not* covered – namely, concepts relating to social welfare, social rights, and state protection of minority groups.

In Estonia and elsewhere, NGO-led youth-citizenship initiatives tend to mirror pedagogical trends in the Global North as local NGOs adopt the language and ideological priorities of donors, which seldom address deep-seated material inequalities or political differences. Especially salient in NGO programming in post-conflict settings are values and practices associated with cosmopolitanism (e.g., conflict resolution, dialogue, and “tolerance”) and “active citizenship.” By training young people in supposedly neutral and pragmatic leadership skills and in the art of building consensus across differences, some NGOs are attempting to create new kinds of citizens who have the capacity to act in a nonpartisan manner and to take responsibility for healing their societies, rather than relying on the state, which is often viewed as nontransparent, corrupt, and ineffective.

While citizenship programs have become ubiquitous in post-conflict societies through the NGO sector, it is important to note, as a number of scholars have, that neither donors nor NGOs are capable of eliminating alternative modes of political subjectivity or practice. Alex Jeffrey’s (2012a) work on Bosnia is instructive in this regard. Jeffrey demonstrates that a variety of associations in post-conflict Bosnia have continued to operate apart from the NGO sector, including local territorially based associations created in the Tito era. Such groups, he suggests, have been deeply threatening to NGOs and donors in their refusal to conform to the conventions and norms of what Jeffrey calls “gentrified civil society” – evidenced by their sometimes blatant alignment with partisan interests and ethnonational claims.

By the same token, local NGOs, in familiarizing themselves with donor discourses and expectations, are sometimes pursuing agendas that are, in fact, at odds with donor objectives. Stevick (2008: 110) describes Estonian educators and NGO workers in the post-Soviet context as participating in the “ritual of listening to foreigners,” which involved polite agreement with American and EU consultants who had virtually no knowledge of the Estonian language and very little understanding of local histories. Local actors, Stevick argues, were able to manipulate international donors with relative ease; in some cases, donors unwittingly selected partners whose interests were diametrically opposed to their own. In the end, Stevick suggests, donors’ influence on post-Soviet civic educational reform was limited – a view corroborated by Cottrell Studemeyer’s recent work on Estonia (► [Chap. 25, “Contending with Multicultural Citizenship in a Divided Society: Perspectives from Young People in Tallinn, Estonia,”](#) this volume), which shows that internationalized NGO discourses revolving around cosmopolitanism and tolerance coexist uneasily with highly divisive, ethnonational pedagogy in Estonian schools.

While recognizing the enormous influence that international donors and NGOs have had in post-conflict societies, it is fruitful to think of the coexistence of multiple political projects that at various moments overlap, intersect, or conflict with each other. Associations outside of the NGO realm (or even within it) may pursue very different agendas than those proffered by donors – agendas that may or may not be progressive in nature. We must consider, as well, the multiple sites in

which young people “learn citizenship.” As Staeheli and Hammett (2010) note, neither NGOs nor schools have a monopoly on citizenship education. Young people learn citizenship norms from parents, communities, and peers, and they develop political subjectivity not just through formal instruction but through everyday experiences, which might bear little relation to the world imagined by think tanks and consultants. Emerging as it does from multiple sites, youth citizenship is open ended, contradictory, and always in the process of becoming, not a monolithic, static structure (Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► Chap. 26, “Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship,” this volume). The remainder of this chapter draws out these points further in a detailed case study of a small set of NGOs in Lebanon and their approaches to youth citizenship.

4 The Production of Youth Citizenship in Post-Civil War Lebanon

Citizenship is a contested concept in every society, but in Lebanon the production of societal membership has been an especially fraught process. Like many postcolonial societies, Lebanon has lacked a compelling national narrative and a state apparatus capable of bringing cohesiveness to a society divided by confession, class, and political ideology. The country was created under French mandate rule at the behest of Maronite Christian elites, who imagined Mount Lebanon and its adjoining coastal cities as a coherent cultural-territorial entity dating back to Phoenician times. Their maneuverings for separate state were deeply resented by Muslim elites (as well as by some Christians), who viewed themselves as part of a broader Syrian or Arab nation. Nevertheless, Sunni, Shi’a, and Druze elites, despite lingering misgivings about Lebanese independence, eventually arrived at a power-sharing agreement with the Maronites, dividing the spoils of rule among themselves. But the country’s political structure was fragile, and the country teetered on the brink of civil war in 1958, only 15 years after full independence from France (Salibi 1988). Full-fledged civil war erupted in 1975 after years of tensions between different political factions – tensions compounded by deep divisions over the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the country. The war dragged on for a decade and a half, with the lines of sectarian conflict increasingly muddled by internecine warfare.

The reconstruction of Lebanese society in the 1990s brought numerous donors from North America and Europe, who, in the post-Cold War context, were investing heavily in democracy promotion and “civil society” (i.e., NGOs) in the Middle East (Carapico 2002). The growth of the NGO sector, to be sure, did not take place in an institutional vacuum. European and American missionaries had long been involved in institution building in Lebanon, focusing mainly on the establishment of schools. Moreover, Lebanese civil society before the civil war had been populated by a motley collection of communists and socialists, labor union activists, faith-based social justice organizations (most notably the Shi’a-led Movement of the Deprived), and right-wing nationalist groups (including Christian Phalangists). International

organizations, as well, had been on the scene since the 1960s, when UNESCO established a presence in Beirut, initially as the Arab States Center for Educational Personnel and later as the Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States.

By the end of the civil war, however, many of these prewar social and political movements had faded from view or had been subsumed into party-based entities. The Movement of the Deprived, for instance, was absorbed into Amal, a Shi'a-based political party-cum-militia. The NGO sector, anchored by UNESCO, thus became an increasingly visible component of civil society in Lebanon, as it did elsewhere in the postcolonial world in the 1990s. After the 2001 al Qaeda attacks, donors renewed their commitment to NGO-based civil society in the Middle East, seeing it as a bulwark against the spread of radical Islam, especially among the region's disaffected youth. In more recent years, fears of Iran's growing influence in the region, and especially in Lebanon through the Shi'a group Hizbullah, have ensured continued donor support of NGOs. Prominent funders in Lebanon today include USAID, the British Council, the US-Middle East Partner Initiative (MEPI), the European Union, the Norwegian embassy, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Heinrich Boell Foundation, and World Vision among others.

Youth programming is a key component of many NGOs' operations. Whether focused on the environment, electoral reform, or women's issues, many organizations have some youth remit. The attention to youth reflects, in part, the view that youth should be the primary object of political-socialization efforts; it also reflects the belief – or perhaps hope – among some NGO workers in Lebanon that youth are as yet untainted by corrosive sectarian political identities and affiliations and therefore better able to absorb international citizenship norms (a questionable assumption, as we explain below).

NGO directors and employees are fluent in particular citizenship discourses revolving around ideas of empowerment, leadership, and active citizenship. NGO workers acquire this fluency while attending American or European universities or English- and French-speaking institutions in Lebanon, where concepts like service-learning and civic engagement have become increasingly common (the Lebanese American University initiated a civil engagement office around 2010, and the American University of Beirut has a civic engagement office sponsored by USAID). They also gain fluency in citizenship ideals by attending donor-supported training and networking events. One NGO director we interviewed, as well, made ample use of the internet to find international (i.e., European, US, and UN) sources for youth-citizenship curriculum development, which he then incorporated into donor-funded youth-citizenship training programs. It is worth noting here that some of the NGO workers we interviewed had themselves been participants in NGO-based youth activities as high-school and university students. NGOs, in this respect, reproduce their own workforce by training young people in the language of NGOs and by selecting promising young people to attend training events in Beirut, Cairo, Amman, and other hubs of NGO activity in the Middle East. One young woman we interviewed, who had secured a position at an NGO after attending

NGO- and donor-sponsored youth leadership workshops in Beirut, London, and the USA, exemplifies what might be described as the NGO “revolving door.”

The idea that young people can and should take responsibility for transforming local communities and society informs countless youth leadership workshops in which young people learn to write funding proposals, to petition politicians, to organize public events, and to make use of social media. Related to youth leadership workshops are “training-the-trainer” workshops, whereby young people are instructed to reach out into their communities and to train other young people in appropriate citizenship practices and attitudes. One of our interviewees described citizenship training as a process of “re-culturing minds” to think of leadership in new ways:

Here in Lebanon, leadership is holding a microphone and speaking to a million. They want you to applaud at the end. But leadership is helping others and inspiring others and empowering others to reach their full potential. . . It is helping people achieve what they want to achieve, what they can achieve, and what they thought they could never achieve. . .

UNESCO continues to have an important role in articulating citizenship norms and in training young people in the ways of empowered and active citizens. In June 2014, UNESCO hosted a youth-based consultation for the new EU-funded Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED) project, which is intended to address a host of social ills – social exclusion, youth unemployment, and (alleged) political apathy – through citizenship training. The press release for the event is replete with NGO youth-citizenship lingo:

[NET-MED] will help young women and men to develop their competencies, claim and exercise their rights and meaningfully engage as active citizens, particularly in decision-making relating to youth policies. The focus will be on the development and revision of public policies by reinforcing the capacities and participation of identified youth organizations and stakeholders working on youth-related issues (locally elected officials, decision-makers and civil servants). NET-MED Youth will also promote young people’s freedom of expression, representation in mainstream media and empowerment through media and information literacy, underpinning their participation in public dialogue.

To be sure, empowerment and active citizenship are not mere buzzwords. Rather, they prompt a great deal of youth action. Lebanese youth can be found cleaning up beaches, planting community gardens, writing letters to the editor, petitioning municipal officials for parks and open space, and painting peace murals – activities that usually stop well short of protest, yet are expressive of a particular understanding of serving one’s community. One NGO director we met, in an effort to empower the young people involved in its after-school programs, had given youth participants a say in the governance of the NGO, reasoning that activating youth citizenship required giving young people a stake in governance at all levels of society. Members of each club associated with the NGO would vote for its own representative to participate in board meetings and to approve (or not) funding proposals to be sent to donors. Young people would also be involved directly in

designing projects and in assessing NGO priorities. This level of empowerment is undoubtedly exceptional, but it is nonetheless indicative of the emphasis placed on young people's capacity, and responsibility, to make and to direct changes.

In addition to youth empowerment and active citizenship, NGOs in Lebanon are also heavily invested in concepts of tolerance, dialogue, and consensus building. The drive to build consensus partly explains the tendency for NGO youth empowerment schemes to focus on relatively noncontroversial issues like the environment. As described by our interviewees, youth participants receive communication skills that allow them to engage in civil debate and strategies to resolve conflicts and to achieve practical solutions to problems. NGO workers commonly invoke the metaphor of bridge building to describe their efforts to bring together youths from different confessional backgrounds to speak across their differences and to achieve a sense of common purpose. Some NGOs quite literally remove young people from their sectarian contexts and devise opportunities for them to interact with each other. One NGO we visited takes young people from divided neighborhoods and brings them to camp during school holidays; another buses youths from around the country for training and leadership workshops; yet another on one occasion put young people together on a boat off the Lebanese coast for a series of civic-education sessions.

The consensus-building strategies and skills favored by NGOs hinge on the submergence of more contentious forms of political subjectivity, and some NGOs actively discourage (even forbid) the expression of sectarian political identities among youth participants. NGO directors and employees speak of redirecting young people's energies away from "politics" – i.e., sectarianism – which is seen as producing an illegitimate form of citizenship. As one interview explained:

Lebanon has an organic identity problem which is projected in a negative way on the concept of citizenship. Because citizenship is not seen from the perspective of rights and duties as much as it is seen as privileges, as being a member of a [sectarian] community.

The desire to promote consensus, to empty citizenship of its sectarian content, and to build social cohesion around internationalized citizenship norms is certainly understandable in a post-civil war context; even sectarian politicians pay lip service to the ideal of non-sectarianism and regularly make a show of "coexistence" (see Volk 2007). But the promotion of tolerance and dialogue and the disparagement and delegitimizing of sectarian political affiliations can also be viewed as profoundly marginalizing for many Lebanese youths whose families rely on sectarian patronage networks for jobs and crucial services like medical care. The impression we had during our fieldwork – an impression confirmed by some NGO leaders with whom we spoke – was that NGOs, despite their efforts to reach youths from different sectarian and class backgrounds, often draw participants from a limited sector of Lebanese society, mainly those who are already "sold" on internationalized norms and who possess the social and cultural capital to converse in the language of NGOs (hence, the "revolving door" described earlier). NGOs, we were told, constantly struggle to be truly inclusive, to build trust in local communities, and to find "ins" with underrepresented groups.

4.1 Sectarian Civil Society and the Marginality of NGO Discourses

Because they are unable to address people's anxieties, insecurities, and material needs, NGOs are limited in their capacity to transform political life in Lebanon or to mold the political consciousness of youths. Some of our interviewees recognized the limitations of a politics built upon notions of non-sectarian consensus and inter-sectarian dialogue. One of our interviewees, who has built his career on promoting civil dialogue and "de-confessionalizing" Lebanese society, explained:

On the one hand, sectarianism in this country is bad, but on the other hand, it's a safety net. For many people in this country, sectarianism is what you go back to when you have no protection from the state. That's unfortunate to say, but that's the truth. . . . So how do you go about [reform]? Do you go about it by sweeping everything and destroying everything and starting anew? Or do you work to enhance the system from within, knowing that a lot of the people who voted on sectarian lines are people who are convinced with their vote? Most people in Lebanon are very conscious of their political choices, even if they're not optimal choices.

Some NGO directors believe that they are essentially competing against the scores of voluntary organizations, foundations, and philanthropies affiliated with sectarian parties and leaders who are participating as much as NGOs in the formulation of citizenship. Some of these sectarian organizations, we should note, have themselves mastered the language and management style of NGOs and have received donor funding, rendering the boundaries between different elements of civil society rather hazy. Of particular note are the dozens of voluntary associations affiliated with Hizbullah, a group that has been shunned by US aid agencies for its militant stance toward Israel and its ties with Iran. These associations have been an important component of the Shi'a community's drive to achieve social and political empowerment in Lebanon, and they mobilize hundreds of volunteers, many of them women, to lead efforts in education, job training, neighborhood improvement, housing, and the like. Their models of citizenship revolve partly around ideas of active citizenship similar to those found in the NGO sector, but these are intertwined in unique ways with concepts of modernity, piety, resistance, and social justice rooted in the Shi'a community's long-running struggle against Israel and against its own marginalization within Lebanese society (see Deeb 2006).

Sectarian-based organizations convey their own understandings of Lebanese history, national identity, and civic virtue to Lebanese youths in a variety of ways. Youth clubs have a particularly visible role in inculcating youths with particular identities, values, and political loyalties. One interesting example is the Lebanese Scouting Federation, whose 29 affiliate organizations are associated with sectarian groups and political parties. The al-Mahdi Scouts, for instance, are affiliated with Hizbullah, and they regard ideas of "Islamic resistance" and the struggle against Israel as key tenets of their organization. Meanwhile, the Future Scouts are the purview of the Sunni-dominated Future Party, which, in turn, is patronized by Saudi Arabia; the Progressive Scouts are supported by the Druze-dominated Progressive Socialist Party, which espouses a mildly leftist political

agenda; and there are several Christian scouting groups that represent rival political factions and militias, some of them right wing in their politics. As members of a federation, these scouting organizations, in theory, adhere to the same set of scouting principles and accept a common set of virtues and leadership qualities. Yet the fragmentation of the scouting movement invariably reproduces particular, sectarian-based political values along with very different understandings of Lebanon's past and its future. A small number of non-sectarian scouting organizations have entered the fray to promote alternative, "universal" values and cosmopolitan identities, but their relatively minor presence on the scouting scene suggests that sectarianism exerts a much stronger pull on Lebanese youths.

The Lebanese school system provides little alternative to, or respite from, the sectarianism that pervades youth-based activities. Lebanon's 18 legally recognized confessional groups have the right, enshrined in the 1926 Constitution, to establish and oversee their own schools, and public schools historically have played a relatively minor role in the Lebanese education system. The post-Mandate era saw some expansion of the public school system, mainly benefitting Shi'a and Sunni Muslims who had not had full access to the Christian-dominated private-school sector. But the nation-building agenda of the post-independence Lebanese public education leaders, which sought to "graduate a generation unified in aims and national feelings" (Lebanese Republic, 1943, quoted in Frayha 2003, p. 82), generally came to naught. The Ta'if accord that ended the civil war was yet another call for unified national education and the further expansion of public schools in order to build "social cohesion." The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education at this time consulted with UNESCO and the Canadian Bureau for International Education on matters of curriculum development and teacher training, so the language of human rights and interconfessional dialogue is quite visible in official documents. But religious authorities balked at proposals to write standardized history textbooks and religious studies curricula. While they *did* agree to a common civics curriculum, this curriculum has been heavily criticized by Lebanese education scholars as bearing little relation to Lebanon's political realities (Farha 2012). Farha (2012) is careful to note that the large percentage of Lebanese students enrolled in private, usually confessional schools (close to 70%), is not a problem in and of itself, as some of the most progressive civic education can be found in nominally Christian and Muslim schools that are committed to multi-sectarian inclusiveness. But such schools are out of reach financially for many Lebanese, and poorer youths in segregated neighborhoods attend state schools that, despite their public status, reflect and reproduce the sectarian and social-class divisions in which they are situated. Critics describe these schools as staffed by unqualified teachers hired through patronage networks who exercise little imagination in addressing sectarian outlooks and hostilities and who give low priority to the state's social-cohesion agenda. Many confessional schools, especially in rural areas, appear to have much the same effect (see Shuayb 2012).

The power of sectarian allegiances in shaping youth politics carries into Lebanese universities, where the youth wings of political parties have a strong presence. Student elections are serious business at Lebanese universities, and political parties

compete for leadership of departments and faculties. At the American University of Beirut, a bastion of internationalized civil-society discourse, political parties have been banned from campus, yet many students told us that parties operate behind the scenes, and students are well aware of which clubs are controlled by which groups and which candidates for student government represent which party.

To be sure, not all Lebanese youths are swayed either by NGOs or by sectarian parties, and there are youth-based social movements emerging in Lebanon that seem to be independent of both. Most notable has been the secularist movement, which established a presence on Facebook and then took to the streets in a number of marches and demonstrations during the Arab Spring protests in 2010–2011. Secularism has a long history in Lebanon, and not all of the participants in the movement are young, but tech-savvy university students certainly play an important part in it. The secular movement's opposition to sectarian power structures and its advocacy of civil status, civil marriage, and electoral reform is akin to NGOs' rejection of sectarianism as a legitimate basis for political identity and practice. Some of the NGO leaders with whom we spoke were sympathetic to the movement's aims, and members of the secularist movement whom we interviewed conveyed to us that they had received some support from NGOs. Yet the secularist movement, at least in 2010–2011, had not been subsumed by the NGO sector, and the individuals we interviewed were intent upon keeping the movement leaderless and amorphous.

In sum, young people in Lebanon learn to be citizens not from one source but from many, and youth citizenship takes shape within a spectrum of state and non-state organizations, institutions, and networks whose boundaries are not always clear. NGOs have become an important source of citizenship discourse and practice in post-civil war Lebanon. But NGOs, in a sense, continuously jostle up against an array of state and non-state actors whose narratives of “we-ness” and understandings of rights and responsibilities are more compelling, or perhaps just more familiar and accessible, to many Lebanese than those offered by NGOs. Lebanon's secularist movement reminds us, as well, that we must consider the role of youths themselves in assembling citizenship ideals and norms and bringing these to the public sphere in ways that may overlap with the NGO sector but that remain separate from it (compare with Laketa, ► [Chap. 9, “Youth as Geopolitical Subjects: The Case of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina,”](#) this volume).

5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the making of youth citizenship and the role of NGOs in shaping youth political subjectivity and citizenship practice in post-conflict settings. Our discussion began with an explanation of the state's historical role in developing citizenship pedagogy, mainly through public school systems, as a means to facilitate the governance and regulation of citizens. States remain highly vested in the formation of citizens and citizenship in a shifting context of economic globalization, the rollback of the welfare state, and the “rollout” of new regulatory

regimes that require citizens to take more responsibility for their own well-being (Peck and Tickell 2002). Citizenship pedagogies based on active citizenship, youth empowerment, and cosmopolitan virtues serve to “prepare” young citizens for changing social, economic, and political realities.

Yet citizenship pedagogy is not, and has never been, the exclusive domain of state action. Rather, voluntary associations, political parties, religious institutions, families, and local communities have all had a role in socializing young people into particular norms of societal participation and membership. This socialization often serves the interests of states, but it can just as often support alternative social and political agendas. The making of citizens, in this sense, has always been a relatively fluid, contentious, and multi-sited process, even as citizenship pedagogy tends to coalesce in particular historical moments around certain ideas and practices.

In post-conflict contexts, where states are fractured, weak, and/or lacking in legitimacy, the role of the state in promoting certain citizenship ideals is undoubtedly contentious and circumscribed. Over the past few decades, scholars have noted the growing prominence of NGOs in such contexts and their advancement of certain citizenship ideologies and norms that appear to be more in line with donors and foreign interests than with the interests of national states (though states may also rely on NGOs for expertise, service provision, and the implementation of reforms). For many critics, the importance of “civil-society” actors, with financial and intellectual ties to the Global North in governance, regulation, and the implementation of citizenship norms, is indicative of the limited sovereignty of postcolonial states – a condition that has defined the postcolonial condition for decades. Many scholars also see in NGOs the emergence of a global neoliberal order dominated by powerful states and multilateral institutions.

Lebanon in some ways is a special case characterized by a unique (and obviously problematic) combination of a weak state, strong regional and communal identities, dense patron-client networks organized along sectarian lines, and a long history of Western influence and intervention. Here, perhaps even more than in other postcolonial nation-states, citizenship is highly decentralized and fragmented, with numerous groups – state, non-state, quasi-state – participating simultaneously, and often at odds with each other, in the production of citizenship values, norms, and practices. But the lessons we can draw about youth citizenship from the Lebanese case are applicable to other contexts. That is, far from a static legal status or set of rights, citizenship is, above all, a production, something actively made by multiple actors, including youths. While particular citizenship norms and practices can achieve prominence in particular temporal and geographical contexts, citizenship is highly contested, and it emerges from differing, sometimes conflicting, ideals that circulate globally as well as within national societies. Young people are important agents in citizenship production. Their political identities, ideals, and behaviors in many instances conform to the aims of citizenship pedagogy, but as the case of the secularist movement in Lebanon reminds us, such conformity cannot be assumed, and we must be mindful of the ways in which young people resist, manipulate, and undermine citizenship discourses and norms, no matter their source.

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Representing, Reproducing, and Reconfiguring the Nation: Geographies of Youth Citizenship and Devolution

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Sarah Mills and Jonathan Duckett

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Abstract

While children’s geographers have showcased the diverse political engagements of young people at the local and global scale – not least in this volume – less attention has perhaps been directed to those at the national scale. Furthermore, in a UK context, devolution is having an increasingly important role in shaping young people’s everyday lives. This chapter highlights how the practices and performances of youth citizenship “take place” within shifting policy landscapes and understandings of national identity. Overall, the chapter reviews literature and current debates on “representing and reproducing the nation” and “national identities and devolution” within political geography and asks what these might mean for those who study the everyday lifeworlds of children and young people. It also highlights some key studies in children’s geographies and the social sciences that engage with ideas of national identity. Finally, the chapter provides two brief examples of current research projects that engage with youth citizenship, national identity, and the “political” in the context of UK devolution.

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Nation • Devolution • Youth • Citizenship • Geographies • Scotland • Wales • National Citizen Service • Commonwealth Games • Independence referendum

1 Introduction

Children's geographers and those from other disciplinary backgrounds studying the political engagements of children and young people have often highlighted the relevance and importance of the national scale. Indeed, the empirically focused chapters in this volume firmly locate their studies within unique national contexts or historical genealogies of nation building (e.g., Azmi et al. in Sri Lanka or Cottrell Studemeyer in Estonia; see also Jeffrey and Staeheli, ► [Chap. 26, "Learning Citizenship: Civility, Civil Society, and the Possibilities of Citizenship"](#), this volume). And yet, the core focus of geographical inquiry tends to remain on the *local* engagements of young people or the *global* processes influencing young people's lives (see also Hopkins 2010; Hopkins and Alexander 2010 on this debate). This theme also relates to some wider discussions in children's geographies about the role of scale in micro- and macrolevel analyses (Ansell 2009; Holloway 2014) and the connections and relationships between the local, national, and global scale in shaping young people's everyday lifeworlds (Hopkins 2007; Katz 1994; Massey 1998). Furthermore, this scholarship is set against a backdrop of lively and critical conceptual debate on scale within academic geography (e.g., Herod 2010; Jones and Fowler 2007; Marston 2000; Marston et al. 2005; Marston and Mitchell 2004). Nations, and the social construction of nations, have long-standing, powerful, and enduring connections with childhood and youth, utilizing them as key ideological tropes within shifting moral landscapes of citizenship (Gagen 2004a; Mills 2013). It is important to note however that studies on representing and reproducing the nation in political geography have perhaps not fully explicated how discourses of childhood are mobilized and enacted. Furthermore, despite the primacy of identity as a core focus within children's geographies (Holloway and Valentine 2000a), studies attending to how young people construct, understand, and perform *national identity* remain surprisingly marginal, as Hopkins (2010) notes (see also Hopkins and Alexander 2010). Indeed, back in 2000, Holloway and Valentine outlined that "one set of issues which has attracted relatively little attention, either in children's and young people's geographies, or the new social studies of childhood more generally, concerns the relations between child, childhood, nation, national identity and nationalism" (2000b, p. 336; see also Stephens 1997). In this chapter, we chart the "place" of the *nation* within the context of debates on young people, politics, and citizenship and also offer some timely reflections on *devolution* in a UK context – a process reconfiguring nations and national identities in complex ways. In geographical research, devolution has remained a topic firmly located within the subdisciplines of political and economic geography, with studies often centered on public policy and planning

(Goodwin et al. 2005; Jones et al. 2005; Shaw and MacKinnon 2011; Woolvin et al. 2014). Here, we argue that most of the opportunities and challenges for young people living in the UK to engage “politically” are increasingly influenced or shaped by the geographies of devolution and that there is scope for these socio-spatial relationships to be further interrogated.

There are important distinctions between citizenship and national identity (Edensor 2002; Kong 1999; Mavroudi 2008; Nagel and Staeheli 2004; Yarwood 2013) and by extension youth citizenship and young people’s national identities (Philo and Smith 2003; Scourfield et al. 2006; Staeheli and Hammett 2010; Skelton 2013; Weller 2007). However, ideas of both nationalism and citizenship are inscribed onto youth (as well as negotiated and resisted; see Section 3). There are also a raft of associated concepts and ideas in relation to young people’s political identities, including belonging and participation. However, it is not the aim of this chapter to map out this conceptual and definitional terrain, or how these concepts are shaped by social difference and globalization, but rather to highlight and review the scholarship surrounding, firstly, representing and reproducing the nation and, secondly, national identities and devolution – with specific reference to children and young people. Both of these lines of inquiry are then illustrated through some contemporary examples relating to our current individual programs of research.

2 Youth and Representing the Nation

In 2007, Rhys Jones and Carwyn Fowler importantly drew attention to “the geographical contexts within which nations are reproduced” and “the geographical concepts and processes that inform the ongoing reproduction of nations” (p. 332; see also Jones 2008; Newman and Passi 1998). Indeed, nations are sustained through staged and imaginative geographies, through the “stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which...give meaning to the nation” (Hall 1992, p. 293; see also Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Gellner 1983). Geographers have illustrated and elucidated how discursive meanings around the “place” of the nation are shaped by everyday representations, landscapes, and sites of memory, for example, through film, ceremonies, and material culture (Edensor 2002), monuments (Johnson 1995), architecture (Lorimer 2001), streets and public space (Azaryahu 1997), other expressions and embodied performances (Radcliffe 1999), and powerful imaginative geographies in (post)colonial contexts (Phillips 1997; Radcliffe 1996).

In relation to children and young people, Phillips’ (1997) work is noteworthy for examining how children’s adventure literature between the eighteenth and twentieth century mapped out European and non-European places and people along axis of race, gender, class, and *nation*. These fictional texts “opened up a cultural space,” where, for example, “readers living in the separate and independent Australian colonies, were able to imagine Australia as a nation within the British empire” (Phillips 1997, p. 87). Other studies have analyzed the symbolic and performative “place” of youth in telling national narratives and stories. For example, Lily Kong

and Brenda Yeoh's (1997) study of National Day Parades in Singapore between 1965 and 1994 identified that a "consistent message" in these parades and related material was "youthfulness," emphasizing "the importance of youth in nation-building and the relative youthfulness of Singapore as a nation" (1997, p. 232). Here, they argue that a combination of ritual and spectacle at these parade events facilitated the communication of ideas and meanings about the nation and national identity. Indeed, similar themes can be seen in the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, with the choreographed performance communicating ideas about the UK, for example, around voluntarism and the National Health Service (Yarwood 2013). It is worth highlighting here the explicit references to, and performances of, youth within that "one-off" ceremony. For example, not only did the ceremony prominently feature connections to childhood and children's literature as a celebration of imagination and creativity (e.g., J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter and P. L. Travers' Mary Poppins), but more powerfully, it firmly located young people at the heart of the event through a group of young UK athletes lighting the Olympic torch in the finale as an embodiment of the Games' slogan "Inspire a Generation" (for further studies on children and their position within projects of the nation, see Millei 2014). Despite these clear connections between youth and the nation, the focus within work on geographies of the nation and nationalism does tend to be adult centric (on the political geographies of children and young people more broadly, see Philo and Smith 2003; Skelton 2013; Kallio and Mills 2015). However, several studies by geographers have importantly examined the institutional geographies of "learning" to be citizens, a process necessarily entwined with national narratives and constructions of identity, alongside the promotion of other scalar connections to local and global communities.

Cultural and historical geographers have considered the subtle forms of governance and citizenship training embedded within schemes such as the Youth Hostels Association (Matless 1998) and country code (Merriman 2005) and their connections to rural landscapes and nationhood. There have also been more overt forms of informal citizenship training in rural and urban spaces through British youth organizations – voluntary uniformed schemes that enrolled children and young people into structured programs as an "instruction" in good citizenship (Mills 2013). Formal education and schooling are also closely connected to ideas of nationhood and citizenship; indeed, as key sites for children and young people, schools shape and reproduce diverse place-based and social identities (Collins and Coleman 2008). Previous work on schools, nationhood, and empire – primarily by historical geographers – has analyzed the content of classroom textbooks and educational resources for overt representations of nationalistic ideas, as well as highlighting the powerful role of associated spaces such as playgrounds and other learning environments in shaping national understandings and moral geographies (de Leeuw 2009; Gagen 2000; Maddrell 1996; Ploszajska 1994, 1996). In a more contemporary context, Matt Benwell's (2014) research on secondary schools in Argentina and the Falkland Islands has considered the role of the educator in the delivery of educational materials (see also Gruffudd 1996). He discusses how some

teachers did not blindly reproduce these texts, but instead engaged young people by facilitating space for them to think critically or actively challenge overt narratives of nationalism. Additionally, Benwell suggests that when considering seemingly banal forms of nationalism exhibited in the classroom (see also Billig 1995; Jones and Merriman 2005), it should be recognized that these are locally produced and performed, understood through wider connections and interpretations between other spatial scales such as the region. While this work has developed understandings of how the nation may be produced through the role of educational materials and teachers within the context of the school, there remains scope for further research with children and young people themselves, considering how they receive (and potentially negotiate) this information. These themes have appeared in work on the contemporary geographies of citizenship education. For example, Susie Weller (2007) explored teenagers' experiences of undertaking citizenship education, introduced into the UK National Curriculum in 2002. She found a statistical relationship between "how participants felt they were regarded by teachers and their level of interest in citizenship education. . . all of those participants who felt treated like children during citizenship lessons did not like the subject" (2007, p. 79). Furthermore, her qualitative research highlighted how some of the assumptions within citizenship education "presupposes, to some degree, that teenagers are not already engaged in acts of citizenship" (2007, p. 70) and her participants had a divided response to a sense of "belonging" across the local, national, and global scale. The emergence of more fluid and relational understandings of citizenship, as expressed by Weller's (2007) participants, does raise questions about the perceived decline in affiliation to the nation-state. It is important to stress however that "citizenship education should be seen as a tool in nation- and polity-building" (Staeheli and Hammett 2010) in diverse international contexts. Overall, there remains far greater scope to examine young people's roles within the reproduction of national ideologies and nation building, as well as how these help to construct (or challenge) their own understandings and sense of national identity.

3 Young People's National Identities and "Devolved" Youth

A core focus of scholarship within children's geographies is "on those everyday spaces in and through which children's identities and lives are made and remade" (Holloway and Valentine 2000c, p. 9). While the above section outlined how spaces such as schools and youth organizations act as sites for the (re)production of national ideas and discursive meanings about the nation and "good citizens", this section focuses more explicitly on young people's own articulations and understandings of their *national identities*. As Del Casino Jr states, "concepts of social identity and subjectivity are both perceived and experienced differently across the lifecourse" (2009, p. 186), and it is therefore vital that children and young people's own understandings of the nation and national identities are considered worthy of scholarly attention. The idea that identity is complex, relational, multifaceted, and diverse is now firmly located at the heart of social and

cultural geography (Jackson 2014). Indeed, national identity intersects with axis of social difference including class, gender, race, religion, sexuality, (dis)ability, and, in the context of this chapter, age. Diasporic and transnational identities are also important (see Kong 1999; Mavroudi 2008), for example, in how migration in childhood can influence national identity construction (Trew 2009), how young people navigate competing discourses of national identity in divided societies (Leonard 2012), and more broadly in terms of expanding notions of relational citizenship (Hörschelmann and El Refaie 2014).

There have been some important, if not still relatively isolated, studies in the specific area of young people's national identities. Holloway and Valentine (2000b) explored how other national identities are imagined and understood by children through analyzing "the online interactions between children in 12 British and 12 New Zealand schools" and "their imaginative geographies of each other" (p. 335). The corresponding visions of the 13-year-olds' different spatial locations varied between descriptive and more nuanced understandings, whereas their imagined perceptions of people and daily lives garnered more emotional responses, for example, the frustrations of some children from New Zealand over the ways in which British children drew upon stereotypes of Australia. Overall, Holloway and Valentine found that "perceptions of each other were a complex mix of highly stereotypical understandings of difference, as well as assumptions of sameness across boundaries" (2000b, p. 353). In another project that explored ideas of nations and nationality, but with younger primary-school-aged children from Edinburgh, Scotland and Syracuse, New York, Euan Hague (2001) collected 127 drawn pictures "about Scotland." The Scottish children's drawings drew on historically recognized and essentialized symbols of nationhood, for example, the saltire and tartanry, whereas those from New York State tended to draw houses, hills, mountains, kilts, and bagpipes. Hague concludes that "stereotypical 'emblem images' are an important means through which children distinguish nations and that these images are, particularly for residents of the nation concerned, intertwined with personal experiences" (2001, p. 92).

Beyond ideas of representation, the work of Peter Hopkins has cemented the importance of the national scale and national identities in young people's geographies. The core of Hopkins' work to date has examined the lives of young Muslim men in Scotland (2004, 2007; although see Hopkins and Hill 2006 on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and Hopkins 2014 on young Sikh men). In doing so, his research has contributed to debates on gender, religion, race, and age within social geography. Of particular relevance to this chapter's discussion is that firstly, Hopkins' research illustrates the importance of "Scottishness" as a concept in understanding "the claims of national identity made by the young Muslim men, highlighting the multiple ways that the young men feel simultaneously included and excluded from being Scottish" (2004, p. 260) and, secondly, that Hopkins has explicitly outlined the difference that Scotland makes/made to his research, especially on race and racism (2008). These factors include "continuities and connections between the Scottish context and that of the rest of the UK," but also "discontinuities and disjunctures" (2008, p. 114). Hopkins also flags up how issues

relating to Scottish politics and governance mattered in diverse ways when considering the geographies of race and racism. This discussion leads directly into the next focus of this chapter on devolution.

Devolution in the UK in the late 1990s led to the formation of the National Assembly for Wales, Scottish Parliament, and Northern Ireland Assembly. The significance and reach of this new legislative landscape has reshaped the British state in complex ways (Goodwin et al. 2005; Hardill et al. 2006; Jones et al. 2005; Shaw and MacKinnon 2011; on devolution in non-UK contexts, see Hough and Jeffery's 2006 edited volume; Rodriguez-Pose and Gill 2003). Geographical research on devolution has tended to focus on the political and economic "institutional unevenness" as the state has been "filled in" (Goodwin et al. 2005, p. 433), and although there is a broader interest in the identity politics of Celtic regions (Harvey et al. 2001), the focus in the literature remains firmly on public policy and practices of governance (Raco 2003; Jones et al. 2004). This focus on policy and governance is incredibly important; indeed, children's geographers have critically demonstrated how policy and reforms, for example on education, directly influence young people's lives (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2012; see Kraftl et al. 2012 for a range of studies on international policy contexts and youth). However, the impact of devolution and state restructuring on young people's lived experiences, political engagements, and *sense of identity* is also worthy of study. There are some isolated studies from the social sciences within this vein. For example, a 2009 study by Mark Drakeford and colleagues examined the views of children from Wales aged 8–11 on their "perspectives on different levels (and places) of government" (2009, p. 247). Here, the various *scales* of governance (in this case, the UK parliament and Welsh Assembly) were explored, with children discussing issues of decision-making and the impacts of national and broader-scale government on their local, everyday lives. Ultimately, the authors found that notions of civic identity were present, in the form of "a rather diffuse and (as yet) shallowly rooted sense of 'Welshness' [that] is accompanied by sharper dimensions of civic awareness, in which localism matters most" (Drakeford et al. 2009, p. 263). Indeed, national civic institutions "reinforced" and "validated" this notion of "Welshness," but the authors found that "without some reinforcement, either at home or at school, civic institutions, by themselves, provide only a weak and background contribution to 'Welsh' identity formation" (Drakeford et al. 2009, p. 262; see also Scourfield and Davies 2005). Overall, the connections between devolution, identity, and politics have yet to be fully engaged with by children's geographers, especially in relation to teenagers and older young people. Clearly, work within children's geographies has examined UK youth beyond the English context: not least, Hopkins' research discussed earlier, but also Vincett et al. (2012) on young Christians in Scotland, Skelton (2000) on teenage girls in the Rhondda Valleys, South Wales, and Leonard (2006, 2010) on young people's experiences of territory and place in Northern Ireland. However, the unique and nationally specific opportunities for young people currently living in the UK to engage "as citizens" (both "in the making" and "in their own right") are changing, at the same time as the "national" itself is being reconceptualized. It is therefore an opportune moment for

geographers to critically examine the spatialities and subjectivities of youth citizenship in the context of this shifting landscape.

We now turn to two brief case studies that outline our current programs of individual research and connections to youth citizenship, nationhood, and devolution. First, Mills' project on National Citizen Service – a state-funded voluntary youth scheme launched in England in 2011 – and second, Duckett's work on young people, the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and referendum on Scottish independence.

3.1 National Citizen Service

Over the last 30 years, successive UK governments have launched citizenship education programs, either under the auspices of tackling youth unemployment or dealing with the “democratic deficit” (Cockburn 2009). Informal citizenship training, by contrast, has been delivered through a range of voluntary youth organizations since the late nineteenth century, and this practice continues today (Mills 2013). As such, both these formal and informal arenas – discussed as young people's spaces earlier in this chapter – act as a useful lens through which to critically examine wider debates on youth, voluntarism, and civil society over time (Buckingham 2002; Hilton and McKay 2011). Crucially, the nature of this service provision has been blurred in recent years through the latest incarnation of a government scheme – National Citizen Service (NCS). NCS is a short-term “citizenship training” voluntary scheme for 16- and 17-year-olds delivered through a range of charities, private sector partnerships, and youth organizations that purports to give participants “the tools to change the world around them” (NCS 2014). The 3-week NCS program involves two residential experiences and a series of training workshops and volunteering activities, culminating in a youth-led social action project to foster a “more cohesive, responsible and engaged society” (Mycock and Tonge 2011, p. 62). Between 2011 and 2013, 64,500 young people participated in NCS, with a recent IPPR “Condition of Britain” report recommending that “half of young people aged 16–17 are taking part [in NCS] by 2020” (IPPR 2014, p. 4).

An ESRC-funded project led by Mills (2014–2017) positions this new scheme within the historical context of youth citizenship development in the UK and explores the state's motivations behind, the third sector's engagement with, and young people's experiences of, NCS in England. However, it is worth noting in the context of this chapter's discussion on devolution that NCS now runs in Northern Ireland following a pilot in 2013. In addition, an NCS pilot was launched in Wales in autumn 2014. It is therefore interesting to note how this government-funded youth program has already been shaped by the landscape of UK devolution. For example, while the scheme costs young people from England £50 to attend (with bursaries available for some “hard-to-reach” groups), it was free to those on the 2014 pilot scheme in Wales (BBC 2014a). NCS articulates a vision of an ideal “national” (young) citizen, for example, as an active local volunteer, yet the scheme now “takes place” in three UK jurisdictions, each with their own unique national

genealogy and relationship to the current, contested “Big Society” rhetoric within which NCS sits (Woolvin et al. 2014; Mycock and Tonge 2011). Overall, this brief overview of the emergence and delivery of NCS demonstrates how a wider moral landscape of youth citizenship can be shaped through the everyday geographies of devolution, policy, and practice.

3.2 The 2014 Commonwealth Games and the Scottish Independence Referendum

Duckett’s current research explores the prominence of the nation in the lives of young people through two uniquely coupled events of national significance in Scotland during the summer of 2014. This considers the sporting “mega event” of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games together with the “once-in-a-generation” political opportunity to decide the future of the nation through the referendum on Scottish independence (Sharp et al. 2014). For the first and only time anywhere in the UK, the vote was afforded to 16- and 17-year-olds living in Scotland to participate in this historic national moment. This therefore presents an important point to study the intersection of young people’s national political identity and agency as well as reflecting on whether young people fight for this enfranchisement to be extended to future elections. Indeed, this is a clear example of where the geographies of devolution are (re)shaping young people’s political geographies.

While sport has been explored by geographers as a nation-building strategy (Koch 2013) and “organizing opportunity” (Wills 2013), the performative moments of sports mega events provide important spaces for the often overt communication of national narratives and collective memory alongside more subtle and nuanced performances. Children and young people have historically been actively encouraged to participate in the support of the nation and its athletes across the world (Gagen 2004b). While many young people may independently choose to participate in these activities, it is the social construction of children and young people as constituting ‘our future’ that underlies the desire of many adults to encourage young people to participate in such performances. Ultimately, this shapes and educates future society along lines of adult idealist constructions (Collins and Coleman 2008), but fails to entitle children and young people to ‘become-other’ through their own trajectories. Rather, this privileges the developmental view that adult society holds of its aspiration for children to become like itself (Aitken et al. 2007). The 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, like other major sporting events before it, positioned children and young people as a key site to communicate visions of the nation on and through. This was exhibited in the lead up to and during the Games through the encouragement of children and young people to (re)produce the nation through competitions to design a Commonwealth tartan and mascot for the Games in support of the event and their home nation. The Commonwealth Games also partnered with the children’s charity UNICEF to “put children first” both in Scotland and around the Commonwealth, by raising money throughout the Games to help save and change children’s lives (Glasgow 2014). While these

adult-led practices through the Commonwealth Games encouraged particular visions and traditions of Scotland to be imparted on and through children and young people, the independence referendum provided a space for a new generation of young voters to voice and mobilize their own ideas about the nation's future. Overall, this project seeks to understand how newly enfranchised voters in the independence referendum engaged with official and unofficial representations and performances of Scottish national identity during the Glasgow Commonwealth Games and how these resonated with their own visions of a future Scotland as young Scottish citizens. This research also reflects on how the enfranchisement of 16- and 17-year-olds during this historic decision may affect their own engagement as citizens throughout their political life course, potentially reshaping the future political landscape of Scotland and the UK through a possible extension of the vote for this age group in all political decisions (Lewin 2014).

4 Conclusion

In 2004, Elizabeth Gagen stated that “discourses of childhood are invariably located in particular spaces: the home, school, playground, street, countryside, city, *nation*” (2004a, p. 407, emphasis added; see also Holloway and Valentine 2000a). This chapter has provided a broad overview of how the nation is represented and reproduced in relation to such discourses of childhood, as well as reconfigured through young people's lived experiences and own articulations and understandings of national identity. Throughout this chapter, we have charted some of the core geographical studies in these areas and introduced summaries of our individual programs of current research. In part, these projects reflect on the impact of *devolution* in a UK context for young people's engagement with “politics” (broadly defined; see Kallio and Mills 2015). For example, in the most basic sense, one can observe how, during the summer of 2014, 16- and 17-year-olds living in Scotland would not have been eligible to participate in “National Citizen Service” – the voluntary scheme designed to encourage young people to become active citizens – as the program is so far only running in England and Northern Ireland (with a pilot in Wales). However, young people of exactly those age ranges did have the opportunity to actively participate in the referendum on Scottish independence (BBC 2014b). This formal expression of citizenship through exercising the right to vote could be seen as a more powerful engagement with ideas of nationhood and civic identity than participating in citizenship “training.” Furthermore, this scenario highlights the fragmented and often contradictory spaces of youth citizenship and participation within the current UK political landscape, demonstrating the wider tension hinted at in this chapter between the positioning of young people as citizens “in the making” or “in their own right” within national narratives and frameworks.

In drawing this chapter to a close, it is important to again emphasize the importance of the national scale within and beyond the subdiscipline of children's geographies. One relevant area of exciting research bringing together core themes in political geography and children's geographies is the recent flurry of work on critical

geopolitics and youth. In a co-convened session on *Children, Young People and Critical Geopolitics* at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference in 2013, Matt Benwell and Peter Hopkins emphasized how young people's lives are shaped by geopolitical events (not just as victims, but as active participants too) while also importantly stressing that these events are not just "global" or "local" but also take place – and have repercussions at – the national (and regional) scale (Benwell and Hopkins 2016; see also Hopkins and Alexander 2010). Indeed, we want to echo these sentiments for more critical debate about the national scale as well as to make a wider call in the context of this volume on politics, citizenship and rights for more scholarship that critically engages with concepts of national identity, nationalism, and, in certain geographical contexts, devolution. Overall, we would argue that the "place" of the nation both shapes, and is shaped by, the lives of children and young people and that there is far greater scope for more dialogue between political and children's geographers on the themes of representing, reproducing, and reconfiguring the nation.

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